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GOVERNMENT NOTICES • GOEWERMENTSKENNISGEWINGS

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NO. 7610

17 June 2026

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT, 2008 (ACT NO. 67 OF 2008)**DIRECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRE-2009 QUALIFICATIONS, TRADES, AND REGULATORY UNIT STANDARDS**

I, Kgwaridi Buti Manamela, Minister of Higher Education and Training, acting in terms of sections 3, 8, 13 and 36 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008), after consultation with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and relevant stakeholders within the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector, hereby issue this Directive on the continued transition from Pre-2009 Qualifications following the *Directive on the Implementation and Transitional Arrangements for Pre-2009 Qualifications under SAQA Act, 1995* (Gazette No. 4920, 3 June 2024).

The purpose of this Directive is to provide further transitional arrangements for identified Pre-2009 Qualifications, Trades, and Regulatory Unit Standards that remain critical to national skills development priorities. This extension constitutes the final transitional arrangements towards the full implementation of occupational qualifications and skills programmes.

Government acknowledges the importance of a managed and credible transition that protects learners already enrolled within the system while simultaneously accelerating the implementation of quality occupational qualifications, and it has therefore become necessary, in the public interest and in support of national economic priorities, to grant a final structured extension for enrolment and achievement of identified expired Pre-2009 Qualifications, Trades and Regulatory Unit Standards. This Directive seeks to balance the urgent need for transformation of the skills development system with the practical realities currently facing the PSET sector.

1. EXTENSION PERIODS FOR PRE-2009 QUALIFICATIONS, TRADES AND REGULATORY UNIT STANDARDS

The details on extension periods for Pre-2009 Qualifications, Trades and Regulatory Unit Standards is published on the SAQA website (www.saqa.org.za), noting that no extensions for learner enrolments for NATED programmes are provided as a result of the phasing out circulars that were issued by the DHET for the implementation of teach-out periods.

The extensions include:

- (a) Learner enrolment and achievements for Pre-2009-Qualifications are granted extensions for a period of 6 – 24 months as per lists published on the SAQA website;
- (b) Learner enrolment and achievements for Regulatory Unit Standards are granted extensions for a period of up to 36 months as per lists published on the SAQA website; and
- (c) Learner enrolment and achievements for Trades which are not yet registered as occupational qualifications are granted extension for a period of up to 12 months as per lists published on the SAQA website.

2. CONDITIONS OF FINAL TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

These extensions are granted as final transitional arrangements to the PSET sector, with the following conditions:

- (a) SETAs shall remain accountable for the development, replacement and implementation of occupational qualifications and skills programmes.

- (b) SETAs must report quarterly through SAQA to the Minister on progress made in the transition process as directed by SAQA. These include: qualification development progress; implementation readiness; provider accreditation status; learner enrolment and completion statistics; and occupational qualification uptake.
- (c) The QCTO shall monitor and provide oversight mechanisms relating to accreditation, assessment readiness, curriculum implementation, external quality assurance, and workplace approval.
- (d) SAQA is delegated the authority to manage the final transition of Pre-2009 Qualifications, Trades and Regulatory Unit Standards, including any change in enrolment and achievement dates within and beyond the periods stated above.
- (e) Funding arrangements and service level agreements must prioritise the development and implementation of occupational qualifications aligned to national economic priorities and scarce skills.
- (f) All stakeholders in the PSET sector must commit to these last dates for learner enrolments and achievements as part of the transition to occupational qualifications and skills programmes.
- (g) All learner achievements must be uploaded to the National Learner's Records Database (NLRD) aligned to SAQA policies and specifications.

3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- (a) All existing learner achievements and credits uploaded to the NLRD shall remain recognised in accordance with applicable legislation and articulation policies.
- (b) Nothing in this Directive prevents the accelerated registration of occupational qualifications and skills programmes before the expiry of the transitional periods.
- (c) Stakeholders are encouraged to expedite implementation to strengthen the credibility, quality and responsiveness of the occupational qualifications system.

4. CONCLUSION

Government remains committed to a modern, quality-driven national qualifications system that is responsive to labour market demands, supports economic growth and enables the development of a capable and employable workforce.

The transitional arrangements granted herein must therefore be utilised responsibly and decisively by all stakeholders to conclude the transition from legacy qualifications toward a fully implemented national qualifications framework.



MR KB MANAMELA
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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