

Wholesale & Retail

LEADERSHIP CHAIR



*"Collaboration opens the window
to a world of opportunities."*

Project 2014/08B

**Development of W&RSETA
management system and procedures
for AQP for QCTO retail qualifications**

October 2015

**APPLIED RESEARCH
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
SERVICE TO RETAIL COMMUNITY**

Project 2014/08B

**Development of W&RSETA
management system and procedures
for AQP for QCTO retail qualifications**

October 2015

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List of abbreviations

AA – Automobile Association

AQP - Assessment Quality Partner

CD – Compact Disc

CPUT - Cape Peninsula University of Technology

DQP – Development Quality Partner

ETQA – Education and Training Quality Assurance

FET – Further Education and Training (College)

FISA - Final Integrated Summative Assessment

MIS – Management Information System

NLRD – National Learner Records Database

NQF – National Qualifications Framework

OQF – Occupational Qualifications Framework (a sub-framework of the NQF)

QCTO - Quality Council for Trades and Occupations

QMB – Qualifications Management Board of the W&RSETA

RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning

SAQA – South African Qualifications Authority

SETA - Sector Education and Training Authority

TVET - Technical Vocational Education and Training (College)

TVET (FET) - Technical Vocational Education and Training (Further Education and Training) (College)

VET – Vocational Education and Training

W&R – Wholesale and Retail

W&RSETA - Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority

Executive summary

This research project considers and critically evaluates the implementation requirements of the new system of occupational qualification and part qualifications. Currently, there are no guidelines but rather national policy published by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). In addition, no implementation exists in the new system from which to benchmark.

The research evaluated the wholesale and retail sector at large, as assessment and models for assessment need to consider industry-specific needs. There are many different segments in the wholesale and retail sector and the needs within the sector are variable in nature. The qualifications that form part of the research include those related to “Service Station Attendant” to “Retail Store Manager”, for example, and each of these qualifications need to work within one quality assurance model for the Assessment Quality Partner (AQP), which in all of these identified cases will be the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education & Training Authority (SETA).

The consideration from previous research, which formed part of the overall W&RSETA commission, was to use Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET) as well as private education providers. Thus, an evaluation was done to see if the TVET colleges were able to fulfill the qualification requirements. Although many TVETs had some ability to assess, including the use of specialised equipment such as checkout systems, they do not have sufficient equipment for large-scale assessment, or are currently unable to offer assessment of the seven identified qualifications that form the scope of this research. The technical requirements as per the Assessment Specification Documents, therefore, have to be the primary consideration for the implementation model.

Secondly, the current policy of the QCTO requires some further development, as the current policy is unclear in some instances. In other cases, the policy does not provide guidelines to help define what the assessment requirements should be, as well as how the quality indicators will be measured. This directly affects the costing, and model, and in part does not allow a definitive model to be defined at this time.

The final phase of the research considers what stakeholders within the Wholesale and Retail sector define as the criteria for certification and the registration of examiners and moderators. As various role-players would require capacity building in the new system, this phase also incorporated stakeholder input on how this would be done internally within the W&RSETA, and within the sector at large.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act brought into being the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), under the auspices of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). The NQF Act identified the QCTO as being responsible for the development, implementation and quality control of learning interventions registered on the Occupational Qualifications Framework (OQF) sub-framework of the NQF. The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education Training Authority (W&RSETA) has developed, and will continue to develop, qualifications for trades and occupations in the wholesale and retail (and related) sectors, for registration on this sub-framework and for delivery, in order to benefit individuals, organisations, communities and the country and region as a whole.

QCTO policy and procedure requires independent, fair and objective assessment of learning interventions through an Assessment Quality Partner (AQP). As with the Development Quality Partner (DQP), the AQP operates in terms of a Service Level Agreement with the QCTO. Each AQP is to be overseen by the relevant SETA; in the case of W&RSETA, the SETA itself is the AQP for various qualifications within the SETA's mandate, and this is likely to extend to future relevant qualifications as well. In order to fully participate and to comply with its mandate and appropriate QCTO policies and procedures, the W&RSETA has engaged the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) to research and develop a suitable W&RSETA management system, and procedures, to oversee its role as AQP.

The overall purpose of the research is to develop an implementation model for the Assessment Quality Partner to be capacitated in order to meet the required functions, published in policy documentation, of developing, implementing and capacitating the sector for Final Integrated Summative Assessment (FISA). This FISA will need to be conducted in line with the requirements (including policy and procedure) of the QCTO for the W&RSETA occupational qualifications. This research project forms part of a larger set of research projects, which considers assessment, and management thereof, within the new QCTO.

The framework for occupational qualifications in South Africa has moved from

unit standard based learning to occupational profile based learning. This framework is not so much outcomes based as rather focused on the needs of the occupational profile, as per industry requirements and standards.

In the new framework, assessment takes place at each stage of the learning cycle: after training (formative), practical (formative), workplace based assessment (logbook as well as formative). Successful completion of these allows the learner access to the summative, which is a controlled summative assessment, which is standardised, and which all learners complete in order to be awarded the occupational qualification.

The new framework includes Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs), which administer the summative assessment component of the assessment cycle, in a controlled external summative assessment, administered nationally for all learners who qualify to meet the requirements for external summative assessment. The AQP therefore has to consider the development of assessment instruments, as well as the logistics and planning of a national summative assessment, in a controlled environment.

This research considers a model that the AQP, which role will be fulfilled in this case by the W&RSETA, can use in order to facilitate and manage the summative assessment process.

