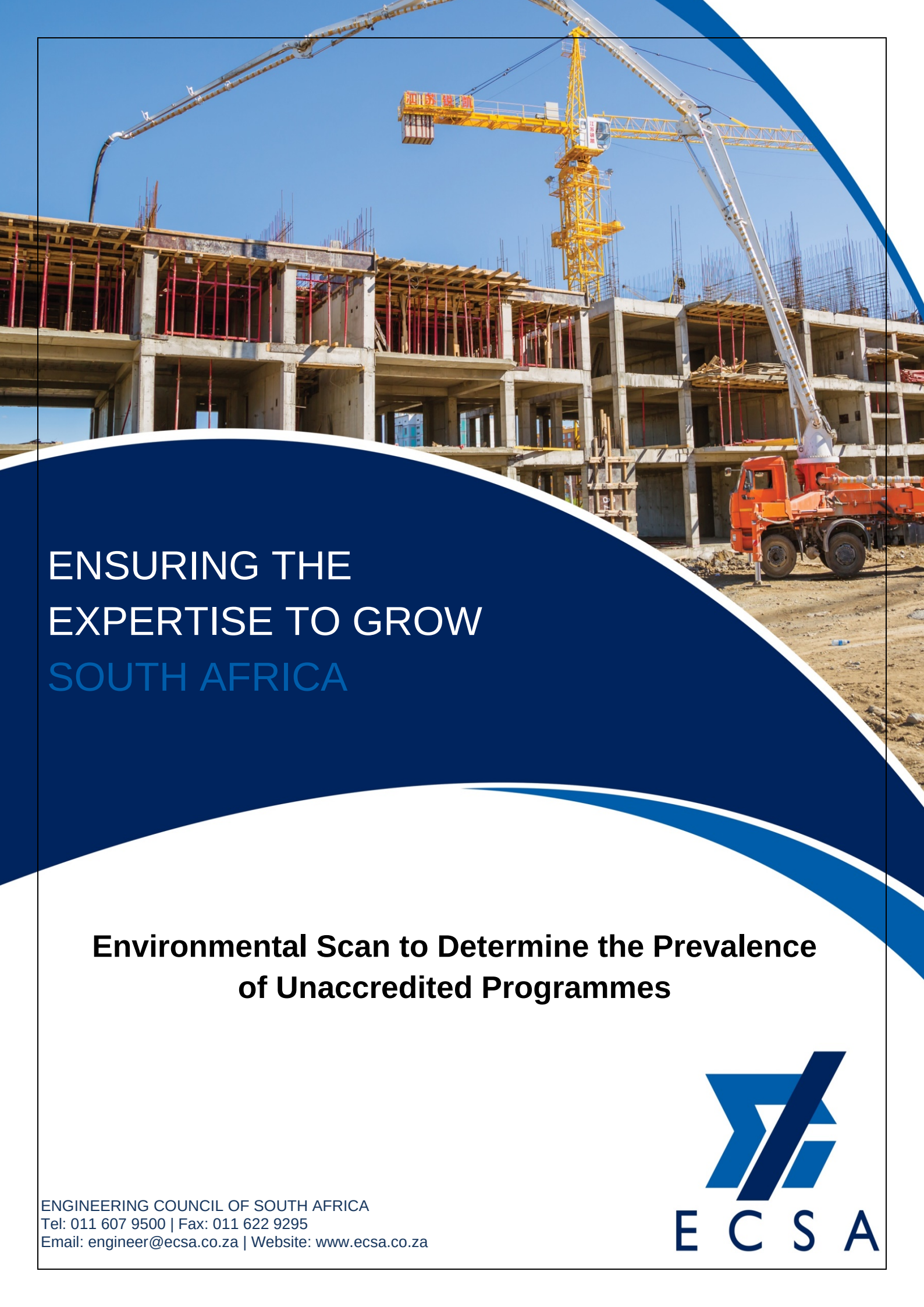




ENSURING THE EXPERTISE TO GROW SOUTH AFRICA

Environmental Scan to Determine the Prevalence of Unaccredited Programmes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accreditation of an engineering programme is an essential mark of quality assurance for the programme that it meets the engineering profession's standards. The Council of Higher Education (CHE) has conferred such authority in South Africa on the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). Accreditation for professional registration has been a powerful tool for academic quality and relevance after qualification as an entry route to the engineering profession. This is a rigorous endorsement of a critical element of the pathway that a student embarks upon towards becoming a registered person who demonstrates the required outcomes.

This research provides a report on the prevalence of unaccredited engineering programmes in South Africa through an environmental scan. Data collection was in the form of qualitative research through a review of relevant documents; focus groups consisting of representatives from ECSA, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the CHE; and site visits to sampled higher learning institutions. The scope of the study was the Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) qualifications from National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 5 to 8, providing a snapshot of misrepresentation for the year 2021.

The report findings revealed that all established public universities provide base qualifications that are accredited by ECSA. Private colleges' engineering programmes are not accredited by ECSA, excluding the Independent Institute of Education Monash South Africa (IIE MSA). Most of these private institutions offer NQF level 5 to 7 programmes and although they operate legally, their programmes are not accredited by ECSA. The findings further indicated that from the study sample, only two institutions misrepresented themselves.

Due to the number of TVET and private colleges that provide engineering programmes, the study suggested that the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy be implemented to absorb the pool of engineering technicians coming out of these institutions. Additionally, the research made the following recommendations:

- ECSA needs to utilise the opportunity of accrediting engineering programmes offered by the private colleges as they are registered by DHET, which is an added advantage for ECSA.

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- SAQA has developed a draft policy for the misrepresentation of qualifications that will be published as appropriate after the promulgation of the NQF Amendment Act. ECSA needs to operate within the framework of this policy and can expect to be notified by SAQA should SAQA identify misrepresentation in the engineering sector, based on its qualification verification and evaluation processes.
- ECSA should regularly engage with SAQA, Quality Councils, DHET and providers of education and training to discuss and pursue instances of misrepresentation of which these entities may be aware.
- ECSA should consider accrediting programmes offered by TVET and private institutions from NQF level 5 and above.
- ECSA should consider developing the ECSA Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) policy to allow graduates with further training to register when they meet the registration requirement.
- ECSA should scan the environment after 5 years parallel to the accreditation cycle.

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DEFINITIONS

“**Articulation**” means the process of forming systemic, specific and individual possibilities of connection between qualifications and part-qualifications to allow for the vertical, horizontal/lateral, vertical and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work:

- **Horizontal articulation** is articulation within and between NQF Sub-Frameworks, on the same NQF level
- **Vertical articulation** is articulation across NQF levels within an NQF Sub-Framework
- **Diagonal articulation** is articulation across NQF levels and NQF Sub-Frameworks
- **Systemic articulation** is a ‘joined up’ system including qualifications, professional designations, policies and various other official elements that support learning and work pathways
- **Specific articulation** means aligning qualifications through inter- or intra-institutional agreements such as memoranda of understanding, credit accumulation and transfer and other mechanisms
- **Individual articulation** refers to learners being supported in their learning and work pathways through flexible admissions, curriculum, learning and teaching, learner support systems such as the quality of qualifications and learning, career development services, and other mechanisms.

“**Comparison**” means the process of comparing foreign qualifications with South African qualifications by considering the structure and outcomes of foreign qualifications and locating them within the South African NQF.

“**Council on Higher Education (CHE)**” means an independent statutory body responsible for advising the Minister: HET, on all Higher Education policy issues and quality assurance in Higher Education. The CHE is the council for quality assurance in Higher Education, mandated by the NQF Act, 67 of 2008, to achieve the objectives of the NQF and develop and manage the HEQSF.

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“Evaluation” means the process followed by the SAQA to verify the authenticity of a foreign qualification and compare it with a South African qualification for placement (location) within the South African NQF.

“Foreign institution” means an education institution that is registered, accredited or recognised in a national education and training system other than that in South Africa and in accordance with the national policies or generally accepted practice of that country that offers authentic qualifications.

“General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)” means the Sub-Framework of the NQF for General and Further Education and Training that is developed and managed by Umalusi.

“Higher Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)” means the Sub-Framework of the NQF for Higher Education that is developed and managed by the Council on Higher Education (CHE).

“Learning pathway” (See “Articulation”).

“Learning programme” means a structured and purposeful set of learning experiences comprising modules/subjects and other learning activities, which together contribute towards the achievement of specified learning outcomes – for a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF offered by a recognised provider.

“Level descriptor” means that statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level.

“National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD)” means the electronic management information system of the NQF under the authority of SAQA, which contains records of qualifications, part-qualifications, learner achievements, recognised professional bodies, professional designations and all related information such as registrations and accreditations.

“National Qualifications Framework (NQF)” means the comprehensive system approved by the Minister: Higher Education, Science and Innovation for the classification, co-ordination, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications and part-

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qualifications. The South African NQF is a single integrated system comprising three coordinated Qualifications Sub-Frameworks for General and Further Education and Training, Higher Education, and Trades and Occupations.

“National Qualifications Framework Management Information System (NQF MIS)” means the whole electronic management information system of the NQF under the authority of SAQA, which contains the NLRD (See “National Learners’ Records Database” above) and records of qualification verifications, foreign qualification evaluations, registers of recognised professional bodies and their designations, and misrepresented qualifications.

“Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)” means the Sub-Framework of the NQF for Trades and Occupations that is developed and managed by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

“Part-Qualification” means an assessed unit of learning that is registered as part of a qualification on the NQF.

“Quality Council (QC)” means one of the three councils tasked with developing and managing each of the NQF Sub-Frameworks to ensure that agreed quality standards are met: CHE for the HEQSF, Umalusi for the GFETQSF and QCTO for the OQSF.

“Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)” means the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations that was established in terms of the NQF Act, 67 of 2008, mandated to achieve the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the OQSF.

“Recognised provider” means, in South Africa, a public or private entity that offers any learning programme that leads to qualifications or part-qualifications registered on the NQF, (1) that is accredited or deemed accredited by Umalusi to offer qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), (2) that is accredited by the QCTO as a Skills Development Provider to offer qualifications in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) or (3) where its programmes are accredited by the CHE and registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) – where independent schools must also be registered with the relevant provincial departments of education; private higher education institutions (HEIs), private technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges and private community education and

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training (CET) colleges must also be registered with the DHET. Where there is a recognised professional body, a professional body accreditation role may be factored into the Quality Council processes.

A **“public provider”** is a body wholly or partially funded by the state.

A **“private provider”** is a body not funded by the state.

“Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)” means a body established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998, and continuing under the Skills Development Amendment Act, 37 of 2008, to develop and implement sector skills plans and promote learning programmes, including workplace learning. The QCTO has delegated quality assurance powers to the SETAs.

“Self-accreditation status” means status granted by the HEQC to an institution for a period of 6 years that enables the institution to re-accredit existing programmes where no statutory council has jurisdiction. Information considered by the HEQC to grant self-accreditation status includes the audit findings for the institution, as well as programme quality information from HEQC sources and other relevant information from the DoE and SAQA. The institution also has to present a quality management plan for the execution of its re-accreditation responsibilities during the period of self-accreditation.

“Self-evaluation” means within a programme accreditation context – self-evaluation refers to the process by which an institution critically reviews and evaluates its programmes using the HEQC’s programme accreditation criteria and any other quality criteria that it deems relevant. The process leads to the development of the self-evaluation report.

“South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)” means the statutory authority established in terms of the SAQA Act, 58 of 1995, and continuing in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 67 of 2008, which advances the objectives of the NQF, oversees the further development and implementation of the NQF and coordinates the NQF Sub-Frameworks.

“Sub-Framework of the NQF” means one of three co-ordinated Qualifications Sub-Frameworks which make up the South African NQF as a single integrated system, namely the

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Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF) and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).

