

# DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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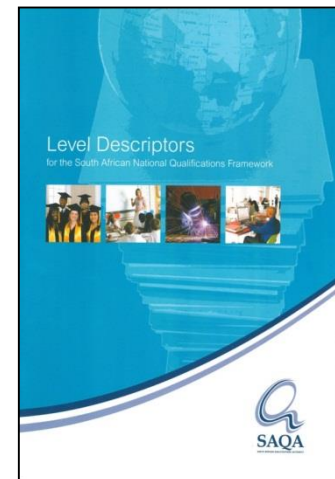
**ECCE ROUNDTABLE**  
**Emperor's Palace**  
**4 JUNE 2018**



# Overview

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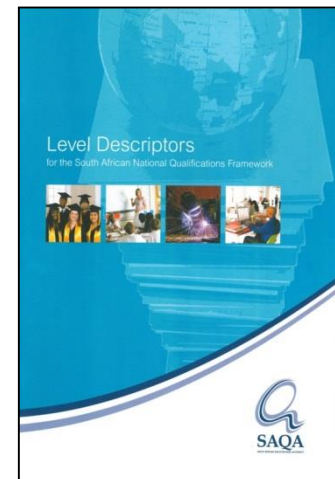
1. Introductory comments
2. Purpose & philosophy of level descriptors
3. Applying the level descriptors
4. Clarifying some myths
5. Concluding comments
6. Questions & answers