1.2 CONTEXT AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As per the project specification, the predetermined aims of the research have been developed by the research sponsors, W&RSETA, who have commissioned WRLC CPUT to conduct the research. Therefore the aims of the research are pre-agreed and require the researcher to interrogate and provide research which considers how an organisation, the W&RSETA in this regard, would develop a model for the accreditation, operation and management of assessment centres in line with the requirements (including policy and procedure) of the QCTO. This is limited to identified W&RSETA occupational qualifications. This research should result in:

- A model for the development, management and implementation of assessments, and the certification of QCTO qualifications for which the W&RSETA is acting as the AQP, as well as the registration of examiners and moderators.
- A costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP.

- A strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff and relevant stakeholders

1.2.1 Models for Assessment Quality Partner for Occupational Qualifications

The new qualifications to be introduced by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations will see the management and quality assurance process change from the current model. In the new model, an Assessment Quality Partner will be appointed, per qualification, and this AQP will be responsible for developing assessment instruments, accrediting assessment centres at which the national examinations will be held, ensuring the assessments are assessed and notifying learners of their assessment results.

The Wholesale and Retail SETA will act as the Assessment Quality Partner for various qualifications that are currently registered, or in the process of being registered, by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, and is in the process of looking at models for implementation.

For purposes of clarity, occupational qualifications (and part qualifications) refer to the generic term for all qualifications. Occupational certificates refer specifically to the seven identified qualifications that form the scope of this research.

Recent research conducted for the Wholesale and Retail SETA (Damons, le Grange, Louw & Mason, 2015) considers which model would be the most appropriate to the identified wholesale and retail qualifications. Currently one of these has been registered by the QCTO and there are six others that are in the development and registration process. The research referred to considers how the model can be flexible in order to meet all the needs of the various current (and potential future) qualifications.

On analysis of the qualifications, it was noted that there were practical requirements in the majority of assessment specifications, including assessment timelines that ranged from half a day to two full days. In many cases, the assessment also required practical ability to be demonstrated and assessed. Thus, in line with the implementation, there would be a requirement to have access to a practical venue in addition to one where the written assessment would take place. Some requirements were of concern, for example where the assessment is expected to take place on a

forecourt and, in another case, where learners are required to access software which they might be unfamiliar with, for the assessment, prior to it taking place. Therefore, the modeling had to take these various requirements into consideration, which are noted as being different to those prescribed by the QCTO.

Two models were identified:

Model A considers the private solution, in which privately owned businesses can register and go through an accreditation process in order to become assessment centres, for purposes of making a profit. Those businesses that have national footprints would be required, in addition to smaller providers in rural towns and areas, in order to support the model.

Model B considers using the current Technical Vocational Education and Training (Further Education and Training) (TVET (FET)) Colleges throughout the country as a base for all national assessments, which would require learners to come to the venues even if these were not within the close proximity of the learner. This model could also incorporate the following two other alternative recommendations:

- 1) In addition to venues potentially being a long distance away from learners, it was also noted by industry that they would consider it time consuming to let learners off for long periods of time and thus wanted the assessments to take place at their site/venue. Thus, the assessment centre would effectively run the assessment “in-house” at the employer premises.
- 2) It was further suggested that an optimal model could incorporate both options, that is, a combination of both the (TVET (FET)) Colleges as well as “in-house” at the employer premises, based on need as well as resources in each particular instance.

Focus groups held around the country considered the two models and found that Model B, which received 91% of the choices, was the best suited to industry as well as other stakeholders within the sector. This would be particularly desirable if alternative 2), outlined above, would be incorporated.

This research considers the process of taking a theoretic model, developed as part of a separate research project, and considers practical implementation requirements. This requires amongst other things to consider triangulation as a means of unearthing and determining the needs of the wholesale and retail sector, which is different to other workplace-based sectors within the country. The sector has to consider its various sub-sectors, each with very specific needs that do not necessarily align to each other or a central industry-generic structure, or in many

cases sub-sectors that do not have even any similarities to each other. This is most easily demonstrated in comparing the needs of the clothing retail sector, which is a dominant industry role player, and the fuel retail sector, with its own very specific needs.

To consider all of these industries in one singular framework is thus not possible. In addition to this, when engaging with those from outside of the sector, there is an assumption that retail is the only sub-sector linked to wholesale and retail. Clearly this is not the case, as there is very obviously also a wholesale component. Furthermore within what may be considered the retail sector are very many sub-sectors each with their own requirements, as shown in the example above.

Thus, the process that has been followed has been to consider the needs of this range of sub-sectors, while exploring the insecurity of the TVET capacity to deliver, and relevant QCTO policy. This has ensured that there is a process of triangulation in order to validate the model selected by participants (Model B), but also to consider private provision, which would be required to meet the same criteria that public provision would be required to meet.

The triangulation is explained through the links noted within each of the following three contributors that would be participating in the assessment implementation, should Model B be adopted:

1.2.2 QCTO national policy and framework

Firstly, the current policy and processes noted within national policy, developed by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations would have to be satisfied that the model's implementation would be in line with requirements laid out therein.

1.2.3 Industry needs

Participants from the wholesale and retail industry have indicated the requirement that learning should be: to prepare learners for the workplace, to make them employable, and to provide some foundational knowledge in order to be considered work-ready. Surveys (questionnaires) utilised in the research considered the needs of the industry and its role-players, including people representing the

workplace, training providers, quality assurance and sector specific educational personnel.

