SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNITION MANUAL
SADC-QR MANUAL

GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

SADC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This publication is a result of the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) initiative of the Technical Committee of Certification and Accreditation (TCCA).

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PREFACE

The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Recognition Manual contains standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of qualifications. These standards and guidelines generally intend to make the recognition procedures transparent to all stakeholders to contribute to a joint qualifications recognition area, in which all SADC countries practice a similar and common methodology in the recognition of qualifications, based on commonly agreed standards and guidelines. The stakeholders in this regard include credential evaluators, education and training institutions, learners, employers and policy makers who are directly or indirectly involved in recognition practices in all SADC countries.

Through adherence to these common standards and guidelines, a harmonised and transparent recognition of qualifications in the region will be achieved, the intention being to enhance the *(leading to enhanced)* mobility of learners and workers in the region. This is in line with the Addis Convention on recognition of qualifications.

ABOUT THE MANUAL

This manual contains standards and guidelines on all aspects of the recognition of qualifications and aims to provide credential evaluators from SADC Member states with general guidelines to assist them to develop member country specific recognition manuals. Further, the manual provides general guidelines that make the recognition procedures transparent to all stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in recognition such as; credential evaluators, education and training institutions, learners, employers and policy makers. In general, this manual aims to create more clarity regarding recognition practices in all SADC countries and to contribute to a joint qualifications recognition area, in which all SADC countries follow the same procedure in the recognition of qualifications, based on commonly agreed standards and guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

This Manual consists of six (6) chapters, each chapter building on the previous sections *(other chapter)* and together presenting a complete picture for *(to provide)* credential evaluators in *(from)* SADC Member states with general guidelines to assist in the (them) development of country specific recognition Manuals.

Chapter 1 of the Manual provides (gives) context for the (of) recognition of qualifications within the SADC region. Chapter 2 presents the legal frameworks, protocols and conventions to which SADC subscribes. Chapter 3 provides information on qualifications. Chapter 4 discusses the different types of qualifications and recommendations on standard verification procedures. Chapter 5 discusses qualifications frameworks as tools that enable the *(provide an opportunity for)* mutual recognition of qualifications, learning

outcomes, and used of credits. This *(are discussed in Chapter 5. The)* chapter also covers substantial and non-substantial differences between qualifications and, recognition decisions together with the right to appeal recognition decisions. It (including) provides pointers for transparency and information in this regard (provision). Chapter 6 explores some of the lessons gleaned from known good verification and best practices in the verification and comparability of qualifications. It further states the provisions in the ADDIS and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) Global conventions on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications.The Manual also includes a glossary of terms, *(and)* a list of acronyms and a list of the sources used in this Manual.

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CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT OF QUALIFICATIONS RECOGNITION

Summary

This chapter discusses context of qualifications recognition towards deepening understanding of the *(It aims to provide a better understanding on)* recognition of qualifications. In doing so, it (will) focuses on the *(discussing)* background for the *(on)* recognition of qualifications, namely the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), the SADC Qualifications Recognition Manual, and the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States. It further seeks to enhance (creates an) understandings of what qualifications are and of the diversity of education and training systems.

1.1 Background to the recognition of qualifications

Africa has generally experienced positive economic development over the past decade. To stimulate and sustain increased economic activity, countries that share common geographical regions have tended to establish alliances to integrate their economies and promote trade. Economic Integration is an agreement amongst countries in a geographical region usually aimed at reducing barriers to free movement of goods and services and factors of production. The SADC and other regional blocs as the African Union (including the Organization for African Free Trade and Commerce) and other organizations are inter-Governmental entities *(organizations that were)* established to further the social economic cooperation and integration within and across the member countries.

The mobility of leaners and workers *(Labour mobility)* is an integral part of international trade and holds benefits to countries, companies, leaners and workers. Individual workers can increase their income levels; improve their standards of living; and gain access to better employment opportunities through labour migration. Companies can improve their competitiveness and profitability if they can source the required skills in the region and globally. Remittances can improve the balance of payments in recipient countries and destination countries can benefit from innovation, skills transfers and alleviate human capital shortages.

Furthermore, the free movement of people can address the challenge of skills and training constraints. There is no country today that can form or train the entire range and number of evolving skills needed to perform the ever more complex work performed in its territory.

1.2 The Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)

In 2011, SADC Ministers responsible for education and training approved the establishment of the SADCQF to set minimum standards for quality assurance (QA) and to facilitate the recognition of qualifications in the SADC region. The SADCQF is a comprehensive Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) that includes *(for all areas)* (a) general education; (b) technical and vocational education and training (TVET), (c) higher education, and (d) lifelong learning and out-of-school or post-school education and training that encompasses formal as well as non-formal and informal learning. The SADCQF also speaks to all *(non-formal education, including but not limited to various)* modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance, online and blended learning, and others.

The SADCQF is a 10-level qualifications framework underpinned by learning outcomes and quality assurance principles that provide regional benchmarks for qualifications and quality assurance mechanisms in SADC countries. It is a referencing framework against which the countries can compare their national and sectoral qualifications frameworks (NQFs and SQFs).

The vision is that, in the SADC region, all new qualification certification and other documents issued by competent authorities relevant the SADCQF level descriptors, with the purpose of enabling the movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and beyond. Its purpose is to enable easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally. Free movement of persons is viewed as a means to ensure availability of skills and labour where needed to spur investment and economic development by drawing on the full breadth and diversity of professional and technical competencies as well as labour power across the member states. However, as cross-border mobility of people increases, SADC has found it necessary to develop a standard procedure for recognizing foreign qualifications.

1.3 The SADC Qualification Recognition Manual

The proposal to develop a Recognition Manual for SADC was first conceptualized at a September 2016 meeting of the SADC Technical Committee of Certification and Accreditation (TCCA). At this meeting, members explored ways in which they could accelerate the implementation of the SADCQF. As part of the TCCA's strategy to accelerate the SADCQF, the meeting agreed on an implementation model consisting, initially, of three implementation areas: development and alignment of NQFs, quality

assurance and verification across member countries. Two more areas of alignment were added, namely;

- communication and advocacy; and
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) together with articulation and Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS).

It is envisaged that the SADCQF will be a conduit to build trust and enhance mobility across SADC through its quality-assured qualifications and verification mechanisms. This Manual has been developed as part of the SADCQF implementation strategy.

1.4 What is qualifications recognition?

In very general terms, recognition can be understood as a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of foreign qualifications with a view to access further education and/or employment opportunities. The recognition of qualifications is now at the very center of SADC and global policy discussions in the field of education and training. Fair recognition is acknowledged to be the cornerstone of the internationalization of education and training, and of learner and worker mobility.

1.5 Diversity of education and training systems

The SADCQF gives due recognition to the fact that there are differences between the education and training systems and recognition practices across countries. What is understood to be good practice also differs.

Some examples of elements that characterize the diversity of education and training systems include the variance in educational provision, the requirements of different member state NQFs for similar level of qualifications, the ratios of theory versus practical work for qualifications at similar levels, the delivery modes for similar levels of qualifications, and others.

This Manual has been developed as a new and innovative tool that sets clear and consistent standards for recognition practices. Potentially, it will have multiple uses – for policy makers, credential evaluators, the holders of foreign qualifications, education and training institutions and other stakeholders.

Given the technicalities involved in recognition practices, capacity building would be a critical element for the successful implementation of the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Manual (SADCQRM). To this end, the SADC Secretariat and the member states are mandated to ensure that all the relevant stakeholders and practitioners are capacitated for this successful implementation. As a prerequisite, the

capacitation should be done through developing the knowledge, skills and values needed to understand, resource and implement consistent recognition processes of quality.

CHAPTER 2: SADC LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Summary

This chapter (*provides these frameworks on recognition of qualifications namely)* outlines key points from the SADC Protocols in education and training *as per **Annexure I,*** the SADCQF *as per Annexure **III*** and The Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of studies, certificates Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States as per ***Annexure II.***

2.1 Revised Addis Convention

Sections II, section III, Article 2, Article 3 and Article 4 of the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States are key and are reproduced for convenience. Further, Article 5, Article 6, Article 7, Article 8, Article 9 and Article 10 of the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States are key and are highlighted as they emphasise on areas of cooperation as per the Protocol.

SECTION II. AIMS OF THE CONVENTION

Article II.

1. The aims of the present Convention are:

    a) Strengthening and promoting inter-regional and international co-operation in the field of recognition of qualifications;

    b) Defining and putting in place effective quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms at the national, regional and continental levels;

    c) Encouraging and promoting the widest and most effective possible use of human resources available in Africa and of the diaspora in order to speed up the development of their respective countries and to limit African brain-drain;

    d) Facilitating the exchange and greater mobility of students, teachers and researchers of the continent and the diaspora, by recognition of qualifications delivered by other Parties in order to pursue higher education;

    e) Furthering the setting up of high-level joint training and research programmes between higher education institutions and supporting the award of joint degrees;

f) Improving and reinforcing the collection and exchange of information for the purpose of implementing this Convention across the Continent;

g) Contributing to the harmonization of qualifications, taking into account current global trends and;

2. The Parties agree to take all necessary steps at the national and regional levels with a view of achieving the goals defined in the present Article.

As such Member states are to:

(a) make provision for development, implementation and alignment of National Qualifications Frameworks to the regional;

(b) make provision for quality assurance;

(c) make provision for verification;

(d) make provision on communication and advocacy;

(e) make provision on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Articulation and Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems (CATS).

