


	QAP	GUIDELINES
	E-LEARNING	



## E-LEARNING GUIDELINES

DOCUMENT REF:	QAP/E-L/01
VERSION NO:	01/2020
OWNER:	ETQA MANAGER
APPROVED BY:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DATE APPROVED:	08 July 2020
EFFECTIVE DATE	08 July 2020


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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Description
<b>ETDP</b>	Education and Development Training Practitioners
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>NLRD</b>	National Learner Records Database
<b>PSETA</b>	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority
<b>QAP</b>	Quality Assurance Partner
<b>QCTO</b>	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management System
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>SDA</b>	Skills Development Act
<b>SETA</b>	Sector Education and Training Authority
<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement
<b>SMS</b>	SETA Management System
<b>SDP</b>	Skills Development Provider
<b>OQSF</b>	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework

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**DEFINITIONS**

Term	Description
<b>Accreditation</b>	The certification, usually for a particular period, of a person, a body or an institution having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system.
<b>Assessment</b>	The process of collecting evidence of learners' work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
<b>Assessor</b>	Means a person registered by the QAP for the purposes of conducting external assessment for occupational qualifications.
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Refers to a set of conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding to organisation(s) that are accredited by PSETA.
<b>E-assessment</b>	E-assessment is the use of electronic systems for the development, operation and delivery of accredited qualification assessment or the collection of performance evidence, which contributes to the awarding of a unit or an accredited qualification.
<b>E-Learning</b>	Various forms of electronic learning where technology is used to deliver part, or all of a course content, whether it is within a school or in a distance learning environment.
<b>Extension of Scope</b>	Means an addition of qualification(s) and/or unit standards falling with the scope of the PSETA, granted after approval of the initial application
<b>Full circle of Training</b>	Means the Provider has recruited, registered learners through PSETA SMS leading to the NLRD compliance, trained, assessed, moderated, verified learner assessments through PSETA External Moderation process and certified learners' achievements.
<b>Guideline</b>	Means a general rule, principle, piece of advice or a statement that aims to streamline processes according to a set routine or sound practice.
<b>Moderator</b>	Means a person, who has achieved competence against moderator standard and is registered with ETDP SETA as a qualified moderator. The PSETA constituent moderator is the latter who is registered to moderate against the PSETA part or full qualifications in line with the PSETA assessment policy
<b>Organisation</b>	Refers to legally established entities which may include but not limited to, national and provincial government departments and agencies, institution/organisation, company, centre, collaborative partnership, or consultancy established in line with relevant statutory body requirements and currently in good standing.
<b>Part qualification</b>	Means an assessed unit of learning that is registered on the NQF as a part qualification.
<b>Primary Accreditation</b>	Means a body accredited to deliver learning programmes which culminate in specified NQF qualifications and or part qualification which falls within the PSETA scope.

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Primary focus</b>	Means that activity or objective within the sector upon which an organization or body concentrates its efforts.
<b>Programme Approval</b>	Means secondary accreditation of organisations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process signed between SETAs. A provider accredited by another QAP can apply for extension of scope on unit standard/s or qualification/s falling within the primary focus of another QAP. The Provider is required to notify the primary QAP of the intention to extend scope. The primary QAP will on behalf of the Provider liaise with the secondary QAP to take the process forward.
<b>Quality Assurance Partner</b>	means a body delegated by the QCTO responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the monitoring and auditing of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1) (b) (i) of the SAQA Act.
<b>Quality Management System</b>	Means the combination of policy, processes and procedures used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved.
<b>Registered Qualifications</b>	Means qualifications registered on the NQF.
<b>Scope of Accreditation</b>	Means the list of qualification(s) and/or part qualification(s) for which a body is accredited for a defined purpose.
<b>Secondary accreditation</b>	Means a body accredited with another SETA and is approved by the PSETA to deliver learning programmes which culminate in specified NQF qualifications and or part qualifications that fall within the PSETA scope.
<b>Skills Development Provider</b>	Means a provider of occupational learning accredited by the QAP as delegated by the QCTO
<b>Skills Development Provider Applicant</b>	Means a provider seeking accreditation or programme approval of occupational learning accredited by the QAP as delegated by the QCTO

