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SOUTH
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QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Established in terms of Act 58 of 1995

The General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)

Discussion Document for Public Comment

This document was approved for release as a discussion document for public comment at the SAQA meeting held on 6 December 2000.

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or

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The **closing date** for comments is **28 February 2001**.

Submissions should be titled: *"GETC Discussion Document for Public Comment"*.

The General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)

Discussion Document for Public Comment

1   Introduction

The need for a document that provides a framework within which constructors of qualifications can design a GETC is indicated by

- broad stakeholder demand for guidance in the development of the GETC
- the difficulties which National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) have experienced in conceptualizing the qualification; and
- the requirement for coherent registration of GETCs on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

This discussion document outlines the context within which the GETC is located, discusses some of the difficulties associated with the design of the GETC, addresses particular issues which constructors of GETCs need to take into account – namely

- the purpose of the GETC
- rules of combination
- the articulation of GETCs
- progression and credit accumulation
- integrated assessment; and
- recognition of prior learning (RPL)

and makes a number of recommendations in the course of addressing these issues. The final section highlights some of the issues that need to be taken into account in the implementation of the recommendations made in section 4 of the document.

2 Background: The establishment of the purpose, guiding principles and criteria for the GETC

2.1 The legal responsibility of SAQA as per the SAQA Act (Act No. 58 of 1995) (RSA, 1995)

The functions of the Authority as per the SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995, are as follows:

The Authority shall

- Oversee the development of the NQF.
- Formulate and publish policies and criteria for
  - ➢ The registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications;
  - ➢ The accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications.
- Oversee the implementation of the NQF including
  - ➢ Registration or accreditation of bodies referred to above and the assignment of functions to them;
  - ➢ The registration of national standards and qualifications;
  - ➢ Steps to ensure compliance with provisions for accreditation;
  - ➢ Steps to ensure that registered standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.

2.2 The Regulations for National Standards Bodies (NSBs) (RSA, 1998a) and for Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs) (RSA, 1998b)

Among the functions of NSBs as listed in the Regulations are the following:

- Ensure that the work of SGBs meets the requirements for the registration of standards and qualifications as determined by the Authority;
- Recommend the registration of standards on the NQF to the Authority;
- Recommend the registration of qualifications to the Authority;
- Update and review qualifications;
- Liaise with ETQAs regarding the procedures for recommending new standards and qualifications, or amending registered standards and qualifications.

Among the functions of ETQAs as listed in the regulations is the following:

- Recommend new standards and qualifications to NSBs, for consideration, or modifications to existing standards or qualifications to NSBs for consideration.

In accordance with the Act and the regulations, SAQA, through the NSB-SGB structures, is responsible for the registration of qualifications. Furthermore the NSBs have the function of liaising with ETQAs regarding the procedures for recommending new standards and qualifications, or amending registered standards and qualifications. Quality Assurance bodies are responsible for assuring the quality of these qualifications. Through liaison with the NSBs they have a direct role to play in recommending new standards and qualifications as well as modifications to existing

standards and qualifications to NSBs for consideration. The ETQA structures, then, are not legally in a position to assume responsibility for recommending standards and qualifications to SAQA, as this is clearly the responsibility of the NSB-SGB structures.

2.3   The generalist (or generic) qualifications

In the case of the GETC, there is likely to be a range of recommendations for such qualifications which cut across all NSBs and SGBs and which attempt to fulfil a variety of needs within the education and training sector at these levels. Provision includes formal schooling, ABET, out-of-school youth and the learners within learnerships and skills programmes of the Department of Labour.

The NSB Regulations provide very general direction in respect of the structure of these qualifications. However, discussions at the NSB level indicate that further guidance and clarity is needed.

In accordance with the Regulations, the bodies responsible for recommending standards and qualifications to the Authority are the NSBs. However, as mentioned above, these qualifications cut across all NSB fields and across a variety of contexts of education provision, and since NSBs and particularly SGBs are regarded as having sectoral interests, a wider forum and process inclusive of the NSBs and SGBs should make recommendations regarding the principles and minimum requirements for such qualifications.. Clearly, since SAQA has the responsibility for the development of the NQF, it is appropriate that it oversees the development of the minimum requirements and guiding principles for these generalist (or generic) qualifications.

2.4   A discussion forum for the development of the purpose, guiding principles and guidelines for the GETC

If a broader forum and a process are required to make recommendations on the parameters for the generalist (or generic) qualifications, it is advisable that SAQA convene a forum and propose a process to establish the basic principles and minimum requirements for the GETC and recommend these to the Authority for approval or recommend a process whereby these can be established. Once approved at Authority level, NSBs will have to ensure that the standards and qualifications at this level which they recommend for registration to the Authority meet the requirements of the Authority.

Before the forum recommends the basic principles and minimum requirements to the Authority for final approval there will need to be an engagement with all stakeholders, including the Inter-NSB Forum, and a public comment process.

2.5   The GETC Forum

An FETC/GETC forum was established and met on 12 May 2000. The original intention was that that forum would address both the FETC and the GETC. This was not possible and so that forum continued with its work, focusing on the FETC. A discussion document has recently been in the public domain, and SAQA will now

follow a process to establish as policy the document amended in the light of public comment.

At the SAQA Meeting of 16 August 2000 it was decided that a similar process should be followed to establish a discussion document for the GETC.

The following process was recommended for this:

- The framework for submissions should be established at the meeting of 18 September 2000 – that is, the issues pertaining to the GETC that need to be addressed in a policy document.
- These discussions will be synthesised into a document by SAQA staff. This document will be e-mailed to all members of the forum before distribution for comment. Once incorporated, the document will be ready for distribution by 4 October 2000.
- SAQA will then call for submissions from major stakeholders. The closing date for initial submissions should be 31 October 2000.
- These submissions will be considered in the drawing up of a discussion document for tabling to the GETC Forum on 20 November 2000. Details of time and venue will be sent to members. The draft discussion document will be forwarded to members of the forum by 15 November 2000.
- A document could be submitted to the SAQA meeting scheduled for 6 December 2000. If accepted by SAQA, a wide consultation process would be undertaken and in that process further comments could be obtained.
- It is envisaged that the GETC policy document will be finalised at the April 2001 meeting of SAQA.

2.6   Submissions for the GETC

The following submissions for the GETC received at the SAQA Office by 31 October 2000 – including submissions that are not in response to the "Document for Submissions: GETC" distributed in the wake of the 18 September 2000 meeting of the GETC Forum but which were received at the SAQA office prior to this date –have been taken into account in the drafting of this discussion document:

- Department of Education: "Proposal to HEDCOM on: The General Education and Training Certificate" (received 18 September 2000) (Department of Education, 2000b)
- Interim ABET Advisory Board (IAAB): "GETC Proposal for ABET" (received 31 May 2000) (IAAB, 1999)
- IAAB: "GETC Discussion: Comments from the IAAB, 31 October 2000" (received 31 October 2000) (IAAB, 2000)
- SAFCERT: Submission on SAQA's "Document for Submissions: GETC" (31 October 2000)

3   Particular design challenges at the GETC level

The challenges facing the designers of a framework for the GETC are a function of the complexity of cross-cutting factors that need to be taken into account. The three-dimensional matrix comprises

- an age continuum (from children to adult learners)
- a site-of-learning differentiation (from classroom to factory floor to workplace learning centre to community centre); and
- a time-of-learning dichotomy (daylight-based versus night-based learning).

Furthermore the approach and the nature of the learning programmes will differ substantially from group to group. This has raised the question as to what the term "general" means when referring to a qualification at level 1: "general" in the context of children is quite different from "general" in the context of adults, for example.

While SAQA is chiefly concerned that the achievement of a qualification constitute a statement of competence in a particular field, it cannot ignore the dimension of sectoral difference in the design of qualifications – particularly where two such sectors are differentiated on the basis of age (children versus adults). Learning to count as a child in a schooling environment, for example, is very different from learning to count as an adult in an ABET environment. Since competence is achieved within the learning context of a sector, then, *competence* and *sector* should be held in tension.

There has been no formal certification for any of these sectors at this level. The education and training system hence is not geared to assessment or certification on a large scale at level 1 or below level 1 of the NQF.

There are political implications if some kind of formal assessment system is put in place and achievement levels are low. Furthermore there are huge cost implications should assessment at this level be of the scale currently conducted at the Senior Certificate level.

Moreover, there is an imperative to bring the marginalized ABET sector into the mainstream by creating appropriate articulation with formal education provision so that learners can have access and mobility within the education and training system through recognition of their achievements.

4   The General Education and Training Certificate: Discussion and recommendations

Recommendation 1

Each full qualification registered at level 1 on the National Qualifications Framework will be called a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and will conform to the broad requirements recommended in this document.

Recommendation 2

Each GETC will provide access to various learning pathways, both vertical and horizontal, in terms of the purpose of the qualification. The scope of access provided by each GETC will be determined by the qualification itself.

Discussion: SAQA's definition of a qualification

The NSB regulations in section 8 define a qualification as follows:

8(1) A qualification shall

- represent a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning;
- add value to qualifying learner in terms of enrichment of the person through provision of status, recognition, credentials and licensing, marketability and employability; and opening-up of access routes to additional education and training;
- provide benefits to society and the economy through enhancing citizenship, increasing social and economic productivity, providing specifically skilled/professional people and transforming and redressing legacies of inequity;
- comply with objectives of the NQF contained in section 2 of the (SAQA) Act;
- have both specific and critical cross-field outcomes that promote life-long learning;
- where applicable, be internationally comparable;
- incorporate integrated assessment appropriately to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is achieved, and such assessment shall use a range of formative and summative assessment such as portfolios, simulations, workplace assessments and also written and oral examinations;
- indicate in the rules governing the award of the qualification that the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through the recognition of prior learning, which concept includes but is not limited to learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal and non-formal learning and work experience.

