



Education Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority

# Assessment Quality Partner Quality Assurance Policy

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## 1. Policy Background

### 1.1 Purpose of this Policy

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The purpose of this Accreditation of Assessment Centre’s and Sites Policy” is to inform all constituents, skills development providers, and ETDQA staff of the policy and principles of ETDP SETA Quality Assurance.

The policy applies to all processes conducted by ETDP SETA staff related to the accreditation of assessment centres and registration of assessment sites for specific NQF registered occupational qualifications within the accreditation scope of the ETDP SETA as an AQP.

The aim of this policy is to

- establish legal accountability for the quality of assessment practices culminating in the award of occupational qualifications which the ETDP SETA has been delegated functionality as an AQP;
- ensure that bodies holding legal accountability for providing assessment practices in the education, training and development (ETD) sector have the competence and capacity to do so at the level of quality required for contributing to the achievement of national strategic human resource development and skills development goals;
- ensure that ETDP SETA processes related to the accreditation of assessment centres and registration of assessment sites in the ETD sector is performed economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- ensure that ETDP SETA processes related to the accreditation of assessment centre and registration of assessment sites in the ETD sector comply with the relevant legal requirements referred to in section 1.2 below.

## 1.2 Legal Base of this Policy

This policy is based on the provisions for accreditation of assessment centres in QCTO Policy for Accreditation of Assessment Centres, 2013. Furthermore, this policy is based on the delegate function to the ETDP SETA by QCTO.

Apart from the above legal basis for the ETDP SETA Assessment Centre Accreditation Policy, aspects of the provision of assessment practices within education and training sub-sectors are also governed by legislation and associated regulations relevant to the specific sub-sector. As assessment centres have to adhere to all requirements of such relevant legislation and regulations, this policy does not intend to replace such legislation. The onus remains with the assessment centres to ensure that compliance to all relevant acts is maintained.

## 1.3 Terminology used in this Policy

The terminology used in this policy document assumes the following meaning and interpretation<sup>1</sup>:

No	Term	Description
1	<b>Accreditation</b>	"accreditation" means the certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfill a particular function in the quality assurance system.
2	<b>Constituent</b>	"constituent" means belonging to the defined or delegated constituency of an organization or body referred to in these regulations;
3	<b>De-accreditation</b>	"De-accreditation" means the suspension of certification rights, and eventual removal of accreditation, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution in response to the findings of a quality audit against the provision and requirements of the AQP
4	<b>AQP</b>	"A body delegated by the QCTO to manage and coordinate the external

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<sup>1</sup> ETQA Regulations 1127, SAQA Criteria and Guidelines for providers, Criteria and guidelines for Monitoring and Auditing

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No	Term	Description
		integrated summative assessments of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications
5	<b>External Moderation</b>	Audit at an assessment level, the results of assessment against unit standards and validating that internal moderation is conducted in a fair, valid, reliable and practicable manner that is free of all bias and discrimination.
6	<b>Monitoring</b>	Monitoring means the formal process of determining compliance of provider policies, systems, processes and administrative record keeping in support of quality of provision, assessment and moderation.
7	<b>Quality Assurance</b>	"quality assurance" means the process of ensuring that the degree of excellence specified is achieved;
8	<b>Re-accreditation</b>	"Re-accreditation" means the renewal of certification, usually for a particular period of time, of a person, a body or an institution as having the capacity to fulfill a particular function in the quality assurance system.
9	<b>QCTO</b>	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations as established in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act of 2008
10	<b>Verification</b>	Audit at a systems level, the results of external moderation of assessments against unit standards is conducted in a fair, valid, reliable and practicable manner that is free of all bias and discrimination conducted by an external moderator.

### 1.4 Supporting Resources to this Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following standard documents and templates provided by the QCTO

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2011;
- Policy on Accreditation of Assessment Centres, 2013;
- Assessment Quality Partner, Criteria and Guidelines, 2013 and;
- Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy, 2014.

## 1.5 Principles of this Policy

The ETDP SETA adheres to the Assessment Quality Partner Criteria and Guidelines as determined by QCTO, and adopts the following guiding principles in respect of Assessment Centre Accreditation.

