



MINING QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Introduction – background, legislation, mandate and funding

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) is a statutory body established in terms of the Mine Health and Safety Act No. 29 of 1996 and is a registered Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) for the mining and minerals sector in terms of the Skills Development Act No 97 of 1998.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) requires the MQA to generate Unit Standards and Qualifications and enables the

organisation to be an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) body for the sector. The MQA must support the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) as determined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and also support the objectives of the Mining Charter in terms of the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act No. 29 of 1996.

The MQA is responsible for administering a number of skills development initiatives. Skills programmes and learnerships aim to develop a skilled and educated workforce whose skills are recognised and valued in terms of the NQF. This is to ensure that the mining and minerals sector has sufficient competent people who will improve health and safety, employment equity and increase productivity. The following five priorities were adopted by the MQA Board to promote skills development in the sector:

- Support the transformation of the sector through skills development;
- Support objective decision-making for skills development through research in the sector;
- Enhance information management for skills development in the sector;
- Facilitate and support the development and implementation of core skills development programmes aligned with the sector qualifications framework; and
- Enhance the monitoring, evaluation and review of the delivery, capacity and quality of skills development in the sector.

The MQA has a tripartite governing structure consisting of the state, employer and labour organisations within the sector. The expertise and experience of this partnership with key stakeholders proposes guidance to the MQA's strategic direction. This is underpinned by the Business Plan, the Constitution and Sector Skills Plan (SSP). The SSP determines the skills needs in the sector.

The MQA's activities are funded by the skills levy collected from employers in the mining and minerals sector by the South African Receiver of Revenue (SARS). The MQA disburses the funds back to the industry in a form of grants for providing training and supporting learners in special projects.

Skill Planning and Research

The MQA is mandated to develop the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) in

terms of the Skills Development Act and in accordance with the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III). The SSP is a five-year report aimed at analysing the sector and its associated skills requirements. The MQA has to update the SSP annually to determine the skills gap identified in the WSP-ATR submitted by the sector and through research, to plan interventions to fulfill the needs of the sector.

The primary source for skills planning and scarce skills list for the mining and minerals sector is the Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs) and the Annual Training Reports (ATRs). The WSP-ATR serves as a format for the MQA to collect information annually from individual organisations and as a mechanism to release

mandatory grants provided that MQA requirements are met.

Furthermore the MQA undertakes analysis of the WSP-ATR submissions annually to examine trends, skills requirements and priorities for the sector.

Objectives:

- Conduct research, develop a Sector Skills Plan, identify and implement planned interventions;
- Provide labour market information relating to skills development in the sector;
- Produce the scarce skills needs in the mining and minerals sector;
- Manage the submission and evaluation of the Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Report; and
- Support and capacity building for Skills Development Facilitators and Skills Development Committees within the sector.

The MQA participates in a number of initiatives to address scarce and critical skills. These initiatives include:

- Unit standard and qualification development;
- The promotion of learning programmes such as AET, learnerships and skills programmes;
- Support offered to MQA bursars;
- Targeted projects such as internships; and
- The quality assurance of assessment and skills development.

Quality Assurance and Standards Setting

Quality Assurance

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) is a tripartite statutory body established by chapter 4 of Mine Health and Safety Act of 1996. The MQA has also been delegated quality assurance functions in terms of section 261 (2) of the Skills Development Amendment Act (SDA) 37 of 2008 and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupation (QCTO) delegation policy of 11 June 2011. It has been further approved as an Assessment Quality Partner (AQP).

The primary responsibility of these bodies is to accredit providers of education and training standards for qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), monitor the provision of training, evaluate assessments and facilitate moderation across providers, register assessors and issue certificates to learners. In the case of where a training provider is already accredited by another Quality Assurance body, the provider can apply for programme approval to provide training relevant to the mining and minerals sector. The requirements for registering as an assessor to conduct an assessment of any mining and minerals registered unit standard can be found on the MQA website.

The MQA in terms of the QCTO delegated functions must ensure inter alia that the sector has accredited providers that will maintain the quality of standards, qualifications and learning provision. The training providers accredited by the MQA must ensure that they provide qualifications of a high standard that can be recognised in South Africa and internationally. The accredited training providers must implement the ISO 9001:2008 quality management system together with other requirements stated by SAQA. For more information please visit the MQA website.

The primary function of the MQA's QA is to ensure quality assurance through:

- The accreditation of training providers;
- The registration of assessors and moderators;
- Auditing, quality assurance and recording of learner achievements;
- The evaluation of learning programmes;
- Improving the quality and relevance of education and training in the sector;
- The support for provider development; and
- The certificating of learners.

