



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique

# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

## PACIFIC QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Educational Quality and Assessment Programme:  
Pacific Community

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**Australian  
Aid** 



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Suva, Fiji, 2018



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## List of Abbreviations

<b>APQN</b>	Asia Pacific Quality Network
<b>DFAT</b>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (The Australian Aid Programme)
<b>EQAP</b>	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
<b>INQAAHE</b>	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>PEDF</b>	Pacific Education Development Framework
<b>PICTs</b>	Pacific Island countries and territories
<b>PQAF</b>	Pacific Quality Assurance Framework
<b>PQF</b>	Pacific Qualifications Framework
<b>PRQS</b>	Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards
<b>QSG</b>	Quality Standard and Guidelines
<b>SPBEA</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment
<b>SPC</b>	Pacific Community
<b>SPBEQ</b>	Secretariat of the Pacific Board for Educational Quality

# Foreword

Ministers for education in the Asia-Pacific region made a call at the Brisbane Communiqué in 2006<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on cooperation between organisations, ‘to develop a quality assurance framework for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online’ that recognises the diverse range of quality assurance policies and practices prevailing in the region. This framework should also recognise ‘quality education and training’ as the firm foundation for socio-economic development. In the Pacific Islands region, people are its most valuable resource. Being mindful of the exponential growth of post-secondary education and training institutions in all Pacific Island countries, including cross-border provision, it was vital that the Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) responded to this call by the education ministers, while simultaneously being wary of diploma mills and rogue accrediting agencies.

The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) is the PICTs’ response to this call for a ‘quality assurance framework for the region’ The PQAF addresses quality standards for accrediting agencies, all forms of education and training institutions (such as technical and vocational, tertiary and non-tertiary, and field-specific forms, such as theological education and maritime training), programmes, and units of learning or programme components.

The PQAF is intended to serve two important purposes. Firstly, it provides a broad range of quality principles on the roles and functions of accrediting agencies in monitoring and sustaining quality within post-secondary education and training institutions. Understandably, accrediting agencies and institutions have developed their own quality strategies that address their specific fields of responsibility and programmes. The PQAF is not intended to standardise the quality assurance practices in PICTs. The PQAF provides a broad base for accrediting agencies and institutions in order to compare and inform their own quality assurance policies and processes. However, where the opportunity arises to relate to regional initiatives such as the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) and the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS), the PQAF provides a common quality standard for mutual understanding and implementation. Secondly, PQAF is the tool for measuring, enhancing and maintaining quality as it carries out its functions as a Regional Quality Assurance Agency for the Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP).

The PQAF is an outcome of a project<sup>2</sup> that was funded by the Australian Aid Programme on the development of the PRQS.

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1 *The Brisbane Communiqué, <https://shelbycearley.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/thebrisbanecommunique.pdf>*  
2 *Australian Agency for International Development.*

# Introduction

The Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), a division within the Pacific Community (SPC), is the agency responsible for measuring and monitoring quality in education in PICTs. EQAP focuses on two priority areas: facilitating labour and learner mobility, and enhancing educational quality.

One of the areas EQAP invests in to fulfil these objectives is quality assurance in post-secondary education and training. Establishing regional educational standards and benchmarks is crucial if the aspiration of PICT leaders to set up a framework is to be achieved.

As a regional quality assurance agency, EQAP has been mandated to perform the following functions listed below.

- a. Quality audit of quality assurance agencies.
- b. Accreditation of institutions and provider qualifications in countries that do not have national quality assurance agencies.
- c. Accreditation of regional qualifications and units of learning.
- d. Quality assurance of providers to deliver regional qualifications and Units of learning/ Micro-qualifications.
- e. Recognition of foreign qualifications.

The mandate to perform these quality assurance functions was reaffirmed during the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) regional consultation that was held at the Novotel Hotel in Nadi, Fiji from 16 to 19 May 2016. For each of these areas, there are specific standards, requirements, criteria and procedures in place.

EQAP is responsible for the development and maintenance of the PRQS. The PRQS is a regional database with three domains: accredited qualifications and micro-qualifications; traditional knowledge and indigenous skills of PICTs; and professional licensing and occupational standards. The qualifications and micro-qualifications domain of the PRQS includes:

- a. qualifications that have been initially quality-assured by national accrediting agencies and submitted for registration; and
- b. units of learning (micro-qualifications), provider qualifications and regional qualifications accredited by EQAP.

The registration of qualifications on the PRQS:

- facilitates the recognition of PICT qualifications;
- establishes comparability of qualifications from diverse education and training systems;
- enhances transparency of qualifications and how they relate to each other;
- supports portability of learning and labour migration; and
- provides flexible pathways for further studies or employment.

The PRQS is supported by two meta-frameworks: the Pacific Qualifications Framework (PQF) and the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF). The qualifications frameworks and quality assurance strategies of national accrediting agencies are referenced against the PQF and PQAF, respectively, to determine their comparability with national frameworks. This facilitates the registration of their qualifications on the appropriate levels of the PRQS.

This **Pacific Quality Assurance Framework** manual assists persons, agencies and educational institutions that are seeking recognition and accreditation through their applications. The manual contains:

- **Standards** for the various quality assurance processes;
- **Guidelines** that further explain the standards; and
- **Criteria and Outcomes** that must be met and against which applications would be evaluated.

Persons or organisations wishing to pursue educational recognition or accreditation are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the respective guidelines in this manual prior to submitting an application.



# SECTION 1:

## The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework

### 1.1 Policy Context

The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) recognises the growth of technical and higher education institutions in PICTs including online delivery, the global commitment to developing national qualifications frameworks and the aspirations of leaders of PICTs for qualifications and standards to be benchmarked against appropriate international standards.

The PQAF directly addresses the core issue of ‘quality education’ as articulated in the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF), the Brisbane Communiqué, the objectives of Education for All (EFA), the UN Millennium Development Goals, and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2015–2030. Quality education is indeed a cross-cutting theme that underscores all other developmental activities.

The PQAF is informed by the quality assurance systems of larger countries (Australia, New Zealand and the European Community), as well as the development of PICT systems. It is cognizant of international ‘best practices’ in quality assurance, as reflected in the guidelines of good practice by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE); the quality criteria of the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and the APQN Chiba Principles.

The PQAF will provide a common ground for mutual understanding of how accrediting agencies and education and training institutions relate to the Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS).

### 1.2 Definitions

The following definitions clarify the terminology used in this document for the purpose of mutual understanding.

#### 1.2.1 Quality

Quality is a complex, multi-dimensional and often subjective concept, as it is most often determined by different stakeholders under very different circumstances. In assuring the quality of education and training activities, ‘quality’ is understood to mean any of the following: ‘excellence’, ‘fit for purpose’, ‘continuous improvement’, ‘achieving thresholds’ and ‘enhancement’. In this context, all of these meanings are assumed but will predominantly be ‘fit for purpose’ and ‘continuous improvement’.

#### 1.2.2 Quality assurance

Quality assurance is the set of planned and systematic processes that provide confidence in the design, delivery and award of qualifications within an education and training system. Quality assurance ensures that relevant policies and procedures are thoroughly developed and clearly communicated to all relevant personnel for implementation. The diligent application of policies and procedures confirms to an agency’s or institution’s multiple stakeholders that their interests and investments are protected.

### **1.2.3 Quality audit**

An independent, systematic and documented examination of an institution, system or process, to obtain authentic evidence and evaluate it objectively against set standards to determine compliance, efficiency and effectiveness. The kind of evidence that a quality audit looks for is the consistent application of clearly defined procedures that are thoroughly developed and communicated to all personnel of an agency or institution.

### **1.2.4 Internal quality assurance**

The policies and procedures of an agency or institution that build a culture of quality in all its processes, operations and programmes. These are clearly communicated to and applied by all its personnel.

### **1.2.5 External quality assurance**

An independent assessment of an agency, an institution or a programme of learning in order to confirm its compliance with set standards. An external quality assurance (or quality audit) activity usually involves:

- a. an agency or institution conducting a self-assessment of its operations or programmes;
- b. an analysis of documentation that is submitted with the self-assessment report;
- c. a site visit to confirm the self-assessment report and verify evidence submitted; and
- d. a final report on the status of the agency, institution or programme.

## **1.3 Purpose and Scope**

The PQAF supports and sustains the development of a 'culture of quality' within accrediting agencies and within all aspects of institutions of education and training. The PQAF recognises PICTs' capacity limitations in quality assurance, its limited financial resources that are devoted to quality assurance activities, and the challenges of maintaining objectivity and independence within small communities. The PQAF provides a broad structure against which PICTs can evaluate their quality assurance policies and procedures for mutual understanding and collaboration.

### **1.3.1 Purpose**

Accrediting agencies and institutions adopt and apply a wide range of quality assurance processes that are defined and implemented to suit their domestic and/or relevant contexts. In general terms, quality assurance is conducted to respond to one or more of the following:

- a. A requirement by law, such as legislation, an act of parliament or a government decree. For instance, a government may instigate an external review of an institution to determine the government's return on investment.
- b. An institution's own commitment to continuous improvement of its systems, processes and programmes.
- c. An institution's desire to gain some international academic or industry recognition or certification (e.g. ISO 900X).

### **1.3.2 Scope**

The PQAF provides a strategic focus on the achievement of 'quality' in the following areas:

- a. The accrediting agencies have robust quality management systems for carrying out their quality assurance functions.

- b. The institutions develop internal quality assurance processes to govern and guide all of their activities.
- c. The programmes and units of learning are designed, delivered and assessed following the most current and relevant methodologies that promote and support learners' achievement.

Section 2 of this document provides the details of the quality standard for each of the areas mentioned above.

## 1.4 Core Values and Principles

### 1.4.1 Core Values

The core values espoused by the PQAF include that:

- a. learning is a lifelong process;
- b. quality education and training is a fundamental human right;
- c. institutions and accrediting agencies are accountable and responsible to their multiple stakeholders;
- d. diversity – of traditions, cultures, religious values, views, practices and beliefs – is respected; and
- e. regular consultation with multiple stakeholders is essential for continuing relevance and currency.

### 1.4.2 Principles

The following principles guide the application of the PQAF:

- a. **Integrity:** an ethical and trustworthy quality assurance system that instils mutual trust, confidence and understanding of education and training systems either within a country or in the Pacific Islands region. Members of quality assurance panels – whether internal or external – must be adequately trained to fully understand and carry out their roles.
- b. **Evidence-based:** all findings and conclusions are based on factual evidence that is accurate and directly related to the area being investigated.
- c. **Independence:** any quality assurance activity being conducted (e.g. accreditation or audit) must be implemented by people who are independent of the area under review and they must remain impartial until the activity is completed. The reports and conclusions of a quality assurance activity are not influenced by external parties.
- d. **Confidentiality:** any information collected is protected from unauthorised access and use, and the privacy of informants is protected.
- e. **Balanced reporting:** any report produced must be complete, accurate and objective, covering both the strengths and weaknesses of a system or process. All audit reports must highlight the facts supported by adequate evidence.
- f. **Fit for purpose:** the PQAF can be applied to any agency, institution or programme. The purpose will guide how the PQAF is applied, irrespective of the size, context, resources or complexity. The goal is to obtain accurate and authentic evidence for continuous improvement.

