Accreditation Policy

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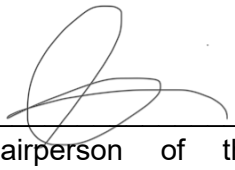
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1 LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
AC	Assessment Centre.
APP	Annual Performance Plan.
ARPL	Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning.
CET	Community Education and Training.
CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission.
CLC	Community Learning Centre.
COIDA	Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act.
CV	Curriculum Vitae.
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training.
DoL	Department of Labour.
EC	Examination Centre.
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment.
FISA	Final Integrated Supervised Assessment.
GENFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework.
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework.
ISO	International Organization for Standardization.
KM	Knowledge Module.
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs.
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding.
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation.
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database.
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation.
NQF	National Qualifications Framework.
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety.
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework.
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act.
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act.
PM	Practical Module.
QC	Quality Council.
QP	Quality Partner.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning.
SAPS	South African Police Service.
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority.
SARSA	South African Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Contractors Association.
SDA	Skills Development Act.
SDP	Skills Development Provider.
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority.
SLA	Service Level Agreement.
SME	Subject Matter Expert.
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise.
TCS	Tax Compliance Status.
TTC	Trade Test Centre.
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
WBL	Workplace-Based Learning.
WM	Workplace Module.
WPBLP	Workplace-Based Learning Programme.

2 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms apply to this document. Where there is any conflict between terms in this document and the OQSF Policy, the OQSF Policy takes precedence. A comprehensive list of terms can be found in the OQSF Policy.

TERMS	DESCRIPTION
Accreditation-AC	An official approval awarded to an Assessment Centre and TTC for a specific period by a Quality Council to conduct assessments on occupational qualifications, part-qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework.
Accreditation-SDP	An official approval awarded to a Skills Development Provider for a specific period by a Quality Council to offer training on occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes registered on the National Qualifications Framework.
Act of dishonesty	Any individual or SDP engaging in dishonest/ misconduct acts by flouting the accreditation policy and policy guidelines to meet interests other than those of the QCTO.
Administrative error or omission	Any error of a technical nature where individuals unintentionally fail to follow the prescribed administrative procedure with the result that information is omitted, something is not done or is neglected in any way that may cause the learner or institution to be advantaged or disadvantaged because of this error or omission.
Applicant	A prospective Skills Development Provider(SDP), Assessment Centre(AC), Trade Test Centre(TTC) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centre applying for accreditation.
Assessment Body	A department of education or an entity accredited/delegated by a Quality Council to conduct external summative assessment and moderate site-based assessment for specified qualifications, part-qualifications, or prior learning.
Assessment Centre	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised (accredited), usually for a particular period, by the QCTO, as having the capacity and capability to assess any OQSF qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme at the required minimum standard.
Bias	Accreditation practices that hinder or advantage particular institutions or groups of institutions. An absence of bias is sought, where all institutions are treated with equal respect and consideration regardless of social, economic, cultural, faith-based, ethnic, gender or other differences.
Certification	The formal recognition of an OQSF qualification, part-qualification or skills programme awarded to a successful learner on meeting the set requirements or standards.

Credibility	A respected process or product which results from a fair, valid, and reliable validation process designed to enhance the quality of a qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme.
Credits	A measure of a volume of learning required for a qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme, quantified as the number of notional hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme. One credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning in accordance with SAQA specifications.
Educator	An inclusive term referring to teachers, lecturers, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and others teaching, educating, training, facilitating, assessing, or enabling learning in learning contexts across the board.
Examiner	A qualified and competent person appointed to develop, administer, and oversee a formal assessment, including a person appointed to develop assessment instruments (such as exam papers, marking guidelines, and others). An examiner may be an educator.
E-Learning	Various forms of electronic learning where technology is used to deliver modules/sections of the qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme, or the entire qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme. Provided the qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme allows for such type of learning.
External Assessment	Assessment developed by a qualified and competent person or body not directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning being assessed.
External Integrated Summative Assessment	The final external integrated evaluation of a learner's occupational competence in the specified registered NQF occupational or part-qualification. A learner gains access to the EISA through meeting the requirement as stipulated in the qualification or part-qualification.
Facilitator/Lecturer	A person who guides learners in training and development process through interactive education and training process. This person also conducts assessments and moderation of learning.
Final Integrated Supervised Assessment	Means a supervised final assessment for which assessment processes, tools, and results are recorded towards the achievement of a historically registered qualification or occupational skills programme.
Formal Assessment	Assessment for which assessment processes, tools, and results are recorded towards achievement of an occupational qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme.
Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and that is explicitly designated as such. Formal learning leads to the awarding of an occupational qualification or part-qualification or skills programme.

Imposter	Any entity who hosts or attempts to host the accreditation on behalf of the entity that applied for accreditation without formal authorisation.
Mixed-mode or multi-modal learning	Learning that makes use of different learning sites and different forms of delivery including but not limited to face-to-face, distance and e-learning, and full-time, part-time, and block-release study.
National Learners Records' Database	The electronic management information system of the NQF under the authority of SAQA, which contains records of qualifications, part-qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations, and associated information such as registrations and accreditations.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	The comprehensive system, approved by the Minister of Higher Education Science and Innovation Training for the classification, co-ordination, registration and publication of articulated quality-assured national qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three coordinated qualification sub-frameworks for General and Further Education and Training, Higher Education, and Trades and Occupations respectively.
Notional hours of learning	The agreed estimate of the learning time that it would take an average learner to meet the defined learning outcomes; it includes consideration of contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning and assessment. Ten notional hours equate to one credit in accordance with SAQA specifications.
Occupational health and safety compliance	Adherence to laws, rules, and standards designed, as prescribed by the Act, to protect the health and safety of employees and learners in the Skills Development Provider and Assessment Centre facilities.
Occupational Qualification	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession developed and quality assured under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of knowledge/theory and application (practical skills/work experience/simulated work experience) components and an external integrated summative assessment.
OQSF	The sub-framework of qualifications developed and managed by the QCTO.
Occupational Part-Qualification	An assessed unit of learning with a defined outcome that is or will be, is registered as part of a qualification on the NQF.
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the National Qualifications Framework, and certified and awarded by a recognized body.