“Umalusi” means the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training established by the GENFETQA Act, 58 of 2001. In terms of the NQF Act, 67 of 2008, it is tasked with supporting the achievement of the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the GFETQSF.

“Unaccredited programme” means a programme that fails to abide by the prescribed programme duration and credits.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AET	Adult Education and Training
AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CET	Community Education and Training
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CPC	Preliminary Course Score
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
E&A	Evaluation and Accreditation
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
ENADE	National Examination of Student Performance
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FET	Further Education and Training
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
IEQAS	International Education Quality Assurance System
IIE MSA	Independent Institute of Education Monash South Africa
KCUE	Korean Council for University Education
KUAI	Korean University Accreditation Institute
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDP	National Development Plan
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

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NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PQM	Programme and Qualification Mix
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance of Assessment
QAAPSQ	Quality Assurance Assessment Post School Qualifications
QAASQ	Quality Assurance Assessment School Qualifications
QC	Quality Council
QCC	Quality Assurance of Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAPS	South African Police Services
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SINAES	National System for Evaluation of Higher Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UMALUSI	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
USA	United States of America

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1. INTRODUCTION

Democratic South Africa established a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to integrate its system for education, training, development and work (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1995). The revised and streamlined NQF continues under NQF Act, 67 of 2008 (RSA, 2008b); its objectives remain access, redress, articulation and mobility, quality and transparency in the system. These objectives are achieved in the context of three articulated NQF Sub-Frameworks coordinated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA):

- The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), developed and overseen by Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (GENFET)
- The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) overseen by the Council on Higher Education (CHE)
- The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

The authenticity and validity of qualifications are key in the quality of qualifications and learning-and-work pathways in South Africa and beyond. SAQA has developed a draft policy on the misrepresentation of qualifications that guides its work in identifying and reporting misrepresentation (SAQA, 2017a).

A number of public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges offer tertiary engineering education and training in various disciplines both in South Africa and in other countries across the world. In the course of its work, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)¹ has become aware that some of these local and international institutions and/or the programmes they offer may not be recognised by the relevant authorities concerned.

¹ ECSA is a professional body in South Africa, with international counterparts, that is officially recognised in the context of the NQF.

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In South Africa, the term 'recognised provider' means a public or private entity that offers any learning programme that leads to qualifications or part-qualifications registered on the NQF: (1) that is accredited or deemed accredited by Umalusi to offer qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), (2) that is accredited by the QCTO as a Skills Development Provider to offer qualifications in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) or (3) where its programmes are accredited by the CHE and registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) – independent schools must also be registered with the relevant provincial departments of education, and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), private technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges and private community education and training (CET) colleges must be registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). A 'public provider' is a body wholly or partially funded by the state, while a 'private provider' is a body not funded by the state. A professional body accreditation role may be factored into the Quality Council processes where there is a recognised professional body.

In view of ECSA's perception that some entities are operating outside this framework, ECSA decided to conduct an environmental scan to determine the prevalence of qualifications and learning programmes currently on offer that meet the accreditation, registration and recognition requirements of the NQF in South Africa. This report presents the scope of the study, its methodology and the results of the literature review, ECSA's site visits and the data obtained and analysed from DHET, SAQA, CHE and ECSA. The report closes with a short discussion, concluding comments and recommendations.

2. SCOPE

ECSA was established in terms of the Engineering Profession Act, 46 of 2000, although its history dates back to the South African Council for Professional Engineers (SACPE) in 1969 (RSA, 2000). ECSA's primary role is regulating the engineering profession in terms of this Act. One of ECSA's core functions is to recognise engineering programmes that lead to professional registration (RSA, 2000). This study, therefore, focuses on providers not recognised in the context of the NQF and/or offering qualifications/learning programmes not accredited, registered or recognised in the context of the NQF. Because ECSA perceived the problem in this instance to be linked to the qualifications that form the basis for professional

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registration for its designations 'Professional Engineer, Professional Certified Engineer, Professional Engineering Technologist and Professional Engineering Technician', the environmental scan focused on qualifications at NQF Levels 5–8 (Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and the undergraduate). This report thus focuses on the HEQSF context in 2021.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The environmental scan was designed to include a focused search and review of the relevant documentation (legislation, reports and literature), coupled with qualitative observations and interviews from selected site visits by ECSA and focus group discussions involving ECSA, SAQA and CHE representatives. The findings from the document survey, site visits and focus group discussions were supplemented by data from the relevant DHET, SAQA, CHE and ECSA databases.

The over-arching mechanism guiding the environmental scan was the collaborative discussions in the focus group discussions among the representatives of ECSA, SAQA and the CHE. The research questions were as follows:

- What is the extent of misrepresented engineering programmes?
- What are the unaccredited programmes by engineering institutions?

The document survey included the following:

- NQF legislation (Acts and Regulations), NQF policy and the related criteria, guidelines and forms as developed by the DHET, SAQA and the Quality Councils.
- Legislation, policy, guidelines and forms governing ECSA's work.
- Relevant research reports on quality assurance and implementation of the related NQF legislation and policy.
- Literature around the issues of quality assurance and misrepresentation.

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4. DOCUMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW: FINDINGS

4.1 The legal framework

In terms of the NQF Act, 67 of 2008, the NQF, South Africa's system for education, training, development and work, comprises three articulated NQF Sub-Frameworks as follows:

- Higher Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)
- General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)
- Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF).

Each NQF Sub-Framework is developed and overseen by one of three Quality Councils:

- Council on Higher Education (CHE), which is responsible for the HEQSF that comprises qualifications at NQF Levels 5–10
- Umalusi, which is responsible for the GFETQSF that comprises qualifications at NQF Levels 1–4
- The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), which is responsible for the OQSF that comprises qualifications at NQF Levels 1–8.

A diagram of the South African NQF is shown in Figure 1.

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South African NQF levels					
10	HEQSF	Doctoral Degree Doctoral Degree (Professional)		OQSF	10
9		Master's Degree Master's Degree (Professional)			9
8		Bachelor Honours Degree Postgraduate Diploma	Specialised Occupational Diploma		8
7		Bachelor's Degree Advanced Diploma	Advanced Occupational Diploma		7
6		Diploma Advanced Certificate	Occupational Diploma Advanced Occupational Certificate		6
5		Higher Certificate	Higher Occupational Certificate		5
4	GFETQSF	National Senior Certificate National Certificate: Vocational (NCV4)	National Occupational Certificate		4
3		Intermediate Certificate National Certificate: Vocational (NCV3)	Intermediate Occupational Certificate		3
2		Elementary Certificate National Certificate: Vocational (NCV2)	Elementary Occupational Certificate		2
1		General Education Certificate (GEC) ABET Level 4	General Occupational Certificate		1

Figure 1: The South African NQF

The responsibilities of each Quality Council (RSA, 2008c), among others, are to:

- develop and manage its NQF Sub-Framework
- consider and agree to the NQF Level Descriptors developed by SAQA
- develop and implement policy and criteria for developing, registering and publishing quality assured qualifications on the NQF, in line with SAQA's policy for developing, registering and publishing such qualifications
- develop and implement policy for quality assurance in its NQF Sub-Framework context
- ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance in its NQF Sub-Framework context

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- ensure that the quality assurance necessary in its NQF Sub-Framework context is undertaken, among others.

Thus, the three Quality Councils are responsible for the necessary recognition in their NQF Sub-Framework contexts.

Further, independent schools must also be registered with the relevant provincial education departments. Private HEIs, private TVET colleges and private CET colleges must also be registered with the DHET in terms of the Continuing Education and Training Act, 16 of 2006 (RSA, 2006). The DHET is mandated by the South African Constitution to develop capable, well-educated and skilled citizens who can compete in a sustainable, diversified and knowledge-intensive international economy (RSA, 1996b). In carrying out this mandate, the DHET operates within the legal framework of the NQF Act (RSA, 2008b), the Higher Education Amendment Act (RSA, 2010a, 2010b), the Skills Development Amendment Act (RSA, 2008c), the GENFETQA Amendment Act (RSA, 2008a) and the Continuing Education and Training Act (RSA, 2006) together with its Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions (DHET, 2016) which repeal the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions.

However, it must be noted that the DHET Communiqué of 21 February 2020 (RSA, 2020) revokes the Joint Communiqué of 2016, which requires all private providers to register with the DHET: at present HEIs and TVET and CET colleges must register, while it is not yet mandatory for Skills Development Providers (SDPs) accredited by the QCTO to do so – the SDPs will only be required to register once the CET Act (RSA, 2006) has been amended and the NQF Amendment Act (RSA, 2019) promulgated.

In its registration process (DHET, 2016), the DHET considers SAQA-registered qualifications on the NQF and Quality Council accreditation processes. Private HEIs may only apply for registration to offer qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF and located in the HEQSF (NQF Levels 5–10) (Ibid.). The learning programmes for these qualifications must be accredited by the CHE (Ibid.). As part of their registration process, private providers must also state programmes that they offer located in the OQSF and the GFETQSF and provide proof of their QCTO and Umalusi accreditation and their DHET registration numbers to offer the QCTO and Umalusi programmes (Ibid.).

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4.2 Registration of private higher education institutions

The DHET (2016: 12) implements its registration and regulation functions for private higher education. The purpose of registration is to ensure that:

- private institutions offer quality education
- the public is protected against unscrupulous and exploitative operations
- students obtain qualifications that are aligned with the HEQSF and registered on the NQF
- the education system meets the goals of transforming South Africa, in accordance with government policy and legislation
- private institutions comply with the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997, as amended (RSA, 1997).

Private institutions' programmes must be registered with the DHET, accredited by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and registered on the NQF by SAQA. The programmes must be recognised nationally and internationally, and in the case of engineering programmes, they must be approved by ECSA. The Engineering Profession Act (RSA, 2000) mandates ECSA to 'accredit' engineering learning programmes which means the process of evaluation and recognition by the Council (ECSA) of education programmes offered by education institutions relating to the engineering profession (RSA, 2000: Clause 1[i]).

Thus, the definition of 'accredit' in the Engineering Profession Act is not in line with the definition of 'accredit' under the NQF Act – this contradiction was pointed out in the NQF Act Implementation Evaluation (Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation [DPME]-DHET, 2018) and SAQA's more recent analysis of overlaps and contradictions in the legislation for SAQA and the Quality Councils on the one hand and statutory professional bodies on the other hand (RSA, 2008a). While the NQF Act governs education and training in South Africa, addressing the legislative contradictions in the Acts of statutory professional bodies requires a Cabinet Memorandum and work, over time, with the ministries involved. In the meantime, ECSA and other statutory professional bodies work with the CHE to approve learning programmes in the qualification development process. ECSA's memorandum of understanding

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(MoU) is covered in Section 4.8 of this report, and ECSA's learning programme approval process, in Section 4.9.

4.3 Draft NQF Amendment Act, 12 of 2019

The Draft NQF Amendment Act, 12 of 2019 aims to protect the integrity of the South African education and training system by addressing the gaps in NQF Act, 67 of 2008 (RSA, 2019). The NQF Amendment Act clarifies what an authentic South African qualification or part-qualification is by stipulating that it must be:

- registered on the NQF
- offered by a registered and accredited institution or skills development provider
- lawfully obtained.

Importantly, the NQF Amendment Act also outlines penalties for education institutions and skills development providers that falsely claim registration and accreditation to offer qualifications and part-qualifications.

4.4 Private colleges

As at 28 January 2020, the DHET lists 2 610 private skills development providers that have lodged applications to be registered as private colleges with the DHET. The DHET updated its National Register of Private Colleges on 11 March 2020. The list is published in accordance with Regulation 15(3) of the Regulations for the Registration of Private Further Education and Training. The register shows, among others, the registration status of private colleges, NQF-registered qualifications and their NQF levels. The register lists 280 colleges in different provinces of South Africa. These colleges offer various qualifications and some colleges have more than one branch/campus in a province. The register also lists private colleges whose registration has been cancelled due to failure to maintain their registration and requests to cancel their registration because they have ceased operating (DHET, 2020b).