## 1.5 Challenges and Gaps

Most of the literature about education and training in PICTs is littered with references to common and ongoing challenges that the PQAF will seek to address. Some of these are:

- a. the post-secondary education and training sector is not well coordinated;
- b. the absence of a common standard for assessing quality within an agency, an institution, a country and across the region;
- c. graduates in PICTs having to complete bridging programmes when they attend metropolitan institutions;
- d. a proliferation of low quality institutions delivering sub-standard programmes of learning;
- e. continuing delivery of trade programmes that are grossly under-resourced;
- f. the engagement of trainers who are either untrained, inadequately trained or lack recent relevant industry experience;
- g. a mismatch between work demand and graduate profiles;
- h. accreditation is often a 'light touch' and does not reflect the rigour demanded by stakeholders to meet international standards.

## 1.6 Vision, Mission and Objectives

### 1.6.1 Vision

The PQAF will underpin the implementation of the PQF to facilitate the comparability and international recognition of qualifications and standards in PICTs through improving mutual understanding and application of international best practices in quality assurance.

### 1.6.2 Mission

The PQAF will empower accrediting agencies and all forms of post-secondary education and training institutions in PICTs to collaborate in meeting and maintaining international standards that facilitate the international benchmarking of qualifications and standards in the region; support mobility of learners and labour; and establish clear pathways for lifelong learning in order to improve personal, national and regional socio-economic development.

### 1.6.3 Objectives

The overall objectives of the PQAF are to:

- (a) improve the quality assurance functions and responsibilities of accrediting agencies;
- (b) cultivate and maintain a culture of quality and excellence within institutions of learning in PICTs;
- (c) improve the quality of programmes for students and other beneficiaries within the region;
- (d) ensure clarity and transparency in quality assurance processes and outcomes;
- (e) provide a measure of accountability for the investment of public and private funding;
- (f) support and foster cooperation of key stakeholders across national borders; and
- (g) build professional trust and promote stakeholder confidence in the quality of Pacific education and training in PICTs.

## 1.7 Priority Areas

The priority areas articulated in this framework are direct responses to the critical challenges and key issues that have plagued the quality of education and training in PICTs. These areas are summarised in the table below and given in greater detail in Section 2 of this document in order to ensure mutual understanding of intent and application.

The table below shows the different areas which agencies, institutions, programmes and units of learning need to place emphasis on to ensure they are fit for the purpose which they are intended.

Priority Areas	Areas of Focus
Accrediting agencies and their quality systems (whether sectoral or national)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ governance and management</li> <li>➤ organisational systems and processes</li> <li>➤ adequate resources (physical, human and financial)</li> <li>➤ independence and autonomy</li> </ul>
Institutions of education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ governance and management structure</li> <li>➤ vision and mission statements that reflect their goals and objectives</li> <li>➤ recruitment, selection and continuing professional development of their personnel</li> <li>➤ adequate resources</li> <li>➤ an internal quality assurance system that builds a culture of quality</li> <li>➤ procedures for the design, development, delivery, assessment and review of its programmes</li> </ul>
A programme of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ title, outcome and purpose statements</li> <li>➤ entry requirements, including pre-requisites and co-requisites</li> <li>➤ resources – physical, personnel, financial, learning, etc.</li> <li>➤ duration of study and conditions for successful completion</li> <li>➤ the credit profile and qualification framework level</li> </ul>
A Unit <sup>3</sup> of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ title and purpose</li> <li>➤ learning outcomes or competencies</li> <li>➤ resources</li> <li>➤ delivery and assessment methodologies</li> <li>➤ entry requirements, including pre-requisites and co-requisites</li> <li>➤ recognition of prior learning and/or current competencies</li> <li>➤ duration of study and requirements for successful completion</li> <li>➤ the credit value and level on a qualification's framework</li> </ul>

## 1.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Quality assurance is a new field and will continue to grow as new aspects are considered from new perspectives, as well as a result of a fast-changing world. PICTs must be sensitive to new forms of education delivery and programmes, and qualifications, including those delivered online. In spite of their size, economy and context, PICTs must align their quality assurance developments with international standards and expectations. The PQAF will foster regional collaboration among PICTs in order to achieve quality education and training for its people. The PQAF will be subject to regular review to ensure continuing relevance and currency.

<sup>3</sup> An individual course is a component of a qualification. Course is synonymous with unit, paper, module or other unit of study.

## SECTION 2:

# Quality Standards, Guidelines, Criteria and Outcomes

The Quality Standards, Guidelines, Criteria and Outcomes (QSGCO) provide details of the Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF). The QSGCO recognises the wide range of types, forms and contexts under which education and training services are organised and delivered in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs). The challenges in securing good quality resources and qualified personnel to deliver courses and programmes are real; however, the cultivation and maintenance of a ‘culture of quality’ is primarily the remit of institutions or providers of education and training services. Accreditation agencies are gate-keepers of quality – they monitor and support institutions through a very professional and mentoring relationship to ensure international standards and stakeholders’ expectations continue to be met. In the non-formal sector, it is also important to recognise the role that traditional structures and apprenticeships have contributed in relation to the acquisition and maintenance of traditional knowledge and skills in our local communities.

The standards, guidelines, criteria and outcomes will be implemented using a ‘fit for purpose’ and a ‘fitness of purpose’ approach. Regardless of the type of programme – academic, theological, technical and vocational, or enduring traditional structures – the PQAF will provide a common ground for understanding and implementing good quality teaching and learning. The expected outcome is the establishment and continuous improvement of standards of education and training in PICTs that will enhance the international recognition<sup>4</sup> of these qualifications and standards.

The quality standards, guidelines, criteria and outcomes cover the following three key areas:

- Accrediting agencies.
- Institutions and providers.
- Programmes and their components.

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<sup>4</sup> *‘international recognition’ here includes mutual recognition arrangements.*

# PART A:

## Quality Audit of Accrediting Agencies

The quality audit of an agency refers to the periodic compliance reviews of an accreditation agency to ensure that a baseline of quality is met and that there is demonstrable improvement over time. The quality audit will result in the recognition of the agency as a standard-setting body by EQAP – a designation that is held for a period of five years. The quality audit process will confirm that the accrediting agency has:

- the basic structural and operational requirements for establishment and operations;
- the necessary policies, procedures and resources to effectively function as a standard-setting body;
- clear mechanisms in place to support its education and training sector, and maintain accountability to its stakeholders;
- strategies to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency in its quality assurance processes; and
- mechanisms to encourage the development and continued enhancement of a culture of quality.

### A.1

## Standards and Guidelines for Quality Audit of Accrediting Agencies

There are nine standards for the quality audit of agencies, as outlined below. Following each standard is a set of guidelines, which further explain the standards.

#### A.1.1 Standard 1: Establishment and Recognition

The agency is formally established and recognised as a quality assurance agency for education and training.

##### Guidelines:

- (a) The agency is established by virtue of a legal or equivalent instrument that specifies its functions and powers.
- (b) The purpose of the agency is to set standards for education and training provision and programmes.
- (c) The organisation has vision and mission statements, and goals that are consistent with its purpose.

#### A.1.2 Standard 2: Governance, Management and Structure

The agency has suitable governance, management and organisational structures for the sound performance of its quality assurance functions.

##### Guidelines:

- (a) The agency has a governing body whose members are suitably qualified and experienced, and which represents the various sectors of education and training in the country.
- (b) The governing body has a strategic role in providing direction on the effective management of its operations.

- (c) The management team is appropriately qualified and experienced.
- (d) There is a well-defined organisational structure that reflects the nature of positions and personnel required to carry out the functions of the agency.

### **A.1.3 Standard 3: Independence and Autonomy**

The agency's evaluations and decisions are based on accurate and authentic evidence, and are not influenced by external parties.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The agency's decisions on quality assurance processes are fair, consistent and based on pre-defined and publicised criteria.
- (b) The performance of the agency's operations and functions are undertaken without discrimination and/or external influence.
- (c) The agency has mechanisms in place to manage conflicts of interest in the work of its governing body, management and staff.

### **A.1.4 Standard 4: External Quality Assurance Criteria and Processes for Higher Education Institutions**

The agency has well defined and clearly documented processes and criteria for quality assurance of institutions and their programmes.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The agency's quality assurance strategies incorporate international guidelines.
- (b) The quality assurance policies, procedures, guidelines and requirements are pre-defined and publicly available.
- (c) There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development of standards and criteria for quality assurance.
- (d) The quality assurance reports prepared by the agency are accessible to stakeholders.

### **A.1.5 Standard 5: Internal Quality Assurance System**

The agency has processes in place for internal quality assurance to enhance the quality and integrity of its operations.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The agency's policies and procedures on internal quality assurance demonstrate its accountability to its stakeholders and are publicly available.
- (b) The agency demonstrates commitment to its internal quality assurance by:
  - (i) having an internal quality management system that guides its operations and ensures all persons involved in its operations are competent, and act professionally and ethically;
  - (ii) protecting against intolerance and discrimination of any kind;
  - (iii) having regular reviews conducted by adequately qualified and experienced personnel;
  - (iv) making reports on its quality assurance accessible to stakeholders; and
  - (v) publishing its annual and audited financial reports.
- (c) The agency is affiliated to and collaborates with regional and international quality assurance agencies and networks.

### **A.1.6 Standard 6: Resources**

The agency is adequately resourced to effectively function as an external quality assurance organisation.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The agency has an adequate level of physical, financial and human resources to carry out its functions and responsibilities.
- (b) The agency has an adequate number of staff members for the conduct of its functions.
- (c) The agency has a pool of qualified and trained assessors and auditors.
- (d) The agency has strategies and provisions for professional development and training of its permanent and temporary staff members and experts.

### **A.1.7 Standard 7: Representation and Appeals**

There are equitable provisions for institutions to seek review of decisions made by the agency on quality assurance processes.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) There are clearly defined provisions for institutions to seek review of the decisions made by the agency.
- (b) The policies and procedures on review are fair and publicly available.
- (c) There is an independent, transparent and fair review process.

### **A.1.8 Standard 8: Reporting**

The agency informs and responds to the public, and demonstrates accountability by reporting openly on review decisions and on its own performance.

#### **Guidelines:**

The agency demonstrates this by ensuring that reports:

- (a) are clear, factual, detailed and supported by authentic evidence; and
- (b) contain decisions, recommendations, actions that are required for improvement, and their timeframe and rationale.

### **A.1.9 Standard 9: Information Management**

The agency collects, manages and analyses data and uses information to guide decision-making.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The agency systematically maintains records of official data, decisions and outcomes of its processes.
- (b) Data is analysed and results are used in the overall development of the education and training sector.

