

TEACHER GUIDE TO

Occupational Qualifications

This curriculum aligned guide, together with the Learner Guide support FET teachers to guide learners from school into recognised occupational pathways





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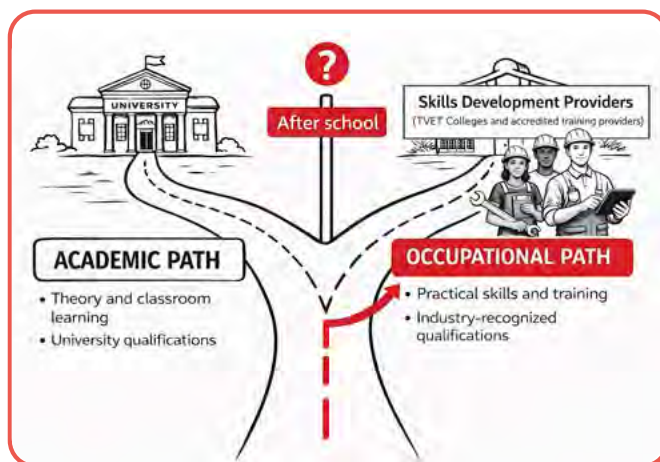
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A message to teachers

Supporting learners to develop practical skills through occupational pathways

As a teacher, you play an important role in helping learners understand the opportunities available to them after school.

Many young people need more opportunities to develop practical skills. At the same time, South Africa needs more people with practical skills and workplace experience to fill shortages across many industries. Occupational qualifications are designed to prepare people for these types of skilled occupations.



Academic pathways offered through universities are widely understood and often well explained in schools.

Occupational pathways are newer within the South African system and may therefore be less familiar to teachers, parents and learners.

Yet these qualifications are formally registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and quality assured by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). They combine structured learning with practical training and workplace experience, and lead directly to recognised occupations.

This Teacher Guide has been developed to help you introduce these pathways to learners and support career discussions in the classroom.

Tools included to assist teachers (Section 6 Appendices)

This Teacher guide is intended to be used together with the Learner guide, two posters and a workbook. All these resources support classroom discussions, stimulate learner curiosity about practical careers, and help learners understand which is the best opportunity available to them.

Learner Guide

A career guidance resource and a simple guide that explains occupational qualifications, how they fit into the education system, and how learners can access these programmes and the careers they lead to.

Poster: Understanding Occupational Qualifications

A classroom poster that explains the pathway to achieving an occupational qualifications and how they prepare learners for specific occupations.

Poster: Occupational Fields

A classroom poster that groups occupations into different fields to help learners see the wide range of careers that can be accessed through occupational pathways.

Self-Exploration Workbook

A learner activity workbook that helps learners explore study fields and find which fields interests them. They then choose an occupation that may suit them and research it further.



Section 1: What this guide is about

This guide supports teachers introducing occupational and skills-based pathways in the FET phase. It explains how these pathways fit within the South African qualifications system and how they lead to recognised occupations.

It is designed for direct classroom use to support structured career guidance and informed post-school planning.

1.1 Scope of the guide

This guide focuses specifically on occupational qualifications registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework and overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

It explains how occupational qualifications are structured, how learners access them and how they progress into employment.

The guide is intended to be used together with the Learner Guide to support structured facilitation in the classroom.

1.2 Who this guide is for

This guide is intended for Life Orientation teachers and other educators involved in career guidance in the FET phase (Grades 10-12). It may also be used to support learners in Grade 9.

No specialist knowledge of the QCTO system is required. Key concepts are explained in clear, practical terms to enable teachers to guide learners with confidence.

1.3 How this guide links to the Learner Guide

This Teacher Guide is used together with the Learner Guide. Both follow the same four-step structure:

Self – Opportunity – Decision – Action (SODA).

In Step 1, learners build self-awareness and reflect on their interests and strengths.

In Step 2, they explore the changing world of work and occupational opportunities.

In Step 3, they select one occupation and research the associated qualification pathway.

In Step 4, they identify practical next steps towards entering into that pathway.

Section 4 of this guide corresponds directly to each step in the Learner Guide. This allows teachers to facilitate the process sequentially and support learners as they move from exploration to structured planning.



Section 2: Understanding occupational qualifications

Occupational qualifications are designed to prepare learners for specific occupations. They focus on practical competence, structured workplace learning and demonstrated performance.

This section explains how occupational qualifications fit within the national system and how they operate.

2.1 Occupational qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework

All qualifications in South Africa are part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is divided into three sub-frameworks:

- The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (overseen by Umalusi)
- The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (overseen by the Council on Higher Education)
- The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (overseen by the QCTO)

The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) focuses on qualifications that prepare learners for defined occupations. Occupational qualifications are formally registered on the NQF and assigned recognised NQF levels.

They are part of the same national system as school, college and university qualifications.

