

BQA NCQF QUALIFICATION TEMPLATE

SECTION A: QUALIFICATION DETAILS												
QUALIFICATION DEVELOPER (S)			BA ISAGO University									
TITLE		Postgraduate Diploma in Student Support Services					NCQF LEVEL		8			
STRANDS (where applicable)		Not applicable										
FIELD		Health and Social Services		SUB-FIELD			Social Services		CREDIT VALUE		120	
<i>New Qualification</i>				✓	<i>Legacy Qualification</i>							
SUB-FRAMEWORK		General Education		TVET			Higher Education			✓		
QUALIFICATION TYPE		Certificate	I	II	III	IV	V	Diploma	Bachelor			
		Bachelor Honours			Post Graduate Certificate			Post Graduate Diploma		✓		
		Masters				Doctorate/ PhD						
RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE QUALIFICATION												
<p>RATIONALE:</p> <p>The modern educational landscape is marked by heightened awareness of mental health issues among students. Factors such as academic pressure, social challenges, and personal struggles contribute to an increasing demand for effective support services within educational institutions. As education systems evolve to meet the diverse needs of students, the role of student support services has become increasingly vital.</p> <p>Efforts are being made to enhance the intellectual faculties of students and to engage a holistic approach to producing well-rounded individuals. Graduating students are expected to exhibit employability skills and be prepared in wellness categories, socially (appreciating individual</p>												

uniqueness), physically (wellbeing), emotionally (self-awareness and awareness of the needs of others), intellectually (development of cognitive skills), occupationally (practical skills), and spiritually (attitude towards life) as a foundation for educating the whole person (Pansiri & Sinkamba , 2017).

Trends around the world have demonstrated a growth in, and emphasis on student affairs standards (Pansiri & Sinkamba, 2017). To achieve this, there is a need to employ qualified professionals in this field. In most cases, Student Affairs Staff often hold adjacent qualifications such as Social Work, Counselling and Psychology and while these qualifications equip graduates with relevant skills to carry out duties of student support services, they nonetheless may be generic. As a result, a specialized qualification in student support services is necessary to ensure that staff is adequately trained.

In Botswana, Student Support and Services Norms and Standards were launched by Human Resource Development Council in December 2017. On the 30th of May 2023, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) held a workshop for the Student Affairs Services (SAS) Practitioners from local Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) to discuss matters regarding student welfare. This exercise was done as a recognition of the importance of standardization of student affairs and services that are offered in institutions of higher learning in Botswana.

This premise is the basis for this developed qualification. As highlighted by (Pansiri and Sinkamba, 2017), a major challenge affecting the provision of quality student support services, is that staff competencies in student affairs remain very low with no predetermined qualifications required for the job as the vacancies for the post often require a degree in any field. There is therefore a need to train relevant practitioners who can ensure an uphold of these standards and norms upon tertiary education to ensure standardization of support given to students.

Postgraduate Diploma in Student Support Services is therefore designed to provide specialized study in theory and practice pertaining to student development and service provision, programs, and initiatives that support student success in universities. The qualification is intended for student affairs and services practitioners, administrators, and educators within universities and to equip them with the requisite skills and knowledge for managing, coordinating, organizing and implementing programmes of support for student welfare.

PURPOSE: (itemise exit level outcomes)

The purpose of the qualification is to produce graduates with highly specialized knowledge, skills, and competence to.

1. Assess student needs and develop programmes that will create exceptional experience in the learning environment.
2. Collaborate with students, faculties, administrators, and communities to coordinate support services and foster a culture of inclusivity and equity.
3. Manage crises and emergencies within educational settings, providing timely support, intervention, and referral services to students in distress.

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS (including access and inclusion)

- i. Applicants must have a minimum of Certificate IV, NCQF Level 4 (TVET/GE) or equivalent
OR
- ii. Candidates who do not meet the minimum academic qualifications stated above will be considered through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, which shall be administered according to the National RPL Policy. There will also be provision for Credit Accumulation Transfer to the learner in case they transfer in from another institution, as per the National Policy on CAT.

SECTION B		QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION	
GRADUATE PROFILE (LEARNING OUTCOMES)		ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
<p>1. Develop a comprehensive academic plan that aligns with learners' career goals, interests, and academic strengths.</p>		<p>1.1 Investigate the student's career aspirations, including specific career paths, industries, or professional roles of interest.</p> <p>1.2 Provide reasoned advice to learners how each academic component (courses, majors, minors, extracurricular activities) contributes to the attainment of long-term career goals to enable informed decision making.</p> <p>1.3 Integrate short-term and long-term career objectives into the academic plan, showcasing a strategic approach to academic and professional development.</p> <p>1.4 Incorporate interdisciplinary opportunities that align with the student's diverse interests, passions and foster intellectual growth.</p>	
<p>2. Cultivate a sense of self-empowerment, assertiveness, and advocacy in learners that enables them to assert their needs, rights, and boundaries in various contexts.</p>		<p>2.1 Exemplify establishment of clear and healthy boundaries in relationships, work environments, and academic settings.</p> <p>2.2 Develop strategies for setting boundaries, including assertive communication, time management techniques, and prioritization of personal well-being.</p> <p>2.3 Establish platforms for advocacy of personal needs, rights, and interests in various contexts, including academic settings and workplace environments.</p>	