## A.2 Outcomes for Quality Audit

The nine standards for the quality audit of a quality assurance are broken into 52 outcomes, against which an application for quality audit would be evaluated. These are shown in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Outcomes for Quality Audit of a National Quality Assurance Agency**

Standard	Outcomes
<b>1. Establishment and Recognition</b>	<p>The agency is established by virtue of a legal or equivalent instrument.</p> <p>The functions and powers of the agency are clearly specified.</p> <p>The primary purpose of the agency is to set standards for education and training provision and programmes.</p> <p>The agency has vision and mission statements, and goals and objectives that are consistent with its purpose.</p> <p>The outcomes and consequences of the processes and activities of the agency are accepted within the higher education system, by the state, the stakeholders and the public.</p>
<b>2. Governance, Management and Structure</b>	<p>The agency has a governing body whose members are suitably qualified and experienced.</p> <p>The membership of the governing body is representative of the various sectors of education and training in the country.</p> <p>The governing body has a strategic role in providing directions on effective management of its operations.</p> <p>There is a management team responsible for the efficient conduct of the functions of the agency.</p> <p>The members of the management team are appropriately qualified and experienced.</p> <p>There is a clear demarcation between the deliverables and accountabilities of the governing body and the management team.</p> <p>There is a well-defined organisational structure that reflects the nature of positions and personnel required to carry out the functions of the agency.</p> <p>The reporting relationships and line of authority are clearly specified in the organisational structure.</p>
<b>3. Independence and Autonomy</b>	<p>The agency is independent and acts autonomously:</p> <p>Organisational independence – the documentation on the establishment of the agency shows its independence from higher education institutions, government and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Operational independence – the definition and operation of the agency's procedures and methods as well as the nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken autonomously and independently from third parties such as higher education institutions, government and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Independence of formal outcomes – while experts from relevant stakeholder organisations take part in quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.</p> <p>The agency's decisions on quality assurance processes are fair, consistent and based on pre-defined and publicised criteria.</p> <p>The agency has mechanisms in place to manage conflicts of interest in the work of its governing body, management and staff.</p>

	Standard	Outcomes
4.	<b>External Quality Assurance Criteria and Processes for Higher Education Institutions</b>	<p>The agency has well-defined and clearly documented processes and criteria for the quality assurance of institutions and their programmes.</p> <p>The quality assurance policies, procedures, guidelines and requirements are publicly available.</p> <p>The agency's quality assurance strategies incorporate international guidelines.</p> <p>There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development of standards and criteria for quality assurance.</p> <p>The quality assurance reports prepared by the agency are accessible to stakeholders.</p> <p>The agency regularly holds sessions to advise institutions about the criteria and requirements for quality assurance and how they could demonstrate their compliance with them.</p>
5.	<b>Internal Quality Assurance System</b>	<p>The agency has policies and procedures on internal quality assurance.</p> <p>The policies and procedures on internal quality assurance demonstrate the agency's accountability to its stakeholders and are publicly available.</p> <p>The agency ensures that its staff members are competent and act professionally and ethically.</p> <p>There are processes to ensure the quality of outputs, activities and material produced by staff and agents of the agency.</p> <p>There are regular self-reviews of the agency by adequately qualified and experienced personnel.</p> <p>The agency has internal and external feedback mechanisms in place that lead to continuous improvement within the agency.</p> <p>The agency makes accessible reports on its quality assurance to the stakeholders.</p> <p>The agency produces its annual and audited financial reports on a regular basis.</p> <p>The agency is affiliated and collaborates with regional and international quality assurance agencies and networks.</p> <p>The agency has a website through which it provides public information about itself and the outcomes of the processes that it administers.</p> <p>There is a dedicated team of staff members who are primarily responsible for assuring the quality of its operations.</p> <p>The agency has established and clearly documented processes, procedures and guidelines on its administrative, financial and human resources operations.</p>
6.	<b>Resources</b>	<p>The agency has an adequate level of physical and financial resources to carry out its functions and responsibilities.</p> <p>There is an adequate level of suitably qualified and experienced staff members in the agency.</p> <p>The agency has a pool of qualified and trained assessors and auditors.</p> <p>There are strategies and provisions for continuous professional development and training of staff.</p>

Standard	Outcomes
<p><b>7. Representation and Appeals</b></p>	<p>There are clearly defined provisions for institutions to seek review of the decisions made by the agency.</p> <p>The policies, procedures and requirements of reviews are fair and publicly available.</p> <p>There is an independent committee to handle applications for review of decisions.</p> <p>Representations and appeals procedures are conducted in a timely and fair manner and allow for representation by all parties.</p> <p>The outcome of an appeal is relayed to the institution within a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>There is confidence that the outcomes of representations and appeals would be respected and complied by all parties.</p>
<p><b>8. Reporting</b></p>	<p>The agency ensures that the reports it prepares are clear, factual, and accurate, and supported by empirical evidence.</p> <p>The quality assurance reports prepared by the agency contain information on: outcomes/decisions, reasons for decisions, recommendations on remedial measures, and provisions for reconsideration and appeal.</p> <p>The reports on institutions and their programmes are made available to the institutions within a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>The agency clearly communicates any issues for institutional follow-up for redress with a defined timeframe and expected outcomes.</p>
<p><b>9. Information Management</b></p>	<p>There is a credible system for the collection and management of data.</p> <p>The agency systematically maintains records of official data, decisions and outcomes of its processes.</p> <p>There are documented procedures governing the protection and release of confidential data.</p> <p>Data is analysed and results are used in the overall development of the education and training sector in the country.</p>



## PART B:

# Quality Assurance of Institutions

Institutions are the key agents in the development of any nation's human resources. At the core of their design and delivery of education and training services is the cultivation and maintenance of a 'culture of quality'. Such a culture should permeate all levels – from their governance and management, to faculty and support personnel – and all systems, processes, programmes and programme components. Communication and the monitoring of implementation of policies and procedures that guarantee quality in all aspects of an institution's key functions are critical. Evaluating the quality assurance of an institution refers to the systematic processes for assessing the quality of an institution, its educational provisions and services, and taking actions to ensure the quality is continually maintained and enhanced. The quality assurance system has internal and external elements. Internal quality assurance involves monitoring and evaluation instruments, and activities aimed at bringing about improvements. External quality assurance comprises activities on external audit, the establishment of benchmarks, external quality assessments, and accreditation.

### B.1

## Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Institutions

The Pacific Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) contains 13 standards for building the capability of institutions to deliver sound education and training services, as shown on the following pages. Through application of the standards, institutions will demonstrate a commitment to continuously improving and maintaining the quality of their educational provisions. The standards will assist an institution in:

- (a) improving operational transparency and accountability to its stakeholders;
- (b) enhancing its reputation as the preferred supplier/provider of quality education and training; and
- (c) self-reflection and analysis of its policies and procedures for continuous improvement.

Following each standard is a set of guidelines, which further explain the standards.

### **B.1.1 Standard 1: Establishment, Organisational Focus and Structure**

The institution's focus is on the delivery of quality education and training, and that its organisational structure is suitable for its purposes.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution is constituted and legally recognised under a law of the country.
- (b) The institution has clearly stated vision, mission, goals and functions that:
  - (i) reflect a desire to develop, sustain and improve the quality of education and training.
  - (ii) guide decision-making in planning, resource allocation and programme development and delivery.
- (c) There is a well-defined and clear organisational structure that reflects the provision of education and training, and administrative, financial and support services.
- (d) The key responsibilities of distinct positions are specified.

### **B.1.2 Standard 2: Governance and Management**

The institution has appropriate governance and management structures, and personnel for the sound conduct of education and training services.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) There is an experienced or qualified governing body for all of the institution's activities.
- (b) The institution has appropriate management structures and personnel who are appropriately qualified and experienced, and are responsible and accountable for the decisions that they make.

### **B.1.3 Standard 3: Programme Development and Review**

The institution has a strategy for the development, approval, evaluation and periodic review of its programmes.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) There are documented strategies and guidelines for the development, approval, evaluation and review of the education and training programmes.
- (b) There is adequate evidence of relevant stakeholder support (industrial, professional, technical, academic and community) in the design, development and review of programmes.
- (c) There are provisions to ensure that the outcomes of programme monitoring and review processes are utilised for continuous improvement.

### **B.1.4 Standard 4: Teaching and Learning**

The Institution creates an environment that is conducive to learning and provides adequate and relevant information that enables learners to be successful in their studies.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution establishes and maintains a sound, stable and well organised learning environment.
- (b) The institution effectively integrates Information Communications Technology (ICT) to enhance learning and teaching/training.
- (c) Varied and innovative teaching strategies (including practical and field work) are utilised in the delivery of the institution's programmes.
- (d) There is an effective feedback system for evaluating the quality of teaching and training delivery in all modes and sites.

### **B.1.5 Standard 5: Financial Stability**

The institution has the financial capacity and mechanisms to sustain the quality delivery of education, training and assessment services.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution has the financial capacity to sustain its operations.
- (b) The institution conducts and reports financial operations in accordance with sound financial management practices.

### **B.1.6 Standard 6: Staffing**

The institution recruits, manages, evaluates and trains staff to ensure the sound delivery and assessment of its education and training services.

**Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution is appropriately staffed to achieve its mission and goals.
- (b) There are policies and processes on selection, recruitment, training, evaluation, appraisal, promotion and discipline of staff members.
- (c) The institution has systems for dissemination of all relevant information to its staff members to ensure their commitment to its vision, mission and values.

**B.1.7 Standard 7: Learner Information and Support**

Adequate and relevant information and support services are provided to learners.

**Guidelines:**

The institution:

- (a) makes available current and accurate information about itself, as well as all its programmes and other services that it offers for learners and stakeholders to enable them to make informed decisions;
- (b) has policies and procedures on selection and admission of learners and provision of learners' support; and
- (c) makes information on admission criteria and requirements, programme outlines, assessment and completion requirements available.

**B.1.8 Standard 8: Physical and Learning Resources**

The institution has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to support the delivery of its programmes.

**Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to deliver all its programmes.
- (b) There are mechanisms for the periodic review and acquisition of resources.

**B.1.9 Standard 9: Assessment and Moderation**

The institution has fair, valid, transparent and effective systems and criteria for assessing learners against the programme outcomes.

**Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution's regulations and policies on assessment and moderation (internal and external) are explicit, transparent, fair and include provisions on re-assessments, special assessments, reporting assessment outcomes, appealing assessment decisions, progression and completion, and unacceptable practices regarding assessment.
- (b) There are mechanisms to ensure that the:
  - (i) volume, timing, weighting and nature of assessments are appropriate and aligned with learning outcomes/performance criteria;
  - (ii) requirements for assessment and marking criteria are made accessible to students; and
  - (iii) feedback on assessment is constructive and promptly communicated to learners.

**B.1.10 Standard 10: Reporting Learners' Achievement**

The institution adequately and appropriately reports on learners' achievement.

**Guidelines:**

The institution's policies and procedures for reporting learners' achievement include:

- (a) the nature of assessment outcomes reported with the institution's grading scale;
- (b) information about credit aggregates and transfer processes;

- (c) conditions for issuance of qualifications and results upon completion or partial completion of programmes; and
- (d) displaying the logo of the accrediting agency on its qualifications.

### **B.1.11 Standard 11: Research**

The institution has a research culture to meet the requirements of under-graduate and post-graduate programmes and qualifications.

#### **Guidelines:**

The institution has established structures, policies and procedures on research (where appropriate) to:

- (a) meet education and training requirements for under-graduate and post-graduate programmes;
- (b) encourage staff members to dedicate time and resources to research that informs the development, delivery, assessment and review of their programmes; and
- (c) facilitate the development of an institutional research culture.