The following paragraphs from section 9 of the NSB Regulations give further definition to a qualification at NQF level 1 and begin to address the question of basic criteria for the registration of such a qualification.

    a.   A minimum of 72 credits is required at or above the level at which the certificate is awarded, which shall consist of fundamental learning, of which at least 20 credits shall be from the field of Communication Studies and Language, and in addition at least 16 credits shall be from the sub-field of Mathematics including numeracy in the case of certificates at level 1.

    b.   A minimum of 36 credits at level 1 and 52 at levels 2 to 4 which shall be divided between the Core and Elective categories, with each qualification specifying the distribution of credits required in these categories: provided that the range of additional credits shall be broad enough to enable learners to pursue some of their own learning interests.

c.   By the year 2002, at least 16 of the 52 credits for certificates at levels 2 to 4 shall be from the sub-fields focusing on Mathematics Literacy.

The primary reason for including the requirement that 20 credits of a GETC qualification be from the field of Language and Communication and 16 credits be from the field of Mathematics (including numeracy) is an attempt to bring some coherence to the qualification.   There is a danger that because of the variety of learning sectors at this level, there will be a variety of different qualifications which, if they are not perceived to be of a comparable value within society, will serve to hinder progression, access and mobility, and articulation rather than enhance it.

The danger also exists, however, that an attempt to create coherence will result in the compulsory requirements for NQF level 1 qualifications being too prescriptive, thereby creating artificial barriers to progression - as is the case with the Senior Certificate with matriculation endorsement.   Too much flexibility, however, inevitably results in social judgements about the "exchange" value of certain qualifications and ultimately prejudices the learners who hold the qualification.

4.1   The purpose of the GETC

Because learning sectors at NQF level 1 are vastly different, there has been a suggestion that in fact there is no single over-riding, that is, primary, purpose for qualifications at NQF level 1, as there is for the FETC (SAQA, 2000).   The primary argument rests on the fact that the first exit point for compulsory education – that is, the end of foundational education for children - is at this level.   Because of this, it is inappropriate to issue a GETC because training *per se* is not part of the purpose of a child's learning at this stage.   However, for adults in the workplace, the argument is that the GETC is primarily about having gained the fundamental skills needed to perform effectively within the workplace – in the context of which it may not be suitable to refer to foundational education.

This suggestion has raised a number of issues:

- Do all qualifications at this level have a primary purpose?   The purpose for particular qualifications designed for a specific purpose, within the primary purpose, can be added as an overlay to the primary purpose.   This is the position in respect of the FETC.
- If there are different purposes for each full qualification registered at level 1 on the National Qualifications Framework, should each qualification conform to the same broad requirements beyond that which is proposed in the NSB Regulations?
- Should all qualifications at this level be called a GETC (as is the case with all qualifications at level 4 being called an FETC)?   Is there an argument for a GEC and a GETC?
- What is the impact of this on access, progression and articulation?   This is the major point for discussion in respect of different qualifications at the same level.   What is the social value that is attached to them?

4.1.1   The GETC and integration

A useful starting point in addressing these questions is to consider the meaning of "integration" in the context of the NQF. There are two ways of looking at integration. The first takes its cue from the first objective of the NQF, which speaks of creating an "integrated national framework for learning achievements" (RSA, 1995). According to this conception, integration does not necessarily imply a blurring of the distinctions between education and training: thus formal schooling will inevitably be education-orientated, focusing on knowledge acquisition and production, while industry learning will inevitably be training-oriented, focusing on skills acquisition and performance. What an integrated framework allows and promotes is the co-existence on a single framework of qualifications which articulate with one another – that is, allow for movement from one to the other in a relatively seamless way. Taken to extremes, however, this might imply a perpetuation of the divisions between education and training.

The second way of interpreting integration is to see it as a bringing together of the knowledge, skills and values in a learning area necessary for the demonstration of applied competence. In other words, education's traditional emphasis on knowledge acquisition and production needs to be counterbalanced by an emphasis on the acquisition and demonstration of skills; similarly, training's traditional emphasis on the acquisition and demonstration of skills needs to be counterbalanced by an emphasis on knowledge acquisition and production. And an overlay of values needs to characterize this amalgam of education and training. Taken to extremes, however, this might imply an homogenization which fails to recognize the traditional strengths of particular educational or training foci.

These two conceptions are not mutually exclusive, however. What the NQF stands for is a framework which brings the two together in a way **that does not perpetuate extremism but that promotes balance** – while simultaneously recognizing the particular orientations of particular qualifications. In this spirit, it would be counterproductive, in terms of the second interpretation of *integration* above, to perpetuate extremism by registering, for example, a GEC (General Education Certificate) for the formal schooling sector, a GTC (General Training Certificate) for the industrial sector, and a GETC for the ABET sector. Whatever the orientation of any of these sectors' qualifications, it is important, if equivalence amongst qualifications is to be promoted at level 1 of the NQF, to register a GETC across the board.

4.1.2   A GETC typology

A consideration of the types of GETC that have been proposed by different sectors operating at NQF level 1 – in other words, what "GETC" means in different education and training contexts – will assist us in determining equivalence at this level.

4.1.2.1 Interim ABET Advisory Board: ABET GETC

The IAAB has indicated (1999) that the GETC for the ABET sector will be a unit standards-based qualification, based on a combination of the Department of Education 8 learning areas and the 12 organizing fields of the NQF (including electives

developed for ABET), whose 120 credits learners obtain throughout the duration of the learning programme(s) leading to the achievement of the qualification. The GETC structure diagram (1999: 5) indicates that the fundamental learning component will comprise a total of 36 credits in Language, Literacy and Communication and in Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy, that the core learning component will comprise a total of 54 credits spread across a minimum of 4 of the remaining 6 learning areas, and that the elective learning component will comprise a total of 30 credits assigned to unit standards from any of the 12 organizing fields of the NQF, including electives developed or proposed for ABET (Agriculture and Agricultural Technology; Arts and Culture; Economic and Management Sciences; Small Medium and Micro Enterprises [SMME]; Technology; Food and Fibre Processing; Human and Social Sciences; Health Care; Natural Sciences; Mathematics, etc.; and Hospitality and Tourism).

4.1.2.2 Department of Education: Schooling GETC

The Department of Education (2000b: 1-2) has indicated that the GETC for the formal schooling sector will be a qualification not based on unit standards, constructed around the 8 learning areas and 66 specific outcomes, whose 120 credits learners achieve between Grade 7 and Grade 9 but are awarded only in Grade 9. The credit allocation table (2000: 4) seems to suggest that the fundamental learning component will comprise a total of 36 credits in Communication and Mathematics, that the core learning component will comprise a total of 60 credits spread across the remaining 6 learning areas (10 credits in Life Orientation are compulsory; Human and Social Sciences; Economic and Management Sciences; Natural Sciences; Arts and Culture; and Technology), and that the elective learning component will comprise a total of 24 credits differentially spread across the 8 learning areas. Clusters of specific outcomes are likely to form a key element in determining progression and credit accumulation, since they serve as standards.

4.1.2.3 Industry-specific GETCs

The initial IAAB proposal for an ABET GETC addresses the issue (1999: 9) of a possible tension between a *General* Education and Training Certificate and an industry-specific qualification, which may by virtue of its level of specialization not be a GETC at all. Essentially the question is this: can one call a qualification whose only apparent claim to being general rests on the inclusion of communication and mathematics in its fundamental learning component a GETC?

4.1.3   From typology to purpose

This brief look at typology suggests three different orientations of GETC:

- for the ABET sector, a unit standards-based qualification based on coverage of a combination of the Department of Education 8 learning areas and the NQF 12 organizing fields whose orientation is towards education *and* training;
- for the formal schooling sector, a "whole" qualification based on coverage of the 8 learning areas whose orientation is towards education; and
- for the industrial sector, a unit standards-based or "whole" qualification (the sector has not specified) whose orientation is towards training.

The three issues which coalesce in this discussion about the purpose of the GETC are

- the meaning of "General" in "General Education and Training Certificate"
- the integration of education and training in the GETC; and
- the articulation of GETCs in different sectors at level 1 of the NQF.

The discussion so far suggests that all GETCs registered on the NQF need to be *general*, they need to *integrate* education and training, and they need to *articulate* with one another. But how does one ensure that all three pertain?

Some attempt has been made in section 4.1.1 above to outline the parameters for integration – the conclusion drawn that if equivalence amongst qualifications at NQF level 1 is to be promoted, not GECs, not GTCs , but GETCs must be registered across the board. This means not only that all qualifications at level 1 must focus on the attainment and assessment of applied competence, but that in terms of their field coverage they must ensure adequate preparation for further learning and for the assumption of a productive role in the workplace. In this regard, the 8-learning-area-overlap between the proposed ABET and schooling GETCs is a positive development.

The argument for the registration of a *GETC* for all sectors involved in the provision of education and training at level 1 of the NQF is clearly linked to the notion of the purpose of the qualification. In fact, it answers to a large extent the questions posed in the first two bullet points in section 4.1 above. If a GETC is registrable across the board, then sectoral differences are not as important as we might suppose.

