		POLICY DOCUMENT
	E-LEARNING POLICY	



PSETA E-LEARNING POLICY



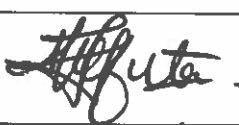

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NAME AND DESIGNATION OF THE AUTHOR	BENJAMIN MOTLHABANE QA MANAGER	
NAME AND DESIGNATION OF THE LINE EXECUTIVE MANAGER	SHIVANTHINI NAGALINGAM-POTTER ACTING COO	
SIGNATURE OF THE LINE EXECUTIVE MANAGER AND DATE		01-09-2020
NAME AND DESIGNATION OF THE RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL	BONTLE LERUMO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER	
SIGNATURE OF THE RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL AND DATE		
NAME OF APPROVAL AUTHORITY	MR THULANI TSHEFUTA CHAIRPERSON OF THE ACCOUNTING AUTHORITY	
SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL AUTHORITY		
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Quality Council for Trades Occupations (QCTO) has in terms of Section 26I (2) of the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (SDA) and the Council's delegation policy delegated the quality assurance partner (QAP) functions to the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA).
- 1.2 The delegation was conferred to the PSETA as of 27 September 2012 and it is limited to the Public Service sector. The delegated functions are as follows:
- i. Accredit Skills Development Providers (SDPs) for the qualifications or part qualifications listed in the schedule in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO;
 - ii. Monitor the provision by providers of Learning Programmes leading to the qualifications or part qualifications in order to ensure that the criteria for accreditation are being complied with;
 - iii. Evaluate learner assessment and the facilitation of moderation of learner assessment by providers;
 - iv. Register assessors and moderators to undertake assessments and moderation for specified qualifications or part qualifications in terms of criteria determined by the QCTO;
 - v. Certify qualified learners in accordance with the policy determined by the Minister in terms of section 26F of the SDA;
 - vi. Maintain a comprehensive learner information management system;
 - vii. Upload learner data to the National Learner Records Database (NLRD) according to the NLRD load specifications; and
 - viii. Perform such other functions consistent with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act and the SDA as the QCTO may from time to time allocate to the SETA in writing.
- 1.3 The delegation expires once the qualifications delegated to the PSETA are reviewed and replaced by qualifications developed and registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) or until the qualifications reach their registration end date and teach out periods or when the qualifications are withdrawn by the QCTO.
- 1.4 The delegations is subject to the following terms and conditions:

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- i. The QCTO may review the quality management policies and procedures of the PSETA and examine the activities of the Quality Assurance Partner (QAP) department;
- ii. The PSETA must ensure the integrity of quality assurance by exercising its delegated functions separately and independently from any provision of education and training; and
- iii. The performance by the SETA of its delegated functions must advance the objectives of the NQF as contemplated in section 5 of the NQF Act.


2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to

- 2.1 Outline the standards regarding educational provision leading to an award or part of an award which is delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through means which generally do not require the learners to attend particular classes or events at particular times and particular locations. This includes practice such as E-Learning, distance learning, blended learning, flexible learning, instructor led training and the use of web-based materials to supplement classroom-based learning.
- 2.2 Outline the minimum requirements that must be met by SDPs when delivering this provision.
- 2.3 The requirements of this policy are in addition to the normal requirements on SDPs, as detailed through the accreditation process.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
ETDP	Education and Development Training Practitioners
MIS	Management Information System
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NLRD	National Learner Records Database
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework


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Abbreviation	Description
PSETA	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority
QAP	Quality Assurance Partner
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QMS	Quality Management System
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDP	Skills Development Provider
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMS	SETA Management System


4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Description
Accreditation	The certification, usually for a particular period, of a person, a body or an institution having the capacity to fulfil a particular function in the quality assurance system.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence of learners' work to measure and make judgements about the competence or non-competence of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications.
Assessor	Means a person registered by the QAP for the purposes of conducting external assessment for occupational qualifications.
Blended Learning	Blended learning refers to the provision of structured learning opportunities using a combination of contact, distance, and/or information communication technologies (ICT) - supported opportunities (modes of provision) to suit different purposes, audiences and contexts.
Code of Conduct	Refers to a set of conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding to organisation(s) that are accredited by PSETA.