### **B.1.12 Standard 12: Information Management**

The institution collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of its programmes and other activities.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The institution has mechanisms for the collection and management of data on learners' details, assessment results/outcomes, course completion and progression rates, employability of graduates, evaluation of programmes and learning resources.
- (b) There are procedures on ensuring confidentiality of learners' information, facilitating student access to data, and reporting learners' achievements to stakeholders.
- (c) Data is analysed and effectively utilised for the continuous improvement of the institution and its programmes.

### **B.1.13 Standard 13: Appeals, Grievances and Complaints Resolution**

The institution has mechanisms for handling academic and general discipline and complaints in a fair, accessible and timely manner.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) There are clearly defined provisions for raising grievances and seeking review of the decisions made by the institution.
- (b) The policies and procedures on review are fair and publicly available.
- (c) There is an independent, transparent and fair review process.

## **B.2**

### **Accreditation of Institutions**

Accreditation is a specific element in external quality assurance. It is both a process and a status. It is the process of evaluating institutions and their programmes, operations and services to determine if acceptable standards have been met and how well they serve students and society. The result of the process, if successful, is the award of 'accredited status'.

For students, accreditation is critical for obtaining employment, receiving student aid and transferring credits. For the public, the process ensures reliable information about institutions and programmes, promotes accountability, and tracks progress.

Organisations that are established and operating as post-secondary education and training institutions/providers in countries that do not have national quality assurance agencies may apply for accreditation with EQAP. The providers/institutions that are established and are operating in countries that have a national quality assurance agency must seek institutional accreditation with their national agency.

### B.2.1 Outcomes for Institutional Accreditation

The standards for the quality assurance of an institution are broken into 98 outcomes, against which an application for accreditation would be evaluated. These are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Outcomes for Accreditation of an Institution**

Standard	Outcomes
1. Institution Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The institution has valid contact details and physical address.</li> <li>The 'type of institution' is appropriate for the nature of programmes that it offers.</li> <li>The programmes offered at various locations are clearly spelt out.</li> <li>The institution has a head office on the premises to provide support for students and staff.</li> </ul>
2. Establishment, Organisational Focus and Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The institution is constituted and legally recognised under a law of the country or equivalent.</li> <li>The institution complies with the relevant national legislative requirements of organisations and entities.</li> <li>The institution has clear vision and mission statements, and goals.</li> <li>The mission and goals guide decision-making, planning, resource allocation and programme development and delivery.</li> <li>The mission and goals reflect a desire to develop, sustain and improve the delivery and quality of education and training.</li> <li>There is a well-defined and clear organisational structure.</li> <li>The organisational structure is suitable for the purposes of the institution and for the provision of quality education.</li> <li>The organisational structure reflects the provision of education and training, and administrative, financial and support services.</li> <li>The organisational structure places people or groups at appropriate levels to ensure adequate authority for implementation and effective line of reporting.</li> <li>The key responsibilities of distinct positions are stated and demarcated.</li> <li>The institution has pre-defined and clearly stated graduate and staff attributes.</li> <li>The historical background of the institution shows a reputation in the provision of quality education.</li> <li>The institution's focus is clearly articulated as being the delivery of quality higher education.</li> </ul>

Standard	Outcomes
<p>3.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Governance and Management</b></p>	<p>The institution has a governing authority that oversees the responsibilities of all the institution's activities.</p> <p>The governing board is lawfully constituted.</p> <p>The powers and functions of the board and procedures for the conduct of its members are clearly specified.</p> <p>The directors of the institution are sufficiently experienced or qualified for the governance of the institution.</p> <p>The head of the institution is appropriately qualified academically and professionally.</p> <p>There is a management team that is vested with powers to make decisions, and is responsible and accountable for the decisions that it makes.</p> <p>There is an academic committee or senate for the overall academic governance of the institution.</p> <p>The institution has appropriate structures for its corporate governance.</p> <p>The institution's operations are governed by its statutes, by-laws or rules.</p> <p>The various departments/divisions/faculties are headed by suitably qualified personnel who have powers to make decisions independently and take responsibility and accountability for the decisions that they make.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Programme Development and Review</b></p>	<p>There is a policy containing procedures and guidelines on the design, development, approval and review of programmes and courses.</p> <p>The policy makes provision for the following:</p> <p>(a) Participation of students, staff members and stakeholders (industrial, professional, technical, academic and community) in the design, development, approval and review of programmes.</p> <p>(b) Participation of students in the evaluation of courses on a regular basis.</p> <p>(c) Outcomes of programme monitoring and review processes to contribute to continuous improvement of courses and programmes.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Learning and Teaching</b></p>	<p>The institution makes information available on the programmes and services that it offers.</p> <p>Only the programmes declared in the accreditation are offered by the institution.</p> <p>There are policies/procedures on learning and teaching.</p> <p>The policies/procedures on learning and teaching have provisions to ensure that:</p> <p>(a) learning and teaching activities, and associated resources, provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to develop their skills and achieve the intended learning outcomes;</p> <p>(b) Information Communications Technology is integrated to enhance learning and teaching/training;</p> <p>(c) varied and innovative teaching strategies (including practical and field work) are applied in the delivery of programmes;</p> <p>(d) the efficient conduct of work-based and practical attachments/placements;</p> <p>(e) the quality of teaching and training delivery in all modes and sites is evaluated;</p> <p>(f) the learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation and current professional and industrial practices; and</p> <p>(g) there are structures for the sound conduct of the processes on learning and teaching.</p> <p>The institution has a system of assuring the quality of its programmes and qualifications.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Financial Stability</b></p>	<p>The institution has the financial capacity to sustain its operations.</p> <p>Financial planning is linked to institutional goals and strategies.</p> <p>The institution has appropriate personnel and systems to ensure the conduct and reporting of financial operations is in accordance with sound financial management practices.</p> <p>The financial procedures and protocols are clearly documented.</p>

Standard	Outcomes
<p>7.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b></p>	<p>There is an academic manager for the management and administration of the academic affairs of the institution.</p> <p>The ratio of academic staff members to students is acceptable.</p> <p>The academic staff members are suitably qualified.</p> <p>The technical staff members have the requisite qualifications and industrial experience.</p> <p>The programmes offered are supported by an appropriate number and quality of staff members.</p> <p>There is a policy on staffing that has provisions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● selection and recruitment;</li> <li>● professional development and training;</li> <li>● evaluation and appraisal;</li> <li>● promotion; and</li> <li>● discipline.</li> </ul> <p>The policy on staffing is clearly documented, accessible, fair and is consistent with the institution's mission and goals.</p> <p>There are rules to govern the behaviour and conduct of staff members.</p>
<p>8.</p> <p><b>Learner Information and Support</b></p>	<p>Information about the institution and its training provisions is available to the public at all times.</p> <p>The institution provides an annual calendar containing information on the criteria for admission, programme details, processes for application and admission into programmes of study and assessment, and completion requirements.</p> <p>The procedures on selection and admission are fair, equitable, non-discriminatory and clearly documented.</p> <p>Selection and admission processes are conducted in a professional manner by authorised and competent staff members.</p> <p>During selection processes, students are provided with detailed information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● how selection, admission and enrolment processes will be conducted;</li> <li>● what prospective students would have to do; and</li> <li>● dates for changes to programmes and refund of fees.</li> </ul> <p>There are procedures and guidelines on making and recording decisions on selection and admission, and conveying the same to prospective students.</p> <p>There are mechanisms for the provision of support to learners.</p> <p>To enable student development and achievement, there are practices and systems that facilitate successful transitions and academic progression.</p> <p>Information on the nature and conditions of learner support is clearly documented and accessible to the learners.</p> <p>The institution, in partnership with its student body, defines the responsibilities and promotes the range of opportunities for any student to engage in educational enhancement and quality assurance.</p> <p>There is an environment within which students and staff engage in discussions that aim to bring about demonstrable enhancement of the educational experience.</p> <p>There are arrangements for the effective representation of the collective student voice at all levels of the organisation, and these arrangements provide opportunities for all students to be heard.</p> <p>Student representatives have access to training and ongoing support to equip them to fulfil their roles in educational enhancement and quality assurance effectively.</p> <p>The rules and regulations governing the behaviour and conduct of learners are clearly documented and accessible to learners.</p>

Standard	Outcomes
<p>9.</p> <p><b>Physical and Learning Resources</b></p>	<p>The institution is located in an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.</p> <p>The location is clear from external disturbances and noise pollution.</p> <p>The classrooms and laboratories are adequately sized to accommodate students.</p> <p>The workspace per learner is appropriate depending on the programme of study.</p> <p>The facilities are compliant with the standards for health and safety.</p> <p>Separate male and female toilets are adequately provided.</p> <p>The provision of electricity, water and telephone facilities are adequate.</p> <p>ICT provision for staff and students is adequate.</p> <p>The resource centre/library is adequately equipped to support the programmes being offered.</p> <p>The common rooms for learners are adequate.</p> <p>Teaching aids (such as overhead projectors, boards, multimedia projectors, video and audio equipment, computer and language laboratories) are adequately provided.</p> <p>The requisite equipment, tools and materials including photocopiers are available to meet the requirements of the programmes.</p> <p>The institution ensures regular upgrading/maintenance of buildings and equipment.</p> <p>The standard of housekeeping, hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation is good.</p> <p>The institution is committed to a timely review and acquisition of resources.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>There are regulations, policies and procedures to ensure that the standard for the award of each qualification is rigorously set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that student performance is equitably judged against this standard.</p> <p>The regulations, policies and procedures on assessment are explicit, fair and contain provisions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● re-assessments and special assessment;</li> <li>● progression and completion;</li> <li>● reporting assessment outcomes;</li> <li>● appealing assessment decisions; and</li> <li>● dealing with unacceptable practices.</li> </ul> <p>There are mechanisms to ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes/performance criteria.</li> <li>● Volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>● Weighting, due date and marking criteria for each assessment are clear and made available to students.</li> <li>● Assessment is carried out securely and in accordance with the principles of assessment.</li> <li>● Feedback on continuous assessment is timely, constructive and developmental in nature.</li> <li>● Results of assessments are communicated to students promptly and in accordance with stated timescales.</li> </ul> <p>The institution has panels, with membership, procedures, powers and accountability to approve assessment tools and outcomes.</p> <p>The proceedings of assessment boards and assessment panels are recorded accurately.</p> <p>The processes for grading assessments and moderating marks are fair and explicit.</p> <p>The records on assessment are secure and systematically maintained.</p>
<p>11.</p> <p><b>Reporting Learners' Achievement</b></p>	<p>There are provisions on the issue of transcripts and certificates to learners who have successfully completed a programme and met all its requirements.</p> <p>The transcripts provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● results obtained;</li> <li>● grading structure;</li> <li>● procedure for aggregation of credits;</li> <li>● conditions for issuance of qualifications and results upon completion or partial completion of programmes; and</li> <li>● conditions and circumstances for re-issuance of qualifications and transcripts.</li> </ul>

Standard	Outcomes
12. Research	<p>The institution has structures and provisions for research and free intellectual inquiry.</p> <p>Staff members are encouraged to carry out research.</p> <p>The findings of research are shared among staff members and inform the development, delivery and assessment of programmes.</p>
13. Information Management	<p>There are credible mechanisms for the collection and management of data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal details of learners;</li> <li>• assessment results/outcomes;</li> <li>• programme completion and progression rates;</li> <li>• employability of graduates;</li> <li>• evaluation of programmes; and</li> <li>• nature of learning resources.</li> </ul> <p>Controls are in place to ensure data is kept secure and confidential at all times.</p> <p>There are conditions governing learners' access to their records and sharing of data with stakeholders.</p> <p>Data is being analysed, and the analysis informs the continuous improvement of the institution and its services.</p>
14. Appeals, Grievances and Complaints Resolution	<p>The institution has a system to deal with student and staff grievances.</p> <p>The procedures and requirements for filing appeals, complaints and grievances are explicit and accessible to students and staff members.</p> <p>There is a committee to handle appeals, grievances and issues of discipline of students and staff members.</p> <p>Appeals and complaints procedures are conducted in a timely and fair manner and allow for representation by all parties.</p> <p>The institution ensures that appropriate action is taken following an appeal or complaint.</p> <p>There is a clear refund policy for students that ensures equity and transparency.</p> <p>There are reasonable arrangements to protect student interests in the case of institutions ceasing to operate as training institutions.</p>

## B.3 Approval to Deliver a Regional Qualification

A regional qualification accredited and registered on the PRQS would be available for delivery by providers/organisations of the member countries. However, providers/organisation must first seek approval from EQAP to deliver the qualification.