1.2.4 TVET and/or Assessment Centre readiness and capacity

Other considerations for the model, and its application, consider that Model B could require combinations that include TVET and private “in-house” assessment centres. Thus, these institutions would need to be evaluated to see if they are in fact able to provide the service of being an assessment centre, conducting assessments and managing national assessments. Experience and capacity would also be considerations. Furthermore, it would be necessary for them to have the necessary resources and suitable technology to be able to meet the requirements of the various qualifications. These resources and suitable technology are a significant factor, noting the large practical component required within each of the identified qualifications, as outlined in the respective assessment specification documents.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The research project initiated by the Wholesale and Retail SETA required researching a model that could be used by the W&RSETA for the registration and management of assessment centres. In this model the W&RSETA fulfills the role of the AQP and relies on delegation to (or service provision by) the assessment centre(s) to assess the learner, and related activities, on behalf of the AQP.

During the aforementioned related research, linked to this research project, various models were recommended in terms of implementation, namely:

- 1) a W&RSETA assessment centre, at its current registered offices (although this could only be considered for knowledge based assessments and some mobile practical assessments);
- 2) an outsourced model for those wishing to apply as assessment centres, provided that the applicant had the necessary resources to be able to manage the assessments (although there were models identified like public, public an in-house and in-house only); and
- 3) A relationship with TVET (FET) Colleges to assist in the administration of assessment centres (although this could only be considered for knowledge based assessments and some mobile practical assessments).

This literature survey considers best practice models both nationally and internationally.

The initial survey considers the research outcomes:

- A model for the development, management and implementation of assessments and the certification of QCTO qualifications for which the W&RSETA is the AQP, as well as the registration of examiners and moderators.
- A costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP.
- A strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff and relevant stakeholders

For purposes of clarity, the scope of the project is pre-defined and initial limitations noted in terms of the QCTO policy in the public domain at the time of the research study. This is then reviewed in relation to the practical assessment requirements of the identified seven W&RSETA qualifications which form the scope of the research. Those practical requirements are laid out in each of the respective assessment specification documents, for each identified qualification. Application based methodology and process are considered in terms of the ability to define the needs of both practical and knowledge assessment. Finally, the international comparability considers, amongst other things, models used in Germany, Australia and the United States of America.

2.1.1 Scope and limitation of the research

The following statement has been included in the research specification document and thus incorporated into the research proposal, for the purposes of clarifying and ensuring suitable focus of the project. The researchers were required to consider models of assessment for seven W&RSETA qualifications that had been identified as being developed (or in development) at the time, the research was commissioned, namely:

1. Occupational Certificate: Checkout Operator;
2. Occupational Certificate: Service Station Attendant;
3. Occupational Certificate: Retail Buyer;
4. Occupational Certificate: Dispatching and Receiving Clerk or Officer;
5. Occupational Certificate: Retail Supervisor;
6. National Occupational Qualification: Retail Manager: Retail Store Manager;
and
7. Occupational Certificate: Store Person.

Therefore, the research regarding implementation required of the AQP should be based on these seven qualifications only, and the implementation model specific to this research should consider how the implementation of assessment could be managed for these only. Should other qualifications be developed, or initiated, at some later stage after the research study, then the model would need to be reconsidered in light of those new qualifications.

2.2 RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

For this part of the Literature Survey a range of practices of assessing vocational or occupation-based qualifications were reviewed.

2.2.1 City and Guilds

One can consider the research conducted by Damons, le Grange, Louw and Mason (2015) which evaluated the City and Guilds model.

City and Guilds are a private institution in the United Kingdom offering vocational qualifications. The model that is used combines both theoretical and practical assessment in the form of exit summative assessments, which could assess both theoretical and practical competency. The City and Guilds assessment model is linked to the qualifications that are offered as part of multiple sector skills councils in the United Kingdom. The model that City and Guilds has developed is therefore closely aligned to the requirements of the QCTO.

City and Guilds have produced various documents that list the process and procedure for accrediting, conducting and providing the administrative and data support for assessments, using a national, or in their case international, exit summative assessment. These documents include:

Providing City and Guilds Qualifications: a guide to centre and qualification approval (City and Guilds, 2008)

Guide to the assessment of practical skills in International Vocational Qualifications (City and Guilds, 2003)

Guidance for Centres: Our Quality Assurance Requirements (2011)

Amongst the resources that are noted as being required in terms of the abovementioned documents are external resources such as quality systems consultants, external verifiers and setting and marking examiners (City and Guilds, 2008, 11-13) as well as an internal quality assurer (City and Guilds, 2011, 27) for the initial phases of accreditation and assessment. In addition to these roles, monitoring post-registration as an assessment centre is conducted by a consultant to ensure that the assessment centre meets all requirements (City and Guilds, 2011, 23).

Basic process for registration as a City and Guilds centre

- Applicants register their interest to become an assessment centre with the regional City and Guilds Office;
- The Quality Systems consultant then visits the centre to validate that there are sufficient systems and to ensure assistance in completing the application documentation;
- Applicants formally apply to become Assessment Centres, based on having applicable resources including required human resources such as assessors and moderators, physical venue(s) for the assessment and computer based software (aligned to City and Guilds requirements);
- The identified roles of human resources required at an assessment centre, which would need to be in place, include: a quality assurance coordinator, an internal verifier, an assessor and an invigilator;
- There is an opportunity to have an advisory visit (2008, 5), in which the assessment centre pays to undergo capacity building, although these visits are noted as an additional service and are therefore charged to the assessment centre;
- The regional office will schedule a site visit by an external verifier;
- An external verifier then undertakes the site visit confirming and validating the information provided;
- The external verifier writes a report indicating findings and making a recommendation for:
 - Registration
 - Not yet recommended for registration with further developments required for registration, against an action plan
 - Once the action plan has been satisfied the Centre is required to inform the regional office and possibly undergo a remedial site visit

(City and Guilds, 2008, 6-14)

City and Guilds do differentiate the approval of an examinations-only centre (that is, not being an assessment centre) and the one process differentiator is:

- A site visit does not always have to take place but spot checks prior to, or during, examinations could be required.