Quality	Meeting the requirements of nationally agreed outcomes and performance/ assessment criteria, thus facilitating both provision and monitoring.
Quality Assurance	The process of ensuring that specified standards or requirements for qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme development, accreditation, teaching learning, education administration, assessment, certification, and the recording of achievements have been met. ISO defines quality assurance as a way of preventing mistakes and defects in manufactured products (skilled and capable work force) and avoiding problems when delivering products or services (qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme development, accreditation, assessment, and certification) to customers.
Quality Council	One of the three Quality Councils tasked with developing and managing one of the Sub-Frameworks of the NQF in order to ensure that agreed quality standards are met, These Quality Councils are Umalusi for the (GENFETQSF); the CHE for the HEQSF and the QCTO for OQSF.
Reliability	The overall consistency of a measure. A measure is said to have high reliability if it produces similar results under consistent conditions.
Regulatory / Legally Mandated Refresher Training	A non-credit-bearing refresher training required by law or regulation to maintain a licence or legal compliance as stipulated by the relevant statutory body. (e.g., DoL, SARSA)
Site-based assessment	Assessment tasks developed and administered on-site by educators at the place at which tuition is offered.
Skills Development Provider	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised, usually for a particular period, by the QCTO, as having the capacity and capability to offer a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF at the required standard.
Occupational Skills Programme	a credit bearing short programme that is occupationally based and when completed may lead to a qualification registered on the NQF.
Sub-Framework	One of three qualifications Sub-Frameworks which make up the South African NQF as a single integrated system namely: the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub- Framework (GENFETQSF) the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).
Summative Assessment	The final assessment of knowledge, skills, and values, which is used to evaluate a candidate's competences against a set of assessment criteria in the EISA and FISA.
Supervised Assessment	The Final Integrated Summative Assessment (FISA) (theory and/or practical) developed, moderated, and conducted in a supervised manner under examination conditions.

Trade Test Centre	A legally established institution (public or private) that has been recognised (accredited), usually for a particular period, by the QCTO, as having the capacity and capability to assess any OQSF qualification or part-qualification, related to the trades, as per the Listing of Occupations as Trades (Gazette no 35625 of 31 August 2012) , as per at the required minimum standard.
Transparency	The extent to which the accreditation criteria and processes are known, visible to, and understood by the institutions and the various role-players in the accreditation process.
Workplace based learning	Learning achieved through structured exposure to work and workplace interaction that a learner must complete towards an occupational qualification, part-qualification or skills programme registered on the OQSF, where applicable.
Workplace based learning programme	An intervention as contemplated in an occupational qualification which a person internalises knowledge, skills and competencies and gain insights through exposure to work by achieving specific outcomes to enhance employability.

3 PREAMBLE

3.1 The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established through the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998), as amended, as one of the three Quality Councils.

3.2 The Skills Development Act (SDA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008, as amended, with specific reference to (Chapter 5 Sections 26 and 27) outline the mandate of the QCTO.

3.3 The main functions of the QCTO are divided into five domains, which are:

3.3.1 Qualifications;

3.3.2 Accreditation and Workplace Approval;

3.3.3 Assessment;

3.3.4 Certification; and

3.3.5 Quality Assurance.

3.4 The QCTO aspires to contribute to a skilled and capable workforce by effectively and efficiently managing the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF), setting standards, developing and quality assuring national occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes for trades, occupations and, where appropriate, professions.

3.5 This Policy focuses on accreditation as one of the QCTO's core quality assurance mechanisms within the OQSF, contributing to the development of a skilled and capable workforce that is employable or self-employed.

3.6 This Policy establishes a consistent framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and quality assuring accreditation within the OQSF.

3.7 This policy maintains the following values of the QCTO:

3.7.1 Innovation and Excellence;

3.7.2 Empowerment and Recognition;

3.7.3 Respect and Dignity;

3.7.4 Ethics and Integrity;

3.7.5 Ownership and Accountability; and

3.7.6 Authenticity.

3.8 The submission of an application to the QCTO constitutes the applicant's acknowledgement that the QCTO and its Quality Partners may collect, process, verify, store, disclose and use information submitted. Such processing shall be undertaken in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013) (POPIA), and other applicable legislation.

4 PURPOSE

4.1 This Policy establishes the standards for the accreditation, monitoring, renewal, suspension and revocation of Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres, Trade Test Centres, RPL Centres and related assessment sites collectively referred to as accredited centres, for occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and occupational skills programmes registered on the OQSF, where applicable.

4.2 Accreditation within the OQSF is based on the applicant demonstrating existing capability and capacity to meet the minimum requirements to offer learning, assessment or related quality assurance services for the relevant OQSF-registered qualification, part-qualification or skills programme, where applicable.

4.3 Accredited Centres must maintain the minimum accreditation requirements for each approved qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme throughout the accreditation period.

4.4 Persistent or material non-compliance may result in corrective action, suspension or revocation, taking into account the seriousness, frequency and effect of the non-compliance and subject to a procedurally fair process.