Member states will each be responsible for creating an enabling environment aimed at ensuring that the objectives referred to in this Manual are implemented, affirming the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of studies, certificates Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States of the convention, in particular;

SECTION III. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

Article III.1 - General Provisions

1. The provisions of this Convention apply to qualifications obtained in public or private higher education institutions recognized by the competent authority/authorities of a Party, located within or outside its national boundaries and in compliance with the legislation in force.

2. The recognition by a Party of a delivered qualification is contingent upon the fulfilment of all the qualification's requirements.

3. The provisions of the present Convention apply to all forms of higher education as defined in Article I.

Article III.2 - Obligations Related to the Recognition of Qualifications

1. Each Party shall recognize, for the purpose of access to each of its higher education programmes, the qualifications issued by the other Parties that

meet the general requirements for access to these respective higher education programmes, unless a substantial difference can be shown between the general requirements for access in the Party in which the qualifications were obtained and those in the Party in which recognition of the qualifications is sought.

2. Parties agree to take all necessary measures in order to facilitate access to the higher education institutions of their country for qualifications holders of other Parties who satisfy the requirements for admission to the appropriate higher education programme.

3. Parties agree to define the criteria and procedures for the evaluation of qualifications to ensure expected learning outcomes in order to facilitate and reinforce mobility within and between the Parties.

4. Parties agree to take the necessary measures to ensure that the qualifications issued by an accredited institution of higher education of a Party are recognized for the purpose of employment in conformity with labour laws in the receiving Party.

5. Parties, through competent recognition authorities, agree to establish appropriate procedures to assess whether refugees and internally displaced persons respectively fulfil relevant requirements to access higher education through recognition of prior learning and qualifications for employability and integration.

Article III.3 - Recognition of Partial Studies

Each Party agrees to recognize the level of learning outcomes/ competences, provided that it corresponds to the equivalent studies of a higher education programme whose recognition is requested.

Article III.4 - Validation of Acquired Relevant Experience and Prior Learning

Parties agree, with a view to promoting adult education and life-long learning, to adopt procedures, criteria and standards that allow the validation of acquired relevant experience and prior learning for access to higher education programmes.

Furthermore, the SADC Protocol on Education and Training is key in this regard. In particular, Member states agreement to co-operate in education and training under this Protocol for purposes of achieving the following principles and objectives –

ARTICLE 2 PRINCIPLES

Member states agree to act in common pursuit of the objectives of this Protocol which shall be implemented in accordance with the following principles -

(a) recognition of the equality of all member states;

(b) equitable participation, balance and mutual benefit in regional co-operation;

(c) maximizing the effective utilization of existing regional expertise, institutions and other resources for education and training in the Region, in order to ensure long-term sustainability of the co-operative effort;

(d) reduction and eventual elimination of unnecessary and costly duplication of effort in provision of education and training and in particular, at tertiary and professional training levels;

(e) establishment and promotion of regional Centers of Specialization and Centers of Excellence as a major instrument for providing efficient and effective education and training and research in the Region;

(f) active involvement and participation of all key stakeholders in education and training at the level of Member states and regionally, including in institutions executing regional education and training programmes;

(g) guaranteeing academic freedom in institutions of learning and research as it is the sine qua non for high quality education, training and research and as it ensures freedom of enquiry, experimentation and critical and creative thinking;

(h) Member states shall take all steps possible to act together as a Community, in the gradual implementation of equivalence, harmonization and standardization of their education and training systems under this Protocol. However, two or more Member states may progress at a differential rate than that achieved by any other Member states.

ARTICLE 3 OBJECTIVES

Member states agree to co-operate in education and training under this Protocol for purposes of achieving the following objectives -

(a) to develop and implement a common system of regular collection and reporting of information by Member states about the current status and future demand and supply, and the priority areas for provision of education and training in the Region;

(b) to establish mechanisms and institutional arrangements that enable member states to pool their resources to effectively and efficiently produce the required professional, technical, research and managerial personnel to plan and manage the development process in general and across all sectors in the Region;

(c) to promote and coordinate the formulation and implementation of comparable and appropriate policies, strategies and systems of education and training in Member states;

(d) to develop and implement policies and strategies that promote the participation and contribution of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other key stakeholders in the provision of education and training;

(e) to promote and coordinate the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for the promotion and application of science and technology, including modern information technology and research and development in the Region;

(f) to work towards the reduction and eventual elimination of constraints to better and freer access, by citizens of Member states, to good quality education and training opportunities within the Region;

(g) to work towards the relaxation and eventual elimination of immigration formalities in order to facilitate freer movement of students and staff within the Region for the specific purposes of study, teaching, research and any other pursuits relating to education and training.

i. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and other possible future pandemics has a significant negative impact on the freer movement of people.
ii. Studying, training and working remotely forms part of the existing principles, protocols and management measures for COVID-19 pandemic in Member States to address the negative impact of freer movement. Furthermore, for those that manage to move within the region for studying, training and working purposes, observation of existing principles, protocols and management measures for COVID-19 pandemic in Member States is key regards.
iii. Possible design principles as the use of advanced Information and Communications Technology (ITC) to support remote studying, training and working as well as protocols and management measures of future pandemic for freer movement future pandemics will also be key in regional co-operation in education, employment and training in Member States.

(h) to promote policies for creation of an enabling environment with appropriate incentives based on meritorious performance, for educated and trained persons to effectively apply and utilize their knowledge and skills for the general development of Member states and the Region;

(i) to promote the learning of English and/or French, and/or Portuguese as the working languages of the Region.

(j) to achieve gradually and over a period not exceeding twenty years from the date of entry into force of this Protocol, the implementation of the ultimate objective as stated in paragraph

(k) hereof; to progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonization and standardization of the education and training systems in the Region which is the ultimate objective of this Protocol.

AREAS OF CO-OPERATION

ARTICLE 4 CO-OPERATION IN POLICY FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Member states acknowledge that whilst currently each Member State has its own policies for education and training and whilst co-operation and mutual assistance in education and training is desirable and possible, the co-operation can be facilitated more effectively and can be expanded to cover more areas by the development and formulation of coherent, comparable, harmonised and eventually standardized policies with regard to the following matters, amongst others:

(a) widening provision and access to education and training as well as addressing gender

equality;

(b) increasing equitable access, improving the quality and ensuring the relevance of education and training;

(c) rationalising admission requirements to education and training institutions and accreditation of qualifications;

(d) encouraging joint development and production of teaching and learning materials;

(e) achieving a partnership approach to financing education and training, among governments, beneficiaries and employers;

(f) promoting academic freedom and creating an enabling environment with appropriate

incentives based on merit, for educated and trained persons to effectively apply and utilise their knowledge and skills for the benefit of Member states and the Region;

(g) achieving comparability, equivalence and standardization of education and training systems.

The areas of cooperation as per the Protocols are in the below ARTICLES of the Protocol;

ARTICLE 5 CO-OPERATION IN BASIC EDUCATION: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS

ARTICLE 6 CO-OPERATION IN INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

CERTIFICATE AND DIPLOMA LEVELS

ARTICLE 7 CO-OPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ARTICLE 8 CO-OPERATION IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE 9 CO-OPERATION IN LIFE-LONG EDUCATION AND TRAINING

ARTICLE 10 CO-OPERATION IN PUBLISHING AND LIBRARY RESOURCES

2.2 The SADCQF

Similarly, The SADCQF is key in this regard. The SADCQF is a regional mechanism for comparability and recognition of full qualifications, credit transfer, and creation of regional standards and facilitation of QA. It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures and standardized terminology intended to: ensure effective comparability of qualifications and credits across SADC, facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications among Member states, harmonize qualifications, and create acceptable regional standards.

The main purposes of the SADCQF include:
   a) Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC,
   b) Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all Member states,
   c) Harmonizing qualifications wherever possible,
   d) Promoting the transfer of credits within and among Member states and even beyond, and
   e) Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.

The scope of the SADCQF includes all forms, levels and categories of education and training that exist in the Region including in Member states. This includes provision by public and private sectors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The main principle will be one of inclusiveness to encompass all areas of general education, TVET, higher education, lifelong and out-of-school or non-formal education, including but not limited to various modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance and online learning. Apprenticeships and industry-based training will also be taken on board. Cross-border education and training as outlined under the General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS) will not be excluded.

The Underlying principles are in:
Regional solidarity and co-operation; Interaction with global and local frames of reference; Strengthening of national education and training systems; Quality enhancement and strengthening of education and training in the region; Respect for regional and multilateral decisions; Autonomy and inter-relatedness of the sectors of learning; Pragmatism in development; Prioritization of projects; Position in terms of globalization and internationalization; Transparency, flexibility and validity; Mobility; Relation to national education systems; Equity within and among Member states; Responsiveness and relevance.

The above instruments are useful for the recognition process as they create a binding agreement around the norms and standards for formal procedures recognizing qualifications, they ensure credible and reliable recognition of qualification.

CHAPTER 3: INFORMATION ON QUALIFICATIONS

Summary

This chapter provides information on qualifications in accordance with Article IV.2 (2) of the Revised Addis Convention particularly which reads, "Parties undertake to make appropriate arrangements for the assessment of an application for recognition of qualifications solely on the basis of knowledge, skills and competences achieved".

The chapter also includes key elements required to define a qualification: level, workload, quality, learning outcomes and issues related to internationalization of education and training, and of student mobility and globalization. In order to adequately assess qualifications for the purposes of recognition, a thorough description of these elements is necessary.