The MQA will issue a qualification certificate to registered

learners that have completed a learning programme, and have been successfully assessed against all unit standards that make up a particular qualification. A certificate will only be issued for qualifications registered on the NQF.

Standards Setting

The Standards Setting Unit function of the MQA falls under the Quality Assurance Unit, and is responsible for administering the functions of the mining and minerals sector and has been delegated as a Development Quality Partner (M & M DQP). The DQP has a stakeholder driven function with members from the following six (6) stakeholders:

- The State;
- Labour;
- Employers;
- Providers of education and training;
- Suppliers of equipment and services; and
- Mining professional associations.



The standards setting process for the mining and minerals sector is governed by the Mine Health and Safety Act of 1996, the Skills Development Amendment Act and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupation (QCTO). The NQF Act of 2008 provides a new occupational qualifications framework for standard setting and quality assurance in South Africa.

The DQP's main function is to design, review and develop fit for purpose occupational qualifications and associated unit standards available to the mining and minerals sector. The DQP ensures registration of qualifications and unit standards on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for the sector, and ensures that appropriate qualifications and unit standards are in place through collaborative initiatives with other relevant DQPs and/or SETAs. The goal of the Unit is to form an Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) aligned qualifications framework for the sector which is available and implemented by all stakeholders in the sector. This framework is reviewed annually, updated, published and its implementation is monitored by the Unit.

In order to fulfill its function, the mining and minerals DQP has identified distinct areas in which it formulated working groups to facilitate the development of unit standards, and the design of qualifications. Stakeholders from employers, state, labour, providers, manufacturers and professional bodies have nominated persons with technical expertise in these areas to serve on the working groups.

The working groups, called Community of Expert Practitioners (CEPs), identify qualifications that are required by the sector as identified through the MQA Qualifications Framework, and then detail the competencies that are applicable to these qualifications. The qualifications are then designed and populated by the associated unit standards or modules.

These qualifications and unit standards then undergo rigorous ratification through the quality assurance validation process after which it is submitted to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for registration on the NQF.

Once qualifications are registered, the CEPs develop appropriate learnerships associated with these qualifications for submission to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for registration and recording. Registered unit standards are packaged into appropriate skills programmes for registration on the MQA-I-Share. Since NSDS 1 this is the eleventh year of standards writing and qualification registration within the sector. A framework of envisaged qualifications, learnerships and skills

programmes existed since 2003. It has now been reviewed in line with the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO). To date over 100 outcomes based qualifications, learnerships and skills programmes are registered for implementation within the sector. Over 3 million grants are paid to small companies annually that release their employees to work in standards setting CEPs.

The development of learning material for the associated registered unit standards is co-ordinated by the joint MQA/Chamber of Mines (CoM) Learning Materials Development Initiative MoU and ratified for technical content by the CEPs. Since inception, the MQA has developed over 1000 learning packs for the registered qualifications and unit standards. These learning packs include

the facilitator and assessment guides and are made available to sector accredited providers in the form of a CD or MQA-I-Share download. If accredited, providers may search for MQA approved learning packs on MQA-I-Share by using the link <http://www.mqa.org.za/MQA-I-Share>. Interested stakeholders may contact the Unit regarding accessibility of the MQA learning packs.

To search for sector registered qualifications on the QCTO's searchable database visit <http://www.qcto.org.za/>. Choose "Qualifications and Unit Standards". This should take you to a choice of searchable databases. The other source of registered sector registered qualifications is the electronic OFO aligned MQA Qualifications Framework which has NLRD IDs hyperlinked for the relevant registered qualifications.

The design and development of mining engineering qualifications and competency standards is conducted through a Joint Implementation Plan (MoU) between the MQA and the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). The MQA has also established a subject matter expert working group for Level 5 – 8 engineering qualifications and it also works in collaboration with ECSA Engineering. To search for Standards & procedures for engineering levels 5 – 8 qualifications (on the ECSA website) visit <http://www.ecsa.co.za/>. Choose "Standards and Procedures". You are then prompted to select from five (5) areas.

