

Quality Assurance Policy (Monitoring and Evaluation)

Effective date: 19 August 2026

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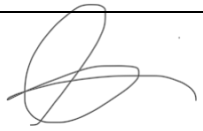
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APPROVAL BY

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1. LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AC	Assessment Centre.
CET	Community Education and Training College.
CLC	Community Learning Centres.
CHE	Council on Higher Education.
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training.
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment.
FISA	Final Integrated Supervised Assessment.
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework.
GENFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework.
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs.
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body.
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database.
NQF	National Qualifications Framework.
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework.
QC	Quality Council.
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.
QP	Quality Partner.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning.
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority.
SDP	Skills Development Provider.
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority.
SME	Subject Matter Expert.
TTC	Trade Test Centre.
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
WBL	Workplace-Based Learning.
WBLP	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.

Term	Description
Accreditation-Assessment Centre and Trade Test Centre	An official approval awarded to an Assessment Centre or Trade Test Centre for a specific period by a Quality Council to conduct assessments for occupational qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework.
Accreditation-Skills Development Provider	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 deliberate act of fraud, misrepresentation, forgery, bribery, corruption or other dishonest conduct intended to improperly obtain, retain or use accreditation or approval status.
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, assessment centre and trade test 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.
Assessment Monitoring	The QCTO's process for evaluating whether accredited Assessment Centres and Trade Test Centres conduct assessments and trade tests fairly, consistently and in line with approved assessment policies, specifications and qualification requirements. Personnel used for this monitoring must be suitably qualified at the same or higher NQF level and have relevant occupational experience.
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.
Blended learning	Blended learning refers to a mode of delivery for occupational qualifications, part-qualifications or skills programmes where the qualification, curriculum or

Term	Description
	programme document expressly permits practical learning and/or workplace-based learning to be delivered partly online. For all occupational qualifications, part-qualifications, and skills programmes, Knowledge Modules may be offered online, provided that learner attendance can be proven.
Credit Compression	Credit Compression may be applied up to 30% of the total credits of a qualification, provided that credible evidence is available to demonstrate that all modules, learning outcomes, and associated assessment criteria are sufficiently covered. The application of credit compression must not compromise the integrity, depth, or quality of the learning, and providers must retain documented proof showing how the compressed delivery continues to meet the requirements of the qualification document, programme document, and curriculum document.
Credit Expansion	Credit Expansion refers to increasing the time or duration allocated to learning beyond the standard or planned delivery period to ensure that all modules, learning outcomes, and associated assessment criteria are fully addressed. This may include extending contact time, practical learning time, or instructional hours to enhance the depth, mastery, and overall quality of learning. Credit Expansion may be applied as long as the last date of achievement for the qualification or programme is not exceeded.
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 occupational qualification, part-qualification, or skills programme, quantified as the number of notional hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the occupational 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, trainers, lecturers, facilitators, assessors, moderators, and others teaching, educating, training, facilitating, assessing, or enabling learning in learning contexts across the board. The educator must hold a qualification at the same or a higher NQF level than the qualification being facilitated and have relevant occupational expertise in the field.
Examiner	A qualified and competent person appointed to develop, administer and oversee a formal assessment, including developing assessment instruments such as examination papers and marking guidelines. An examiner may be an educator and must hold a qualification at the same or higher NQF level than the qualification being examined, with relevant occupational expertise.

Term	Description
E-Learning	Various forms of electronic learning where technology is used to deliver modules or sections of a qualification, part-qualification or skills programme, or the full qualification or programme, where such delivery is permitted.
External Integrated Summative Assessment	As defined in the Assessment Policy.
Facilitation	Facilitation is the process through which a facilitator guides, supports, and manages learning activities to enable learners to achieve the intended outcomes of a qualification, part qualification, or skills programme. It involves creating an enabling and inclusive learning environment, applying appropriate teaching and learning methodologies, and ensuring that learning is interactive, learner-centred, and aligned with the curriculum and assessment requirements.
Final Integrated Supervised Assessment	As defined in the Assessment Policy.
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.
Institutional Monitoring	Monitoring of an institution's overall capacity, systems, governance, resources and quality management practices to determine whether it meets the minimum requirements to deliver and/or assess occupational qualifications, part-qualifications or occupational skills programmes. It confirms that the institution has the organisational capability, infrastructure, staffing, learning and assessment systems, and compliance mechanisms required to operate as an accredited SDP, AC or TTC within the OQSF. This process may be conducted by trained QCTO or QP personnel, or appointed SMEs.
Marking Centre Monitoring	The QCTO's process for evaluating the accuracy, consistency and fairness of marking conducted by accredited Assessment Centres or Trade Test Centres.
Moderation Monitoring	The QCTO's process for evaluating the quality, consistency and validity of internal and external moderation conducted by accredited Assessment Centres or Trade Test Centres. It reviews moderation practices, reports and sampled assessment evidence to verify compliance with QCTO moderation policies, assessment specifications and qualification-specific requirements. The purpose is to ensure that assessment decisions are credible, fair and standardised across assessors and sites.
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.

Term	Description
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	The comprehensive system approved for the classification, coordination, registration and publication of articulated quality-assured national qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes. 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 Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993), to protect the health and safety of employees and learners in the Skills Development Provider and Assessment Centre facilities.
Occupational Monitoring	The QCTO's process for evaluating whether accredited Skills Development Providers and approved Workplace-Based Learning sites deliver occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes in line with curriculum, assessment and programme-specific requirements. Personnel used for this monitoring must be suitably qualified at the same or higher NQF level and have relevant occupational experience.
Competency Determination Monitoring	The QCTO's process for evaluating the accuracy, consistency, fairness, validity and reliability of competency decisions arising from assessments conducted by SDPs, ACs and TTCs. It reviews assessment evidence, decisions, moderation outcomes and learner results to confirm compliance with approved requirements, QCTO policies and applicable quality assurance standards. Personnel used for this monitoring must have relevant occupational, assessment and quality assurance expertise.
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.
Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework	The sub-framework of qualifications developed and managed by the QCTO.
Part-Qualification	An assessed unit of learning with a defined outcome that is registered, or will be 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,

Term	Description
	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., Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL), South African Revenue Service (SARS))
Skills Development Provider	A legally established institution, public or private, that has been accredited or recognised by the QCTO as having the capacity and capability to offer a qualification, part-qualification or skills programme registered on the NQF at the required standard.
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	As per the assessment policy.
Supervised Assessment	As per the assessment policy.
Trade Test Centre	A legally established institution, public or private, accredited by the QCTO as having the capacity and capability to assess OQSF qualifications or part-qualifications related to trades, as listed in the Gazette, at the required minimum standard.

Term	Description
Workplace-Based Learning (WBL)	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 (WBLP)	An intervention contemplated in an occupational qualification through which a learner gains knowledge, skills and competencies through structured exposure to work to enhance employability.

