



BOTSWANA
Qualifications Authority

CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR INSTITUTIONAL AUDITS

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REVISION HISTORY

Date	Summary of changes	Version

SECTION A

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) is mandated by the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act (the Act), No. 24 of November 2013, to maintain a National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) and to coordinate a quality assurance system for education, training, and skills development. Pursuant to part II, sub-section 4 (2) (n and t) of the Act, the BQA must develop and review quality standards, ensure compliance through a monitoring and evaluation system, and set criteria for the development of national education and training quality and inspection standards.

According to Botswana Qualifications Authority (Registration and Accreditation of Education and Training Providers) Regulations, 2016 the Authority shall

13(1) monitor and audit registered and accredited Education and Training Providers (ETPs) at a fee set out in the Fees Regulations by the Authority.

13(2) audit an education and training provider at least midway through the lifecycle of its registration and accreditation.

According to Botswana Qualifications Authority (Accreditation of Learning Programmes) Regulations, 2016 the Authority shall

13(5) conduct auditing of learning programmes within two and a half years of the accreditation of the learning programme.

1.2 AIMS FOR INSTITUTIONAL AUDITS

Auditing of Institutions aims to:

- 1.2.1 Encourage and support Institutions to maintain a culture of continuous quality improvement/enhancement by means of an Internal Quality Management System (IQMS) that builds on the Authority requirements.
- 1.2.2 Enable Institutions to develop reliable indicators that will assure the Authority and other stakeholders that the provider's policies, systems, strategies, and resources for assuring and enhancing quality are effective.
- 1.2.3 Provide information and evidence that will enable Institutions and the Authority to identify areas of strength and excellence as well as areas which require improvement in the short, medium, and long term.
- 1.2.4 Promote transparency and accountability in both internal and external quality management.
- 1.2.5 Ensure that education and training quality standards are continuously maintained across the Institution.
- 1.2.6 Contribute towards the credibility and marketability of the Institution locally, regionally, and internationally.

2. PURPOSE

This document sets out the criteria which will be used in conducting audits of Institutions and Learning Programmes. It is intended to support Institutions in the effective implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) practices, self-assessment, and enhancement of Internal Quality Management System (IQMS) through the application of QA standards and guidelines. These Criteria and Guidelines will be used by BQA audit panels to conduct institutional audits within the framework of external quality assurance of Institutions. Institutions may also use the Criteria and Guidelines to conduct internal audits of their quality management systems.

These Criteria and Guidelines are the baseline of the institutional audit framework, which relates to the inputs, processes, and outputs of the Institution, as well as providing benchmarks against which the quality of administrative and academic core functions of the provider are judged. Essentially, the criteria provide evaluative tools that enable BQA, the audit panel and the institution to focus on important institutional signals and indicators of quality management.

3. INTERPRETATION

Some of the terms listed below are as defined in the Act, and others as generally used in the global context.

Accreditation	A process of ensuring that education and training providers, and any programme of education and training offered, conform to any quality assurance standards set by the Authority.
Act	the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act No 24 of 2013.
Assessment	the process of collecting evidence of learners' work to measure and make a judgement about achievement or non-achievement of specified NCQF standards and/or qualifications.
Assessor	a person who collects evidence of learners' work to measure and make a judgement about achievement or non-achievement of specified NCQF standards or qualifications.
Audit	Systematic, independent, and documented process for obtaining evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria are fulfilled.
Audit evidence	information provided by the Institution in its audit portfolio presented to the audit panel.
Audit panel	Two or more people appointed by the Authority to conduct an audit, supported if needed by technical experts.
Audit report	an evaluation report from BQA to the audited Institution outlining the results of an assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal quality arrangements of the Institution.
Audit visit	a site visit of one to five days, during which the audit panel engages in various evaluative activities, such as conducting interviews and scrutinizing documents to validate the claims that are made in the audit portfolio.