The review of Competency Certificates into outcomes based occupational qualifications and programmes, is conducted for the Chamber of Mines Tickets/Certificates as well as some of the Government Certificate of Competency (GCC) currently managed



CONTACT DETAILS:

by the MQA. Written examinations for GCC are conducted under the banner of the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR). The University of South Africa (UNISA) conducts examinations for some of the CoM certificates and will hand-over the administration process to the MQA as soon as the transitional process has been concluded. The review process for the CoM certificates is underway in collaboration with higher education institutions, professional associations, the CoM and the MQA. The competency certificates are listed on the OFO aligned MQA Qualifications Framework. The components of the MQA Qualification Framework are:

- The NQF Level of the qualification;
- The title and NQF level of a registered or proposed qualification, skills programme and learnership;
- The OFO code and occupation associated with the qualification;
- The reference to current qualification, if any; and
- The envisaged practicing person footprint and learning pathway from GETC to HET levels.

A new dawn in the South African skills development is the advent of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) under the DHET. This has created formal standards setting and quality assurance structures to enable skills development changes. The Occupational Qualifications Framework (OQF) is designed to enable articulation and addresses the two schisms of theory and practice as well as further and higher education and training. There are bridges created between the academic, vocational and occupational forms of learning. It is also designed to access the workplace with structures created towards learner occupational readiness. The OQF introduces three curriculum components for all occupational qualifications and those are knowledge, practical and workplace. For the sector learning progression is guided through MQA Qualifications Framework from Levels 1 to 10. The approval of the MQA as a Development Quality Partner (DQP) by the QCTO requires a supply of the following occupational qualifications:



Mining	: Team Leader, Miner, Shift Overseer (Shift Boss) and Mine Overseer
Safety	: OHS Representatives, OHS Coordinator, OHS Practitioner, Safety Advisor and Mine Inspector Training
CoM Certificates	: Strata Control (Rock Engineering Technician), Mine Ventilation and Surveyor
Engineering	: Rigger, Motor Mechanic (in collaboration with MERSETA)
Beneficiation	: Goldsmith, Jewellery Setter & Jewellery Designer
Laboratory	: Chemical Laboratory Analyst (CHIETA is a DQP) in collaboration with CHIETA

New applications approved by the QCTO include:

Mining Operator plus Mobile, Operator, Crawler Pilot, Crane Hoist Operator and Mineral Beneficiation Process Controller

New applications pending approval include:

Horologist, Chainmaker

The MQA undertakes to ensure capacity building of CEPs in the QCTO qualification development facilitation and their participation in the occupational profiling within the sector to validate the OFO and occupations listed on the MQA Qualification Framework. Through the CoM/MQA MoU, learning materials are being developed for the Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) associated with the sector's occupational qualifications.

The Quality Assurance Unit implements projects below to achieve the objectives:

- MQA-A004: Standard Setting (TRGs / CEPs)
- MQA-A005: Learning Materials Development

Beneficiation Projects for Diamond and Jewellery

The MQA has established a Beneficiation Committee comprising of the Department of Mineral Resources, State Diamond Trader, the SA Precious Metals Regulator, Diamond Transformation Forum, the Jewellery Council of South Africa, Diamond Council of South Africa, UASA-Diamond Industry, Labour (Jewellery Association) to implement the jewellery beneficiation value chain as per the Beneficiation Strategy. The MQA hosts regular national beneficiation seminars with key role players.

Learning Programmes – learnerships, skills programmes, apprenticeships and AET

1. What is a learnership?

A learnership is a learning programme in terms of the Skills Development Act that consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience of a specified nature and duration. It must be registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). A learnership with a SETA can only be offered by an accredited training provider and for a learnership to take effect there must be a host employer, an accredited training provider and a learner. The three parties must sign a learning programmes agreement which has to be registered by the MQA. The MQA provides grants that offer learnerships to learners. Companies are required to apply for these grants on a year-to-year basis.

The terms of a learning programme agreement are as follows:

- The employer must employ the learner for a period of not less than the one specified in the agreement;
- The employer must provide the learner with the specified practical work experience;
- The employer must release the learner to attend the education and training specified in the agreement; and
- The learnership to be achieved must be achieved in the agreement. After the completion of a learnership, a learner obtains a qualification that is recognised throughout the country and will receive a certificate. Learnerships are open to candidates already employed by companies who want to upgrade their knowledge and skills and also to unemployed individuals. If the learner is unemployed, he or she will also need to sign a fixed-term contract with the employer, for the period of the learnership.



How to access MQA learnerships:

- Employed learners should contact their company Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) or Human Resource professionals for information;
- Unemployed learners must register with the DHET centre as work seekers by completing and submitting the registration form indicating their area of interests. The Labour centre will contact the person should they meet the minimum criteria for the learnership of a specific employer; and
- Employers advertise in national, regional or local newspapers and on the internet when they are recruiting new learners. They undergo a selection process and once the candidates are successful, they sign learnership agreements and commence with training.

