



Assessment Policy for Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)

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List of Acronyms

AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
FLC	Foundational Learning Certificate
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SDP	Skills Development Provider

Glossary of terms

Accreditation	The certification, usually for a particular period, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system set up by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).
Administrative errors	Means irregularities that are of a technical nature, where the student or an assessment official unintentionally fails to follow the prescribed administrative procedures.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence of learner's work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified National Qualifications Framework (NQF) occupational standards or qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessment centre	A centre accredited by the QCTO for the purpose of conducting external integrated summative assessments for specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications
Assessment Process	Includes the total process of assessment that commences once the candidate has satisfied and met the assessment criteria for writing an external integrated summative assessment including passing the knowledge, practical and workplace components.
Assessment Quality Partner	A body delegated by the QCTO to develop assessment instruments and manage the external integrated summative assessments of specific NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.

Assessment site	Any site selected as suitable and approved by the relevant AQP to conduct the external integrated summative assessments for specified registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications, where the specific assessment specifications do not require the use of an accredited assessment centre.
Assessment specialist	A person who has been appointed by the relevant AQP in accordance with established criteria to conduct, develop and/or moderate external integrated summative assessments for NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Applied competence	The ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining an occupational qualification or part qualification.
Candidate	A person whose performance is being assessed by the relevant AQP at an accredited assessment centre or approved workplace.
External integrated summative assessment	An assessment managed by a body appointed by the QCTO, using nationally developed assessment instruments at end of sections of learning or the end of the whole learning process to facilitate demonstration of both theory and practical competence in achieving the outcomes of the occupational qualification or part qualification.
Formative Assessment	On-going assessments, reviews, and observations which would be a range of formal and informal assessment procedures applied during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities and to improve learners' attainment;
Internal assessment	refers to the assessment (formative assessment) conducted by a provider during the course of learning to re-inforce learning and support the learner. It also refers to internal self-evaluations done by the provider to monitor its general performance on the training delivery and formative assessments
Invigilator	Means any person appointed to manage the conduct of an assessment.
Irregularity	Means any event, act or omission and any alleged event, which may undermine the integrity, credibility, security, or the fairness of the assessment process.

Learner	a person undergoing education and training at an accredited Skills Development Provider (SDP)
Moderation	The process managed by the AQP which ensures that the assessment of the learning outcomes described in the NQF occupational standards, qualifications and part qualifications is fair, valid, reliable and unbiased.
Moderator	A person who has been appointed by the relevant AQP in accordance with established criteria to ensure that the assessment process and procedure is fair, valid, reliable and unbiased.
Monitoring	A continuous process of the review of quality that can be conducted internally and/or externally to recommend quality improvements.
National Learners Records' Database	The electronic management information system of the NQF, which contains records of qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations and all related information such as registration and accreditations..
Occupational curriculum	Is derived from the occupational profile and is the purposeful combination of conceptual, practical and work experience knowledge and skills in order to achieve a certain occupational qualification.
Occupational qualification	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession, resulting from work-based learning and consisting of the knowledge, practical skills and work experience standards as defined in the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998).
Part qualification	An assessed unit of learning that is registered on the NQF as a part qualification. Occupational part qualifications must comprise all three learning components.

Quality Assurance	The process of ensuring that standards and procedures are adhered to and that delivered products or services meet performance requirements according to the QCTO requirements.
Skills Development Provider	A body that delivers learning programmes which culminate in specified registered NQF occupational standards and qualifications and part qualifications and manages the internal assessment thereof.
Systems auditor	The person responsible for auditing the management and information systems of the AQP
Validation	The end-process by which it is determined by the relevant AQP whether or not an assessment is valid and leading to the acceptance or rejection of assessment results.
Verification	The process managed by the relevant AQP for externally checking moderation processes and confirming or overturning moderation findings.

