

BQA NCQF QUALIFICATION TEMPLATE

SECTION A: QUALIFICATION DETAILS																	
QUALIFICATION DEVELOPER (S)			Institute Of Health Sciences - Gaborone														
TITLE		Diploma In Dental Therapy								NCQF LEVEL		6					
STRANDS (where applicable)		N/A															
FIELD		Health and Social Services								CREDIT VALUE		369					
SUB FIELD		Health Science															
New Qualification				Legacy Qualification			√		Renewal Qualification								
									Registration Code								
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																	
RATIONALE: Oral health conditions remain a significant public health concern globally and in Botswana, contributing to pain, infection, functional limitations and reduced quality of life. According to the World Health Organisation (2019), oral health is a state of being free from chronic mouth and facial pain, oral cancers, periodontal disease, tooth decay and other disorders that impair an individual's ability to eat, speak, smile and maintain psychosocial wellbeing. In Botswana, the burden of oral diseases is compounded by communicable conditions such as HIV/AIDS, which are associated with several oral																	

manifestations and opportunistic infections. These challenges highlight the need for appropriately trained oral health personnel to support the country's health priorities outlined in Vision 2036 and national health strategies.

Dental therapists play a critical role in delivering primary oral health care services, particularly in preventive, promotive, curative and basic rehabilitative care. Their training focuses on providing accessible and cost-effective oral health services across the lifespan, especially at the primary health care level. Evidence suggests that developing countries benefit from training dental therapists rather than relying solely on dentists, as this approach expands access to oral health services, particularly in underserved and rural communities (Nash et al., 2008; Apiradee et al., 2015). Countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and New Zealand have adopted this model to improve oral health coverage.

In Botswana, Dental Therapy has been identified as a priority occupation in the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) Report on Top Occupations on Demand (2016). The qualification, therefore, responds directly to national workforce needs in the health sector. In line with the Ministry of Health and Wellness Roadmap, the qualification emphasises preventive and community-based approaches to oral health care, consistent with the Primary Health Care philosophy.

The curriculum integrates clinical oral health sciences, community oral health, and emerging health priorities such as HIV/AIDS and other opportunistic infections. It also strengthens competencies in clinical practice, research and management to ensure graduates can function effectively with minimal supervision. The qualification, therefore, prepares competent dental therapists capable of delivering high-quality oral health services and supporting national efforts to reduce the burden of oral disease.

PURPOSE: (itemise exit level outcomes)

The purpose of this qualification is to produce graduates with advanced knowledge, skills and competencies to:

1. Apply clinical reasoning and skill in the management of clients with oral conditions
2. Collaborate and partner with other professionals in providing comprehensive, holistic care to individuals, families and communities and promote activities geared towards the prevention of oral illness
3. Implement information, education and communication principles and technology to improve oral health care.

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4. Utilise the Primary Health Care approach to promote and maintain the oral health of individuals and the community.
5. Perform basic maintenance of oral health instruments, materials and equipment.
6. Utilise research information to improve the quality of oral health care

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS (including access and inclusion)

- Certificate IV, NCQF level 4 or its equivalent.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation (CAT) shall be applied in line with the national RPL policy.

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SECTION B QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION	
GRADUATE PROFILE (LEARNING OUTCOMES)	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
1.1 Apply clinical reasoning in the assessment and management of clients with oral health conditions.	1.2.1 Obtain relevant medical, dental, and social history from clients. 1.2.2 Perform comprehensive oral examination using appropriate diagnostic techniques. 1.2.3 Identify signs and symptoms of common oral diseases and abnormalities 1.2.4 Interpret clinical findings to identify oral health problems. 1.2.5 Formulate appropriate treatment plans within the scope of practice
1.2 Demonstrate clinical competence in performing therapeutic oral health procedures	1.2.1 Perform common dental therapy procedures safely and effectively. 1.2.2 Apply infection prevention and control measures during procedures. 1.2.3 Use appropriate instruments and materials competently. 1.2.4 Provide post-procedure instructions and follow-up care.
2.1 Collaborate effectively with other professionals in the provision of comprehensive oral health care to individuals, families and communities.	2.1.1 Communicate effectively with members of the multidisciplinary healthcare team. 2.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different health professionals. 2.1.3 Participate in referral, consultation, and follow-up processes to ensure continuity of care. 2.2.1 Plan and implement oral health promotion and disease prevention activities.