2.2 What makes occupational qualifications different

Occupational qualifications are developed around the requirements of a specific occupation. They are designed in consultation with industry and focus on demonstrated competence in real work contexts.

Unlike programmes that are primarily academic in nature, occupational qualifications combine knowledge, practical application and workplace experience. The emphasis is not only on passing examinations, but on being able to perform the occupation to the required standard.

2.3 Structure of occupational qualifications

All occupational qualifications follow a standard structure consisting of three integrated components:

- Knowledge modules, which provide the theoretical foundation required for the occupation.
- Practical modules, which develop applied skills in a simulated or workshop environment.
- Work experience modules, which provide structured learning in a real workplace.

These components culminate in an External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) or, in the case of trades, a national trade test. Successful completion of either the EISA Assessment or the national trade test confirms occupational competence. The structure aims to produce learners who are work-ready rather than exam-ready.

How occupational training works:





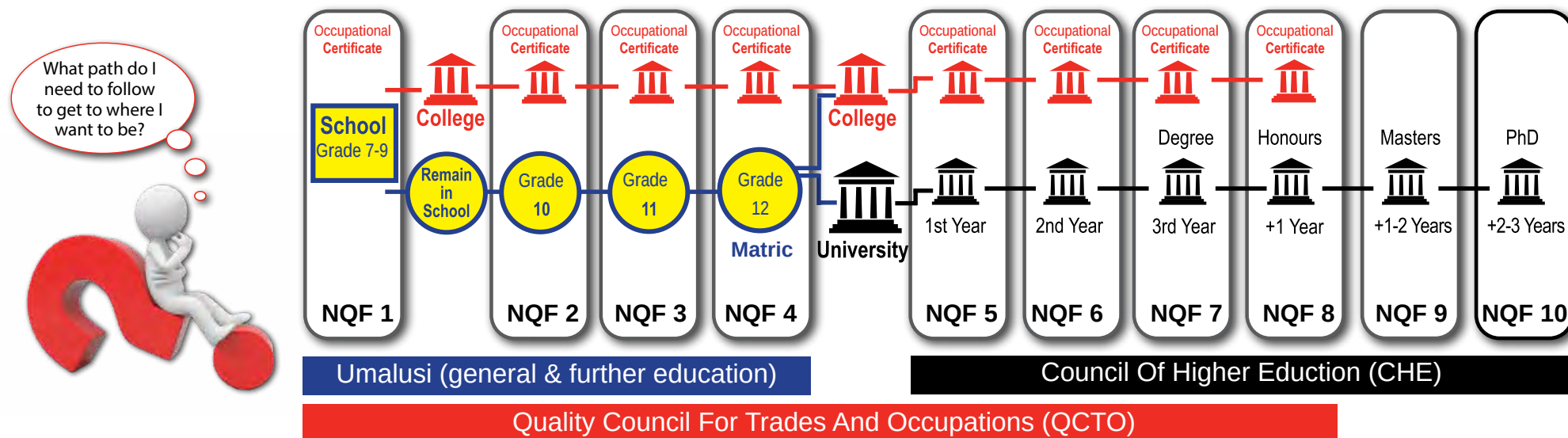
2.4 Entry requirements and qualification levels

Each occupational qualification is registered at a specific NQF level. The level of the qualification indicates the complexity of learning achieved upon completion.

Entry requirements vary by qualification and are not automatically one level below the qualification level. For example, a Level 5 occupational qualification may require entry at Level 3 or Level 4, depending on the occupation.

It is important to distinguish between:

The entry requirement, which determines who may enrol, and the qualification level, which is achieved upon successful completion. These are not always the same.



Section 2: Understanding occupational pathways

2.5 Artisan and non-artisan pathways

Occupational qualifications include both artisan and non-artisan routes.

2.5.1 Artisan pathways

Artisan pathways lead to recognised trades regulated under the Skills Development Act. There are approximately 125 listed trades in South Africa.

Training includes knowledge, practical and workplace components, and concludes with a compulsory national trade test. A person is recognised as an artisan only after passing this trade test.

Examples of trades include electrician, plumber, fitter and boilermaker and hairdresser.

2.5.2 Non-artisan occupational pathways

Non-artisan occupational pathways lead to recognised occupational certificates in fields such as information technology, health services, hospitality, and business administration.

These qualifications follow the same structured model but conclude with an External Integrated Summative Assessment rather than a trade test.

Both artisan and non-artisan qualifications:

- Are formally registered on the NQF.
- Are quality assured by the QCTO.
- Lead to recognised occupational competence.

The difference lies in the nature of the occupation and the final assessment requirement.

2.6 Where occupational qualifications are offered

Occupational qualifications are delivered by accredited Skills Development Providers (SDPs). These may include public TVET colleges, private training providers, or employer-based training centres.

Providers must be accredited with the QCTO to offer a specific qualification. Availability therefore depends on accreditation status, workplace partnerships, and industry demand.