4.5 Private higher education institutions

- As of 17 March 2020, the DHET updated its register of private HEIs (DHET, 2020a). The register of private HEIs is published in accordance with Section 54(2) (a)(i) of the Higher

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Education Act, 101 of 1997, as amended (RSA, 1997). The register provides the public with information on the registration status of private HEIs and lists the following details:

- 102 HEIs across the different provinces of South Africa offer various qualifications, with some institutions having more than one branch/campus in a province.
- 34 institutions have provisional registration because they have not fulfilled all the requirements for registration as private HEIs. However, the DHET Registrar believes that they will fulfil the requirements within the stipulated periods.
- 19 HEIs have had their registrations cancelled.
- 70 institutions have undergone cancellation or lapse of registration has come into effect.
- 10 institutions have requested the DHET Registrar to discontinue their registrations following the stipulations of the Act and the Regulations.

4.6 Unregistered (bogus) colleges

The DHET (2021:154) states that it is aware of several colleges and institutions purporting to offer higher education programmes without registration with the Department. The unregistered entities are referred to as 'bogus' colleges; they use a range of methods to mislead the public (Ibid.).

The recent trends identified by the DHET suggests that several online operators commit internet misrepresentation by purporting to offer degrees in 15 days using DHET's name and logo. Most of these operators' websites appear to be based in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). In an attempt to warn the public, the DHET has published a list of 'bogus' colleges to raise awareness and warn the public about unscrupulous providers and their *modus operandi*. The DHET has also filed cases against these 'bogus' colleges with the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the USA.

In this regard, Fargo University in the USA, as an example, now informs students on its website that it is no longer accepting admissions. Both Barkley University and Study for Career Success have been removed from the Internet. The DHET is monitoring these developments closely.

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The DHET lists the following typical behaviours by these 'bogus' institutions:

1. Consultants promising jobs after graduation.
2. Consultants and websites offering two degrees for the price of one as well as huge discounts.
3. Use of nomenclatures for qualifications; for example, a Bachelor of Commerce degree is different from a Bachelor of Commerce in Financial Management degree.
4. Official-looking bogus colleges that use seals, crests and logos used by legitimate institutions such as the DHET, public universities and public colleges.
5. Exaggerated and numerous claims regarding accreditation to lend credibility to the college.
6. The names of colleges are similar or identical to those of prestigious universities such as Oxford University and Cambridge University.
7. The application form is questionable as it does not require information or proof of formal schooling, identity documents, etc.
8. Diplomas and degrees offered in short periods, making it possible to receive several degrees in one year.
9. The absence of a physical address for the legal entity, called 'the institution' or 'the awarding body'.
10. Local tuition centres purporting to offer qualifications on behalf of foreign and international universities.
11. The continued and undue emphasis on 'international accreditation' and 'international qualifications'.

4.7 Higher Education Quality Assurance in South Africa

The Republic of South Africa has distinctively outlined its intentions for a robust educational system in Chapter 9 of the National Development Plan (NDP). The educational objectives are specified to improve the quality of education, training and innovation (RSA, 2012). The NDP deems higher education as the main driver of the knowledge system, which links to economic development. Globalisation at the forefront of evolution has also meant that South Africa has

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not been excluded from the highly competitive educational industry. The impact of such has resulted in the industry having to distinguish, for benefactors of the industry, that knowledge is not quantity but quality. This can be viewed in line with an increase in demand for quality education, which has brought about increased demand for quality assurance (QA). The demand has also been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has shifted paradigms of learning from the historical 100% physical learning to hybrid learnerships comprising both physical and online education.

Now more than ever, it has become vital that QA is prioritised as it is the vehicle the country uses to ensure that the standards of different programmes in South Africa are competitive both locally and internationally. ECSA prides itself that the engineering profession is beyond reproach, with the highest ethical standards underpinned by integrity, quality, timeliness, trust and respect; thus the need for it to stay abreast of the developments in the three educational accords to which it is a signatory and enjoys the membership status in the International Engineering Alliance (IEA). These educational accords are the Washington, Sydney and Dublin Accords. It is in this context that the definition of quality is explored as well as mechanisms that ensure higher education QA is examined on accreditation and registration, as these aspects involve the content of the learning programmes offered by the different institutions, as well as the institutions themselves.

Barnett (1992 cited in Ntshoe *et al.*, 2010) argues that the definition of quality, especially in the HEQSF context, depends significantly on the standardising position regarding higher education. Barnett's (1992) argument is affirmed by both Pavel (2012) and Kis (2005).

Pavel (2012) believes that quality in higher education is complex as it is a multilevel, multidimensional and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model. This is aligned with the mission and objectives and specific standards within a given system, institution, programme or discipline. Quality may take different, sometimes conflicting, meanings depending on the understanding of various interests of other constituencies or stakeholders in higher education; for example, students, universities, disciplines, the labour market, society and a government.

Similarly, Kis (2005) affirms that "*Quality relates to a stakeholder-specific meaning. Here quality is considered, having regard to a variety of stakeholders interested in higher education,*

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each having the potential to think about quality in different ways. In particular, highlight the importance and value of considering quality from a variety of stakeholder perspectives". A diagram illustrating the definitions of quality is shown in Figure 2.

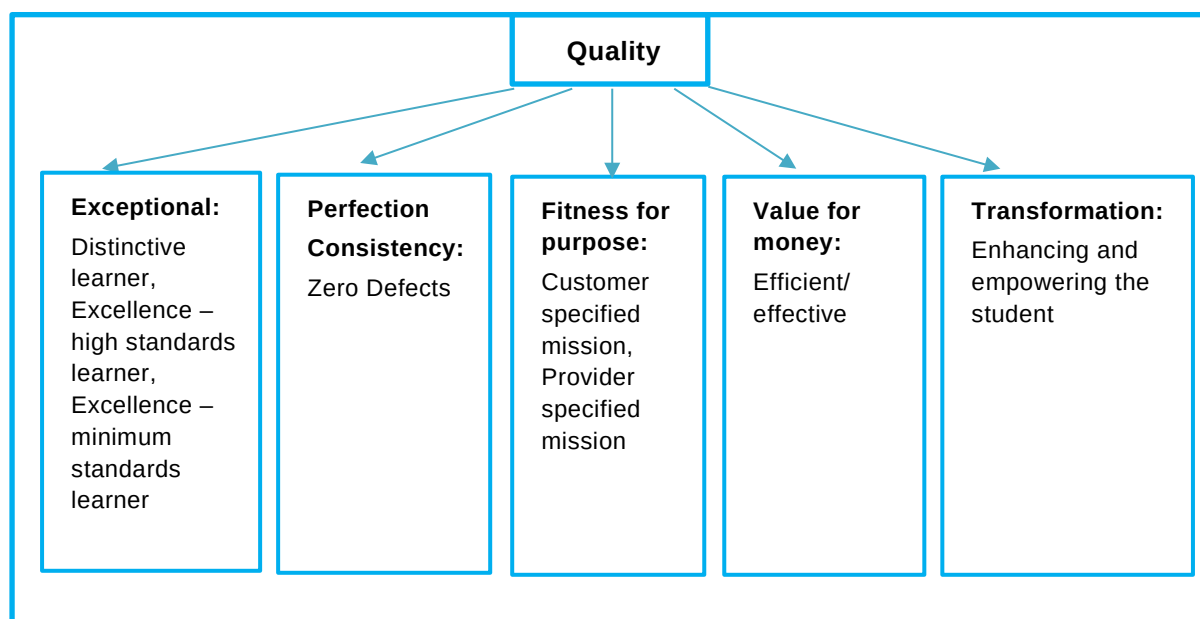


Figure 2: Definitions for quality Source: Watty, 2003 p.215

Although Figure 2 above captures the prominent definitions of what quality can be defined as, in relation to quality in higher education, it is essential to exclude some components of the structure, in this instance perfection and consistency, mainly because the system cannot produce graduates that are not devoid of defects. However, the remaining four components are why QA is crucial for the system.

4.8 Methods used for quality review in South Africa

The NQF in South Africa is designed to ensure that South Africa remains competitive globally. In the NQF context, the three Quality Councils are responsible for QA in their respective NQF Sub-Framework contexts; SAQA's mandate also supports systemic quality. SAQA is mandated by the NQF Act (RSA, 2008b), among others, to oversee further development and implementation of the NQF and to ensure achievement of NQF objectives in the following ways:

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1. Developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements.
2. Developing and implementing the NQF level descriptors.
3. Developing and implementing a system of collaboration to guide the mutual relations of SAQA and the Quality Councils.
4. Developing and implementing policy for the development, registration and publication of qualifications and part-qualifications – which includes ensuring that South African qualifications meet appropriate criteria and are internationally comparable.
5. Developing policy for the recognition of prior learning (RPL)², credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)³ and assessment.
6. Collaborating with international counterparts and sharing good NQF practices nationally and internationally.
7. Communicating NQF-related information to the public.
8. Conducting, commissioning, publishing and disseminating research towards the further development and implementation of the NQF, including periodic studies on the NQF's impact.
9. Maintaining a national learners' records database.
10. Providing an evaluation and advisory service regarding foreign qualifications, which includes verifying authenticity and evaluating them to determine comparable South African NQF levels for these qualifications.

The three Quality Councils are described in Section 4.1 above in this report. Umalusi was established in 2001 and derives its mandate as a Quality Council from the NQF Act, as

² RPL means the principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person, learned informally and non-formally, are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development (SAQA, 2019).

³ CAT means the practice of accumulating credits from one or more cognate learning programmes in an institution, and transferring those credits to be recognised towards a qualification and/or part-qualification in the same or a different institution (SAQA, 2021).

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amended (RSA, 2008c), the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996a) and the GENFETQA Act as amended in 2008 (RSA, 2008a). Umalusi is mandated to set standards for general and further education and training through the development and management of the GFETQSF. In carrying out its mandate regarding qualifications offered in public and private schools, public and private FET and TVET colleges, public and private CET colleges and Adult Education and Training (AET) centres, Umalusi established its internal units for the quality assurance of assessment (QAA), the quality assurance of qualifications, curricula and certification (QCC) and the quality assurance of evaluation and accreditation (QEA). These units have further sub-structures. Umalusi conducts quality assurance through the following:

- Development and implementation of assessment policies and directives
- Moderation of the standards of examination papers
- Moderation of the standards of internal assessment
- Monitoring the administration of national examinations and marking processes
- Moderation of the standard of marking
- Monitoring and verification of resulting
- Standardisation of results.

The CHE was established in 2004 after forming the HEQC in 2001, and that quality committee is the CHE. The CHE's main purpose is to safeguard the quality of education provided, both in public and private spaces, by all the providers in the country. The CHE conducts quality assurance through:

- programme accreditation
- institutional (self) evaluations
- programme reviews.

To attain the level of quality that CHE approves, several principles should affect the qualification, among which are the following:

- They foster and provide a central role for communities of practice, in that the preferred origins of standards are expert groups of peers representing knowledge fields and disciplines.

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- They are fit for purpose, in the sense of being linked to the missions and contexts of the institutions themselves and their capacity to be continually responsive to changes in knowledge fields and society at large.

“These principles should form the basis for development of standards for higher education qualifications. They recognise the dynamic and diverse contexts in which higher education programmes are offered. This implies that the establishment of standards is much more a process of keeping abreast of academic developments, nationally and internationally, than it is an end-product” (CHE, 2013).