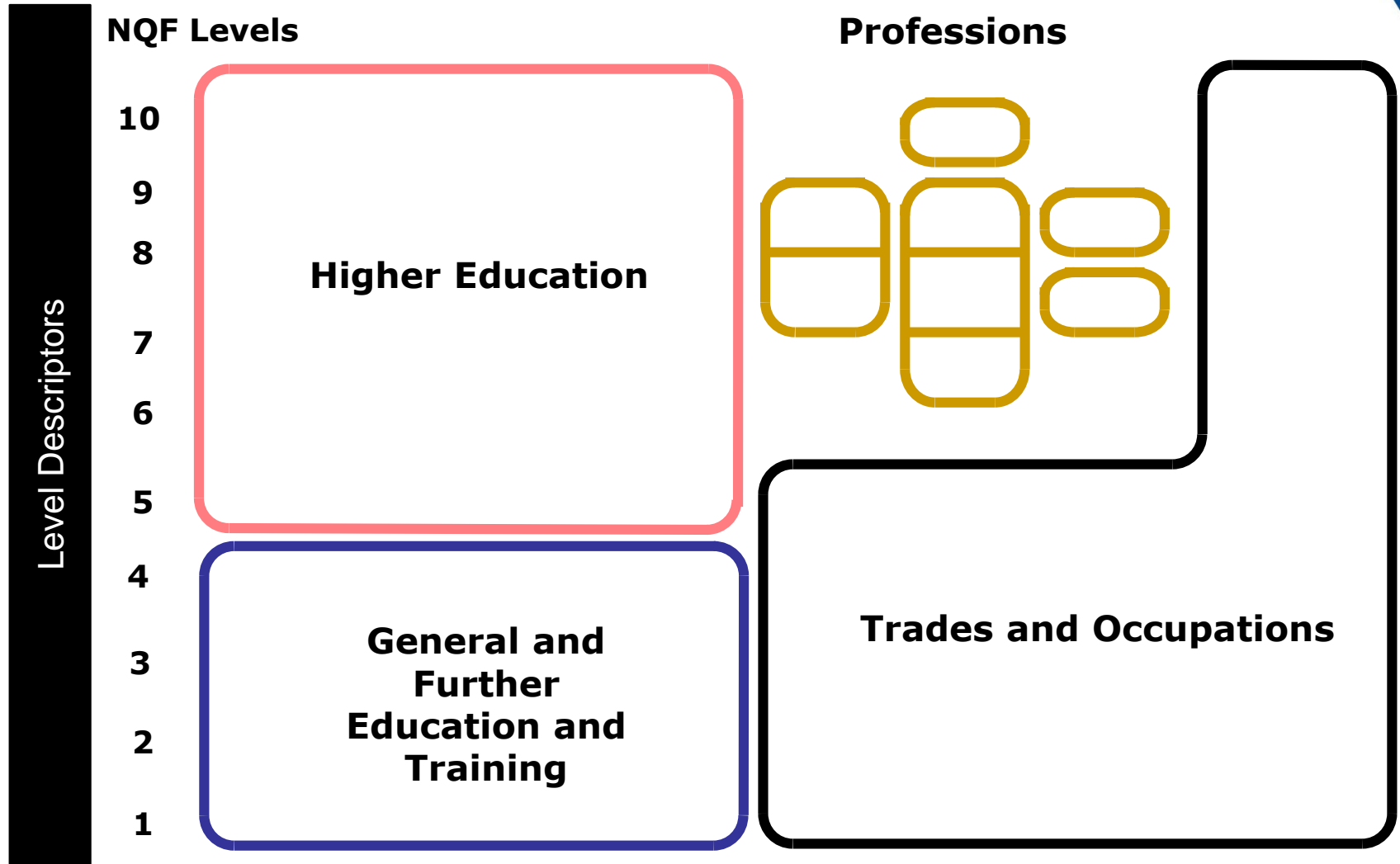
# Introductory comments

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- The NQF comprises ten levels and covers all kinds of learning achievement
- The level descriptors provide a general, shared understanding of learning and achievement at each of these ten levels
- The level descriptors are designed to enable their use across a wide range of learning contexts
- What are levels?
  - indication of the relative demand made on the learner, the complexity and/or depth of achievement, and the learner's autonomy in demonstrating that achievement
- The descriptors have been written to cover the full range of learning outcomes:
  - irrespective of the learning or institutional context
  - from basic education, through school and unskilled worker levels up to doctoral or senior professional levels
  - both work and study situations
  - academic as well as vocational settings
  - initial as well as continuing education or training
  - all forms of learning