SECTION IV. IMPLEMENTATION, Article IV.1, Article IV.2, Article IV.3, Article IV.4 and Article IV.5 of the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States are key for information on qualifications. As thus, in undertaking this, the provisions *(of the Revised Addis Convention on the Recognition of studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, particular)* of SECTION IV. IMPLEMENTATION compels Member states to;

a) As per Article IV.1 - Process for the Recognition of Qualifications of the Revised Addis Convention, the process for the recognition of qualifications should take into account quality assurance mechanisms and the accreditation of programmes and institutions issuing qualifications.

b) Furthermore, as per Article IV.2 of the Revised Addis Convention-:

   1. Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that holders of qualifications issued by a higher education institution or other Parties shall have adequate access, upon request to the appropriate body, to an assessment of these qualifications in a timely manner.

2. Parties undertake to make appropriate arrangements for the assessment of an application for recognition of qualifications solely on the basis of knowledge, skills and competences achieved.

3. Parties commit to adopt measures to eradicate all forms of fraudulent practices regarding higher education qualifications.

c) In accordance with of Article IV.3 of the Revised Addis Convention, Each Party shall ensure that the procedures and criteria used in the assessment and recognition of qualifications are transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory, in particular, by making public such procedures and criteria.

d) In line with Article IV.4 of the Revised Addis Convention, Parties shall ensure that decisions on recognition of qualifications are made in the following manner:

i. Decisions on recognition are made on the basis of appropriate information on the qualifications for which recognition is sought:

ii. In the first instance, the responsibility for providing adequate information rests with the holder of the qualifications who shall provide such information in good faith.

iii. Parties shall instruct or encourage, as appropriate, all education institutions belonging to their education systems to comply with any reasonable request for information for the purpose of assessing qualifications earned at the said institutions.

iv. Parties shall encourage institutions belonging to their education systems to provide, upon request and within a reasonable timeframe, relevant information to the holder of the qualifications or to the institution or the competent recognition authority of the Party in which recognition is sought.

v. The responsibility to demonstrate that an application does not fulfil the relevant requirements lies with the body undertaking the assessment.

e) As required by Article IV.5 of the Revised Addis Convention, Each Party shall ensure, that in order to facilitate the recognition of qualifications, adequate and clear information on its education system is provided.

1. In accordance with Article III.2 - Obligations Related to the Recognition of Qualifications of the Revised Addis Convention, particular Article III.2 (3), Parties agree to define the criteria and procedures for the evaluation of qualifications to ensure expected learning outcomes in order to facilitate and reinforce mobility within and between the Parties.

3.1 Elements of a Qualification

3.1.1 Level of a qualification

The qualifications level is normally described by a set of level descriptors for countries that have a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). A level descriptor is a statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the type of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate for a qualification at that level.

Example

A Bachelor's degree Qualifications, is level 7 in most NQFs in the SADC region and the level descriptors spell out the knowledge, skills and competences the Qualifications holder should possess.

Knowledge: *Demonstrates knowledge of a major discipline with possible areas of specialization, including command of understating of ideas, principles concept, chief research methods and problem solving techniques of the recognized discipline;*

Skills: *Demonstrate intellectual independence, critical thinking and analytical rigor, and advanced communication and collaborative skills in complex and variable context;*

Competence: *Designs and manages processes and work with broad accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and group outcomes*

The expectation of SADC is that all Member states should have NQFs in place and that the NQF must be aligned to the SADCQF.

3.1.2 Work load

The time to acquire a qualification is measured by the number of academic years and a certain number of credits is assigned to that academic year. The workload of the learner is then calculated using credits. SADC is currently advocating for the use of notional hours to calculate the workload of a learner per qualifications. Notional hours represent an estimate of the time spent by an average full time equivalent learner to master a unit of learning. The hours referred to all the learning activities, inclusive of contact time, private

study, research, assignment writing and examinations. One credit is awarded for ten notional hours of successful learning activity.

3.1.3 Quality

For recognition of foreign qualifications, the quality of the learning programme need to be considered. This can be looked at in three ways:

- Firstly, the awarding body and learning programme must have been exposed to external quality assurance procedures by a recognised Quality Assurance (QA) Body in the qualification's country of origin. QA is considered essential in building trust in qualifications, institutions and systems. Information on accreditation statuses of institutions can be solicited from various sources. The QA bodies in the countries of origin of the qualifications can provide such information and the SADC Qualifications Verification Network 2017 Booklet has contact details of persons in charge in all the SADC member states.
- Secondly, consider how the internal assessment of the learning outcomes was conducted.
- Thirdly, though with limitations, the ranking of the awarding institution nationally and globally could be considered when assessing a foreign qualification. The ranking will shed some light on the quality of the institution and programmes on offer, which is vital information where recognition of a foreign qualification is sought. If the institution and programme are recognised or accredited, it implies that certain educational standards have been met.

3.1.4 Learning Outcomes

This is a statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning and may be written for a single module/ courses or learning programme component or complete learning programme or qualifications level. There are various means of expressing Learning outcomes and linking outcomes to levels within national or overarching qualifications frameworks. Credits obtained by learners can serve as proof that leaners have achieved the stipulated learning outcomes for that module/ course / learning programme.

Learning outcomes are divided into two:

- Generic learning outcomes which are transferable from one subject discipline to another and are usually linked to the national or overarching qualifications frameworks. For example, these are linked to the level descriptors in all the different NQFs in the region and also the SADCQF Levels.
- Specific learning outcomes which are specific to the subject discipline

  Where can information on learning outcomes be found?
    - ✓ National Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors
    - ✓ Description of learning programme
    - ✓ Qualification profile

3.2 Qualifications awarded through unconventional (exceptional) arrangements

3.2.1 Transnational Education

Transnational education refers to the delivery of learning programmes (particularly, in which the learners are located in one country other than the one where the awarding institution is based. Programmes offered through Online are also included regards and therefore will follow similar recommendations. Often times it is a challenge to determine the home country of the awarding institution or the authority responsible for recognising it / accrediting the institution or its learning programmes.

Transnational education programmes are established through transnational arrangements and there are two types:

- **Collaborative arrangements** where learning programmes of the awarding institution are delivered by another partner institution in another country.

> *Example*
> *Where learning programmes of an institution in Zimbabwe are delivered by an institution in Eswatini but the qualification is awarded by the institution in Zimbabwe.*

- **Non- collaborative arrangements** where learning programmes are directly delivered by an institution on a cross border arrangement.

> *Example*
> *An institution in South Africa has a branch in Eswatini where it delivers its learning programmes. The institution in South Africa remains the awarding institution.*

Recommendations regarding transitional qualifications

There are specific types of qualifications which may require more investigation than others in order to establish if they can be recognised. When evaluating qualifications obtained through transnational education, it is recommended that the following should be done:

a) Verify the status of the institution responsible for awarding the transnational education programme:
   - Verify that the education and training provider is recognised/ accredited in the country where it is located.
   - If applicable, verify is the provider is permitted (by home and host authorities) to operate in the host country.

Check whether the quality of the learning programmes is assured by the transnational arrangements of the institutions involved. It should also be checked whether the transnational education programme is accredited in the home country of the provider or recognised/ accredited in the host country. One of the two is usually sufficient.

> *Example*
> *A transnational education programme provided by a South African institution through a branch in Eswatini may not be recognized / accredited in Eswatini but recognised/ accredited in South Africa.* In this case, the evaluation officer should continue evaluating the qualification because the quality of the learning programme would have been ensured.

3.2.2 Joint learning programmes

A joint learning programme is a programme offered jointly by several institutions (mainly in higher education) forming a consortium. After completion of a joint programme, the graduate may be awarded: a single national qualification, several separate qualifications referred to as a double or multiple qualifications, and or a single document awarding a joint qualification. Qualifications from a joint learning programme differ from foreign national qualifications because they are considered as either belonging to more than one national system or not fully belonging to any single national system. As a result, some additional evaluation elements have to be considered in the assessment of such qualifications.

One major challenge is that the provision and awarding of (international) joint qualifications may be hindered by the legislations of the consortium partners. Relevant legislation may either be missing or may prevent their proper provision. Another possibility is that national legislation of different countries may conflict with some aspects of the joint programme. In order to solve this problem, quality assurance bodies in Europe are advocating that the accreditation of a joint programme by one reliable organisation be sufficient evidence for their quality.

Recommendations regarding learning programmes

When evaluating joint programme qualifications, it is recommended to:
  a) Check if the joint programme is accredited in each of the consortium partners.
  b) If the above is not met, check if the joint programme is accredited by a reliable national organisation in one of the countries where a member of consortium partners is based.

c) In the absence of a full accreditation status of the joint programme, check the accreditation/ recognition status of the consortium partners/ institutions offering the joint programme in order to verify the quality of the programme.
d) Accept that the consortia offering the joint programme may have institutions that are not recognised in their country of origin as long as the recognised institutions take full responsibility of the quality of the joint programme.

3.2.4 Qualifications from unrecognised institutions

Below are recommendations on how to deal with qualifications awarded by unaccredited/unrecognised institutions in the home country, which may be offering legitimate programmes worth evaluating:

- The status of the awarding body is always important.
- If an institution is recognised in its national education system, the qualification, upon satisfactory substantiation by the national qualifications authority as informed by the education system in place, can be evaluated.
- If the institution is not recognised in its national education system, it has to be found out if any other recognized /accredited organization / institution gives it legitimacy.

It is important to note that national procedures for quality assurance and recognition vary from country to country, which may result to certain institutions and programmes being unrecognised. Even if there are major differences making recognition impossible, it may still be possible to provide useful comments and advice to applicants holding such qualifications.