### B.3.1 Criteria and Outcomes for Approval to Deliver a Regional Qualification

An application for the delivery of a regional qualification must meet criteria for delivery, which are broken into outcomes. These are shown in the Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Criteria and Outcomes for the Delivery of a Regional Qualification**

Criterion	Outcomes
1. The information about the organisation's accreditation and contact details are appropriate and sufficient.	1.1 The organisation has valid contact details and physical address.
	1.2 The organisation has been accredited as a training provider in its home country by the national accrediting agency.
	1.3 The organisation's accreditation would be valid for the duration of the delivery of the qualification.
	1.4 The conditions of accreditation, if any, would not have an impact on the delivery of the qualification by the organisation.

Criterion	Outcomes
2. The organisation is well established, and has the necessary systems, structures, processes and provisions to ensure the sound delivery of the qualification and other associated services.	2.1 The organisation is legally constituted and recognised under a law of the country or equivalent.
	2.2 The organisation has clear vision and mission statements, and goals.
	2.3 Information on the owners/directors of the organisation is made available.
	2.4 The history of the organisation has been clearly documented.
	2.5 The historical background shows a reputation in the provision of quality education and training.
	2.6 The organisation's strategic plan provides a focus on the quality delivery of education and training services.
	2.7 The organisational structure and personnel are suitable for the provision of quality education.
	2.8 There are appropriate structures and provisions to quality assure training delivery by the organisation.
	2.9 The organisation has the financial capacity to sustain the quality delivery of education and training.
	2.10 There are suitable and well documented provisions for learners to seek review of the decisions made by the organisation on training delivery, assessment and other associated matters, and the processes to resolve them are fair and equitable.
	2.11 The organisation has the provisions to provide authentic and timely information to learners on: admission criteria and requirements, processes and procedures on selection and recruitment, learner progress and achievement.
	2.12 There are credible mechanisms on the collection and management of data on learners.
	2.13 There are reasonable and cost effective arrangements to protect the interests of learners in the case of the winding up of the programme and/or organisation.
3. The details about the qualification are sufficient, appropriate and clearly documented.	3.1. Information on the subject area, level and credit of the qualification are correctly stated.
	3.2. The entry and selection criteria and requirements (including co-requisite and/or pre-requisite requirements) are fair, reasonable and clearly stated.
	3.3. Entry restrictions, if any, and their reasons are clearly stated and are non-discriminatory.
	3.4. For each component, information on the learning outcomes and their level and credit matches with the information on the qualification document.
	3.5 The composition of the qualification is in accordance with the packaging rules of the qualification.

Criterion	Outcomes
<p>4. The delivery and learning methods for all modes of delivery, given the stated learning outcomes, are adequate and appropriate.</p>	<p>4.1. The delivery mode(s) for each of site is/are stated.</p> <p>4.2. The delivery and learning methods are appropriate for the nature of the qualification and the learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.3. The policy/procedures on workplace attachment/ placement have reasonable provisions/arrangements for the following:</p> <p>(a) Selection of an appropriate workplace.</p> <p>(b) Selection of a suitably qualified workplace supervisor.</p> <p>(c) Provision of feedback to learners from workplace supervisors/ assessors.</p> <p>(d) Clarification of specific roles and responsibilities of learners, workplace supervisors and trainers in the duration of the attachment.</p> <p>(e) Identification of the personnel who are responsible for coordinating, carrying out and reporting assessment, moderation and evaluation of practical work-based components.</p> <p>(f) Job rotation to enable the learner to be exposed to all aspects of the job.</p> <p>(g) Safety and welfare of learners in the duration of the attachment.</p>
<p>5. The assessment procedures and methodology are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the stated learning outcomes.</p>	<p>5.1. The assessment plan(s) are outlined and practicable in terms of resources, personnel and timeliness.</p> <p>5.2. Assessment methodologies are stated and compatible with the nature of the qualification and learning outcomes.</p> <p>5.3. There are assessment activities for all components and learning outcomes.</p> <p>5.4. The assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes.</p> <p>5.5. The assessment activities are scheduled sporadically in the duration of the qualification.</p> <p>5.6. The volume and weighting of assessment tasks is appropriate.</p> <p>5.7. There are reasonable provisions on the quality assurance of the:</p> <p>(a) development and approval of assessment items and tools;</p> <p>(b) administration of assessment; and</p> <p>(c) grading and determination of assessment outcomes.</p> <p>5.8. The pre-assessment meetings discuss learner preparation, assessment methodology and assessment requirements.</p> <p>5.9. The post-assessment meetings discuss learners' achievement and provisions for re-assessment and appeals.</p> <p>5.10. There is a system for the provision of regular feedback to learners on their progress and final achievement.</p> <p>5.11. The grading system for the recognition of various levels of performance is fair and clearly documented.</p> <p>5.12. There are provisions for re-assessment, special assessment, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions.</p> <p>5.13. The conditions and requirements for re-assessment, special assessment, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions are fair and reasonable</p> <p>5.14. There are provisions for assessment appeal applications to be processed fairly and objectively.</p> <p>5.15. For moderation:</p> <p>(a) there is a valid, reliable and well documented plan;</p> <p>(b) the criteria are clear, transparent and accessible to learners; and</p> <p>(c) there is a transparent process for the appointment of a suitably qualified moderator.</p>

Criterion	Outcomes
6. The organisation has the support services and the required physical, financial and human capacity to support the sustained delivery of the qualification in all delivery modes and delivery sites.	6.1. The teacher to learner ratio for the qualification for the stated delivery mode(s) is acceptable.
	6.2. There is an adequate number of suitably qualified, trained and/or experienced staff members to deliver the qualification.
	6.3. There is a sufficient level of teaching and learning resources.
	6.4. There is a detailed and acceptable acquisition plan for the procurement of resources that are required but are not currently available.
	6.5. The physical facilities (including: buildings, furniture, laboratories, etc.) that are available at all locations are adequate to sustain the delivery of the qualification.
	6.6. The facilities are compliant with the standards for health and safety.
	6.7. The support and guidance systems accessible to learners for the qualification are suitable and sufficient.
7. The requirements on completion and grading are appropriate, fair and clearly documented.	7.1. The core courses and electives are appropriate and clearly documented.
	7.2. The requirements on duration, attendance, assessment, progression and any other special requirements are reasonable and clearly documented.
	7.3. There are provisions to inform learners about the requirements on duration, attendance, continuous assessment, progression and any other special requirements.
	7.4. The grading system is defined and clearly documented.
	7.5. Progression pathways are provided from the proposed qualification to other qualification(s) at the same or other institutions.
8. The strategy on continuous monitoring and evaluation is fair, reasonable and ensures the sound conduct of the training delivery and assessment services to learners.	8.1. The monitoring and evaluation plan shows the timeline and the personnel responsible for the various activities.
	8.2. The personnel responsible for monitoring the training delivery and assessment are appropriately qualified.
	8.3. There is provision for the active participation of learners in the evaluation of the qualification and its components.
9. The organisation has appropriate external support for the delivery of the qualification.	9.1. The application for delivery of qualification has been supported by the respective regional and/or national industry or professional association.
	9.2. There is documentary evidence on the support.

## B.4

### Approval to Deliver a Micro-qualification

A regional qualification accredited and registered on the PRQS would be available for delivery by providers/organisations of the member countries. However, providers/organisation must first seek approval from EQAP to deliver the qualification.

#### B.4.1 Criteria and Outcomes for Approval to Deliver a Micro-qualification

An application for the delivery of a micro-qualification must meet criteria for delivery, which are broken into outcomes. These are shown in the Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Criteria and Outcomes for the Delivery of a Micro-qualification**

Criterion	Outcomes
1. The information about the organization's contact, establishment and accreditation details are appropriate and clearly documented.	1.1 The organisation has valid contact details and physical address.
	1.2 The organisation has been accredited as a training provider in its home country by the national accrediting agency.
	1.3 The organisation's accreditation would be valid for the duration of the delivery of the micro-qualification.
	1.4 The conditions of accreditation, if any, would not have an impact on the delivery of the micro-qualification by the organisation.
	1.5 The organisation is legally constituted and recognised under a law of the country or equivalent.
	1.6 The organisation has clear vision and mission statements, and goals.
2. The organization is well established, and has the necessary systems, processes and provisions to ensure quality delivery of the micro-qualification and other associated services.	2.1 The history of the organisation has been clearly documented.
	2.2 The historical background shows a reputation in the provision of quality education and training.
	2.3 There are appropriate structures and provisions to quality assure training delivery by the organisation.
	2.4 There are suitable and well documented provisions for learners to seek review of the decisions made by the organisation on training delivery, assessment and other associated matters, and the processes to resolve them are fair and equitable.
	2.5 There are credible mechanisms on the collection and management of data on learners.
3. The delivery and learning methods for the stated learning outcomes, are adequate and appropriate	3.1 The delivery and learning methods are appropriate to the nature of the micro-qualification and the learning outcomes.
	3.2 The policy/procedures on workplace attachment/placement have reasonable provisions/arrangements for the following (if applicable):
	a. Selection of an appropriate workplace.
	b. Selection of a suitably qualified workplace supervisor.
	c. Provision of feedback to learners from workplace supervisors/assessors.
	d. Clarification of specific roles and responsibilities of learners, workplace supervisors and trainers in the duration of the attachment.
e. Identification of the personnel responsible for coordinating, carrying out and reporting assessment, moderation and evaluation of practical work-based components.	
f. Safety and welfare of learners in the duration of the attachment.	