# Context



# National Qualifications Framework

Level	Sub-framework and qualification types	
10	Doctoral Degree Doctoral Degree (Professional)	*
9	Master's Degree Master's Degree (Professional)	*
8	Bachelor Honours Degree Postgraduate Diploma Bachelor's Degree	Occupational Certificate (Level 8)
7	Bachelor's Degree Advanced Diploma	Occupational Certificate (Level 7)
6	Diploma Advanced Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 6)
5	Higher Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 5)
4	National Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 4)
3	Intermediate Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 3)
2	Elementary Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 2)
1	General Certificate	Occupational Certificate (Level 1)

Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework

Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework

General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework

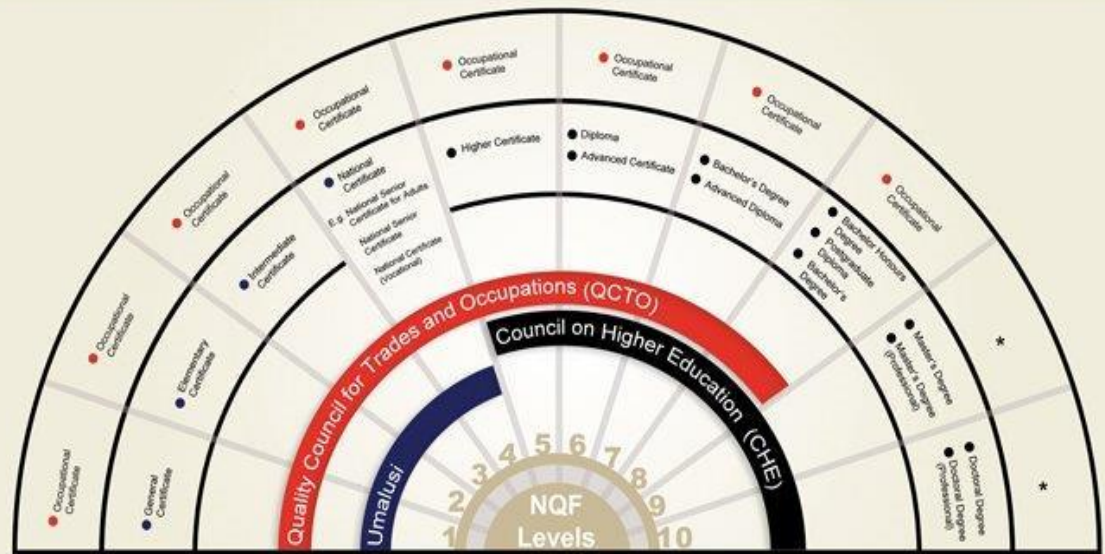
**\* Open ended should qualifications be developed at levels 9 and 10**