Preamble

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 in terms of section 26G of the Skills Development Act, of 1998 as a juristic person. It was listed as a public entity in Government Gazette No 33900 of 31 December 2010 effective from 1 April 2010 to establish the Sub-framework for Trades and Occupations. It is responsible for the development, maintenance and quality assurance of qualifications within its sub-framework.

External integrated summative assessment is an integral and critical component of the QCTO's quality assurance system. External integrated summative assessment ensures consistency and credibility of the assessment of occupational qualifications, trades and part qualifications. The external integrated summative assessment will be conducted by the relevant AQP, applying nationally standardised assessment instruments.

For learners to qualify for an external integrated summative assessment, they must provide proof of completion of all required modules. Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) is a pre-requisite for the external integrated summative assessment of all occupational qualifications and part qualifications at NQF levels 3 and 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives and criteria for assessment

The objectives and criteria for External Integrated Summative Assessment are to:

- outline how the external integrated summative assessment will be conducted, by whom how and where i.e. the model to be used
- outline the requirements for the external integrated summative assessment for occupational qualifications, trades and part qualifications and guide all assessment practices;
- ensure that all assessment practices are aligned to legislation and national policy environment;
- ensure that assessment is understood as an integrated process within the learning experience; and
- outline the most appropriate way for the AQP to carry out its functions for the given context.

1.2 Legislative and regulatory framework

In terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998), the QCTO must design and develop occupational qualifications and standards and ensure the quality assurance thereof. A nationally standardised external integrated summative assessment (EISA) is an integral part of the quality assurance of occupational qualifications, trades and part qualifications.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the QCTO Policy on Delegation of Qualification Assessment to Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs).

1.3 Audience and applicability

This policy applies to AQPs responsible for developing standardised assessment instruments in accordance with the external assessment specifications document and accredited assessment centres responsible for conducting external summative assessments. The policy is applicable to the assessment of occupational qualifications and part qualifications registered on the Occupational Qualifications sub framework (QQSF).

1.4 Rationale for a flexible approach

The assessment strategy will vary according to a number of factors. Since the qualifications in the Occupational Qualifications Framework cover a variety of occupational contexts, levels of complexity, percentage of knowledge, practical skills and work experience as well as NQF levels, there can be no one model for external assessment which will suit all occupational qualifications. Part of the design process for each qualification focuses on determining the most efficient, effective, practical and economic way to conduct valid external assessment in the context of that particular qualification and this information is outlined in the Qualification Assessment Specifications document.

1.5 Underlying principles and values

The following principles and values must be taken into consideration during the development of the processes.

External Assessment systems and processes must:

1.5.1 be fair, reliable, valid, ethical and transparent

1.5.2 be consistent across time, place, role players and respond to a non-sectoral demand led model

1.5.3 use methodologies that are fit-for-purpose and reflect a consistent level of higher cognitive challenge

1.5.4 avoid tendencies of exclusivity

2. ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Qualification Assessment Specifications

The QCTO has introduced a compulsory external assessment as a prerequisite for certification for all occupational qualifications. The purpose of this is to establish and maintain a national standard for each occupational qualification. By ensuring the validity and reliability of the external summative assessment based on a national standard the QCTO aims to enhance the credibility of the certificates issued to qualifying learners for occupational qualifications.

Internal assessment is conducted by providers in line with the guidelines given in the curriculum for each curriculum component. Workplaces offering the work experience are provided with a work experience record which must be completed and signed off, as well as

specifications regarding supporting evidence to be collected. The learner achievements resulting from internal assessment are recorded in statements of results. Candidates become eligible for external assessment when they have all the statements of results as specified in the assessment specifications.

Because the external assessment strategy needs to be fit for purpose, a Qualification Assessment Specifications document spelling out the requirements for external assessment is developed for each occupational qualification. Assessment instruments will be developed in accordance with the assessment strategy for each occupational qualification. The actual assessment is thus standardised nationally for all candidates for any single occupational qualification.