3. PREAMBLE

3.1. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in terms of the Skills Development Act (SDA), Act 97 of 1998, as amended, as one of 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 QCTO's mandate encompasses five core domains:

3.3.1. Qualifications;

3.3.2. Accreditation, including Workplace Approval;

3.3.3. Assessment;

3.3.4. Certification; and

3.3.5. Quality Assurance.

3.4. In terms of Section 26J of the NQF Act, the QCTO is empowered to make regulations, through publication in the Government Gazette, to establish overarching legal frameworks and compliance requirements.

3.5. This policy specifically addresses the Quality Assurance (QA) domain, which is integral to the QCTO's mission of developing a skilled and capable workforce that is employable or self-employed.

3.6. The QCTO is responsible for establishing, maintaining and overseeing the national monitoring and evaluation framework required for quality assurance within the OQSF. This includes:

3.7. Developing Quality Assurance Policy, guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs);

3.8. Ensuring the integrity, credibility and consistency of monitoring activities conducted by Quality Partners (QPs), and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs);

3.9. Ensuring that monitoring is aligned with statutory requirements outlined in the Skills Development Act and NQF Act.

3.10. Analysing monitoring data to inform planning, decision-making and risk-management strategies; and

3.11. Overseeing the performance of QPs and SMEs in implementing delegated responsibilities.

3.12. Through effective and efficient management of the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF), the QCTO sets standards, develops, and quality assures provision of national occupational qualifications, part-qualifications, and occupational skills programmes for the benefit of individuals pursuing trades, occupations, and, where applicable, professions.

3.13. This policy maintains the following values of the QCTO:

3.13.1. Innovation and Excellence;

3.13.2. Empowerment and Recognition;

3.13.3. Respect and Dignity;

3.13.4. Ethics and Integrity;

3.13.5. Ownership and Accountability; and

3.13.6. Authenticity.

3.14. 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. The purpose of this Quality Assurance Policy is to establish a coherent, standardised and systematic framework for monitoring the implementation of occupational qualifications, part qualifications, occupational skills programmes and historical qualifications registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).

4.2. The policy provides the strategic framework for assuring, maintaining, enhancing, monitoring, evaluating, and continuously improving the quality, credibility, effectiveness, relevance, responsiveness, and integrity of occupational qualifications and certification within the OQSF.

4.3. Monitoring and Evaluation provides the evidence, findings, ratings, risk classifications, improvement opportunities, and performance information needed to determine the effectiveness of Quality Assurance.

4.4. This policy sets out the principles, processes and requirements for ensuring effective oversight of education and training delivery, assessment practices, workplace-based learning integration, and the protection of learner interests.

4.5. It enables the QCTO and its Quality Partners to assess the quality, integrity and consistency of provision, identify risks and deficiencies early, and ensure that corrective action is implemented to maintain national standards.

4.6. This policy provides the binding framework that all SDPs must use to develop their internal monitoring and evaluation policies, ensuring full alignment with QCTO standards and national consistency in the monitoring of occupational qualifications.

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 Quality Assurance Policy must be read together with and applied in conjunction with the following QCTO policies and guidelines to ensure integrated, consistent and compliant implementation of occupational qualifications:

5.2.1. QCTO Occupational Qualifications Development (QD) Policy, which sets standards for qualification development, ensuring monitoring activities align with curriculum and qualification specifications.

5.2.2. QCTO Accreditation Policy, which outlines accreditation requirements and conditions for Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres, RPL Centres and Trade Test Centres.

5.2.3. QCTO Assessment Policy, which prescribes standards for formative, internal Final Integrated Supervised Assessment (FISA) and External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) including Trade Tests.

5.2.4. QCTO Certification Policy, which governs the requirements for learner certification and submission of results; and the

5.2.5. QCTO Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy, which provides a structured and quality-assured process for recognising and validating prior formal, informal or experiential learning so that individuals may gain access to the FISA or EISA, including trade tests.

5.3. Together, these policies form a unified regulatory framework that guides qualifications development, accreditation, delivery, monitoring, assessment and certification processes across the OQSF.

5.4. This policy supersedes and replaces the Quality Assurance (Monitoring & Evaluation) Policy of 09 September 2021, Reference Number: 10/2/P.

6. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

6.1. This policy applies to all stakeholders involved in the implementation and quality assurance of all qualifications under the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF). Specifically, it covers:

6.1.1. Accredited Skills Development Providers (SDPs);

6.1.2. Accredited Assessment Centres (ACs) or Trade Test Centres (TTCs);

6.1.3. Accredited Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centres;

6.1.4. Approved Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites;

6.1.5. Quality Partners (QPs) delegated by the QCTO to perform quality assurance functions;

6.1.6. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) contracted or appointed by the QCTO or QPs to perform any function within the OQSF.

6.2. All stakeholders engaged in monitoring, reporting, evaluation, or oversight of occupational qualifications must comply with this policy and its associated guidelines, procedures (SoPs), and reporting frameworks.

6.3. This policy applies to all qualifications and programmes registered on the OQSF, including:

6.3.1. Occupational qualifications;

6.3.2. Occupational Part-qualifications;

6.3.3. Occupational skills programmes.

6.3.4. Historically registered qualifications that have not reached the Last date of Achievement.

6.3.5. Legacy Trades;

6.3.6. Unit standard-based qualifications;

6.3.7. Historical Skills Programmes;

6.4. Monitoring and evaluation activities extend across the full range of qualifications and programmes under the QCTO's regulatory jurisdiction to maintain consistent national oversight of quality, compliance, and learner outcomes.

6.5. The provisions of this policy apply equally to all categories of accredited providers, including:

6.5.1. Public Skills Development Providers (SDPs) eg TVET and CET Colleges;

6.5.2. Private Skills Development Providers (SDPs);

6.5.3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Centres;

6.5.4. Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites; and

6.5.5. Any entity that is formally participating within the OQSF.

6.6. Each provider type must ensure that delivery, workplace-based learning, and assessment align with approved curriculum and accreditation conditions, regardless of institutional ownership or governance structure.

6.7. Occupational qualifications, part qualifications, and skills programmes may not be delivered solely through digital or online platforms due to the integrated requirements of:

6.7.1. Knowledge Modules (KM);

6.7.2. Practical Skills Modules (PM); and

6.7.3. Workplace Experience Modules (WM).

6.8. Digital platforms may support knowledge components and learner engagement but cannot replace mandatory practical and workplace-based elements.

6.9. The following exemptions and conditions are applicable:

6.9.1. Certain qualifications or skills programmes may be delivered entirely online if explicitly permitted in the qualification and curriculum documentation. Providers must obtain written approval from the QCTO before implementing online delivery.

6.9.2. Online assessments (FISA/EISA) are permitted only for specific qualifications, subject to compliance with QCTO Assessment Policy and written approval.

7. POLICY STATEMENT

7.1. The QCTO adopts a uniform, objective and evidence-based Quality Assurance Rating Framework for evaluating the performance and compliance of Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres, Trade Test Centres, Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites, Quality Partners and Subject Matter Experts operating within the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).

7.2. All entities are assessed and assigned a compliance rating on a four-star scale as part of the annual evaluation cycle.

7.3. All accredited Skills Development Providers, Assessment Centres, Trade Test Centres, approved Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites and Quality Partners with QCTO agreements must be assessed and evaluated in line with this policy at least once every financial year.