No	Principle	Description
1	Transparent and equitable	The accreditation process will be open, equitable, transparent and as simple as possible while at the same time being efficient and cost effective
2	Quality and continuous improvement	The accreditation process is focused on determining the potential for quality of provision, continuous improvement and best practice in providers
3	Procedural and substantive fairness	The accreditation process will follow be conducted in a procedurally fair manner, and accreditation decisions will be based on substantively fair interpretation of evidence.

## 2. Accreditation

### 2.1 Policy Statement

The ETDP SETA shall recommend to QCTO the accreditation of an Assessment Centres on the following conditions that:

- The Assessment Centre has applied for accreditation in the formal process of accreditation as outlined by the ETDP SETA;
- The Assessment Centre shares a primary focus of provision with the ETDP SETA in terms of specific NQF registered occupational qualifications.

### 2.2. Accreditation Requirements

The entity seeking accreditation as an assessment centre must:

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- be a juristic person registered or established in terms of South African law;
- have a valid tax clearance certificate issued by the South African Revenue Service if applicable;
- have a suitable and compliant MIS in accordance with the ETDP SETA specifications, which are aligned to QCTO;
- be safe, secure and accessible to candidates;
- meet the relevant standards for occupational health and safety;
- have the required physical resources, specified by the ETDP SETA to assess learners' competence regarding the occupational qualification or part qualification;
- have appropriately qualified human resources as specified by the ETDP SETA; and
- make provision for any other requirements specified for the relevant trade, occupational qualification or part qualification

### 2.3 Accreditation Status

Where the Assessment Centre meets all the assessment centre accreditation criteria, the Assessment Centre will be recommended to QCTO for accreditation:

- for a period of 5 years from the date the QCTO grants accreditation; or
- until de-registration of the occupational qualification; or
- until de-accreditation is recommended to QCTO by the ETDP SETA

### 2.4. Extension of Accreditation Scope

In the even an accredited assessment centre wants to increase its scope accreditation may do so by applying to the ETDP SETA for conducting integrated external summative assessments for additional occupational qualifications or part qualifications.

All application received for the extension of an accreditation scope of an assessment centre must comply with all the requirements as outlines under 2.2 above.

## 2.5. Accreditation contract

The Assessment Centre will be required to accept the ETDP SETA terms of reference for maintaining an accreditation status. The acceptance by the Assessment Centre and the signing of the Assessment Centre accepted terms of reference for maintain accreditation will constitute the Accreditation Contract between the ETDP SETA and the Assessment Centre.

## 2.6 De-accreditation

An accredited Assessment Centre may be recommended to QCTO for de-accredited by the ETDP SETA if it is of the opinion that the Assessment Centre has failed to perform its functions satisfactorily as per the accreditation contract.

Recommendation to QCTO for the withdrawal of an accreditation status will apply where an assessment centre fails to comply with the relevant ETDP SETA requirements including but not limited to

- sufficient evidence which indicates that the assessment centre has been involved in gross irregularities or sub-standard practice
- sufficient evidence of monitoring of assessment center's practices, which presents documented evidence of such sub-standard practice
- assessment centre has been provided with a period of remediation to correct such sub-standard practice, and has failed to do so satisfactorily
- poor record keeping and reporting on assessments;
- poor internal moderation; and
- ineffective reporting to the ETDP SETA

## 2.7. Irregularities

In accordance with the QCTO Policy for Accreditation of Assessment Centres, the ETDP SETA expect an Assessment Centre to address and report irregularities involving external

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integrated summative assessment practices, which include, but are not limited to the following:

- a candidate cheating, copying or accessing assessment instruments in advance;
- a candidate bribing, blackmailing, threatening or harassing an assessor or others involved in the assessment process; and
- any party (leaners, assessor, moderator, invigilator etc.) that falsifies documents or evidence for access before or during an assessment session.

## 3. Monitoring

### 3.1 Policy Statement

In terms of the QCTO Policy for Accreditation of Assessment Centres, the ETDP SETA shall monitor the performance of accredited assessment centres.

The ETDP SETA therefore recognizes its fundamental right and obligation to conduct monitoring Assessment Centres in relation to specific occupational qualifications.

The ETDP SETA shall monitor all Assessment Centre within its scope for quality of provision, assessment and moderation.

### 3.2 Principles of Monitoring

Monitoring, will be done on the foundation of establishing the following embedded principles:

No	Principle
1	Policy statement: The organization's aims, objectives and purposes are spelt out.
2	QMS: Outline procedures that implement quality management.
3	Review mechanisms: Outline the ways in which the implementation of policies would be monitored
4	Irregularities: There are mechanisms in place to manage all irregularities and report them timeously.