The description of the purpose of a GETC for ABET in the initial IAAB submission (IAAB, 1999), it might be argued, holds true not only for the ABET sector but for all sectors operating at level 1 of the NQF. The following extracts from the document make the point:

> The [GETC] provides formal recognition that persons have the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to perform the particular roles – related to the purpose – to the standards and levels of complexity required by our society (1999: 1-2).

> ABET introduces citizens to a culture of learning and provides them with the foundations for acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for social and economic development, justice and equality. It also provides access to further and higher education, training and employment (Department of Education, 1997; cited in IAAB, 1999: 2).

The document goes on to claim four broad purposes for a GETC:

- Political: for informed participation in a democracy;
- Social: for active involvement in community contexts;
- Personal: for empowerment, self-confidence and links with cultural capital;

- Economic: for economic growth, in terms of *providing a foundation* for the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed for the world of work (1999: 3; emphasis added).

These "purposes" together constitute a *general, foundational* bedrock for the future development of the child, adolescent or adult. The *degree* to which the learner embraces them will depend on the specific purpose of the qualification and the particular orientation of the learner. For example, as the second IAAB submission puts it (2000: 1), the ABET GETC by virtue of being an adult learner qualification has to serve many purposes, such as enabling learners to progress into the FET band, constituting an exit qualification and a first recognised qualification, providing access to learnerships and work-related skills, etc.

In short:

- There is a primary purpose for the GETC across all sectors;
- The GETC constitutes a *general* education and training, and prepares learners both for further learning and, whether immediately or in the longer term, directly or indirectly, for the world of work[1]; and
- Notwithstanding its particular orientation, no GETC should focus on one "stream" (education versus training; academic versus vocational) at the expense of the other.

At this point we might formulate a purpose statement for the GETC as follows:

Recommendation 3

The primary purpose of the General Education and Training Certificate is to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in society as well as continuing learning in further education and training, and provide a firm foundation for the assumption of a productive and responsible role in the workplace.

This recommendation addresses the issue of the integration of education and training and through its statement of a bifocal purpose for the GETC attempts to delimit the meaning of *General* in General Education and Training. The question of whether it provides clear enough guidelines on the meaning of *general* in specific design contexts requires further exploration, however.

One conception is that the NQF should be able to accommodate qualifications that are very general (at one end of the continuum) and very specific (at the other end of the continuum). Another conception is that, to be called a *General* Education and Training Certificate, a GETC must be general enough to provide learners with a *general* education and training yet specific enough to satisfy the needs of a particular sector. The former approach allows for maximum flexibility yet the possibility of over-specialization of a *General* Education and Training Certificate and concomitant

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[1] The SAFCERT submission (SAFCERT, 2000: 9) points up the importance of the GETC preparing school-based learners to join the world of work should they not wish to pursue school-based learning beyond the GETC.

failure of the qualification to provide an adequate preparation for movement into the FET band. The latter allows for an apparent balance between over-generalization and over-specialization, yet is prescriptive and therefore potentially restrictive. How specialized industry-based and, for example, general schooling qualifications at level 1 articulate - if constructors of qualifications are given free reign to develop GETCs that serve their needs – and what their relative value will be in society will indicate, perhaps after a first round of GETC registration and provision of learning programmes leading to the achievement of such qualifications, how one should proceed in this matter.

4.2   Rules of combination

4.2.1   Minimum credits at level 1

The same problem identified in the FETC document (SAQA, 2000) exists at this level: in terms of the NSB Regulations, the requirements that must be fulfilled by a learner before an NQF level 1 qualification can be awarded are as follows:

- 120 credits, of which 72 must be at level 1 or above.
- Of these 72 credits, 20 credits must be in Language and Communication, and 16 must be in Mathematics.

The gap in the Regulations is evident: in the case of the 48 credits that do not need to be at level 1 or above, what is their minimum level (since the first NQF level is level 1)?

As indicated above (section 4.1.2.2), the Department of Education (2000b) has proposed that in the case of the schooling sector GETC all 120 credits will be at level 1 of the NQF. This is perfectly acceptable, since the NSB Regulations specify (regulation 9[1][a]; RSA, 1998a) that a *minimum* of 72 credits need to be at or above the level at which the qualification is pegged. In the case of the ABET sector, however, the existence of three sub-levels below level 1 of the NQF allows one to assign 48 of the 120 credits at ABET level 3 – which is the proposal made by the ABET sector. Equivalence of these two types of qualification, then, is determined at the final exit level of the qualification – on the achievement of the 120 credits.

Recommendation 4

For the GETC for formal schooling, a minimum of 120 credits will be at level 1 of the NQF, while for the GETC for ABET a maximum of 48 credits of the GETC may be at ABET level 3. The remaining 72 credits for the GETC for ABET will be at or above level 1 of the NQF.

4.2.2   The fundamental learning component of the GETC

The questions about the fundamental learning requirements are similar to those of the FETC. It is important to emphasize that these two areas of learning provide the key to further learning and hence the complexity and choices of standards are crucial. These have to relate to the purpose of the qualification; the critical cross-field outcomes should be used as the primary measuring stick in the fundamental areas of learning to

assess the attainment of the purpose of the qualification as well as to see whether the skills in these areas can be applied in the general arena of the qualification.

The question then arises as to the degree of coherence that should be prescribed or the amount of learning that must be common for all learners in the GET band to ensure that progress to further learning is possible within the variety of contexts. The structure and rules of combination for qualifications at this level therefore become crucial in ensuring that barriers to accessing further education and training are not created. The role of the critical outcomes and their relationship to the purpose of the qualification is also critical. Essential in these considerations is the place of the compulsory credits in Language and Communication and in Mathematics.

4.2.2.1 Language and Communication

Given the importance of language in the development of thinking skills and the necessity for aligning language study with the medium of instruction of further study – a point made strongly in the SAFCERT submission (2000: 8) - the recommendation for NQF level 1 qualifications in respect of the 20 credits for Language and Communication could be as follows:

Recommendation 5

The 20 compulsory credits in Language and Communication must be obtained at NQF level 1 or above in one of the eleven official South African languages (Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, or isiZulu) or in one of the languages promoted by the Pan South African Language Board (the Khoi, Nama, and San languages, and sign language) in terms of the South African Constitution (Chapter 1, Section 6; RSA, 1996).

The learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria at level 1 must be of the standard required by a learner to participate effectively at an institution of further education and training. An appropriate SGB will need to be established to determine these learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The work of this SGB would clearly have to take into account the particular needs of all stakeholders in the GET band. The varied nature of learners in this band is a particular issue in the study of language. Furthermore there are SGBs that are working on standards in these areas or such SGBs that are in the process of formation. Care must be taken to ensure that there is no duplication of the work and that a single coherent system is created in respect of the fundamental learning standards.

The issues about the study of language in a multi-lingual society, which includes the question of language of instruction and the workplace, are discussed in the FETC document (SAQA, 2000). In the FETC recommendations, there is a proposal that a further 20 credits in Language and Communication must be obtained in a second official language at a minimum of NQF level 3. This is included to address the need to develop citizens who can participate effectively in a multi-lingual society. The questions that could be asked in the context of the GETC are:

- Is a recommendation in respect of a second language appropriate for NQF level 1?

- The requirement for the FETC pitches the level for proficiency in the second language at NQF level 3. At what level would it be pitched for qualifications at NQF level 1?

A summary of research findings (Clampitt, 2000) on the optimal age at which to acquire a second language (L2) suggests that while adults and adolescents learn a L2 faster than young children, children ultimately become more proficient in the L2 than do adolescents or adults. While adults respond better to the teaching of formal grammar and rules, this does not necessarily translate into communicative competence. The reasons for this are biological, affective and environmental.

Biologically, lateralization (the assigning of functions to different sides of the brain) takes place before puberty, at around the age of 12 or 13; if the learner is not exposed to the new language prior to lateralization, mother tongue speaker-like proficiency is rarely achieved. From an affective perspective, since adolescents and children are generally more self-conscious than children, there is in their case a higher level of affective filter and consequently less language acquisition – children being far more likely to take risks in the learning of a L2. And environmentally, since adults in addressing children simplify the structures and vocabulary they use, children are able to process concrete and easily visualized concepts (translating them, later, into abstract concepts in line with the Piagetian developmental stages); the language directed at adults, however, is more complex in structure and vocabulary.

On balance, then, the research suggests that the earlier a L2 is acquired the better. It would therefore seem important for the GETC to have a L2 component built into it, just as the FETC does; and since medium of instruction is clearly a critical factor in education and training at the GETC level which will have a major impact on the majority of South African learners throughout their lives, the recommendation is that a similar number of credits be assigned to the L2 Communication and Language component as to first language one.

The other critical question – addressed in the second bullet point above - is the level at which these credits should be assigned. In the case of the FETC the recommended level is 3 on the NQF. In the case of the GETC, however, there is, except for ABET, no sub-level at which L2 unit standards or exit-level outcomes can be pegged. It would seem appropriate, in terms of Recommendation 4 above, therefore, for the ABET sector to peg its L2 credits at ABET level 3 and for the formal schooling sector to peg its L2 credits at NQF level 1. Since the industrial sector has not indicated a preference for unit standards-based or non-unit standards-based qualifications and has not pronounced on the minimal number of credits to be assigned at level 1 of the NQF, it may, contingent upon a possible future decision to create sub-levels below NQF level 1, assign L2 credits accordingly.