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Term	Description
E-assessment	E-assessment is the use of electronic systems for the development, operation and delivery of accredited qualification assessment or the collection of performance evidence, which contributes to the awarding of a unit or an accredited qualification.
E-Learning	Various forms of electronic learning where technology is used to deliver part, or all of a course content, whether it is within a school or in a distance learning environment.
Extension of Scope	Means an addition of qualification(s) and/or unit standards falling with the scope of the PSETA, granted after approval of the initial application
Full circle of Training	Means the Provider has recruited, registered learners through PSETA SMS leading to the NLRD compliance, trained, assessed, moderated, verified learner assessments through PSETA External Moderation process and certified learners' achievements.
Guideline	Means a general rule, principle, piece of advice or a statement that aims to streamline processes according to a set routine or sound practice.
Moderator	Means a person, who has achieved competence against moderator standard and is registered with ETDP SETA as a qualified moderator. The PSETA constituent moderator is the latter who is registered to moderate against the PSETA part or full qualifications in line with the PSETA assessment policy
Organisation	Refers to legally established entities which may include but not limited to, national and provincial government departments and agencies, institution/organisation, company, centre, collaborative partnership, or consultancy established in line with relevant statutory body requirements and currently in good standing.

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Term	Description
Part qualification	Means an assessed unit of learning that is registered on the NQF as a part qualification.
Primary Accreditation	Means a body accredited to deliver learning programmes which culminate in specified NQF qualifications and or part qualification which falls within the PSETA scope.
Primary focus	Means that activity or objective within the sector upon which an organization or body concentrates its efforts.
Programme Approval	Means secondary accreditation of organisations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) process signed between SETAs. A provider accredited by another QAP can apply for extension of scope on unit standard/s or qualification/s falling within the primary focus of another QAP. The Provider is required to notify the primary QAP of the intention to extend scope. The primary QAP will on behalf of the Provider liaise with the secondary QAP to take the process forward.
Quality Assurance Partner	means a body delegated by the QCTO responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards or qualifications, and to which specific functions relating to the monitoring and auditing of national standards or qualifications have been assigned in terms of section 5(1) (b) (i) of the SAQA Act.
Quality Management System	Means the combination of policy, processes and procedures used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved.
Registered Qualifications	Means qualifications registered on the NQF.
Scope of Accreditation	Means the list of qualification(s) and/or part qualification(s) for which a body is accredited for a defined purpose.
Secondary accreditation	Means a body accredited with another SETA and is approved by the PSETA to deliver learning programmes which culminate in

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	specified NQF qualifications and or part qualifications that fall within the PSETA scope.
Skills Development Provider	Means a provider of occupational learning accredited by the QAP as delegated by the QCTO
Skills Development Provider Applicant	Means a provider seeking accreditation or programme approval of occupational learning accredited by the QAP as delegated by the QCTO


5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Policy applies to:

- 5.1. SDPs seeking to offer training using E-Learning and/or distance learning platforms;
- 5.2. PSETA QAP staff members;
- 5.3. ETD Practitioners in the sector; and
- 5.4. PSETA contracted external consultants where applicable.

6. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PRESCRIPTS

- 6.1. Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998, as amended.
- 6.2. South African Qualifications Authority Act.
- 6.3. National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008.
- 6.4. QCTO Delegation Policy.
- 6.5. QCTO E-Assessment Policy.
- 6.6. QCTO General Principles and minimum requirements on e-assessment of qualifications and part qualifications on the occupational qualifications sub-framework (OQSF).
- 6.7. Draft White Paper on e-Education – Government Gazette Notice 1869 of 2004.

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7. POLICY PROVISIONS AND CONTENT


7.1. Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1.1. The Accounting Authority (AA) grants approval of this Policy to be implemented and exercises its fiduciary duties of provisions of the Policy and Delegations of Authority.
- 7.1.2. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), assisted by the Chief Operations Officer (COO) is accountable for establishing and maintaining systems to manage the function.
- 7.1.3. SDPs that are applying for approval to implement E-Learning are responsible to align their operations in line with the requirements contained in this policy document.
- 7.1.4. The QAP staff or its representatives are responsible for implementation of this policy and to ensure stakeholder compliance.
- 7.1.5. The QAP Manager is
 - i. Accountable for implementation and management of this Policy; and
 - ii. Responsible for signing the approval letters authorising SDPs to implement E-Learning.

8. CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

- 8.1. In order for the PSETA to award approval to an SDP to implement E-Learning, the following minimum requirements must be met:
 - i. The SDP must be already accredited with the PSETA. This includes secondary SDPs with programme approval status.
 - ii. The SDP must provide details of the platform to be used for E-Learning.
 - iii. The SDP applicant shall produce proof of ownership or a duly signed Service Level Agreement for an E-Learning platform.
 - iv. The SDP must submit a comprehensive and signed E-Learning Policy.
 - a. This policy must detail how learners will be enrolled on the E-Learning platform and documentation that would need to be



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submitted to the PSETA for enrolment on the SETA Management Information System (MIS).


- b. Access to the portal must also be addressed in terms of security and authenticity.
- c. It should also outline the guidance and continued support that will be offered to learners. This could be technical or academic support.
- d. It is also critical that different kinds of learning styles are taken into consideration to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.
- v. The SDP must provide evidence of PSETA registered constituent ETD Practitioners i.e. Assessors, and Moderators bearing the scope or exceeding that of the applicant SDP;
- vi. The SDP must indicate how learners will get access to the learning material

8.1. The SDP should submit the above-mentioned information and documents in a format prescribed by the PSETA QAP.

9. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

As part of the approval requirements, applicant SDPs are required to have the following Policies and Procedures:

- 9.1. **Physical Resources:** This policy should outline physical resources required to implement E-Learning and/or distance learning.
- 9.2. **Staff Selection, Appraisal and Development:** This policy must indicate educational and experience required from all staff that will interact with learners on the E-Learning platform.
- 9.3. **Learner Entry, Guidance and Support Systems:** This policy must detail how learners will be enrolled on the E-Learning platform and documentation that would need to be submitted to the PSETA for enrolment on the SETA MIS. Access to the portal must address aspects of security and authenticity. It should also outline the guidance and continued support that will be offered to learners. This could be technical or academic support. It is also critical that different kinds of learning styles are taken into consideration to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.

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9.4. Management of Assessments: This policy must outline how assessments are going to be conducted. Both Formative and Summative assessments must be provided for. This must take into account the principles of assessment and must also include both pre and post-assessment activities.

10. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF E-ASSESSMENT

In order for an e-assessment system to have credibility, there are generic principles of assessment that should be upheld, over and above the specific principles that are germane to electronically supported assessment systems. Assessment Quality Partners must adhere to these general principles of assessment in order to ensure that they implement credible systems.

10.1. Validity of e- assessment: Assessment Quality Partners should ensure that:

- i. Students who pass the programme demonstrate the graduate competences indicated in the purpose and exit level outcomes of the programme.
- ii. Where relevant, practical competences are adequately assessed
- iii. Systems have been put in place to ensure reliability, rigor and security of the e-assessment system for remote students
- iv. Assessment activities are sufficiently varied for the programme purpose and level and the diversity of its student body. Appropriate constructs as covered in the relevant courses are adequately covered in the assessment.
- v. Where students submit assessment individually by electronic means from homes or workplaces, and not from a recognised assessment centre, the programme has the necessary security systems for electronic assessment.
- vi. Programmes delivered exclusively or mainly through electronic learning methods do not narrow the range of assessment to the assessment of factual knowledge (which is most easily assessed), rather than the full range of outcomes and depth of knowledge required for the particular programme of study. In technology supported distance education delivery, there is the danger of limiting assessment tasks to


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low level cognitive skills (e.g. simple multiple choice questions [MCQs] that can be computer-marked) at the expense of high level skills (usually requiring more open-ended written and practical assignments) that enhance deep and critical engagement with concepts. Higher order thinking skills like application, analyses, evaluation and creation should be covered in the assessment.

- vii. There is evidence of staff development to familiarize academic staff with online assessment strategies that take high level cognitive skills into account thereby ensuring credible online assessment.