Recommendations regarding the recognition status of institutions
a) An effort should be made to find out if an institution is a legitimate provider.
b) To establish if an unrecognised institution can be considered legitimate, the following should be done:
   - Conduct a thorough professional verification investigation into the legitimacy of the institution and the qualification; which national authorities are responsible for it, and determine what the function of the qualification is/was in the home country.
c) If no recognition can be granted to the applicant, give reasons why.

3.2.5 Qualifications without documentation

There are certain groups of people that may possess qualifications but without documentation to prove ownership of the qualifications. Examples of such groups may be refugees or asylum seekers. These people, in most cases, have formal education from

recognised and or accredited institutions and have a right to have their qualifications evaluated when they have a need for that.

It is worth noting that the evaluation of a refugees' qualification may be complicated due to a number of factors: documentation may be unavailable or incomplete and it may be difficult to verify the national education system due to political issues in the home country. To be efficient and maintain fairness, the evaluator is advised to describe the evaluation procedure employed and include it in the institutional recognition procedure.

Recommendations regarding qualifications without documentation

In accordance with Article III.2 - Obligations Related to the Recognition of Qualifications, particular Article III.2 (5) of the Revised Addis Convention, Parties through competent recognition authorities, agree to establish appropriate procedures to assess whether refugees and internally displaced persons respectively fulfil relevant requirements to access higher education through recognition of prior learning and qualifications for employability and integration. Applicants in this category may include such groups as refugees, or asylum seekers or internally displaced persons.

In doing so, when dealing with an application without documentation as above, it has to be determined whether the applicant meets the main requirements based on their previous qualifications (if applicable):

a) Incomplete information provided should be accepted and reconstruct the academic achievement based on alternative information provided by the applicant in 'background paper'. The background paper is a file that may include the following:

   i) Detailed information on the content, level and extent of education provided by the applicant, such as:
   - Personal data of the applicant such as names, surname, date of birth, place of birth, etc.
   - Name of qualification obtained
   - Name of institution(s) where the qualification was obtained
   - Levels of qualifications obtained
   - Duration of the learning programme
   - Date of award or completion of the qualification
   - Descriptions of the content of the learning programme(s) including courses and workload if transcript is not available
   - Attestation from applicant that information was provided truthfully

   Further information on professional experience could also be included if it relates to the applicants' education.

   ii) Documents and supporting evidence provided by the applicant, which may help confirm the information in (a):

- Learner's identification number if available;
- Educational documents (academic transcripts, results, certificates);
- Declaration of the institution where the qualifications was awarded;
- Testimonials of work experience if available; and
- Any other evidence such as instructors name, description of courses, etc.

The applicant should be encouraged to provide as many supporting documents as possible.

iii) General knowledge of the education and training system the qualifications is from.

b) An attempt should be made to evaluate the qualifications on the basis of the background paper, accepting that not all documentation and information is available. If possible, information from previous applications from the same institution or learning programmes (e.g. transcript) to gather information about the elements of the qualifications may be used. It may not be possible to gather information on all elements of the qualifications, should this happen, professional judgement should be applied. Keep a database of recognition decisions for use in future cases.

c) Whenever possible and or necessary, the verification may also include an assessment procedure. This may depend on the information that was (not) possible to obtain from the background paper.

i) An evaluation method that is fit for purpose and feasible should be chosen. Examples of methods may include the following:
- Existing instruments such as entrance examinations.
- Sworn statements before a legal competent authority.

ii) When undertaking an assessment, it is important to focus on the overall learning outcomes needed to enter the field of study.

iii) Make sure that the evaluation methodology is consistent and the quality is assured.

d) Formulate a recognition decision based on point (ii) and (iii).

3.2.6 Recognition of partial studies

1. In accordance with Article III.3 - Recognition of Partial Studies of the Revised Addis Convention, each Party agrees to recognize the level of learning outcomes/ competences, provided that it corresponds to the equivalent studies of a higher education programme whose recognition is requested. In doing so,

2. Education whose duration or content is incomplete according to the regulations and rules of the institution, and which, not having resulted in the conferral of a qualifications, has been subjected to an evaluation and a validation, in accordance with the regulations and rules of the institution concerned are Partial Studies.

3. Member states Competent Recognition Authority shall assess the extent to which the competences/learning outcomes of these Partial Studies corresponds to the equivalent studies of a higher education programme whose recognition is requested.

3.2.7 Validation of acquired relevant experience and prior learning

1. In line with Article III.4 - Validation of Acquired Relevant Experience and Prior Learning, of the Revised Addis Convention, Parties agree, with a view to promoting adult education and life-long learning, to adopt procedures, criteria and standards that allow the validation of acquired relevant experience and prior learning for access to higher education programmes. In doing so,

2. Member states Competent Recognition Authority shall recognise learning and/or experience that have already been acquired in different ways either formal or non-formal for access to higher education programmes.

3. Member states Competent Recognition Authority shall assess for comparability to determine the extent to which such Learning and/or experience meet basis of knowledge, skills and competences achieved for credits award and/or credit accumulation and transfer in line with Competent Recognition Authority requirements, for recognition and access to their respective higher education programmes.

CHAPTER 4: INFORMATION ON VERIFICATIONS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Summary
This chapter provides information on the verification of qualifications. In line with Article III.1 (1) - General Provisions, of the Revised Addis Convention, the provisions of the Convention apply to qualifications obtained in public or private higher education institutions recognized by the competent authority/authorities of a Party, located within or outside its national boundaries and in compliance with the legislation in force.

According to Du Plessis et al (2015) verification of qualifications refers to the confirmation that a credential is authentic and represents a qualifications awarded to an individual by a recognised institution at a specific time. Verification seeks to establish several factors and below is a summary of each factor. The term qualifications refers to formal certification that a learner has successfully achieved learning outcomes and/or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.

4.1 Rationale for verification
For a long time, many businesses and educational organizations overlooked verification of qualifications which is indeed a vital basic procedure before hiring an employee or admitting an applicant to an education and training institution. However, the battle between good and evil, fake and genuine is continuing to triumph. Thus verification is important due to the following reasons:

a) There is always a degree of uncertainty when hiring a new employee or when admitting learners particularly in institutions of higher learning.
b) The cost of hiring a wrong employee or admitting a learner with fake qualifications is always regarded as a costly mistake. Similarly, the cost of rehiring due to a candidates providing fraudulent educational documents or background information is significantly higher than running the background and qualifications verification prior to hiring/admission.
c) Qualification verifications are a very valuable tool in pre-employment background checks, since it confirms whether or not a candidate has earned the qualifications they claimed to have. Therefore the fundamental purpose of qualifications verification is to validate the qualifications of applicants.
d) Furthermore, through verifying qualifications, the accreditation of applicant's domestic education and training institutions is also confirmed. This is because there are many institutions that claim to be accredited by independent agencies whose standards and curriculum are not equal to those legally established institutions (those are commonly referred to as 'diploma mills').
e) Through verification of qualifications, applicants with unscrupulous educational awards would be eliminated.

4.2 Understanding Verification

a) Verification of awarding bodies

Verification of awarding bodies refers to confirmation whether the issuing authority has a credible and verifiable status conferred by a recognised quality assurance body in the country of origin at the time of award. It is about authenticating the status of the institution and the qualifications offered by the institution. Such information provides an indication that the awarded qualifications represents an appropriate minimum level of quality in that particular country.

b) Verification of accrediting bodies

This seeks to identify whether the body is recognised by law in a specific country to accredit learning programmes, education and training institutions or to give approval. It also includes identifying which body is officially mandated to authorize the creation of institutions or a new branch of specialization particularly in higher education.

c) Verification of qualifications

Verifying a qualification includes the confirmation that the qualification has been approved by a recognised QA body/ bodies in the country of origin and whether the qualifications was issued by a body/bodies or institution/s legally mandated to do so.

d) Verification of the qualification holder

The verification of the qualification holder intends to seek for information whether the qualifications holder has in fact been rightfully awarded the qualifications.

e) Verification of documentation

Verification of documentation seeks to determine whether submitted documents by individuals were issued legally.

4.3 What to consider before conducting verification:

It is noted that verification of qualifications is a challenging and cumbersome activity. If it is for hiring purposes, there is a high possibility of losing a favourable candidate due to turn-around time policy of the verifying agencies. Thus the following should be borne in mind when verifying.

a) Verifications done by competent third parties on behalf of ministries, education and training institution, qualification authorities, etc. might be faster provided that all requirements are met, but it might be expensive.

b) Verification from other parts of the globe might take longer than from the region. Some institutions would not accept verification request without consent from the holder of the qualifications.

c) In some instances, the verification process for the female applicants, may take longer than usual as the names and surname used during the studies may have changed due to the change in the marital status.

4.4 Information/documentations to be verified

The following information, among others are to be verified:
a) Name of candidate as per the awarding institution record.
b) Name of the awarding institution.
c) Accreditation status of the awarding institution.
d) Mode of study e.g. fulltime, part time, distance, online etc.
e) Date of commencement, date of completion and date of award.
f) Exact name of the qualification acquired and the specialization (where applicable).
g) Certified copies of qualification certificates and official academic transcripts.
h) Proof of research, terminal project, thesis/dissertation (particularly for postgraduate qualifications) where applicable.
i) Student number/examination number, centre number/registration number/enrolment number/certificate number where applicable

4.5 Verification of foreign and national qualifications

4.5.1 Foreign qualifications

Verification of foreign qualifications is the process of authenticating the status of institutions and qualifications offered; investigating the authenticity of qualifications documents and confirming that awards were made to individuals.