Teachers should guide learners to verify that:

- The qualification is registered.
- The provider is accredited.
- The entry requirements are clearly confirmed.

Official sources, such as the QCTO and SAQA websites should always be used to confirm information.

2.7 Funding for occupational qualifications

Funding for occupational qualifications varies depending on the provider and sector. Possible funding mechanisms include SETA learnership grants, National Skills Fund initiatives, employer sponsorship, bursaries, and, where applicable, NSFAS at public TVET colleges.

Funding is not automatic and must be confirmed with the provider.

In the Learner Guide, funding is addressed in Step 4 when learners identify providers and plan next steps.

The teacher's role is to guide learners to official sources and ensure they understand that funding availability varies by programme and provider.



At the final stage, the pathway leads to either a trade test (artisan) or an external assessment (non-artisan).

The table below explains the two pathways:

Artisan/Apprenticeship Pathway	Occupational (Non-Artisan) Pathway
Similarities • Skills-based. • Include workplace learning. • Lead to recognised Occupational Certificates.	Similarities • Skills-based. • Include workplace learning. • Lead to recognised Occupational Certificates.
Differences • This pathway leads to a recognised trade. • You train in a recognised trade and must pass a trade test. • When you pass the trade test, you are recognised as an artisan. • In South Africa there are about 125 recognised artisan trades. • These are regulated by the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).	Differences • This pathway leads to a skilled occupation. • These occupations are practical and workplace-based, but they do NOT require a trade test. • Instead, you complete an external assessment.
Use the QR Code/or link below to view the Trade Test Centres in your province and choose a trade from the dropdown menu: https://nadsc.dhet.gov.za/site/Trade%20Test%20Centres.aspx Examples of artisan trades: • Electrician • Plumber • Boilermaker • Fitter and Turner • Millwright • Hairdresser • Joiner • Diesel Mechanic • Bricklayer • Rigger 	Examples include: • Office Administrator • Logistics Clerk • Tourist Information Officer • Marketing Practitioner • Human Resource Officer • IT Support Technician • Graphic Designer • Early Childhood Development Practitioner • Project administrator
Learning → Practice → Workplace → Trade Test → Job	Learning → Practice → Workplace → External Assessment → Job

Section 3: How to use the Learner Guide in the classroom

This section explains how the Learner Guide should be introduced and implemented in the Life Orientation classroom.

The Learner Guide follows the SODA model:

Self – Opportunity – Decision – Action.

The structure is deliberate and developmental. Learners first build self-awareness, then explore work opportunities, narrow their focus in order to make decisions, and finally develop a practical action plan.

3.1 Alignment to the Life Orientation CAPS

The Guide aligns with the Life Orientation Annual Teaching Plans across the FET phase. The SODA structure supports progressive development rather than once-off career tasks.

Teachers should refer to Table 1 below for typical alignment across Grades 10 to 12.

3.2 Suggested time allocation

A typical Life Orientation period is approximately 55 to 60 minutes. Most schools allocate two Life Orientation periods per week in the FET phase.

Table 1: Typical alignment across grades is shown below.

Grade	Term and weeks	Focus	Teaching emphasis	Learner outcome
Grade 10	Term 2 Weeks 6-7	Awareness and exploration	Career fields, world of work, career change	Broad interests identified
Grade 11	Term 2 Weeks 7-8	Investigation and readiness	Occupational pathways, progression, access	Possible pathways explored
Grade 12	Term 3 Weeks 3-4	Planning and transition	Decision-making, funding, next steps	Realistic post-school plan

The Guide can be completed over approximately 5 to 7 periods:

Step 1: Self – 1 to 2 periods

Step 2: Opportunity – 1 to 2 periods

Step 3: Decision – 2 periods including research

Step 4: Action – 1 period

Step 3 in the Learner Guide may require additional research at home using official sources such as the QCTO website, NCAP, SAQA, or private provider websites such as Gostudy.

Schools may adjust pacing depending on timetable constraints and learner readiness.

3.3 Teachers role in facilitation

Teachers are facilitators, not decision-makers.

Their role is to:

- Guide structured discussion.
- Clarify system information.
- Correct misconceptions.
- Encourage realistic exploration.
- Support reflection and planning.



The **Learner Guide** contains the activities that learners will complete.

This **Teacher Guide** supports teachers in facilitating the activities and guiding learners through the process.

The aim is not to tell learners what to choose, but to help them understand their options clearly and make informed decisions

Before beginning Step 1, teachers should take time to position the purpose of the guide within the occupational qualifications system.

Learners need to understand from the outset that this process focuses specifically on occupational qualifications. These qualifications prepare learners for clearly defined occupations and are formally registered on the National Qualifications Framework. They are quality assured by the QCTO and directly linked to recognised job roles.

