



**DIRECTIVE ON THE VERIFICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE
EMPLOYEES' QUALIFICATIONS BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN
QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

(AS AMENDED: 2011)

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 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. This specifically includes ensuring that the qualifications held by Public Service employees are verified. Many departments have been verifying qualifications independently through a variety of means and processes. These efforts were initially limited to new employees and have occasionally been rolled out to include existing employees.
- 1.2 Although successful to some extent, this process did not provide a holistic or cost-effective approach in terms of time frames and the size and scale of the Public Service. The verification process was found to be highly fragmented: Departments were managing service providers individually, and a shared government-wide methodology was absent.
- 1.3. 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.
- 1.4 Against this background, the DPSA issued a Circular entitled 'Request for Departments to Undertake the Bulk Verification of Employee Qualifications with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)' ('the Circular') which requested Departments to undertake the bulk verification of employees' qualifications with SAQA, on 25 May 2009.
- 1.5 In order to assist Departments to undertake the verifications of employees' qualifications, the DPSA introduced a number of additional measures between June and December 2009. These measures included furnishing departments with additional information to clarify and to assist with the implementation of Directive contained in the Circular. Hence the need arose to inform Departments of all aspects related to the verification of qualifications of Public Service employees by SAQA, and to ensure its successful implementation, in the form of a Directive.

2. AUTHORISATION

- 2.1 This Directive is issued by the Minister for Public Service and Administration in terms of section 41 (3) of the Public Service Act, 1994 as amended by Act 30 of 2007 to supplement Regulation D 8 (b) of Part VII of Chapter 1 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended.

2.2 This Directive amends the Directive on the Verification of Public Service employee's qualifications by the South African Qualifications Authority, that was issued with effect from 01 March 2010 by the Minister for Public service and Administration.

3. COMMENCEMENT

3.1 This Directive takes effect on 1 March 2011.

4. OBJECTIVES OF VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS BY SAQA

4.1 The verification of Public Service employees' qualifications with SAQA is to 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.

4.2 Qualification verification with SAQA 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.

4.3 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.

5. SCOPE OF QUALIFICATION VERIFICATION BY SAQA

5.1 Departments are required to make use of the services offered by SAQA with regard to:

- a) Bulk verification of existing employees' qualifications.
- b) Verification of qualifications of prospective employees.
- c) Evaluation of foreign qualifications.
- d) Verification of qualifications for high level appointments.

5.2 **Annexure A** contains more information on the costing options and relevant contact numbers for each of the service types mentioned above.

6. BULK VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES

6.1 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.

7. SUBMISSION OF QUALIFICATION RECORDS OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES FOR BULK VERIFICATION BY 30 APRIL 2011

7.1 Departments were originally requested to submit the records of existing employees for bulk verification to SAQA by 30 April 2010. The deadline for submission has been extended to 30 April 2011 to afford Departments which were unable to submit the opportunity to do so.

8. VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

8.1 Some Departments have already entered into agreements with private companies with a view to verifying the qualifications of new and potential employees. The DPSA is 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.

8.2 SAQA will verify educational achievements against the NLRD and conduct the necessary fieldwork in order to verify each qualification that does not appear on the NLRD.

8.3 Departments must submit their verification requests on the formats obtained from SAQA. SAQA may also request Departments to supply the following information, if it is deemed necessary for the successful verification of the qualification:

- a) Clarifications or corrections on information submitted.
- b) Copies of certificates.
- c) Copies of Matric certificates if Matric was completed prior to 1992.

8.4 Copies of certificates should not be sent to SAQA when making verification submissions. SAQA will request only those that are required.

8.5 When formulating the verification submissions, Departments are requested to include qualifications obtained, and to exclude enrolments and qualifications that they know to be incomplete. (An enrolment can lead to a qualification being issued at a future date, but is not a qualification achievement and should not be submitted to SAQA for verification).

9. EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

9.1 SAQA will evaluate foreign qualifications with a view to determining the appropriate level of recognition that it should receive within the South African educational qualifications context, i.e. in terms of Qualification type and NQF level. The outcome will be the issuing of an Evaluation Certificate, which contains a security hologram and a unique serial number.

9.2 In this instance, SAQA's turnaround time is connected to its costing structure. Departments should align the time of their submission of foreign qualifications to SAQA with the costing option of their choice.

10. VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR HIGH LEVEL APPOINTMENTS

10.1 After the publication of the Circular, the need emerged for a specialized method for verifying qualifications for high level appointments, when the appointment needs to be approved by Cabinet. This includes appointments on the following levels:

- a) Deputy Directors General.
- b) Heads of Government Components.
- c) Directors General.
- d) Chief Executive Officers and Board Members of Major Public Entities and National Government Business Enterprises, as listed in Schedules 1, 2 and Part B of Schedule 3 of the Public Finances Management Act No.1 of 1999 as amended by Act 29 of 1999.
- e) Commissioners of Constitutional Institutions.

10.2 To this end, the DPSA had arranged that the verification process for appointments of this type be processed through the Office of the Deputy Executive Officer of SAQA. Departments can access this channel by utilizing the contact details provided in **Annexure A**.

10.3 The outcome of this effort will be the provision of a Verification Letter, to be included in the submission for Cabinet approval of the appointment. The Verification Letter will contain a full verification record as well as a recommended statement whereby the qualifications of the candidate can be announced.

10.4 SAQA will also verify foreign qualifications for appointment at this level only.

10.5 SAQA's verification service provides for this type of verification for the Public Service within 72 hours of submission. However, this requires that SAQA be informed, at the inception of the process, that the requested verification forms part of appointment of candidates on the levels mentioned above. In order to allow for the process for the nomination of candidates to proceed in a timely fashion, Departments are requested to undertake verification with SAQA at least one month in advance of the scheduled interview date for the candidate in question.

10.6 The Minister for Public Service and Administration will only process appointments on the above mentioned levels if the nominee's qualifications are verified, and evaluation of foreign qualifications performed, by SAQA. Verification and evaluation checks of qualifications by other institutions will not be accepted.

10.7 This arrangement is mandatory for Departments, Major Public Entities, National Government Business Enterprises, Constitutional Institutions and Government Components in the national sphere. The DPSSA is aware that Provincial Governments adhere to internal policies and practices regarding appointments on the above-mentioned levels. However, Provincial Governments can utilize this channel voluntarily, and can contact SAQA should they opt to do so.

11 PROCESS FOR QUALIFICATION VERIFICATION AND EVALUATION

11.1 Departments are requested to contact SAQA directly, using the contact numbers shown in **Annexure A**, regarding the processes to be undertaken and adhered to for each of the services described above.

ANNEXURE A

1. CONTACT NUMBERS

The contact numbers for the qualification verification services offered by SAQA are as follows:

1.1 Bulk Verification and Individual Verification for Prospective Employees

Contact Person: Yvonne Shapiro
Email: Verifications@saqa.org.za
Tel: 012 431 5155
Fax: 012 431 5051

1.2 Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

Contact Person: Nadina Coetzee
Email: verifypublicservice@saqa.org.za
Tel: 012 431 5004
Alternative Contact Person: Joe Samuels
Tel: 012 431 5027
Fax: 012 431 5039

1.3 Verification of Qualifications for High Level Appointments

Contact Person: Joe Samuels
Email: verifypublicservice@saqa.org.za
Tel: 012 431 5027
Fax: 012 431 5039
Alternative Contact Person: Yvonne Shapiro
Tel: 012 431 5027

2. COSTING

The costing options for the qualification verification services offered by SAQA are shown below. These are subject to change from time to time and Departments are urged to contact SAQA to confirm the costing options prior to initiating the budgeting process for the type of verification service required.

The costs involved will be carried by individual Departments. Departments are urged to comply with the PFMA when settling the verifications costs and make payments on time (preferably within 30 days of invoicing by SAQA).

2.1 Bulk Verification

- a) 'Bulk verification' refers to a submission of more than 125 records where one record consists of one person to qualification match.
- b) The bulk verification service costs R30 per record.
- c) The minimum charge for a single bulk verification exercise is R6000 and a further R6000 if 125 or more of these are Matric verifications.

2.2 Individual Verification for Prospective Employees

- a) 'Individual verification' refers to a submission of 125 or less records where one record consists of one person to qualification match.
- b) Individual verification will cost R30 per record.

2.3 Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

- a) Departments should align the time of their submission of foreign qualifications to SAQA with the costing option of their choice. The options are:
 - i. Delivery within 48 hours: R1 390.00
 - ii. Delivery within 10 working days: R 970.00
 - iii. Delivery within 20 working days: R 590.00
 - iv. Delivery within 30 working days: R 390.00

2.4 Verification of Qualifications for High Level Appointments

- a) This service will cost R30 per record, with a minimum cost of R100 per letter (for each candidate for whom qualification verification has to be undertaken).
- b) Submissions must be for 6 candidates or fewer.