7.4. A default rating of two (2) stars applies to all entities before they are evaluated, with final ratings adjusted upward or downward based on verified evidence of compliance or non-compliance after the evaluation.

7.5. Monitoring shall comprehensively cover all information required by the QCTO as well as all information required by the relevant Quality Partner (QP).

7.6. Monitoring activities must therefore encompass institutional governance, learner administration, occupational health and safety, accredited qualifications, facilitator, assessor and moderator details and enrolments, upcoming EISA and FISA assessments, outstanding certificates, active projects, grants, and associated funders amongst others. High level checks of learning materials and provisioning tools will also be checked, and should a more detailed visit be required for a specific qualification, this will be indicated in the report.

7.7. Different monitoring forms shall be used to ensure uniformity of monitoring practices across the QCTO and all QPs.

7.8. Under this Policy, all instances of non-conformance identified during monitoring, verification, data validation, site visits or evaluation processes are classified as Critical, Major or Minor, in accordance with their severity, impact on quality, and associated risks.

7.8.1. A Critical Non-Compliance is any condition or action that presents a serious and immediate threat to learner or staff safety, undermines assessment integrity or qualification credibility, constitutes intentional misconduct, breaches any South African legal or regulatory requirement, results in learner progression delays exceeding twelve (12) months, or exposes the QCTO or a Quality Partner to litigation or parliamentary intervention.

7.8.2. A Major Non-Compliance is a significant failure that compromises delivery, assessment or compliance quality, results in learner progression delays of more than four (4) months, or presents substantial regulatory or legal risk, but does not create immediate danger and is not the result of intentional misconduct.

7.8.3. A Minor Non-Compliance is a deviation from standards that does not compromise quality, learner or staff safety, or system integrity, but requires correction to support continuous improvement.

Rating	Minor Non-Compliances	Major Non-Compliances	**Critical Non-Compliances**
Four (4) stars	Any number	0–3	0
Three (3) stars	Any number	0–5	0
Two (2) stars	Any number	0–8	0
One (1) star	Any number	>8	≥1

7.9. Institutional Monitoring Forms, Assessment Credibility Monitoring Forms and Stakeholders Performance Monitoring Forms will evaluate the effectiveness, quality, performance, risks, organisational maturity, and continuous improvement of stakeholders participating in the implementation of occupational qualifications within the OQSF.

7.10. The primary objective of institutional monitoring is to obtain a comprehensive institutional overview.

7.11. The monitoring process should take no longer than three hours per average institution, on the condition that the Self-Evaluation Form is completed in advance.

7.12. The QCTO and Quality Partners (QPs) shall implement the approved monitoring forms as the standard and authoritative instruments for all monitoring activities. The monitoring forms shall be implemented primarily in a digital or automated format, aligned to the system requirements of the QCTO or the applicable QP, provided that all mandatory sections, data elements, rating logic, and evidence requirements prescribed by the QCTO are fully retained and enforced without alteration.

7.13. Digital monitoring forms shall constitute the primary and official record of monitoring outcomes. Paper-based or PDF versions of the approved monitoring form may only be used as a temporary contingency measure in the event of verified system downtime, network failure, or exceptional operational constraints.

7.14. Any data collected using contingency forms must be captured in full and uploaded to the authorised QCTO or QP digital platform within forty-eight (48) hours of system restoration. Failure to timeously upload such data shall constitute non-compliance with this Policy and may result in corrective action or sanctions

7.15. Any updates to the Institutional Monitoring Forms shall only be effected through a formal review, approval and adoption process led by the QCTO in consultation with QPs. No Quality Partner or institution may unilaterally amend or replace the approved form. The QCTO shall maintain the master version and ensure controlled dissemination of all updates.

7.16. Post monitoring surveys will be sent to the visited entities to obtain feedback on the site visit and gather suggestions for improvement.

7.17. The overall Quality Assurance Rating Framework for evaluating the performance and compliance of Skills Development Providers (SDPs), Assessment Centres (ACs), Trade Test Centres (TTCs), and approved Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites is shown in Figure 1 below.

7.17.1. The process begins with QCTO or Quality Partners maintaining updated databases of accredited and approved sites, after which QCTO allocates accredited sites to QPs quarterly based on SIC codes.

7.17.2. Monitoring is then scheduled by either QCTO or the QP, who requests a Self-Evaluation report from each site.

7.17.3. This is followed by a scheduled or unscheduled monitoring visit, during which the latest Self-Evaluation report and, where necessary, trained Subject Matter Experts are used to assess compliance.

7.17.4. The findings are evaluated and interventions or sanctions are recommended to the QCTO Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) via the QA Director(s).

7.17.5. All reports and evidence are then submitted to the central monitoring database, after which the QAC reviews, approves, amends, or ratifies the proposed actions.

7.17.6. QCTO or the QP then communicates the official feedback to the site, which may lodge a formal appeal if dissatisfied. Finally, the QCTO and QPs update the national database with the site’s current star rating, completing the cycle and preparing for the next monitoring period.

7.18. The overall Quality Assurance Rating Framework for evaluating the performance and compliance of Quality Partners is as follows:

7.18.1. The process begins with the QCTO maintaining an internal database of all Quality Partners, while each QP also keeps an updated register of approved Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites, which they submit to the QCTO on a quarterly basis.

7.18.2. The QCTO QP Manager, at Deputy Director level and above, initiates the monitoring cycle by scheduling monitoring activities and requesting a Self-Evaluation report from the QP completed by the QP Quality Assurance Manager or above.

7.18.3. This is followed by both scheduled and unscheduled monitoring visits conducted using the latest Self-Evaluation report as the primary reference.

7.18.4. Based on the monitoring outcomes, the QP Manager evaluates the findings and recommends appropriate interventions or sanctions, which are submitted to the QCTO QAC through the QA Director.

7.18.5. The QCTO Manager then uploads all monitoring reports and supporting evidence to the internal database dedicated to QP monitoring.

7.18.6. The QAC subsequently reviews, approves, ratifies, or amends the recommended interventions and sanctions.

7.18.7. Following this, the QCTO Chief Director issues formal feedback to the Quality Partner, who may choose to lodge an appeal if dissatisfied with the decision.

7.18.8. The process concludes with the QCTO Director updating the Quality Partner database with the final star rating, thereby completing the Quality Assurance Rating cycle.

8. COMPLIANCE, MONITORING AND REVIEW ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. The QCTO is mandated in terms of the Skills Development Act (SDA), section 26H, and the NQF Act, section 32, to develop, implement and maintain a national quality assurance system for OQSF qualifications and programmes.

8.2. These statutory obligations include developing and implementing quality assurance policies, ensuring the integrity and credibility of monitoring processes, overseeing the performance of delegated QPs, verifying monitoring findings, analysing national compliance trends, and intervening where systemic or high-risk non-compliance threatens the quality, credibility or learner or staff safety within the OQSF.

8.3. The QCTO is responsible for establishing national-level monitoring frameworks, guidelines, SOPs and forms to support consistent and uniform implementation across the system.