The QCTO was established in 2010. It conducts QA through accrediting providers and approving and submitting qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF. It works with a system of Development Quality Partners (DQPs), Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs), Quality Development Facilitators (QDFs) and Community Expert Practitioners (CEPs), for all of which it has detailed policy and criteria as well as oversight.

The three Quality Councils develop and implement policies for developing, registering and publishing qualifications in their NQF Sub-Framework contexts, and for RPL, CAT and assessment – aligned with SAQA’s policies for these areas of work. The Quality Councils oversee the development of qualifications – and the quality of these qualifications – with providers in their NQF Sub-Framework contexts and they submit the qualifications and part-qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF. SAQA evaluates the qualifications and part-qualifications submitted according to its policy and criteria (RSA, 2008b). These offerings meet the NQF level, quality, access, articulation and international comparability criteria to register them on the NQF. This approach allows for the differentiation of qualification structure and purposes across the three NQF Sub-Framework contexts. It also ensures that the articulation among qualifications in learning-and-work pathways occurs at the qualification design phase.

Given the focus of the current study on misrepresentation in the HEQSF context, the quality assurance processes of the CHE are presented in more detail in the sections that follow.

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4.8.1 Programme accreditation in the HEQSF context

The following steps lead to accreditation:

1. Within one year of the first cohort of students graduating from the new programme, the institution must demonstrate that it has met the conditions set by the HEQC during the candidacy phase, which includes conditions relating to the evaluation of the mid-term report from the institution. Acceptable reasons and relevant evidence have to be provided in instances where the conditions have not been met.
2. The institution is also required to conduct a self-evaluation of the programme using the HEQC's criteria for the accreditation phase, which includes those for programme input, process, output and impact, and review.
3. The institution must submit a programme improvement plan to address areas in need of attention as identified in the self-evaluation.
4. A site visit may be conducted, if necessary.

If the institution's submission is approved by the HEQC, the programme obtains accreditation status.

It should be noted that in both phases of accreditation, institutions have the opportunity to further develop the programme where it does not meet the required criteria, on the expectation that they have the ability to remedy the problem areas and attain minimum standards within a stipulated period of time.

4.8.2 Institutional self-evaluations in the HEQSF context

The CHE attaches great importance to institutional self-evaluation to improve the quality of programmes. To this end, the assembly of data for the review commences with institutional self-evaluation of the identified programme against the standard and the published criteria.

The compilation of the self-evaluation report (SER) requires the department/unit offering the programme to engage in critical self-evaluation leading to evidence-based claims on the achievement of the standard and compliance with the criteria, the identification of areas of good practice, areas for improvement and any other interventions that might be required to sustain or enhance the quality of the programme.

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In cases where an institution identifies its programme as falling short of the qualification standard and thus being in need of development – either as a whole or in respect of specific aspects of the standard – the SER should include steps being taken or that will be taken to address the issues. The report should also propose timelines within which the necessary steps might be accomplished. These timelines may be approved or, after further consultation, amended by the HEQC.

The institutional SER is subjected to a desktop evaluation by the CHE. The main purpose of this evaluation is to compare the programme with the national qualification standard and to identify areas of good practice and shortcomings. It may recommend areas in need of attention, but it does not include any recommendation in respect of accreditation. The evaluation report is sent to the HEI, which may, during the forthcoming site visit, provide further information by way of clarification or elaborate on plans for development.

4.9 Memorandum of understanding between CHE and ECSA

The concept of an MoU is derived from the inherent interest of two parties that have a common line of action. Although an MoU is not legally binding, it is a serious pronouncement between parties that share mutual objectives. ECSA understands that an MoU is an extremely valuable tool for collaboration between two statutory entities and is aware of the benefits of working with like-minded counterpart institutions in this way.

In terms of Section 13(c) of the Engineering Profession Act (RSA, 2000), in all matters relevant to education in the engineering profession, ECSA may consult CHE. The engineering education expertise lies with ECSA as a professional body, and as a result, the CHE requires ECSA to assist it in this regard. The MoU between the CHE and ECSA is predicated upon the fact that ECSA has built a solid relationship with the CHE. This relationship can be traced back to when it was resolved through extensive discussions that ECSA's accreditation processes should be aligned to those of the HEQC. The discussion process resulted in the two parties learning what was important to the other; thus, reaching an understanding and finding common ground, which led to them signing an MoU on 7 November 2006.

It is worth noting that although the CHE is mandated by the NQF Act (RSA, 2008b) to develop and implement the policy for developing, registering and publishing qualifications as well as

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developing and implementing the policy for quality assurance, it carries out these functions in consultation with registered professional bodies, such as ECSA, through the utilisation of its MoU tools. Although ECSA executes separate functions, its requirements for registered persons and their potential professional designations should not contradict those of CHE. It is reiterated in HEQSF policy (CHE, 2013) that all the processes and standards that emerge from the professional bodies should not have any serious disjuncture between those that exist within CHE as the Quality Council in the HEQSF context and the professional bodies themselves.

Against this backdrop, one of the CHE's goals that take precedence is the pursuit to improve public opinion on uniformity with regard to parallel qualifications offered by different institutions within the country, taking into consideration the diverse fields of particular study qualifications. Therefore, this brings about CHE-ECSA accreditation process in which the CHE is the regulator. CHE's representatives assess the institutions to ensure that the HEIs and colleges continue to be competitive on a global level. To enable full recognition in the HEQSF and engineering contexts, the HEIs and colleges must meet the CHE and ECSA criteria for quality in higher education (CHE, 2013; ECSA, 2020a).

Furthermore, ECSA's NQF-aligned institutional accreditation carries additional weight because of the MoU. The MoU enables recognition in both the NQF and engineering contexts: qualifications registered on the NQF are recognised within the NQF context(s) nationally and internationally, and ECSA accreditation is also recognised nationally and globally. The CHE and ECSA processes supplement and strengthen each other with no duplication – the MoU system maximises efficiency. Importantly, aligned ECSA-accredited institutions make it easier for students to be eligible for government funding programmes, i.e. the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Moreover, students can easily transfer between ECSA-accredited institutions, allowing them to have their credits recognised by the institution to which they have crossed over during their studies: aligned recognition enables CAT – a key aspect in articulated learning-and-work pathways and lifelong learning pathways and learning in general. In addition, employment prospects are higher for students from CHE-recognised, ECSA-accredited institutions as most of these institutions have relationships with potential employers. Further, the education outcomes from these institutions by the recognition and accreditation processes have been validated.

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Engineering institutions require that students during their final year have practical modules that are considered as in-service training with various companies; this is the integration of academic modules with real-life work experience. In his report, Fisher (2011) articulates that the industry makes a vital contribution to engineering education through the crucial provision of workplace experience and training for both students and engineering graduates; the industry contribution is not limited to the usual offering of bursaries, investments in infrastructure or any other related issue. These practices further strengthen the fundamental relationship between ECSA and industry. Ideally, it should be that upon completion of their in-service training, the students would be absorbed into the membership of ECSA. This does not however preclude the fact that the relationship between ECSA and students needs to be strengthened to tackle this significant transitional hurdle of the university to the industry that they must overcome.

In contrast, there is the reality of unaccredited/ unrecognised institutions which by definition do not meet the ECSA (2020a) criteria for programme accreditation and/or the CHE requirements for programme accreditation, the DHET requirements for Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) (in the case of public entities) and registration (in the case of private entities) and the NQF requirements that qualifications and part-qualifications must be registered on the NQF. Although some of these unaccredited/unrecognised institutions/programmes appear to be legitimate, students must also always check via SAQA and the NQF MIS databases for the institutions that are accredited so they do not find themselves at a disadvantage, both financially and academically due to resources and time lost. Any qualification obtained in these institutions cannot be used anywhere, not for academic purposes to further one's studies or in the labour market for employment purposes.

The MoU between ECSA and CHE has never been so crucial. Changes have already taken place – online learning has become the mainstream for institutions in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and during the Covid-19 pandemic. These developments have opened up a new array of bogus online institutions, which means CHE and ECSA must work hand in hand to root these out to preserve the integrity of the engineering profession. However, in most cases, the CHE and SAQA only know about these institutions through student alerts as they come across them and require verification.

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Regarding the CHE's programme accreditation process, ECSA has great influence in accreditation regarding engineering education as it is a professional body in the engineering field. It is stated in the Engineering Profession Act (RSA, 2000:10) that "*The council may either conditionally or unconditionally grant, refuse or withdraw accreditation about all educational institutions and their educational programmes about engineering*". This duty for ECSA to consult with CHE is stipulated in the MoU, as already described.

The accreditation of learning programmes is complex. While the CHE approves the offering of particular accredited learning programmes at specific HEIs, and the DHET approves the PQMs of public HEIs and registers private HEIs, institutions that have acquired ECSA's institutional accreditation can still be lacking in their learning programmes. For any institution to consider ECSA accrediting its learning programmes, it must first be ECSA-accredited institutionally and have gone through the related CHE and DHET processes.

It is important to note that learning programmes are not accredited in perpetuity; these programmes need to be reviewed at regular intervals to maintain their standards. Due to the ever-changing world, accreditation is never guaranteed just because an institution had accredited programmes at one point or the other. Thus, there is a need for a continuous assessment of accreditation as per the prescripts given to each responsible entity.

Once every 3–5 years, the CHE carries out programme accreditations; while ECSA, in terms of section 13(a) of the Engineering Profession Act (RSA, 2000), conducts accreditation visits to any education institution at least once during its term (4 years) of Council, or as and when an institution calls upon ECSA to come and accredit one of its programmes. This is because ECSA's accreditation is not an extension of the CHE's work, meaning that CHE still conducts its accreditation processes in parallel to those of ECSA as per its mandate (RSA, 2008b).

The CHE and ECSA MoU has a process flow whereby the HEIs approach ECSA with their engineering programmes for accreditation; upon the success of this ECSA-accreditation, the institutions take their ECSA letter of accreditation, which is an endorsement by ECSA, to the CHE so that the CHE can submit the qualification/learning programme to SAQA for registration on the NQF. This process flow is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

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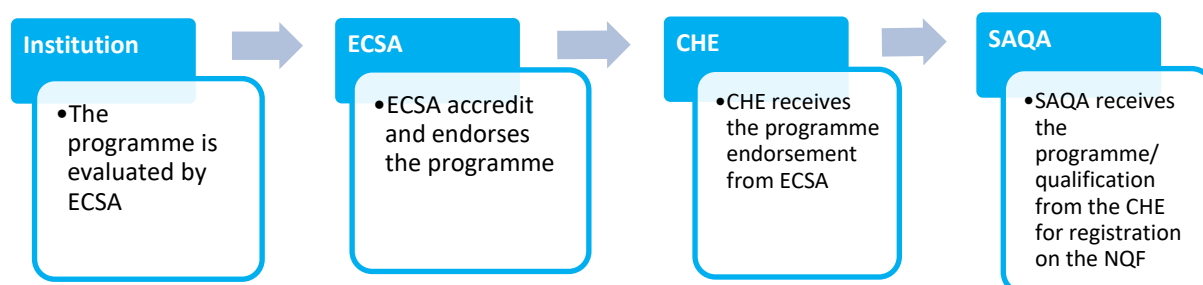


Figure 3: Programme accreditation flow

For ECSA programme accreditation to be approved, as shown in Figure 3, the HEI must be capable of offering qualifications that have a specific duration with a precise number of credits. This suggests that any institution that fails to abide by the prescribed programme duration or credits is considered to be offering an unaccredited programme. The following steps also factor into the process, as described in Section 4.8.