5 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

5.1 This policy is informed by, but not limited to, the latest amended versions of the following legislation, regulations, policies and related prescripts:

5.1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;

5.1.2 Ministerial Determination of the Sub-Frameworks that comprise the National Qualifications Framework, Determination No. 1391 dated 24 December 2020, published under Government Gazette No. 44031;

5.1.3 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008, as amended;

5.1.4 Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework Policy (OQSF);

5.1.5 Skills Development Act (SDA), (Act 97 of 1998), as amended;

5.1.6 Sector Education and Training Authorities Workplace Based Learning Programme Agreement Regulations, 2018 as amended;

5.1.7 Annexure A Of National Treasury Instruction No. 1 of 2024/2025 (or the latest thereof) - National Travel Guidelines;

5.1.8 Skills Development Levies Act, 1999, as amended;

5.1.9 Grants Regulations, 2012, as amended;

5.1.10 Trade Test Regulations, 2014, as amended; and

5.1.11 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993), and Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act No. 29 of 1996), as amended.

5.2 This policy supersedes and replaces the Accreditation Policy of June 2022, Reference Number: 11/P/1.

5.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the latest versions of the following QCTO policies:

5.3.1 The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) Policy, 2021;

5.3.2 The Workplace Approval Policy;

5.3.3 The Quality Assurance Policy;

5.3.4 Revised Policy: Generic National Artisan Workplace Data, Learner Grant Funding and System Policy, 2017, as amended;

5.3.5 Workplace Approval Criteria and Guidelines, as amended; and

5.3.6 SETAs Workplace Based Learning Programme Regulation. (WPBLPAR) of 2018.

6 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

6.1 This policy applies to:

6.1.1 Accredited Skills Development Providers (SDPs);

6.1.2 Accredited Assessment Centres (ACs), and accredited Trade Test Centres (TTCs);

6.1.3 Accredited Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centres;

6.1.4 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs);

6.1.5 Quality Partners (QPs); and

6.1.6 Any entity that is formally participating within the OQSF.

6.2 This policy covers accreditations of Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres, Trade Test Centres and Recognition of Prior Learning Centres for any of the following:

6.2.1 Historical Registered Qualifications;

6.2.2 Legacy Trades;

6.2.3 Unit Standard Based Qualifications;

6.2.4 Historical Skills Programmes;

6.2.5 NATED 190/191 (N4 to N6);

6.2.6 Occupational Qualifications;

6.2.7 Occupational Part Qualifications; and

6.2.8 Occupational Skills Programmes.

6.3 The applicant may apply to be accredited by the QCTO as any of the following:

6.3.1 Skills Development Provider (SDP);

6.3.2 Assessment Centre (AC), including Trade Test Centre (TTC);

6.3.3 Accredited Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centres;

6.3.4 A combination of Skills Development Provider and Assessment Centre including TTC; or

6.3.5 A combination of Skills Development Provider and RPL Centre.

6.4 Assessment Centres and Trade Test Centres may not be accredited as RPL Centres. Their role is to conduct EISAs or trade tests, while RPL Centres assess prior learning, identify gaps, provide or arrange gap training, and prepare candidates for EISAs or trade testing.

6.5 Accreditation application for Skills Programmes is for the SDP, as there are no dedicated ACs or TTCs for Skills Programmes.

6.6 SDPs already accredited for an occupational qualification may be accredited for a linked registered part-qualification or occupational skills programme without a site visit, provided the part-qualification or skills programme falls within the scope of the occupational qualification for which the SDP is already accredited.

7 POLICY STATEMENT

7.1 Any legal entity registered according to South African law (Private Company/Close Corporation/ Registered NGO/CET/NPO/Public Institution) that wishes to offer any occupational qualification, part qualification or occupational skills programme within the OQSF shall be formally accredited by the QCTO, before commencing with any activity relating to offering, provisioning or assessment of any OQSF registered occupational qualifications, part-qualifications, or skills programmes.

7.2 All accreditation Letters for any qualification in the OQSF as listed in 6.2 issued from 1 June 2026 shall be bearing the QCTO logo. Accreditation Letters issued prior to this date by any SETA will remain valid until their expiry date.

7.3 The QCTO implements the accreditation process in partnership with its Quality Partners (QP), as per the quality partner functions outlined in the signed Service Level Agreement (SLA). Quality Partners may include but are not limited to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB).

7.4 Applicants are encouraged to communicate directly with the QCTO or the relevant Quality Partner.

7.4.1 The QCTO communicates only with the applicant, being the Skills Development Provider, Assessment Centre, Trade Test Centre or RPL Centre.

7.4.2 Applicants must ensure that accreditation-related decisions are made by an authorised and accountable person or executive authority.

7.4.3 Where an applicant chooses to use a consultant or third party, a fully signed Power of Attorney must be submitted, clearly stating the authorised powers, limitations and validity period of the appointment.

7.4.4 The QCTO and its Quality Partners will not be responsible for, or involved in, any investigation, court case, complaint or dispute arising from the applicant's use of a consultant or third party.

7.4.5 The QCTO and its Quality Partners will not be liable for any misinformation, delay, damage or loss caused by such consultant or third party.

7.5 A SAQA recognized professional body may neither be accredited as an education and training provider by the QCTO, nor be registered as an education and training provider with the Department of Higher Education and Training in accordance with the Policy and Criteria for Recognising a Professional Body and Registering a Professional Designation for the Purposes of the NQF Act, 67 of 2008 (As Amended, 2023).

7.6 The QCTO and its quality partners reserve the right to reject accreditation applications for historical registered qualifications in 6.2, if an alternative occupational qualification, part qualifications or occupational skills programmes is available.

7.7 The QCTO and its Quality Partners reserves the right to reject accreditation applications for qualifications or programmes that are classified by an act for public or statutory entities.

7.8 The training, learning, practical training, assessment or workplace site identified in the accreditation application should ordinarily be located within 30 km of the approved Skills Development Provider, Assessment Centre or Trade Test Centre.