10.2. Management of e-assessment:

- i. There is evidence that the assessment body understands the importance of feedback on formative assessment in E-Learning.
- ii. There is evidence of an assessment management system to ensure that feedback on assessment is confidential and reaches the right students timeously. Systems are in place to communicate feedback and results quickly, efficiently and securely to a distributed student body.
- iii. Adequate systems to guarantee the integrity and security of the assessment system and the authenticity of student submissions (including means to discourage plagiarism from online sources) are in place.
- iv. E-assessment systems are tested to ensure proper functionality and any shortcomings identified are fully addressed prior to full implementation.
- v. There is regular monitoring and checking of the smooth functioning of e-assessment systems to make sure that the assessment system is not compromised in any way.
- vi. The e-assessment body has enough competent staff to address any technical problems students face with the assessment system to ensure the assessment process runs smoothly and does not in any way disadvantage the student.
- vii. The assessment body does not pass on unnecessary costs to students.
- viii. There is a policy on external moderation of the e-assessment and the policy is effectively implemented.

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- ix. External moderation reports are used to improve the various aspects of the e-assessment process, like the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance, and the reliability of the marking process.
- x. Assessment partners must have effective quality assurance measures in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment data.
- xi. E –assessment systems must have capacity to generate key information like system error reports and data that demonstrates regulatory compliance.
- xii. Where Assessment Partners enter into partnership arrangements with any other provider, formal service level agreements with clearly stated roles and responsibilities must be signed.

10.3. Teaching/Learning value of e-assessment:

- i. The central role of formative assessment and feedback in online learning is formally recognized and there is evidence of an appropriate number and variety of formative assessment tasks, and mechanisms for the monitoring and quality assurance of feedback and minimum turn-around time are in place.
- ii. Accurate and reliable records of student e-assessment are kept and can easily be retrieved as when there is need.
- iii. The potential of the electronic environment for the use of ongoing formative assessment of different kinds (self-, peer- and tutor assessment) is exploited appropriately.

10.4. User-friendliness of e-assessment System:

- i. The rules and regulations governing assessment are published and clearly communicated to students and relevant stakeholders.
- ii. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that these rules are widely adhered to.
- iii. Breaches of assessment regulations are dealt with effectively and timeously.
- iv. Students are provided with information and guidance on their rights and responsibilities regarding e-assessment processes (for example,


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definitions and regulations on plagiarism, penalties, terms of appeal, supplementary examinations, etc.).

- v. Student appeals procedures are explicit, fair and effective.
- vi. There are clear and consistent published guidelines/regulations for:
 - a. Marking and grading of results.
 - b. Aggregation of marks and grades.
 - c. Progression and final awards.
 - d. Credit allocation and articulation.
- vii. As much as possible, e-assessment systems should operate on inclusive principles and therefore accommodate learners with various forms of physical challenges.
- viii. E-assessment systems are designed in such a way that they are easy for learners to navigate. Assessment partners should ensure that learners do not spend much time grappling with system issues instead of with the content of the assessment.
- ix. Mechanisms are in place to support learners who are less competent in working with technologies so they can gain the necessary skills and gain sufficient confidence in working with the technology; and
- x. Ensure that there is fair and equal treatment of all undertaking e-assessment, irrespective of geographical location, time of assessment and course.

10.5. Use of e-portfolios for assessment

- i. In addition to regulatory principles, e-portfolio systems should store and maintain performance evidence for access by all required parties securely, meet the evidence needs for a range of qualification types and enable learners to move their portfolios from one centre to another.
- ii. E-portfolio systems must have the capabilities to store and maintain a variety of forms of performance evidence or coursework for secure access by the learner, assessors, verifiers and moderators based on a robust authentication process.
- iii. As far as is practicable, awarding bodies must give due consideration to the need to support a degree of inter-operability in the e-portfolio

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systems that they develop or endorse to enable learners to move their portfolios from one centre to another.

- iv. 100% assessments shall be conducted for E-Learning learner assessments
- v. 50% moderations shall be conducted for E-Learning learner assessments.

10.6. Learner achievement shall be endorsed and SORs and/or certificates shall be issued in line with the PSETA Certification policy.