In addition, where there is a practical component such as a workplace-based assessment, or a practical assessment that is a component of a summative assessment, then it is up to the assessment centre to manage this and to ensure the credibility of the assessment (City and Guilds, 2008, 15).

Currently the assessment centres receive two external verifier site visits a year, and should more be required then a charge is levied (City and Guilds, 2008, 48).

What should also be noted is that the City and Guilds model follows an assessment-on-demand model, which means that assessments can be ordered and delivered within a specific time period. There are no restrictions for set and largely unalterable, national assessment dates, which are predefined and published, and thus City and Guilds allows for continuous assessment throughout the year.

This model is comparable to the requirements noted in the *QCTO Policy on Accreditation of Assessment Centres*.

The AQP could fulfill similar functions, noting the costs associated with the process linked to this model. It would seem that there might need to be charges levied for the management of the quality assurance activity.

The concern about this model is that there is a reliance on organisations wishing to register as assessment centres. As this is a voluntary process, and one linked to various requirements for continued compliance, it will be driven by the willingness of organisations to register as assessment centres, presumably on their seeing value in doing so. There could also be challenges if organisations choose not to register as assessment centres in certain regions, resulting in learners having to travel, at a cost to be borne by someone or some organisation, to undertake an assessment at a centre away from where they are located, noting that there may be no assessment centre for a considerable distance. Considering this, although this model is the best from a management and cost perspective, it could become exclusive.

2.2.2 Other international models

A recommended model to review is that developed by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2014). Its process of implementing assessments should be considered in relation to the following parameter.

Firstly, there is a strategy that defines how the assessment will be implemented and considers amongst things, the purpose and need for the assessment in relation to the curriculum. This is then followed by a process of industry engagement, which is seen as a critical step as the strategy must consider industry needs, validated through such industry engagement.

Assessment in this model is conducted based on both the original strategy and the industry engagement, and this ensures fit-for-purpose assessment instruments as well the assessment process. This is then followed by a systematic evaluation that considers the efficacy of the assessment and reviews the various phases in the implementation of the assessment.

What is important to note from this model, is that there is industry engagement prior to the assessment, as the validation and validity of the assessment by the industry is considered crucial.

Winther and Klotz (2013, 3) note that there is no singular model or content applicable when considering assessment within any sector and specifically in a situation in which competence should be demonstrated, “[t]hus VET content is heterogeneous not only between countries and also across different professions within nations but across workplaces”. Thus, the idea of ‘action competency’ has been developed to ensure that the individual needs of the profession are catered for when students engage in a learning methodology, which is measured through action and that this is linked to the workplace to ensure authenticity. As Winther and Klotz (2013, 4) note:

“Since then students by law have to be instructed in a way that enables them to plan, execute and monitor a whole action process in a working environment.”

The ‘action competency’ model helps to determine the level of competency and to consider future learning pathways, specific to a learner.

The Australian Qualification Authority (2008) combines models in a new model which is somewhere on the spectrum between: the currently implemented SAQA model (unit standard based with provider developed summative assessments), and the one which is being adopted by the QCTO (AQP-developed national final integrated summative assessment). However, the Australian model refers to making sure assessment is reliable and meets industry needs. For example, the following need had been identified by industry:

Assessors work with the candidate to collect a range of evidence using the appropriate, nationally endorsed, industry competency standards as benchmarks

As noted in the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority documentation, the need to ensure participation of all role-players in the design and collection of evidence requires a framework that is circular in nature, always returning to the efficacy of the assessment.

As the assessment must be accessible to all, as noted in various QCTO documents, learners with special needs will also be able to follow the MAGIC model noted by Lombard of the National Center for Research in Education, Berkeley (1994). This model requires a pre-assessment with very specialised data requirements, which are used to analyse the learners' needs and ability, in order to navigate assessment in a way that is empowering. This requires that significant attention be paid to the pre-assessment model, which is currently not a consideration or even noted in the documentation linked to the Final Integrated Summative Assessment, which will be implemented in South Africa.

What is evident through the various models used is that there is a need to have a structured assessment process in which there are various models, considering not only national but also international competency requirements. This process must be flexible to meet all learners' needs and it must have a clear set of outcomes in terms of requirements.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SECTOR

As noted in the research of Winther and Klotz (2013), there are multiple needs across professions and even within them. One only has to consider the various sectors that make up the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority to acknowledge the vast, and very different, range of needs in that area of the economy.

The W&RSETA Sector Skills Plan 2011-2016 (W&RSETA, 2010) notes the following:

Profile of the Wholesale and Retail Landscape:

Hypermarkets

Supermarkets

Discounters

Convenience Stores

Forecourt Retailers

Mixed Retailers

Health and Beauty specialists

Clothing and footwear specialists

Furniture and Furnishing stores

DIY, Home Improvement and Garden Centres

Electronic and Appliances Specialists Retailers

Leisure and Personal Goods Specialist Retailers

Vending

Home shopping

Internet Retailing

Direct Selling

Fuel retailers.

(W&RSETA, 2010, 1)

Therefore educating within the wholesale and retail sector requires a careful analysis of both the knowledge and practical requirements of the sector and the wide range of sub-sectors. One cannot make assumptions that learning and the model of implementation for assessment will be the same. One only has to contrast the assessment requirements of the service station attendant (which includes knowledge about health and safety issues, for example.) against a small retailer that employs less than 20 people who fulfill multiple roles, to acknowledge that one single, holistic or generic model for assessment cannot be implemented in this area.