7.9 Where the site is located more than 30 km from the approved venue, the applicant must submit a motivation setting out how learners or candidates will be transported, who will be responsible for the transport costs, and the period for which such transport arrangements will apply.

7.10 Workplace simulation may only be used as a workplace-based learning intervention where expressly permitted by the relevant curriculum document and in compliance with all applicable legislative, regulatory and quality assurance requirements. Simulations may be used for knowledge and practical modules.

7.11 Under no circumstances may workplace simulation be implemented as a substitute for workplace-based learning where the curriculum or applicable regulations require actual workplace exposure.

7.12 The QCTO will publish monthly, a list of accredited skills development providers, assessment centres, including trade test centres, on its website www.qcto.org.za

8 ACCREDITATION PROCESS SUMMARY

8.1 Any legal entity intending to offer learning, assessment or related services in respect of an Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework-registered occupational qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme must be accredited by the QCTO before commencing such services.

8.2 The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all information and supporting documents submitted are valid, accurate and, where required, legally certified.

Step	Action	Responsible party	Timeline
1. Application	Complete the application form and pay applicable fees, where applicable.	Applicant	N/A
2. Desktop evaluation	Acknowledge receipt of the application and notify the applicant of outstanding information, where applicable.	QCTO or Quality Partner	Within 10 working days from receipt of the complete application and applicable fees, where applicable.
3. Submission of outstanding information	Submit any outstanding information requested by the QCTO or Quality Partner.	Applicant	Within 10 working days from notification.
4. Site visit	Arrange and conduct a physical, virtual or hybrid accreditation site visit, where required.	QCTO or Quality Partner	Within 60 working days from receipt of a complete application or gap-closure submission.
5. Evaluation report	Submit the accreditation evaluation report to the relevant decision-making structure or Quality Partner.	Evaluator or Subject Matter Expert	Within 5 working days from the site visit. (Part of the 60 days)
6. Recommendation to QCTO	Consider the report and make an approval, decline or gap-closure recommendation.	Quality Partner	Within 30 working days from receipt of the report. (Part of the 60 days)
7. Accreditation outcome	Issue the accreditation letter with a unique accreditation number where the outcome is positive, or issue a decline letter where the outcome is negative.	QCTO or authorised Quality Partner	Within 30 working days from the final decision.
8. Lodge an appeal	Complete the appeal process and pay applicable fees, where applicable.	Applicant	Within 10 working days from decline letter date.
9. Quality assurance	Conduct announced or unannounced visits to confirm continued compliance.	QCTO or Quality Partner	During the accreditation period.
Overall processing objective	Process and finalise a complete accreditation application.	QCTO or Quality Partner	Within 90 working days, excluding applicant-related delays or gap-closure periods.

8.3 The applicable qualification documents may be viewed from the South African Qualifications Authority and QCTO websites. The associated curriculum documents may be downloaded from the QCTO website.

8.4 The submission of false, fraudulent, misrepresented or unlawfully certified documents will be regarded as an intentional misrepresentation and may result in the application being declined and legal action being instituted against the applicant.

8.5 The accreditation process is initiated through the QCTO website, where the applicant must complete the prescribed self-evaluation form and submit the required information for the category of accreditation sought.

8.6 The QCTO will commence the evaluation of the application once the applicant has completed and submitted the prescribed self-evaluation form and has paid any applicable fees.

8.6.1 Fees may be levied on new applications, appeals, re-applications, extensions, renewals, or other quality assurance services, where such fees have been approved and published or communicated through an authorised QCTO fee schedule, circular, guideline or directive.

8.6.2 Payment of any prescribed fee does not guarantee approval, accreditation, renewal or a favourable appeal outcome, as all applications and appeals remain subject to compliance with the prescribed minimum requirements, evaluation outcomes and applicable quality assurance processes.

8.6.3 No fee shall be payable where the QCTO has expressly exempted a category of application, applicant or service through an approved policy, circular, guideline or directive.

8.6.4 Where an application is submitted for a service for which no fee has been approved or published by the QCTO, no payment shall be required.

8.6.5 Fees shall not be payable for corrective actions, additional information requests, or administrative amendments initiated by the QCTO, unless otherwise provided for in an approved fee schedule, circular, guideline or directive.

8.6.6 The QCTO may, in exceptional circumstances and subject to an approved policy, circular, guideline or directive, waive, reduce, defer or refund fees in full or in part.

8.6.7 Fees paid to the QCTO are non-refundable unless a refund is authorised in terms of an approved QCTO policy, circular, guideline, directive or fee schedule.

8.6.8 Where an application is withdrawn, declined, abandoned or lapses, no refund will be paid.

8.7 Each applicant site shall be assigned a unique permanent QCTO Site Identifier upon submission of its first application.

8.7.1 The QCTO Site Identifier shall remain permanently linked to the site and must be quoted in all future applications, correspondence, amendments, renewals and accreditation-related transactions concerning that site.

8.7.2 The allocation of a QCTO Site Identifier does not constitute accreditation, approval or recognition of the applicant or site by the QCTO.

8.8 The QCTO or its Quality Partner may arrange a physical, virtual or hybrid site visit with the applicant to verify compliance with the applicable accreditation requirements.

8.9 Following the site visit, where applicable, a site verification report shall be submitted to the relevant accreditation decision-making structure for consideration.

8.10 The QCTO shall issue the accreditation outcome only after the application and, where applicable, the site verification report has been considered and a decision has been made by the authorised decision-making structure.

8.11 In addition to the permanent QCTO Site Identifier, each accreditation, approval, extension of scope or related decision shall be assigned a unique Accreditation Decision Number.