# Fan diagram of the NQF

The NQF is the set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning.



## NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK SUB-FRAMEWORKS AND QUALIFICATION TYPES



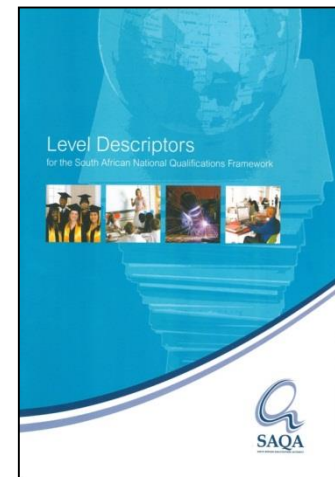
- UMALUSI** Umalusi is responsible for the General And Further Education And Training Qualifications Sub-Framework on NQF Levels 1 - 4
- CHE** Council on Higher Education is responsible for the Higher Education Sub-Framework on NQF Levels 5 - 10
- QCTO** Quality Council for Trades and Occupations is responsible for the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework on NQF Levels 1 - 8



# What is a level descriptor?

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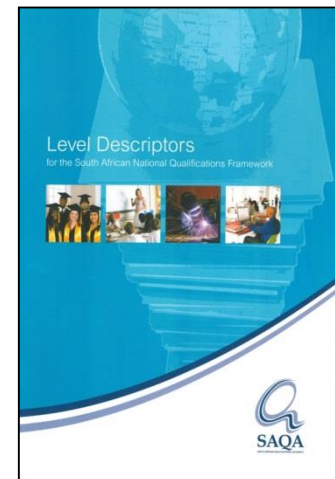
- Statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification at that level



# The purpose of the level descriptors

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- To ensure coherence in learning achievement in the allocation of qualifications and part qualifications to particular levels, and to facilitate the assessment of the national and international comparability of qualifications and part qualifications
- The level descriptors provide a guideline to practitioners involved in the design and delivery of qualifications
- Developers should use their professional expertise to apply the level descriptors to their own subject area or context
- Where appropriate, they should also use their knowledge and understanding of relevant leveling tools such as sector- or subject-specific descriptors

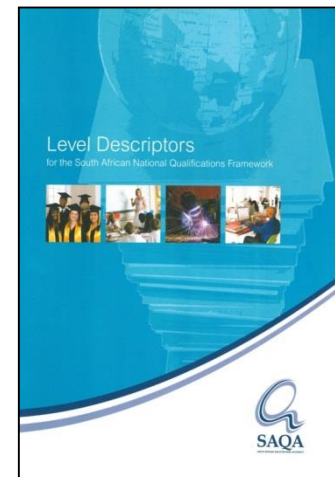




# Philosophical underpinning

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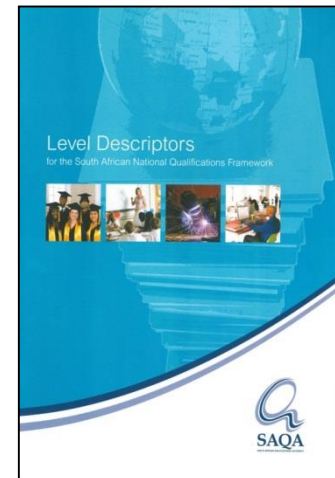
- The philosophical underpinning of the NQF and the level descriptors is applied competence which is in line with the outcomes-based theoretical framework adopted in the South African context
- Applied competence has three constituent elements:
  - Foundational competence embraces the intellectual/ academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which includes information processing and problem solving
  - Practical competence includes the concept of operational context
  - Reflexive competence incorporates learner autonomy



