

# Is your qualification accredited, recognised and exportable?

You have studied for years to obtain a credible qualification/s in your chosen profession. You have obtained work experience in South Africa, but you are considering working overseas. Is your hard-earned qualification internationally recognised? What is the "accreditation" and "recognition of qualifications" really about?



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Gloria Castrillón, executive manager: quality assurance and regulatory affairs of Milpark Business School, said that although most countries respect the academic freedom of higher education institutions - including their right to develop and deliver their own, unique qualifications - countries also require that qualifications comply with certain minimum standards to guarantee their quality through a process called accreditation.

"In South Africa, all higher education programmes must be quality assured by the Council on Higher Education's Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). Once the HEQC has approved a programme, it is registered as such by the Department of Higher Education and Training and is also listed on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which is administered by the South African Qualifications Authority, known to most of us as SAQA."

## A 10-level framework

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a 10-level framework in terms of which all higher education (HE) qualifications are constructed and "mapped".

"In other countries where an NQF is in place (for example, in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and most Scandinavian countries), the authorities will assess a South African qualification on the NQF against a qualification on their own NQF and determine whether they are equivalent or not. In this way, qualifications registered on the SA NQF are portable (from country to country) and transferable (from institution to institution)," said Castrillón.

"In countries that do not have an NQF, the process is similar, although it may be more complex. This is the case in the US,

which does not have an NQF, but does have equivalent authorities in place in the various states or groups of states to determine whether a qualification from outside the US is similar to those inside the US."

Castrillón said that it is essential that all students in South Africa insist on HEQC-accredited higher education programmes that are registered on the NQF. "In this way, if you wish to move to another country, you will be able to approach SAQA for assistance in obtaining recognition for your qualification in that country."

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