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Authority	the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) established under section 3 (1) of the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act No 24 of 2013.
Awarding Body	An organization recognized or accredited by the Authority, which awards registered qualifications.
Compliance	Fulfillment of a requirement.
Criteria	Statements against which the standard of performance are assessed.
Education and Training Provider (ETP)	a person or entity that provides or organises a programme of education and training, including the provision of professional development services.
Evaluation	The process of judging the quality, importance, amount, or value of services offered.
Higher Education	any studies undertaken beyond the level of secondary education but excluding Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
Institution	Awarding Bodies and ETPs including their Learning Programmes.
Learning programme	sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of a particular qualification.
Moderation	a process which ensures that the assessment of outcomes described in the NCQF standards or qualifications are fair, valid, reliable, and consistent.
Moderator	a person who is registered and accredited to ascertain whether the assessment of outcomes described in the NCQF standards or qualifications are fair, valid, reliable, and consistent.
Monitoring	This is a systematic process by BQA comprising of collecting, analysing, and using the information to track progress made by the ETPs towards reaching its goals and objectives.

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National Credit and Qualifications Framework	an instrument developed under section 4 (2) (d) for the classification of qualifications according to set criteria for specified levels of learning achieved.
Portfolio of Evidence	self-evaluation report of the Institution containing documentary evidence of the effectiveness of the education and training activities of the Institution to be audited against BQA audit criteria.
Quality assurance	a process of ensuring that specified standards or requirements have been achieved.
Quality management	Institutional arrangements for assuring, supporting, developing, enhancing, and monitoring the quality of qualifications and learning programme design and development; teaching and learning; assessment system; research and development; and community engagement.
Quality Management System	A set of policies, processes and procedures that help an ETP to stay compliant and deliver services that consistently meet the needs of a customer.
Quality Standards	Details of requirements, specifications, guidelines, and characteristics that products, services, and processes should consistently meet the needs of customers.
Registration	The process by which the Authority ascertains that the ETP has the requisite human and material resources, systematic structures, policies, and processes to operate as an ETP.
Registration and Accreditation	means a process that an ETP shall undertake with the Authority as a pre-requisite for learning programme accreditation to ascertain the ETPs capacity to provide for a defined scope of education and training in accordance with the Act.
Self-evaluation	the process by which an Institution reviews the effectiveness of its quality management system for assuring, supporting, developing, and monitoring the quality of qualifications and learning programme design and development; teaching and learning; assessment system;

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	research and development; and community engagement against the requirements of the BQA's audit criteria and any other quality criteria that the Institution deems relevant.
Self-Evaluation Report	Documentation of an assessment conducted by the ETP on its quality assurance activities.
Statutory Audit	An Audit carried out at least midway through the lifecycle of the ETP's registration and accreditation and within two and half (2½) years of accreditation of a Learning Programme.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	an education and training which provides knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant for employment or self-employment.

SECTION B – THE CRITERIA

CRITERION 1: LEGAL STATUS AND NAME

BQA seeks to verify that the Institution continues to operate as a body corporate, legally constituted in Botswana. The Institution must maintain the name as approved by BQA during registration and accreditation.

The Institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) verifiable proof of the confirmation of the legal status of the Institution in Botswana
- b) proof of approval of significant changes relating to Legal Status and Name, where applicable
- c) assurance that the name of the Institution on building signage and promotional materials matches with the BQA approved name.

CRITERION 2: OWNERSHIP

BQA seeks to verify that the ownership of the Institution has maintained the capacity to achieve its objectives.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) the name(s) of the person(s) legally and financially responsible for the institution and that the name(s) should be the same as and/or partly includes those listed in relevant Articles of Association (or similar) required for the registration of a company, society, or trust
- b) communication to the Authority concerning changes to ownership where applicable
- c) certified copies of identity, security clearance report (not older than six (6) months) work permits, residence permit, etc.

CRITERION 3: VISION, MISSION, AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

BQA seeks to verify that the Institution's business operations are aligned with its purpose as articulated in the vision and mission. Furthermore, the Institution must demonstrate the alignment of its planning, resource allocation and quality management to the strategy.

The Institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) records of regular review of the institution's performance, strategic plan and priorities
- b) implementation of the outcomes of the reviews undertaken.

