



## E-LEARNING POLICY

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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) and the Council's delegation policy, delegated the quality partner (QP) functions to the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA).
- 1.2 The delegation was conferred to the PSETA as of 27 September 2012, and it is limited to the Public Service sector. The delegated functions are as follows:
  - i. Accredite Skills Development Providers (SDPs) for the qualifications or part qualifications listed in the schedule in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO
  - ii. Monitor the provision by providers of Learning Programmes leading to the qualifications or part qualifications in order to ensure that the criteria for accreditation are being complied with
  - iii. Evaluate learner assessment and the facilitation of the moderation of learner assessment by providers
  - iv. Register assessors and moderators to undertake assessments and moderation for specified qualifications or part qualifications in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO
  - v. Certify qualified learners in accordance with the policy determined by the Minister in terms of section 26F of the SDA
  - vi. Maintain a comprehensive learner information management system
  - vii. Upload learner data to the National Learner Records Database (NLRD) according to the NLRD load specifications; and
  - viii. Perform such other functions consistent with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act and the SDA as the QCTO may from time to time allocate to the SETA in writing.
- 1.3 The delegation expires once the qualifications delegated to the PSETA are reviewed and replaced by qualifications developed and registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) or until the qualifications reach their registration end date and teach-out periods or when the qualifications are withdrawn by the QCTO.
- 1.4 The delegation is subject to the following terms and conditions:
  - i. The QCTO may review the quality management policies and procedures of the PSETA and examine the activities of the Quality Partner (QP) department.

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- ii. The PSETA must ensure the integrity of quality assurance by exercising its delegated functions separately and independently from any provision of education and training; and
- iii. The performance by the SETA of its delegated functions must advance the objectives of the NQF as contemplated in section 5 of the NQF Act.


## 2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to

- 2.1 Outline the standards 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. This includes practice such as E-Learning, distance learning, blended learning, flexible learning, mobile learning, instructor-led training and the use of web-based materials to supplement classroom-based learning.
- 2.2 Outline the minimum requirements that must be met by SDPs when delivering this provision.
- 2.3 The requirements of this policy are in addition to the normal requirements on SDPs, as detailed through the accreditation process.

## 3. ABBREVIATIONS


Abbreviation	Description
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
ETDP	Education and Development Training Practitioners
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NLRD	National Learner Records Database
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
POPI	Protection of Personal Information
PSETA	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority
QA	Quality Assurance
QP	Quality Partner
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

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Abbreviation	Description
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management System
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>SDA</b>	Skills Development Act
<b>SDP</b>	Skills Development Provider
<b>SETA</b>	Sector Education and Training Authority
<b>SLA</b>	Service Level Agreement

#### 4. 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 who has achieved competence against the assessor unit standard. The PSETA constituent assessor is a person registered by the PSETA to assess against the PSETA part or full qualifications in line with the PSETA assessment policy.
<b>Blended Learning</b>	Blended learning refers to the provision of structured learning opportunities using a combination of contact, distance, and/or information communication technologies (ICT) - supported opportunities (modes of provision) to suit different purposes, audiences and contexts.
<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>Distance education</b>	refers to any educational activity in which learners are separated from faculty and their peers, and this may include, in addition to independent learning, synchronous or asynchronous environments with a variety of instructional modes.
<b>E-assessment</b>	E-assessment is the use of electronic systems for the development, operation and delivery of accredited qualification assessment or the

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Term	Description
	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>External Integrated Summative Assessment</b>	Means a single national assessment leading to the awarding of an Occupational Certificate, which ensures that the assessment of occupational qualifications and part qualifications is standardised, consistent and credible.
<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 the moderator standard. The PSETA constituent moderator is a person who is registered to moderate against the PSETA part or full qualifications in line with the PSETA assessment policy
<b>Occupational qualification</b>	A qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession developed and quality assured under the auspices of the QCTO and consisting of knowledge/theory and applications (practical skills/work experience/simulated work experience) components and an external integrated summative assessment.
<b>Organisation</b>	Refers to legally established entities which may include, but are not limited to, national and provincial government departments and agencies, institutions/organisations, companies, centres, collaborative partnerships, or consultancies 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 qualifications which fall within the PSETA scope.
<b>Primary focus</b>	Means that activity or objective within the sector upon which an organisation or body concentrates its efforts.