8.4. Quality Partners, which comprise of Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), mandated Government Departments and Entities, Statutory Professional Bodies are delegated by the QCTO in terms of section 26I of the SDA to perform specific quality assurance functions.

8.5. These delegated responsibilities include monitoring the implementation of occupational qualifications within their respective sectors, collecting and validating learner enrolment and progression data submitted by SDPs, coordinating and conducting scheduled and unscheduled monitoring visits, verifying internal assessment and moderation practices, reporting non-compliance, and submitting monthly and quarterly monitoring reports to the QCTO.

8.6. QPs must implement the Quality Assurance Policy and all associated guidelines, ensuring alignment with national requirements, and must submit reports to the QCTO and escalate high-risk findings to the QCTO within prescribed timeframes.

8.7. The QCTO maintains direct oversight over the performance of QPs and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) engaged in monitoring activities.

8.8. This oversight includes verifying the accuracy, integrity and completeness of monitoring reports submitted by QPs and SMEs; conducting selective verification site visits; reviewing evidence used in reporting; identifying trends or gaps in QP performance; providing capacity development where needed; and taking remedial action where QPs or SMEs fail to execute delegated monitoring duties as required.

8.9. SMEs operate under the authority of the QCTO or QP and must comply with all monitoring tools, templates, protocols and reporting standards.

8.10. The QCTO reserves the right to withdraw QP delegations, suspend SME participation, conduct its own investigation, or direct the QP to undertake an investigation within prescribed timelines.

8.11. The QCTO may also escalate matters to the relevant Accounting Authorities and Officers, such as the Board, Director-General (DG), Chief Executive Officer (CEO), responsible Minister, Auditor-General (AG), or the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training.

8.12. The QCTO may also impose sanctions, which may include corrective or remedial measures, administrative sanctions, financial sanctions, disciplinary actions, or legal action in accordance with the South African legal framework, should monitoring activities be compromised or improperly executed. In addition, the QCTO may instruct the QP to implement such sanctions within a prescribed turnaround time.

8.13. All stakeholders are required to comply with this Quality Assurance Policy and any related guidelines issued by the QCTO.

8.14. Non-adherence to policy requirements, failure to conduct monitoring as scheduled, failure to submit monitoring reports, or evidence of inaccurate, misleading or incomplete reporting may result in consequences, including but not limited to:

8.14.1. Targeted interventions, corrective support or capacity-building directed by the QCTO.

8.14.2. Increased monitoring frequency or heightened risk-based oversight.

8.14.3. Suspension or withdrawal of delegated functions (for QPs).

8.14.4. Termination, suspension or non-renewal of SME contracts.

8.14.5. Temporary suspension of training delivery, new enrolments, assessments or workplace-based learning activities (for SDPs/ACs/TTCs).

8.14.6. Full or partial de-accreditation in cases of repeated, serious or high-risk non-compliance.

8.14.7. Freezing or declining of accreditation applications, extension requests or scope expansions until compliance is demonstrated.

8.14.8. Suspension or withdrawal of workplace approval where unsafe or non-compliant conditions exist.

8.14.9. Withholding, delaying or invalidating accreditation letters, learner results, certificates or programme registrations until full compliance is restored.

8.14.10. Recording the non-compliance status of the SDP or AC on the QCTO compliance database, subject to applicable law, POPIA requirements and procedural fairness.

8.14.11. Referral of serious matters to the relevant Accounting Authority or Officer (Boards, Directors-General, CEOs).

8.14.12. Escalation of systemic or unresolved failures to the responsible Minister or the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education.

8.14.13. Referral to law-enforcement agencies, the Auditor-General or forensic investigation bodies in cases involving suspected fraud, corruption, forgery, data manipulation or intentional misconduct.

8.14.14. Initiation of civil or criminal proceedings in accordance with South African law.

8.14.15. Requiring the provider to implement learner-continuity arrangements, which may include transferring learners to alternative accredited institutions, subject to applicable law, contractual arrangements and procedural fairness.

8.14.16. Suspension or invalidation of internal assessment records pending investigation.

8.14.17. Immediate cessation of unsafe or non-compliant learning and assessment activities to protect learners and staff.

8.15. Compliance reviews reinforce the QCTO's authority to intervene whenever quality assurance duties are not executed effectively or where learner interests and system integrity are compromised.

9. SCOPE OF MONITORING OF PROVISION

9.1. Monitoring of provision is a core component of the QCTO's national quality assurance system. It is a structured, continuous and evidence-driven process through which the QCTO, DHET, where applicable, delegated Quality Partners (QPs), and appointed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) evaluate the extent to which Skills Development Providers (SDPs), Assessment Centres (ACs), Trade Test Centres (TTCs) and Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites deliver or support occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and occupational skills programmes.

9.2. Monitoring is conducted in accordance with approved accreditation documents, curriculum and assessment specifications, and the quality standards prescribed under the OQSF.

9.3. This monitoring process also includes the identification of non-conformances, which inform the four-star compliance rating scale and determine the associated regulatory actions where required.

9.4. Monitoring ensures that the delivery, assessment, moderation and workplace-based learning components of occupational qualifications are implemented in compliance with accreditation conditions, curriculum requirements and QCTO policies.

9.5. It also safeguards learner and staff interests by ensuring that training environments remain safe, enabling and fully compliant with national quality assurance standards.

9.6. Monitoring of provision aims to:

9.6.1. Verify that SDPs, ACs, TTCs and WBL sites implement or support programmes in full alignment with approved curriculum and assessment documents.

9.6.2. Ensure that learning and assessment facilities, workshops, equipment, simulation environments and staff capacity are adequate and appropriate for programme delivery.

9.6.3. Validate the accuracy and integrity of learner enrolment, attendance, progression, withdrawal, completion, assessment and results data.

9.6.4. Confirm that Workplace Based Learning (WBL) arrangements are authentic, compliant, supervised appropriately, and aligned with curriculum requirements.

9.6.5. Confirm that Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) arrangements are authentic, compliant, appropriately supervised and aligned with curriculum requirements.

9.6.6. Evaluate learner orientation, academic and psycho-social support, grievance handling processes, and institutional communication systems.

9.6.7. Identify risks requiring corrective action, targeted support, increased monitoring frequency or escalation to the QCTO.

9.6.8. Protect learners by ensuring consistent programme quality, integrity of assessment, and compliance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) requirements.

9.7. Monitoring activities include on-site visits, virtual checks, verification of records and assessment evidence, classroom and workshop observations, WBL site inspections, interviews with learners and staff, and review of institutional data and reporting systems.

9.8. Monitoring verifies that all components of the occupational qualification, Knowledge Modules, Practical Skills Modules and Workplace Experience Modules are delivered as prescribed, following approved sequencing, instructional methods and pacing.

9.9. Monitoring also ensures that:

9.9.1. Practical or workplace components are not replaced by digital delivery unless explicitly approved in the curriculum.

9.9.2. Assessment and moderation systems comply with the QCTO Assessment Policy, including assessor/moderator registration and readiness for the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) or FISA.

9.9.3. All WBL documentation, logbooks and mentor reports are authentic, complete and aligned with qualification requirements.