1. The DHET approves the PQM for each public HEI and college and funds programmes in the PQM.
2. According to its quality criteria, the CHE accredits specific learning programmes offered by specific HEIs (CHE, 2012).
3. The DHET registers private HEIs, according to criteria (DHET, 2016), taking CHE approval and programme accreditation and SAQA's registration of qualifications and part-qualifications on the NQF before they are allowed to operate.
4. SAQA registers qualifications and part-qualifications submitted by the three Quality Councils on the NQF when the qualifications and part-qualifications meet the specified criteria (RSA, 2008).

Following these rules, regulations and processes is mandatory in South Africa. If providers of education and training provide procedures that do not follow any parts of the rules, regulations and processes, they will be operating outside the legal system in the country. In such instances, students will not be able to use qualifications obtained for further studies or employment.

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The public can readily access recognised providers, accredited and registered qualifications, and part-qualifications. The DHET maintains lists of accredited providers freely available to the public. SAQA maintains the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) and the NQF Management Information System (MIS), of which the NLRD is part – the parts of which can be accessed in different ways. The NQF MIS contains the following databases:

- Qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF, and related information including but not limited to the exit level learning outcomes, the credits allocated, NQF level, access options including RPL, articulation possibilities, international comparability, and the providers recognised to offer the qualifications/ part-qualifications.
- Learning achievements against the qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF.
- Qualifications and part-qualifications verified by SAQA.
- Foreign qualifications evaluated by SAQA (SAQA, 2017b).
- Professional bodies recognised by SAQA, and their recognised professional designations (Ibid.).
- Misrepresented qualifications (SAQA, 2017a).

4.10 ECSA accreditation processes

ECSA accreditation is a voluntary assessment procedure, compliance with which HEIs undertake to preserve nationally and internationally recognised standards regarding the quality of engineering education. This process allows for an unbiased and fair evaluation of the qualifications in all HEIs and colleges. Moreover, it is a signal to the public that the institution has fulfilled the set criteria for standards by the accrediting bodies. Therefore, ECSA evaluates and recognises the education programmes offered by higher education providers relating to the engineering profession through a quality assurance procedure. ECSA accredits individual engineering programmes as indicated below:

- BSc(Eng)/BEng programmes, a combination of BEng Tech, PGDip Eng Tech, MEng and a combination of BEng Tech, BEng Tech (Hons) and MEng meeting Stage 1 requirements towards registration as a Professional Engineer and registration as a Candidate Engineer.

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- BTech/BEng Tech/Adv Dip Eng programmes, meeting Stage 1 requirements towards registration as a Professional Engineering Technologist and registration as a Candidate Engineering Technologist.
- ND/Dip Eng/Adv Cert Eng Tech/Adv Cert Eng/Dip Eng Tech programmes, meeting Stage 1 requirements towards registration as a Professional Engineering Technician and registration as a Candidate Engineering Technician.

As already highlighted, ECSA does not accredit education providers or the respective engineering faculties (e.g. Engineering and the Built Environment Faculty of Engineering Information Technology Faculty, etc.), as the role of recognising institutions in the NQF context is managed by the DHET and the CHE and is about qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF by SAQA.

ECSA conducts its accreditation in various ways: through physical on-site visits, online or a hybrid model. During Covid-19, ECSA had to evolve in terms of its accreditation processes and began relying on online accreditation, in line with HEIs' processes, as there is an increasing number of institutions carrying out assessment and invigilation online. ECSA looks for different characteristics depending on the type of programme being accredited; with online accreditation, institutions must arrange good quality live video feeds for evidence on their laboratories and other facilities; they must also agree with ECSA around using a mobile laptop with camera, tablet, cellphone or other appropriate devices to show real-time video footage of the required evidence.

ECSA accreditation is done in three stages in the life cycle of an engineering programme: at the planning stage, when students are at the halfway point in their studies, and at a point where the programme produces a cohort of graduates. Therefore, ECSA accreditation is a mark of assurance that the engineering programmes offered by education providers meet the standards set by ECSA in terms of ECSA's criteria for the accreditation of engineering programmes (E-03-CRIP) and can continue to produce graduates who meet the criteria for a defined period of up to 5 years (ECSA, 2020a). ECSA outlines the following five principles that must be satisfied by an existing programme that has produced a cohort of graduates:

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- Criterion 1: Specified credits, knowledge profile and coherent design of the programme
- Criterion 2: Assessment of graduate attributes
- Criterion 3: Quality of teaching and learning
- Criterion 4: Resourcing and sustainability of the programme
- Criterion 5: Response to previously identified deficiencies and concerns, capacity for improvement and programme review evidence.

Further to these criteria, ECSA's accreditation process as articulated by ECSA (2020b) is carried out systematically and involves the pre-accreditation, actual accreditation and post-accreditation phases as provided for in terms of the accreditation process definition (E-11-PRO). In addition, all institutions are required to commit to unannounced visits by ECSA's reviewers and rigorous internal review programmes to verify that the standards of these engineering programmes continue to meet the required benchmarks.

An updated list of all ECSA-accredited programmes is contained in the E-20-P series for engineering science programmes, the E-20-PT series for the engineering technologists programmes and the E-20-PN series for engineering technician programmes – all of which can be accessed via the ECSA website (ECSA, 2021a; ECSA, 2021b).

ECSA accreditation is an evidence-based process in which the onus to provide the evidence required in terms of the accreditation criteria rests on the respective education provider and must be in compliance with ECSA's programme self-study documentation requirements for accreditation (E-12-REQ-P). The E-12-REQ-P information specifies the documentation regarding the responsibilities, timing, format and required content of a self-study programme that the provider must submit before accreditation. These requirements apply to programmes contemplated in the accreditation criteria defined in document E-03-CRI-P. The notation for various persons and bodies defined in document E-11-PRO is used in E-12-REQ-P (ECSA, 2020).

4.11 International reality of unaccredited programmes

Higher education has undoubtedly changed over the last decade due to technological advances. This advancement has rapidly shifted the perceptions and realities of academic faculty members and students regarding distance, online and blended learning. Indeed, the

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different methods of studying have long existed. However, in 2020–2021, Covid-19 popularised the option for education providers and students to opt for these methods over the previously used in-person teaching and learning. This shift has accelerated the evolution of unaccredited programmes and institutions, thus changing the entire education system. Online programmes offer students more control over how they learn because online programmes are more flexible regarding learning times, pacing and personal study schedules.

However, pursuing these pathways is based on affordability. Often, affordability is linked with unaccredited online programmes and providers that are not officially recognised as their accredited and recognised counterparts are too expensive.

It is only natural that accredited institutions prefer what they are familiar with regarding what they have been offering and how they have been operating. However, adaptability is necessary for survival; extinction is traditionally inevitable. For these universities, it is now a race against time as the era of dinosaur teaching methodologies has a rapid end (Wachira & Ombati, 2020). Unaccredited programmes are growing online, but some institutions are rendering such programmes globally and unashamedly.

Below is a closer look at this prevalence within emerging and developed countries.

4.11.1 Emerging countries

Kenya

The Commission of Higher Education continuously informs the public by warning prospective students against a growing concern over enrolling in international universities purporting to offer degrees and diplomas. This was done without the government's approval. Moreover, the commission highlighted that all the institutions offering unaccredited programmes in Kenya were not recognised in their home countries. Nganga (2010) confirmed that the council placed the responsibility on prospective students to verify the legitimacy of these institutions with the council. Nevertheless, the Republic of Kenya has pressured the government to crack down on the unaccredited institutions on multiple occasions. Nganga further indicated that the commission agreed that bogus institutions damage the reputation of the country's education system.

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To mitigate against this, in 2012, Kenya adopted the university bill into law; the Universities Act, 42 of 2012 seeks to restructure the Commission of Higher Education and enable it to regulate the higher education institutions effectively. Section 28 of this Act mandates that foreign universities that seek accreditation in Kenya must first submit proof of accreditation in their countries of origin. Furthermore, the Act dictates the institutions to adopt internal quality assurance processes for each programme they offer to ensure that what the students are taught is relevant, of international standard and responsive to the job market.

Brazil

The National System for Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES) in Brazil is similar to CHE in South Africa; it assesses higher education institutions and individual study programmes. In addition, SINAES implements accreditation reviews on programmes depending on the performance of the institutions in the National Examination of Student Performance (ENADE) and on the Preliminary Course Score (CPC). SINAES encourages compliance with accreditation through a reward system; institutions that perform poorly are subjected to 3-year cycle accreditation reviews. At the same time, those that serve well are rewarded with an 8–10-year accreditation review cycle.

Nevertheless, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recommended that institutions undergo external institutional reviews at least every 4, 5 or 6 years for Brazil's higher education to align to international standards. The accreditation review process can lead to a programme becoming unaccredited if the institution fails on the minimum requirement set by the SINAES. However, this is only applicable to private higher education institutions as this is a prerequisite; for public institutions, accreditation reviews are essentially an administrative formality as their legal status protects them.

The country's legislation requires that institutions offering distance education programmes abide by the set rules and regulations of the national curriculum guidelines (DCNs). Nevertheless, monitoring bodies ensure such institutions can establish up to 250 locations without being inspected by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) evaluators. This has raised concern among stakeholders that such uncontrolled expansion will lead to inadequate education programmes. Furthermore, the specific evaluation criteria for distance education institutions and programmes used currently

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are few in number and underdeveloped in light of the risks associated with this kind of provision (OECD, 2018).

India

India's government, over the years, has been extremely cautious with its approach to online learning. In a move to reshape the educational system of India, the government has allowed full online degrees with restricted subject areas to be offered only by the top 100 institutions in India's National Institutional Ranking Framework. Programmes that can be provided are the non-technical courses, which excludes the most popular programmes such as medicine and engineering. India's hesitancy around online accreditation has been warranted; the government highlighted that previously it had allowed only about 20% of the programmes to be online because of concerns regarding the quality of online programmes and limitations in mechanisms for oversight and regulation.

One of the industry leaders in online programmes, Himanshu Rai, the Indian Institute of Management Indore director, stated that education quality would not be compromised during Covid-19. Most institutions were forced to go online and quality remained. Additionally, both Raghav Gupta and Amit Goyal, the managing director of India and the Asia-Pacific region for Coursera and country head of India and Southeast Asia for edX, respectively, pointed out that full online degrees could increase enrolment and completion for India. In addition, it assists India in reaching its vision of 50% of students graduating from high school completing university. Moreover, they articulated that online degrees will likely be offered at a lower cost than face-to-face programmes and will probably appeal to working adults who do not have the time to pursue a traditional on-campus degree.

However, both cautioned that with many institutions favouring the move to online programmes, India faces further concerns from employers regarding recognition of these programmes. This is despite the oath by India's University Grant Commission that it will not compromise on the quality of these online programmes as it is the authority responsible for validating the new online degrees. India still struggles with a huge number of unaccredited institutions in operation, increasing the pressure on the government to clamp down on these institutions. Additionally, India has one of the most vulnerable systems, whereby it is still relatively easy to buy a fake degree certificate (McKenzie, 2020; Niazi, 2021).

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China

In 2016, The Economic Times reported on China grappling with over 400 bogus institutions offering prospective students degrees. The names of these institutions were slightly altered from the names of the accredited institutions, thus using fabricated and outdated accreditation. The report indicated that most of the bogus institutions had websites where their fake certification could be found and verified. The Ministry of Education (MoE) stated that although these institutions were being exposed yearly, it is not hopeful of eradicating them as it is incredibly cheap and easy to fake and make an institution website.

What makes it more difficult to control them is that many of them utilise foreign IP addresses (The Economic Times, 2016). In 2018, China terminated 234 programme partnerships between Chinese and overseas institutions. The MoE highlighted the lack of quality education standards in these partnerships. It was also realised that some of these institutions were unaccredited, and students, therefore, raised questions to MoE if the ministry would recognise programmes provided (Siqu, 2018).

