



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

(AS AMENDED: 2015)

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.
- 1.2 Against this background, the DPSA issued on 25 May 2009 a Circular entitled 'Request for Departments to Undertake the Bulk Verification of Employee Qualifications with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) which requested departments to undertake the bulk verification of employees' qualifications with SAQA. The aim was to ensure that the qualifications of all employees already employed are verified and to establish the Public Service qualifications database.
- 1.3 The verification of qualifications by SAQA was later extended to include other categories (thus, verification for prospective employees, Cabinet appointments and evaluation of foreign qualifications). 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.
- 1.4 The first Directive was issued in 2010 and later reviewed in 2011.

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 (Proclamation 104 of 1994) to supplement Regulation D. 8 of Part VII of Chapter 1 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended.
- 2.2 This Directive replaces the Directive on the Verification of Public Service employees' qualifications by the South African Qualifications Authority that was issued with effect from 01 March 2011 by the Minister for Public Service and Administration.

3. COMMENCEMENT

3.1 This Directive takes effect on 1 October 2015

4. OBJECTIVES OF VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 The verification of Public Service employees' qualifications is to be undertaken with a view to reaching the following objectives:

- a) To assist in improving the reliability of data on qualifications captured on systems such as PERSAL.
- b) To establish a comprehensive and reliable aggregated database of the qualifications of Public Service employees in respect of qualifications verified by SAQA.

4.2 The verification of qualifications is also meant to assist in the implementation of the vetting strategy and to identify possible fraudulent qualifications or any misrepresentation by employees and individuals applying for positions in the Public Service, in terms of the qualifications that they claim to possess.

5. SCOPE OF VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

5.1 Departments are required to verify and/ or evaluate qualifications of prospective/ serving employees with regard to:

- a) South African / national qualifications
- b) Foreign qualifications
- c) High level appointments.

5.2 **Annexure A** contains more information on the relevant contact details for each of the service types mentioned above.

6. VERIFICATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROSPECTIVE /SERVING EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 Departments must use SAQA for the verification of qualifications of prospective/ serving employees. Where SAQA confirms that it cannot verify a qualification and such a qualification is not material in relation to the inherent requirements and employment conditions of the job and was not material in the selection process, departments are allowed discretion as to whether they wish to pursue further verification.
- 6.2 SAQA will verify national educational achievements against the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) and conduct the necessary fieldwork in order to verify each qualification that does not appear on the NLRD. Standardised priority categories with clearly defined timeframes for verification of all qualifications per individual have been developed. Priority areas have been introduced by SAQA with a specific turnaround time linked to the finalization of the verification of an individual's qualifications and a price structure. Departments should align their verification submissions with SAQA's verification categories and timeframes.
- 6.3 SAQA will from time to time publish the protocol to follow and it may include specific formats to be complied with when submitting verification requests. SAQA may if it is deemed necessary for the successful verification of a qualification, also request departments to supply additional candidate/employee information such as copies of certificates and /or other documentation.
- 6.4 When formulating the verification submissions, departments must only include qualifications obtained, and exclude enrolments and qualifications that they know to be incomplete. (Note: An enrolment may 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 as these instances could potentially be classified as misrepresentations). Departments must also exclude submissions of short courses and professional designations.

7. EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

7.1 Evaluation of foreign qualifications includes both verification and comparison. SAQA will therefore evaluate foreign qualifications with a view to determining:

- a) their validity; and
- b) the appropriate level of recognition that each should receive within the South African educational qualifications context, i.e. in terms of its NQF level, which will be indicated on a SAQA Certificate of Evaluation.

8. VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR HIGH LEVEL APPOINTMENTS

8.1 This category includes verification of qualifications of employees for high level appointments that need to be approved by Cabinet. This includes appointments for:

- a) Deputy Directors General;
- b) Heads of Government Components;
- c) Directors General; and
- d) Ministerial Advisors.

8.2 The number of people whose qualifications must be verified must not exceed (6) per request.

8.3 SAQA must receive the request at least one month before presentation to Cabinet.

8.4 SAQA's verification service for South African qualifications provides for this type of verification for the Public Service to be concluded within 72 hours of submission.

8.5 The Minister for Public Service and Administration will only process appointments on the above mentioned levels if the nominee's qualifications, in the case of local qualifications and/or the evaluation of foreign qualifications have been verified by SAQA. Verification and Evaluation checks of qualifications by other service providers/ institutions will not be accepted.

9. BULK VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF EXISTING EMPLOYEES

Departments were originally requested to submit the records of existing employees for bulk verification to SAQA by 30 April 2011. Notwithstanding this, departments may still request SAQA to verify the qualifications of employees that have, as yet, not been verified.

10. INSTANCES WHERE AN EMPLOYEE OR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEE PROVIDES A VERIFICATION / EVALUATION STATEMENT

10.1 In instances where an employee or prospective employee provides a verification and / or evaluation statement issued by SAQA or any other verification agency, Departments must either confirm such statements issued by SAQA or verify the qualification (issued by other verification agencies) with SAQA.

11. PROCESS FOR VERIFICATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

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

12. COSTING

12.1 VERIFICATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

12.1.1 The costing options for the qualification verification services offered are as published by SAQA from time to time and are subject to change. SAQA's turnaround time is linked to its price structure. SAQA will determine the prices according to its service standards and in line with its cost recovery policy.

12.1.2 Departments are urged to contact SAQA to confirm the costing options prior to initiating the budgeting and procurement processes for the types of verification services required.

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

12.2 EVALUATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

12.2.1 The costs of evaluation of foreign qualifications is determined by SAQA. Departments must liaise directly with SAQA's Directorate for Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services to determine the costs and service standards.

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

ANNEXURE A

Note: Departments are advised that in instances where a prospective/serving employee has obtained both national and foreign qualifications, such verification requests should be sent to SAQA as separate verification applications in terms of the verification and evaluation types listed below.

1. CONTACT DETAILS

The contact details for the verification of national qualifications and the evaluation of foreign qualifications service offered by SAQA are as follows:

1.1 Verifications of national qualifications for Prospective/ Serving Employees

These verification requests should be sent via e-mail, and will be processed within SAQA's Verifications Project Unit:

Email: verifications@saqa.org.za
Tel: 012 431 5010 / 012 431 5155
Fax: 012 431 5051

1.2 Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

These verification requests should be sent via e-mail, and will be processed within SAQA's Directorate for Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services:

Email: evaluatepublicservice@saqa.org.za (*The e-mail subject line should include the words "Foreign Qualifications"*)
Tel: 012 431 5070

1.3 Verification of Qualifications for High Level Appointments

These verification requests should be sent via e-mail, and will be processed within SAQA's Verifications Unit (for national qualifications) and within SAQA's Directorate for Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services (for foreign qualifications):

Email: verifypublicservice@saqa.org.za (*The e-mail subject line should include the words "High Level Appointments"*)
Tel: 012 431 5010 / 012 431 5155 (SA qualifications)
Fax: 012 431 5051 (SA qualifications)
Tel: 012 431 5070 or 012 4315035(Foreign qualifications)