8.12 The Accreditation Decision Number shall be linked to the specific accreditation decision, approved scope and accredited site address and shall be used for monitoring, reporting, auditing, verification and traceability purposes.

8.13 The Accreditation Decision Number shall remain valid only for the duration of the accreditation or approval period to which it relates and shall cease to be valid upon the expiry, withdrawal, revocation or termination of that accreditation or approval.

8.14 The expiry or termination of an Accreditation Decision Number shall not affect the permanent QCTO Site Identifier assigned to the site.

8.15 Quality assurance visits may be announced or unannounced and may be conducted by the QCTO or its Quality Partners during the accreditation period.

8.16 The accredited entity must maintain the applicable minimum accreditation requirements throughout the accreditation period.

8.17 Where non-compliance is identified, the QCTO may require corrective action or consider the suspension or revocation of accreditation, subject to written notice, an opportunity for the accredited entity to respond, consideration by an authorised decision-maker and the provision of written reasons.

8.18 Where accreditation is suspended or revoked, the accredited entity remains responsible for implementing reasonable learner continuity arrangements. These arrangements may include transferring affected learners to another accredited Skills Development Provider, Assessment Centre or Trade Test Centre, where applicable.

9 ACCREDITATION PLANNING

9.1 The QCTO mandate allows it to only accredit legal organisations within the Republic of South Africa.

9.2 A provider needs to comply with all the legal and mandatory requirements as per the self-evaluation process.

9.3 Proof of compliance with the Companies Act 71 of 2008 juristic requirement is mandatory. This evidence may take the form of CIPC registration documents or proof of establishment according to the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 for labour organisations. State entities, such as State-Owned Companies, are exempt from the above juristic requirement, subject to providing a letter to that effect.

9.4 Proof of compliance with the Income Tax Act 58 of 1962 at the time of accreditation must be provided through a current Tax Compliance Status. State entities, such as State-Owned Companies, are exempt from the above tax compliance requirement, subject to providing a letter to that effect.

9.5 Applicants must provide evidence that they have the capacity and capability to offer, conduct Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or assess each occupational qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme applied for. This includes demonstrating compliance with the applicable infrastructure, equipment, systems, learner support and other quality assurance requirements relevant to the accreditation scope.

9.6 Where foreign personnel are utilised, applicants must submit certified copies of valid passports and work permits issued within six (6) months of the application date. Such permits must authorise the holder to work in the Republic of South Africa and remain valid for the duration of the qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme, in accordance with the Immigration Act, 2002 (Act No. 13 of 2002).

9.7 Applicants must provide evidence that suitably qualified and experienced facilitators, lecturers, assessors or other relevant personnel are available for each qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme applied for. Supporting evidence must include a curriculum vitae, certified identity document, certified qualification copies issued within six (6) months of the application date, and a valid appointment, employment or service agreement. Foreign qualifications must be accompanied by a SAQA evaluation.

9.8 The permanent physical address where learners are trained, assessed or undergo Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) activities must comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993), the Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996 (Act No. 29 of 1996), where applicable, and any other relevant legislative, regulatory or safety requirements.

9.9 Facilitators or lectures may be linked to more than one Skills Development Provider only where the following criteria are met:

9.9.1 The facilitator should have the same or one level above the qualification to train at the different SDPs in the different or same qualifications.

9.9.2 It is Mandatory for facilitator to be available for and participate in the accreditation visit conducted by QCTO or delegated Quality Partner.

9.9.3 A Quality Partner can recommend the suspension of training for multiple SDPs to the QCTO should QCTO policy be contravened in any way.

9.9.4 Lecturers or facilitators must meet the minimum requirements for the specific occupational qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme, as prescribed in the curriculum document. As a general rule, they must hold the same or a higher qualification in the same or related field, with proven industry experience. Documents requiring certification must be certified and valid at the time of application.

9.10 Proof of OHS compliance must include one or more of the following, where applicable:

9.10.1 A current ISO 45001, OHSAS 18001 or other recognised occupational health and safety management system certificate; or

9.10.2 A valid and signed OHS audit certificate or audit report issued by an authorised or accredited person with verifiable credentials; or

9.10.3 A valid and signed internal OHS evaluation report issued by an authorised person, where such report is current and verifiable at the date of application.

9.11 Proof of COIDA requirement shall be a valid COIDA certificate or a valid liability letter.

9.12 The QCTO issues accreditation for a specific physical address, and hence multiple applications must be submitted, should accreditation be required for different physical addresses or mobile training or learning sites.

9.13 No accreditation may be granted or maintained where two or more Skills Development Providers rely on the same physical infrastructure and human resources at the same training venue, unless the arrangement is expressly approved by the QCTO and the applicant demonstrates separate governance, learner records, personnel responsibilities, equipment access, timetabling and evidence collection arrangements.

9.14 Change of physical address requires re-accreditation as it is vital to ensure that the new site meets the minimum requirements, and the new accreditation letter must be issued against the new site address. The SDP and AC/TTC shall apply for approval from the QCTO before moving the physical address to ensure compliance with this policy.

9.14.1 An application to effect any change of address or location that warrants movement of the current training facilities to another should be forwarded to the QCTO before moving.

9.14.2 Training or assessing learners after relocating to new premises without the revised accreditation letter, shall result in learner training and results not being considered for the qualification in such a case.

9.14.3 All accreditation applications for any qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme must have a physical address within the Republic of South Africa in line with the Domicile Act No 3 of 1992, even if the entire occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme can be offered online or using mobile training or learning sites. The physical address is normally where the SDP or AC/TTC is based.

9.14.4 For SDP that uses online or mobile training or learning sites, physical address must be in accordance with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) requirements.

9.14.5 The physical address is a mandatory requirement even if the occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme can be offered and assessed using mixed-mode or multi-modal learning.