9.9.4. Learner records are accurate, verifiable and free from manipulation.

9.9.5. Institutional practices uphold fairness, transparency, safety and national quality assurance standards.

9.10. Monitoring of provision identifies early warning signs, risk patterns, systemic weaknesses and capacity gaps. Based on monitoring outcomes, the QCTO or QPs determine required corrective actions, prescribe timelines for compliance, and schedule follow-up visits.

9.11. Persistent, serious or high-risk non-compliance may result in regulatory interventions, including suspension of delivery, withdrawal of delegated functions, de-accreditation, or sanctions in accordance with QCTO policies.

10. MONITORING OF SDPs, WORKPLACE-BASED LEARNING (WBL) SITES, ASSESSMENT CENTRES (ACs) AND TRADE TEST CENTRES (TTCs)

10.1. Monitoring of Skills Development Providers (SDPs), Assessment Centres (ACs), Trade Test Centres (TTCs) and Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites is a core component of the QCTO's national quality assurance system.

10.2. It is a structured, continuous and evidence-driven process through which the QCTO, DHET (where applicable), delegated Quality Partners (QPs) and appointed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) evaluate the extent to which accredited and approved entities deliver and assess occupational qualifications in accordance with the OQSF.

10.3. Monitoring is conducted in line with approved accreditation letters, accreditation conditions, curriculum documents, assessment specifications, QCTO policies, forms, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and all applicable legislation.

10.4. Monitoring of accredited SDPs, ACs, TTCs and approved WBL Sites shall be conducted by QCTO employees, QP employees, QCTO or QP appointed SMEs in line with this policy.

10.5. The QCTO will publish and maintain a consolidated list of all accredited SDPs, ACs and TTCs linked to each QP. Monitoring activities shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with this list, which will be reviewed and updated quarterly.

10.6. Each QP must submit to the QCTO an updated list of all approved WBL sites. Monitoring of WBL sites shall be executed based on this list and in full compliance with the requirements of this Policy.

10.7. Monitoring also includes the identification of non-compliances, which directly inform the four-star compliance rating scale and determine the applicable regulatory actions.

10.8. Monitoring of SDPs, ACs, TTCs and WBL sites aims to:

10.8.1. Verify that programme delivery is fully aligned with approved curriculum, learning materials, assessment instruments and accreditation requirements.

10.8.2. Ensure that infrastructure, tools, equipment, workshops, simulation environments and staff capacity are adequate, maintained and appropriate for programme delivery.

10.8.3. Validate the integrity and accuracy of learner enrolment, attendance, progression, completion and assessment data.

10.8.4. Confirm that WBL arrangements are authentic, contractually formalised, safe, adequately supervised and aligned to curriculum expectations.

10.8.5. Assess the effectiveness of internal quality assurance systems, moderation processes, governance controls, record-keeping and continuous improvement mechanisms.

10.8.6. Evaluate the availability and quality of learner support systems, orientation, psychosocial support, grievance mechanisms and communication systems.

10.8.7. Ensure compliance with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards, regulatory requirements and QCTO quality assurance criteria.

10.8.8. Protect learners and staff by ensuring safe, fair, credible and compliant delivery of occupational qualifications.

10.9. Monitoring of SDPs, ACs, TTCs and Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites is conducted through a range of structured activities designed to evaluate compliance, programme quality, assessment integrity and learner protection. Monitoring activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

10.9.1. Scheduled site visits, planned and communicated in advance as part of the approved monthly or annual monitoring plan.

10.9.2. Unscheduled (risk-triggered) visits conducted without prior notice when immediate risks or non-compliance indicators arise.

10.9.3. Accessing and auditing the Learner Management System (LMS) to evaluate the accuracy of learner enrolment, attendance, progression, assessment and certification records, and to confirm that institutional data aligns with QCTO reporting requirements.

10.9.4. Physical inspections of classrooms, workshops, laboratories, simulation rooms and WBL sites to assess readiness, safety and resource adequacy.

10.9.5. Direct observation of teaching, practical demonstrations, assessment practices and internal moderation implementation.

10.9.6. Verification of documents and evidence, including assessment records, moderation files, attendance registers, electronic submissions, and WBL logbooks.

10.9.7. Interviews with management, lecturers, facilitators, assessors, moderators, mentors, workplace supervisors and learners.

10.9.8. Review of institutional data, reporting systems, governance documents and internal quality assurance evidence.

10.10. SDPs must submit a complete and accurate Self-Monitoring Report to the QCTO or applicable QP at least seven (7) days before any scheduled monitoring visit, confirming institutional readiness, availability of staff, access to facilities, and preparedness of evidence.

10.10.1. All responsible Facilitators, Lecturers, Assessors, Moderators, Workplace Mentors and any other relevant personnel must be present during the monitoring visit and fully prepared to answer programme or qualification-related questions, demonstrate processes where required, and provide all evidence requested by the monitoring team.

10.10.2. Failure to submit the Self-Monitoring Report within the prescribed timeframe or failure to ensure the availability of responsible staff during the monitoring visit will constitute a Major or Critical Non-Compliance.

10.10.3. This may result in a reduced star rating, escalation for compliance action, suspension or de-accreditation of the SDP or AC/TTC, and/or suspension or withdrawal of the Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) site approval, subject to applicable QCTO policies and procedural fairness.

10.11. Scheduled site monitoring is used to:

10.11.1. Verify delivery of Knowledge, Practical Skills and Workplace Experience Modules.

10.11.2. Assess adequacy of staff, resources, workshops and facilities.

10.11.3. Evaluate assessment and moderation implementation.

10.11.4. Confirm compliance with accreditation conditions and programme scope.

10.11.5. Review internal QA systems, governance mechanisms and evidence files.

10.12. Unscheduled visits are conducted when risks or concerns warrant immediate intervention. These visits are used to verify high-risk situations and may lead to immediate corrective actions, suspension of delivery or escalation to the QCTO.

10.13. Triggers for unscheduled visits include:

10.13.1. Complaints from learners, employers, staff or community stakeholders.

10.13.2. Irregularities in assessment, moderation or internal data reporting.

10.13.3. Evidence of unsafe, inadequate or non-functional training facilities.

10.13.4. Failure to implement previously required corrective actions.

10.13.5. Suspicion of fraudulent activities, misconduct or data manipulation.

10.13.6. High-risk findings identified during previous monitoring cycles or data analysis.

10.14. Monitoring activities will include verification of readiness for External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) or FISA. This includes checks on:

10.14.1. Learner eligibility and compliance with entry requirements.

10.14.2. Completeness and accuracy of internal assessment records.

10.14.3. Readiness, availability and security of assessment venues.

10.14.4. Preparedness of assessors, invigilators and administrative personnel.

10.14.5. Integrity and security of learner documentation, results submission systems and assessment evidence.

10.15. Monitoring may include comprehensive Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) site verification activities to ensure workplace learning environments align with curriculum requirements. WBL verification focuses on:

10.15.1. Authenticity and legal validity of workplace agreements and employer partnerships.

10.15.2. Alignment of workplace tasks with occupational curriculum outcomes.

10.15.3. Adequacy of learner supervision, mentorship and exposure to practical tasks.

10.15.4. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) compliance and risk mitigation.