One only has to consider the extensive review conducted by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2012) to consider the various challenges that wholesale and retail sectors in any country face. The report focused a large component of its output on devaluing skills (not evaluating skills) and considered

how skills, or rather the lack of skills, affected the sector. As noted, there is always a high turnover in the sector as people move around and therefore “the sector always has jobs available due to churn levels and new businesses opening” (Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012, 75). As a result, there is a need to continuously employ staff, even when skills transfer has taken place from staff that have left. This is a concern in the wholesale and retail sector, that short learning programmes are more appropriate due to the pace of turnover of employees. “The main reason across all of the nations for skills shortage vacancies was the lack of job-specific skills” (Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012, 85), which simply highlights the impact of the movement of staff. Therefore, the sector has to adapt. The tendency to continue training, customised or specifically for a store or organisation is a reality, as if this is not done, “loss of business to competitors, increased operational costs / difficulty in meeting quality standards and new working practices” (Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012, 98) is the direct impact.

Therefore, an understanding of the wholesale and retail sector is critical in implementing a new model of assessment and learning, as will be done in the manner envisaged by the QCTO

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESIGN OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION

The initial phase of the research included a literature survey to consider current practice used both nationally and internationally. Findings from this research were then considered in order to conduct a selection of the most appropriate models for the target audience of participants in the research and also the W&RSETA, as well as the regulatory authority, the QCTO.

National Policy, including draft policy, evaluation instruments and other documents supplied to the researchers were analysed in terms of whether a model could be developed and implemented based on this set of reference material.

Following this, qualitative research was conducted, using small focus groups, industry experts as well as stakeholders from the training providers and those linked in other ways to SETAs and quality assurance bodies. Due to the nature of the research problem and key outcomes indicated, a limited range of expert participants was able to provide the bulk of relevant high-level inputs, rather than a broad-based quantitative survey collecting and analysing relatively low-level inputs.

Participation of role-players currently engaged with the vocational and occupational learning environment was notable. The researchers engaged with the role-players in a controlled environment, through focus groups for some role-players. In addition, structured interviews were more useful with other role-players such as TVET Colleges and private providers with a national footprint who conducted national summative assessments. This was also the methodology used to conduct research with the SETA staff who were considering the roll-out of the qualifications registered, or in the process of being registered, on the OQF.

The collection of this data thus formed the base on which the assumptions and coding of data was considered.

In order to explain the research methodology the following critical influencers should be noted:

- Currently, the suggested model has not been piloted, nor has it been tested. Therefore, there is nothing on which to base findings or for interview participants to benchmark against;

- Similarly, the quality assurance body that is ultimately the policy developer as well as system processor is still in the process of compiling a comprehensive system of relevant documents, and thus some of these are noted as being in draft form. There are certain policies which have been developed and published, but these are not always supported by procedure and more importantly templates, even draft, for guideline purposes;
- The model recommended by previous research (Damons, le Grange, Louw and Mason, 2015) to some extent challenges the current policy as well as the pre-conceived concept of how the final summative might be conducted.

3.1.1 Research instruments

Research instruments developed for purposes of the research were research surveys, with open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to provide their unique perspectives when considering the model and how it could be implemented. As there were role-players from a wide spectrum of the vocational and occupation environment, including skills development providers, quality assurance experts, industry and workplace personnel, professional bodies as well as SETA staff, the surveys had to be generic enough in nature so that all role-players would be able to participate and provide data. This ensured that the data collected would be comprehensive in nature.

In addition to research surveys developed for the role-players in the W&RSETA sector, structured interviews were designed specifically for:

- National education providers who conduct national summative assessments, in order to consider current implementation models that manage assessment centres nationally.
- TVET Colleges who have a national footprint, to understand capacity requirements in order to be an assessment centre which can meet the requirements of W&RSETA qualifications and participants.
- Members of the Qualifications Management Board of the W&RSETA to understand the design of the assessment specification documents, the rationale in selecting assessment tools, and to understand how the QMB envisaged implementing and managing the roll-out of these qualifications.

3.1.2 Data

As the research is qualitative in nature, the sources of data need to be considered and defined. The data becomes the primary source for the model and its implementation in terms of setting up and maintaining an AQP.

The sources of data were evaluated based on the kinds of data that would be available to the researchers and the validity thereof. Thus, a list of data is required to form part of the research methodology to indicate what has been used as reference points.

Data that formed part of the research can be classified into the following:

- Research surveys formed part of the participation by focus groups that were held across the country in Pretoria/Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. The surveys were collected in a controlled environment, ensuring authenticity in the response and validity. In addition to this the data which was collected from semi-structured interviews held with research subjects of TVET Colleges, skills development providers with a national footprint as well as the QMB, was also captured.
- Research surveys for the focus groups consisted of two sections:
 - Section A in which the qualifications, of which seven had been identified within the scope of this research study, were analysed in terms of five questions that were developed. These questions considered the AQP's role in setting up, implementing and managing all requirements of an AQP, certification as well as registration of assessors and moderators, the costing of the assessments, capacity-building requirements for both internal staff as well as information dissemination for external stakeholders; and
 - Section B in which the same five questions were interrogated asking the research subjects to consolidate their analysis and consider a holistic approach which could be applied across all seven identified qualifications, thus ensuring that one body could be the AQP for all of the seven identified qualifications and could manage them simultaneously using the same methodology and resources.
- Focus Groups were held across the country in Pretoria/Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban and research subjects were afforded the opportunity to discuss the key ideas that formed part of the research brief. Data was

collected in the form of recorded sessions, which was later extracted and coded.