South Korea

The Korean structure resembles that of South Africa; the MoE under Article 4 of the Higher Education Act, 11690 of 2013, is mandated to establish accrediting facilities. Thus, the accreditation of institutions is designated to the Korean University Accreditation Institute (KUAL) in consultation with Korean Council for University Education (KCUE), which does the accreditation process every 5-year period. The accreditation of programmes is reviewed every 5 or six 6 years; it is designed for the professional bodies and other specific curriculum recognised by the MoE to improve quality. The International Education Quality Assurance System (IEQAS) acts similarly to the three South African QCs, and it is designed to enhance international education quality assurance for Korean universities (KARIC, 2020).

4.11.2 Developed countries

United States of America

Smith (2016), in an interview, detailed that unaccredited higher education is undoubtedly a growing trend due to the increasing number of students opting for online learning. Online

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learning does not differentiate between an accredited and an unaccredited institution; over and above, unaccredited online programmes tend to be cheaper and more flexible. Furthermore, Smith indicated that unaccredited programmes have an advantage over accredited programmes because of the restriction aligned to an accredited institution to offer a programme over a certain period for specific credits. With unaccredited programmes not receiving financial aid, the direction has changed in the USA.

However, public perception still matters; these institutions still ought to prove to the public and reviewers that they can offer the same education programme quality as the mainstream accredited institutions. Online enrolment is flat nationwide for the accredited institutions, but the unaccredited institutions are seeing a spike in enrolment. There are views that soon, unaccredited institutions will overtake accredited institutions in enrolment, which is why there is a shift in operations, where the department of education has experimented with partnering accredited and unaccredited institutions together to create financial aid pathways.

United Kingdom

The UK has been experiencing a dilemma whereby universities have been criticised for providing non professionally accredited programmes. It has also been indicated that students find it challenging to find employment. These institutions never make it clear to students that they are unaccredited and leave students stranded post their qualifications. It was raised that the same name qualification is accredited in one institution but unaccredited in another. Therefore, the institution operating with the unaccredited programme commits deception by omission, which the education secretary should take as a serious offence.

Professor Julie Lydon, chair of Universities Wales, said, *“Professional accreditation is not a measure of degree quality or a requirement for awarding a degree”*. She argues that Welsh universities follow a robust quality assurance to ensure competitiveness. She highlighted that there is adequate information in the official UK websites to verify accredited and unaccredited programmes; as such, no blame can be placed on the institutions. However, the Welsh spokesperson declared that *“The accreditation status of a course should always be clear and institutions are not permitted to claim that courses are accredited when they are not”* (Busby, 2018).

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In concluding international reality, there must be collaboration among the ministries of education, police and professional bodies so that the authorised quality assurance structures can curb the prevalence of these unaccredited institutions and programmes. The DHET must introspect continuously; the next decade will be fundamental to how education is viewed. The options made available to students will be essential to future educational pathways.

4.12 Misrepresentation of qualifications in South Africa

The Draft NQF Amendment Act, 12 of 2019 (RSA, 2019) continues to mandate SAQA to advance the NQF's objectives, oversee further development and implementation of the NQF and co-ordinate the NQF Sub-Frameworks. The Draft NQF Amendment Act also confirms SAQA's role in verifying national qualifications and registering any misrepresentation in this regard. SAQA's (2017a) Draft Policy on the Misrepresentation of Qualifications is based on the requirements of the NQF Act, 2008, as amended by the Draft NQF Amendment Act of 2019. This draft policy:

- defines what qualification misrepresentation means
- provides a framework for identifying and reporting offenders
- specifies how information about individuals, providers and entities that misrepresent qualifications will be recorded in the Register of Misrepresented Qualifications that SAQA will keep when the NQF Amendment Act is promulgated
- details the appeals processes open to these providers and individuals
- provides details about how information about offenders found guilty of qualification fraud by a court of law is recorded in the Register of Fraudulent Qualifications
- defines the roles and responsibilities of the different role-players in the education and training landscape regarding the misrepresentation of qualifications.

SAQA's (2017a) Draft Policy on Misrepresentation of Qualifications is relevant to all state organs, employers, education institutions, skills development providers, entities that work with qualifications, Quality Councils and individuals with foreign qualifications who wish to work or study in South Africa. The Draft NQF Amendment Act (RSA, 2019) is expected to be promulgated in the near future. The Draft NQF Amendment Act, may further be strengthened to enable SAQA to implement this Act effectively.

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In SAQA's (2017a) Draft Policy,

- (a) the 'authenticity' of qualification or part-qualification is understood as a qualification or part-qualification that is:
- (i) registered on the NQF
 - (ii) offered by a registered, established, declared or merged and accredited educational institution or skills development provider in terms of the Amended NQF Act or any other applicable law
 - (iii) lawfully obtained
 - (iv) accompanied by an original certificate of the award that has not been tampered with.
- (b) In relation to a foreign qualification, it means a qualification or part-qualification that is lawfully obtained from a recognised institution in the education and training system of a foreign country that has been evaluated by the SAQA in terms of the NQF Act, 2008 as amended, and recognised.

'Foreign qualification' means a qualification that:

- forms an intrinsic part of an education and training system other than that in South Africa, and is awarded by an institution that is accredited or recognised in that system, in accordance with the relevant laws, policies or generally accepted practice; or
- meets other specific criteria as determined and published by SAQA.

A fraudulent qualification or part-qualification is a qualification or part-qualification that, through SAQA's verification or evaluation process, has been forged or awarded in contravention of the NQF Act, 2008, as amended, and has been declared such by a court of law. A misrepresented qualification or part-qualification is a qualification or part-qualification that is not authentic or where the certification of award or SAQA evaluation has been tampered with. These draft conceptualisations will be sharpened in the published versions of the policy (SAQA, 2017a).

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4.12.1 South African Qualifications Authority

Note on SAQA's qualification misrepresentation statistics

SAQA verifies the authenticity of national and international qualifications and evaluates foreign qualifications in line with its mandate (RSA, 2008b) – this work is described in Sections 1 and 4.8 of this report. When misrepresentation is identified in relation to a qualification, the incident is recorded and investigated. Once the related legal processes have been completed, SAQA enters the misrepresented qualification in a register. At present, this register is submitted to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology but is not published for public use; such registers may be published and publicly available in the future. When a case of misrepresentation is identified, SAQA notifies the relevant entities, which may include a professional body.

SAQA evaluated 526 foreign engineering qualifications at NQF Levels 5–10 in the 9 months during which data was gathered for the current research, namely, January to September 2021. In all, SAQA received and recorded five misrepresented qualifications in this period and notified ECSA accordingly.

SAQA evaluation of engineering qualifications

Data on the SAQA evaluation of engineering qualifications was extracted from the NQF MIS for the period during which data was gathered for the current research, namely, January to September 2021. The data was analysed in terms of:

- numbers of evaluations per month
- numbers of evaluations per HEQSF level
- numbers of evaluations by country
- numbers of evaluations for the purpose of evaluation.

The results of these analyses are shown in Figure 4 – Figure 7 that follow.

Figure 4 shows the numbers of evaluations by month.

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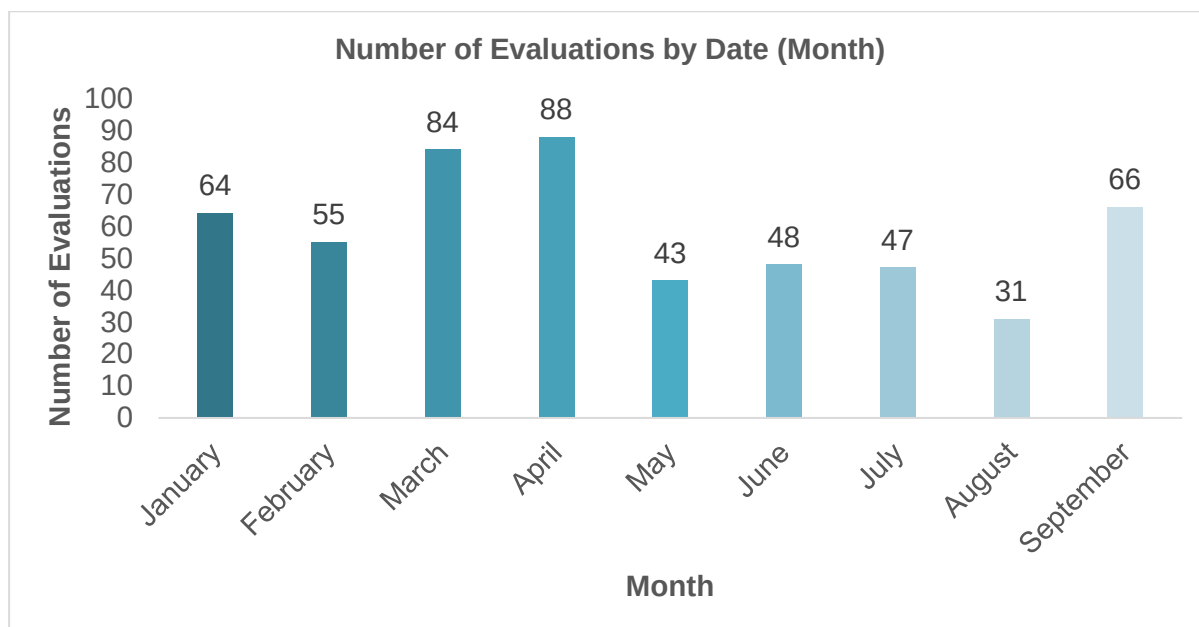


Figure 4: Evaluations done by SAQA for engineering qualifications by date (months in 2021)
(Source: NQF MIS)

Figure 5 shows the numbers of foreign qualification evaluations by SAQA, by NQF level, for the months considered in the study. Most of the qualifications were at NQF Level 8 – the level of South African Honours Degrees (see Figure 1 for the types of qualifications at particular South African NQF levels).

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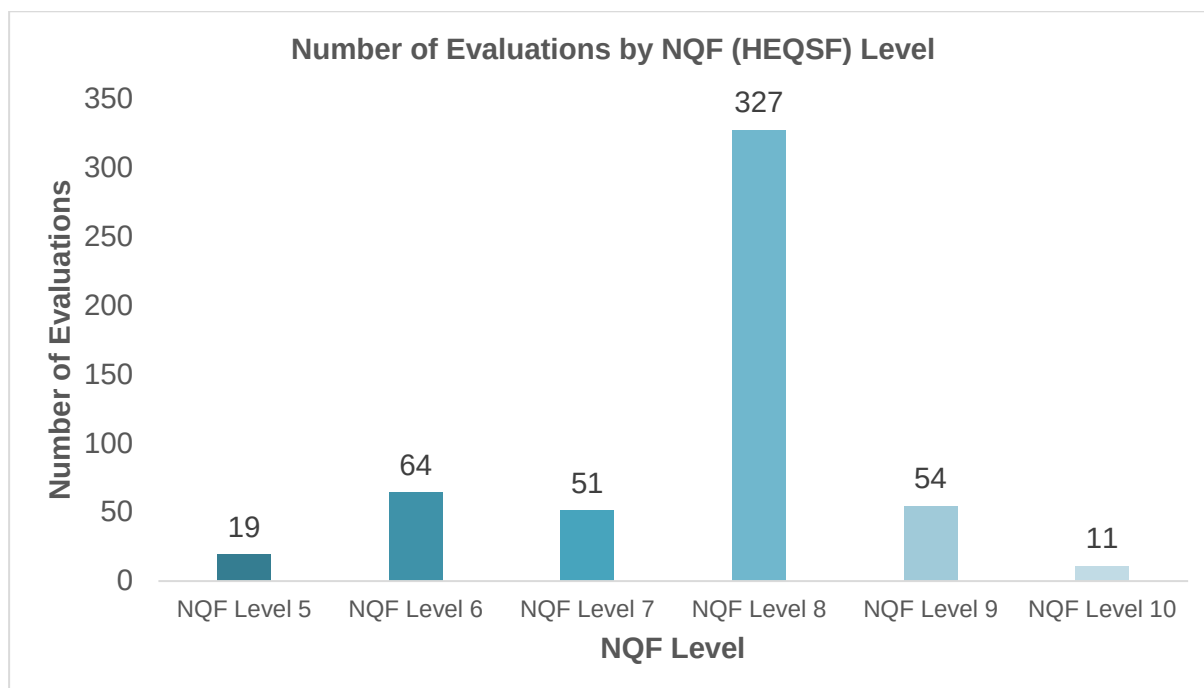


Figure 5: Evaluations done by SAQA for engineering qualifications by NQF (HEQSF) level, January to September 2021

(Source: NQF MIS)

Table 1 and Figure 6 show the numbers of requests for evaluations received by SAQA per country in which the qualifications were obtained. India and Zimbabwe submitted the highest numbers of qualifications for evaluation. There were also considerable numbers of qualifications from Nigeria, the Peoples' Republic of China and the United Kingdom. There were under 20 qualifications submitted from 47 further countries, from 41 of which there were fewer than 10 submissions, with 33 of these countries having under five submissions.