When an organisation is appointed as an Assessment Quality Partner by the QCTO for a specified occupational qualification, its first task is to participate in the development of the Qualification Assessment Specifications for the qualification in question. The Qualification Assessment Specifications are developed during the qualification development process and it is expected that a minimum of 50% of the working group members should be experts in that particular occupational qualification.

2.2 Criteria for the development of the external assessment specifications document

2.2.1 The external assessment strategy must be included.

2.2.2 Key occupational outcomes must be described.

2.2.3 The point(s) at which the occupational qualification is to be assessed must be indicated.

2.2.4 Critical identified elements of 'external assessment' to be externally moderated (if any) must be indicated.

2.2.5 Eligibility requirements for candidates for external assessment must be specified.

2.2.6 Exemplars of external assessment instruments must be included.

2.2.7 The language(s) of assessment must be included.

2.2.8 Minimum requirements (qualifications/experience) for the assessment specialists must be specified.

2.3 Criteria for the development of external assessment instruments

2.3.1 The guidelines on the content to be assessed should ensure consistency and quality across time, place, role players and occupations.

2.3.2 Assessment instruments should be developed to ensure the validity, consistency, quality and credibility of the assessments.

2.3.3 Assessment instruments should be based on the outcomes of the occupational qualification or part qualification and assessment criteria stated in the assessment specifications document.

2.3.4 Assessment instruments should be developed by subject matter experts in a particular occupational qualification or part qualification.

2.4 Assessment techniques

A range of assessment techniques to ensure that assessment is educationally sound, appropriate to the discipline or field of study, all outcomes are assessed and the criteria of validity, reliability, authenticity and feasibility are met will be spelled out in the curriculum component of the occupational qualification, trade or part qualification.

2.5 Responsibilities for the implementation of internal assessments

2.5.1 The accredited Skills Development provider (SDP) is responsible for conducting formative assessments and learners must be given feedback on their performance;

2.5.2 The SDP must conduct internal self-evaluations to monitor its general performance on the training delivery and formative assessments;

2.5.3 The AQP and the QCTO will monitor the performance of the SDP with respect to the implementation of internal formative assessments and the internal self-evaluations of its performance on the training delivery and formative assessments.

2.6 Roles and responsibilities of the QCTO

The QCTO will

2.6.1 Where necessary appoint an AQP for each occupational qualification or part qualification.

2.6.2 Publish assessment specifications document, developed as part of the qualifications development process.

2.6.3 Monitor and evaluate AQPs performance in managing the external integrated summative assessments and where necessary undertake audits to determine the quality performance of AQPs.

2.6.4 Ensure that national standards are met through monitoring and evaluation of the execution of functions by the AQP.

2.6.5 Evaluate the assessment and moderation processes.

2.6.6 Maintain a database of accredited SDPs and assessment centres/sites.

2.6.7 Monitor adherence to the QCTOs Code of Conduct for AQPs.

2.6.8 Monitor the readiness of learners for the EISA

2.7 Roles and responsibilities of the AQP

The AQP will:

2.7.1 Ensure that it receives learner enrolment data from accredited Skills Development Providers (SDPs) on time for planning purposes.

2.7.2 issue candidate registration numbers after the learners have been recommended to sit for final external assessment;

2.7.3 Liaise with the accredited assessment centres and approved sites on assessment instruments to be administered for a particular session.

2.7.4 Ensure that complete assessment instruments and related documentation are forwarded to the accredited assessment centres and approved sites in a secure manner agreed upon.

2.7.5 Keep a record of assessment specialists that assess and moderate the external assessments involving practical tasks which are conducted at decentralised assessment centres that simulate working conditions or approved workplace sites.

2.7.6 Ensure that learner results are credible and that the assessment process was fair, valid, reliable and unbiased.

2.8 Roles and responsibilities of assessment centres

Accredited assessment centres are addressed in a separate policy as they must meet a number of criteria. The accredited assessment centres and their approved sites will ensure that:

2.8.1 Assessment instruments should be developed to ensure the validity, consistency, quality and credibility of the assessments.