- Current policy published by the QCTO which was available from the QCTO website and thus in the public domain.
- Draft templates developed by the QCTO which were provided to the researchers by the W&RSETA senior management and which had formed part of a workshop held by the QCTO for information dissemination purposes.

3.1.3 Respondents

Focus groups were held across three major metropolitan areas of South Africa, the total sample size was 67 in total for all three regions, as follows:

Cape Town - 22

Durban - 29

Gauteng - 16

The interests that the various respondents represented are shown in Table 1:

Table.1: Representation – focus group

Interest	%
Business	37,3
Skills development provider	46,3
Both	9,0
Quality Assurance	1,5
W&RSETA	6,0
TOTAL	100.1

3.1.4 Data extraction and sample consideration

All participants' data was extracted and coded (see below). In order to help classify the data, surveys were categorised into three types:

- Completed – the research subject had completed all fields within a section, and had attempted to answer all questions within the survey;

- Partially completed – the research subject had completed some fields within a section, and had attempted to answer all questions within the survey; and
- Incomplete – the research subject had completed some fields within a section, but had not answered all the questions within the survey.

For this purpose, when considering the data extraction, data was considered per qualification within Section A (all fields within one qualification had been attempted), and/or (depending on level of completion) in Section B a singular source of data (addressing all of the identified qualifications) could be considered (meaning that a question had been answered).

Thus, the sample is not finite per qualification or overall question. Rather, the data was extracted and evaluated per type and, although time consuming, it allowed for participants who had partially completed or provided incomplete data to be considered and for the data, as much as was submitted, to be used.

3.1.5 Coding and data analysis

The data was analysed using a thematic identifier looking at common trends and language used within the survey at question level. These identifiers were grouped according to categories and data was collected from the questionnaires taking each questionnaire and dissecting it and classifying it according to the identified categories.

Independent checks were put in place in which data was cross-referenced and audited to ensure that all findings produced were error free.

The findings are noted within each section of the survey by first explaining the coding developed for that question. This helps to understand the rationale of the coding as well as provide a context for it.

3.1.6 Validity

Validity of the data design, collection and analysis was ensured through conducting peer debriefing. This was done both by the researchers to selected peers, as well as

by providing the research report in three draft phases, thus allowing all focus group participants to provide input before the research report was finalised.

Grounded theory formed the basis of ensuring validity and considered that the data provided the framework, which lead to useful concepts being identified and developed.

The summaries of the focus groups' interactions have been collated, considering each of the discussions. Key concerns and issues have been collected and noted within the recommendations section of this report. These recommendations consider the discussions held with all stakeholders within the assessment process and therefore are a subjective discussion. The subjective nature of this data is acknowledged.

CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first consideration was an evaluation of current policy, as this acts as the key interpretation of the legislation on which the processes being researched are based and subject to. Secondly, there had to be the consideration of industry needs that validate how industry would see the implementation requirements of the Assessment Quality Partner. These needs would form the primary list of considerations; within which there is a need to see whether the current recommended assessment centres are able to meet the identified industry requirements. This would directly impact on the model as capacity building would then, thirdly, need to be included. Capacity building would have a process requirement as well as a cost implication. Implementation was then considered in terms of whether the TVET Colleges (alone), or private provision (alone), would have the necessary resources and capacity to fulfill the role of the assessment centres. Finally, although findings for each section are explored separately, there is also an overall consideration of findings for the research project as a whole, leading to associated recommendations.

4.1.1 Industry consideration of implementation

As noted in Damons, le Grange, Louw and Mason (2015), two models were identified: one was a private assessment centre model, and the other was a combined public TVET college and private/in-house model.

In the research findings, where the findings were applicable to both models no differentiation is noted. However, when each model is analysed separately, the findings will be different.

The research brief identified various criteria that an AQP will be required to consider. They are broken down into three concepts:

- A model for the development, management and implementation of assessments and the certification of QCTO qualifications for which the W&RSETA is the AQP, as well as the registration of examiners and

moderators.

- A costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP.
- A strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff and relevant stakeholders

These have been further broken down, separating interlinked concepts, to produce the following:

- A model for the development, management and implementation of assessments
- Certification of QCTO qualifications
- Registration of examiners and moderators
- A costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP.
- A strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff
- A strategy to build capacity amongst relevant stakeholders

Each of these concepts is considered, noting first the QCTO policy, followed by data coding and an explanation of these, then the findings related to the data, all specific to the wholesale and retail sector's needs. Thus there are section-based findings. Finally, a section of this report heading "Key findings and recommendations" considers the research study as a whole, to see where there is synergy or disparity.

4.2 A MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENTS

Setting up, operating (in terms of implementing assessments) and maintaining the AQP is a significant challenge, considering the fact that there is no pilot implementation against which to benchmark. All definitions and explanations refer to documents sourced from the QCTO website as being the current versions of these documents at the time at which this research was conducted. As these could change, in the reference section specifically, the date of the document of approval is noted, as well as the date it was accessed for research purposes.

The limitation of this study, therefore, in part accepts that should these policies, guidelines or documents change, this research reflects the version that was originally used as part of the scope of this research project, at the time the research was conducted.