If a learner is unemployed when the learnership begins, the employer that hosted the learner is not obliged to offer the learner a permanent job. The list of registered learnerships is available on the MQA website.

2. What is a Skills Programme?

A skills programme is defined in the Skills Development Act as:

- An occupationally based programme;
- Presented by an accredited training provider; and
- When completed, constitutes credits towards a qualification registered on the NQF.

Key elements of a skills programme:

- The total credit value of the programme must be less than 120;
- It must be unit standard based;
- It must have a structured workplace learning component;
- It must be registered with the MQA; and
- A skills agreement must be entered into by the employer, learner and provider.

How to access MQA skills programmes:

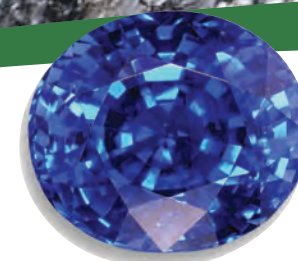
The employees should contact their SDF or HR professional for information on skills programmes registered with the MQA. An employee should then request his or her employer to be trained in the identified skills programme when the employee has identified a registered skills programme that is relevant to their work.

Note: the MQA does not provide grants towards a skills programme except for the OHS skills programme.

The list of MQA registered skills programmes is available on the MQA website.

3. MQA Artisan Development

The MQA Artisan Development Projects' targets are aligned with the National Skills Accord and support the objectives of the New Growth Path. The MQA hosts the quarterly Artisan Development Forum with the MQA accredited engineering training centres,



trade test centres and MQA mining linked TVET colleges. The MQA is also part of the Chamber of Mines RPL Implementation Task Team for Engineering Workers within the mining industry.

The MQA also participates at the Artisan and Technician Subcommittee meeting coordinated by the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB).

4. Adult Education and Training

AET Grant Incentives

The provision and delivery of quality Adult Education and Training (AET) learning programmes in the sector continues to play a pivotal role in the implementation of skills development initiatives undertaken by the MQA over the past six years. Since the inception of the SETAs the MQA has channeled vast amounts of resources towards the provision of quality AET learning programmes in the sector.

The MQA in consultation with the sector role players of AET have set about introducing a number of strategic interventions aimed at addressing the need for AET provision in the sector. To this end, the MQA Board approved the creation of AET grant incentives to employers in the sector who offer learning opportunities for learners who embarked on AET learning programmes.

This initiative was hailed as the first in the industry and it culminated in the acceleration in pace for the accreditation of training providers in the sector as part of the delivery process of quality learning.

The AET grants disbursement protocol

The MQA has developed an AET grants application and disbursement process which is a departure from the previous open-ended system that was based on a first come first served basis. In terms of this protocol levy paying mining companies are required to apply for AET grants allocations during the MQA's financial year.

The MQA is determined to ensure that the AET grants reach as wide a pool of beneficiaries as possible and to this extent, advertisements are placed in national papers and on the website inviting mining companies to apply for discretionary grants allocation for each financial year.

The following AET levels are allocated:

- AET 1
- AET 2
- AET 3
- AET 4
- NQF Level 1 GCTC Mining and Minerals Processes

The MQA and its stakeholders ensure that AET is standardised across the sector and learners undergo external final examinations through assessment bodies such as the Independent Education Board (IEB), the Department of Education and Benchmark.

MQA Projects

The following represents a list of the current MQA projects:

Project no.	Project title
MQA – A001	HEI Lecturer Support
MQA – A002	Bursaries
MQA – A003	Work Experience
MQA – A004	Standard Setting (TRGs / CEPs)
MQA – A005	Learning Material Development
MQA – A006	Internships
MQA – A007	Learnerships: Non Artisan
MQA – A008	Skills Development Facilitator Support
MQA – A009	Adult Education and Training
MQA – A010	OHS Representatives Development
MQA – A013	Learnerships: Artisan Development (Employed and Unemployed)
MQA – A014	Artisan Aides / RPL: Employed
MQA – A015	TVET College Support: Learner's support
MQA – A015	TVET College Support: TVET Lecturer Support
MQA – A016	Maths and Science
MQA – A017	FLC Grant Incentive
MQA – A019	Mine Community Development
MQA – A020	Workplace Coach Development
MQA – A022	Management Development
MQA – A041	HDSA Candidacy Programme
MQA – A042	HDSA Accredited Training Provider Support

For more information on the MQA projects please contact the MQA.



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