

SUMMARY: ECD QUALIFICATIONS & RELATED ISSUES

Extracted from ECD CoP & ECD Reference Group meetings in 2016-17, the November 2016 Joint Submission to ETDP SETA on the Implementation of the Level 4 Occupational Certificate for ECD, and the August 2017 Ntataise Panel Discussion on 'The ECD qualification continuum: articulating level 3 through to level 7'.

1. Qualifications and articulation issues

- Occupational Certificate: Early Childhood Development Practitioner, NQF Level 4, SAQA ID 97542 is registered; current FETC ECD Childhood Development Level 4 legacy qualification has 2019 as the date for the last intake, teach-out to 2022.
- Status of the proposed NQF Level 3 Part Qualification as access to the NQF Level 4?
- A proposed Higher Certificate in ECCE is set out in the 'Policy on Minimum Requirements for Programmes Leading to Qualifications in Higher Education for Early Childhood Development Educators' (Gazette 31 March 2017) – hereafter called DHET Policy. Does this qualification exist / who is developing it? How does this relate to provider-based ECD qualifications at NQF Level 5 as listed on the SAQA database?
- Some universities do not recognise the FETC ECD qualification, or those offered by the TVET sector at NQF 4/5, or the NQF Level 4 Occupational Certificate as 'equivalent' to matric endorsement for entry into HEI.
- How will RPL in the sector accommodate experiential learning, and how can this be balanced with the needs of higher education to maintain standards and to rely on a level of academic proficiency at diploma and degree levels?
- The Level 4 Occupational Certificate is seen by some as too difficult to access for many practitioners who may have minimal formal education; at the same time, it is seen by Higher Education as having too many gaps to serve as entry into HE. How do these tensions play out in terms of the different technicalities of 'entry requirements' between the Occupational sub-framework for qualifications and the Higher Education sub-framework requirements?
- What does this mean for articulation with the Diploma and the Degree, which have to meet the minimum requirements of the DHET policy?

2. Challenges of the QCTO Qualification model for the ECD sector

- **Registration** challenges in for ECD sites in general: QCTO model requires WIL (called Work Experience Modules) & its assessment to be carried out at a registered centre:
 - Access for practitioners
 - Absence from own employment
 - Impact on children at registered site
 - Human resources for mentorship
- **Costs:**
 - for Foundational Learning Competence (FLC)
 - for the External Integrated Summative Assessment
 - for transport etc to registered sites for the Workplace Learning Component
 - for bursaries when there is no employer
- **External Summative assessment:**

- Challenges for practitioners without CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) to write formal examinations.

3. Accreditation issues

- Two types: accreditation: as an assessment centre/ site, and as a skills development provider. What is the situation in terms of changing roles of ETP SETA and QCTO?
- What is happening re the development by ETDP SETA of Learning Materials for the Occupational Certificate at NQF Level 4? Does this have implications for programme accreditation for providers?

4. Other questions

- Is ECD moving from DBE to DSD?
- Will ECD practitioners need to fall under the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) or under South African Council of Educators (SACE)?
- Issues re providers having to register with DHET, which is problematic for NPOs.
- How do we link more closely with DSD and Department of Health, especially in relation to human resource issues?
- Poor salaries in the sector means that the uptake of qualifications at the higher end of the qualifications scale is quite low.
- How do we improve conditions and career pathways for those working at lower end of the qualifications scale?

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