10.15.5. Accuracy and completeness of WBL logbooks, portfolios and progress reports.

10.16. Virtual monitoring may only be applied to entities that have achieved a three-star or four-star compliance rating. Elements of virtual monitoring may include:

10.16.1. Video-based evidence submission and virtual demonstrations.

10.16.2. Digital audits of documents and institutional evidence.

10.16.3. Virtual interviews with learners, mentors, facilitators and management.

10.16.4. Remote validation of assessment and administrative records.

10.17. For all announced monitoring visits, SDPs, ACs, TTCs and WBL sites must:

10.17.1. Ensure that all lecturers, facilitators, assessors, moderators, mentors and relevant administrative staff are available and prepared to answer any qualification- or programme-related questions.

10.17.2. Ensure that a representative sample of learners is present and available for interviews and verification.

10.17.3. Ensure that workshops, classrooms, ICT systems, simulation areas and WBL sites are operational and accessible.

10.17.4. Ensure that all required documents and evidence packs are prepared and readily available.

10.18. Accredited SDPs, ACs, TTCs and approved WBL Sites must notify the QCTO and relevant QPs in writing of any:

10.18.1. Change in trading or operational hours;

10.18.2. Change in physical address, workshop location or campus layout;

10.18.3. Change in WBL location;

10.18.4. Temporary closure, recess, shutdown period or relocation;

10.18.5. Training, assessment, trade testing or WBL at a temporary location;

10.18.6. Change in ownership, management or operating structure that impacts delivery; or

10.18.7. Loss, damage or unavailability of tools, equipment or training/assessment resources used during accreditation.

10.19. Failure to provide timeous notification may lead to Critical or Major non-compliance when monitoring takes place.

10.20. The following circumstances will trigger automatic escalation:

10.21. If the QCTO or QP conducts three (3) separate announced site visits within a 12 months cycle during normal working hours at the accredited address, and no staff, delivery or assessment activities are found, the de-accreditation process will be initiated and the entity will be updated on the national database as non-operational.

10.21.1. If the tools, equipment, simulators or resources used to approve or accredit the site are not available, nonfunctional or insufficient during any monitoring visit, this indicates that the entity can no longer meet accreditation requirements. In such cases, the de-accreditation process will be initiated immediately.

10.21.2. If staff or learners required for monitoring are repeatedly unavailable without valid justification, monitoring may be deemed compromised, and enforcement action will follow.

10.21.3. Situations involving unsafe training conditions, compromised assessment integrity, falsified records or unauthorised relocation will result in immediate investigation and possible suspension.

11. MONITORING OF QUALITY PARTNERS (QPS) BY THE QCTO

11.1. Monitoring of Quality Partners (QPs) is a core oversight function of the QCTO and forms an integral part of its national quality assurance mandate.

11.2. It ensures that all delegated quality assurance responsibilities are executed in accordance with the Skills Development Act (SDA), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, and all applicable QCTO policies, standards and operating procedures.

11.3. As SETAs, Government Departments, State-Owned Entities, statutory bodies and other designated entities carry out delegated monitoring, data validation and programme oversight functions, the QCTO must continuously evaluate their performance to ensure national consistency, accuracy of reporting, risk mitigation, and protection of the integrity of the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).

11.4. The QCTO shall maintain a consolidated register of all Quality Partners (QPs) with valid agreements in place. Monitoring of QPs shall be conducted exclusively by QCTO employees at the level of Deputy Director or higher, and strictly in accordance with this Policy.

11.5. The monitoring of QPs aims to:

11.5.1. Verify whether QPs are executing delegated responsibilities in full compliance with QCTO policies, guidelines, templates and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

11.5.2. Ensure that monitoring conducted by QPs is accurate, complete, credible and aligned to national quality assurance standards.

11.5.3. Identify strengths, weaknesses and capacity-building needs within QP quality assurance systems.

11.5.4. Ensure that learner enrolment, delivery, and assessment data submitted by QPs is reliable, verifiable and free from manipulation.

11.5.5. Promote uniformity, national standardisation and equitable application of quality assurance requirements across all QPs.

11.5.6. Detect deviations, high-risk indicators and non-compliance early to enable timely intervention, targeted support or regulatory escalation.

11.6. In terms of section 26I of the SDA, QPs are formally delegated to perform specific quality assurance functions on behalf of the QCTO, including:

11.6.1. Monitoring SDPs within their sectors in accordance with QCTO requirements.

11.6.2. Validating learner enrolment, progression, completion and withdrawal data.

11.6.3. Conducting scheduled (routine) and unscheduled (risk-triggered) monitoring visits.

11.6.4. Verifying internal assessment practices, moderation processes and assessment readiness.

11.6.5. Reviewing workplace-based learning (WBL) arrangements and compliance at SDPs.

11.6.6. Identifying non-compliance and implementing corrective actions.

11.6.7. Submitting monthly and quarterly consolidated monitoring reports to the QCTO.

11.6.8. Escalating high-risk findings, systemic failures or unresolved non-compliance to the QCTO within prescribed timeframes.

11.7. The QCTO implements a structured oversight process to ensure that QPs execute their delegated responsibilities effectively and consistently. This oversight process includes:

11.7.1. Verifying the authenticity, completeness and accuracy of monitoring reports submitted by QPs.

11.7.2. Compulsory capacitation of all staff involved in implementing the delegated functions.

11.7.3. Conducting selective or risk-triggered verification site visits to confirm QP findings.

11.7.4. Sampling learner data, institutional records and evidence retained by QPs.

11.7.5. Assessing the adequacy and quality of QP monitoring tools, processes and staff competence.

11.7.6. Reviewing adherence to Service Level Agreements (SLAs), reporting schedules and escalation protocols.

11.7.7. Providing targeted feedback, support and capacity-building where performance gaps or weaknesses are identified.

11.7.8. Intervening where QPs fail to fulfil delegated responsibilities, including escalation and enforcement where required.

11.8. QCTO monitoring of QPs follows a structured, cyclical process:

11.8.1. Monthly submission of QP monitoring reports for ongoing oversight.

11.8.2. Quarterly consolidated report by the QCTO of sector performance and compliance.

11.8.3. Bi-annually sampling of QP monitoring verification and trend analysis that is quality assurance of QP work.

11.8.4. Annually consolidated report by the QCTO of sector performance and compliance including star rating of Quality Partners.

11.9. QPs are required to:

11.9.1. Submit monthly monitoring reports using QCTO-approved templates.

11.9.2. Notify the QCTO of capacitation needs.

11.9.3. For OQSF related qualifications and programmes, only award funding to accredited providers.

11.9.4. Provide quarterly consolidated sector performance summaries.

11.9.5. Maintain comprehensive physical and digital evidence files for all monitoring activities.

11.9.6. Maintain accurate and up-to-date learner and provider databases of all enrolments within their sector regardless of funding.