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Quality Council for Trades Occupations (QCTO) has in terms of Section 26I (2) of the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA) as amended, and the Council's delegation policy, delegated the Quality Assurance Partner (QAP) functions to the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA).
- 1.2 The PSETA, as one of the QAPs delegated to carry out the quality assurance function of promoting quality learning in the Public Service Sector, shall take into consideration the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008 and related legislation promulgated for this mandate.
- 1.3 The advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and more recently the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, has necessitated the need to fast track the use of alternative methods of provision of learning.
- 1.4 As the custodian of qualifications and trades on the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF), the QCTO has taken the decision to relax regulations around the mode of delivery for qualifications on this sub-framework. Such relaxations depends on the "nature" of the qualification (QCTO Covid-19 Memorandum 1 Opening Up of E-Learning on the OQSF).
- 1.5 SETAs and Professional Bodies have been urged by the QCTO to urgently consider and implement sectoral arrangements around the mode of delivery, assessment and other qualification requirements and to urgently communicate these with Skills Development Providers (SDPs).
- 1.6 SDPs must take due regard of any other national restrictions that apply to them or their specific qualifications regarding the national lockdown.

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1. The purpose of this document is to provide clear guidelines regarding educational provision leading to an award or part of an award which is delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through means which generally do not require the learners to attend particular classes or events at particular times and particular locations.
- 2.2. This includes practices such as e-learning, distance learning, blended learning, flexible learning, instructor led training and the use of web-based materials to supplement classroom-based learning.
- 2.3. The Guidelines outlines the requirements that the PSETA expects should be met by SDPs when delivering this educational provision.
- 2.4. The requirements of this Guidelines are in addition to the normal requirements on SDPs, as detailed through the accreditation process.

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- 2.5. A developmental and advisory approach shall be adopted when gaps are identified and much needed support shall be provided to SDPs.
- 2.6. The PSETA shall endorse learner achievements in line with this Guideline document.

### **3. LINK TO POLICIES**

This Guideline document shall be read in conjunction with the PSETA Accreditation, Certification, External Moderation, Learning Programme Evaluation, Management of Assessment, Monitoring, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Appeals Policies.

### **4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES**

- 4.1. NQF Act 67 of 2008.
- 4.2. Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998, as amended
- 4.3. Skills Development Levies Act, 9 of 1999
- 4.4. Service Level Agreement on Delegated Functions between the PSETA and the QCTO
- 4.5. National Skills Development Plan
- 4.6. QCTO General principles and minimum requirements on e-assessment of qualifications and part qualifications on the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF).
- 4.7. QCTO Memorandum 1- COVID-19 Crisis – Opening up of E-Learning on the OQSF.
- 4.8. Summary of Guidelines on E-Learning and E-Assessment on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) Applicable during the National COVID-19 Lockdown.

### **5. GUIDELINES**

- 5.1. PSETA shall allow SDPs to implement blended e-learning as a pilot phase, in line with the country's lockdown prescripts.
- 5.2. SDPs shall ensure that the quality of learning is not compromised when implementing e-learning as a mode of learning delivery.
- 5.3. SDPs shall be accountable for the health and safety of learners and shall not expose learners to possible infections by the COVID-19 Virus, when implementing the practical and workplace learning, during the lockdown period.
- 5.4. SDPs shall present an e-learning model/software that accommodates large files for online verification and other files, when required.
- 5.5. The e-learning software shall have a backup system to prevent system crashing and possible hacking.
- 5.6. The e-learning model shall be aligned with the content of the learning materials as approved by the PSETA and or the relevant Statutory/Professional body.

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## 6. SDP MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1. In order for the PSETA to award approval for an SDP to implement e-learning, the following minimum requirements must be met:
- i. The SDP must be already accredited with the PSETA. This includes secondary SDPs with programme approval status.
  - ii. The SDP must provide details of the platform to be used for e-learning.
  - iii. The SDP applicant shall produce proof of ownership or a duly Service Level Agreement for an e-learning platform.
  - iv. The SDP must submit a comprehensive and signed E-Learning Policy.
    - a. This policy must detail how learners will be enrolled on the e-learning platform and documentation that would need to be submitted to the PSETA for enrolment on the SETA MIS.
    - b. Access to the portal must also be addressed in terms of security and authenticity.
    - c. It should also outline the guidance and continued support that will be offered to learners. This could be technical or academic support.
    - d. It is also critical that different kinds of learning styles are taken into consideration to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.
  - v. The SDP must provide evidence of PSETA registered constituent ETD Practitioners i.e. Assessors, and Moderators bearing the scope or exceeding that of the applicant SDP;
  - vi. The SDP must indicate how learners will get access to the learning material
- 6.2. The SDP must indicate in detail the support that will be provided to learners.

## 7. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF E-ASSESSMENT

In order for an e-assessment system to have credibility, there are generic principles of assessment that should be upheld, over and above the specific principles that are germane to electronically supported assessment systems. Assessment Quality Partners must adhere to these general principles of assessment in order to ensure that they implement credible systems.