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Term	Description
<b>Programme Approval</b>	Means secondary accreditation of organisations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process signed between SETAs. A provider accredited by another QA can apply for extension of scope on unit standard/s or qualification/s falling within the primary focus of another QA. The Provider is required to notify the primary QA of the intention to extend the scope. The primary QA will, on behalf of the Provider, liaise with the secondary QA to take the process forward.
<b>Quality 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>Skills Development Provider</b>	Means a provider of occupational learning accredited by the QA as delegated by the QCTO
<b>Skills Programme</b>	Means an occupation-based, short learning programme that focuses on specific work-related skills, incorporating at least one unit standard/module.
<b>Skills Development Provider Applicant</b>	Means a provider seeking accreditation or programme approval of occupational learning accredited by the QA as delegated by the QCTO

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## 5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION


This Policy applies to:

- 5.1. SDPs seeking to offer training using E-Learning and/or distance learning platforms for qualifications under the PSETA scope
- 5.2. PSETA QA staff members;
- 5.3. ETD Practitioners in the sector; and
- 5.4. PSETA contracted external consultants where applicable.

## 6. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRESCRIPTS

- 6.1. Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998, as amended.
- 6.2. South African Qualifications Authority Act.
- 6.3. National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008.
- 6.4. QCTO Delegation Policy.
- 6.5. QCTO E-Assessment Policy.
- 6.6. QCTO General Principles and minimum requirements on e-assessment of qualifications and part qualifications on the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF).
- 6.7. QCTO Guidelines for the standards of eLearning for Registered Qualifications on the OQSF
- 6.8. Draft White Paper on e-Education – Government Gazette Notice 1869 of 2004.
- 6.9. Protection of Personal Information Act, No 4 of 2013
- 6.10. PSETA Records Management Policy
- 6.11. PSETA Accreditation Policy
- 6.12. PSETA Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- 6.13. PSETA Management of Assessment Policy
- 6.14. PSETA Appeals Policy
- 6.15. PSETA Monitoring Policy
- 6.16. PSETA External Moderation Policy
- 6.17. PSETA Certification Policy
- 6.18. PSETA POPI Policy
- 6.19. Service Level Agreement between QCTO and PSETA

*The highlighted legislation is not meant to be an exhaustive list.*

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## 7. POLICY PROVISIONS AND CONTENT


In line with the QCTO delegation, the PSETA is responsible for the management of e-learning of registered qualifications within the PSETA scope.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1. The Accounting Authority (AA) grants approval of this Policy to be implemented and exercises its fiduciary duties under the provisions of the Policy and Delegations of Authority.
- 8.2. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), assisted by the Chief Operations Officer (COO), is accountable for establishing and maintaining systems to manage the function.
- 8.3. SDPs that are applying for approval to implement E-Learning are responsible for aligning their operations in line with the requirements contained in this policy document.
- 8.4. The QA staff or its representatives are responsible for the implementation of this policy and ensuring stakeholder compliance.
- 8.5. The QA Manager is
  - i. Accountable for the implementation and management of this Policy; and
  - ii. Responsible for signing the approval letters authorising SDPs to implement E-Learning.

## 9. CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

- 9.1. In order for the PSETA to award approval to an SDP to implement E-Learning, the following minimum requirements must be met:
  - i. The SDP must already be 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 signed 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 Management Information System (MIS).
    - b. Access to the portal must also be addressed in terms of security and authenticity.


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- 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.
- e. The learners enrolled in the SDP's online courses and programmes must fit the admission requirements. This ensures fit between the designed programme, support mechanisms and the capabilities of the learner.
- f. Sufficient information must be provided to prospective learners to enable them to make informed choices.
- 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

## 10. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As part of the approval requirements, applicant SDPs are required to have the following Policies and Procedures:

- 10.1. **Physical Resources:** This policy should outline the physical resources required to implement E-Learning and/or distance learning. There must be sufficient resourcing of key activities to ensure the rigour of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.
- 10.2. **Staff Selection, Appraisal and Development:** This policy must indicate the educational and experience requirements for all staff who will interact with learners on the E-Learning platform. Staff supporting online learning must be carefully selected, appropriately trained and frequently evaluated.
- 10.3. **Learner Entry, Guidance and Support Systems:** 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. Access to the portal must address aspects of security and authenticity. It should also outline the technical guidance and/or continued academic support that will be offered to learners. There must be effective communication between members who design curriculum, members who interact with learners, and SDP members who evaluate and assess learning.
- 10.4. **Management of Assessments:** The SDP must clearly demonstrate how technology-based formative assessments meet the principles of validity, reliability

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and authenticity. Assessment design and strategies need to demonstrate that "quality learning" takes place and that the credibility of the Statement of Results is met.


## 11. 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 relevant to electronically supported assessment systems. In line with the QCTO e-Learning guidelines, Quality Partners must ensure that SDPs adhere to these general principles of assessment in order to ensure that they implement credible systems.