Because of the limited information available, this research team had to interrogate and dissect all available documentation. This included either what was in the public domain, or shared in meetings with quality assurance bodies. What information could be gleaned was explored in order to determine what a model might look like, and if in fact a model could be developed considering the paucity of information available. This has resulted in a contextualising of current policy used primarily for this evaluation, although not limited to it. Scrutinised documents included, as noted below:

QCTO Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) Criteria and Guidelines

QCTO Policy on Accreditation of Assessment Centres

4.2.1 QCTO Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) Criteria and Guidelines

It is important to understand the key terminology, as defined by the QCTO, namely: Assessment Quality Partner, and Accredited Assessment Centre. In terms of the definitions below, these have been sourced from the abovementioned “criteria and guidelines” document, either in the definitions section therein or elsewhere in the document, in order to help create a comprehensive understanding of what their differing roles are:

Assessment Quality Partner – A body delegated by the QCTO to manage and coordinate external integrated summative assessments of specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications (QCTO, 2013a, 4).

In short, an AQP is an entity appointed by the QCTO and delegated to manage, on behalf of the QCTO, the assessment process in order to achieve the above objective. (QCTO, 2013a, 5)

Assessment Centre – A centre accredited by the QCTO for the purpose of conducting external integrated summative assessments for specified NQF registered occupational qualifications and part qualifications. (QCTO, 2013a, 4)

4.2.2 Functions of an AQP

In considering the model and its implementation there are some very specific criteria noted which need to be met. Even though the QCTO will register the assessment centres as per the specifications developed by the AQP, it is the AQP that will be responsible for:

“Assessment centre accreditation/ de-accreditation and assessment site approval/ de-approval” (QCTO, 2013a, 11).

In addition, the AQP and its associated assessment system should meet the principles and values of the QCTO namely:

- be fair, reliable, valid, ethical and transparent;

- be consistent across time, place, role players and respond to a non-sectoral demand-led model;

- use methodologies that are fit-for-purpose and reflect a consistent level of higher cognitive challenge;

- avoid tendencies of exclusivity;

- adhere to the QCTO values which show:

- i. innovation and excellence
- ii. empowerment and recognition
- iii. respect and dignity
- iv. ethics and integrity
- v. ownership and accountability
- vi. authenticity”

(QCTO, 2013a, 6).

Although the values may seem generic, one has to take cognisance of the fact that they have to “be consistent across time, place, role players and respond to a non-sectoral demand-led model”. Thus, the model should not be directly, or exclusively, linked to the sector for which it has been developed and, at the same time, should “avoid tendencies of exclusivity.”

One should take cognisance that the definition may have intended to imply that the overall model, namely, the process by which the assessment would be managed, should be a holistic one in which the learner would progress (sequentially or not) from formative assessment, to practical assessment, to workplace experience and assessment and finally to the external summative assessment.

Each sector and many a sub-sector, however, has specialised needs. Therefore the logistics of managing the assessment needs to be taken into account, if this is to be non-sector based, as the needs and assessment of wholesale and retail are very different to those of, say, insurance. Similarly, the wholesale and retail industry functions at all NQF levels, requiring more practical final summative assessments at the lower levels of the NQF to more specialised knowledge and skills at the higher levels of the NQF. Thus, not only would sectors and sub-sectors influence assessment, but also NQF level.

Therefore, it appears that a system suitable to the industry, one which is able to assess for specific job readiness in the sector, and for which the sector would like to consider successful learners for employment, is in direct contrast to the policy statement of the QCTO.

In addition, the model suitable to industry needs to ensure, from a costing and access perspective, that there are sufficient opportunities for learners to be able to participate in the assessment process actually inside the workplace, as this is what industry sees as being directly linked to learners gaining the qualification.

In implementation, these two criteria will be difficult to manage from a cost perspective. Furthermore, the consideration of ensuring a fit-for-purpose model that is non-sector led and which is not exclusive becomes a serious challenge.

In addition to these functions the AQP will “Coordinate and manage external assessment processes” (QCTO, 2013a, 8) and provide a mechanism for RPL, which would also have to be considered in the assessment centre model.

It should also be noted that there are very specific timelines provided by the QCTO in the implementation model for the AQP that do not seem entirely attainable. For example, some of these timelines have been impossible to meet with regard to the one qualification for which the W&RSETA has (at the time of this research) registered as the AQP: the National Occupational Qualification: Retail Manager: Retail Store Manager.

4.2.3 QCTO Policy on Accreditation of Assessment Centres

Although a model may be considered, the criterion for the registration and accreditation of assessment centres needs to take into account, as per the following published criteria:

The entity must:

- “a) be a juristic person registered or established in terms of South African law;
- b) have a valid tax clearance certificate issued by the South African Revenue Service if applicable;
- c) have a suitable and compliant MIS in accordance with QCTO specifications;
- d) be safe, secure and accessible to candidates;
- e) meet the relevant standards for occupational health and safety;

- f) have the required physical resources (e.g. venue; equipment, machinery or protective clothing), specified by the AQP to assess learners' competence regarding the occupational qualification or part qualification;
- g) have appropriately qualified human resources as specified by the AQP; and
- h) make provision for any other requirements specified for the relevant trade, occupational qualification or part qualification." (QCTO, 2013b, 8)

Challenges here may be the monitoring of assessment centre ongoing compliance, for example with regard to the required tax clearance certificate. While this may be valid at the start of an assessment cycle, it may expire (and not be renewed) during an assessment cycle. This would hinder the assessment process at the specific site concerned.

In addition, the MIS for storing and transmitting learner data as per the specifications of the AQP could also be a potential challenge. This is discussed in a later section of this research report.

An analysis of the current policy indicated various matters of concern, or lack of detail, but as these fall outside of the ambit of this research study they are not included in this research report.

4.2.4 Industry feedback

The following section identifies how those in the wholesale and retail sector consider the model, as well as challenges noted to date.