To address the need to develop citizens who can participate effectively in a multilingual society, then, the following is proposed:

Recommendation 6

A further 20 credits in Language and Communication must be obtained in another official language enshrined in the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) or in

one of the languages promoted by the Pan South African Language Board (the Khoi, Nama, and San languages, and sign language) in terms of the South African Constitution at a minimum of ABET level 3 or in the case of the formal schooling sector at NQF level 1.

Because language proficiency is to be encouraged as widely as possible, moreover, the following recommendation is made in the light of Recommendations 5 and 6:

Recommendation 7

Credit for one or both of the languages outlined in Recommendations 5 and 6 may be obtained at NQF level 2, particularly where such attainment will either promote cultural development through the achievement of proficiency in the primary language (L1) or develop proficiency in the language of learning, where the L1 and the language of learning are different.

4.2.2.2   Mathematics (including numeracy)

Given the medium of instruction legacy that still haunts South Africa and the fact that English, the language of international communication, is not the first language of the vast majority of South Africans, the rationale for the inclusion of Communication and Language within the fundamental learning component of level 1 to 4 qualifications is not difficult to understand. Less accessible is the reason for including Mathematics in the fundamental component – notwithstanding the arguments for the need to produce numerate citizens who can, at worst, "get by" in banks, shops, and casinos. Not surprisingly, the SAFCERT submission (2000) devotes much discussion to the issue of the type of mathematical literacy that will comprise the fundamental learning component of the GETC, making the point that "To enforce Mathematical Literacy in the 'general' sense ... (Mathematics as a subject) may have the unintended consequence of many learners deciding not to enter the stream of lifelong learning" (2000: 7). Much discussion needs to take place about the most appropriate type of mathematical literacy for the GETC.

The following questions throw some of the issues into relief:

- 16 credits in Mathematics including numeracy must be obtained. Should all learners who achieve a level 1 qualification have achieved the same learning outcomes to be credited with the minimum compulsory 16 credits? Or could different candidates have achieved different outcomes?
- The credits could be achieved in different areas of study, but are the outcomes the same?

The intention behind the inclusion of language and communication and of mathematical literacy in the fundamental component is not to limit access, but to provide a foundation for further learning and to enable the effective participation of literate and numerate citizens in society. This said, it should be possible to achieve the outcomes in a variety of learning contexts so that the emphasis is not on the study of concepts in the abstract or more specifically on Mathematics as a subject. If one is to obtain a measure of equivalence between, for instance, mathematics for school children and mathematics for factory workers, moreover, there needs to be some

accommodation of academically-oriented mathematics within the industry context and of industry-oriented mathematics within the schooling context for the primary purpose of the GETC not to be compromised.

In this regard, an appropriate SGB will need to be established to determine level 1 learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Furthermore there are SGBs that are working on standards in these areas or SGBs that are in process of formation. Care must be taken to ensure that there is no duplication of the work and that a single coherent system is created in respect of the fundamental learning standards. Moreover, in the development of the fundamental mathematics standards from GETC to FETC, attention must be given to ensuring that there are no critical gaps and that progression is logical from one level to the next. For this reason, it is recommended that:

Recommendation 8

The 16 credits in Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy (including numeracy) must be obtained at NQF level 1.

4.2.3   Core and elective learning

Paragraph 9(b) of the NSB Regulations discusses the question of core and elective learning:

> A minimum of 36 (thirty-six) credits at level 1 … which shall be divided between the Core and Elective categories, with each qualification specifying the distribution of credits required in these categories: Provided that the range of additional credits shall be broad enough to enable learners to pursue some of their own learning interests.

It is unlikely that any blanket ruling on the division of credits across these two categories will serve any positive purpose. The reason for this is that the different purposes of qualifications should ultimately determine the ratio of core and elective learning: in some qualifications it may not be very easy to determine what constitutes core learning as opposed to elective learning while in other qualifications the core learning will dominate the necessary credits, by virtue of the purpose of the qualification. The determination of what constitutes core learning for a qualification and what the elective options are should rest with the proposers of the qualification.

Recommendation 9

The principle is accepted that proposers of a certain qualification can designate specific areas of study or credits as compulsory within that qualification.

4.2.4   Additional rules of combination

There is a danger in a system of credit accumulation that credits are accumulated over a period of time, separately from a number of different providers, and that in that process, although the learner has accumulated all the parts, the overall purpose of the qualification has been lost. In HET there is a practice of requiring learners to

complete a certain percentage of the qualification requirements or aspects of the qualification within the institution before the qualification is awarded; only a limited number of courses from other institutions is taken into consideration. In the case of the Senior Certificate with Endorsement, there are minimum requirements for the number of subjects that must be offered and passed at one sitting of the examination – the group examination concept. These requirements are attempts at ensuring coherence within the qualification. This issue needs consideration and guidance on how and where the concerns around the "shopping basket" accumulation of credits can be addressed, and is alluded to in the context of integrated assessment and RPL below.

In an attempt at ensuring coherence, it may be apposite to make the following recommendation:

Recommendation 10

Proposers of qualifications should liaise with the ETQAs which quality assure the learning programmes leading to the award of GETCs on the requirements for ensuring coherence within and of those qualifications.

4.3 The articulation of unit standards-based and "whole" qualifications at level 1 of the NQF

According to the NSB Regulations (8[4]), a registered qualification at NQF level 1 – or indeed at any level on the NQF - may be constructed from unit standards or it may be registered as a "whole" qualification – that is, not constructed from unit standards. The use of the term "whole qualification" in the Regulations is misleading, however, the implication being that a non-unit standards-based qualification is in some way less than whole. Others have differentiated the two on the basis of exit-level outcomes, "whole qualifications" being based on exit-level outcomes rather than unit standards. Even this is a misconception, however, since both unit standards-based and non-unit standards-based qualifications are required to stipulate the exit-level outcomes that learners need to demonstrate towards achievement of the qualification (NSB Regulations 5[1][b & c]).

This last point in fact assists us in solving the difficulty of articulation and equivalence between unit standards-based and non-unit standards-based qualifications. Short of insisting that all qualifications should be unit standards-based – as the SAFCERT submission gestures towards doing (2000: 9) - one way of demonstrating equivalence is to make articulation hinge on the common denominator, exit-level outcomes. Thus, since the formal schooling certificate is likely to be a "whole qualification", a comparison of the schooling GETC and the ABET GETC, for example, can be made on the basis of their respective exit-level outcomes.

This does not, however, preclude the articulation of unit standards-based qualifications on the basis of unit standards, specific outcomes, and indeed level.

The following recommendation is therefore made:

Recommendation 11

A registered GETC may be unit standards-based or non-unit standards-based, in accordance with the requirements of the NSB Regulations (8[4]). Unit standards-based and non-unit standards-based GETCs should articulate on the basis of their exit-level outcomes, specific outcomes, and levels – depending on the types of qualifications involved and the purposes of articulation.

4.4   Progression from GET to FET and credit accumulation

The issue of progression from GET to FET and credit accumulation is discussed to some extent in the FETC discussion document. The Department of Education FET Curriculum Discussion Document (Department of Education, 2000a: 19) appears to support the notion that a learner may accumulate credits; should certain credits not have been achieved, the learner may enrol concurrently for credits at level 2 and at level 3, for example. In the same document (2000a: 31) the following statement is made: "After a learner has obtained the FETC, s/he can proceed towards the achievement of outcomes leading to a certificate or diploma at level 5, subject to HE admission requirements." This policy reflects the process followed in higher education and indicates a shift from past practice.

It may be necessary for SAQA to take a principle stand that progression within a band may be on the basis of accumulation of credits as determined by the providers within a band. However, progression between bands must be based on the achievement of critical qualifications: for example, progress from ABET to study of a qualification in the Further Education and Training Band requires the achievement of a GETC; progress from study at level 3 and below to a qualification in the Higher Education and Training Band requires the achievement of an FETC. Alternatively, proposers of qualifications may be asked to indicate the conditions upon which progress to a qualification at a level in the next band is granted – though the danger here is that the flexibility may ultimately undermine the credibility and coherence of the NQF itself.

The question is how to balance progression and access. There is a need to balance flexibility with rationality in the system so that it is possible for institutions to manage learning in a coherent manner. The real challenge may well be in ensuring that institutions are flexible enough.

The Department of Education FET Discussion Document (2000a) suggests that credit accumulation at levels 2 and 3 will be acknowledged by the issuing of credit-based certificates when the minimum compulsory credits have been attained. The accumulated credits will be captured on SAQA's National Learners' Record Database (NLRD). This process motivates learners by accrediting achievement as it occurs.

Certain other proposers of qualifications that span more than one level are experimenting with the concept of designing the qualification in such a way that credit-based certificates can be issued along the way as the necessary credits are achieved.

It has been forcefully argued in the FETC discussion document that the underlying principle in the design of an NQF level 4 qualification must be that the qualifying

learner has the learning assumed to be in place to embark upon the study of qualifications at a higher level and that through the acquisition of the NQF level 4 qualification a viable learning pathway is created. This underpins the concept that qualification design must favour the principle of "dove-tailing": exiting from one qualification must lead directly to entry to one or more qualifications at the same or higher level of the NQF. This principle should be adopted in the case of qualifications at NQF level 1.

Recommendation 12

*Qualifications at level 1 of the NQF, **certificates** of achievement below level 1 of the NQF in the case of the ABET sector, **statements** of achievement below level 1 of the NQF in the case of the formal schooling sector, and certificates or statements of achievement (depending upon whether any decision is taken about the creation of sub-levels) in the case of the industrial sector must be proposed within learning pathways that allow for simultaneous exit from one qualification, certificate of achievement, or statement of achievement and entry into another at the same level or sub-level of the NQF. In addition, learning pathways should indicate the progression possibilities from the GET into the FET and HET bands, where appropriate.*

4.5   Integrated assessment

The NSB Regulations require the proposers of qualifications to address the notion of integrated assessment in their submissions.