4.5.2 Verification of national qualifications

Now and then, reports of candidates in various positions in public and private sectors with fraudulent and misrepresented qualifications are increasing. Therefore, there is need to verify national qualifications. Verification of national qualifications involves the authentication of qualifications awarded inside the country. When a learner wants to use the qualifications to apply for work or further study, the qualifications must be verified.

4.6 Institutional recognition practices

For fair and consistent recognition of qualifications, it is recommended that recognition bodies should establish and maintain a database for information used in previous verification processes to prevent inconsistent evaluation results that could expose the institution to unnecessary appeals and or litigation. Furthermore, the database can be used for consistency purposes that include all previous recognition outcomes of the institution. The ability to consult previous recognition decisions minimizes unpredictability and support consistency in recognition decisions made by the institution. It also saves a

lot of time if previous decisions can be easily applied to new application cases. The database can also be used as a check and balance instrument for verification purposes which include examples of incoming qualifications that have been checked and found to be genuine, examples of fraudulent documents, a glossary of common terms in foreign languages, examples of qualifications from Diploma Mills and Accreditation Mills. Such a database can be used to compare incoming qualifications and help to establish whether these are genuine or possibly fraudulent.

<u>**Example: Qualification Information Database**</u>

Date precedent approved/added to the database	Name of Qualification evaluated	Principal Subject area	Awarding Body	Quality Assuring Body	Field of Learning	Comparability to type of NQF Qualifications	Reason/s	Country of origin
15 Nov 2010	Certificate in Management Studies	Management Studies in HR	MANCOSA	CHE (SAQA ID NO. 57206)	Business Commerce and Management Studies	Certificate at NQF Level 6	Credits are 360. Registered at NQF Level 6 in the country of origin	RSA
15 Dec 2010	Edexcel Level 3 BTEC National Diploma in Health and Social Care	Health	Edexcel Ltd	OFQUAL (Qual. No. x55/x550/0)	Health and Social Services	Certificate at NQF Level 4	Total learning hours is 1430 translate to 143 Credits	UK

NB: Information on the Qualifications Information Database is not a one-size-fits-all. This means that if a Bachelor's Degree from Z University in country X is rated as Bachelor's Degree Honours, it does not mean that all the Bachelor's Degree from that country can be rated Bachelor's Degree Honours. It depends how the qualification meets the host country's requirements for a Bachelor's Degree Honours.

4.7 Infrastructure for verification

Since verification processes can be a costly exercise, it is recommended that it should have strong financial backing and well established human capital. It also needs policies, regulations, high-tech databases, and updated Information Technology (IT) facilities. Furthermore, it is recommended that institutions should move from paperwork to digital documents, which increase accessibility, protection and easy retrieval of information.

4.8 Diploma and Accreditation mills
   a) Diploma Mills

A diploma mill, also known as a degree mill, is a bogus education and training institution that sells qualifications certificates and transcripts rather than the educational experience. Therefore, 'Diploma mills' refer to different (often online based) entities or organizations who claim to offer qualifications in exchange for a sum of money, while offering no real preparation and assessment of knowledge, skills or abilities.

Identifying a 'diploma mill'

Diploma or degree mills usually present the following characteristics:
- The qualification can be easily purchased or customized.
- Attainment of a qualification is very short; in some cases, it may be possible to obtain a bachelor's degree in 5 days.
- There is a claim of an external accreditation, but no evidence of this status, or the external accreditor is an accreditation mill in a certain country, island or state that has little or no regulation concerning the authorization and functioning of education and training providers.
- The entity fails to provide a list of its faculty members or staff and their corresponding qualifications.
- There is little if any attendance required of learners, either online or in class.
- The physical address of the organization or its campus is not provided or the address relies simply on a post office box.
- A sample of the qualification is presented on the organization's website, if the website exists.
- Qualifications offered have unlikely titles.
- The organization has a similar name to other well-known education and training institutions.
- The website features strong emphasis on fees and payment options with different payment methods on its main page
- The institution may offer 'non-formal education' or 'distance learning' and recognize credits based on life experience.

   b) Accreditation Mills

'Accreditation mills' are fake quality assurance bodies that claim to carry out external quality assurance activities for bogus education and training institutions in order to help them look legitimate.

Identifying an 'accreditation mill'

'Accreditation mills' usually present some or most of the following characteristics:

- The organization has published a list of institutions or learning programmes they claim to have accredited/evaluated/audited on its website, without those institutions knowing that they are listed or have been externally reviewed.
- The organization claims that it is recognized by a national authority when it is not.
- In many cases accreditation mills are closely associated with diploma mills and bear similar characteristics
- Few if any standards for quality assurance are published by the organization.
- The period of time required to have an external review by the organization is very short.
- The external QA procedure does not require a review by an external review panel.
- The organization grants "permanent" QA labels without any requirement for subsequent periodic external QA.
- The organization's name is similar to other recognized and well established quality assurance agencies.

c) Negative effects of Diploma and Degree Mills

A loss of public trust in qualifications certificates is the immediate visible damage caused by Diploma mills. Fake qualifications not only reduce the value of genuine qualifications but can be harmful to society. *

4.9 How to find and use information

For each and every verification, it is vital that information about the verification processes given to clients and public is clear. It is therefore recommended that information should be openly available, accessible, comprehensive and understandable to promote transparency.

Information tools

Some useful links to more information about Diploma mills

- World Education service

Link:*www.wes.org/ewenr/Diplomamills.htm;*
- Centre for information on Diploma Mills
  Link: *www.diplomamills.nl/index engels.htm;*

- Useful questions about diploma mills and accreditation mills
  Link:*www.chea.org/pdf/fact sheet 6 diploma mills.pdf;*
- CIMEA against the mills. How to spot and counter Diploma Mills
  Link:*http//www2.ed.gov/students/prep/college/diplomamills/diploma-mills.html#fake*

However, accessibility to certain information is limited based on user's portfolio or a country's existing legal framework e.g. Access to Information Act/Law.

4.10 Important information for the public
The following information is very important to the public
- All copies must be certified by the National Police in host country or at the embassy of host country in the country of applicant
- No original documents must be handed in unless specifically requested by the evaluating agency
- Original documents requested should not be laminated
- Facsimiles, photocopy of certified copies and email scanned documents are not acceptable
- Certified documents are kept by the evaluation institution for record and references purposes and will not be returned to the clients after submitted for evaluation.
- Waiting period of not more than 30 working days depending on availability of information.
- If the application form is submitted and is not complete, the shortcoming should be communicated to the applicant.
- An official statement letter from the education authority in country of origin as to whether the particular qualifications is recognized for employment in the field in that country, for what level of professional practice.

4.11 Qualification documents required for verification process
It is recommended that all relevant documents should be made available by the client during the launch of the application as indicated in the list below:
i) Completed and signed application for verification
ii) Highest School Leaving Certificate
iii) Certified copies of qualification certificates to be evaluated and the preceding qualification.

iv) Complete, official academic record, transcript (or equivalent) of qualification to be evaluated and for the preceding qualification.
v) Translation of all non-host country language documents prepared by a sworn translator in the host country / by the awarding body in the country of origin.
vi) Valid Identity Document; passport showing the photograph of an applicant for foreigners or national identity document or birth certificate for minors for nationals.
vii) Proof of name change (i.e. Marriage Certificate)
viii) Proof of Research project e.g. dissertation/thesis for the Postgraduate studies.
ix) An official statement letter from the education authority in country of origin as to whether the particular qualification is recognized for employment in the field in that country, for what level of professional practice.
x) A consent form authorizing the recognition authority to verify and share this information with third parties for verification purposes. This is important especially when we consider the protection of personal information.

CHAPTER 5: COMPARING QUALIFICATIONS

Summary

This chapter discusses qualifications frameworks as tools that provide an opportunity for mutual recognition of qualifications, learning outcomes and credits. The chapter further covers substantial and non-substantial differences, recognition decisions together with the right to appeal including transparency and information provision.

5.1 Qualifications frameworks

NQFs, Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) as well as other international overarching qualifications frameworks have an increasing influence on national, regional and international reforms of education, training and qualifications systems, in particular in terms of addressing the challenges of portability of qualifications and mobility of learners and workers.

NQFs are "systems for classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured qualifications" (Addis Convention, 2014). In their most basic sense, they can be understood as classifiers specifying the relationship – horizontally, vertically and perhaps diagonally - between different qualifications within a national system. A comprehensive qualifications framework is one that covers all levels all areas of general education, TVET, higher education, lifelong and out-of-school or non-formal education, including but not limited to various modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance and online learning. NQFs provide a way to compare qualifications and to describe the relation between the different levels of a national education and training system, workload and learning outcomes of specific qualifications. It is a useful tool for employers and education and training institutions to better understand the level of a national and foreign qualification, in particular with regard to further study opportunities and occupational/professional outcomes.

Regional overarching frameworks such as the SADCQF, provide a common regional reference framework. The main principle of regional qualifications frameworks is inclusiveness, which encompasses all areas of general education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), higher education, lifelong and out-of-school or non-formal education, including but not limited to various modes of learning such as face-to-face, distance and online learning. The primary goal of regional qualifications frameworks is to facilitate mutual understanding of qualifications within regions. NQFs, therefore, play a critical role in qualifications comparability.

Recommendations regarding the use of national education and training

systems

- Qualifications credential evaluators should always view a foreign qualification within its national system. If an NQF exists, credential evaluators should take the qualification level within the NQF, into consideration. If a country does not have an NQF, this fact should not prejudice the evaluation of a qualification from such a country as the education and training quality assurance system in that country may be used as a framework.