CRITERION 4: GOVERNANCE OF THE INSTITUTION

BQA seeks to verify that the Institution's system of governance ensures ethical decision-making and efficient provision of human, physical and financial resources to effectively accomplish its mission, vision, and strategic goals.

The Institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) a list of current members of the Governing structure indicating their roles, which includes individuals with qualifications and experience in educational management and Business/Financial Management
- b) adequate and regular engagement of the governing body with senior management before and during the implementation of major changes e.g., schedules and minutes of meetings indicating timely resolution of issues
- c) up-to-date curriculum vitae (CVs) of members of the governing structure
- d) compliance with regulatory requirements pertaining to the implementation of significant changes in the governance of the Institution where applicable.

CRITERION 5: MANAGEMENT OF THE INSTITUTION

BQA seeks to verify that the Institution has access to guidance, direction, and management of its day-to-day and long-term affairs and that the management has the right experience and competencies to manage an Institution.

The Institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) an operational organogram and associated duty statements or terms of reference showing lines of authority, responsibilities and allocations of functions and accountabilities for every management position within the Institution
- b) curriculum vitae (CVs) of current members of the senior management team which includes individuals with qualifications and experience in educational management and Business/Financial Management
- c) regular engagement of senior management with staff and the Student Representative Council (SRC) before and during the implementation of major changes

- d) implementation of a 'whistleblowing' policy including initiatives to educate key stakeholders about the policy.

CRITERION 6: QUALITY MANAGEMENT

BQA seeks to verify that the institution's objectives and mechanisms for quality management are integrated into the operations of the institution, and to ensure that effective quality management is the overarching principle in the business of education and training.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) implementation of its policy on Quality Management System (QMS)
- b) execution of roles and responsibilities and levels of accountability for the internal QMS
- c) implementation of mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of structures, processes and procedures of the following but not limited to
 - i. SHE programmes and activities
 - ii. admissions and enrolments
 - iii. protection of enrolled learners
 - iv. academic support services, the use of technologies and relevant coordination structures on teaching and learning
 - v. workplace/internship activities
 - vi. implementation of human resource management policies
 - vii. assessment and moderation
 - viii. learner support, communication, and consultation
 - ix. internal QMS
 - x. Research and development.
- d) involvement of learners, staff, and external partners in the quality management system.

CRITERION 7: RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has clear and efficient records management arrangements to ensure the integrity of records.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) a records management system that provides for the nature and scope of operation of the institution (learner records, staff records, teaching & learning records, assessment records etc)
- b) access, security, confidentiality, retention, and disposal of records
- c) off-site documents backup arrangements (including but not limited to cloud, document banks)
- d) a document control system and that all key documents are centrally controlled with version numbers, revision status and revision history indicated
- e) filing index and referencing for easy retrieval of records.

CRITERION 8: FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND MANAGEMENT

BQA seeks to verify that the institution's financial systems and procedures are clear, efficient and allow for effective financial planning and adequate resource allocation for the development, improvement, and monitoring of quality in service provision.

The institution shall provide evidence of the implementation of financial management systems and controls used in the monitoring of financial activities of the institution which include:

- a) procurement plan, budgeting, expenditure monitoring and control
- b) implementation of a refund policy for protecting the financial interests of learners
- c) records for annual internal and external financial audits to keep track of the institution's financial condition and control over its finances
- d) evidence of a trust fund and its maintenance
- e) evidence of maintenance and operation of a local bank account
- f) learner fees are realistic and are informed by market trends.

CRITERION 9: HUMAN RESOURCES

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has adequate human resources capacity to conduct its business and achieve its mission and goals.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) implementation of recruitment, staff development, performance management policies and procedures
- b) registered and accredited assessors and moderators with the Authority
- c) evaluation of qualifications for academic staff
- d) the list of academic staff which includes their qualifications and programmes taught
- e) the list of administrative staff, their qualifications and roles
- f) valid work permits for expatriate staff
- g) implementation of the localisation policy
- h) adherence to the documented conditions of service which are consistent with relevant legislation
- i) the teaching staff qualified at a minimum, at least one level higher than they would be teaching
- j) academic/teaching staff with relevant qualifications required for the scope of services that they are assigned to deliver
- k) the administrative staff that are relevant and appropriate to the size of the ETP
- l) staff to learner ratios are appropriate for the learning programme.