	<p>2.4 Engage in student’s advocacy efforts to address issues of injustice, inequality, or systemic barriers affecting them.</p> <p>2.5 Motivate healthy lifestyle behaviors, including regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, stress management techniques, and avoidance of harmful substances.</p>
<p>3. Promote student engagement in community health initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and social activities that promote social connection, civic engagement, and collective well-being.</p>	<p>3.1 Create opportunities for student involvement in community health initiatives and volunteerism.</p> <p>3.2 Organize networking sessions that will enable students to build new connections and socialize.</p> <p>3.3 Communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders, including organizational partners, and fellow volunteers to coordinate activities and achieve common goals.</p> <p>3.4 Engage in reflective practices with learners to evaluate personal experiences, learning outcomes, and growth opportunities gained through participation in community health initiatives.</p> <p>3.5 Collaborate with peers and community partners to address complex health and mental wellness challenges, leveraging collective knowledge, skills, and resources to maximize impact.</p>
<p>4. Demonstrate effective managerial skills in overseeing residence halls, orientation programs, and welcoming activities for</p>	<p>4.1 Coordinate schedules, resources, and logistics to facilitate seamless operations of residence halls for student campus life.</p>

<p>smooth operations and optimal support for students.</p>	<p>4.2 Allocate resources efficiently, including budgetary funds, staffing, facilities, and equipment, to meet the needs of orientation programs and welcoming activities.</p> <p>4.3 Monitor expenses and identify cost-saving opportunities for optimization of resource utilization.</p> <p>4.4 Empower staff and student leaders to take ownership of their roles, delegate responsibilities effectively, and collaborate towards common goals.</p> <p>4.5 Commit to ongoing learning and professional development, seeking out best practices, trends, and innovations in learners' residence life.</p> <p>4.6 Address operational challenges, conflicts, and emergent issues in a timely and effective manner.</p> <p>4.7 Construct well-informed decisions based on data, feedback, and institutional policies, considering their impact on learners, staff, and the overall campus community.</p>
<p>5. Collaborate with academic staff to implement individualized support plans for learners with disabilities, addressing their unique academic, social, emotional, and physical needs.</p>	<p>5.1 Establish positive working relationships with academic staff, fostering open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to student success.</p> <p>5.2 Communicate relevant information about student needs to academic staff in a clear and concise manner, ensuring a shared understanding of how to best support the student.</p>

5.3 Coordinate appropriate resources and accommodations to address students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs, leveraging available support services, assistive technologies, and community resources.

5.4 Share relevant knowledge, resources, and training opportunities with academic staff to enhance their capacity to support learners with disabilities effectively.

5.5 Regularly monitor the effectiveness of individualized support plans in meeting learners' needs, gathering feedback from academic staff, learners, and other stakeholders.

SECTION C	QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE				
COMPONENT	TITLE	Credits Per Relevant NCQF Level			Total Credits
		Level [7]	Level [8]	Level [9]	
FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT <i>Subjects/ Courses/ Modules/Units</i>					
CORE COMPONENT <i>Subjects/Courses/ Modules/Units</i>	Introduction to Student Support Services		10		10
	Student Support Development			10	10
	Developing Programs for Student Welfare		10		10
	Global Citizenship		10		10
	Student Development Theories		10		10
	Students with Special Needs	10			10
	Norms and Standards for Student Welfare		10		10
	Academic Advising and Career Guidance			10	10

BQA NCQF QUALIFICATION TEMPLATE

	Integration of Technology Use in Student Support		10		10
	Practicum		30		30
STRANDS/ SPECIALIZATION	Subjects/ Courses/ Modules/Units	Credits Per Relevant NCQF Level			Total Credits
		Level []	Level []	Level []	
1.					
	N/A				
2.					
Electives	N/A				

BQA NCQF QUALIFICATION TEMPLATE

SUMMARY OF CREDIT DISTRIBUTION FOR EACH COMPONENT PER NCQF LEVEL

TOTAL CREDITS PER NCQF LEVEL

NCQF Level	Credit Value
7	10
8	90
9	20
TOTAL CREDITS	120

Rules of Combination:

(Please Indicate combinations for the different constituent components of the qualification)

The credit distribution is made up of 120 credits from the core components. Learners should gain all these to be eligible for graduation.

ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

All assessments which are leading to the award of the qualification should be based on learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. The Assessors and Moderators should:

- Be registered and accredited as Assessors and Moderators by the Botswana Qualifications Authority or its equivalent.
- Be experts in educational management or any leadership qualifications at level 10 in the sub-field of the qualifications area.

i. Formative Assessment

The weighting of formative assessment is 60 % of the final assessment mark.

ii. Summative Assessment

The weighting of summative assessment is 40 % of the final assessment mark.