- 7.1. Validity of e- assessment: Assessment Quality Partners should ensure that:
- i. Students who pass the programme demonstrate the graduate competences indicated in the purpose and exit level outcomes of the programme.
  - ii. Where relevant, practical competences are adequately assessed
  - iii. Systems have been put in place to ensure reliability, rigor and security of the e-assessment system for remote students
  - iv. Assessment activities are sufficiently varied for the programme purpose and level and the diversity of its student body. Appropriate constructs as covered in the relevant courses are adequately covered in the assessment.

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- v. Where students submit assessment individually by electronic means from homes or workplaces, and not from a recognized assessment centre, the programme has the necessary security systems for electronic assessment.
- vi. Programmes delivered exclusively or mainly through electronic learning methods do not narrow the range of assessment to the assessment of factual knowledge (which is most easily assessed), rather than the full range of outcomes and depth of knowledge required for the particular programme of study. In technology supported distance education delivery, there is the danger of limiting assessment tasks to low level cognitive skills (e.g. simple multiple choice questions [MCQs] that can be computer-marked) at the expense of high level skills (usually requiring more open-ended written and practical assignments) that enhance deep and critical engagement with concepts. Higher order thinking skills like application, analyses, evaluation and creation should be covered in the assessment.
- vii. There is evidence of staff development to familiarize academic staff with online assessment strategies that take high level cognitive skills into account thereby ensuring credible online assessment.

## 7.2. Management of e-assessment

- i. There is evidence that the assessment body understands the importance of feedback on formative assessment in e-learning.
- ii. There is evidence of an assessment management system to ensure that feedback on assessment is confidential and reaches the right students timeously. Systems are in place to communicate feedback and results quickly, efficiently and securely to a distributed student body.
- iii. Adequate systems to guarantee the integrity and security of the assessment system and the authenticity of student submissions (including means to discourage plagiarism from online sources) are in place.
- iv. E-assessment systems are tested to ensure proper functionality and any shortcomings identified are fully addressed prior to full implementation.
- v. There is regular monitoring and checking of the smooth functioning of e-assessment systems to make sure that the assessment system is not compromised in any way.
- vi. The e-assessment body has enough competent staff to address any technical problems students face with the assessment system to ensure the assessment process runs smoothly and does not in any way disadvantage the student.
- vii. The assessment body does not pass on unnecessary costs to students.
- viii. There is a policy on external moderation of the e-assessment and the policy is effectively implemented.

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- ix. External moderation reports are used to improve the various aspects of the e-assessment process, like the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance, and the reliability of the marking process.
- x. Assessment partners must have effective quality assurance measures in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment data.
- xi. E –assessment systems must have capacity to generate key information like system error reports and data that demonstrates regulatory compliance.
- xii. Where Assessment Partners enter into partnership arrangements with any other provider, formal service level agreements with clearly stated roles and responsibilities must be signed.

7.3. Teaching/Learning value of e-assessment

- i. The central role of formative assessment and feedback in online learning is formally recognized and there is evidence of an appropriate number and variety of formative assessment tasks, and mechanisms for the monitoring and quality assurance of feedback and minimum turn-around time are in place.
- ii. Accurate and reliable records of student e-assessment are kept and can easily be retrieved as when there is need.
- iii. The potential of the electronic environment for the use of ongoing formative assessment of different kinds (self-, peer- and tutor assessment) is exploited appropriately.

7.4. User-friendliness of e-assessment System

- i. The rules and regulations governing assessment are published and clearly communicated to students and relevant stakeholders.
- ii. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that these rules are widely adhered to.
- iii. Breaches of assessment regulations are dealt with effectively and timeously.
- iv. Students are provided with information and guidance on their rights and responsibilities regarding e-assessment processes (for example, definitions and regulations on plagiarism, penalties, terms of appeal, supplementary examinations, etc.).
- v. Student appeals procedures are explicit, fair and effective.
- vi. There are clear and consistent published guidelines/regulations for:
  - a. Marking and grading of results.
  - b. Aggregation of marks and grades.
  - c. Progression and final awards.
  - d. Credit allocation and articulation.
- vii. As much as possible, e-assessment systems should operate on inclusive principles and therefore accommodate learners with various forms of physical challenges.

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- viii. E-assessment systems are designed in such a way that they are easy for learners to navigate. Assessment partners should ensure that learners do not spend much time grappling with system issues instead of with the content of the assessment.
- ix. Mechanisms are in place to support learners who are less competent in working with technologies so they can gain the necessary skills and gain sufficient confidence in working with the technology; and
- x. Ensure that there is fair and equal treatment of all undertaking e-assessment, irrespective of geographical location, time of assessment and course.