CRITERION 10: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has the necessary physical facilities, resources and infrastructure required to support the nature and scope of learning programmes offered. The learning conditions at the satellite campuses should be comparable to those at the main campus.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) execution of roles and responsibilities for coordination and monitoring of resource utilisation across all functional areas of the institution
- b) maintenance plan and regular maintenance of infrastructural facilities, and resources including those for co-curricular activities
- c) implementation of a system for tracking reported defects and complaints as well as responses and corrective actions
- d) adequate library resources (books of current edition both digital and physical, reading space, access to the library)

- e) sufficient facilities and resources that are appropriate and in good working condition e.g., classrooms, Labs, vehicles, photocopiers, computers (with industry recommended software), furniture, and printers etc
- f) inclusive practice regarding the provision of and access to facilities and resources
- g) proof of ownership/lease agreement.

CRITERION 11: SAFETY, HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT (SHE)

BQA seeks to verify that the institution operates within an environment that has the capacity to cater for and adhere to safety, health, and environmental standards. The safety of learners, staff and guests is the primary responsibility of the institution.

The institution shall provide evidence of the following:

- a) records of meetings of Safety, Health and Environment coordinating structure, internal inspection reports and reports on SHE activities/events
- b) clear evacuation procedures displayed in strategic areas for all to see
- c) adequate signage within the institution including the location of emergency exits and assembly points
- d) adequate firefighting equipment, in good working condition and placed strategically within the ETP
- e) adherence to annual Medical Examination requirement for staff, i.e., kitchen staff and caretakers
- f) adherence to legislative requirements related to environmental issues including handling and disposal of waste (e.g., hazardous, and toxic waste and sanitary waste); inspection of moving machinery/equipment (e.g. hoists and lifts)
- g) availability of trained personnel on first aid and firefighting
- h) clean and tidy environment within the institution (i.e., kitchen, classrooms, workshops, laboratories, toilets, hostels etc.);
- i) annual health and safety inspection report issued by the Local/Competent Authority.

CRITERION 12: ADMISSIONS, ACCESS, AND EQUITY

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has implemented policies and procedures, including fair and equitable guidelines and processes for the recruitment, selection and admission of learners

into learning programmes. The institution ensures that learners are enrolled on learning programmes in which they have pre-requisite knowledge to achieve the set learning outcomes.

The ETP shall provide evidence of:

- a) consistency of practice on admission, enrolment, and protection of learners within the ETP and its satellite campuses, if any
- b) information on details of learning programme structure, duration, level and credit value availed to the learner prior to enrolment
- c) information on learning programmes and their total costs, educational services and other financial commitments made accessible to the learner prior to enrolment
- d) Information on enrolled learners indicating type of sponsorship, programme, year of study, year of completion, and graduation rates per programme.

CRITERION 13: PROTECTION OF ENROLLED LEARNERS

BQA seeks to verify that the institution implements its policy on the Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) to ensure that learners are protected if the programme they have been enrolled in ceases before completion, a learner withdraws from the learning programme, or the institution closes due to different reasons.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) information on learner protection arrangements made accessible to prospective learners before enrolling them or accepting payment
- b) communication with alternate institutions that learners may transfer to.

CRITERION 14: LEARNING PROGRAMME DELIVERY, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

BQA seeks to verify that the institution operates/adopts clear and efficient systems and procedures for quality assurance of delivery of learning programmes on offer. This criterion further seeks to ensure that the requirements are consistently applied and regularly monitored.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) records of meetings/forums undertaking an evaluation of learning programme delivery and reviews;
- b) implementation of curriculum (e.g. preparation of lesson plans, scheme of work, attendance registers, course outlines, etc);
- c) records for the provision of academic support services to learners.

