QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARD 3(2) CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION OF NON-NCQF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

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<tr><td rowspan="2">[logo] BOTSWANA Qualifications Authority</td><td>QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARD 3(2)-
CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR ACCREDITATION OF
NON-NCQF LEARNING PROGRAMMES</td></tr>
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Summary of changes	Version

SECTION A:

PREAMBLE

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) is mandated to accredit learning programmes (Botswana Qualifications Authority Act, 2013, section 4(2)(m).

According to the Regulation (3)(*1*) of the Botswana Qualifications Authority (Accreditation of Learning Programmes) Regulations, 2016 any registered and accredited Education and Training Provider (ETP) wishing to offer a learning programme must apply to the BQA for accreditation of such a learning programme.

All applications for accreditation of learning programmes must meet the criteria set out in this Quality Assurance Standard). The development of this Quality Assurance Standard has taken into cognisance other relevant Acts, national policies, institutional quality settings, regulatory structures in so far as the accreditation of LPs is concerned.

1.2 AIMS OF ACCREDITATION OF NON-NCQF LPs

Accreditation of LPs aims to:

    1.2.1 ensure quality teaching and learning provision;

    1.2.3 enable access, equity, relevancy, mobility and progression;

    1.2.4 ensure that education and training standards are continuously maintained; and

    1.2.5 contribute towards the credibility and marketability of the education and training system.

1.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Quality Assurance Standard is to set out criteria and offer guidance to registered and accredited Education and Training Providers when applying for accreditation of learning programmes. The Standard also ensures that the process of recognising learning programmes is completely structured, transparent and consistent.

1.4 INTERPTETATION

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 (ETPs) and any programme of education and training offered, conform to any quality assurance standards set by the BQA;

"Act" - means the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act, 2013;

"Authority" – means Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA) established under section 3 (1) of the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act, 2013;

"Awarding Body" - means an organisation, recognised by the Authority, which awards accredited qualifications;

"Criteria" – Statements against which the standards of performance are assessed;

"Domain" - means a grouping of unit standards in a specific area of education or training within sub-fields;

"Education and Training Provider" – means a person or entity that provides or organises a programme of education and training, including the provision of professional development services.

"Field" - means a particular area of learning used as an organising mechanism for the National Credit Qualifications Framework (NCQF)

"Formal learning" - means learning that is organised and structured, occurring at pre-primary school through to university including workplaces and based on learning outcomes;

"Non-National Credit Qualifications Framework (Non-NCQF)"- Learning programmes from the qualification systems that are based on qualifications that are not registered on National Credit and Qualifications Framework.

"Learning outcomes" - means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes;

"Learning programme" - means the sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of a particular qualification;

Learning programme review" – means the internal quality assurance procedures that the Education and Training Providers use to monitor and reflect on the outcomes of the education it provides through the learning programme, whose findings should feed into the reviews of the LPs of which they form part;

"Level" - means a stage in a hierarchical system used for grouping qualifications that are broadly equivalent;

"Level descriptor" - means characteristics of a qualification that would lead to it being assigned to a particular group of qualifications;

"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;

"Notional learning time" - means the number of hours an average learner needs to achieve specified learning outcomes. This time includes directed and self-directed activities as well as assessment time;

"Qualification" - means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;

"Quality assurance of qualifications" - means a process of ensuring that qualifications registered on the NCQF meet stipulated criteria set by the Authority;

Quality Assurance Standard (QAS1)" – the level of performance required in order to gain and maintain registration and institutional accreditation;

""Registration and Accreditation of an Education and Training Providers" – means a process that an Education and Training Providers shall undertake with the Authority as a pre-requisite for learning programme accreditation to ascertain the education and training provider's capacity to provide for a defined scope of education and training in accordance with the Act;

"Regulations" – means Botswana Qualifications Authority (Accreditation of Learning Programme) Regulations 2016;

"Sub-field" - means a specific area of education or training at qualifications level within a field

SECTION B – THE CRITERIA

This section provides all requirements to be met by Education and Training Providers or Awarding Bodies for accreditation of Non-NCQF learning programmes by the Botswana Qualifications Authority.

CRITERION 1: NON-NCQF LEARNING PROGRAMME GENERAL INFORMATION

BQA requires the Education and Training Providers key information about the Non-NCQF Learning Programme for which the accreditation is sought.

The applicant shall:

a) provide the name of the Awarding Body, title, type of qualification, credit value, duration of programme, status and validity period;

b) ensure that the Learning Programme accreditation application is within the Education and Training Provider's approved scope of accreditation.

CRITERION 2: LEARNING PROGRAMME ENDORSEMENT

If the learning programme leads to professional qualifications, to the Education and Training Providers must seek endorsement from relevant Professional Bodies and Regulatory Agencies prior to submitting the application to BQA.

