



the dpsa

Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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TO: ALL HEADS OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS

CIRCULAR: REQUEST FOR DEPARTMENTS TO UNDERTAKE BULK VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYEE QUALIFICATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

1. The Department of Public Service and Administration (the **dpsa**) has been involved in a number of interventions to improve the quality of Human Resources Management and Development in the Public Service. Many departments have been verifying qualifications independently through a variety of processes, some of which involve private service providers. This process, although successful to some extent, does not provide a holistic or cost effective approach in terms of time frames and the size and scale of the public service. Furthermore, although this approach may be beneficial to individual departments in the short term, it is not beneficial to the Public Service as a whole over the longer term as services rendered by service providers are being duplicated resulting in a waste of resources. As part of ongoing efforts to improve on efficiency and to enhance capacity to perform this function optimally, the **dpsa** has identified the “*bulk verification of qualifications*” service offered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as a possible solution.
2. The **dpsa** hereby requests all departments to utilize the bulk verification service offered by SAQA for the verification of existing employees’ qualifications. The verification of the qualifications of new employees should continue to be

undertaken on an individual basis. The bulk verification should be undertaken with a view to reaching the following objectives:

- a. To assist in improving the reliability of PERSAL data and complement the efforts already undertaken by the HR Connect programme in this regard.
 - b. To establish a comprehensive and reliable aggregated database of the qualifications of public service employees. It is foreseen that the database will be utilized to promote more effective planning and decision-making within Departments.
3. The bulk verification is also meant to assist in the security checks which came into effect on 1 January 2008 and which were derived from the National Security Strategy. However, security vetting should continue to be undertaken on a case-by-case basis.
4. SAQA administers the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD), which has been used to record and verify the achievements of learners for a number of years. The NLRD records educational achievement according to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), for which SAQA is the national overseer. The NLRD is the most comprehensive database in the country for this information. Employees' qualifications should be verified against the following data, currently available on the NLRD, i.e. **only achievements that fall within the following should be submitted (noting that SAQA will also charge for all records submitted and not found):**
- a. South African public university achievements from 1986 to up to 2004 (data for 2005 and 2006 is expected in the near future).
 - b. South African 'technikon' achievements from 1999 to 2004 (technikon data for earlier years will eventually also be present).
 - c. Information from non-based Education Training and Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies (SETA ETQAs).

- d. Senior certificates matching (this is undertaken for SAQA by Umalusi, a statutory organization which monitors the quality of general and further education and training in South Africa).
5. **Annexure A** contains more information on the costing involved in requesting SAQA to undertake the bulk verification of qualifications.
6. SAQA does not provide a verification service for foreign qualifications, and Departments will have to contact the issuing institutions directly. After the authenticity of the foreign qualification has been confirmed, it should be referred to SAQA's Centre for Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ) for evaluation. CEEQ evaluates foreign qualifications in order to determine their appropriate placing within the South African educational qualifications context i.e. in terms of Qualification type and NQF level.
7. Some Departments have already entered into agreements with private companies with a view to verifying the qualifications of new and potential employees. We are mindful that contractual obligations with such institutions should be honoured. However, no further agreements should be entered into with such private companies and such practices should be terminated with immediate effect upon expiry of the contract and such Departments should approach SAQA with regard to the verification of qualifications for all employees as described above.
8. The bulk verification should be undertaken by no later than the 1 November 2009. Departments will be able to approach the **dpsa** upon the completion of the bulk verification to access the information in the aggregated database. This should be done on the understanding that the **dpsa** did not generate the data internally but relied on the third party for its provision.
9. Comments and completed bulk verification reports per department as well as individual verification reports should be submitted to the **dpsa** in electronic format

and directed to hrp@dpsa.gov.za. The purpose of this is to establish a comprehensive and accessible aggregate database of the qualifications of Public Service employees.

10. Departments are requested to contact SAQA directly regarding the processes to be undertaken and adhered to for the "bulk verification" process. In addition, questions regarding the verification process can be directed to SAQA at:

Tel.: 012 431-5155

Fax.: 012 431-5051

Email: verifications@saqa.org.za)

Questions concerning the evaluation of foreign qualifications can be directed to CEEQ (Tel.: 012 421-5004).

11. In view of the importance of the project at national level and the benefits that will accrue from a uniform skills agenda and accurate human resources base line data, it would be appreciated if implementation of the project is driven at the highest level within participating Departments. To this end, your leadership and oversight is kindly requested.

Your co-operation is appreciated.



DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 25/5/09

ANNEXURE A

1. The costing involved in requesting SAQA to undertake the bulk verifications of the qualification of Public Service employees is as follows:
 - (a) The costs involved will be carried by individual departments.
 - (b) The bulk verification service will cost R1.00 per record, where one record consists of one person-to-qualification match. The senior certificate matching will cost 75 cents per person (if 500 000 records are matched for example, the cost = R375 000).
 - (c) The minimum charge for a single verification exercise will be R 5000, even if there are less than 5000 records.
 - (d) Bulk Senior Certificate matching is done separately from the rest, also with a minimum of R 5000 per verification exercise.
 - (e) Departments will also need to submit detailed information about the employees and their qualifications records. The information will be required in an Access File or Excel Spreadsheet. Codes (supplied by SAQA) are required to be used for qualification type, field and provider. If SAQA undertakes the coding operation, it will cost an additional 30 cents per record.
2. The above mentioned pricing structure was generated by SAQA and is subject to change from time to time.
3. If the data is submitted to SAQA in the required format and correctly coded, the verification of qualifications takes between six and eight weeks. SAQA can be requested to undertake the coding, at additional cost, and this process will take between three and four months, after which the actual verification will take place. If there are issues which require recoding or re-checking of data, it will extend the duration of project. However, the extra required time will be determined by the complexity of the issues to be resolved.