- For SADC Member States, qualifications credential evaluators should check to see if the NQF of the country where the qualification was obtained has been referenced to the SADCQF. This will ensure availability of specific comparisons of NQF's on the SADCQF portal.

- The SADCQF qualifications portal, has been established as an integrated system that is able to channel information on qualifications, learners and education and training providers from various sources from the member states into a seamless interface that will allow different levels of access to employment and education and training. Member states are therefore urged to populate the portal for effective use.

- Where qualifications were issued under previous arrangements (legacy), the evaluator should refer to the status of the qualification in the country of origin.

- If an NQF exists in the country where the qualification was awarded, it should be established whether qualifications that existed before its (NQF) existence are included in it.

- Where adequate information on the learning outcomes of a specific qualification is available, this would help with the placement of a qualification within a framework and compare qualifications on the basis of learning outcomes.

- Credential evaluators should use NQFs only as important transparency tools for understanding the quality of foreign qualifications. These quality attributes include level, learning outcomes, workload and credit systems. NQFs should not be regarded as instruments leading to automatic recognition of foreign qualifications but as a foundation to compare qualifications on the basis of learning outcomes.

5.2 Learning Outcomes

A learning outcome, as described in the Addis Convention (2014) is a result of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes play an important role in the development of national and overarching qualifications frameworks. Similarly, the role of NQFs in promoting and

systematically implementing a shift to learning outcomes allows for more learner-centred approaches influencing teaching, training and assessment methods. This allows the existing education and training system and the framework based on learning outcomes to be gradually and progressively aligned with each other. National qualifications frameworks make use of:

- level descriptors which are learning outcomes used as generic descriptions of various levels;
- qualification descriptors which are learning outcomes used as generic descriptions of various types of qualifications; or
- National subject benchmark statements which are learning outcomes describing the subject-specific characteristics and standards of learning programmes.

Recommendations regarding the use of learning outcomes

- Evaluation of a foreign qualification should focus on establishing what the applicant knows, understands and is able to demonstrate. For this purpose, recognition should be focused on the learning outcomes of the qualification. This approach should be used to check whether substantial differences exist between the foreign qualification and the national qualification it is compared with.
  Information on learning outcomes at learning programme level might be found in the:
  - o Academic transcript, or a supplementary document such as Diploma supplement.
  - o description of the learning programme (usually available on the content of the learning programme, websites or catalogues of education and training providers);
  - o Qualification Profile (if available).
- General information on learning outcomes at national level might be found in the following features of national qualifications frameworks:
  - o NQF Level descriptors
  - o National qualification descriptors;
  - o National subject benchmark statements,
- In practice, usually no direct information on learning outcomes is found in the accompanying documentation of the qualification, such as the list of subjects or transcript. In the absence of information on learning outcomes, there should be an attempt to infer the output of a qualification from other pieces of more readily available information, such as the place of the qualification in the national education system or qualifications framework, the purpose of the learning programme, the contents of the learning programme, compulsory

elements (such as a thesis or dissertation), the rights attached to the qualification and workload of the programme.

- The learning outcomes assigned to a particular learning programme should always be looked at within the context of the general learning outcomes assigned to the qualifications at that level (as expressed in national qualification descriptors and level descriptors). Also, there should not be quick and easy conclusion that non-matching lists of learning outcomes of two learning programmes or qualifications are a sign of substantial differences between the programmes or qualifications.

5.3 Credits

Credits are used to quantify the volume of learning in terms of learning outcomes, relating to the workload of learning involved to achieve a particular learning outcome. Learning achievements are awarded to the learner upon successful completion of a given unit of a learning programme and/or a complete learning programme. Credits do not normally take the level of performance into consideration unless otherwise specified. Varied credit systems exist across various sectors and levels of education and training universal. A credit system may be limited to a single institution, to a specific national context or may be applied across different national education and training systems.

Recommendation regarding credits
- Credits should be accepted as an indication of the amount of study successfully completed and of the workload of modules within the learning programme.
- If a foreign qualification uses a different credit system, conversion of the credits from the system where the qualification originates, to the system where comparison is required should be done. This means working out the basic principles of the foreign credit system.
- A system of converting credits to academic years should be determined. This will allow the evaluator to determine the minimum amount of credits required for completion of the learning programme and for completion of an academic year. With this information it can be determined how the foreign credits may be converted to or interpreted in the host country's own credit system.

5.4 Substantial and non-substantial differences

The Addis Convection (2014) declares that qualification recognition should be granted, unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that is being compared with. Substantial differences are differences between the foreign qualification and the national qualification that are so significant, that they would most likely prevent the holder of the foreign qualification from succeeding in the sought after activity such as further study or employment. The responsibility of proof of a substantial difference lies with the recognition authority and the following should be taken into consideration:

- not every difference should be considered to be "substantial";

- the difference should be substantial in relation to the function (purpose) of the qualification

The interpretation of substantial differences is very much linked to the overall outcome of a qualification, since this determines whether the holder of the qualification has been prepared sufficiently for the sought after activity. A difference that is only related to input criteria (such as workload in terms of credits and duration of study and structure of the programme) is not likely to have a direct effect on the abilities of the applicant, and should therefore not be considered automatically as a substantial difference.

Recommendations regarding substantial differences
- The recognition authority should recognise a qualification, unless it can prove that there is a substantial difference that could be a major obstacle for successfully pursuing the sought after activity. The essential question to answer is: does the qualification that the holder has obtained enable him/her to follow a certain learning programme or take up a certain employment?
- The recognition authority should compare the foreign qualification to the relevant national qualification (or set of qualifications) that is required for the sought after activity. The recognition authority should determine whether the main requirements for the desired activity are sufficiently covered by the outcomes of the foreign qualification. This implies that not all of the outcomes of the relevant national qualification need to be matched by those of the foreign qualification, but only those that are essential to successfully pursue the sought after activity.
- If the recognition authority has found that there are no substantial differences, full recognition should be granted.

- If the recognition authority has identified substantial differences that form a major obstacle for successfully pursuing the activity, recognition should not be granted. The recognition authority has an obligation to inform the applicant of the nature of these substantial differences. This provides the applicant with a chance to lodge an appeal against the evaluation of their qualification.
- The following criteria may be followed in judging whether differences between qualifications are substantial or not,

In considering whether substantial differences exist, level, workload, quality, profile and

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Criterion 1: Determine key elements of the qualification and relate them to the entrance requirements of the learning programme.

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learning outcomes of the qualification should be taken into account, 'Even if a substantial difference is found in one of the key elements, it should still be determined whether this also leads to a substantial difference in the overall outcome of the qualification, or whether it is compensated by another key element of the qualification. The focus should be on learning outcomes when evaluating the qualification.

The following questions may be helpful when evaluating the qualification:

(i) What is the level of the qualification and does it give access to further study in the country of origin?

The level of the qualification refers to its position within the national education system and/or qualifications framework. Usually, qualifications at different levels (such as Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelors' Degrees, Masters' Degrees and Doctoral Degrees) have substantially different outcomes.

(ii) What is the workload of the leaning programme?

The workload of a qualification is usually expressed in credits (or duration of study) and may be used to provide an indication of the learning outcomes achieved. As already mentioned, credit systems differ between countries and within one country. Thus, judgements on differences in this respect should be based on thorough scrutiny of the context of the credit system used. A substantial difference may arise if a different workload leads to a difference in the overall outcome of the qualification. If this is not the case, the qualification should be recognised.

(iii) What is the quality of the institution/learning programme through which the qualification was awarded?

If a learning programme is quality assured or accredited by a competent body it should be trusted that it fulfils the minimum quality standards. If the national

authorities make a clear distinction between institutions and/or qualifications of different quality within their own education system, It may be necessary to take this information into account in the evaluation. However, the recognition of a qualification should not depend on whether it was awarded by an institution that is highly ranked in one of the many international ranking lists that are being published nowadays.

(iv) What are the learning outcomes of the learning programme?
The learning outcomes describe what a graduate knows, understands and is able to do at the end of a learning process. In principle, this should provide the most direct information on which to base the presence or absence of substantial differences, but the information on learning outcomes of qualifications is still scarce and sometimes difficult to interpret.

The foreign qualification should be compared with the relevant national qualification (or set of qualifications) that is required for entry to the programme. This national qualification

> Criterion 2: Determine whether the main requirements for admission to the programme are sufficiently covered by the outcomes of the foreign qualification.

spans a wide range of outcomes, from purely theoretical knowledge to practical skills. Practically, a foreign qualification covers a different range of outcomes and not all of the outcomes have to match those of a national qualification, but only those that are essential to successfully pursue the learning programme.

(i) *If non-substantial differences have been identified, the qualification should be accepted.*
(ii) *If no substantial differences that could be a major obstacle were found, the qualification should be recognized.*
(iii) *If substantial differences have been identified that form a major obstacle for successfully pursuing further studies in a particular qualification or employment, the qualification should not be granted recognition; The applicant should be informed about the reason for denial of recognition and about the nature of the substantial differences found.*
(iv) *In instance of non-recognition, the applicant should be given a chance to compensate for these differences, or to file an appeal against the evaluation of their qualification.*

5.5 Recognition decisions and the right to appeal

Depending on national legislation and practice, the outcome of the evaluation of a foreign qualification may take the form of a decision to recognise the qualification or not, and issue comparability statement. The outcome of the evaluation is then communicated to the applicant or third party. Decisions on recognition of qualifications have to be made within a reasonable time limit specified beforehand by the competent recognition authority. This turnaround time is calculated from the time all necessary information required for processing the application has been provided. If recognition is withheld, reasons for the refusal to grant recognition have to be stated. If recognition is withheld, or if no decision is taken, the holder of the qualifications shall be entitled to make an appeal within a reasonable time limit. If the holder of the qualification agrees with the outcome, the procedure is complete. If however the applicant disagrees with the outcome, they have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal procedure is usually given by the national legislation.