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2.2 Promote preventive oral health activities for individuals, families and communities.	2.2.2 Educate individuals, families and communities on preventive oral health practices. 2.2.3 Facilitate community participation In oral health promotion initiatives. 2.2.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of preventive interventions and recommend improvements.
3.1 Apply communication, education, and information principles in oral health care delivery. 3.2 Utilise technology and information systems to improve oral health services.	3.1.1 Communicate oral health information clearly to clients and communities. 3.1.2 Develop and use appropriate IEC materials for oral health education. 3.1.3 Adapt communication strategies to suit diverse audiences. 3.1.4 Assess client understanding of information provided. 3.2.1 Use relevant technologies to support service delivery and reporting 3.2.2 Apply technology in oral health education and awareness campaigns. 3.2.3 Maintain confidentiality and ethical use of information systems.
4.1 Apply Primary Health Care principles in the promotion and maintenance of oral health.	4.1.1 Integrate prevention, promotion, treatment, and rehabilitation in oral health services. 4.1.2 Promote equitable access to oral health care services. 4.1.3 Apply community-based approaches in service delivery. 4.1.4 Plan and implement outreach oral health programmes.

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	4.1.5 Collaborate with community stakeholders in programme delivery.
5.1 Perform basic maintenance of oral health instruments, materials and equipment	5.1.1 Clean, disinfect, and sterilise instruments according to established protocols. 5.1.2 Inspect instruments and equipment for safety and functionality. 5.1.3 Store instruments and materials appropriately. 5.1.4 Identify and report faults requiring repair or replacement. 5.1.5 Adhere to occupational health and safety standards during maintenance.
6.1 Apply research and evidence-based information to improve oral health care quality.	6.1.1 Access and interpret relevant oral health research literature. 6.1.2 Apply research literature to clinical decision-making and service improvement. 6.1.3 Participate in quality improvement and audit activities. 6.1.4 Use evidence to recommend changes in practice.

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SECTION C		QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE			
COMPONENT	TITLE	Credits Per Relevant NCQF Level			Total Credits
		Level [5]	Level [6]	Level [7]	
FUNDAMENTAL COMPONENT Subjects/ Courses/ Modules/Units	Natural Sciences:				
	Human Anatomy and Physiology		15		15
	Medical Microbiology		13		13
	Chemistry	12			12
	Physics	10			10
	Biology	10			10
	Communications and Study Skills	6			6
	Computer Skills	6			6
	Public Health Sciences:				
	Sociology	8			8
	Psychology	8			8
CORE COMPONENT Subjects/Courses/ Modules/Units	Oral Health Education I		15		15
	Oral Anatomy and Oral Physiology		15		15
	Oral Health Education II			15	15

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	Conservative Oral Health Care I		15		15
	Community Oral Health I		15		15
	Oral Medicine and Surgery I		15		15
	Periodontology I		10		10
	Pharmacology and Therapeutics		10		10
	Conservative Oral Health Care II		15		15
	Community Oral Health II			20	20
	Periodontology II		10		10
	Oral Medicine and Surgery II		15		15
	Conservative Oral Health Care III			20	20
	Oral Medicine and Surgery III			20	20
	Application of Principles and Concepts of Community Oral Health		40		40
	Application of Principles and Concepts in Clinical Oral Health		20		20
STRANDS/ SPECIALIZATION	Subjects/ Courses/ Modules/Units	Credits Per Relevant NCQF Level			Total Credits
		Level []	Level []	Level []	

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SUMMARY OF CREDIT DISTRIBUTION FOR EACH COMPONENT PER NCQF LEVEL

TOTAL CREDITS PER NCQF LEVEL

NCQF Level	Credit Value
5	60
6	234
7	75
TOTAL CREDITS	369

Rules of Combination:

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

- Fundamentals Level 5 – 60 credits (16.3%)
- Fundamentals Level 6 – 39 credits (10.6%)
- Core Level 6 – 195 credits (52.8%)
- Core Level 7 – 75 credits (19.8%)
- Total 369 Credits

There are no electives for this qualification; therefore, the candidate should pass all core and fundamentals modules

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ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

All assessments, formative and summative, leading/contributing to the award of a Diploma in Dental Therapy qualification shall be based on learning outcomes.