STEP 1- 4 FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON OCCUPATIONAL PATHWAYS





Section 3: How to use the Learner Guide in the classroom

3.4 Opening explanation to learners

At the start of the lesson, teachers should explain that:

- The Guide focuses on occupational qualifications and the occupations they lead to.
- The aim is to explore realistic, job-focused pathways.
- The process requires active participation and written completion of activities.
- The four steps build progressively toward a practical post-school plan.

Teachers may say:

“Today we are focusing on occupational qualifications. These qualifications prepare you for specific jobs. They are part of the National Qualifications Framework and are quality assured by the QCTO. This Guide will guide you step by step in exploring whether an occupational pathway is right for you.”

Teachers should provide concrete examples of occupations such as electrician, IT technician, chef, or early childhood development practitioner to make the concept more tangible.

This explanation helps learners understand that the Guide is a structured planning tool rather than a once-off classroom activity.

3.5 Explaining the four-step structure

Once learners understand the focus on occupational qualifications, teachers should explain how the Guide is structured.

The learner guide follows a four-step developmental process:

Self – Opportunity – Decision – Action.

Each step builds on the previous one. The sequence is deliberate and should not be rushed.

Teachers should explain that:

Step 1 helps learners understand their interests, strengths and work preferences.

Step 2 broadens their perspective of the world of work. Learners explore how jobs are changing, where opportunities exist, what employers require and how occupational qualifications connect learning to real workplaces.

Step 3 requires learners to select one occupation and identify the specific occupational qualification that it leads to.

Step 4 translates that decision into practical next steps, including identifying learning providers and confirming entry requirements.

Teachers may say:

“We are not choosing a job today. We are working through a structured process. Each step prepares you for the next one.”

It is important to emphasise that learners should not attempt to move directly to Step 3 without completing the earlier stages. Sound occupational decisions depend on both self-understanding and informed work exploration.

Teachers should write the four steps on the board and briefly outline what will happen in each stage before beginning Step 1.

3.6 Using the Study Fields poster in class

The study fields groups related occupations together. They provide a structured way of exploring the world of work before focusing on a single job title. This helps learners think broadly about occupational areas rather than immediately narrowing to one career choice.

Teachers should emphasise that at this stage learners are not selecting a job. They are identifying fields that align with their interests and strengths.

Teachers may say:

"We begin by thinking in fields. Study fields help us see the range of occupational opportunities available before choosing a specific occupation."

This helps to prevent learners from making a premature decision without having done the research.



Teachers should either:

- Refer to the study fields poster displayed in the classroom, or
- Ask learners to turn to the study fields page in the Learner Guide (Step 3.1).

Teachers should explain that each field contains multiple occupations, many of which are linked to occupational qualifications registered on the QQSF.

For example:

- The Construction field may include occupations such as electrician, plumber, bricklayer, or civil construction supervisor.
- The Information Technology field may include IT technician, network support technician or cybersecurity technician.
- The Education field may include early childhood development practitioner or community development worker.



Section 4: Facilitating Step 1 of the Learner Guide



4.1 Preparing learners for Step 1 - Self Exploration (page 5)

Before learners begin completing the activities in Step 1, teachers should explain why self-understanding is necessary in an occupational pathway process.

Occupational qualifications are linked to specific job roles. Each occupation requires particular types of strengths, interests and work preferences. Without understanding these personal factors, learners may choose an occupation that does not suit them.

Teachers should clarify that Step 1 is not about choosing a job. It is about identifying patterns in how learners work and what types of environments they are suited to.

Teachers may say:

"Before choosing an occupational qualification, you need to understand how you prefer to work. Different occupations require different types of strengths. Step 1 helps you identify yours."

Teachers should reinforce the following points:

- There are no correct or incorrect answers.
- Honest reflection is more important than choosing what sounds impressive.
- Results from Step 1 will guide exploration in Step 2.
- Occupation selection does not take place yet.

It is important to prevent learners from jumping ahead to a specific job title during this stage. If learners attempt to do so, teachers should redirect the discussion back to interests, strengths, and work style.

Teachers should also explain that Step 1 helps narrow fields later. For example, learners who prefer practical, hands-on activities may explore technical or construction-related occupational fields, while those who prefer structured office environments may explore administrative or technical support roles.

Once learners understand the purpose of Step 1, teachers may proceed to the activities in the Guide.



4.1.1 Facilitating Step 1

Step 1 helps learners understand their interests, strengths and work preferences before selecting an occupational pathway.

The purpose of Step 1 is to build self-awareness. Occupational qualifications prepare learners for specific job roles, and those roles require different types of abilities and work styles. Before exploring occupations, learners need to understand how they work best.

Introducing the activities 1.1 to 1.7 (pages 6 - 12)

Teachers should begin by clarifying:

“This step is about understanding how you work, not choosing what you want to be.”

Learners should complete the written activities individually before any group discussion. Reflection must come before peer influence.

During the activities:

While learners are working, teachers should move around the classroom, observe patterns and provide guidance where needed.

If learners attempt to jump ahead to a specific job, teachers should gently redirect them to focus on interests and strengths.