2.8.2 There are sufficient invigilators during assessments and they receive appropriate training.

2.8.3 There are no fraudulent activities during the assessment.

2.8.4 The safe storage of assessment instruments and related documentation is adhered to.

2.8.5 Assessment results are delivered to the relevant AQP within the stipulated time and in a manner agreed upon.

2.8.6 Assessment materials are marked and results are captured accordingly.

2.9 Roles and responsibilities of systems auditors, invigilators and administrators

These key role-players need not necessarily be subject matter experts or expert practitioners since they focus on compliance. They check:

2.9.1 That all relevant assessment policies and procedures are implemented correctly

2.9.2 The secure handling of the assessment instruments and

2.9.3 The procedures for checking the identity of candidates and

2.9.4 The authenticity of the assessment processes.

2.10 Roles and responsibilities of the skills development providers

The skills development providers will:

2.10.1 Conduct internal assessment in line with the guidelines given in the curriculum for each curriculum component.

2.10.2 Record the learner achievements resulting from formative assessments in statements of results.

2.10.3 Register the learners with the AQP when they become eligible for final integrated external assessment.

- 2.10.4 Coordinate the provision and assessment of the knowledge and practical skills curriculum components of an occupational qualification based on the recommendations from the AQP.
- 2.10.5 Liaise with workplaces to assist candidates to have access to work experience.

2.11 Roles and responsibilities of the learners

The learners must:

- 2.11.1 Take responsibility for their learning and assessment by being active participants;
- 2.11.2 Participate in assessment processes in an honest and disciplined manner;
- 2.11.3 Monitor their learning towards readiness to sit for an external summative assessment and inform the provider when ready for external assessment;
- 2.11.4 Know the appeals procedure of the AQP so that they can follow it should there be a need to do so.

2.12 Complaints and Appeals

- 2.12.1 Complaints about the assessment and assessment process by learners should be lodged at the accredited assessment centre or approved site.
- 2.12.2 Appeals on the assessment and assessment process by learners should be lodged with the relevant AQP, in which the decision of the AQP appeals committee shall be final.

3. MANAGEMENT OF ASSESSMENT

3.1 Coordination of Component Provision

The QCTO will ensure, for occupational qualifications, that a single agent is responsible to assist learners to navigate through all three learning components and have access to the external summative assessment.

3.2 Entry requirements

In order to qualify for entry into the final external integrated summative assessment, a learner will have:

- 3.2.1 been enrolled with a QCTO accredited provider for that particular occupational qualification;
- 3.2.2 met the entry requirements specified in the registered occupational qualification document;
- 3.2.3 met the requirements for the knowledge, practical and work experience components of the occupational qualification; and
- 3.2.4 met the requirements for FLC where applicable.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The effectiveness of the policy on the external integrated summative assessment shall be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis against the set quality assurance standards and associated performance indicators to identify and implement appropriate amendments aimed at improving the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and impact of the said policy and procedures.
- 4.2 Best practices in the occupational space for policy implementation will be identified and best practice models will be used to benchmark the practice amongst AQPs.
- 4.3 On appointment the Assessment Quality Partner signs a Service Level Agreement with the QCTO. This provides a schedule for implementation of the QCTO model for external assessment, giving deadlines for each requirement during the first year of appointment. This schedule provides the basis for the QCTO to monitor, evaluate and review the initial activities of the AQP.
- 4.4 In addition, the QCTO has a standardised data reporting template which must be completed and submitted quarterly. This provides specified quantitative data to the QCTO.
- 4.5 Each year after the first year of appointment the AQP must also complete and submit a qualitative report, which serves the dual purpose of a self-evaluation, assisting in strategic planning for the coming year, and of providing the QCTO with the basis for continued monitoring, evaluation and review.