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5	Staff policies: Outline policies and procedures for staff selection, appraisal and development
6	Learner policies: Policies and procedures for the selection of learners are outlined, and learners are given guidance and support.
7	Assessment policies: Outline policies and procedures for forms of assessments that are used and how they are managed.
8	Management system and policies: Indicate the financial, administrative and physical structures and resources of the organization, as well as procedures of accountability within the organization.

The ETDP SETA shall monitor the Assessment Centres for one, or a combination, of the following reasons.

To **collect evidence** of compliance regarding:

1. The systems put in place by an Assessment Centre to assure the quality of its services;
2. The learner support processes in preparation for an assessment session;
3. The assessment center's capacity and competence in relation to the qualifications it is accredited for to conduct assessment against;
4. The moderation practices undertaken by the assessment centres in support of continuous improvement and best practice achievement.
5. What has been learned, achieved, or is already known, through assessing the learner, including RPL practices

### 3.3 Scope of Monitoring

#### Points of Monitoring

The ETDP SETA shall perform monitoring for specific purposes at appropriate intervals.

No	Type of Quality Audit	Purpose of Quality Audit	Interval of Quality Audit
1	Accreditation Review	Determine potential of Assessment Centres for quality of provision of assessment practices, and to accredit Assessment Centres accordingly.	Before assessment is undertaken

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No	Type of Quality Audit	Purpose of Quality Audit	Interval of Quality Audit
2	Monitoring Review	Determine quality of learner support before and during assessment	During before, during and after assessments
3	Monitoring	Accreditation maintenance	annually
4	External Moderation	Determine quality of assessment and moderation practices for certification approval purposes	After assessment, on request of certification
5	Verification	Determine sustainability and credibility of Assessment Centres practices for re-accreditation or accreditation continuance	Before re-accreditation or as part of the de-accreditation process

### Scope of the Quality Monitoring

The ETDP SETA reserves the right to monitor any part of or all of the following elements related to the Assessment Centre:

- Organizational capacity
- Quality Management Systems
- Resources (financial, administrative, human or physical)
- Assessment practices
- Moderation practices
- Administrative support and infra-structure
- Discrepancies / complaints / appeals
- Quality of provision

### 3.4 Outcome of Monitoring

Should a monitoring Intervention show evidence of sub-standard assessment practices, a variety of outcomes may be recommended by the monitor/ verifiers / external moderators, depending on the severity of the **non-compliance / non-conformance**:

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No	Non-compliance	Example	Outcome
1	<b>Compliance</b> <b>Rating 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All QMS and AQP policies &amp; practices comply to / exceed AQP criteria as stated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of continuation of practices</li> </ul>
2	<b>Minor</b> <b>Rating 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and practices are in place, but selected areas need improvement</li> <li>Assessment show evidence of alignment and good practice, but does not meet QCTO criteria</li> <li>Self assessment practices are insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conditional approval of continuation of practices</li> <li>Development Plan</li> </ul>
3	<b>Medium</b> <b>Rating 2 or 3</b>	Insufficient evidence of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sound assessment evidence and practices,</li> <li>QMS policy and practice implementation</li> <li>Quality provision of assessment practices and learner support</li> <li>Insufficient moderation practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspension</li> <li>Sample re-assessment</li> <li>External Moderation</li> <li>Conditional Compliance Plan</li> </ul>
4	<b>Major</b> <b>Rating 1 or 0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obvious disregard to QCTO criteria for quality provision of assessment practices,</li> <li>No evidence of quality assessment practices,</li> <li>QMS practices insufficient in all ETD areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner Salvage – assessment</li> <li>De-accreditation recommended to QCTO</li> </ul>

## 4. Appeals

### 4.1 Policy Statement

All complaints and appeals against accreditation recommendation, monitoring findings or irregularities must be directed to the AQP.

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AQP recognizes the right of any constituent member who has a vested interest in the manner in which the AQP conducts its business to an appeal, and shall institute operational procedures to this effect.