Criterion	Outcomes
4 (a) The assessment methodology and provisions are fair, valid and appropriate for the stated learning outcomes.	<p>4.1 The assessment plan is outlined and practicable in terms of resources, personnel and timeliness.</p> <p>4.2 Assessment methodologies are stated and compatible with the nature of the micro-qualification and learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.3 The assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes.</p> <p>4.4 The assessment activities are scheduled sporadically in the duration of the micro-qualification.</p> <p>4.5 The volume and weighting of assessment tasks is appropriate.</p>
4 (b) The strategy on continuous monitoring and evaluation is appropriate.	<p>4.6 There are reasonable provisions on the quality assurance of the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development and approval of assessment items and tools;</li> <li>administration of assessment; and</li> <li>grading and determination of assessment outcomes.</li> </ol> <p>4.7 The pre-assessment meetings discuss learner preparation, assessment methodology and assessment requirements.</p> <p>4.8 The post-assessment meetings discuss learners' achievement and provisions for re-assessment and appeals.</p> <p>4.9 There is a system for the provision of regular feedback to learners on their progress and final achievement.</p> <p>4.10 There are provisions for re-assessment, special assessment, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions.</p> <p>4.11 The conditions and requirements for re-assessment, special assessment, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions are fair and reasonable</p> <p>4.12 There are provisions for assessment appeal applications to be processed fairly and objectively.</p> <p>4.13 There is a plan for monitoring the delivery of the training.</p> <p>4.14 There are provisions for trainers and learners to be involved in the periodic evaluation of the micro-qualification</p> <p>4.15 There are provisions for the moderation of assessment instruments and marked scripts independently.</p>
5. The organization has the required physical and human capacity to support delivery of the micro-qualification.	<p>1.16 The teacher to learner ratio for the micro-qualification for the stated delivery mode(s) is acceptable.</p> <p>1.17 There is an adequate number of suitably qualified, trained and/or experienced staff members to deliver the micro-qualification.</p> <p>1.18 There is a sufficient level of teaching and learning resources.</p> <p>1.19 There is a detailed and acceptable acquisition plan for the procurement of resources that are required but are not currently available.</p> <p>1.20 The physical facilities; including: buildings, furniture, laboratories, etc. are adequate to sustain the delivery of the micro-qualification.</p> <p>1.21 The facilities are compliant with the standards for health and safety.</p>
6. The requirements on admission, completion and grading are appropriate, fair and clearly documented.	<p>6.1 The entry and selection criteria and requirements (including co-requisite and/or pre-requisite requirements) are fair, reasonable and clearly stated.</p> <p>6.2 Entry restrictions (if any) and their reasons are clearly stated and non-discriminatory.</p> <p>1.3 The requirements on duration, attendance, assessment, progression and any other special requirements are reasonable and clearly documented.</p> <p>1.4 There are provisions to inform learners about the requirements on duration, attendance, continuous assessment, progression and any other special requirements.</p> <p>1.5 The grading system is defined and clearly documented.</p> <p>6.6 Progression pathways are provided from the proposed micro-qualification to other micro-qualification(s) at the same or other institutions.</p>

## PART C:

# Quality Assurance of Qualifications and Units of Learning/ Micro-qualifications

An institution's programmes reflect its vision and mission, and how it achieves its educational goals and objectives. The quality assurance strategy of an institution must include measures for assuring the quality of its programmes and related processes. The rigorous application of the quality strategy in the design, development, delivery and assessment of a programme instils confidence in its stakeholders, facilitates the registration of an institution's qualifications on to the relevant qualifications framework, and enhances international recognition. Components of programmes may either be courses, units of learning, papers or modules.

The quality assurance of a qualification is essential for confirming institutional capacity in developing, delivering and assessing programmes; increasing public confidence in a qualification; facilitating articulation between programmes of different education and training sectors and institutions; and protecting students from poor quality programmes.

Assuring the quality of a qualification is an attempt to find the answers to the following questions:

- (a) How well does the programme design lead to the achievement of the qualification outcomes, stakeholder demands and strategic purpose?
- (b) How well do the programme delivery methods and assessment match the identified needs of learners and the strategic purpose of the qualification?
- (c) To what extent will the programme enable graduates to pursue intended educational, employment, community and/or cultural outcomes?

## C.1

### Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Qualifications

There are 10 standards for the quality assurance of qualifications, as shown below. Following each standard is a set of guidelines, which further explain the standards.

#### C.1.1 Standard 1: Qualification Title

The title of the qualification is appropriate and complies with the definitions for qualification title and level.

##### Guidelines:

The title:

- (a) is consistent with the purpose, content, type and level of the qualification;
- (b) indicates the subject area of the programme; and
- (c) complies with the level descriptors and qualification definitions.

#### C.1.2 Standard 2: Purpose Statement

The purpose statement appropriately identifies the need for the qualification.

**Guideline:**

The purpose statement clearly identifies why the programme was designed and the needs that it addresses.

**C.1.3 Standard 3: Outcome Statement**

The outcome statement for the qualification reflects the expected level of achievement of the stated purpose, and the specific knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are to be acquired by learners.

**Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by ensuring the outcome statement:

- (a) reflects the level assigned to the qualification and describes the knowledge and skills that the learner has achieved;
- (b) is aligned with a unique level of the framework and its level descriptors and:
  - (i) improves understanding about the qualification in describing achievements;
  - (ii) allows for meaningful comparison with other qualifications; and
  - (iii) enhances articulation of learning and provides pathways to other qualifications or employment opportunities.

**C.1.4 Standard 4: Entry Requirements**

Entry requirements are reasonable for the level and complexity of the qualification.

**Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by ensuring that:

- (a) entry and selection criteria and requirements (including co-requisite and/or pre-requisite requirements, and mature age entry) are fair, reasonable and clearly stated;
- (b) there are provisions for cross credits, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning; and
- (c) entry restrictions, if any, and accompanying rationale are clearly stated and non-discriminatory.

**C.1.5 Standard 5: Components of the Programme**

Qualification components are relevant, appropriate and collectively contribute to achieving the qualification outcomes.

**Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by ensuring that the:

- (a) components are clearly defined and appropriate for the level, type, credit value and outcomes of the qualification; and
- (b) descriptor for each component states the following:

- title
- purpose
- learning outcomes and/or defined competencies
- co- and pre-requisites
- delivery modalities, including work-based components
- assessment methodologies
- duration
- completion rules
- credit value
- the level on a qualifications framework (where possible)

### **C.1.6 Standard 6: Qualification Level**

The qualification is assigned an appropriate level on the relevant qualifications framework, which reflects the relationship between the outcome statement and level descriptors of the framework.

#### **Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by ensuring that:

- (a) the qualification level complies with the relevant qualification definitions and credit profile; and
- (b) is appropriate in terms of the complexity of the learning outcomes and the volume of learning.

### **C.1.7 Standard 7: Credit Profile**

The qualification has a credit value indicative of the volume of learning in totality and its components.

#### **Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by ensuring that the:

- (a) credits for the components at various levels are shown;
- (b) the credit profile is in compliance with the definition of the qualification type; and
- (c) the total credit is the aggregate of the credits of its components stated in whole numbers only.

### **C.1.8 Standard 8: Completion Rules**

The requirements for successful completion are clearly stated and consistent with the qualification outcome statement and qualification type descriptors.

#### **Guidelines:**

The institution demonstrates this by:

- (a) specifying the requirements for qualifications completion, including:
  - (i) maximum and minimum periods of time, if any; and
  - (ii) qualification structure and the progression through the qualification.
- (b) demonstrating how the learners' achievement for individual components will be reflected in the overall award of the qualification; and
- (c) specifying the grading system for the complete qualification.

### **C.1.9 Standard 9: Qualification Design, Approval and Review**

The institution has an effective strategy for the design, approval and review of its qualifications.

#### **Guidelines:**

The strategies and guidelines on qualification design, development and review ensure that:

- (a) the components and learning outcomes constitute a coherent programme whose purpose meets the outcome of the qualification;
- (b) the qualifications and its components meet the needs of stakeholders (industrial, professional, technical, academic and community);
- (c) where necessary, core courses and electives are clearly stated; and
- (d) the institution has a strategy for continuous review of the programme.

### **C.1.10 Standard 10: Assessment and Moderation**

Assessment strategies are directly related to learning outcomes being assessed and information on assessment clearly states how the results of assessment tasks are weighted and combined.

#### **Guidelines:**

The assessment strategy clearly states:

- (a) the assessment tasks, requirements and activities to be completed;
- (b) opportunities for re-assessment, where necessary;
- (c) assessment moderation (internal and/or external) arrangements where the institution has multiple campuses or other similar arrangements;
- (d) work, practical and field-based assessment tasks that are integrated into the total programme and component assessment, where relevant; and
- (e) the grading system for recognition of various levels of performance.

## **C.2**

### **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Units of Learning/ Micro-qualifications**

There are 10 standards for the quality assurance of units of learning/qualification components, as shown below. Following each standard is a set of guidelines, which further explain the standards.

#### **C.2.1 Standard 1: Title of Micro-qualifications**

The micro-qualifications title is consistent with the field of study and indicates how the component relates to other components and the complete qualification.

#### **Guidelines:**

- (a) The micro-qualifications title:
  - (i) is defined and clearly states the field of study; and
  - (ii) provides information on the depth and complexity of the relevant field and sub-field.
- (b) The micro-qualifications code conforms to the convention for institutional and programme coding, and is consistent with the complete qualification.

#### **C.2.2 Standard 2: Purpose**

The purpose of the micro-qualification reflects its relation to the field of study and to the whole qualification.

#### **Guidelines:**

The statement of purpose:

- (a) indicates relevance of the micro-qualifications to the whole qualification; and
- (b) relates to the purpose of the qualification and field of study.

#### **C.2.3 Standard 3: Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes describe the specific knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes a learner will achieve through the micro-qualifications.

#### **Guidelines:**

The learning outcomes are:

- (a) specified for each micro-qualification;
- (b) measurable and achievable;

- (c) presented in a logical and progressive way that demonstrates learners' development of knowledge, skills and attitudes; and
- (d) related to the respective framework level, complexity of the field of study, and outcome statement.

#### **C.2.4 Standard 4: Assessment**

Assessment methodology is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the learning outcomes and delivery modes.

##### **Guidelines:**

- (a) There is an assessment plan containing assessment strategies and tools that cover all learning outcomes, and are appropriate and scheduled periodically.
- (b) The policies on assessment have provisions for:
  - (i) promptly providing feedback to learners;
  - (ii) conducting pre- and post-assessment meetings with learners;
  - (iii) re-assessments and special assessments; and
  - (iv) dealing with impaired performance, where learners cannot complete an assessment because of circumstances beyond their control.
- (c) The assessment strategy for each component states the:
  - (i) assessment tasks, requirements and activities to be completed;
  - (ii) opportunities for re-assessment and appeals;
  - (iii) assessment moderation arrangement;
  - (iv) integration of work-based assessment tasks; and
  - (v) grading system for recognition of various levels of performance.

#### **C.2.5 Standard 5: Entry Requirements**

Entry requirements, including any co-requisite, pre-requisite and mature age entry requirements are clearly stated.

##### **Guidelines:**

The entry requirements:

- (a) are clearly stated, including the pre-requisites and/or co-requisites; and
- (b) define provision for non-formal learning and recognition of prior learning, where necessary.

#### **C.2.6 Standard 6: Completion Rules**

Requirements for the successful completion of the micro-qualifications are clearly stated.

##### **Guidelines:**

The requirements for completion are clearly stated including:

- (a) how the results of the various assessment types are recorded and combined, if necessary; and
- (b) how course assessment relates to the grading system for the micro-qualifications.

#### **C.2.7 Standard 7: Credit Value**

The credit value of the micro-qualification is clearly stated and relates to the complete qualification.