CRITERION 14.1: LEARNING PROGRAMME DELIVERY

BQA seeks to verify that the institution provides quality learner experiences to enable the learners to acquire appropriate knowledge, competences, and skills.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) adherence to all components of the Learning Programme (LP) such as options for progression, including the sequence of compulsory, elective components, pre and co requisites, and all entry and exit points
- b) adherence to the modes of delivery which are learner-centred, consistent with the learning outcomes, and allow for flexibility to accommodate varying needs, abilities and learning pace of learners
- c) teaching methods and learning experiences aligned with the learning outcomes of the LP
- d) implementation of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) for LP delivery submitted including but not limited to:
 - i. activities of IQA Structures
 - ii. reviews and adjustments of teaching and learning activities
- e) maintenance of strategic partnerships with relevant industry, ETPs, awarding bodies, professional bodies, and other key stakeholders to increase capacity to provide for:
 - i. programme delivery, assessment, and certification
 - ii. staff development and/or capacity building

- f) adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment for the research activities of staff and learners in line with its strategies
- g) periodic evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning experiences for quality improvement through peer mechanisms and other appropriate feedback mechanisms
- h) effective collection, compilation, and analysis of data on Learners' enrollment, progression, performance and completion.

CRITERION 14.2: MAINTENANCE OF LEARNING PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

BQA seeks to verify that the institution maintains endorsement requirements of relevant Professional Bodies and Regulatory Agencies for LPs that are developed against endorsed qualifications.

The ETP shall provide evidence of:

- a) significant changes that affect the terms and conditions of endorsement disclosed to the relevant professional body before implementation of the changes; and
- b) renewal/maintenance of endorsement (e.g. letter of endorsement or certificate of endorsement) obtained from the Professional Body and/or the Regulatory Agency.

CRITERION 15: WORK-PLACEMENT /INTERNSHIP

BQA seeks to establish that the institution maintains all quality standards, policies, and procedures in the management of work placement.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) roles and responsibilities of key players (workplace supervisors and mentors, academic staff, learners, etc.), are executed as stated
- b) conduct of assessment and moderation related to the workplace learning experience
- c) execution of a risk management plan for work placement
- d) agreement between the learner or institution and workplace stipulating identified procedures and expected outcomes of the placement.

CRITERION 16: ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION SYSTEMS

BQA seeks to verify that the institution operates a coherent assessment and moderation system to ensure academic and professional standards in the design, approval, implementation, and review of assessment strategies for its learning programmes and qualifications.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) pre-assessment and post-assessment moderation (internal and external) to ensure the integrity of awards
- b) re-assessment and associated support services for learners
- c) mechanisms to inform learners on assessment, re-assessment procedures, and appeals process
- d) security arrangements for the recording, documenting, and storing of assessment materials and data for the credibility of assessment outcomes
- e) monitoring and maintaining academic integrity to ensure that risks associated with the institution's assessment strategies are adequately mitigated, e.g., plagiarism, cheating
- f) analysis of assessment results and moderation reports to identify areas of concern and determine remedial action
- g) consideration made to accommodate learners with special need.
- h) structure for coordination of assessment and moderation with clear roles and responsibilities
- i) use of assessment strategies and methods that do not create barriers for the learners
- j) confidential, fair and regular feedback to learners on progress and final achievement.
- k) implementation of appeals procedures and processes for assessments.

CRITERION 16.1: ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION OF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

BQA seeks to verify that the institution operates a coherent assessment and moderation of LPs that is fair, consistent, secure, and appropriate.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) assessment activities that adequately address the learning outcomes of the LP regarding the level of complexity, scope, and sequencing.

- b) schedule of assessments including the type, due date, and assessment criteria for each assessment is provided to learners at the commencement of each Module
- c) implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) policies for the LP
- d) staff trained on outcome-based assessment strategies
- e) Qualified internal and external examiners and moderators appointed by the institution through a transparent and ethical process.