9.14.6 Proof of address, lease agreement or proof of building ownership must be submitted to fulfil this requirement.

9.15 In terms of accreditation process

9.15.1 Address/Site/Premises/Facilities refers to the location of which the venue is based.

9.15.2 Venue/Room/Workshop refers to the area where the actual training takes place. SDPs or ACs sharing the same venue are limited to a maximum of two (excluding trades) in terms of obtaining the accreditation status.

9.15.3 Sub-Leasing refers to a situation where a tenant rents out all or part of a property they are leasing to a third party (called a sub-tenant)—without transferring ownership, provided an original lease agreement allows for it or a landlord gives a written consent.

9.15.4 Private SDPs who want to use Government Premises must obtain authorisation from the responsible Accounting Authority.

9.16 Applications for re-accreditation of the SDP/AC/TTC follow the same process as an application for a new SPD/AC/TTC after accreditation has expired.

9.17 No SDP/AC/TTC will be re-accredited based on the previous application.

9.18 Applicants are required to provide proof of their understanding of the qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme content by means of:

9.18.1 Learning material must be developed and aligned against all Knowledge Modules (KMs), Practical Modules (PMs) and Workplace Modules (WMs) as per the curriculum of the occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme.

9.18.2 Learning Material for all programmes (qualifications, part-qualifications, or occupational skills programmes) will only be viewed on the day of the audit.

9.19 Statement of delivery and quality assurance strategy linked to each module in the curriculum document must be submitted outlining the following:

9.19.1 Strategy to enrol the learners;

9.19.2 Strategy to offer the Knowledge component;

9.19.3 Strategy to offer the Practical component;

9.19.4 Virtual, mobile or blended training and learning strategy, where applicable;

9.19.5 Strategy to offer the Workplace Based Learning Component, where applicable;

9.19.6 Applicable FISA or EISA Strategy;

9.19.7 Strategy to support, mentor and coach the learners through their training and learning journey and when rotating them between different venues; and

9.19.8 Strategy to implement quality assurance.

9.19.9 The above strategy must be fully signed by the accounting officer and must detail how and where the provider will train the learners, so that the site verification can be accommodated accordingly.

9.20 For occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme that requires a Workplace Based Learning Programme (WPBLP), the skills development providers are responsible to ensure that learners have approved workplace-based learning venues.

9.21 Workplace experience can also be acquired through Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs).

9.21.1 WPBLP must be done in line with the curriculum requirements, and verifiable evidence of such experience must be formally recorded and made available on request (e.g., logbooks, journals, videos etc.).

9.22 Applicants must provide proof of Financial Stability in a form a letter from the independent auditor or an accountant. The evidence must demonstrate that the SDP/AC/TTC will be able to sustain its operations throughout the accreditation period.

9.23 The accreditation application shall be accompanied by an administration fee(s) associated with the qualification/part qualifications or occupational skills programme applied for as determined and published by the QCTO.

10 IMPLEMENTATION

10.1 All accreditation applications for qualifications in the OQSF must be submitted online on the QCTO website www.qcto.org.za.

10.2 Where an accredited Skills Development Provider, Assessment Centre, RPL Centre or Trade Test Centre does not implement training, assessment or learner enrolment within three years of accreditation, the QCTO may consider this when evaluating any renewal or re-accreditation application for the affected qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme.

10.3 The QCTO may request the applicant to upload compliance documents through a prescribed platform or link. The applicant must submit the required documents within the prescribed timeframe. Failure to do so may result in the application being declined, and the applicant may be required to re-apply.

10.4 The applicant will be furnished with the accreditation checklist, and other guidelines as part of self-evaluation form. All required documents are listed in the Self-evaluation document. Dates for physical or virtual accreditation site audit by the QCTO or any of its quality partners will be communicated once the desktop evaluation has been completed.

10.5 The accreditation application shall be accompanied by a self-evaluation form with the following required compliance documents.

10.5.1 CIPC Registration Documents, where applicable, in line with section 9.3;

10.5.2 Tax Compliance Status (TCS) (Not applicable for Government entities, TVET, CET);

10.5.3 Proof of address, lease agreement or proof of building ownership in line with section 9.14.6;

10.5.4 Lecturers' or facilitators' CVs, identity document copies and qualifications relevant to each occupational qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme, in line with section 9.7;

10.5.5 Occupational Health and Safety audit report in line with section 9.10;

10.5.6 Proof of Financial Stability in line with section 9.22;

10.5.7 Registration requirements by statutory professional bodies where applicable.

10.5.8 Proof of Payment where applicable.

10.5.9 MoUs / SLAs for work experience

10.5.10 Proof of Learning Material.

10.6 The applicant must:

10.6.1 Upon receiving a proposed accreditation audit date from the QCTO/Quality Partner (QP), formally accept the proposed date in writing within five (5) working days. The SDP must also be fully prepared for the audit, ensuring that all required evidence, documents, tools, human resources, and infrastructure listed in the accreditation checklist are readily available on the day of the audit.

10.6.2 Have a reliable network and enough data for a virtual site visit which can take the entire day. Virtual site visit requires the applicant to move around their premises showing all the requested information and the network must be reliable and stable throughout their premises.

10.6.3 Lack of preparation and non-responsiveness from the applicant within the prescribed timeframe shall result in the application being declined where the applicant will be required to re-apply.

10.7 All accreditation site visit cancellations must be requested in writing from the QCTO or the relevant Quality Partner at least seven working days before the scheduled site visit. Failure to do so may result in associated costs being recovered from the applicant before any further application may be processed, subject to the applicant being afforded an opportunity to make representations.

10.8 The accreditation site audit may be done physically or virtually, and all virtual site visits shall be recorded and will be conducted on a platform preferred by the QCTO or its Quality Partners for administration and audit purposes.