If a learner says, *“I already know what I want to be,”* the teacher may respond:

“That is good. Let’s check whether your interests and strengths support that choice.”

Facilitating discussion

After the written activities are complete, teachers may guide a short discussion.

Learners should reflect on the types of activities and tools they prefer, the environments they work best in and the strengths that appeared more than once.

Teachers should help learners see links between their patterns and broad occupational fields, without matching them to a specific job yet.

The aim is to identify possible directions, not make decisions.

4.1.2 Concluding Step 1

At the end of Step 1, learners should complete the summary on page 13 of the learner guide:

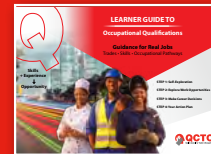
They should describe:

- The activities they prefer.
- Their strongest skills.
- The type of work environment that suits them.

Teachers should encourage learners to identify overall patterns rather than isolated answers.

This reflection becomes the foundation for Step 2, where learners explore occupational opportunities aligned to their strengths and preferences.

Section 4: Facilitating Step 2 of the Learner Guide



4.2 Facilitating Step 2 - Explore work opportunities (page 15)

Step 2 moves learners from self-understanding to understanding the world of work.

The focus is not yet on choosing an occupation. The focus is on understanding how work changes, where opportunities exist and how occupational qualifications connect learning to real jobs.

4.2.1 Introducing the world of work (page 15)

Teachers should begin by explaining that work is not static.

Learners should understand that:

- Jobs change over time.
- Technology influences how work is done.
- New occupations emerge as industries evolve.

Teachers may begin with discussion questions such as:

- Why do some jobs disappear?
- Why are new jobs created?
- What role does technology play?

Activity: Facilitating New inventions (page 17):

During the “New inventions that changed the world of work” activity, teachers should:

- Encourage creative thinking.
- Help learners see links between inventions and new occupations.
- Reinforce that many modern jobs did not exist previously.

After the activity, teachers should ask:

“What does this tell us about the future of work?”

This helps learners understand the importance of skills-based adaptability.

4.2.2 Jobs today use new tools, skills & ways of working (page 18)

Explain how new tools require new skills and ways of working.

4.2.3 Scarce skills and labour market demand (page 19)

When introducing scarce skills, teachers should emphasise:

- Scarce skills are linked to real demand.
- Many scarce skills are practical and technical.
- Occupational qualifications often prepare learners for these areas.



Teachers should connect this directly to opportunity:

“These are areas where employers struggle to find qualified people”.

Teachers should explain that occupational qualifications are updated to match industry needs. The goal is to link occupational pathways to economic reality.

4.2.4 What employers really want (page 20)

In the job advert activity, teachers should guide learners to notice:

- Employers value practical competence.
- Qualifications alone are not enough.
- Experience and applied skills matter.

4.2.5 Explaining occupational qualifications clearly (page 21)

When learners reach Step 2.5 in the Guide, teachers should slow down and clarify:

An occupational qualification:

- Is linked to a specific occupation.
- Combines theory, practice and workplace experience.
- Ends in an external assessment (EISA or trade test).

This structure exists to ensure work readiness.

4.2.6 Learning while working (page 22)

When discussing learnerships and apprenticeships, teachers should explain the differences clearly.

Learners should understand:

- Learnerships combine study and work and are normally funded by the SETA's.
- Apprenticeships focus on recognised trades.
- Workplace learning is compulsory in occupational training.

Teachers should help learners reflect on which learning style suits them best.

4.2.7 Artisan and non-artisan pathways (page 23)

This is an important clarification point.

Teachers must ensure learners understand:

- Both pathways are occupational qualifications.
- Artisan pathways require a trade test.
- Non-artisan pathways end in an assessment.
- Both lead to recognised occupational certificates.

This prevents misconceptions about status or value.

4.2.8 Concluding Step 2 (page 24)

At the end of Step 2, learners should complete the summary on page 24.

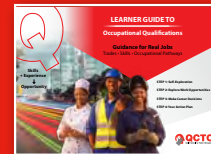
They should reflect on:

- What they learned about how work is changing.
- Which skills are in demand.
- Which types of work areas interest them.

Teachers should reinforce:

“You are building understanding. You are not choosing yet. In Step 3, you will begin narrowing your options.”

Section 4: Facilitating Step 3 of the Learner Guide



4.3 Facilitating Step 3 - Make career decisions (page 25)

Step 3 is the turning point in the Guide.

In Step 1, learners explored themselves. In Step 2, they explored the world of work. In Step 3, they narrow their options and select one occupation to investigate properly.

This is where occupational pathways become specific and evidence based.

Teachers should begin by clarifying the shift that is taking place.

Learners are no longer exploring broadly. They are now required to:

- Select a study field.
- Choose one occupation.
- Understand how occupational qualifications are structured

- Research the occupational qualification linked to it.
- Identify their next realistic step.