CRITERION 17: LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

BQA seeks to verify that the institution operates a learner support environment that is consistent with its value propositions whereby support services and programmes are based on an assessment of learners' needs with an emphasis on quality assurance of such services and programmes.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

- a) records of learner support in line with approved guidelines, including but not limited to
 - i tutorial sessions and other relevant activities to foster academic support for learners;
 - ii learner research project supervision
 - iii records of academic support provided to learners with special needs
 - iv records of orientation of learners to the teaching, learning and assessment methods on the programme
 - v consideration and selection of venues and times for contact sessions, travel time and expense for learner
- b) provision of access to bridging courses, additional modules where applicable
- c) inclusive or non-discriminative practice in the provision of support services to learners
- d) learner enrolment numbers in the LP that do not exceed the capacity of the staff, and the administrative infrastructure
- e) a tracking system for learners to identify those in need of academic support
- f) timely support provided to learners who need academic support to minimise dropouts and maximise learner progression and graduation rates.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- g) career guidance, counselling, welfare, health and safety services and other amenities;
- h) records of communication and consultation with learners on matters pertaining to the provision of learner welfare services;
- i) review and evaluation of learner support system for continuous improvement.
- j) implementation of the policy for enrolment and care for international learners, where applicable.

CRITERION 18: RESEARCH

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has effective arrangements in place for the quality assurance and monitoring of the research function. The research function and processes are supported and developed in a way that assures and enhances quality and increases research participation, productivity, and resources.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) clear communication of the institution's research policies and procedures, including ethical considerations
- b) effective implementation of the research policy
- c) availability and utilization of research funds for staff and learners
- d) research geared towards improvement of research practice within the ETP and/or supporting the socio-economic development initiatives of the country
- e) availability of data on research output
- f) relevance and currency of the research output to the industry
- g) support of research functions and activities to assure and enhance quality of research done
- h) monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of research and impact of research on the operations of the ETP
- i) reports of research undertaken and completed
- j) impact of the ETP's research outputs nationally, regionally, and internationally.

CRITERION 19: INTERNATIONALISATION

BQA seeks to verify that the institution implements the policy that encourages international mobility of staff and learners, and further facilitates the existence of strong partnerships with other institutions with which it benchmarks its activities and performance, and/or shares mutual experiences and expertise.

The institution shall provide evidence of:

- a) a list of international learners that includes Qualifications Framework (QF) level, programme of study, country of origin, etc
- b) agreements of research and education partnerships with other institutions (regionally and internationally)
- c) records of benchmarking, development of international branch campuses, learners, staff, and scholars exchange programs, internationalisation of the curriculum, recruitment of international academic staff.

CRITERION 20: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BQA seeks to verify that the institution incorporates Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into its business operations through its interaction with its stakeholders, communities, and industry.

The ETP shall provide evidence of:

- a) projects and activities undertaken.
- b) resources allocated to facilitate CSR activities.

CRITERION 21: CERTIFICATION AND AWARDS

BQA seeks to verify that the institution has an efficient process of awarding qualifications upon successful completion of the learning programmes. Where the institution is responsible for the award of qualifications, it must establish and operate an effective system for the registration and certification of candidates.

The institution shall provide evidence to demonstrate that:

- a) efficient arrangements are in place for the integrity of certification processes
- b) certificates are issued when all the requirements for the qualification have been met

- c) certificates reflect as a minimum the title of the award, level, date of issue, name and logo of awarding body as well as signatures of relevant persons
- d) certificates exhibit sufficient security features to guard against forgery and/or aid identification of false copies of the certificate e.g., seal, stripes, hologram, etc.
- e) documented procedure for the issuing of replacement certificates is adhered to
- f) a learner taking a qualification offered by the institution is registered in a way that permits the learner to be clearly and uniquely identified
- g) issuance of awards is based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where applicable.

SECTION C – GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

The following sets out the guidelines which will be used by institutions to develop Self Evaluation Reports (SERs). These guidelines provide guidance on how to prepare an audit portfolio, which includes an institution's self-evaluation and the supporting documentation, Portfolio of Evidence. The development of the self-evaluation report should be based on the criteria for Institutional Audits as outlined under section B of this document. The fundamental characteristic of a self-evaluation report is that it must be critical and analytical.