Integrated assessment needs to be incorporated appropriately to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is achieved; such assessment should use a range of formative and summative assessment such as portfolios, simulations, workplace assessments and also written and oral examinations (regulation 8[1][g]; RSA, 1998a).

One of the problems facing the system is that there has been no formally recognised qualification at NQF level 1; some would argue that even current discussions do not indicate a single clear purpose for a qualification at this level. Furthermore, the problem with a system that encourages the achievement of a qualification through credit accumulation is that a learner may achieve the required number of credits in the relevant areas of study – credits earned over a period of time, at different learning sites, and through different assessment modes - perhaps even through RPL. Because of the fragmented nature of the learning and assessment, there is no guarantee that the overall purpose of the qualification has been achieved.

The issue of integrated assessment is addressed in the SAQA publication *Guidelines for the Assessment of NQF Registered Unit Standards and Qualifications* (SAQA, 1999). This is a complex concept, and engagement with it by practitioners will inform further developments and debates.

Recommendation 13

Providers and ETQAs should engage with each other and with one another, with stakeholders in their sectors, and with SAQA on how best to maintain the integrity

of GETCs beyond the requirement that the purpose of the qualification be achieved through appropriate incorporation of integrated assessment.

4.6   Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The NSB Regulations stipulate that proposers of NQF (level 1) qualifications must, in their submissions, indicate in the rules governing the award of the qualification that the qualification may be achieved in whole or in part through the recognition of prior learning, which concept includes but is not limited to learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal and non-formal learning and work experience (RSA, 1998a; regulation 8[1][h]). It will be necessary to spell out the criteria for awarding the qualification (or part of it) through RPL.

Recommendation 14

ETQAs and providers of learning programmes leading to the achievement of GETCs should collaborate in formulating policies and devising criteria that allow learners to achieve whole or part qualifications through the recognition of prior learning.

5   Issues for Implementation

A number of issues have been raised in this document which have different implications for the different sectors operating at the GETC level. The challenge will be for each of these sectors to find ways of implementing the recommendations so as to achieve coherence in qualifications design and construction and in learning programme provision at level 1 of the NQF.

One of the key challenges facing all sectors is how to ensure the articulation of qualifications across the band. In this regard, the Department of Education will have to give further consideration to the articulation of its qualifications with those of the ABET and industrial sectors. The question it will need to address is: What kind of recognition will the statements of achievement given to learners who exit from the formal schooling system before the achievement of a GETC – that is, before Grade 9 – have in the ABET and industrial sectors, and more broadly in society at large?

Further design and implementation issues which the Department of Education will need to consider are:

- the relationship between the 66 specific outcomes, the exit-level outcomes which its qualifications are required to specify, and expected levels of performance (ELPs); and
- the accumulation of credit below Grade 7, and the award of credit below Grade 9.

In terms of the IAAB submission (1999), the ABET sector will need to consider whether the range of elective unit standards available to the learner should be more narrowly defined and its relationship to the core unit standards more clearly explicated to ensure that its selection contributes towards the achievement of the purpose of the qualification. This question of the composition of the core and elective components of qualifications – particularly the relationship between the two in terms

of their contribution towards the achievement of the purpose of the qualification - is a matter for all sectors operating at the level, however.

In the absence of sound education, training and development qualifications design and learning programme provision, however, the best GETC design and GET provision in the world will not succeed in laying a firm foundation for the personal and socio-economic development for which the NQF stands. In other words, the quality of educator/trainer education-and-training, both pre-service and in-service, will ultimately determine the success of NQF implementation and bring about the education and training transformation which South Africa seeks. In this regard, it is important that all roleplayers involved in GET provision liaise with the SGBs registered under the NSB for Education, Training and Development (ETD) - NSB 05 - to ensure that their interests are accommodated in qualifications design, and with the ETQAs accredited to oversee the provision of learning programmes leading to the achievement of ETD qualifications to ensure that educators and trainers are well prepared to provide learning programmes leading to GETCs.

6   Conclusion

The point must be emphasized that one of the strengths of the SAQA system is that it is an open system, allowing flexibility for different bodies to put forward the qualifications that serve their needs. The Regulations should not be restrictive and drive the system back towards closing pathways rather than opening up pathways. We must remember that access and portability exist in tension – as access is opened up and flexibility is prioritized, the portability of credits from one qualification to another becomes more limited; on the other hand, the more portability of credits is emphasized, the more restrictive and less flexible access becomes. SAQA must ensure that the system does not become restrictive and create artificial barriers to viable pathways.

Careful consideration must be given to how one moves a system from the present to the future – that is, to issues of systemic change. Even if SAQA accepts qualifications as proposed by different bodies, debated according to agreed principles, the real problem lies with society's acceptance of their value. Consideration of more flexible organizational arrangements within the system are likely to have the effect of "loosening up" the system and encouraging life-long learning – for example, the semesterization of learning and assessment and the relaxing of group examination requirements.

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NOTICE 4655 OF 2000

Announcement of Intention to Accredit the Construction Sector Education and Training Authority

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) hereby notifies the public that it intends to accredit the Construction Sector Education and Training Authority (CETA) for the following 3 existing qualifications interimly registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF):

1.	National Certificate Carpentry	Level 3
2.	National Certificate Bricklaying	Level 3
3.	National Certificate in Refractories	Level 3

and for the following 9 Designated and 17 Non-designated Trades as they are registered with the Department of Labour:

Designated Trades:

1.	Bricklaying
2.	Bricklaying & Plastering
3.	Carpentry
4.	Joinery & Wood machining
5.	Painting & Decorating
6.	Plastering & Tiling
7.	Plumbing
8.	Roofing
9	Shopfitting

Non-designated Trades:

1.	Aluminium worker
2.	Carpet fitting
3.	Resilient floor layer
4.	Ceiling & Partitioning Erector
5.	Glazer
6.	Waterproofer
7.	Swimming pool Constructor
8.	Scaffold team leader
9.	Drainage & Services Artisan
10.	Road works Artisan
11.	Shuttering Artisan
12.	Construction Site Practice (Part 1)

13.	Construction Site Practice (Part 2)
14.	Management for Technicians & Engineers
15.	Safety
16.	Vocational skills and survey (various)
17.	Supervisory

from the 1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004 in terms of Section 2 (1) of the Education and Training Quality Assurance Regulations (Government Gazette No. 19231 published on 8 September 1998).

Objections to such accreditation must please be lodged with the Executive Officer of SAQA by the 31 January 2001.

The Executive Officer (ATT: Ms R. Rajab)
South African Qualifications Authority
Postnet Suite 248
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WATERKLOOF
0145
Telephone: (012) 482 0878
Fax   (012) 346 5814
e-mail   rrajab@saqa.co.za

Yours sincerely

SAMUEL B.A. ISAACS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOTICE 4656 OF 2000

Announcement of Intention to Accredit the Council on Higher Education as an Eduction and Training Quality Assurance Body

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) hereby notifies the public that it intends to accredit the Council on Higher Education for:

All undergraduate and post-graduate qualifications in the higher education band (levels 5-8) interimly registered on the National Qualifications Framework offered at public and private multi-purpose institutions as Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.

From the 1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004 in terms of Section 2 (1) of the Education and Training Quality assurance Regulations (Government Gazette No. 19231 published on 8 September 1998)

A list of all qualifications offered at the 21 universities, 15 technikons and private higher institutions, registered with the Department of Education is available at SAQA. Please contact Yvonne Sawyer at (012) 468 8481 for any queries regarding these qualifications.

Objections to such accreditation must please be lodged with the Executive Officer of SAQA by the 31 January 2001.

The Executive Officer (ATT: Ms R. Rajab)
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Yours sincerely

SAMUEL B.A. ISAACS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOTICE 4657 OF 2000

Announcement of Intention to Accredit the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technology Sector Education and Training Authority (ISETT SETA)

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) hereby notifies the public that it intends to accredit the Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunications Technology Sector Education and Training Authority (ISETT SETA) for the following eight existing qualifications interimly registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF):
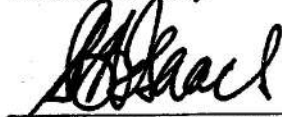
1.	Certificate IT Technician	Level 4
2.	Certificate Electronic and Computing System	Level 4
3.	Diploma Electronic and Computing System	Level 5
4.	Advanced Diploma Electronic and Computing System	Level 5
5.	Certificate Computer Programming	Level 4
6.	Certificate Programming	Level 4
7.	Diploma Programming	Level 5
8.	Advanced Diploma Programming	Level 5

from the 1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004 in terms of Section 2 (1) of the Education and Training Quality Assurance Regulations (Government Gazette No. 19231 published on 8 September 1998).

Objections to such accreditation must be lodged with the Executive Officer of SAQA by 31 January 2001.

The Executive Officer (ATT: Ms R. Rajab)
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Yours sincerely

SAMUEL B.A. ISAACS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOTICE 4658 OF 2000

Announcement of Intention to Accredit the Services Sector Education and Training Authority

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) hereby notifies the public that it intends to accredit the Services Sector Education and Training Authority for the following existing qualification interimly registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF):

1.	National Certificate: Afro Hairdressing	Level 4

and for the following 4 Designated Trades as they are registered with the Department of Labour:

1.	Gents Hairdressing
2.	Ladies Caucasian Hairdressing
3.	General Hairdressing
4.	Cosmetology

from the 1 March 2001 to 29 February 2004 in terms of Section 2 (1) of the Education Training Quality Assurance Regulations (Government Gazette No. 19231 published on 8 September 1998).