Teachers may say:

"You are not deciding your whole life today. You are identifying one structured occupational pathway and testing whether it is realistic for you."

4.3.1 Explore occupations by study field (pages 26)

Learners begin by reviewing the 18 study fields in the Guide or on the classroom poster. Teachers should explain the concept of Study fields.

4.3.2 Choose a study field that suits you (pages 27 - 30)

They may consider up to three fields before choosing one occupation to research further.

4.3.3 Choose one occupation (page 31)

Learners must choose one occupation to research.

Teachers should ensure that the chosen occupation:

- Aligns with the learner's interests and strengths from Step 1.
- Is grounded in what they learned about work and scarce skills in Step 2.
- Links to a recognised occupational qualification.

If a learner chooses an occupation that cannot be clearly linked to a registered qualification, the teacher should guide them to refine or adjust their choice.

The emphasis at this stage is on being realistic.

4.3.4 Explaining how occupational qualifications work (page 32)

Before learners begin research, teachers should revisit the structure of occupational qualifications.



Teachers should use the examples in the Guide to demonstrate that each qualification has an official name, a SAQA ID, and a registered NQF level. This reinforces that occupational pathways are formal, quality assured and nationally recognised.

Learners must understand that they are researching a structured qualification pathway, not simply a job title.

4.3.5 and 4.3.6 Clarifying NQF levels and entry requirements (page 33-34)

Learners must now position themselves within the qualification system.

Teachers should ensure learners understand:

- Their current NQF level.
- The NQF level of the qualification researched.
- The difference between qualification level and entry requirement.

Teachers should explain that NQF levels function like steps on a ladder. Learners must identify their next realistic step in order to access the qualification.

This is where occupational planning becomes practical.

3.7 Research an occupation (page 36)

This section is the core of Step 3 and should not be rushed.

Learners will use the research pages in their learner guide. If a separate research Guide has been provided, this may be used instead. The research Guide functions as a detailed working document and can be treated as a structured pull-out extension of Step 3.

Learners should take the Guide in front of them and work through each section carefully and sequentially.

They are required to:

- Confirm the exact occupation name.
- Record the official name of the occupational qualification.
- Identify the SAQA ID and NQF level.
- Confirm the minimum entry requirement.
- Describe what the occupation actually involves.
- Identify likely work environments and possible study routes.

Teachers should emphasise that all information must be verified using reliable sources such as NCAP, GoStudy, or the QCTO website.

Teachers should go around the classroom checking that learners are using credible sources and completing all sections fully. If learners struggle to find accurate information, teachers should guide their search rather than allow incomplete answers.

3.8 Summary - concluding Step 3 (page 37)

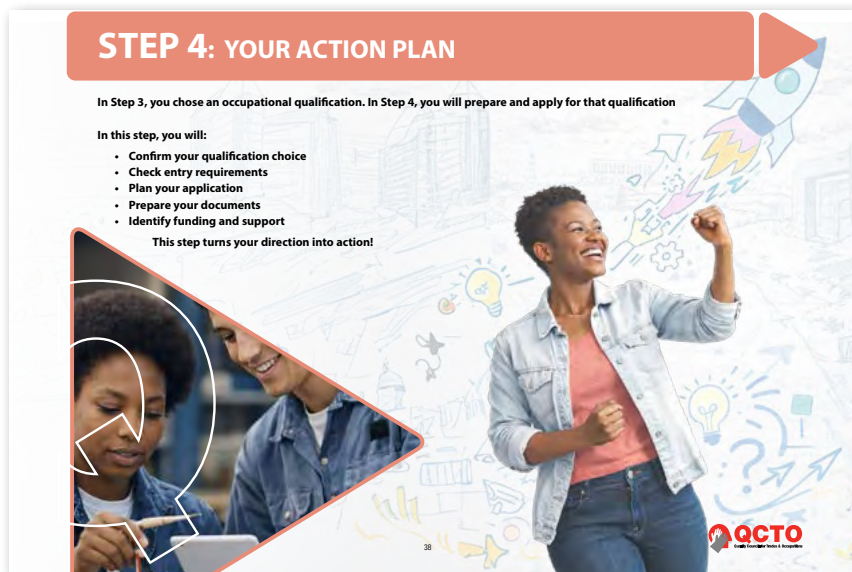
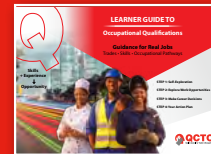
By the end of Step 3, each learner should have clearly recorded:

- One chosen occupation.
- The linked occupational qualification.
- The confirmed entry requirement.
- The qualification's NQF level.
- Their next realistic education or training step.

Teachers should reinforce:

"You have now moved from exploration to decision. In the next step, you will convert this decision into a practical action plan."

Section 4: Facilitating Step 4 of the Learner Guide



4.4 Facilitating Step 4 – Your Action Plan (page 38)

Step 4 moves learners from decision to implementation.

In Step 3, learners identified one occupation and the qualification linked to it. In Step 4, they translate that direction into practical next steps.