The key principles for institutions to observe in the preparation of their self-evaluation reports are as follows:

- (a) **Comprehensiveness:** the self-evaluation report must include all the necessary information about the institution's core functions together with the appropriate evidence to support institutional claims.
- (b) **Reflective:** the self-evaluation report must demonstrate that the institution is able to critique itself, to identify areas of weakness, obstacles to development, and so on.
- (c) **Descriptive:** the self-evaluation report must provide appropriate description of the systems, processes, and procedures for the management of quality, and how these relate to the institution's strategic objectives, planning and resource allocation.

- (d) Analytical: the self-evaluation report must show how the core functions and the quality systems they are operating in, relate to each other and to the mission and vision of the institution. In this regard, it is important that self-evaluation reports show the link between the institution's strategic goals and academic planning.
- (e) Inclusive: the preparation of the self-evaluation report requires the whole institution to reflect upon itself; thus, the different layers and institutional constituencies need to participate in the process.
- (f) Frankness: the self-evaluation and the documentation provided by the institution reflect the institution's openness about its problem areas and difficulties in institutionalising appropriate arrangements for quality in the core functions.

The production of the self-evaluation report should represent the culmination of a process in which key stakeholders within the institution engage in a thorough consideration and assessment of strengths as well as areas that require improvement and development. The report should consist of appendices, documented evidence, as the Portfolio of Evidence (POE) provided by the institution to support its claims. The self-evaluation report should be approved by the ETP's governance structures before the audit portfolio is submitted to BQA. The institution will be given a reasonable time to prepare its audit portfolio and submit to BQA. This time frame depends on the size and complexity of the institution but should not exceed six months.

BQA provides SER templates for further guidance and recommends that the SER be organised and presented in the order of the criteria in section B. The POE is made up of both the quantitative and qualitative information or evidence. Where quantitative information is provided, it must be accompanied by the institution's interpretation of that information. Information can only be regarded as evidence if it is used to substantiate statements made in relation to the criteria used to evaluate the institution's performance against the quality assurance standards. The presentation of data and documents alone is not sufficient, it should be described and related to each other to indicate coherence and evaluated in terms of the extent of their implementation and impact. The background of the SER should include data on the institution's profile like its size in terms of learner enrolments, faculties/departments, staffing, infrastructure capacity, graduation rates and others. The conclusion should include the overall assessment of its quality management system, good practices, and priorities for future improvements where the institution has identified areas for improvement.

SECTION D – THE AUDIT PROCESS

All enquiries on monitoring and auditing of institutions will be attended to at the Authority's Customer Service Division. Specific details on the process of monitoring and auditing of institutions are documented in the BQA Institutional Audit Manual which can be accessed on the BQA website.

SUBMISSION OF A SELF EVALUATION REPORT

BQA registered and accredited institutions will be issued with a notification to submit a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE). Documents required are records that demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements and implementation of the policies of the institution. The institution should submit the institutional audit portfolio online as per the *BQA Institutional Audit Online Submissions Guide*.

The institution should ensure that the correct service fee is paid (where applicable) during the submission of SER and the PoE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION

The Authority will acknowledge receipt of a complete application.

DESK EVALUATION

The Authority will conduct an evaluation of the SER and the PoE and may request for additional information from the applicant.

AUDIT VISIT

Following desk evaluation, the Authority may undertake an onsite verification visit to the institution. Procedures and expectations regarding an audit visit are provided in the BQA Institutional Audit Manual.

AUDIT REPORT

On completion of evidence gathering, the Authority will produce a draft audit report which will be shared with the institution for factual accuracy confirmation. A final audit report will be dispatched to the institution after considering the factual accuracy feedback.

The audit report will detail judgement as to the level of confidence placed in the institution's quality management system and its implementation. Such judgement may be expressed as 'confidence', 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence' as stipulated in the Manual for Institutional Audits.

SECTION E – POST AUDIT ACTIVITIES

The ETP will be required to prepare a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and submit it to the Authority. The Authority will monitor the implementation of the CAP.

SECTION F – REVIEW AND APPROVAL

1. REVIEW OF THE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

These Criteria and Guidelines will be reviewed annually, or earlier if necessary.

2. APPROVAL

These Criteria and Guidelines were approved by and signed on behalf by:

Issue No:	Version	Name	Designation	Signature	Date