Objections to such accreditation must please be lodged with the Executive Officer of SAQA by the 31 January 2001.

The Executive Officer (ATT: Ms R. Rajab)
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Yours sincerely

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOTICE 4659 OF 2000

Guidelines for Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies:

Establishing Criteria for the registration of Assessors

Discussion Document for Public Comment

This document was approved for release as a discussion document for public comment at the SAQA meeting held on 6 December 2000.

Comments should be forwarded to:

SAQA Office
Postnet Suite 248
Private Bag X06
WATERKLOOF
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Fax number: (012) 346-5814

Attention: Ms J Matlaila

or

E-mail: jmatlaila@saqa.co.za

The **closing date** for comments is **31 January 2001**.
Submissions should be titled: *"Criteria for the registration of Assessors Discussion Document for Public Comment"*

Establishing Criteria for the registration of Assessors Discussion Document for Public Comment

GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES

ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ASSESSORS

SAQA DRAFT DOCUMENT : DECEMBER 2000

SAQA Draft Document: December 2000

Guidelines for Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies
Establishing Criteria for the Registration of Assessors

Introduction

This document is a synthesis of information gathered from a variety of sources through internal research process and through consultation with various stakeholders. The initial draft consisted of a consultation process with selected individuals and organizations. It must be noted the final document will be influenced by the generic assessor standards that will be registered in the NQF.

This document serves as a guide for Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) to formulate criteria for the registration of assessors. (ETQAs) are required to register assessors for the standards and qualifications for which they have been accredited. The register of assessors is a means of ensuring that whoever assesses learner competence has been deemed as having the requisite criteria recommended by Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs) for specified NQF registered standards and qualifications.

These guidelines are included to also provide a basis for the registration of assessment agencies and centres. Firstly, it is assumed that agencies and centers would utilize assessors that would have the requisite expertise that is referred to, in this document. Further, agencies and centers would have in place policies systems and procedures that are aligned to the principles and policies of their ETQA. The roles responsibilities and expertise expected of individual assessors could be adapted to agencies and centres.

It is assumed that moderators, whether internal or external, would be registered assessors. On the basis of that assumption, these guidelines lay a basis for the recognition of moderators.

Assessment is an integral element of learning facilitation and as such all facilitators of learning of all sites of learning engage in assessment. The register of assessors that each ETQA has to have is of those learning facilitators that assess learners for summative assessment, that is for assessment that culminates in decisions regarding the awarding of credits and, or qualifications. The rationale for such a register is to ensure the credibility of summative assessments in the NQF system, that is the fairness, validity, reliability and practicality of assessments. It is also to ensure that individuals who make decisions about the competence of learners in order that they acquire credits, and or qualifications have the requisite knowledge, skills and experience for specified NQF registered standards and qualifications.

The guidelines herein are generic. They are intended for use by any ETQA regardless of sector. ETQAs are expected to take the guidelines as a minimum upon which sector specific and standard-qualification specific criteria are established.

SAQA Draft Document: December 2000

Furthermore the guidelines should be used in conjunction with the generic assessor standards[1] registered on the NQF[1]. In appropriate circumstances the registration of assessors can be delegated to providers including providers of assessment only such as assessment agencies and centers Delegation would, nonetheless, be governed by these guidelines and assessor standards.

The Role of Assessors

The OBET system differs fundamentally from previous knowledge and inputs-based systems in the sense that the learner, not the content or the curriculum, is at the centre of the learning. Look at the following:

Learning is no longer something that is 'done to' the learner, but something that the learner is actively involved in. As such, the **role of the assessor** has changed: from being a 'gate-keeper', who uses assessment to prevent learners from developing further, to a **supportive guide** who has the success of the learner at heart – so that the learner can gain access to further learning.

Therefore, the role of the assessor (in terms of the learner) is to:

- Inform the learner about the qualification's or unit standard's requirements
- Support and guide the learner in the collection of evidence
- Help the learner plan for the assessment
- Inform the learner about the timing of the assessment
- Conduct the assessment and provide feedback

To be able to fulfill in these roles, the assessor has to (in terms of the assessment process):

- Become familiar with the qualification and the unit standards that he/she will be assessing
- Plan and design the assessment (or source appropriate assessment methods and instruments and modify these if necessary)
- Collect evidence of the learner's performance in accordance with the relevant ETQA's principles and policies
- Evaluate and judge the evidence

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[1] This guideline will be applicable when assessor standards are registered on the NQF.

SAQA Draft Document: December 2000

- Authenticate the evidence

- Make an assessment decision, i.e. 'competent, or not yet competent'

Once an assessment decision has been made, the assessor has to (in terms of the ETQA requirements):

- Meet all documentation and recording requirements

- Forward the results to the relevant ETQA for certification

- Comply with the ETQA's moderation requirements

- Review the assessment process and implement changes where required[2]

The responsibility of assessors is to plan, administer and manage the assessment process[2] in a manner that ensures credibility. The planning, administration and management of assessment must be done in accordance with the principles and policies of ETQAs including moderation requirements. Specifically, the duties and responsibilities of assessors are to:

- get to know the NQF registered standards and qualifications they are responsible for and to inform learners of the requirements they need to comply with in order that they can be successful and be qualified

- plan assessment and inform learners about the timing of assessment

- design assessment by selecting appropriate methods and designing appropriate instruments

- advise learners on issues related to the collection of evidence for assessment

- collect evidence of learners' performance by using different methods of assessment

- evaluate and judge the evidence collected

- decide whether learners have complied with the relevant criteria and are therefore competent or not yet competent

- conduct assessment according to the relevant principles and policies of ETQAs and moderation requirements

- complete all documentation and recording requirements, forward the results to the ETQAs and inform learners of the outcome of the assessment

- evaluate and review the assessment process and implement changes if required

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[2] The assessment process referred to in this document is that pertaining to summative assessment

The Expertise of Assessors

The responsibilities of assessors clearly indicate the expertise expected of assessors. The expertise needed is the following:

1. Subject Matter Expertise/Occupational /Contextual

Assessors must have proficiency in the subject matter of the discipline or learning area in which the standards and qualifications they are responsible for falls. They should also demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the specific standards and knowledge as obtained in the following areas of expertise, that is, assessors should have both occupational and contextual expertise in their field of assessment.

Contextual Expertise (including Occupational Expertise)

Assessors should:
- know exactly what is expected of the candidates by way of the standards which the candidates have to meet
- be subject-matter and, or occupational experts
- keep in contact with developments in their occupational field
- have a relevant occupational qualification.
- understand the 'language' of the field they are assessing, i.e. both the technical terminology as well as the ways of thinking and doing that are required to be competent as an assessor
- keep in contact with developments in their field
- have a qualification relevant to the specified context
- have a requisite number of years of experience, this being determined by the ETQA, as appropriate

2. Education, Training and Development (ETD) Expertise

Assessors show evidence of their ETD expertise when they:

- Regularly ask candidates for feedback on assessment in order to constantly monitor and improve their (assessors') practice
- Know the curriculum and trainers through regular contact and provide the trainers with detailed feedback
- Use established assessment principles and processes when conducting assessments

- Take language factors into consideration when conducting assessments, using interpreters if necessary to ensure that candidates are clear about what is expected of them
- Exhibit honesty, fairness, reliability, consistency and integrity in their execution of assessment
- Treat learners with respect and sensitivity
- Demonstrate a broad understanding of outcomes-based forms of assessment and the NQF
- Have the necessary training and are in possession of the appropriate ETDP qualifications
- Demonstrate a competence in what they themselves are assessing
- Ensure that the relationship between the learner and assessor during the assessment is conducive to the assessment
- Understand their own role within the broader quality assurance system
- Regularly ask candidates for feedback on the assessment. This enables them to constantly monitor and improve their practice
- Ensure that the environment for assessment is conducive to assessment
- ensure that the assessment tools used are appropriate and meet the established assessment standards
- Demonstrate that they are competent to deal with the following: assessment environment, assessment instrument and assessment system
- Know how to provide feedback on the standards to relevant standard-setting bodies

3. Assessment Expertise

Assessors should be proficient in the assessment process. In all assessment activities they should demonstrate adherence to the principles of fairness, validity, reliability and practicability. Specifically, they should:

- know how to interpret the assessment criteria and requirements of standards and qualifications
- know how to use assessment guides if available
- demonstrate the skill of planning assessment
- demonstrate that they are able to select and, or design assessment instruments, activities and materials appropriate to the subject matter and to specific standards and qualifications
- demonstrate that they can collect evidence from a variety of sources and guide learners in the collection of evidence
- demonstrate that they are able to communicate effectively with learners during assessment
- demonstrate that they can evaluate and judge evidence, and make decisions with integrity and in adherence to the 4 principles of credible assessment

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- demonstrate the ability to implement appropriate recording and reporting methods for assessment results
- demonstrate an understanding of moderation requirements
- demonstrate that they are able to ask candidates for feedback on assessment to enable them to constantly monitor and improve their practice
- demonstrate the ability to evaluate and review the assessment process and to act upon the results thereof
- demonstrate that they have acquired the requisite number of years of experience as assessors
- demonstrate that they have undergone assessment training which may be through: a mentoring process, on the job training, additional study of a unit standard or qualification on assessment, or as part of qualifying as a facilitator of learning[3]

4. Planning, Administrative and Management Skills

Assessors need to demonstrate that they have planning, administrative and management skills. They need to demonstrate that they can implement comprehensive information systems to ensure that the administrative and reporting requirements are managed.