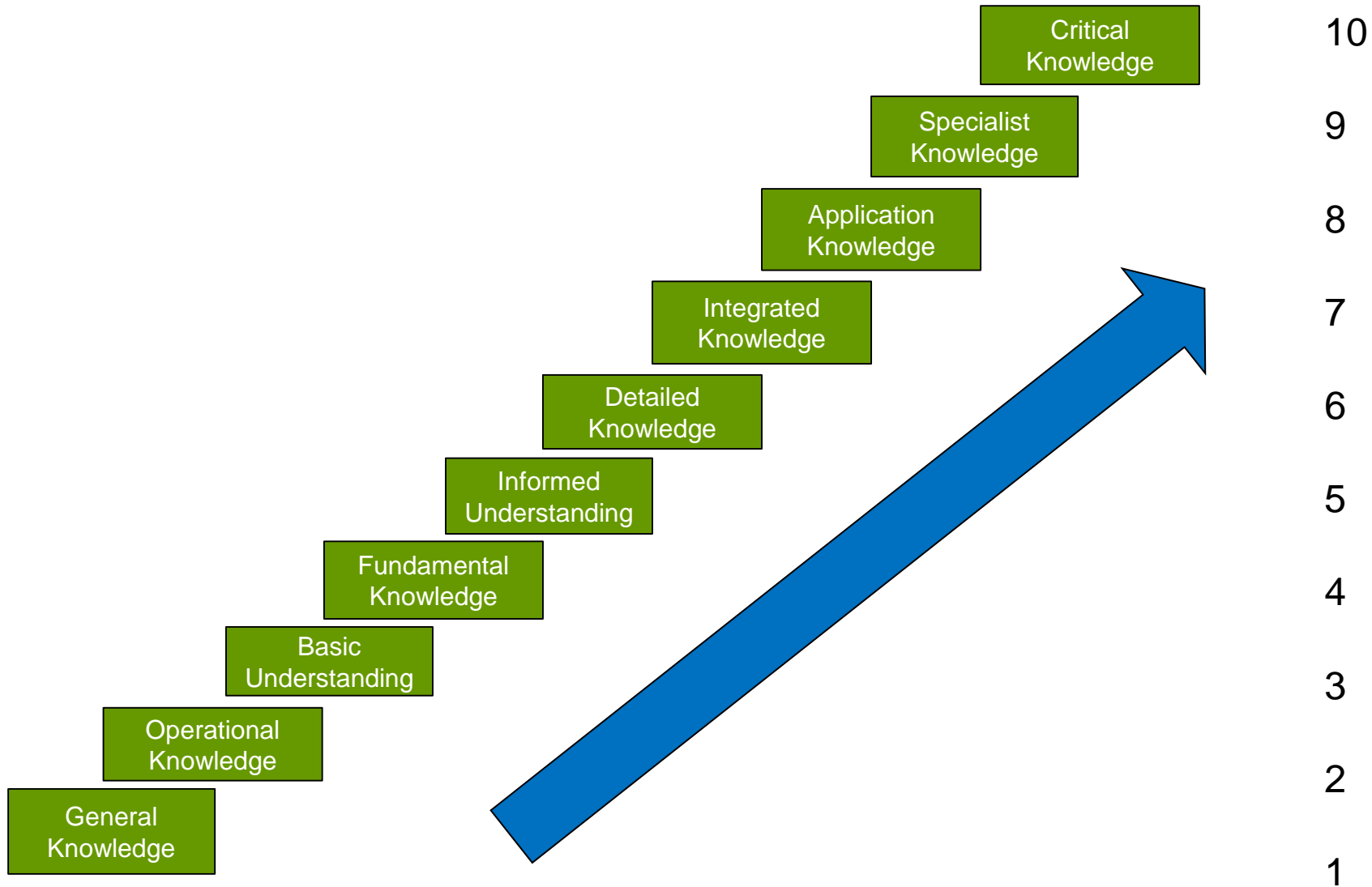
# Categories of applied competencies

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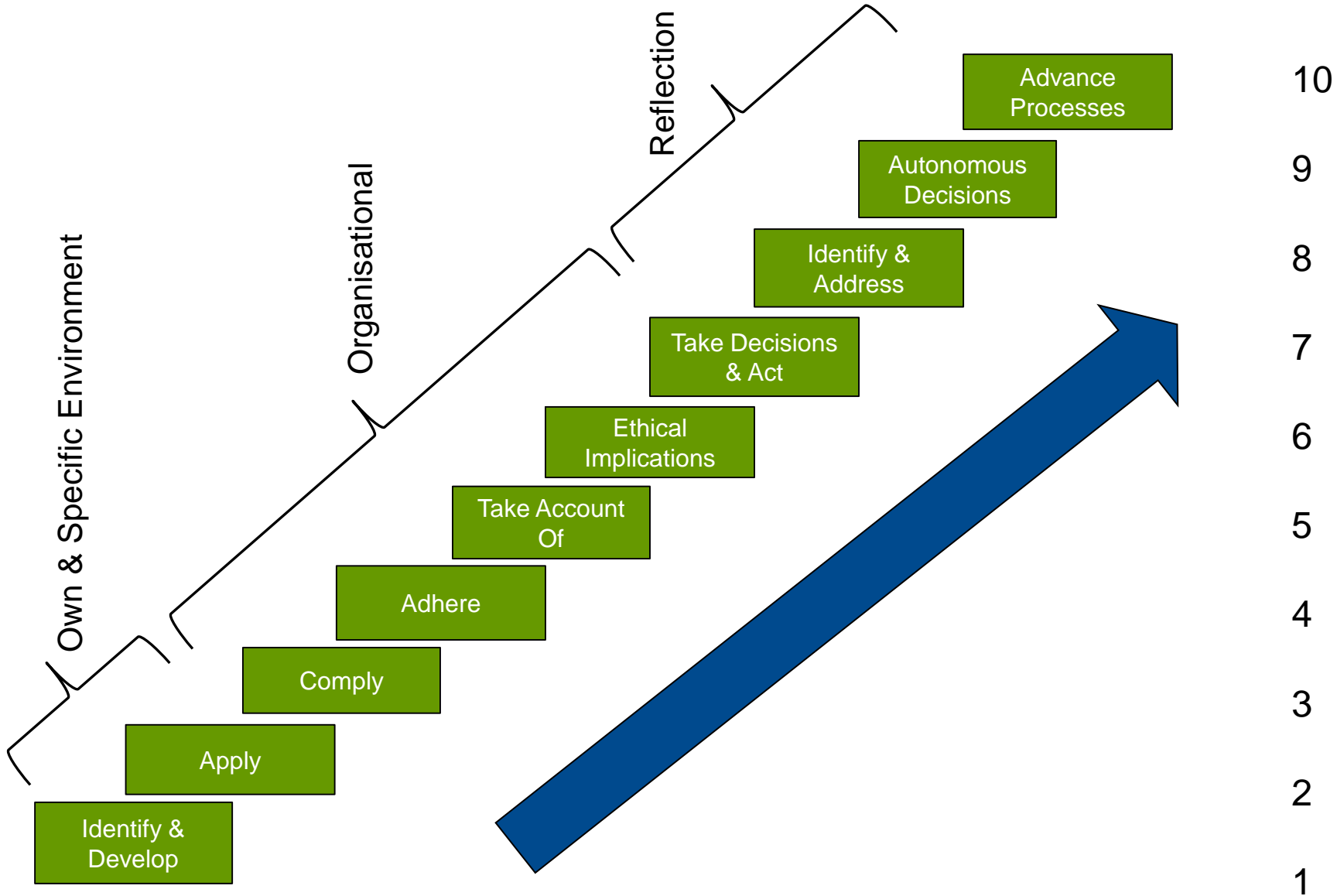
- Ten categories are used in the level descriptors to describe applied competencies across each of the levels of the National Qualifications Framework:
  - Scope of knowledge
  - Knowledge literacy
  - Method and procedure
  - Problem solving
  - Ethics & professional practice
  - Accessing, processing and managing information
  - Producing and communicating information
  - Context and systems
  - Management of learning
  - Accountability