11.10. Report any non-compliance requiring escalation within five (5) working days.

11.11. Respond to QCTO requests for information, evidence or clarification within stipulated timelines.

11.12. Failure to comply with these reporting and monitoring obligations may result in increased QCTO oversight, formal intervention, or withdrawal of delegated functions.

11.13. Where a QP is found to be non-compliant or ineffective in executing delegated functions, the QCTO may impose sanctions, which may include corrective or remedial measures, administrative sanctions, disciplinary actions, the QCTO may also instruct the QP to implement such sanctions within a prescribed turnaround time, including:

11.13.1. Targeted interventions, corrective support or capacity-building directed by the QCTO.

11.13.2. Increased monitoring frequency, heightened risk-based oversight, or direct oversight by the QCTO.

11.13.3. Suspension or withdrawal of delegated functions.

11.13.4. Freezing or declining of delegated QA responsibilities, delegated roles, or expanded functions until compliance is demonstrated.

11.13.5. Issuing of formal improvement notices, written warnings, performance corrective measures, or compliance directives.

11.13.6. Administrative sanctions or penalties for persistent, recurring, or willful non-compliance.

11.13.7. Referral of serious matters to the relevant Accounting Authority or Officer (Boards, Directors-General, CEOs);

11.13.8. Escalation of systemic failures or repeated non-compliance to the responsible Minister or the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education for intervention.

11.13.9. Referral to law-enforcement agencies, the Auditor-General or forensic investigation bodies where fraud, corruption, forgery, data manipulation or intentional misconduct is suspected.

11.14. These measures ensure that all QPs maintain consistent, reliable and nationally standardised quality assurance practices aligned with QCTO requirements and the broader regulatory framework.

12. MONITORING OF SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS (SMEs)

12.1. Monitoring of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) is a core oversight function of the QCTO and its Quality Partners and forms an integral part of its national quality assurance mandate.

12.2. SMEs execute specialised monitoring, verification and evaluation functions on behalf of the QCTO, including where they are appointed by a Quality Partner. Their performance directly influences the accuracy, integrity, objectivity and credibility of quality assurance processes across the OQSF.

12.3. This monitoring ensures that all SME activities are conducted in accordance with the Skills Development Act (SDA), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, the SME Service Level Agreement (SLA), and all applicable QCTO regulations, policies, standards, tools, templates and operating procedures.

12.4. As SMEs conduct monitoring, site verification, data evaluation and programme oversight activities on behalf of the QCTO or delegated Quality Partners (QPs), the QCTO must continuously evaluate their performance to ensure that SMEs meet the minimum qualification requirements relevant to the programmes they monitor, are legally authorised to work within the Republic of South Africa, produce accurate and reliable reports, apply national standards consistently, and adhere to ethical and professional conduct.

12.5. This oversight also ensures that no conflicts of interest exist, that work is allocated equitably among SMEs, and that the integrity of the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) is upheld at all times.

12.6. The monitoring of SMEs aims to:

12.6.1. Verify whether SMEs are executing allocated duties in full compliance with QCTO policies, guidelines, SLAs, templates and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);

12.6.2. Ensure that monitoring conducted by SMEs is accurate, complete, credible and aligned with national quality assurance standards.

12.6.3. Identify strengths, weaknesses and capacity-building needs within individual SME performance.

12.6.4. Ensure that all reports, evidence and findings submitted by SMEs are reliable, verifiable and free from manipulation.

12.6.5. Promote uniformity, national standardisation and consistent interpretation of monitoring requirements across all SMEs.

12.6.6. Detect deviations, high-risk indicators and non-compliance early to enable timely intervention, targeted support or regulatory escalation.

12.7. SMEs appointed by the QCTO (or QPs under QCTO delegation) are formally obligated to perform the following quality assurance functions:

12.7.1. Attend all training and capacitation sessions.

12.7.2. Conduct monitoring of SDPs, ACs, TTCs and WBL sites in accordance with QCTO requirements.

12.7.3. Validate curriculum implementation across Knowledge Modules (KMs), Practical Skills Modules (PMs) and Workplace Experience Modules (WMs);

12.7.4. Conduct scheduled (routine) and unscheduled (risk-triggered) monitoring visits and verifications as allocated by QCTO or QPs.

12.7.5. Verify internal assessment practices, moderation processes, readiness for assessments and compliance with QCTO Assessment Policy.

12.7.6. Review WBL arrangements and compliance at SDPs and workplaces.

12.7.7. Identify non-compliance and outline corrective action requirements during monitoring.

12.7.8. Prepare and submit monitoring reports, evidence packs and recommendations using QCTO-approved templates within the required timelines;

12.7.9. Escalate high-risk findings, systemic failures or irregularities to the QCTO or QPs within prescribed timeframes.

12.8. The QCTO implements a structured oversight process to ensure that SMEs perform their duties effectively and consistently. This oversight includes:

12.8.1. Verifying the authenticity, completeness and accuracy of monitoring reports and evidence submitted by SMEs.

12.8.2. Providing compulsory capacitation, training and induction to ensure SMEs understand and apply QCTO standards, tools, templates and delegated responsibilities consistently.

12.8.3. Conducting selective or risk-triggered verification site visits to validate SME findings and confirm the reliability of monitoring outcomes.

12.8.4. Collecting and analysing feedback from SDPs, ACs, TTCs, Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites and other monitored entities to assess the quality, accuracy, professionalism and conduct of SMEs.

12.8.5. Rating and categorising SME performance based on report quality, adherence to QCTO policies and procedures, compliance with SLAs and timelines, and alignment with ethical and professional standards.

12.8.6. Providing targeted feedback, support and corrective interventions where SME performance gaps, inconsistencies, or risks are identified.

12.8.7. Intervening when SMEs fail to meet required standards, including disciplinary escalation, reassignment of work, or termination/non-renewal of the SLA where necessary.

12.9. QCTO monitoring of SMEs follows a structured, cyclical process:

12.9.1. Monthly review of SME monitoring submissions for ongoing oversight.

12.9.2. Quarterly consolidated review of SME performance trends and compliance.

12.9.3. Bi-annual sampling and verification of SME work to ensure consistency and quality.

12.9.4. Annual Whole Evaluation of SME performance, including classification on the performance grading scale.

12.10. Obligations of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs):

12.10.1. Submit a fixed monthly availability schedule and ensure that any changes to this availability are communicated at least five (5) days before an allocated site visit. Failure to provide timely notice may result in the cancellation of future allocations.

12.10.2. SMEs must also ensure that all communication channels (email, phone and messaging platforms approved by the QCTO or QPs) remain current, active and regularly monitored.

12.10.3. Submit all monitoring reports, evidence, and recommendations using QCTO-approved formats, templates and systems within the prescribed timelines, ensuring accuracy, completeness and professional presentation.

12.10.4. Declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest immediately and recuse themselves from any activity where such a conflict exists or may arise.

12.10.5. Notify the QCTO in writing of any change in employment status, employer details, or professional affiliation within thirty (30) days of such change.

12.10.6. Refrain from acting as consultants, advisors, marketers, or service providers within the OQSF environment while contracted as QCTO or QPs and must not engage in any business dealings that create a conflict of interest.