5. Interpersonal Skills

Assessors need to have good communication skills. In particular, assessors have to demonstrate that they are able to communicate effectively with learners. They need to be able to establish an open relationship with learners to enable learners to perform optimally during assessment. They need to create an enabling environment for learners who are being assessed. They also have to conduct themselves with integrity and uphold the principle of confidentiality, the 4 principles of credible assessment and the learners' recourse to the appeal system.

Note

- Criteria for the registration of assessors would therefore take into account the expertise identified
- The ETQA would develop a strategy for implementation which would identify elements critical for the short-term and those that can be put in place in the medium and long-term.

The Prerequisites for Registration as an Assessor

For SAQA, assessor includes all practitioners who will be responsible for the assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes. SAQA is of the view that assessor can refer to a practitioner–assessor and to the assessor being different from the practitioner.

The notion of the education and training practitioner being both the learning facilitator and assessor means that teachers, lecturers and trainers who traditionally have administered assessment in addition to facilitating learning can be legally recognised as assessors. It also allows, on the basis of negotiation among the parties involved, for the inclusion of other persons in the assessment process such as workplace supervisors, managers or team leaders. The management of their assessment can be included in the overall management and maintenance of an assessment system.

In some instances the assessor may be a different person from the learning facilitator. This is also acceptable to SAQA. The assessor in this instance would, also, need to be registered as an assessor.

There are cases where general qualifications have specific occupational requirements in particular contexts. Usually this has implications that the full qualification of the learner cannot be assessed by one assessor. Arrangements for joint assessment would have to be made. Both assessors in this instance would need to be registered as assessors.

Essentially anyone who meets the above requirements can be an assessor. Assessors can come from a number of sources. The kinds of persons that can be assessors are listed below:

- trainers / teachers / lecturers
- colleagues / peers
- supervisors
- managers
- designated workplace assessors
- external assessors – external to the learning site, be it the workplace or provider of learning

In order to register as an assessor, individuals have to meet the criteria for assessors set out by the Standard Generating Body responsible for the generation of the particular unit standard or qualification. Such persons would need to provide evidence that they have the experience, expertise and knowledge to assess generally and to assess the particular unit standard or qualification specifically. The evidence that an individual is suitable for assessment may be based on verification that:

- the assessor has either the same qualification as the one they are assessing or they have a qualification in the same 'family' as the one they are assessing
- the assessor is up-to-date in their field of assessment and thus they are competent against the current registered standard and qualification
- the work and assessment experience mentioned in the assessor's CV relate to the specific competencies required in the unit standards and qualifications in question
- supporting documentation like letters of reference, certificates of service and transcripts of referees' accounts confirm the assessor's expertise

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- evidence from a selection of assessments which have been conducted like checklists, reports, results and feedback from assessees confirm the assessor's expertise

There maybe instance whereby it may be impossible for ETQAs to require all assessors to have a qualification as the one they are assessing. In such instances, assessors should have a qualification in the same "family" as the one they are assessing, and ETQAs need to define what acceptable "family" is for their qualifications. In some cases however, assessors must have the actual qualification they are assessing–this is especially true for occupations in which lives are at risk or highly technical.

ETQAs should decide on the period of registration of an assessor and they should have mechanisms in place to review the assessor's registration at the end of the stipulated period.

Certification of assessors

- The standards defined in the relevant units should be used as the benchmarks for judging the competence of assessors.

- All assessors should obtain relevant unit certification or be exempt from it based on the experience/ qualifications that have been obtained in the past.

- An assessor may be eligible for credit transfer if he/she has a qualification which covers the practice of assessment, have the requisite number of years of experience in assessment of standards –based qualifications and has been working in a centre and occupational area which has been successfully verified.

Timescales for achieving certification will also vary with the level of activity. For example, an assessor carrying out assessments on a regular basis would be expected to achieve the required unit standard within a short space of time, whereas an assessor with more limited opportunities for carrying out assessments may take longer.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.   **"Assessee"** means the person subjected to a process of assessment wherein they demonstrate evidence of achievement or non-achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards and/or qualifications

2.   **"Assessment"** means the process of collecting evidence of learners' work to measure and make judgments about the achievement or non-achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards and/or qualifications

3.   Assessor" means the person registered by the relevant Education and Training Body in accordance with the criteria established for this purpose by a Standard Generating Body to measure the achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards and/or qualifications, and "constituent assessor" has a corresponding meaning

4.   **"Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies"** means a body in terms of Section 5 (1) (a) (ii) of the SAQA Act, responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the monitoring and auditing of national standards and/or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5 (1) (b) (i) of the SAQA Act

5.   **"Facilitator of learning and assessment "** means an individual who facilitates learning processes and activities and manages and administers assessment. This concept includes educators, trainers, mentors, etc

6.   **"Moderation"** means the process which ensures that assessment of the outcomes described in the National Qualifications Framework standards and/or qualifications is fair, valid and reliable and "Verification" has a corresponding meaning

7.   **"Registration"** means the process which ensures that the person who assesses learner competence has the requisite criteria recommended by Standard Generating Bodies (SGBs) for specified NQF registered standards and/or qualifications