MODERATION ARRANGEMENTS

There will be provision for internal and external moderation, conducted by Moderators registered with Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA).

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be applicable for consideration for award in this qualification, in line with RPL institutional policies on the same.

CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER

Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) will be applicable for consideration for award in this qualification, in line with RPL institutional policies on the same.

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS (LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT)

Learning Pathways

Horizontal Articulation:

- Post-Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Administration
- Post-graduate Diploma in Education

Vertical Articulation

- Master of Arts (Counselling)
- Master of Arts (Educational Counselling)
- Master of Arts (Educational Leadership)
- Master of Education (Career Counselling)

Employment Pathways

Graduates will have requisite competencies and attributes to work as:

- Education Administrator
- Student Affairs and Welfare Officer
- Academic Advisor
- Career Guidance Officer
- Admissions Officer
- Academic Coordinator
- Student Administrative Services Manager
- Dean of Students Affairs
- Diversity and Inclusion Manager

QUALIFICATION AWARD AND CERTIFICATION

Candidates meeting the prescribed requirements will be awarded the qualification in accordance with the qualification composition rules and applicable policies. To be eligible for the award of the Post-graduate Diploma in Student Support Services, candidates should have obtained a minimum of 120 credits. A certificate will be issued to learners who are awarded the qualification.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY

This qualification compares well with the following:

- Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning Care and Support – University of South Africa, South Africa
- Postgraduate Diploma in Post-Secondary Education (Student Affairs and Services) – Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
- Graduate Certificate in Student Affairs in Higher Education – Wilmington University, USA

- Graduate certificate in Student Affairs in Higher Education – Portland State University, USA

The benchmarking exercise revealed that the developed (Postgraduate Diploma in Student Support Services) compares favorably against other regional and international qualifications benchmarked with. The title vary as the developed qualification is new and is not popular. The developed qualification is a postgraduate diploma similar to the qualifications offered by UNISA and Memorial University of Newfoundland. The qualifications offered by Wilmington University and Portland State University are Graduate Certificates. The title of the developed qualification is Student Support Services which varies from all the qualifications compared against, the qualification offered by UNISA is titled Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning Care and Support, the one offered by Memorial University of Newfoundland is Graduate Diploma in Post- Secondary Education (Student Affairs and Services). On the other hand, the titles of the Graduates' Certificates are both similar and are Graduate Certificate in Student Affairs in Higher Education. Although there are slight differences in titles and qualification types, the qualifications have a common goal in terms of capacitating learners with a firm grounding and knowledge in student learning and development, analysis and addressing psychosocial issues within teaching and learning environments and creating a positive & inclusive learning environment for students' engagement and success. Although the qualification types vary (Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate) all the qualifications are pitched at level 8 following the qualification frameworks adopted by each country (NCQF, NQF and OQF). All the qualifications are offered for a period of 1 year on a full-time basis.

There are also similarities in terms of the domains in the developed qualification and the ones benchmarked with. These include Student Services in Higher Education, Student Development Theories and Theoretical Frameworks and Legislation Underpinning Psychosocial Wellbeing in Teaching. The qualification for Wilmington University and Portland State University has a provision for field experience and internship which in most cases enhances their experience of the workplace. The assessment strategies for all qualifications include both formative and summative to assess the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The rule for award of qualification in all the qualifications is for learners to complete all compulsory modules and attain the minimum required credits.

There are noticeable differences in terms of credits because of differences in frameworks adopted by each country. The developed qualification carries 120 credits similar to the qualification offered by UNISA, Wilmington University qualification has 15 credits, and the qualification offered by Portland State University carries 18 credits which is similar to the qualification for Memorial University of Newfoundland. Based on the different frameworks the notional learning hours for Botswana and South

BQA NCQF QUALIFICATION TEMPLATE

Africa dictates that 1 credit is equals to 10 notional learning hours. Therefore, hours of study required for attaining 120 credits for the developed qualification and for UNISA's qualification are 1200 notional learning hours. In Canada, 1 credit equals to 15 notional learning hours therefore 270 hours are required to attain the qualification. In USA 1 credit is equals to 12.5 notional learning hours, consequently 15 credits translate to 187 hours of study for Wilmington University and 225 hours of study for Portland State University needed to attain the qualification.

In terms of articulation, all the qualifications have similar routes for educational progression and employment pathways. The common education progression pathway for all the qualifications together with the developed is Master of Arts in Student Affairs Services. The qualifications have similar employment pathways and the ones that cut across in all qualifications are Student support services officer/ Manager.

REVIEW PERIOD

This qualification will be reviewed after 5 years upon registration.

For Official Use Only:

CODE (ID)			
REGISTRATION STATUS	BQA DECISION NO.	REGISTRATION START DATE	REGISTRATION END DATE
LAST DATE FOR ENROLMENT		LAST DATE FOR ACHIEVEMENT	
REVISION DATE:		NAME OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES/REGULATOR	
		Y	