The applicant shall ensure that:

a) any significant changes to the learning programme that affect the terms and conditions of endorsement are disclosed to the relevant professional body before implementation of the changes; and

b) evidence of endorsement (e.g. letter of endorsement or certificate of endorsement) obtained from the Professional Body and/or the Regulatory Agency is submitted to the Authority as part of the application for learning programme accreditation.

CRITERION 3: WORK-PLACEMENT/INTERNSHIP

BQA seeks to ensure that the coordination of Workplace /work-based Learning will be conducted effectively in all components of applicable learning programmes. This arrangement should include adequate infrastructure, effective communication, record of learner progress, monitoring and mentoring.

The applicant shall provide:

(a) procedures for pre-placement preparation covering health and safety issues, accountabilities, supervision of learners during work placement and regular monitoring;

(b) clear roles and responsibilities of key players (workplace supervisors and mentors, academic staff, learners, etc.),

(c) documented risk management plan for each placement; and

(d) A contract template capturing an agreement between the learner and the Education and Training Provider stipulating expected outcomes of the placement.

CRITERION 4: LEARNING SUPPORT SYSTEM

BQA requires the Education and Training Providers to have a learner support system specific to the delivery of the learning programme.

The applicant shall:

a) Provide documented implementation guidelines on provision of learner support system that includes but not limited to:

    i. tutorial sessions;

    ii. learner research project supervision for learning programmes that have a research component;

    iii. mentorship and coaching on industrial attachment;

    iv. internship coordination and support visits by teachers/trainers/instructors lecturers;

    v. arrangements for supporting learners with special needs.

CRITERION 5: LEARNING PROGRAMME REVIEW

BQA seeks to establish that there is effective LP evaluation and review processes.

The applicant shall ensure:

a) there is a procedure for LP review;

b) The learning programme is reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the requirements of the Awarding Body

CRITERION 6: HUMAN RESOURCES

BQA seeks to establish that the Education and training Provider has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the Non-National Credit and Qualifications Framework learning programme.

The applicant shall:

a) provide information on the required minimum qualification and experience of the academic staff who will deliver the learning programme;

CRITERION 7: PHYSICAL RESOURCES

BQA seeks to establish that the Education and Training Provider has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the Non-National Credit Qualifications Framework learning programme.

The Education and Training Provider shall ensure that:

a) equipment and specialist facilities available for the delivery of the learning programme are consistent with projected enrolments and practice typical of similar learning programmes and level of offering;

b) prescribed resources, inclusive of library facilities, internet access and online resources are consistent with the provision typical of learning programmes leading to the qualification type to be offered;

c) the environment is conducive to teaching and learning and facilities accessible and inclusive of all learners;

d) teaching and learning facilities are adequate and comply with the applicable laws relating to the occupational health and safety of persons on the premises and have licenses as issued by the relevant authorities; and

e) the resourcing plan is consistent with the envisaged increase in enrolments.

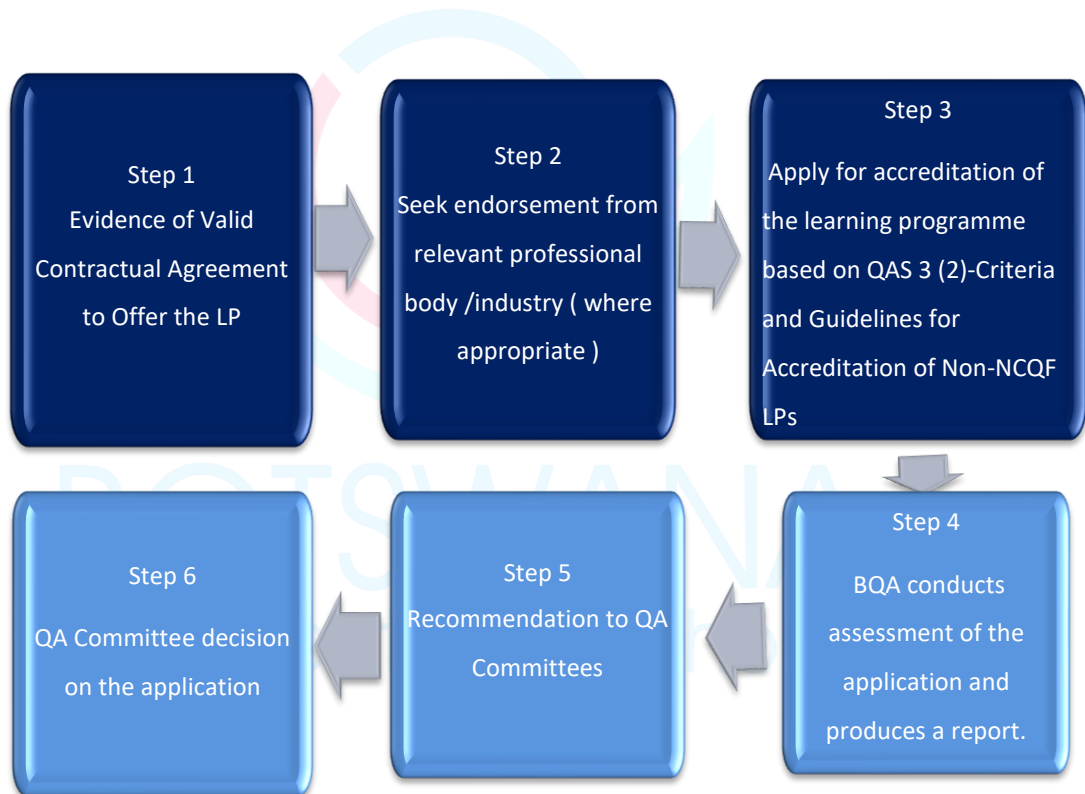## CRITERION 8: VALIDITY OF THE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ETP AND AWARDING BODY