This is where occupational planning becomes action.

Teachers should begin by explaining the shift:

“You have chosen a direction. Now you must take responsibility for moving toward it.”

Step 4 focuses on readiness. Learners must think practically about what needs to happen next.

This may include:

- Completing school successfully.
- Improving specific subjects.
- Applying to a provider.
- Preparing documents.
- Researching funding.

The aim is not to overwhelm learners but to make the pathway real.

4.4.1 Future me (page 39)

Encourage learners to dream of their future occupation without limitations.

4.4.2 Clarifying immediate next steps (page 40)

Learners should review the qualification they researched and identify what must happen next.

Teachers should guide learners to consider:

- Do I meet the entry requirements?
- If not, what must I improve?
- Where is the qualification offered?
- When do applications open?
- Is workplace placement required?

Learners should write down one realistic next step.

For example:

“I will improve my Mathematics results.”

“I will contact the TVET College in Term 3.”

“I will apply for a learnership in this sector.”



4.4.3 Qualification plan (page 41)

Teachers should get learners to complete their qualifications plan.

Teachers should emphasise that pathways can adjust over time.

If learners do not immediately meet entry requirements, there may be alternative routes such as:

- Skills programmes.
- Bridging learning.
- Other courses and paths of study.

The aim is to encourage persistence.

4.4.4 Funding and support (page 42)

Teachers should go through options for possible funding, and encourage learners to investigate these opportunities.

4.4.5 Preparing for application readiness (page 43)

Teachers should also explain that occupational pathways require preparation.

Learners may need:

- A CV.
- Certified copies of documents.
- Academic results.
- An ID document.

Teachers should encourage learners to begin preparing these early rather than waiting until after final exams.

This reinforces responsibility and forward planning.

4.4.6 Find Learnerships and work experience (page 44)

Teachers should explain the different opportunities available and how to access them. Get learners to use the QR codes on page 44 to source possible options for their chosen occupation.

4.4.7 Build support (page 45)

Get learners to complete the activity on networking and encourage them to think more broadly about contacts they may have to assist in their search.

4.4.8 Final action plan (page 46)

Teachers should help learners to write down their goals and then get them to complete the action plan to achieve their goal.

4.4.9 Summary - Concluding the Guide (page 47)

At the end of Step 4, learners should have:

- A chosen occupation.
- A confirmed qualification pathway.
- A realistic next step.

Teachers should reinforce:

“You now have a structured occupational pathway. The next step is to act on it.”

This concludes the four-step process: Self – Opportunity – Decision – Action.

Section 5. Implementation support for schools

This section provides practical guidance for schools implementing the Learner Guide and introducing occupational pathways in the FET phase.

5.1 Planning structured delivery

The Learner Guide should be delivered across multiple sessions rather than as a single lesson. The process should not be rushed.

Schools should ensure:

- Sufficient Life Orientation periods are allocated.
- Learners complete written activities individually before discussion.
- Step 3 includes structured research time.
- Step 4 includes practical planning time.

5.2 Integrating into Life Orientation

The four-step structure aligns with FET Life Orientation themes:

- Self-development
- World of work
- Post-school planning
- Transition preparation

The Guide supports curriculum delivery without adding additional workload.

5.3 Using posters and visual tools

Posters should be used actively during lessons.

The study fields poster supports Step 2 exploration.

The occupational qualification structure poster reinforces understanding of KM, PM, WE and final assessment.

Visual reference strengthens conceptual clarity.

5.4 Supporting learners who are uncertain

Some learners may struggle to select one occupation in Step 3.

Teachers should:

- Encourage selection of one realistic pathway for planning purposes.
- Reinforce that career development is progressive.
- Support further exposure to workplaces where possible.

The aim is structured direction, not absolute certainty.

5.5 Communicating with parents

Parents may not be familiar with occupational qualifications.

Schools should explain that occupational qualifications:

- Are registered on the National Qualifications Framework.
- Are quality assured by the QCTO.
- Include workplace training and external assessment.
- Lead to recognised occupations.

Clear communication supports informed family decisions.

5.6 Ensuring accuracy and compliance

Teachers should guide learners to verify:

- Qualification registration
- Provider accreditation
- Entry requirements

Only official sources such as QCTO and SAQA should be used for confirmation.



Section 6. Appendices

Appendix A: The Learner Guide

The Learner Guide is a career guidance resource designed to explain occupational qualifications, their place within the education system, and how learners can access these programmes and the related career pathways.





Section 6. Appendices

Appendix B: Structure of an Occupational Qualification Poster

This poster visually explains the structure of an occupational qualification, showing the progression from theory and practical training to workplace experience and final assessment. This poster is a practical classroom tool aligned to Step 2.5 in the Learner Guide.





Section 6. Appendices

Appendix C: Study Fields Poster

This poster showing the recognised occupational study fields, is a practical classroom tool aligned to Step 3.1 in the Learner Guide.