10.9 Virtual site visits shall be conducted in line with the Occupational qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme requirements, Occupational qualifications related to the trades will require physical inspections.

10.10 Virtual site audit will be conducted with the aim of capturing as much evidence as possible starting from the street where the prospective SDP, AC/TTC is located to the surrounding environment as well as all applicable tools and infrastructure.

10.11 All accreditation audits (physical or virtual) shall be conducted by a minimum of two people, i.e., the QCTO or QP official and the SME, where applicable.

10.12 The accreditation audit may result in a recommendation for approval, decline or gap closure, where applicable. Any recommendation must be supported by adequate evidence, including evaluation reports, completed checklists, site visit notes, photographs, recordings or other evidence relied upon by the evaluator or Quality Partner.

10.13 The recommended outcome of the accreditation audit shall be recommended to the QCTO accreditation committee for consideration and approval.

10.14 Evidence of physical or virtual site visits may be requested from the Quality Partner as a quality assurance measure.

10.15 A formal outcome letter shall be issued by the QCTO for all applicants that meet/do not meet the minimum accreditation requirements in relation to the site visit audit. The accreditation outcome will indicate the occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme details.

10.16 An applicant whose accreditation application is declined may lodge a formal appeal in accordance with section 14 of this Policy.

10.17 Appeals must be submitted within the period prescribed in section 14 and must be based on procedural unfairness, factual error, incorrect application of the criteria or new material evidence.

10.18 For Regulatory / Legally Mandated Refresher Training programmes, the SDP to contact the relevant statutory body (e.g., DoL, SARSA) for further guidance after the attainment of the regulatory occupational skills programme.

10.19 The QCTO may sample accreditation audits and send it's officials to verify the conducted audits.

10.20 The period of accreditation is five years, or until the expiry of the relevant qualification, part-qualification or occupational skills programme, or until suspension or revocation, whichever occurs first.

11 QUALITY ASSURANCE (ACCREDITATION COMPLIANCE)

11.1 The QCTO or its Quality Partners may from time to time invite all accredited SDP or AC/TTC to attend compulsory training sessions, induction, or capacitation workshops, which may include knowledge review after the session. These sessions may also be prescribed to all prospective SDP or AC/TTC as a pre-requisite before the accreditation letter is issued.

11.2 SDP should submit learner information data quarterly to the QCTO in accordance with the load specifications as provided by the QCTO. Ensure you reference the accreditation number when submitting your electronic data files to the QCTO during your data load cycles.

11.3 An SDP shall not issue any certificate, unless authorised and regulated in terms of the applicable Act. Any unauthorised issuance of certificates will constitute a material breach of accreditation requirements and may result in the immediate revocation of the SDP's accreditation.

12 MODES OF DELIVERY

12.1 Application for temporary site extension by the Accredited SDPs should be sent to the QCTO one (1) month prior to the commencement of the training.

12.2 Should an accredited Skills Development Provider train at a different premises without a prior written permission, the accredited SDP may be de-accredited with immediate effect.

12.3 The advent of educational technologies has brought about profound changes in how education is delivered. One of the advantages of using technology is that it has great opportunity to expand access, it reduces cost, it increases efficiency, it increases openness and flexibility thereby making it possible to attract and retain a broader range of learners.

12.4 The QCTO also acknowledges the trend of mobility of training or provisioning (for example mobile training units). Should an accredited SDP wish to provide occupational qualifications, part qualifications or occupational skills programme at another venue, e.g., different workplace, the SDP must apply online on the QCTO website at least 1 month prior to such event taking place and furnish the QCTO with the following information:

12.4.1 SDP name and address;

12.4.2 Copy of the Accreditation Letter for the occupational qualification, part-qualification, or occupational skills programme to be trained/assessed;

12.4.3 Proof of SLA between the SDP and the new venue (provider);

12.4.4 The QP should be informed of a site change;

12.4.5 Site visits may be conducted depending on the qualification;

12.4.6 Name and address of the new venue;

12.4.7 Contact person at the new venue;

12.4.8 Expected training/assessment period and expected start date;

12.4.9 Valid OHS Report of the new venue; and

12.4.10 Total number of learners to be trained/assessed; and

12.4.11 Proof of project / SLA Implementation Plan.

12.5 Training at the new venue shall only commence after a written permission by the QCTO is granted for training, not more than 12 months. This can be extended by the QCTO based on the monitoring report.

12.6 Please remember the following: Permission is granted only on programmes lasting 12 months or less. If the project will last longer, the institution must apply for full accreditation at an alternative venue.

13 SUSPENSION OR DE-ACCREDITATION OF AN ACCREDITED CENTRE

13.1 The QCTO may suspend the accreditation of a Skills Development Provider (SDP), Assessment Centre (AC), Trade Test Centre (TTC) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centre where there is evidence of material non-compliance with this Policy, applicable legislation, accreditation criteria or quality assurance requirements.

13.2 Suspension may be considered where the accredited entity:

13.2.1 Fails to maintain the human, physical or operational resources required for accreditation;

13.2.2 Experiences staff vacancies that materially affect its ability to deliver training, assessment or related services and fails to notify the QCTO or the relevant Quality Partner;

13.2.3 Delivers training, assessment, moderation or related services that are of an unacceptable quality or do not meet the prescribed standards;

13.2.4 Fails to maintain adequate, safe and functional equipment, facilities or infrastructure required for the approved scope of accreditation;

13.2.5 Fails to maintain proper learner, assessment or accreditation records;

13.2.6 Fails to implement internal quality assurance processes, including assessment and moderation requirements;

13.2.7 Fails to implement corrective actions within prescribed timeframes following monitoring, verification, moderation or compliance visits;

13.2.8 Commits a serious contravention of occupational health and safety requirements or other applicable legislation; or

13.2.9 Is recommended for suspension by the QCTO, a Quality Partner, moderator or authorised evaluator based on verified evidence of non-compliance.