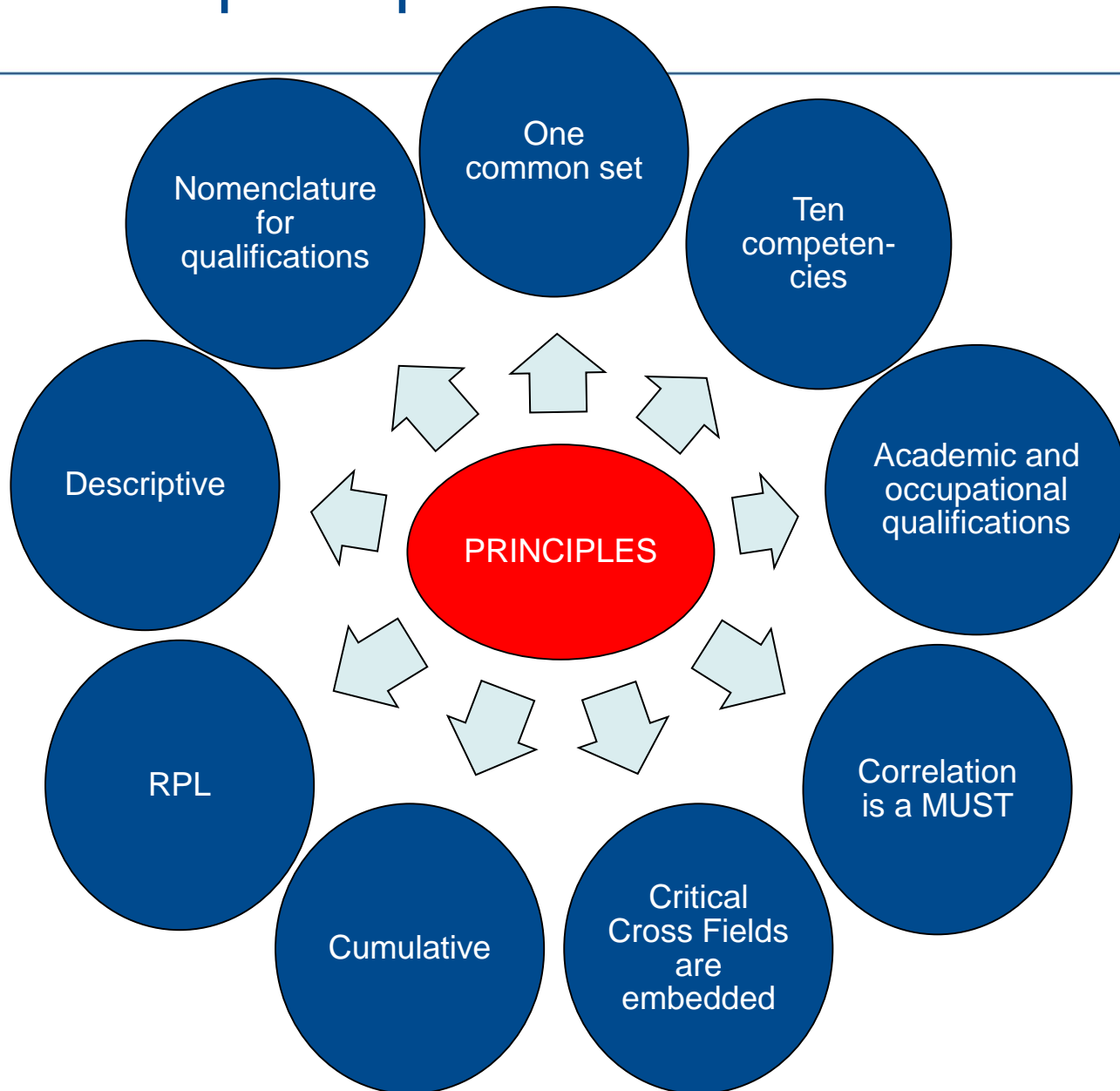
# Example 1: Scope of knowledge



# Example 2: Ethics and professional practice



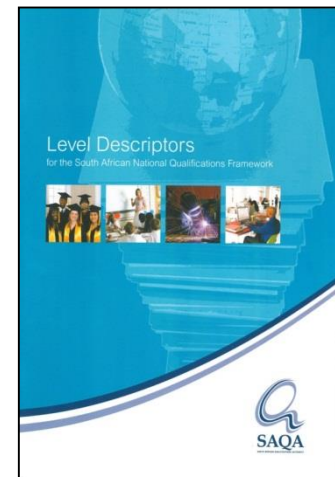
# Application principles



# How to use the level descriptors

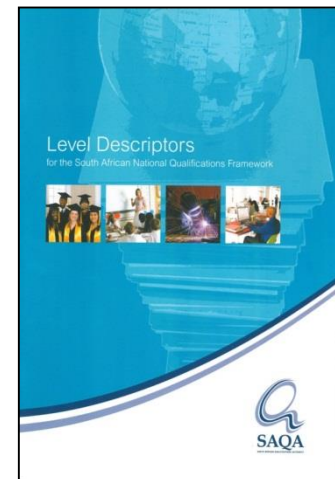
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- There are different types of users of the NQF level descriptors:
  - Qualification designers
  - Providers
  - Individual learners
  - Employers
- For some users a detailed interpretation and application will be required
- For others, the level descriptors will provide a broad indication of the types of learning appropriate to a qualification at that level



# How to use the level descriptors

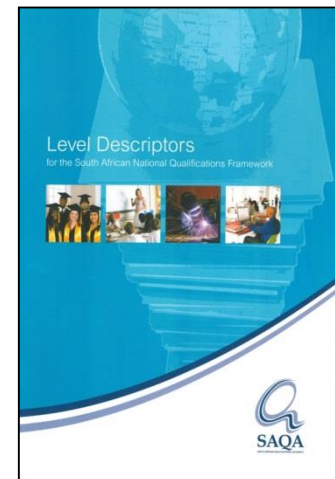
- Level descriptors provide a scaffold from which more specific descriptors can be developed by a variety of different sectors and practitioners, for example discipline- or profession- based
- In the processes of curriculum design and development, the interpretation of these generic level descriptors will be influenced by for example, field-, discipline- and context-specific nuances
- Keep in mind that the nomenclature for qualifications is dealt within the sub-frameworks of the NQF
- The competencies listed at a particular level in the framework broadly describe the learning achieved at that level, but an individual learning programme may not necessarily meet each and every criterion listed



# Myth 1: Qualifications on the same level are equivalent

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- By no means does the NQF intend to promote or to discriminate (against) any type of qualification
- The NQF acts as a neutral reference point for different types of qualifications
- An important objective underpinning the NQF is the promotion of parity of esteem between academic, vocational or higher education routes as well as between initial and further education
- Qualifications on the same NQF level are not equivalent (i.e. they do not necessarily have the same purpose or content)
- Qualifications on the same NQF level do have the same cognitive demand