Recommendations regarding the right to appeal

Where, after thorough consideration of the case, the recognition authority reaches the conclusion that, due to substantial differences, recognition cannot be granted in accordance with the applicant's request:
- In all cases where the applicant disagrees with the decision taken by the recognition authority, they should have a possibility to appeal against it.
- The recognition authority should inform the applicant about the reason for the decision and the possibility to appeal against it.
- In the case of an appeal, the recognition authority should again examine the information originally provided. When necessary the authority may ask the applicant for evidence that has not yet been provided (or insufficiently provided) or conduct more in-depth research.

The recommendations described above do not necessarily apply to cases where recognition has been denied due to qualifications being awarded by diploma mills or submission of fraudulent documents.

The recommendations above only describe the first instance of appeal (which is usually an internal procedure of the recognition authority). The second instance is usually regulated in a separate law depending on national legislation of each member state.

5.6 Transparency and Information Provision

Transparency and information provision are a cornerstone in the recognition of foreign qualifications process as signaled in the Addis Convention (2014). It ensures that

applicants get the most accurate, clear and reliable information on recognition procedures and criteria applied in the host country. It is the prerequisite of the fair treatment of all applicants. In general, the emphasis should be placed not on the amount of information, but more on its relevance, clarity, and availability. Furthermore, transparency and information provision are both linked to the applicant's right to appeal recognition decisions made by the recognition authority. An applicant can only exercise this right effectively if he or she can accurately identify procedural failings on the part of the recognition authority. It is also for this reason that well-organized transparency and information provision is of importance. Recognition authorities shall ensure that the criteria and procedures used in the evaluation and recognition of qualifications are transparent, coherent, reliable, fair and non-discriminatory, in particular, by making public such procedures and criteria. However, protection of personal information, respecting confidentiality and ensuring the security of information should paramount.

Recommendations regarding transparency

To establish transparency on the recognition process, the recognition authority should:

> Make its criteria and procedures for the evaluation of foreign qualifications clearly available. This should at least include the following elements:

- An overview of how the recognition of foreign qualifications are handled;
- The rights and obligations of the each of the parties (recognition body and applicant);
- The list of required documents and how they should be submitted;
- The possible decisions: (recognition or no recognition);
- The status of a decision: advisory or legally binding;
- The approximate time needed to process an application;
- Any fees charged for processing the application;
- References to relevant legislation (national and international, etc.) and
- Conditions and procedures for appealing against a recognition decision.

> Ensure that the information provided on the recognition process and procedure is:

- Easily and publicly accessible;
- Complemented by contact details for further inquiries (telephone numbers and e-mail addresses);
- Targeted at all relevant interest groups (qualification holders and if applicable others such as refugees, employers, etc);

- Available for free in a variety of forms (e.g. electronically, by telephone, by post, face-to-face, and/or hard copy);
- Provided not only in the national language but also in a second widely spoken language;
- Regularly updated.

Provide the following information during the application procedure to the applicant:

- Acknowledge receipt of the application;
- If applicable, indicate documentation and/or information that are lacking,
- Indicate the application turnaround times;
- Inform applicant of delays or issues encountered while dealing with their application;
- Respect the confidentiality of the applicant and do not disclose any personal data without the applicant's consent.

Inform the applicant of the recognition decision and supplement this with the following information:

- The reason(s) for the decision;
- Rights granted by the recognition decision in the host country (if applicable);
- In case of a non-recognition decision, information on the appeals procedure, including the path to follow and the deadline for appeal.

Review the criteria and procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications regularly in order to keep abreast with developments of evolving models of good practice in recognition.

CHAPTER 6: POLICIES

Summary

This chapter provides policies to guide recognition of qualifications for this Manual. It includes Policy on and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications, policies on Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Revocation and Short courses and/part qualification

6.1 Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications

6.1.1 To be accepted for evaluation, applications must meet all the requirements stipulated in the published application material:

a) Applicants must provide competent the authority with a complete and credible set of documents to enable evaluation;
b) Education and training institutions must provide complete and credible qualification documents to qualifying learners; and
c) Competent authority may request the relevant foreign institutions to provide additional information to conduct a fair evaluation of a foreign qualification.

6.1.2 Noting that education systems change, competent authority, in the evaluation of a foreign qualification will consider the historical context within which the foreign qualification was issued.

6.1.3 Competent authority will recognise a foreign qualification after it has determined that, at the time of enrolment of the qualification holder, all the following verification requirements were met:

a) The awarding institution was:

(i) Recognised, or accredited (whichever term applies) by the relevant authority in the home system, in accordance with the relevant laws, policies or generally accepted practice in that country;

b) The qualification was part of the formal education and training system in the country of origin;
c) The institution was authorised to offer the qualification;
d) The qualification holder has successfully completed all the requirements for the award of the qualification as confirmed by the awarding body; and
e) The documentation in respect of the foreign qualification submitted to a competent authority is authentic, with no evidence of tampering or inconsistency.

6.1.4 A qualification will proceed to the comparison phase of evaluation and deemed qualifying for recognition only if all verification requirements are met.

6.1.5 Where recognition agreements exist between the Country that issued the original certification and foreign countries, Competent Authority's recognition decision will reflect the provisions of such agreements consistent with the NQF.

6.1.6 In the absence of a recognition agreement, the foreign qualification will be located within its national system in order to understand how the foreign system compares with the recognizing country's NQF:

a) Where the foreign national system is a qualifications framework, the foreign qualifications framework will be compared with the recognising country's NQF in order to locate the foreign qualification on the recognising country NQF (NQF Level and organising field). The recognition decision will be based on learning outcomes, both level descriptors and qualification descriptors;

b) Where the country does not have a qualifications framework, the foreign national system will be compared with the recognising country's NQF in order to locate the foreign qualification on the NQF. The recognition decision will be based on qualification descriptors and the comparable level will be inferred; and

c) Where the foreign qualifications were issued before the introduction of a qualifications framework, the recognising country's competent authority will ascertain whether provision was made for the inclusion of earlier qualifications into the qualifications framework and consider that in the comparison.

6.1.7 Where a qualification is not located within a national system of education and training but meets all the verification criteria, the competent qualifications recognition authority will use appropriate measures to determine comparability in terms of the NQF.

6.1.8 Policies and criteria governing qualification types in the recognising country's NQF will be considered when conducting comparisons of foreign qualifications.

6.2 Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Revocation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles according to which a competent authority revokes Certificates that it issued and hence annul decisions made regarding the recognition of a foreign qualification; as well as the rights and obligations of qualification holders in the event of such revocation.

This policy should be understood firstly in the context of the evolution of the function over time; a context which is one of changing philosophies, approaches, criteria and methodologies; as well as, ultimately, new insights. The Policy is a manifestation of zero tolerance stance against misrepresentation and is aimed at eliminating instances of fraud.

This policy makes provision for competent authority to revoke Certificates issued. The right to revoke will apply in all cases where new information has come to light which contradicts the information on which evaluation outcomes were based, as expanded below. Applicants are informed of the right competent authority reserves to revoke Certificates both at the time of their application and when Certificates are issued.

6.2.1 Grounds for Revocation

Competent authority will revoke a Certificate it issued when one or more qualifications appearing on that Certificate are found to have been:

a) Misrepresented by the qualification holder, or any other party, in any way;

b) Issued by an institution that at the time of enrolment of the qualification holder was not recognised in the home system according to relevant laws, policy or standard practice; or issued by an institution outside of the relevant laws, policy or standard practice applicable in that system at the time.

c) Incorrectly located within the NQF by competent authority due to the lack, or misinterpretation of, available information at the time of the evaluation. In the case of an erroneous evaluation outcome, and where applicable, competent authority will replace the Certificate with one reflecting the correct outcome.

d) Competent authority cannot revoke certificates it does not issue. Competent authority will, however, take the necessary action to ensure that information about valid Certificates is available and accessible to the public. Such information will be made available with the consent of applicants for evaluation.

e) Competent qualification recognition authority will take action against all parties who have committed or continue to commit a misrepresentation in accordance with its standard processes and procedures for dealing with misrepresentation, including laying relevant charges with the Police Service.

6.2.2 When new information comes to light which contradicts the information on which the evaluation outcomes were based, competent authority will conduct a thorough investigation to validate the new evidence before a decision to revoke is taken.

6.2.3 Competent authority will first inform qualification holders of its intention to revoke and provide reasons for this.

6.2.4 Competent authority may allow an opportunity for the qualification holder to respond and make representation as to why a Certificate should not be revoked. Such representation may be made by a representative on behalf of the qualification holder and must be received by competent authority within 60 days from the date of the letter of intent. In exceptional circumstances and for reasons acceptable to, competent authority may condone the late submission of representations.

6.2.5 Representation received within the stipulated period will be considered by the Foreign Qualifications Appeal Panel and a final decision will be taken whether or not to revoke. This decision will be communicated to the qualification holder or his/her representative, as may be applicable, in writing.

6.2.6 In the absence of a response and representation within 60 days of the notification of its intention to revoke, competent authority confirm the revocation in writing.

6.2.7 Original Certificates must be returned to competent authority within one month of the effective date of the revocation, failing which competent authority will take further action. Loss of the original Certificate must be declared in an affidavit, which must reach competent authority within the same period of time and under the same conditions

6.2.8 Neither the original Certificate, nor any copies of it may be used after revocation.

6.2.9 Where a Certificate is revoked on the ground contemplated in Section 6.2.1 above, competent authority will follow the proper channels to initiate legal action.