##### **Guidelines:**

The credit value of the component:

- (a) is correctly estimated, noting the interplay between the time, learner ability and the learning outcome;

- (b) provides information on the number of lectures, tutorials and any practical requirements per week;
- (c) accounts for the credit values of the learning outcomes of the component;
- (d) is calculated using any one of the ratios:
  - one year of full-time study is equivalent to approximately 120 credits; or
  - one credit is equivalent to approximately ten notional hours of learning;
- (e) is denoted by a whole number.

### C.2.8 Standard 8: Level of Micro-qualification

The level of the micro-qualifications on a qualifications framework is consistent with its learning outcomes and how it relates to other components that make up the qualification.

**Guideline:**

The micro-qualification has a level on the qualifications framework that is consistent with the descriptor of the respective level.

### C.2.9 Standard 9: Micro-qualification Developer

Information on the developer of the micro-qualification is available.

**Guideline:**

Wherever possible, the micro-qualification developer is identified.

### C.2.10 Standard 10: Review Date

The review date of the micro-qualification is appropriate and pre-defined.

**Guideline:**

The review date of the micro-qualification is pre-defined and appropriate for the subject area.

## C.3

### Accreditation of Provider Qualifications

A provider qualification is a qualification developed by a post-secondary education and training institution/provider. In most instances, this qualification is delivered by the institution itself.

Post-secondary education and training institutions/providers operating in countries that do not have national quality assurance agencies and who wish to have their qualifications accredited and registered on the PRQS may apply for accreditation. However, prior to seeking the accreditation of its qualifications, the provider must first be accredited as an institution.

#### C.3.1 Criteria and Outcomes for Provider Qualification Accreditation

An application for the accreditation of a provider qualification must meet the criteria for accreditation, which are broken into outcomes. These are shown in the Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Criteria and Outcomes for Accreditation of Provider Qualification**

Criterion	Outcomes
1. The institution is recognised and its contact details are clearly stated.	1.1 The name of institution is clearly specified.
	1.2 The institution has been accredited as a post-secondary education and training provider.
	1.3 The name and contact details of the authorised officer are provided.

Criterion	Outcomes
<p>2. The title of the qualification is appropriate and indicates the nature, level and volume of learning.</p>	<p>2.1 The title is concise, distinctive, appropriate and indicative of the content.</p> <p>2.2 The title includes a classification category (or subject).</p> <p>2.3 The total number of credits is shown.</p> <p>2.4 The total credit is the aggregate of the credits of the components stated in whole numbers only.</p> <p>2.5 The credits are shown for each level.</p> <p>2.6 The length of the qualification is clearly defined and is appropriate.</p> <p>2.7 The qualification level complies with the 'relevant qualification definitions and credit profile'.</p> <p>2.8 For a qualification offered in partnership with another organisation, the name of the Joint Awarding Partner is given.</p> <p>2.9 The organisation(s) responsible for the following functions are clearly specified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Registration of candidates.</li> <li>(b) Approval of delivery sites.</li> <li>(c) Production of assessment guide.</li> <li>(d) External verification and quality assurance.</li> <li>(e) Certification of learners.</li> </ul>
<p>3. The purpose and outcome statements appropriately reflect the need for the qualification and the nature of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes to be acquired by learners, and are aligned with a predetermined and appropriate PQF level.</p>	<p>3.1 The purpose statement addresses the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Who would the target learners be?</li> <li>(b) Why should learners study the qualification?</li> <li>(c) What industry needs would be met?</li> <li>(d) How the industry needs would be met?</li> </ul> <p>3.2 The outcome statement reflects the level assigned.</p> <p>3.3 The outcome statement describes what a holder of the qualification is expected to achieve in relation to the application of knowledge, skills and learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.4 The outcome statement is aligned with a unique level on the qualifications framework and its level descriptors.</p> <p>3.5 The entry and selection criteria and requirements (including co-requisite and/or pre-requisite requirements) are fair, reasonable and clearly stated.</p> <p>3.6 There are provisions for cross credits, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning.</p> <p>3.7 There are provisions for industry experts to be engaged in the assessment of recognition of prior (RPL)</p> <p>3.8 Entry restrictions, if any, and their reasons are clearly stated and non-discriminatory.</p> <p>3.9 Registration or licensing requirements, if applicable, are stated.</p>

Criterion	Outcomes
4. The learning outcomes and their levels and credits are appropriate and they collectively constitute a coherent and logical qualification.	4.1 The components that make up the qualification are stated.
	4.2 The components are appropriate for the level, type, credit value and outcomes of the qualification.
	4.3 The components and learning outcomes constitute a coherent programme whose purpose meets the outcome of the qualification.
	4.4 The levels of the components are appropriate in terms of the complexity of the learning outcomes and the volume of learning.
	4.5 The purpose statement of the component is appropriate and aligned with the purpose of the qualification.
	4.6 The co- and pre-requisites are clearly stated and reasonable for the nature and level of the component.
	4.7 The learning outcomes for each component are measurable.
	4.8 The levels and credits of all learning outcomes are stated.
	4.9 The total credit of each component is the aggregate of the credits of its learning outcomes stated in whole numbers only.
5. The institution has a quality strategy on the development, approval and review of the qualification and its components, resulting in the acceptability of the proposed qualification by the relevant stakeholders.	5.1 Appropriate procedures were followed in the development and approval of the qualification.
	5.2 There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the qualification.
	5.3 Details of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the qualification are provided.
	5.4 There is a reliable and valid process for the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of the qualification and its components.
	5.5 Reviewed qualifications or components have adequate transition arrangements in place to protect learner interests.
	5.6 Learners enrolled in the qualification will not be disadvantaged by the outcome of the review.
6. The delivery and learning methods for all modes of delivery for the stated learning outcomes are adequate and appropriate.	6.1 The delivery mode(s) for each site is/are stated.
	6.2 The delivery and learning methods are appropriate for the nature of the qualification, the learning outcomes and the prospective learners.
	6.3 The policy/procedures on workplace attachment/placement have provisions/arrangements for the following:
	(a) Selection of an appropriate workplace.
	(b) Selection of a suitably qualified workplace supervisor.
	(c) Provision of feedback to learners from workplace supervisors/ assessors.
	(d) Clarification of specific roles and responsibilities of learners, workplace supervisors and trainers in the duration of the attachment.
	(e) Identification of the personnel who are responsible for coordinating, carrying out and reporting assessment, moderation and evaluation of practical work-based components.
	(f) Job rotation to enable the learner to be exposed to all aspects of the job.
	(g) Safety and welfare of learners in the duration of the attachment.

Criterion	Outcomes
7. The institution has the means for ensuring that the assessment procedures and methodology are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate, for the stated learning outcomes.	7.1 The assessment plan(s) are outlined and practicable in terms of resources, personnel and timeliness.
	7.2 Assessment methodologies are stated and compatible with the nature of the qualification and learning outcomes.
	7.3 There are assessment activities for all components and learning outcomes.
	7.4 The assessment tasks are aligned with learning outcomes.
	7.5 The assessment activities are scheduled sporadically in the duration of the qualification.
	7.6 The volume and weighting of assessment tasks is appropriate and made known to learners.
	7.7 The pre-assessment meetings discuss learner preparation, assessment methodology and assessment requirements.
	7.8 The post-assessment meetings discuss learners' achievement and provisions for re-assessment and appeals.
	7.9 There are reasonable provisions on the quality assurance of the: (a) development and approval of assessment items and tools; (b) administration of assessment; and (c) grading and determination of assessment outcomes.
	7.10 There is a system for the provision of regular feedback to learners on their progress and final achievement.
	7.11 Feedback on continuous assessment is timely, constructive and developmental in nature.
	7.12 The grading system for the recognition of various levels of performance is fair and clearly documented.
	7.13 There are provisions for re-assessment, special assessment, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions.
	7.14 The conditions and requirements for re-assessment, special assessments, dealing with impaired performance and appealing assessment decisions are fair and reasonable.
	7.15 There are provisions for assessment appeal applications to be processed fairly and objectively.
7.16 For moderation: (a) there is a valid, reliable and well documented plan; (b) the criteria are clear, transparent and accessible to learners; and (c) there is a transparent process for the appointment of a suitably qualified moderator.	
8. The institution has the required physical, financial and human resources to support the sustained delivery of the qualification in all delivery modes.	8.1 The teacher to learner ratio for the qualification for the stated delivery mode(s) is acceptable.
	8.2 There is an adequate number of suitably qualified and/or experienced staff members to deliver the qualification.
	8.3 There is a sufficient level of teaching and learning resources.
	8.4 There is a detailed and acceptable acquisition plan for the replacement of existing resources and acquisition of new resources.
	8.5 Support and guidance systems accessible to learners for the qualification are suitable and sufficient.

Criterion	Outcomes
9. The requirements for successful completion are appropriate, reasonable and clearly documented.	9.1 The core courses and electives are appropriate and clearly documented.
	9.2 The requirements on duration, attendance, assessment, progression and any other special requirements are reasonable and clearly documented.
	9.3 There are provisions to inform learners about the requirements on duration, attendance, continuous assessment, progression and any other special requirements.
	9.4 The grading system and structure for the qualification are defined and clearly documented.
	9.5 Progression pathways are provided from the proposed qualification to other qualification(s).
	9.6 The range of cross credits and special requirements for admission into the qualification are clearly stated.

## C.4 Accreditation of Regional Qualifications

A regional qualification is one that is developed with input from the region, serves the needs of the region, is owned by the region, and may be delivered by the providers of the region.

Further information on regional qualifications, and their features and the development process is contained in the “Guidelines for the Development and Accreditation of Regional Qualifications”. Persons intending to develop regional qualifications and seek their accreditation with EQAP are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of the document, which contains important information on the guidelines and procedures for development, and the criteria and requirements for accreditation.

### C.4.1 Criteria and Outcomes for Accreditation of Regional Qualification

An application for the accreditation of a regional qualification must meet the criteria for accreditation, which are broken into outcomes. These are shown in the Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Criteria and Outcomes for Accreditation of Regional Qualification**

Criterion	Outcomes
1. The organisation is well established and its contact details are clearly stated.	1.1. The organisation has valid contact details and physical address.
	1.2. The organisation is legally constituted and recognised under a law of the country or equivalent.
	1.3. The type or nature of the organisation is specified.
	1.4. The organisation has clear vision and mission statements, and goals.
	1.5. Information on the owners/directors of the organisation is made available.
	1.6. The history of the organisation has been clearly documented.
	1.7. The organisation has been associated with the provision of education and training.