8.   **"Standard Generating Body"** means a body registered in terms of Section 5 (1) (a) (ii) of the SAQA Act, responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the establishing and /or qualifications have been assigned in terms of Section 5 (1) (b) (i) of the SAQA Act
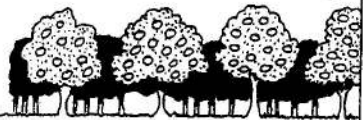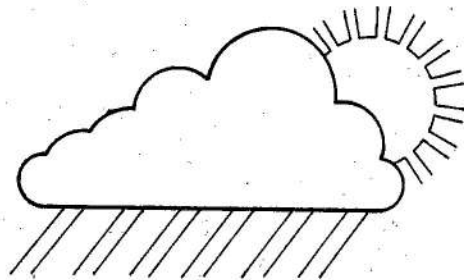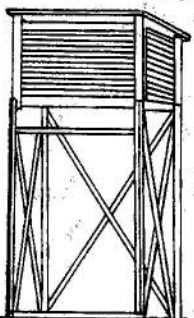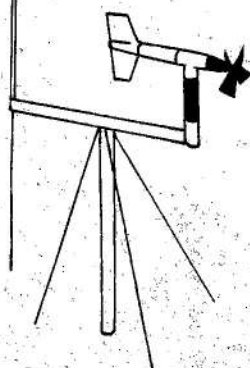
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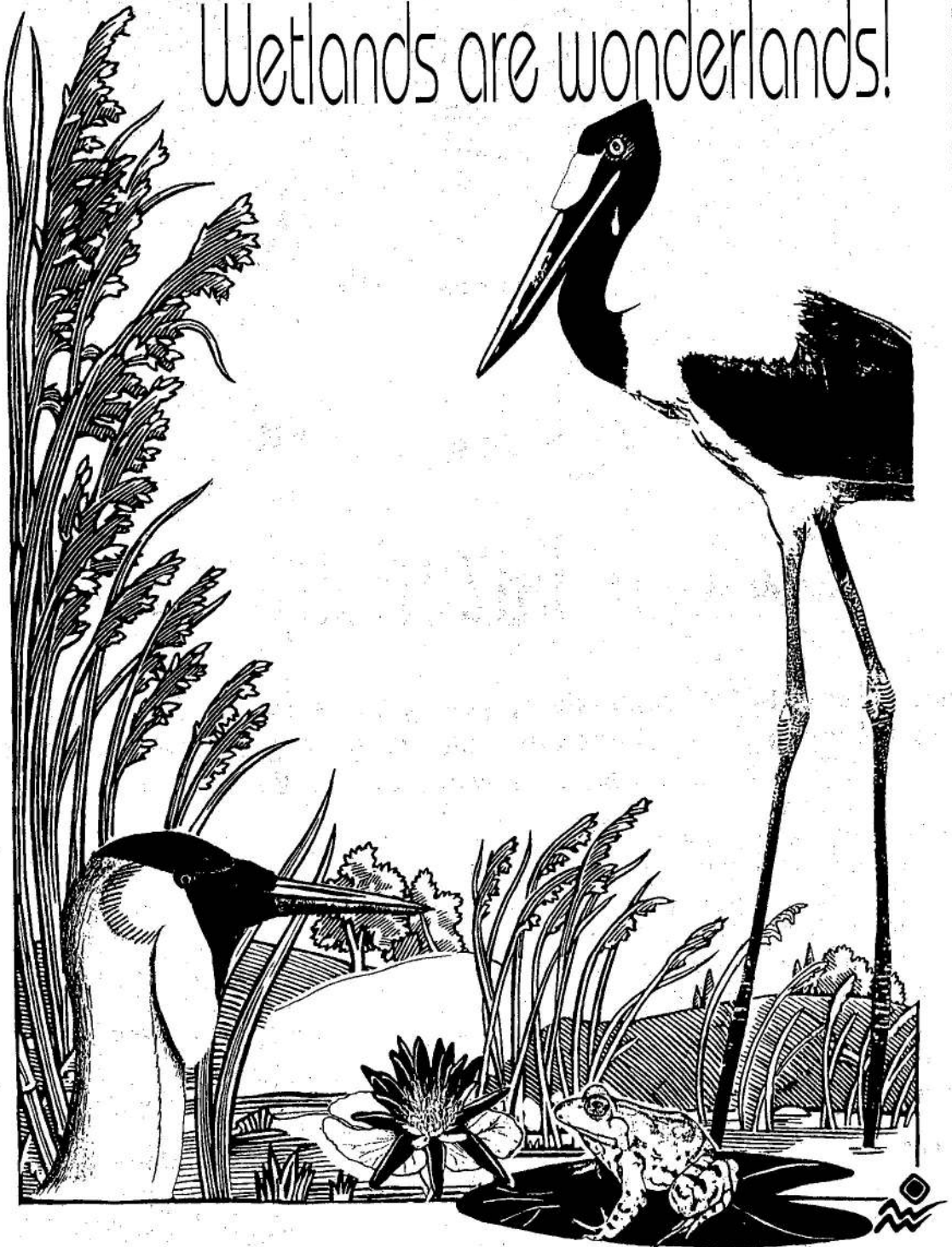
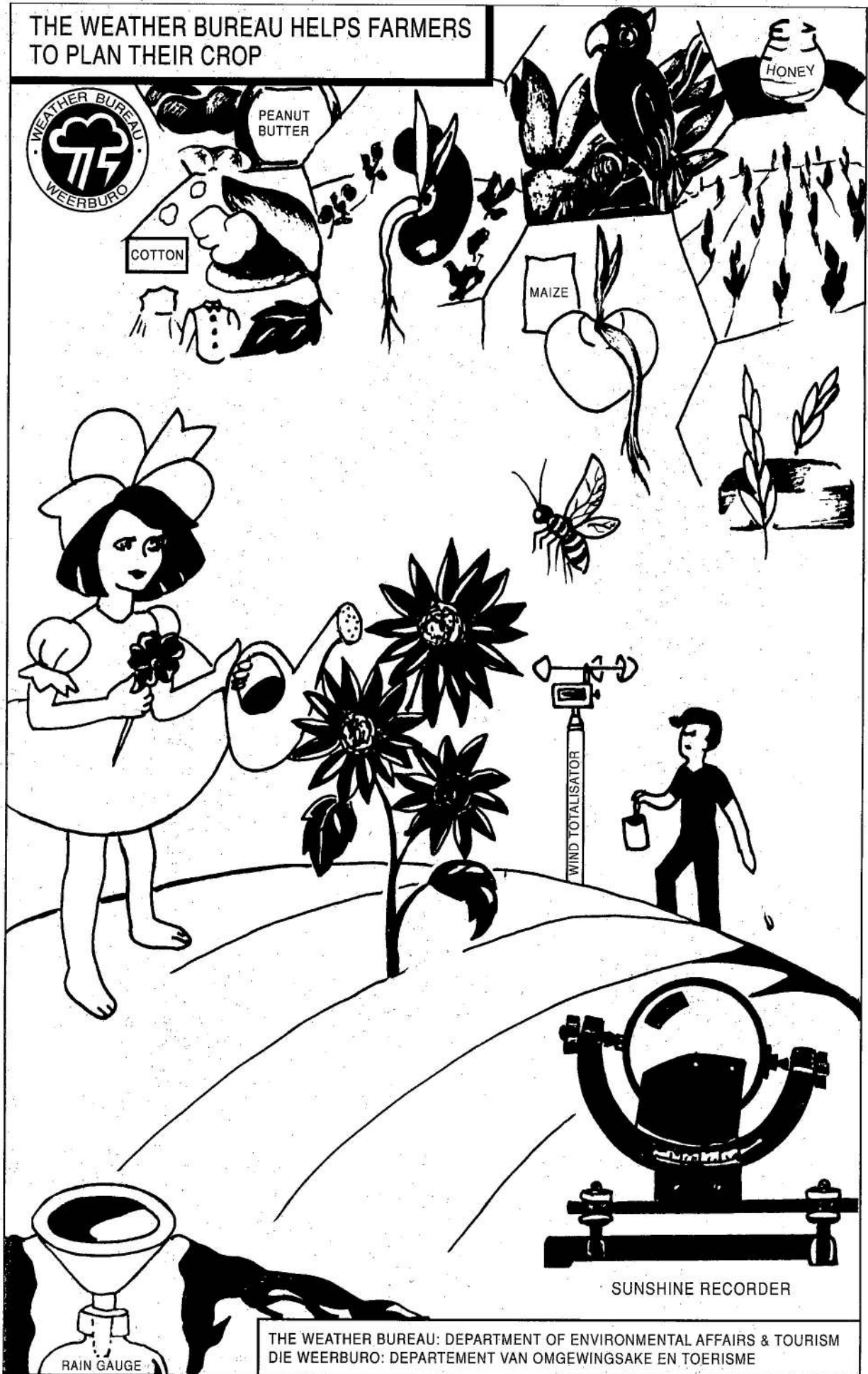Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

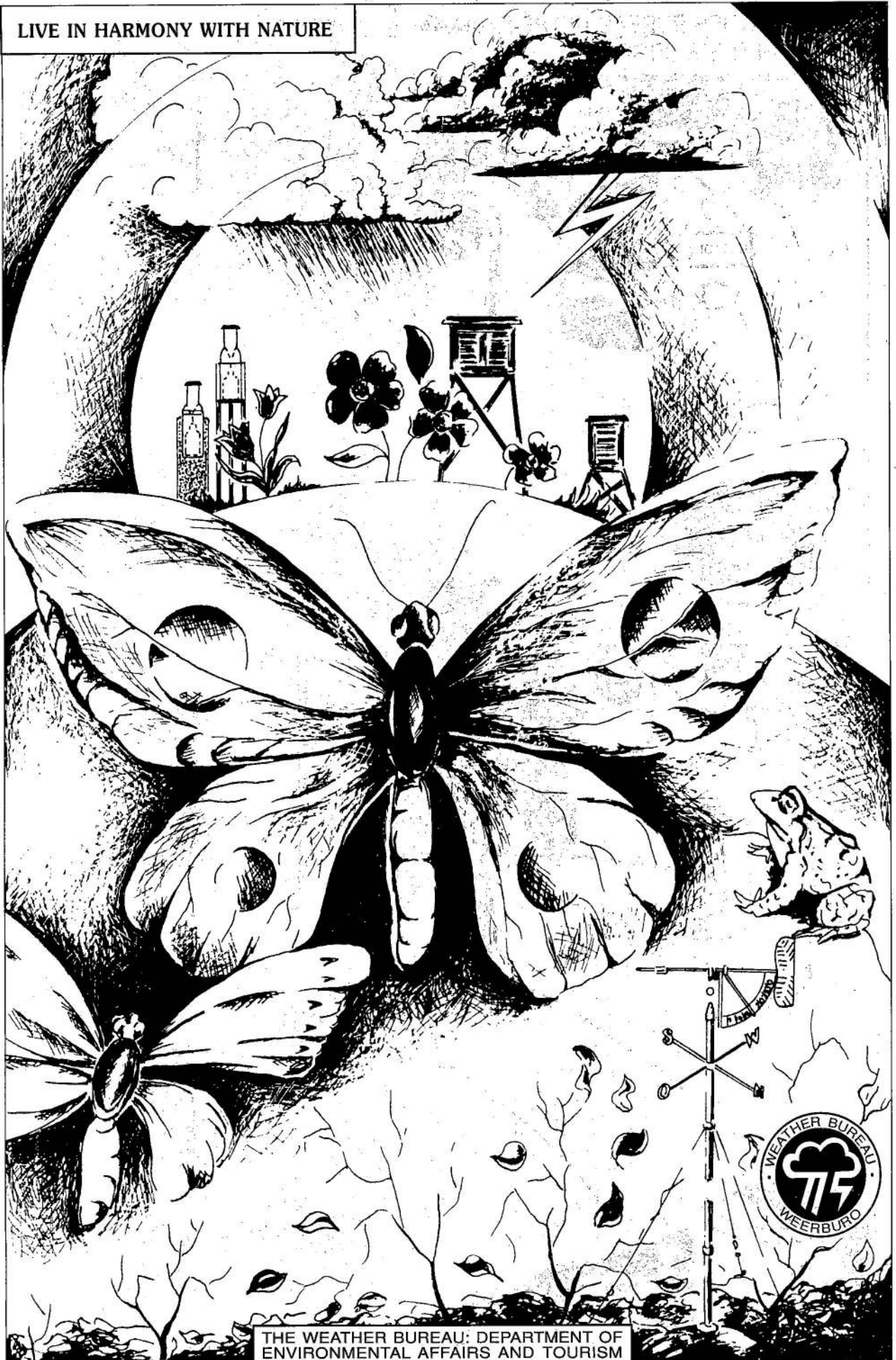SA WEATHER BUREAU   SA WEERBURO

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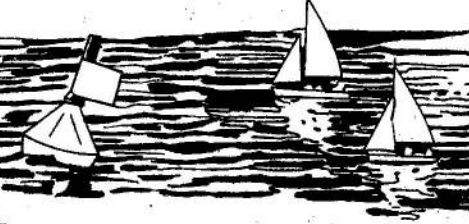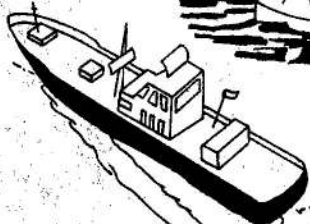
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