Formative and Summative assessment

The weighting of formative assessment shall be 60%, and that of summative assessment shall be 40%.

Assessments shall be carried out by BQA-registered and accredited Assessors

MODERATION ARRANGEMENTS

There shall be provision for both internal and external moderation by BQA-accredited moderators and assessors. Moderators should be holders of at least a bachelor's degree (NCQF Level 7) in Dental Therapy or a related qualification.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Candidates may submit evidence of prior learning and current competence and/or undergo appropriate forms of RPL assessment for the exemption of credits towards the qualification in accordance with applicable national RPL policies and other relevant national-level policies

CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER

Learners who qualify for Credit Transfer shall receive credits for completed qualifications as determined by the national RPL and Credit Transfer and Accumulation (CAT) Policy.

PROGRESSION PATHWAYS (LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT)

Horizontal Articulation

- Diploma in Dental Hygiene
- Diploma in Clinical Dentistry
- Diploma in Community Dental Health
- Diploma in Dental Public Health

Vertical Articulation

Graduates may progress to higher level qualifications (NQF level 7) such as:

- Bachelor of Science in Clinical Dentistry
- Bachelor of Dental Therapy
- Bachelor of Dental Surgery
- Bachelor of Science in Oral Health Education
- Bachelor of Science in Dental Public Health
- Bachelor of Dental Hygiene

Employment Pathways

On successful completion of this qualification, the holder may be absorbed in the job market as:

- Clinical Dental Therapist (in government and private dental clinics)
- Oral Health Promoter
- Dental Clinic Management Support
- Tutor or lecturer (clinical instructor or academic lecturer)

QUALIFICATION AWARD AND CERTIFICATION

Candidates meeting the required minimum of 369 credits will be awarded a Diploma in Dental Therapy in accordance with the qualification composition rules and applicable policies.

Certification

There will be certification upon the awarding of the Diploma in Dental Therapy qualification.

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY

This qualification compares with the qualifications offered by Levy Mwanawasa Medical University (LMMU) in Zambia and Malawi College of Health Sciences (MCHS) in Malawi.

Locally, there is no institution offering a Diploma in Dental Therapy.

- **Titles:** The title of the qualification is the same for both qualifications
- **NQF Levels:** The qualifications are all at level 6
- **Credits:** The qualifications compared/benchmarked have a credit load falling within the range for level 6. However, this developed qualification has a higher credit load than both of them.
- **Main Exit Outcomes:** The prevention of oral health diseases compares well across the institutions. Both qualifications are more focused on community oral health. As for the treatment/procedures offered, this qualification is similar to degree-level qualifications, as it

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provides preventive and curative oral health care across the age spectrum, as dictated by changing disease patterns and disease load in the country.

- **Modules:** The community Oral Health courses/modules performed well across all the institutions. As for clinical courses/modules, this qualification has more due to a broader scope of clinical practice.
- **Assessment weightings:** The assessment strategies compare well with the qualifications, but their weightings do differ. Botswana and Zambia place more weight on formative than on summative, while Malawi has almost the same weightings for both.
- **Rules of combination:** The qualifications benchmarked used the same structure used across most Southern African qualification frameworks, with core courses allocated more credits than fundamentals and electives. This qualification, therefore, compares well, though it does not offer electives.
- **Education and Employment Pathways:** The qualifications have similar education and employment pathways.

REVIEW PERIOD

This qualification will be reviewed every five (5) years or when the need arises, determined by the developer (implementers), stakeholders and regulatory bodies.

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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	