13.3 Before suspension is implemented, the QCTO shall provide written notice of the identified non-compliance, the proposed action and an opportunity for the accredited entity to make representations, unless immediate action is required to protect learners, candidates or the integrity of the OQSF.

13.4 Where accreditation is suspended, the QCTO may require the accredited entity to discontinue training, assessment or related activities for the affected scope until the suspension is lifted.

13.5 The accredited entity remains responsible for learner and candidate continuity arrangements during the suspension period.

13.6 The QCTO may revoke or de-accredit an SDP, AC, TTC or RPL Centre where:

13.6.1 The entity fails to rectify non-compliance within the period specified by the QCTO;

13.6.2 The entity repeatedly commits the same or similar non-compliance after corrective action has been required;

13.6.3 The entity operates outside the approved scope of accreditation;

13.6.4 The entity issues unauthorised certificates, statements of results or other documents implying QCTO certification or approval;

13.6.5 The entity conducts training, assessment or trade testing for qualifications, part-qualifications or occupational skills programmes for which it is not accredited;

13.6.6 There is evidence of fraud, corruption, bribery, forgery, misrepresentation, dishonesty or any other unlawful conduct;

13.6.7 The entity submits fraudulent or materially misleading information to the QCTO or its Quality Partners;

13.6.8 Serious or repeated quality assurance deficiencies are identified and verified by the QCTO or its Quality Partners;

13.6.9 The entity fails to maintain the minimum resources, equipment, facilities, staffing or health and safety requirements applicable to its accreditation;

13.6.10 The entity fails to comply with directives, corrective actions or compliance requirements issued by the QCTO; or

13.6.11 Continued accreditation would pose a risk to learners, candidates, the public, or the integrity of the OQSF.

13.7 Revocation or de-accreditation may only be effected after the accredited entity has been afforded procedural fairness, including written notice, an opportunity to respond and written reasons for the final decision, unless immediate action is required by law or to protect the integrity of the system.

13.8 Where accreditation is revoked or withdrawn, the accredited entity must immediately cease all activities relating to the affected accreditation scope.

13.9 The accredited entity remains responsible for implementing reasonable learner and candidate continuity arrangements, including transferring learners or candidates to another accredited provider, assessment centre or trade test centre where necessary.

13.10 The QCTO may recover reasonable costs incurred as a result of the accredited entity's non-compliance where permitted by law, policy or contractual arrangements.

14 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

14.1 The QCTO evaluates accreditation applications against the minimum accreditation requirements prescribed in this Policy and any related criteria, guidelines or quality assurance requirements.

14.2 Any applicant who is dissatisfied with an accreditation decision may lodge an appeal with the QCTO within ten (10) working days of receiving the accreditation outcome. Appeals must be submitted to Accreditation@qcto.org.za and must clearly set out the grounds for the appeal, supported by relevant evidence. Appeals submitted after the prescribed period may not be considered.

14.3 Complaints, queries and requests for clarification may be submitted through the QCTO website at www.qcto.org.za.

14.4 The QCTO Fraud Prevention Policy and Whistle-Blowing Policy provide mechanisms for reporting suspected fraud, corruption, misconduct, unethical conduct and other irregularities. These policies are available on the QCTO website. Reports, tip-offs and disclosures may also be submitted through the independently managed QCTO Fraud and Ethics Hotline, the details of which are available on the QCTO website.

15 NON-COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

15.1 The submission of false, misleading, altered, fraudulent or misrepresented information or documents constitutes a serious breach of this Policy and may result in the rejection, suspension, revocation or withdrawal of accreditation, as well as any other action permitted by law.

15.2 Corruption, fraud, forgery, bribery, extortion, the use of fraudulent documents and related unlawful conduct are criminal offences and may be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution.

15.3 Where evidence of fraud, corruption, forgery, bribery, misrepresentation or other unlawful conduct is identified, the QCTO may, in addition to any criminal or civil proceedings, take appropriate administrative action against the institution and any individuals involved.

15.4 In terms of section 32B of the National Qualifications Framework Act, where it is established that an SDP, AC, TTC or any other person has misrepresented an accreditation status, qualification or related approval, the QCTO may take one or more of the following actions:

15.4.1 Prohibit the institution or individual from applying for, holding or participating in accreditation-related activities for a period determined by the QCTO, taking into account the nature and severity of the misconduct.

15.4.2 Refer the matter to the South African Police Service, regulatory authorities or any other competent authority for investigation and appropriate legal action.

15.4.3 Withdraw, suspend or revoke any accreditation, approval or recognition granted on the basis of false, misleading or fraudulent information.

15.4.4 Publish or communicate the outcome of the investigation where required by law, policy or the interests of protecting learners and the integrity of the OQSF.

16 IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

16.1 This Policy shall come into effect on the date approved by the QCTO Council and communicated by the QCTO.

16.2 Any accreditation granted before the effective date of this Policy shall remain valid until its expiry date, unless suspended, revoked or otherwise affected by a decision of the QCTO in terms of this Policy or applicable legislation.

16.3 All accreditation letters issued in terms of this Policy shall bear the QCTO logo and any other information determined by the QCTO.

16.4 Applications submitted before the effective date of this Policy and not yet finalised may be processed in accordance with the transitional arrangements determined by the QCTO.

16.5 Where there is a conflict between previous accreditation requirements and this Policy, this Policy shall prevail from its effective date, subject to any approved transitional arrangements.

17 POLICY REVIEW

17.1 This Policy shall be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or when necessary.