11. SDPS RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENTS

11.1 SDPs should ensure learners have access to:


- i. Information that sets out the respective responsibilities of institution for the delivery of the programme, module, or element of study;
- ii. Module descriptors, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the module(s);
- iii. A clear schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.

11.2 SDPs should ensure that learners can be confident that:

- i. Study materials, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet the expectations of the institution in respect of the quality of teaching and learning-support material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards;
- ii. The provision is subject to regular monitoring and periodic review process.

11.3 SDPs should ensure that:

- i. The platform is able to capture and keep records of learner engagements. This is particularly important to ensure notional hours are accounted for;
- ii. Sufficient learning activities are available;
- iii. Learners have access to an online tutor.

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- 11.4 The SDPs shall provide support and guidance to learners by using electronic systems.
- 11.5 The PSETA registered Assessors as Facilitators of learning, shall provide ongoing feedback to learners after an activity has been completed.
- 11.6 The PSETA registered Assessors and Moderators shall assess and moderate learner assessments at the end of the programme and compile assessment and moderation reports in line with the principles of assessments.
- 11.7 SDPs shall ensure that e-assessment tools have a combination of application, analysis, case studies, evaluation and creation type questions.
- 11.8 The Learner matrix, certified ID copies, Assessment and Moderation reports shall be submitted to the PSETA, when a verification application is made.

12. SAFETY AND SECURITY OF INFORMATION

- 12.1. SDPs must ensure that required back-ups and Disaster Recovery Plans are in place to secure the learner information, work and assessments.

13. ACCREDITATION STATUS AND DURATION

- 13.1. Accreditation: The E-Learning approval is directly linked to the accreditation status of the SDP.
- 13.2. Programme Approval: All programme approval SDPs must ensure that their accreditation with their primary quality assurance bodies are valid.


14. PSETA LOGO USAGE

- 14.1 SDPs are not allowed to use the PSETA logo on their E-Learning platform

15. PROCESS FLOW FOR E-LEARNING APPLICATION AND APPROVAL

The steps listed below shall be followed by the PSETA QAP staff when processing the E-Learning applications. It must be noted that these over and above the accreditation requirements:

- 15.1 SDP submits a formal letter with required policies indicating intention to implement E-Learning;

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- 15.2 PSETA QAP acknowledges the application;
- 15.3 PSETA QAP conducts QMS desktop evaluation;
- 15.4 PSETA QAP evaluates learning material where applicable;
- 15.5 PSETA QAP conducts virtual inspection of the E-Learning portal;
- 15.6 E-learning application approved or not approved;
- 15.7 Approval letter signed by QA Manager issued to qualifying SDPs.

16. APPEALS

Appeals will be handled as per the approved PSETA Appeals Policy.

17. TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

The following tools shall be used in processing E-Learning applications:


- 17.1. E-Learning Evaluation tool;
- 17.2. Accreditation Standard Operating Procedure; and
- 17.3. Learning Programme Evaluation tool;

18. NON-COMPLIANCE

- 18.1 Non-compliance with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements through any deliberate or negligent act or omission, including allowing any staff, either expressly or impliedly, not to comply with this Policy or any applicable regulatory requirements, will be considered serious and be dealt with in terms of PSETA's disciplinary policies and procedures.
- 18.2 Should an SDP not comply with prescripts of this policy, signed code of conduct and the terms of accreditation, the PSETA will recommend withdrawal, suspension or de-accreditation of such a provider to the QCTO.

19. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 19.1. This Policy comes into effect on the date of signature and the relevant owner shall ensure that it is communicated to staff using various modes, not limited to email, intranet, workshops etc. However, this shall not have any bearing on the effective date for implementation.
- 19.2. This policy shall be read in conjunction with the following PSETA Policies:

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- i. Learning Programme Evaluation Policy;
- ii. Certification Policy;
- iii. Accreditation Policy; and
- iv. Management of Assessment Policy

20. MONITORING, REVIEW AND UPDATING OF THE POLICY

This Policy shall be reviewed no sooner than 12 months and no later than 24 months after the approval date or will be reviewed as and when required by legislation. The outcome of such process may either require the author to maintain the status quo or update/amend it.

21. APPROVAL OF THE POLICY

The Policy shall be approved by the AA and signed by the Chairperson subsequent to the Resolution taken.