<b>Constituent Right</b>	<b>Constituent Duty</b>
Any constituent has <b>rights of appeal against decisions</b> made by the AQP.	Any appeal that is lodged against a decision of the ETDP SETA must be lodged <b>within the framework of this policy</b> .
<b>AQP Right</b>	<b>AQP Duty</b>
Any decision taken by the AQP is considered <b>legally binding</b> until such time that the Appeals Committee recommends an alternative action. Such alternative action will <b>not be applicable in retrospect</b> , but only from <b>that point forward</b>	A decision made by the Appeals Committee shall be accepted by the AQP, until such decision is overturned by an appeal against the decision.

### 4.2 Reasons for Appeal

The Appeals Policy is applicable to any **disputes resulting** out of:

- Accreditation of Assessment Centres,
- Registration of assessors and/or moderators
- Monitoring of Assessment Centres,
- Recommendation for Certification of learners by QCTO.

An Assessment Centre may access the AQP Appeals Procedure should the organization be dissatisfied with any of the following circumstances:

- QAC decision on the recommendation to QCTO for no accreditation of an Assessment Centre
- Outcomes of an external moderation visit
- Outcome of a monitoring visit
- Evidence Requirements

## 4.3 Direction of Appeal

An organization wishing to appeal against the decision of the AQP may follow the **Appeals Escalation Process** by:

- Make a **written submission** to the **AQP** to that effect together with reasons for the appeal within **1 calendar month** of such decision being made

An organization wishing to appeal against the Appeals Decision of the AQP may thereafter:

- Make a **written submission** to the **Quality Council for Trades and Occupations** (QCTO) to that effect together with reasons for the appeal within **two calendar months of such decision** being made

## 4.4 Appeals Decision

Any Appeal Hearing will result in a clear **Appeals Decision** made by the Appeals Committee

No	Decision	Implication
1	Appeal upheld	Original decision causing the appeal is overturned
2	Appeal failed	Original decision causing the appeal is upheld

Should the applicant's appeal against the decision of the AQP be upheld, then the AQP shall:

- Amend such decisions as was the original cause for appeal
- Advise all relevant parties of such decision
- Document the revised decision electronically and physically

with effect from **that date forward**, and **not in retrospect** from the time of the decision.

## 4.5 The Appeals Committee

### Nature of the Committee

- A neutral Appeals Committee of no more than four people will be established

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- Members of the Appeals Committee will be selected from the AQP and Quality Assurance Committee Members:
- At the discretion of the Quality Assurance Committee,
- from neutral parties that have a defined area of Subject Matter
- based on expertise relating to the Appeal
- selected from neutral parties and stakeholders

### **Duties of the Appeals Committee**

- The appeals committee will be responsible for reviewing and/or hearing the evidence of the Applicant and relevant AQP person
- Based on the evidence heard the Appeals Committee will make a final and binding decision.
- Should the party lodging the appeal (Applicant) be required to be present at the Appeals Evaluation to state his case or to act as witness to an appeal, he/she will be notified thereof. AQPs
- Unless otherwise decided at AQP discretion, the onus of cost will be with the Applicant.

## **5. Policy Maintenance**

### **5.1 Policy Statement**

The AQP Unit is responsible and accountable for managing and overseeing the design, approval, implementation, maintenance, review and improvement of the AQP Assessment Centre Accreditation Policy, processes, and administrative support according to the specific policy set out below.

All approved assessment accreditation procedures shall be clearly and accurately documented in a Standard Operating Procedure document and issued to AQP staff performing the functions for the accreditation of assessment centres.

The Assessment Centre Accreditation Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis on the following basis:

- Achievement of quality objectives and performance indicators

- Strategic, sectoral and legislative requirements

### **5.2 Quality Objectives and Quality Indicators of this Policy**

The AQP shall annually, after consultation with its constituent stakeholders:

- determine measurable quality objectives for all provider accreditation functions aimed at ensuring strategic alignment with skills development objectives at national and sector levels, and
- identify performance indicators in terms of effectiveness, economy and efficiency for achieving the quality objectives at organizational, sector and national levels.
- communicate and explain the approved quality objectives and performance indicators clearly to relevant staff and stakeholders.

### **5.3 Costing of Policy Implementation**

The AQP undertakes to conduct a review of the cost of implementation of the Accreditation Policy on an annual basis.

Elements of cost that will be considered include, but is not limited to the following:

- AQP staff – percentage of time spent on implementation
- External moderators/ Monitors fees
- Logistics – travel, accommodation and administration
- Verification Costs