#### 7.5. Use of e-portfolios for assessment

- i. In addition to regulatory principles, e-portfolio systems should store and maintain performance evidence for access by all required parties securely, meet the evidence needs for a range of qualification types and enable learners to move their portfolios from one centre to another.
- ii. E-portfolio systems must have the capabilities to store and maintain a variety of forms of performance evidence or coursework for secure access by the learner, assessors, verifiers and moderators based on a robust authentication process.
- iii. As far as is practicable, awarding bodies must give due consideration to the need to support a degree of inter-operability in the e-portfolio systems that they develop or endorse to enable learners to move their portfolios from one centre to another.
- iv. 100% assessments shall be conducted for e-learning learner assessments
- v. 50% moderations shall be conducted for e-learning learner assessments.

## 8. SDPS RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENTS

### 8.1. SDPs should ensure learners have access to:

- i. information that sets out the respective responsibilities of institution for the delivery of the programme, module, or element of study;
- ii. module descriptors, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the module(s);
- iii. A clear schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.

### 8.2. SDPs should ensure that learners can be confident that:

- i. study materials, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet the expectations of the institution in respect of the quality of teaching and learning-support material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards;
- ii. The provision is subject to regular monitoring and periodic review process.

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- 8.3. SDPs should ensure that:
- i. The platform is able to capture and keep records of learner engagements. This is particularly important to ensure notional hours are accounted for.
  - ii. Sufficient learning activities are available
  - iii. Learners have access to an online tutor
- 8.4. The SDPs shall provide support and guidance to learners by using electronic systems.
- 8.5. The PSETA registered Assessors as Facilitators of learning, shall provide ongoing feedback to learners after an activity has been completed.
- 8.6. SDPs shall ensure that the practical and workplace components of learning are completed by learners in line with the Directions issued by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation - Directions for reopening of institutions offering qualifications registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF), from 01 June 2020, issued in Government Gazette No. 43486, of 29 June 2020.
- 8.7. The PSETA registered Assessors and Moderators shall assess and moderate learner assessments at the end of the programme and compile assessment and moderation reports in line with the principles of assessments.
- 8.8. SDPs shall ensure that e-assessment tools have a combination of application, analysis, case studies, evaluation and creation type questions.
- 8.9. The Learner matrix, certified ID copies, Assessment and Moderation reports shall be submitted to the PSETA, when a verification application is made.
- 8.10. If the lockdown is not yet completely lifted, the PSETA shall conduct verification online and compile a verification report.
- 8.11. Learner achievement shall be endorsed and SORs and/or certificates shall be issued in line with the PSETA Certification policy.

## **9. SAFETY AND SECURITY OF INFORMATION**

- 9.1. SDPs must ensure that required back-ups and Disaster Recovery Plans are in place to secure the learner information, work and assessments.

## **10. ACCREDITATION STATUS AND DURATION**

- 10.1. Accreditation: The e-learning approval is directly linked to the accreditation status of the SDP.
- 10.2. Programme Approval: All programme approval SDPs must ensure that their accreditation with their primary quality assurance bodies are valid.

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## **11. PROCESS FLOW FOR E-LEARNING APPLICATION AND APPROVAL**

The steps listed below shall be followed by the PSETA QAP staff when processing the e-learning applications:

- i. SDP submits a formal letter with an E-Learning policy mentioned above indicating intention to implement e-learning or technology-based learning.
- ii. PSETA QAP acknowledges the application;
- iii. Conduct QMS desktop evaluation;
- iv. Conducts virtual inspection of the e-learning portal;
- v. Report compiled and recommendation made to the QA Manager;
- vi. Manager review and approve/not approve
- vii. Approval letter signed by QA Manager issued to qualifying SDPs.

## **12. APPEALS**

The appeals will be handled as per the approved PSETA Appeals Policy.

## **13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 13.1. The QA Manager, assisted by the Accreditation Specialist is accountable for establishing and maintaining systems to manage the e-learning approval process.
- 13.2. PSETA QAP staff are accountable and will be responsible for implementation of this Guideline.
- 13.3. Accredited and programme approved SDPs shall comply with the requirements of this Guideline.
- 13.4. The PSETA Chief Executive Officer shall approve and support the implementation of the Guidelines.

## **14. GUIDELINE REVIEW**


This Guideline shall be reviewed after the country's national lock down.

## **15. APPROVAL**

The signatory hereof, duly authorized in terms of PSETA Delegation of Authority and Approval Framework, approves the Guidelines.

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## 16. SIGN-OFF

Guideline Approver	Ms Bontle Lerumo
Designation	Chief Executive Officer
Date	08 July 2020
Signature	

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