Quality Partners should ensure that:

### 11.1 Validity of e-assessment:

- i. Learners who are declared competent demonstrate the graduate competences indicated in the purpose and exit level outcomes of the occupational qualification.
- ii. Where relevant, practical competences are adequately assessed
- iii. Systems have been put in place to ensure reliability, rigour and security of the e-assessment system for remote students
- iv. Assessment activities are sufficiently varied for the qualification purpose and level, and the diversity of its student body.
- v. Where learners submit assessments individually by electronic means from homes or workplaces, and not from a recognised assessment centre, the platform has the necessary security systems for electronic assessment.
- vi. Occupational qualifications 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.
- vii. There is evidence of academic staff development to familiarise them with online assessment strategies that take high-level cognitive skills into account, thereby ensuring credible online assessment.


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## 11.2 **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 learners 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 platforms 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 the e-assessment platform to make sure that the assessment is not compromised in any way.
- vi. The e-assessment body has enough competent staff to address any technical challenges with the assessment platform to ensure the assessment process runs smoothly and does not in any way disadvantage the learner.
- vii. The assessment body does not pass on unnecessary costs to learners.
- viii. There is a policy on external moderation of the e-assessment, and the policy is effectively implemented.
- 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. Quality partners must have effective quality assurance measures in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment data.
- xi. E –assessment platform must have the capacity to generate key information like system error reports and data that demonstrates regulatory compliance.

## 11.3 **Teaching/Learning value of e-assessment:**


- i. The central role of formative assessment and feedback in online learning is formally recognised, 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 turnaround time are in place.

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- ii. Accurate and reliable records of student e-assessment are kept and can easily be retrieved when there is a 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.

#### 11.4 User-friendliness of the 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.
- 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 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.

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#### 11.5 Use of e-portfolios for assessment

- i. In addition to regulatory principles, e-learning 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-learning 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. 100% e-assessments shall be conducted for learner assessments trained through e-learning.
- iv. 50% moderations shall be conducted for learner assessments trained through e-learning.

- 11.6 Learner achievement shall be endorsed, and SORs and/or certificates shall be issued in line with the PSETA Certification Policy.

## 12. SDPS RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENTS


12.1. SDPs should ensure learners have access to:

- i. Information that sets out the respective responsibilities of the 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.

12.2. SDPs should ensure that learners can be confident that:

- i. The SDP provides an online learning orientation programme
- ii. Study materials, whether delivered through 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;
- iii. The provision is subject to regular monitoring and a periodic review process.
- iv. Scheduling of online learning courses and programmes provides learners with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of programmes.

12.3. SDPs should ensure that the platform:

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- i. 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.

12.4. The PSETA registered Assessors as Facilitators of learning shall provide ongoing feedback to learners after an activity has been completed.

12.5. 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.

12.6. SDPs shall ensure that e-assessment tools have a combination of application, analysis, case studies, evaluation and creation-type questions.

12.7. The Learner matrix, certified ID copies, Assessment and Moderation reports shall be submitted to the PSETA when a verification application is made.

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

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

### **14. ACCREDITATION STATUS AND DURATION**

14.1 Accreditation: The E-Learning approval is directly linked to the accreditation status of the SDP.

14.2 Programme Approval: All programme approval SDPs must ensure that their accreditation with their primary quality assurance bodies is valid.


### **15. PSETA LOGO USAGE**

SDPs are not allowed to use the PSETA logo on their E-Learning platform

### **16. APPEALS**

16.1 Appeals will be handled as per the approved PSETA Appeals Policy.

16.2 Appeals for occupational qualifications will be handled in line with QCTO applicable policies

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## **17. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION**

The PSETA will ensure that personal information of learners, SDPs and employers shall be handled with care and in a secure manner in line with the PSETA POPI Policy.

## **18. NON-COMPLIANCE**

18.1. Non-compliance with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements through any deliberate or negligent act or omission, including allowing any staff, either expressly or impliedly, not to comply with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements, will be considered serious and be dealt with in terms of PSETA's disciplinary policies and procedures.

18.2. Should an SDP not comply with the prescripts of this policy, the signed code of conduct and the terms of accreditation, the PSETA will recommend withdrawal, suspension or de-accreditation of such a provider to the QCTO.

## **19. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

This Policy comes into effect on the date of signature, and the relevant owner shall ensure that it is communicated to staff using various modes, not limited to email, intranet, workshops, etc. However, this shall not have any bearing on the effective date for implementation.

## **20. MONITORING, REVIEW AND UPDATING OF THE POLICY**

This Policy shall be monitored by the Policy Owner to ensure consistent implementation and compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. This Policy has to be reviewed every 5 years (60 months) in line with the PSETA Policy Development Framework, and the outcome of such a process may either require the author to maintain the status quo or update/amend it.

## **21. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY**

The Policy shall be approved by the AA and signed by the Chairperson subsequent to the Resolution taken. The approval dates and signatures shall appear on the cover page of the document.