Criterion	Outcomes
2. The details about the qualification are appropriate and clearly stated.	2.1. The title is concise, distinctive, appropriate and indicative of the content. 2.2. The qualification has been correctly associated with a subject area. 2.3. The duration of the qualification is clearly defined and is appropriate. 2.4. The qualification level complies with the 'relevant qualification definitions and credit profile'. 2.5. The credit profile shows the various levels at which the learning outcomes are pitched and their respective credits. 2.6. The total number of credits is shown. 2.7. The total credit is the aggregate of the credits of the components stated in whole numbers only. 2.8. The qualification document contains the required information about the qualification.
3. The purpose and outcome statements appropriately reflect the need for the qualification and the nature of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes acquired by learners.	3.1. The purpose statement addresses the following questions: (a) Who would the target learners be? (b) Why should learners study the qualification? (c) What industry needs would be met? (d) How the industry needs would be met? 3.2. The outcome statement reflects the relevant level descriptor of the PQF. 3.3. The outcome statement describes what a holder of the qualification is expected to achieve in relation to the application of knowledge, skills and learning outcomes. 3.4. The outcome statement is aligned with a unique level on the qualifications framework and its level descriptors.
4. The components and learning outcomes collectively constitute a coherent and logical qualification.	4.1. The components that make up the qualification are stated. 4.2. The components are appropriate for the level, type, credit value and outcomes of the qualification. 4.3. The components and learning outcomes constitute a coherent programme whose purpose meets the outcome of the qualification. 4.4. The levels of the components are appropriate in terms of the complexity of the learning outcomes and the volume of learning. 4.5. The purpose statement of the component is appropriate and aligned with the purpose of the qualification. 4.6. The co- and pre-requisites are clearly stated and reasonable for the nature and level of the components. 4.7. The requirements for the completion of the component are reasonable and clearly documented. 4.8. The learning outcomes for each component are measurable. 4.9. The levels and credits of all learning outcomes are appropriate and clearly stated.

Criterion	Outcomes
5. The organisation has a quality strategy on the development, approval and review of the qualification and its components.	5.1. Appropriate procedures were followed in the development and approval of the qualification. 5.2. There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the qualification. 5.3. Details of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the qualification are provided. 5.4. There is a relevant and effective strategy on the periodic review of the qualification and its components. 5.5. The strategy identifies the timeline and personnel responsible for the review process. 5.6. The organisation has a quality management system that covers all its operations and for periodic internal review.
6. Information on the resources required for the delivery of the qualification is relevant and sufficient.	6.1. The teacher to learner ratio for the qualification for the stated delivery mode(s) is reasonable. 6.2. The qualification(s) and experience required of staff members to deliver the qualification are clearly stated. 6.3. The qualification(s) and experience identified constitute an appropriate skill set for the trainers of the qualification. 6.4. The list of teaching and learning resources is necessary and sufficient for the delivery of the qualification. 6.5. The support and guidance systems identified are sufficient and will assist learners in the qualification
7. The requirements for successful completion are appropriate, reasonable and clearly documented.	7.1. The core courses and electives are appropriate and clearly documented. 7.2. The requirements for completion are reasonable and clearly documented. 7.3. Progression pathways are provided from the proposed qualification to other qualification(s).



## C.5

### Accreditation of a Micro-qualification/Unit of Learning

A micro-qualification is a course of study in a particular area of a subject. It is also commonly referred to as a unit of learning or module or unit of competency or micro-qualification. The combination of a collection of units of learning would lead to a qualification.

There are 10 standards for the quality assurance of unit of learning. These are mentioned in Section C.2 of this document.

#### C.5.1 Criteria and Outcomes for Accreditation of a Component/Unit of Learning/ Micro-qualifications

An application for the accreditation of a unit of learning/micro-qualification must meet the criteria for accreditation, which are broken into outcomes. These are shown in the Table 6 below.

**Table 6: Criteria and Outcomes for Accreditation of Unit of Learning**

Criteria	Outcomes
1. The organisation is well established and its contact details are clearly stated.	1.1. The organisation has valid contact details and physical address.
	1.2. The organisation is legally constituted and recognised under a law of the country or equivalent.
	1.3. The type or nature of the organisation is specified.
	1.4. The organisation has clear vision and mission statements, and goals.
	1.5. Information on the owners/directors of the organisation is made available.
	1.6. The history of the organisation has been clearly documented.
	1.7. The organisation has been associated with the provision of education and training.
2. The details about the micro-qualifications are appropriate and clearly stated.	2.1. The title is concise, distinctive, appropriate and indicative of the content.
	2.2. The micro-qualification is correctly associated with a subject area.
	2.3. The duration of the micro-qualification is clearly defined and is appropriate.
	2.4. The level of the micro-qualification is appropriate in terms of the complexity of the learning outcomes and the volume of learning.
	2.5. The credit profile shows the various levels at which the learning outcomes are pitched and their respective credits.
	2.6. The total number of credits is shown and is stated in whole numbers only.

Criteria	Outcomes
<p>3. The purpose and outcome statements appropriately reflect the need for the micro-qualification and the type of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes acquired by learners.</p>	<p>3.1. The purpose statement addresses the following questions:            (a) Who would the target learners be?            (b) Why should learners study the micro-qualification?            (c) What industry needs would be met?            (d) How the industry needs would be met?</p> <p>3.2. The outcome statement reflects the relevant level descriptor of the PQF.</p> <p>3.3. The outcome statement describes what a holder of the micro-qualification is expected to achieve in relation to the application of knowledge, skills and learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.4. The outcome statement is aligned with a unique level on the qualifications framework and its level descriptors.</p> <p>3.5. The co- and pre-requisites are clearly stated and reasonable for the nature and level of the component.</p> <p>3.6. The requirements for the completion of the micro-qualification are reasonable and clearly documented.</p>
<p>4. The learning outcomes collectively constitute a coherent and logical micro-qualification.</p>	<p>4.1. The learning outcomes constitute a coherent component.</p> <p>4.2. The learning outcomes are measurable.</p> <p>4.3. The levels and credits of all learning outcomes are appropriate and clearly stated.</p> <p>4.4. The micro-qualification descriptor contains all relevant information about the component.</p>
<p>5. The delivery methods and assessment requirements are appropriate and reasonable.</p>	<p>5.1. The delivery and learning methods are appropriate for the nature of the component, the learning outcomes and the prospective learners.</p> <p>5.2. Assessment strategies are stated and compatible with the nature of the micro-qualification and learning outcomes.</p> <p>5.3. The assessment tasks are aligned to learning outcomes.</p> <p>5.4. The volume and weighting of assessment tasks are appropriate.</p>
<p>6. The organisation has a quality strategy on the development, approval and review of the micro-qualification.</p>	<p>6.1. Appropriate procedures were followed in the development and approval of the micro-qualification.</p> <p>6.2. There is evidence of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the component.</p> <p>6.3. Details of stakeholder involvement in the development and approval of the micro-qualification are provided.</p> <p>6.4. There is a relevant and effective strategy on the periodic review of the micro-qualification.</p> <p>6.5. The strategy identifies the timeline and personnel responsible for the review process.</p>
<p>7. Information on the resources required for the delivery of the micro-qualification is relevant and sufficient.</p>	<p>7.1. The teacher to learner ratio for the component for the stated delivery mode(s) is reasonable.</p> <p>7.2. The qualification(s) and experience required of staff members to deliver the micro-qualification are clearly stated.</p> <p>7.3. The qualification(s) and experience identified constitute an appropriate skill set for the trainers of the micro-qualification.</p> <p>7.4. The teaching and learning resources are necessary and sufficient for the delivery of the micro-qualification.</p>

Criteria		Outcomes	
8.	The requirements for successful completion are appropriate, reasonable and clearly documented.	8.1.	The requirements for completion are reasonable and clearly documented.
		8.2.	Progression pathways from the proposed micro-qualification to others are clearly stated.
9.	The plan on the development of other micro-qualifications and their bundling into an appropriate qualification is reasonable.	9.1.	There is a plan to develop other micro-qualifications that could collectively be bundled into a qualification.
		9.2.	The proposed micro-qualification and those identified for development will constitute a coherent qualification.

## PART D: Registration of Qualifications on PRQS

The Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards (PRQS) is the official and public regional database of recognised qualifications and micro-qualifications, competent accrediting agencies, recognised education and training institutions, regional occupational standards and professional workers within Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).

The database enhances and supports regional cooperation in facilitating the recognition of qualifications and learning, and supporting the mobility of the region's learners and labour force. The PRQS also facilitates informed decisions and choices about comparable and recognised qualifications, accrediting agencies, education and training institutions, professional status of workers, and regional occupational standards in PICTs.

The PRQS contains three categories of qualifications. These are as follows:

- (a) Regional qualifications.
- (b) Provider qualifications from institutions that do not have national agencies.
- (c) Qualifications accredited by national agencies.

For qualifications from categories (a) and (b) to be registered on the PRQS, these first have to be accredited by EQAP. The processes on the accreditation of provider and regional qualifications are discussed in Section C of this manual. For registration of category (c) qualifications on the PRQS, national agencies would need to apply in writing.

### D.1 Criteria for Registration of Qualification on PRQS

There are 10 criteria for registration of a qualification on the PRQS, as shown below:

<b>Criterion 1:</b>	The title is appropriate and complies with the title definitions.
<b>Criterion 2:</b>	The stated purpose is related to its identified needs.
<b>Criterion 3:</b>	The outcome for the whole qualification reflects the stated purpose and has a coherent structure.

<b>Criterion 4:</b>	The completion rules are clear and unambiguous.
<b>Criterion 5:</b>	The qualification level is appropriate.
<b>Criterion 6:</b>	The credit value is appropriate and conforms to the PQF qualification definition types and credit profile.
<b>Criterion 7:</b>	The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) qualification level is aligned with the appropriate PQF qualification level.
<b>Criterion 8:</b>	The entry requirements and pre-requisite qualifications are stated.
<b>Criterion 9:</b>	The entry requirements are appropriate for the level of the qualification.
<b>Criterion 10:</b>	The requirements for the award of the qualification are very clearly stated and are appropriate for the level.

An application for the registration of a qualification would be evaluated against the criteria stated above. Due consideration would also be given to the following key areas:

- (a) The qualification submitted was:
  - (i) delivered and awarded by an institution that has been accredited by and registered with a recognised accrediting agency; and
  - (ii) accredited by an accrediting agency and added to its register.
  
- (b) The institution that awards the qualification is:
  - (i) recognised by all its stakeholders;
  - (ii) quality assured and registered with a reputable accrediting agency; and
  - (iii) committed to creating a culture of quality and continuous improvement.
  
- (c) The accrediting agency's:
  - (i) quality assurance strategy has been referenced against the PQAF and the relationship has been confirmed;
  - (ii) quality assurance strategy is rigorously implemented, objective, and effective in its administration;
  - (iii) qualifications framework (where relevant) has been referenced against the PQF and the alignment between each qualification level confirmed;
  - (iv) promise to create a culture of quality and continuous improvement is adhered to; and
  - (v) willingness to conform to EQAP's external quality assurance.

## **PART E:**

# **Recognition of Foreign Qualifications**

The recognition of a foreign qualification is a process for determining the validity and authenticity of a qualification obtained by an individual from an institution that is registered and is operating outside the PICTs.

The need to recognise a qualification may arise under the following circumstances:

- (a) Application for admission into an educational or training institution: when the validation of a qualification that the applicant possesses qualifies him/her to be considered for entry into the programme applied for.
- (b) Application for a vacancy: when a potential employer needs to validate the academic status of an applicant.
- (c) Application for migration.

### **E.1**

## **Criteria for Recognition of Foreign Qualification**

The following information would be considered when determining the outcome of an application for the recognition of a foreign qualification:

- (a) Status of the institution: whether the institution that awarded the qualification has been accredited as a provider.
- (b) Status of the qualification: whether the qualification has been accredited.
- (c) The reason for seeking recognition of the qualification.
- (d) The similarity between the descriptors of the level at which the qualification is placed on its national qualification framework and the relevant PQF level descriptors.

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