6.2.10 Competent authority will maintain a register of revoked Certificates and publish the revocation information in relevant and appropriate ways.

6.3 Short courses and/part qualifications

This policy sets out the requirements for evaluating, registering and publication of short courses and/part time qualifications in line with Member states NQF's. In doing so the Short courses and/part qualification must be evaluated for compliance on the below:

6.3.1 Frameworks and Title.

    a) The relevant sub framework on which the short courses and/part time qualifications is to be registered must be provided
    b) The title of the short courses and/part time qualifications must comply fully with the short courses and/part time qualifications type description provided for in the NQF frameworks policy

6.3.2 Organization Field and Sub field. The NQF Organizing field must be specified.

6.3.3 NQF Level of the short courses and/part time qualifications

    a) The short courses and/part time qualifications must be placed within the relevant NQF level
    b) The published NQF level descriptors must be used to determine the NQF level of the short courses and/part time qualifications
    c) The NQF level of the short courses and/part time qualifications must comply with the requirements for the short courses and/part time qualifications type as determined by the relevant regulatory Authority Framework policy.

6.3.4 Credits

    a) The credits must be calculated as stipulated by the Regulatory Authority Framework
    b) The minimum credit allocation for a short courses and/part time qualifications must comply with the requirements for the qualification type as determined by the relevant Framework Policy.
    c) The short courses and/part time qualifications must meet the minimum required credits as stipulated by the Regulatory Authority Framework

6.3.5 Purpose

    a) The purpose statement must describe how the short courses and/part time qualifications is going to benefit the leaner
    b) What the short courses and/part time qualifications intends to achieve
    c) The typical graduate attributes

6.3.6 Rationale

    a) The need for the short courses and/part time qualifications

b) That a similar short courses and/part time qualifications is not registered on the NQF
c) How the short courses and/part time qualifications will benefit the sector, society and the economy?
d) The typical learner for the short courses and/part time qualifications
e) If the assertion of the short courses and/part time qualifications relates to specific occupation or profession and determine how it meets the requirements for the profession registration, membership or licensing as required by recognized professional bodies.

6.3.7 Entry requirements. All relevant and practical possibilities (within or across the sub frameworks) for entry into the short courses and/part time qualifications must be specified.

6.3.8 Recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL statements must clearly state how leaners will;
a) Gain access through RPL
b) Be exempted from modules through RPL; and
c) Be awarded credits for, or towards the qualification.

6.3.8 Rules of combination. The rule of combination must:

a) Comply with the requirements for the short courses and/part time qualifications type as determined by the relevant sub framework policy and related policies
b) Indicate names and subjects and/modules and credits
c) Stipulate compulsory modules, their level and the credits and
d) Stipulate the selection of elective modules and their levels and credits

6.3.9 Exit level Outcomes

a) Competencies embedded in the NQF level descriptors relate directly to the competencies required for further learning and/or the work for which the qualification was designed and must be used to guide the formulation of the Exit Level Outcomes.
b) Exit Level Outcomes must indicate what the leaner will be able to know, do and understand after completing the short courses and/part time qualifications.
c) The Exit Level Outcomes must be aligned with the NQF level descriptors and must meet the competencies of the relevant NQF level
d) The Exit Level Outcomes must be designed for the short courses and/part time qualifications and modules or subjects

6.3.10 Associated Assessment Criteria

a) The Associated Assessment Criteria must indicate what the leaner must do to show competence, knowledge involved, the context the standards of assessment and the range if applicable

b) Must indicate the nature and the level of the assessment associated with the short courses and/part time qualifications and how the Exit Level Outcomes could be assessed and

c) Can be given as a comprehensive set to assess all the Exit Level Outcomes in an integrated manner or as a comprehensive set to assess Exit Level Outcomes separately.

6.3.11 Articulation

i. To deepen integration, progression and mobility in the education and training system, articulation must show horizontal, vertical and diagonal articulation:

a) Horizontal articulation possibilities within and between sub frameworks at the same NQF level should include systematic, specific and individual articulation;

b) Vertical articulation possibilities across NQF levels within a sub framework should indicate systematic, specific and individual articulation;

c) Regulatory Authority must provide a statement to show how the entry requirements of the short courses and/part time qualifications into which articulation is sought have been taken into account.

d) Regulatory Authority must provide valid reasons where articulation options are not possible.

6.3.12 International standards in other parts of the world: the comparison must indicate the international standards to support learner mobility and in doing so, must include how the short courses and/part time qualifications compares with relevant best practices in other parts of the world; the best practice must include comparison of the following areas:

a) At least two countries, as well as the registered /recognized/accredited institutions and the title of the short courses and/part time qualifications: the comparison must indicate the similarities and/or difference in entry requirements; Exit Level Outcomes/content/modules; credits; assessments; duration and articulation;

Or

b) International standards in other parts of the world: the comparison must be indicate the international standards used in the development of the short courses and/part time qualifications and outline how the qualification compares with international standards

c) The international comparability must provide details of how the short courses and/part time qualifications compares international and not be a mere website or links.

6.4 Publication of Short courses and/part qualification

6.4.1 All the short courses and/part time qualifications must be registered on the NQF and the information on the short courses and/part time qualifications, unless prohibited by law, must be accurate and transparent and made available to the public.

6.4.2 Once a short courses and/part time qualifications is registered on the NQF, any provider seeking to legally offer it must obtain accreditation from the relevant Regulatory Authority.

6.5 Criteria

6.5.1 Regulatory Authority must ensure that the publication of information on the qualification, in their sub framework, is consistent with the information on the NQF. The Regulatory Authority must ensure that:

a) The public is protected from misleading information about the short courses and/part time qualifications.
b) Providers disseminate and advertise accurate information about the legal registration status of the short courses and/part time qualifications.
c) NQF nomenclature like NQF levels and credits are only used in the context of the NQF short courses and/part time qualifications
d) The short courses and/part time qualifications information displayed on the websites and in the transcripts of qualifying learners is consistent with the qualification information registered on the NQF.

DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY

Access	The possibility for eligible candidates to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education
Accreditation	A process of assessment and review that enables a higher education programme or institution to be recognized or certified by the appointed body as meeting appropriate standards
Admission	The authorization of qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or in a given programme.
Articulation	Formal and informal agreements within educational and training systems between two or more education and sub systems, between specific institutional types and guided by policies and accreditation principles.
Authorization	A permit delivered by a body officially mandated to authorize the creation of an institution or a new branch of specialization in a higher education institution.
Competent recognition authority	A body officially charged with making decisions on the recognition of foreign qualifications.
Credential evaluators	Evaluators or officials charged with officially evaluating qualifications for recognition.
Fraudulent Qualification	Misrepresented, false academic and professional credentials
Formal learning	Institutionalized, structured, systematic and objective lead learning planned through public organizations and recognized private bodies

Informal learning	Unstructured, non-systematic and has no set objective in terms of learning outcome.
Manual	Refers to the Manual on the Recognition of Qualifications in SADC.
Higher Education	All programmes of study, or sets of courses of study, training, or training for research at the post-secondary level which are recognized by the relevant authorities of a State Party as belonging to its higher education system
Higher Education Institution	An institution providing higher education and recognized by the competent authority of a State as belonging to its higher education system, and authorized to award qualifications at the higher education level.
Learning Outcomes	Results of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process
Life-Long Learning	Education through experience and formal or informal studies covering the entire span of one's life.
Member State	A sovereign state which is a member of some kind of confederation such as SADC.For the purpose and intent of this manual, Member State refers to a SADC Member State.
Misrepresentation	means an intentional or unintentional incorrect statement of fact or law, or a perversion or distortion of the truth, made by one person (natural or juristic) to Recognition Authority either in writing, or orally, which relates to an application for the evaluation of a Foreign qualification, including any false representation contained on the Foreign qualification certificate

Non-formal learning	An addition, alternative and/or a complement for formal learning or formal education
Prior Learning	Learning and/or experience that have already been acquired in different ways either formal or non-formal.
Qualification in Higher Education	Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by an accredited higher education institution attesting the successful completion of an approved higher education programme.
Qualifications Frameworks	Systems for classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured qualifications
Qualification holder	A person whose qualifications were evaluated by Competent recognition authority
Quality Assurance	An ongoing process of evaluating and enhancing the quality of a higher education system, institutes or programmes to assure stakeholders that acceptable standards are maintained and enhanced.
Recognition	A formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of a Party of the value of a foreign education qualification or a validated training
Region	Means the geographical area of the Member states of the Southern African Development Community.
Revocation	Means the withdrawal of a prior decision by Recognition Authority to recognise a foreign qualification and the action taken to invalidate, annul, cancel or rescind it to have no legal status and effect.
Validation	Procedure by which a competent authority evaluates qualifications in accordance with norms and standards recognized nationally or internationally.

List of Acronyms

CATS   Articulation and Credit Accumulation and Transfer Systems

GATS   General Agreement on Trades and Services

ITC   Information and Communications Technology

NGOs   Non-Governmental Organizations

NQFs   National Qualifications Frameworks

QA   Quality Assurance

RPL   Recognition of Prior Learning

RQFs   Regional Qualifications Frameworks

SADCQF   Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework

SADCQRM   Southern African Development Community Qualifications Manual

SADCQVN   Southern African Development Community Qualifications Verification Network

SQFs   Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks

TCCA   Technical Committee of Certification and Accreditation

TVET   Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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