Table 1: Evaluations done by SAQA for engineering qualifications by country, January to September 2021

Country	Evaluation count
India	116
Zimbabwe	104
Nigeria	47
China, Peoples Republic of	37

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Country	Evaluation count
United Kingdom	27
Australia	17
Congo, Democratic Republic of	14
Lesotho	14
United States of America	13
Cuba	12
Malaysia	11
Iran	9
Pakistan	9
Botswana	7
Brazil	6
France	6
Zambia	6
Italy	5
Mozambique	5
Turkey	5
Canada	4
Kenya	4
Namibia	4
Sudan (North)	4
Cameroon	3
Ethiopia	3
Portugal	3
Colombia	2
Russia	2
Swaziland	2
Switzerland	2
Uganda	2
Argentina	1

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Country	Evaluation count
Belarus	1
Egypt	1
Germany	1
Ghana	1
Hungary	1
Israel	1
Japan	1
Jordan	1
Kazakhstan	1
Korea, South	1
Netherlands	1
New Zealand	1
Palestinian Territory, Occupied	1
Rwanda	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Spain	1
Tanzania	1
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Tunisia	1
United Arab Emirates	1

(Source: NQF MIS)

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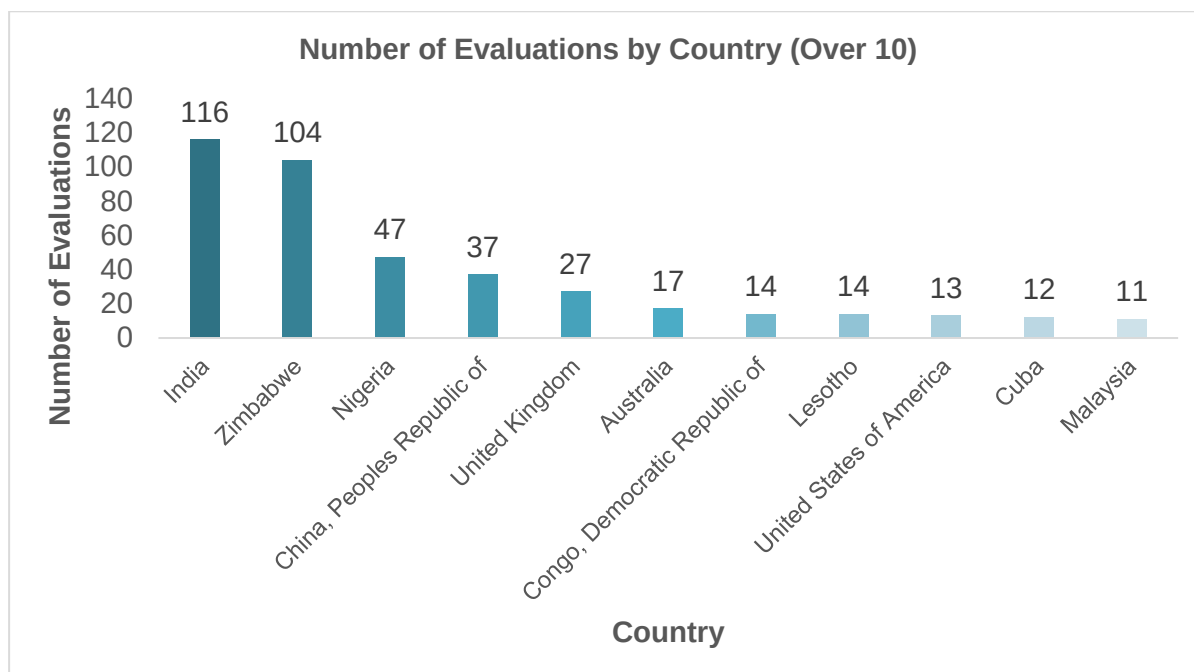


Figure 6: Evaluations done by SAQA for engineering qualifications by country, for countries with over 10 evaluations, January to September 2021

(Source: NQF MIS)

Figure 7 shows the numbers of foreign qualifications evaluated by the purpose for which the evaluations were requested. Figure 7 shows that the main purposes for which foreign qualification evaluations were requested were for:

- employment
- study
- employment, study and facilitating learning-and-work pathways and professional development
- employment and facilitating learning-and-work pathways and professional development
- facilitating learning-and-work pathways and professional development.

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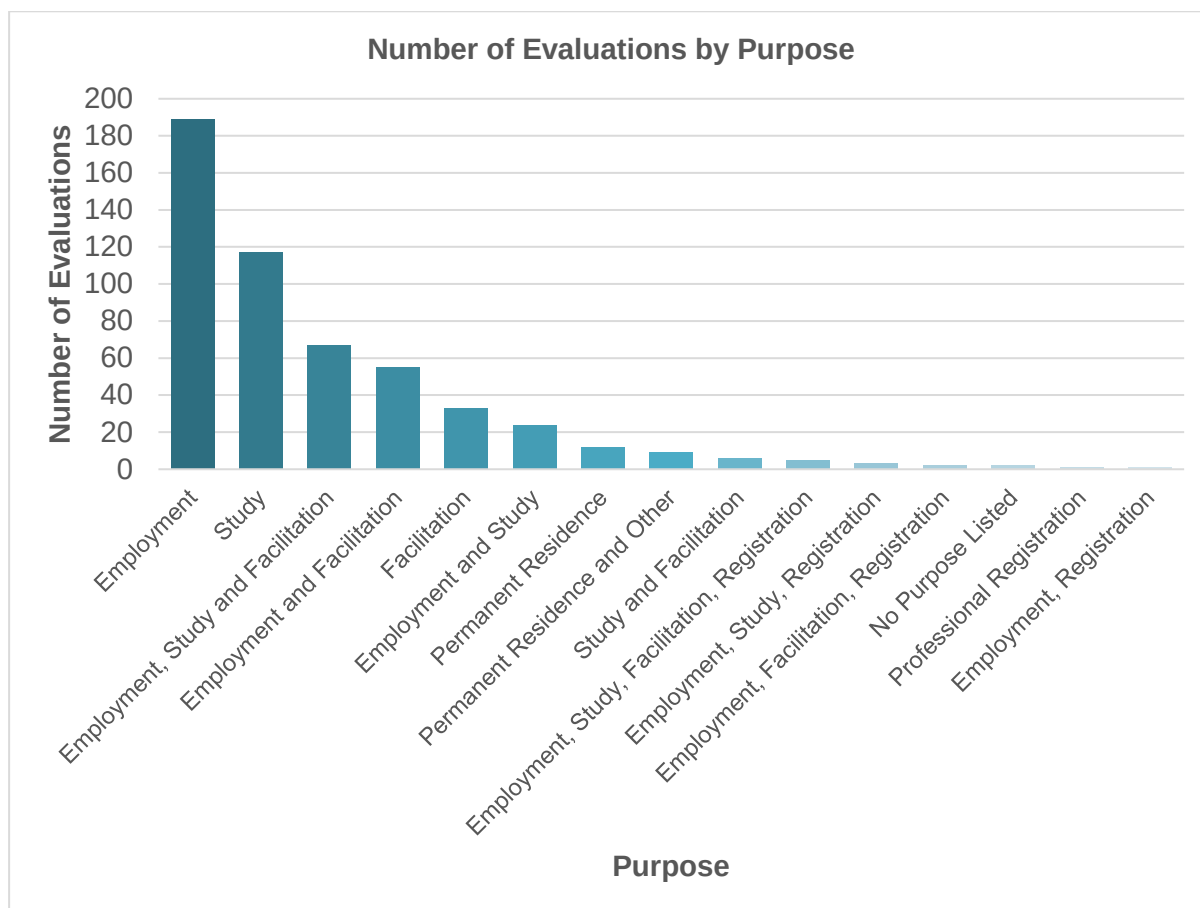


Figure 7: Numbers of evaluations done by SAQA for engineering qualifications by purpose of evaluation, January to September 2021

(Source: NQF MIS)

From the document review, the following tools can and must be used by ECSA when it identifies and addresses misrepresentation:

- The NQF Act (RSA, 2008b)
- The NQF Amendment Act (RSA, 2019), when promulgated
- The NQF policy suite (SAQA, 2014; 2017a; 2017b; 2019;) and the related Quality Council policies – that includes the policy for developing, registering and publishing qualifications, in which professional bodies play a role
- The quality assurance processes of the three Quality Councils that include professional body quality assurance roles

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- The DHET's lists of registered private providers
- The NQF MIS that includes (a) the NLRD – qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the NQF, learning achievements against these qualifications and part-qualifications, and related information including the providers accredited/ registered to offer these qualifications, (b) registers of recognised professional bodies and their professional designations, and (c) information on SAQA's qualification verifications and evaluations – all of which contain information on recognised bodies and qualifications.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN FINDINGS

The environmental scan was conducted in four major South African provinces, namely:

- Eastern Cape
- Western Cape
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Gauteng.

5.1 Environmental scan of institutions of higher learning per province

5.1.1 Eastern Cape

Personnel from the following institutions were interviewed:

- Port Elizabeth TVET College
- Cape Business & Engineering College
- Nelson Mandela University
- Damelin College.

5.1.2 Western Cape

Personnel from the following institutions were interviewed:

- University of Cape Town
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- College of Cape Town
- Kingsway College

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- Northlink College
- Central Technical College
- Stellenbosch University
- Boland College – Stellenbosch campus
- Oxbridge Academy.

5.1.3 KwaZulu-Natal

Personnel from the following institutions were interviewed:

- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- Durban University of Technology
- Berea Technical College
- Umbilo Private Technical College (FET)
- Thekwini City College (FET)
- Howard FET College
- Central Technical College
- Damelin College
- Umgungundlovu TVET College MIDLANDS CAMPUS
- Damelin College – Pietermaritzburg Campus
- Intec College.

5.1.4 Gauteng

Personnel from the following institutions were interviewed:

- Engineering Institute of Technology
- University of South Africa
- University of Witwatersrand
- University of Johannesburg
- University of Pretoria
- Gauteng City College
- Johannesburg Institute of Engineering and Technology (TVET) College
- Wamalloy Engineering College (Pty) Ltd

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- Immaculate College of Commerce and Engineering
- Nichrist Institute of Management and Engineering Technology
- Pretoria West College of Engineering
- Academic Institute of Excellence
- South Africa Institute of Science and Technology
- Technicol SA College
- Vaal University of Technology
- Melwood Institute of Technology (Pty) Ltd.