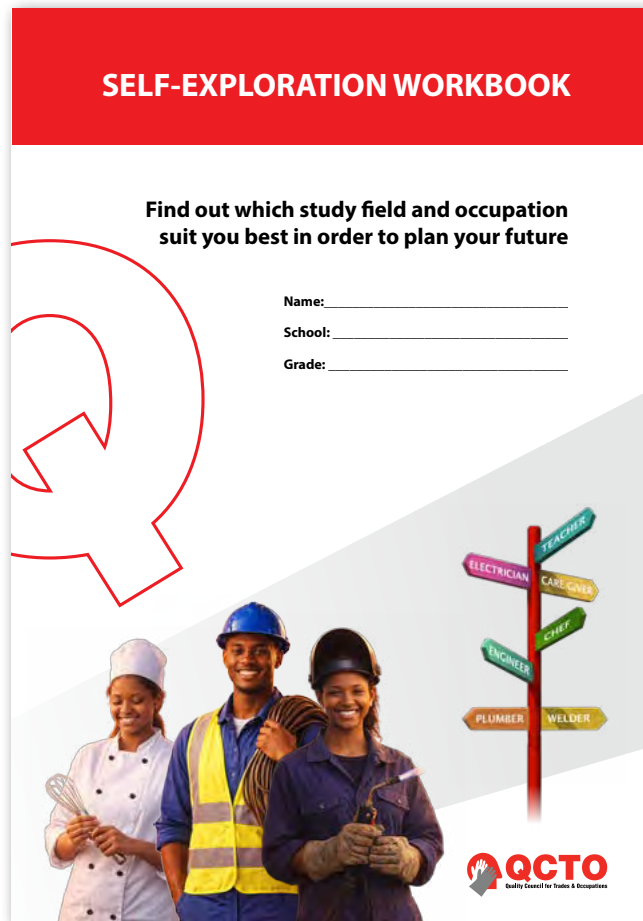




Section 6. Appendices

Appendix D: Self Exploration Workbook

This workbook can be printed out for learners to use when doing Step 3.2 in the Learner Guide. The activities covered in this workbook are from Step 3.2 - Choose a study field that suits you, Step 3.3 - Choose one occupation and Step 3.7 - Research an occupation.





Section 6. Appendix E - Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Apprenticeship	A formal route to artisan status combining workplace training and institutional learning and concluding with a trade test.
Articulation	The formal process that allows a learner to move from one qualification, level, or sub-framework to another within the National Qualifications Framework, provided the entry requirements are met.
Artisan	A person certified as competent in a listed trade after successful completion of an approved route and trade test.
Career	The sequence of learning and work experiences throughout a person's life.
Occupation	A recognised type of work made up of similar tasks and responsibilities, for example: electrician, plumber or chef.
Occupational Pathway	A combination of learning, practical training, and workplace experience that prepares a learner for a specific career.
Occupational Qualification	A qualification registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework and directly linked to a specific occupation.
External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA)	The final external assessment that confirms occupational competence for an occupational qualification.
Job	A specific paid position of employment within an organisation or enterprise.
Learnership	A structured programme, registered by the Department of Higher Education and Training, combining institutional learning and workplace experience leading to a registered qualification and that may be funded by a SETA.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	South Africa's national system for classifying, registering, and comparing qualifications across different levels and sub-frameworks.
Knowledge Module (KM)	The theoretical component of an occupational qualification.
Practical Module (PM)	The structured practical skills component of an occupational qualification delivered in a simulated or controlled environment.
Work Experience Module (WM)	The structured workplace learning component of an occupational qualification completed in a real work setting.
Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)	The sub-framework of the NQF overseen by the QCTO focusing on occupationally directed qualifications.
Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)	South Africa's official occupational classification system used to align qualifications to recognised occupations.
QCTO	The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations is the Quality Council responsible for developing and quality assuring occupational qualifications.
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority - Each SETA is responsible for managing and creating learnerships, internships, unit-based skills programmes, and apprenticeships within its jurisdiction.
Trade	A practical occupation that requires technical training and a trade test and is officially gazetted according to the Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998, as amended).
Work	Any purposeful activity requiring effort, whether paid or unpaid.



Accelerating Skills Development for Inclusive Economic Growth



OUR VISION

The QCTO vision is to qualify a skilled and capable workforce.



OUR MISSION

The QCTO's mission is to effectively and efficiently manage the occupational qualifications sub-framework in order to set standards, develop and quality assure national occupational qualifications, part qualifications and skills programmes for all who want a trade or occupation and, where appropriate, professions.



OUR VALUES

Innovation and Excellence
Empowerment and Recognition
Respect and Dignity
Ethics and Integrity
Ownership and Accountability
Authenticity



Contact us

256 Glyn Street, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0093
Private Bag, X278, Pretoria, 0001

012 003 1800
info@qcto.org.za | www.qcto.org.za