The ETPs offering this Non-NCQF LPs are expected to have valid contractual agreements with the Awarding Bodies.

    i. The applicant shall provide evidence of a valid contractual agreement.

SECTION C: LEARNING PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION PROCESS

All enquires on accreditation on Non-NCQF learning programmes will be attended to by telephone, emails and/or at the Authority's Customer Service Division.

1.1 PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION OF NON-NCQF LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Step 1
Evidence of Valid Contractual Agreement to Offer the LP

Step 2
Seek endorsement from relevant professional body /industry (where appropriate)

Step 3
Apply for accreditation of the learning programme based on QAS 3 (2)-Criteria and Guidelines for Accreditation of Non-NCQF LPs

Step 4
BQA conducts assessment of the application and produces a report.

Step 5
Recommendation to QA Committees

Step 6
QA Committee decision on the application

Where accreditation has been granted a certificate will be issued to the applicant within 30 working days.

1.2 APPEALS

An applicant may submit a written letter to the Chief Executive Office of BQA for appeal the decision made on the application within 21 working days of receipt of the decision letter as per the BQA Appeals Procedure.

SECTION D - POST ACCREDITATION ACTIVITIES

To maintain accreditation of a learning programme, an Education and Training Provider must continue to comply with the BQA Act, Botswana Qualifications Authority (Accreditation of Learning Programmes) Regulations, 2016. The primary responsibility for managing compliance lies with the Education and Training Providers itself, as part of its on-going self-assessment.

1.1 NON-NCQF LEARNING PROGRAMME AUDIT

The Authority shall conduct audits of accredited learning programmes at pre-determined intervals as per the audit schedule available at BQA.

The Education and Training Providers will be expected to submit a learning programme self-evaluation report three months prior to scheduled statutory audit. The report should be compiled in accordance with the Guidelines for Development of Self Evaluation Report (learning programme) available at BQA. The information contained in the report will be used to guide the audit.

Following the audit, BQA will develop an audit report based on the findings. The audit report will detail judgement as to the level of confidence placed in the Education and training Providers quality management system and its implementation.

1.2 RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

(a) An Education and Training Provider which wishes to have the learning programme remain accredited shall, at least six (6) months before the period of accreditation expires, apply for renewal.

(b) An application for renewal shall be on the BQA's prescribed Form.

(c) The application shall be accompanied by a non-refundable fee and relevant documentation.

1.3 NOTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Major changes to learning programmes have the potential to impact on the provision of teaching and learning and the Education and Training Providers capacity to meet the requirements and must be reported to BQA. Major changes may be planned or due to circumstances which are unplanned. If any changes in circumstances of the learning programme occur or changes are proposed or likely, an Education and Training Provider should notify BQA as early as possible to confirm the process to be followed and the level of approval required. Significant changes include the following, but not limited to:

a) a change in the name of a learning programme;

b) a change in the duration or credit value of a learning programme;

c) a change in the content of a learning programme of more than 30% of the core components;

d) discontinuation of a learning programme;

e) a change in any franchising or partnership arrangements;

f) a change in the mode of delivery of any programme or course and assessment.

1.4 REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION

(a) The Authority may revoke accreditation of a learning programme where the Authority has good cause to believe that the accredited learning programme no longer meets the criteria set for learning programme accreditation.

(b) Where the Authority decides to revoke the accreditation of a learning programme, a written notice shall be issued to the governing body of the Education and Training Providers outlining the conditions of revocation.

SECTION E APPROVAL

This Quality Assurance Standard was approved by ……………………………………….. and signed on behalf by:

Issue No:	Version	Name	Designation	Signature	Date