5.2 Findings cluster

The findings have been structured into three categories, namely:

- Misrepresented programmes
- Unaccredited programmes by established public universities
- Programmes provided by TVET and private colleges from NQF level 5 and above.

5.3 Misrepresented programmes

In this context, misrepresented programmes are defined as an incorrect statement of fact or law made by one person to another (natural or juristic). Qualifications have been misrepresented if:

- the provider is not registered and/or accredited by the relevant authority
- the qualification is not registered by the relevant authority or does not form part of a national system of education, or
- the advertisement made for the particular qualification is misleading the public, i.e. if the institution advertises that a professional body accredits it while that is not the case.

From the above definition, the following institutions mentioned in Table 2 offer misrepresented programmes.

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Table 2: Institutions offering misrepresented engineering qualifications

Institution	NQF
Melwood Institute of Technology (Pty) Ltd	5, 6 & 7
Engineering Institute of Technology	6 & 7

Melwood Institute of Technology (Pty) Ltd provides engineering programmes from NQF levels 5 to 7 but does not have a website and the advertisement is only on Facebook. From the DHET report, this institution should not be operating since it has been labelled as a bogus institution (DHET, 2020b).

Similarly, the Engineering Institute of Technology is offering a misrepresented engineering qualification since it is advertising its qualification using ECSA in an unclear manner. The following statement is on its website

“The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) aims to promote a high level of education and training of practitioners in the engineering profession. Members may be able to claim CPD hours for EIT programs as part of Category 3, ‘individual activities’, and should contact ECSA for procedures. ECSA is also a signatory to the Dublin Accord, an international agreement which provides international professional recognition of selected programs” (EIT, 2021).

However, ECSA does not mandate the Engineering Institute of Technology to advertise on its behalf, and there is no MoU between the two institutions. In addition, ECSA has not accredited any of the engineering programmes of this institution to date.

5.3.1 Unaccredited programmes by established public universities

Unaccredited programmes are those engineering programmes/qualifications that are unaccredited by ECSA. Institutions offering unaccredited engineering qualifications are presented in Table 3.

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Table 3: Institution offering unaccredited engineering qualifications

Institution	NQF
Nelson Mandela University	5

Nelson Mandela University is legally established and all its programmes are accredited except Renewal Energy and Mechatronics at the Higher Certificate (NQF level 5).

According to the prospectus of the Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology, the Higher Certificate in Mechatronics is primarily vocational, but with a high conceptual focus and balance between theoretical and practical integration, providing graduates with the required knowledge, skills, and attributes to operate effectively in a supporting role to artisans, technicians, technologists and engineers in the field of Mechatronics in automated manufacturing industries. While it states that the Higher Certificate in Renewal Energy is designed to train people to a pre-artisan level for the renewable energy field, graduates will be able to competently assist artisans, technicians, technologists and engineers working in the renewable energy sector.

However, ECSA's Qualification Standard for the Higher Certificate in Engineering: NQF Level 5 (E-07-SC) makes provision for these qualifications to be accredited (ECSA, 2020c).

5.3.2 Programmes provided by TVET and private colleges from NQF level 5 and above

The number of programmes provided by TVET and private colleges from NQF level 5 and above are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Institutions offering engineering qualifications

Province	City	Institutions (NQF Level 5)	Institutions (NQF Level 6)
Eastern Cape	Gqeberha (former Port Elizabeth)	1	–
Western Cape	Cape Town	2	1
KwaZulu-Natal	Durban	2	2
	Pietermaritzburg	2	–
Gauteng	Johannesburg	7	1
	Pretoria	2	–

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Although ECSA does not accredit these programmes; they constitute a pool of potential Candidate Engineering Technicians if they meet the registration requirements.

6. CONCLUSIONS

To determine the extent of unaccredited programmes, desktop research coupled with site visits has been conducted. The findings show that all the base qualifications/programmes provided by established public universities are accredited by ECSA except the Higher Certificate. From the private universities, only the Independent Institute of Education Monash South Africa (IIE MSA) has engineering programmes accredited by ECSA for the period under investigation. While the majority of the private colleges operate legally, the study found that two colleges have misrepresented qualifications. It was also found that a number of TVET and private engineering institutions providing NQF levels 5 to 6 will contribute to the growth of the engineering profession if they follow the prescribed registration pathway.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the environmental scan of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa, the following recommendations may be considered.

- (a) ECSA needs to utilise the opportunity of accrediting engineering programmes offered by the private colleges as they are registered by DHET, which is an added advantage for ECSA.
- (b) SAQA has developed a draft policy for the misrepresentation of qualifications (SAQA, 2017a) that will be published as appropriate after the promulgation of the NQF Amendment Act (RSA, 2019). ECSA needs to operate within the framework of this policy and can expect to be notified by SAQA should SAQA identify misrepresentation in the engineering sector, based on its qualification verification and evaluation processes.
- (c) ECSA should regularly engage with SAQA, Quality Councils, DHET and providers of education and training to discuss and pursue instances of misrepresentation of which these entities may be aware.

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- (d) ECSA should fully implement the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, allowing TVET graduates with experience and further training to register as professionals.
- (e) ECSA should consider accrediting programmes offered by TVET and private institutions from NQF level 5 and above.
- (f) ECSA should scan the environment after 5 years parallel to the accreditation cycle.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ECSA Accredited programmes per institution

Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
University of Cape Town	BSc (Eng) Chemical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Civil		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Electrical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mechanical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mechanical and Mechatronic		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mechatronic		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Electrical and Computer		Yes
University of KwaZulu-Natal	BSc (Eng) Electrical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mechanical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Chemical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Agricultural	Bioresources Engineering	Yes
	BSc (Eng) Electronic		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Civil		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Computer Engineering		Yes
Nelson Mandela University	BEng Mechatronics		Interim
	BEng Tech Civil Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical Engineering		Yes
	BEng Industrial Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechanical Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Marine Engineering		Yes

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Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
North West University	BEng Chemical		Yes
	BEng Chemical with specialization in Minerals Engineering		Yes
	BEng Electrical and Electronic		Yes
	BEng (Computer & Electronic Eng)		Yes
	BEng Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Electromechanical Engineering		Yes
	BEng Industrial		Interim
	BEng Mechatronic		Yes
University of Pretoria	BEng Civil		Yes
	BEng Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Industrial		Yes
	BEng Mining		Yes
	BEng Chemical		Yes
	BEng Electrical		Yes
	BEng Metallurgical		Yes
	BEng Electronic		Yes
	BEng Computer Engineering		Yes
University of Johannesburg	BEng Civil		Yes
	BEng Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Electrical and Electronic		Yes
	BEng Electrical and Electronic with endorsement information		Yes
	BEng Tech Civil		Yes

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Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
	BEng Tech Chemical		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical		Yes
	BEng Tech Industrial		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Tech Extraction Metallurgy		Yes
	BEng Tech Physical Metallurgy		Yes
	BEng Tech Mining		Yes
Stellenbosch University	BEng Chemical Engineering		Yes
	BEng Mechanical Engineering		Yes
	BEng Civil Engineering		Yes
	BEng Industrial Engineering		Yes
	BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering		Interim
	BEng Mechatronic		Yes
University of the Witwatersrand	BSc (Eng) Metallurgy		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Chemical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Civil		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Electrical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mechanical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Mining		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Aeronautical		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Industrial		Yes
	BSc (Eng) Metallurgical and Materials		Yes

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	BSc (Eng) Electrical - Information option		Yes
	BEngSc Biomedical		Yes
University of South Africa	BEng Tech Chemical		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical – option Power Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical – option Telecommunications Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Industrial		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Tech Mining		Yes
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	BEng Tech Electrical		Yes
	BEng Tech Civil		Yes
	BEng Tech Computer		Yes
	BEng Tech Hons Chemical		Yes
	PGDip Mechanical		Yes
	PGDip Mechanical – option Mechatronics		Yes
	Adv Dip Industrial		Yes
	Adv Dip Mechanical – option Renewable Energy		Yes
Tshwane University of Technology	BEng Tech Civil		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechatronic		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical		Yes

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Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
	Electrical Engineering Diploma		Yes
	BEng Tech Industrial		Yes
	BEng Tech Chemical		Yes
	BEng Tech Materials Engineering – option Polymer Technology		Yes
	BEng Tech Metallurgical		Yes
Durban University of Technology	BEng Tech Civil		Yes
	BEng Tech Mechanical		Yes
	BEng Tech Power Engineering		Yes
	BEng Tech Electronic		Yes
	BEng Tech Hons: Chemical		Provisional
	BEng Tech Industrial Engineering		Yes
Central University of Technology	Mechanical Engineering (Dip Eng Tech and BEng Tech)		Yes
	Civil Engineering (Dip Eng Tech and BEng Tech)		Yes
	Dip Eng Tech Electrical		Yes
	BEng Tech Electrical		Provisional
Mangosuthu University of Technology	Diploma in Civil Engineering		Yes
	Chemical Engineering (Diploma and Advanced Dip)		Yes
	Diploma in Electrical Engineering		Yes
	Diploma in Mechanical Engineering		Yes
	Civil Engineering		Yes

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Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
	(Diploma and Advanced Dip)		
Walter Sisulu University	Mechanical Engineering (Diploma and Advanced Dip)		Yes
	Electrical Engineering (Diploma and Advanced Dip)		Yes
IIE MSA	BEng Electrical and Electronic		Yes
	BEng Mechanical		Yes
Vaal University of Technology		Chemical Engineering (Diploma to DEng)	Yes
		Civil Engineering (Diploma to DEng)	Yes
		Electrical Engineering (Electronics) (Diploma to DEng)	Yes
		Electrical Engineering (Power) (Diploma to DEng)	Yes
		Electrical Engineering (Process Control) (Diploma to DEng)	Yes
		Industrial Engineering and Operations Management (Diploma to MEng)	Yes
		Mechanical Engineering (Diploma to DEng)	Yes

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Institution	ECSA – Accredited Programme (2021)	Institution Programmes	Accredited Yes/No
		Metallurgical Engineering (Diploma to MEng)	Yes

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APPENDIX B: List of private institutions with NQF level 5 and 6 not accredited by ECSA

Gauteng

Institution	NQF
Gauteng City College	5
Johannesburg Institute of Engineering and Technology (TVET) College	5
Immaculate College of Commerce and Engineering	5
Pretoria West College of Engineering	5
Academic Institute of Excellence	5
Nichrist Institute of Management and Engineering Technology	5
South Africa Institute Of Science And Technology	5
Wamalloy Engineering College (Pty) Ltd	5
Technicol SA College	5
Engineering Academy	6

Eastern Cape

Institution	NQF
Port Elizabeth TVET College	4
Cape Business & Engineering College	5

Western Cape

Institution	NQF
College of Cape Town	5
Kingsway College	5
Central Technical College -Cape Town	6

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KwaZulu-Natal

Institution	NQF
Umbilo Private Technical College (FET)	5
Thekwini City College (FET)	5
Umgungundlovu TVET College MIDLANDS CAMPUS	5
Intec College	5
Central Technical College – Durban	6
Berea Technical College	6

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	Revision Date	Revision Details	Approved By
Draft A	1 April 2021	A complete report from the Research Business Unit	MB Mtshali
Draft B	4 April 2021	Customization to ECSA format and preparation for approval by RPSC	MB Mtshali
Rev. 0	12 April 2022	Consideration and approval	RPSC
Rev. 0	23 June 2022	Consideration and approval	Council

Research Report on Environmental Scan to Determine the Prevalence of Unaccredited Engineering Programmes

Revision 0, dated 12 April 2022, consisting of 75 pages, was reviewed for adequacy by the Business Unit Manager and approved by the Acting Executive: Research, Policy and Standards (RPS).



Business Unit Manager

2022/07/19

Date



Acting Executive: RPS

2022/07/20

Date

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