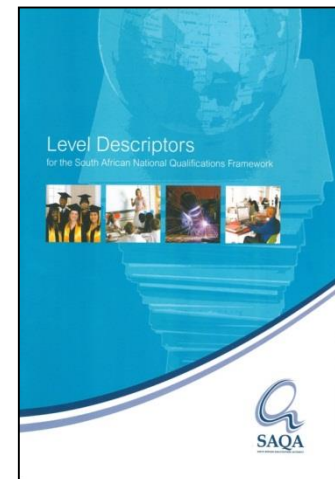




# Myth 2: Higher levels always implies more specialisation

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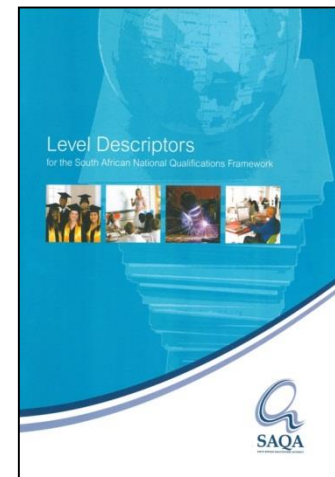
- The level descriptors reflect both specialisations and generalisations
- Reaching a higher level does not necessarily imply that the required skills and knowledge will be more specialised, although this could be the case in many academic, research and professional contexts
- Moving from a lower to a higher level, in some study or work contexts, can also mean becoming more of a generalist



# Myth 3: Qualifications have to be obtained in the sequence of the NQF levels

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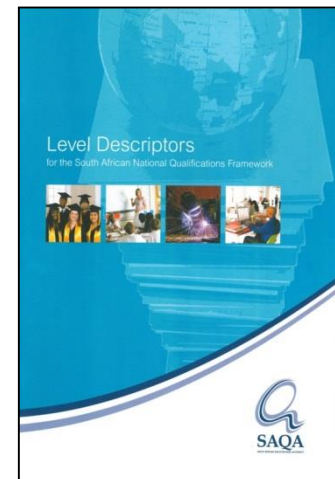
- Placing qualifications on NQF levels does not mean that the qualifications necessarily have to be acquired in the same sequence as the NQF levels
- For example a person that meets the requirements can be awarded a qualification on NQF Level 4 (Trade Certificate) and thereafter on NQF Level 7 (Bachelors Degree): *no qualifications are awarded on NQF Levels 4, 5 and 6*



## Myth 4: Levels promote “a moving up culture”

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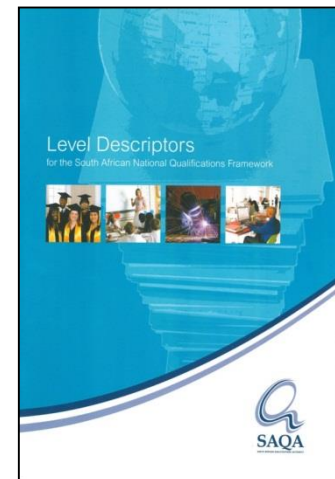
- Over their lifetime, learners will primarily move from a lower to a higher level, but it is also possible to gain two different qualifications at the same level or to move from a higher to a lower level of qualification, if new learning is taken on and new skills are acquired
- Many reasons like illness, new interests and hobbies or unemployment can motivate a person to obtain new qualifications on lower levels, than the one he or she might have obtained before
- For example, a person with a doctorate in engineering decides to study a new field such as languages, which may be located on a lower NQF level: *the engineer will not necessarily have a command of the new language on the same level as his/her engineering qualifications*



# Concluding comments

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- Level descriptors are designed to act as a guide and a starting point for, *inter alia*:
  - Writing learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria for qualifications and part-qualifications
  - Pegging a qualification at an appropriate level on the NQF used together with purpose statements, outcomes and assessment criteria
  - Assisting learners to gain admission through RPL at an appropriate level on the NQF
  - Making comparisons across qualifications in a variety of fields and disciplines pegged at the same level of the NQF
  - Programme quality management used together with purpose statements, outcomes and assessment criteria



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Thank you and questions