12.10.7. Not be owners, shareholders, directors, employees or contractors of any Skills Development Provider (SDP), Assessment Centre (AC), Trade Test Centre (TTC) or Workplace Learning (WPL) site while serving as SMEs for the QCTO or QPs.

12.10.8. Declare all capacity-building needs and participate in all compulsory QCTO training, induction sessions, workshops or briefings required for the execution of SME duties.

12.10.9. Maintain comprehensive, accurate and verifiable evidence files for all monitoring activities, including documentation, photographs, videos, logs and supporting information used to justify findings.

12.10.10. Maintain accurate, up-to-date and verifiable records of all site visits, findings, interviews, observations, and assessments, ensuring compliance with the QCTO's record management and POPIA requirements.

12.10.11. Report all non-compliance, irregularities, risks or red-flag indicators requiring escalation within two (2) working days, as required by the SLA and QCTO procedures.

12.10.12. Respond promptly to all QCTO requests for information, clarification, supporting evidence or additional verification, within stipulated deadlines.

12.10.13. SMEs shall not independently schedule monitoring visits, postpone or reschedule visits, or extend the duration of visits without prior written approval from the QCTO or the delegated Quality Partner (QP).

12.10.14. All arrangements with SDPs, ACs, TTCs or Workplace Learning (WPL) sites must be initiated and coordinated through the QCTO or QP, and SMEs are prohibited from using personal or alternative communication channels to engage providers directly.

12.10.15. The QCTO or QP must always be copied and included in all communications related to monitoring activities.

12.10.16. SMEs must not collect, receive or remove any physical or electronic documents or articles from SDPs, ACs, TTCs or WPL sites, including but not limited to learning materials, assessment tools, internal reports, registers, or any other provider documentation.

12.10.17. All documents required for monitoring must be requested and obtained exclusively through the QCTO or the QP, in accordance with approved data protection, confidentiality and evidence-handling procedures.

12.10.18. SMEs must uphold the QCTO Code of Conduct, including all requirements related to ethical behaviour, confidentiality, impartiality, conflict of interest, professionalism, responsible use of QCTO resources, and protection of the QCTO's reputation at all times.

12.11. Failure by an SME to comply with reporting, conduct or monitoring obligations may result in increased QCTO oversight, targeted performance correction or suspension of duties.

12.12. Where an SME is found to be non-compliant or ineffective in executing allocated functions, the QCTO may impose sanctions, which may include corrective or remedial measures, administrative sanctions or disciplinary actions.

12.13. The QCTO may also require the SME to implement these measures within prescribed turnaround times, including:

12.13.1. Targeted interventions, corrective support, retraining or capacity-building directed by the QCTO.

12.13.2. Increased monitoring oversight or direct supervision by the QCTO.

12.13.3. Suspension or withdrawal of SME duties.

12.13.4. Freezing or declining of future SME assignments or contractual engagements.

12.13.5. Issuing of improvement notices, written warnings, performance directives or compliance instructions.

12.13.6. Administrative sanctions or penalties for persistent, recurring or willful non-compliance.

12.13.7. Referral of serious matters to the SME's main employer, professional body or relevant authorities.

12.13.8. Referral to law-enforcement, forensic or regulatory bodies where fraud, corruption, forgery, data manipulation or intentional misconduct is suspected.

12.14. These measures ensure that all SMEs maintain consistent, reliable and nationally standardised quality assurance practices aligned to QCTO requirements, uphold the integrity of monitoring processes, and protect the credibility of the OQSF.

13. QCTO INTERNAL ESCALATION PROCESS

13.1. The QCTO implements a structured internal escalation pathway to evaluate monitoring results and assign compliance ratings to Skills Development Providers (SDPs), Assessment Centres (ACs), Trade Test Centres (TTCs), RPL Centres, Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) sites, Quality Partners (QPs), and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) operating within the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF), in accordance with the applicable sections of this policy.

13.2. **STEP 1**: Technical Review of Findings

13.2.1. All monitoring reports must be submitted to the Quality Assurance Director within thirty (30) days of the monitoring visit.

13.2.2. All monitoring evidence is subjected to a technical review by the designated QCTO or Quality Partner Quality Assurance Manager to confirm:

13.2.2.1. The accuracy of findings.

13.2.2.2. The severity and categorisation of non-compliances.

13.2.2.3. The impact on programme quality and assessment integrity, and

13.2.2.4. Associated legal, operational, or learner-protection risks.

13.3. **STEP 2**: Submission to the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC)

13.3.1. All One-Star and Two-Star cases must be submitted to the IQAC for:

13.3.1.1. Validation of findings.

13.3.1.2. Confirmation of the supporting evidence; and

13.3.1.3. Recommendation of appropriate interventions and sanctions in line with:

a) Section 10 for SDPs, ACs, TTCs and WBL sites;
b) Section 11 for QPs; and
c) Section 12 for SMEs.

13.4. **STEP 3**: Escalation to the OQA Council Committee

13.4.1. The IQAC forwards its validated recommendations to the Occupational Quality Assurance (OQA) Council Committee, which:

13.4.1.1. Reviews each case.

13.4.1.2. Considers sanctions or necessary interventions.

13.4.1.3. Evaluates risk implications and system-wide impacts.

13.4.1.4. Makes the final verdict; and

13.4.1.5. Informs the QCTO Council for noting.

13.5. All approved sanctions and interventions must be communicated in writing to the affected SDPs, ACs, TTCs, WBL sites, QPs or SMEs operating within the OQSF.

13.6. All communication must reference:

13.6.1. The date of the OQA Council Committee meeting.

13.6.1.1. The approved sanctions or interventions.

13.7. All communication must advise the recipient of their right to appeal. Appeals must:

13.7.1. Be submitted on the official appeal form.

13.7.2. Include additional evidence and proposed corrective interventions; and

13.7.3. Be lodged within five (5) working days.

13.8. Failure to meet this timeline or to submit a fully completed appeal form with evidence results in the sanction becoming final.

13.9. Appeals must be completed and signed by the Accounting Authority or Accounting Officer (e.g., Board Chairperson, CEO, Principals, Campus Managers of the appealing entity). SMEs may submit their own appeals.

13.10. The QCTO Appeals Committee will consider the appeal and may summon the appellant or any person involved to appear physically or virtually for clarification. Following this engagement, the decision of the Appeals Committee will be final and legally binding.

13.11. Failure to comply with escalation directives may result in:

13.11.1. De-accreditation of SDPs, ACs or TTCs.

13.11.2. Withdrawal of WBL approval.

13.11.3. Withdrawal of delegated authority (for QPs).

13.11.4. Suspension of programme delivery.

13.11.5. Learner redirection to alternative accredited institutions.

13.11.6. Referral for legal investigation.

13.11.7. Permanent removal of SMEs from participating in quality assurance activities; or

13.11.8. Application of additional interventions as provided for in Section 11.

13.12. Application of additional interventions provided for in Sections 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, where applicable.

14. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

14.1. Non-compliance with this policy shall be dealt with in accordance with Sections 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, where applicable, and any applicable laws, regulations and QCTO policies.

15. POLICY REVIEW

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