The input from the research participants considers some of the current challenges linked to ETQAs, or more specifically to quality assurance bodies. In addition, various role-players have their own points of view and therefore the subjectivity of this is noted within the responses. However, some of the key themes noted through coding are that the requirements of the AQP could be defined, regardless of these challenges

4.2.5 Data coding

“SOP”

This refers to preparing standard operating procedures that allow the AQP to use project management principles in daily operations. The research participants noted that current challenges with lack of process and unworkable timelines caused frustration across the organisation and with all stakeholders. Specifically, there was a recommendation that standardised generic operating procedures be developed which were linked to a job title, had clear deliverables, indicated templates to be used, and which had published, attainable timelines. This document could then be circulated internally as well as externally to ensure accountability from all role-players, both internal and external. This project management methodology would then allow the AQP to plan for the various examinations and ensure a standardised approach to each, from the development of the sample examination to uploading the data to the NLRD after certification.

Model A consideration

In terms of the requirements of Model A, the standardised approach that assessment centres would follow would ensure their own management of the examinations. Therefore, limited logistics would be required other than ensuring that the examination papers were delivered on time. If a practical assessment were required, then the assessment centre would notify the AQP of when this would be required in order to ensure that an examiner would be present during the practical assessment.

Model B consideration

In terms of the requirements of Model B, the AQP would require multiple staff to be involved in the examination. The team would have to consider all logistics, as the TVET College would need to be managed, including the staff at the TVET College being able to oversee the examination. Also, the numbers of learners registering for the examination would need to be managed by the AQP and this would then need to be shared with the TVET College. In addition to this, practical assessments would require a partnership model with workplaces, so that the practical assessment could be done at the employer site. This would require additional assessors to be made available for the assessment, as these would need to be observed in real time, individually and not as a group.

“Stakeholder part”

This refers to ensuring stakeholder participation and information sharing, considering a 360-degree range of inputs and dissemination. Research participants noted that in many cases they had not known about, or had not been invited by the QMB to participate in the development of, the new occupational qualifications. In addition they noted that there was limited sharing of information by the W&RSETA, and even less regarding the QCTO with relation to occupational certificates. Research participants requested that the AQP fulfil the role of partner to all role-players within the assessment cycle, including the workplace (business), the skills development providers, professional bodies as well as learners. Agreeing how information could be disseminated would ensure that even if an employee left an organisation, there would be a continued sharing of information. There were also requests for information to be shared in a timeous manner, so that sufficient planning could be completed in order to meet requirements.

“Comp QA”

This refers to ensuring competent quality assurance staff (at a quality assurance body) are employed in order to be able to audit and assist the various role-players involved in the assessment, nationally. Research participants noted the lack of competent staff members linked to quality assurance. In addition, they found that the quality assurance cycle was not fully understood by all role-players and that this resulted in different standards being evaluated by different staff members and/or external verifiers. As noted previously, a standardised operating procedure with linked deliverables would help to ensure that this was mitigated.

“Mock Exam”

This refers to providing guidelines on how the assessment would look, including a mock examination so that learners could familiarise themselves with requirements and the style of the AQP. Research participants noted that as a national summative assessment would be held, and that there is no previous comparative assessment available to consider as a benchmark, that the mock exam was critical. In addition, it was also felt that instructions regarding the manner in which the assessment could be completed, what examiners would consider for evidence and how to interpret the external assessment specifications, were equally critical in terms of preparation. As there are practical components linked to some occupational certificates, the brief regarding the process of practical assessment, as well as observation checklists, were requested to be made available so that learners could understand how the assessment would be structured.

Model A consideration

As part of Model A, noting that the practical assessments would be managed by the private assessment centre, the instructions linked to the practical component as well as equipment requirements would need to be specified so that learners could familiarise themselves with the software and/or equipment prior to the assessment. The AQP would need to consider this in the accreditation of assessment centres, as the assessment centre would need to demonstrate its ability to provide learners with software and equipment that was user-friendly.

Model B consideration

As model B refers to a partnership model, the AQP would be required to ensure that partnerships exist between the assessment centre (for example a TVET College) and either an on-site practical assessment, or one linked to in-house options in a workplace. This would require logistical arrangements, which would also need to be published prior to the assessment, so that learners could consider how the practical assessment would take place.

“Ex QA”

This refers to considering an external quality assurance evaluation agency. The research participants considered that an external quality assurance agency could be contracted to ensure the appropriate audit and validation function of the AQP is completed. Included in that scope of work could be the registration of examiners, the coordination of the actual summative assessment and logistical arrangements for the summative assessment, as well as reporting and managing the assessment and data processing of learner results.

“Comp Staff”

This refers to ensuring that competent staff are employed to be able to fulfil job and role requirements. Research participants noted that there was frustration with some staff members in the current model who were not able to demonstrate competency for the role in which they are employed. In a new model linked to SOPs and using project methodology, it is felt that if a staff member is not able to deliver according to the deliverables required, there should be an indicator that could then be managed accordingly.

“Dev LM”

This refers to the AQP developing and providing learning material to skills development providers to ensure consistency. Research participants considered the current challenges with regard to consistency. One of the key issues faced was that learning material as well as assessments were not standardised, and as a result, there were discrepancies related to the quality of learning. The AQP managing the national summative assessment would ensure that that one issue was managed. The development freely available, generic, learning material would be helpful but there would be a cost linked to developing it, which the AQP would need to consider.

“Alt Assmt”

This refers to considering alternative/multiple assessment methodologies. Research participants noted the combination of both theoretical and practical requirements in the assessment specification documentation. The current SAQA-style methodology would be best to apply, considering the alternative assessment methodologies to be incorporated, including on-site or in-house assessments. The preparation of a portfolio of evidence from the workplace which could be presented as access to the national summative assessment, as well as the Recognition of Prior Learning providing this access were further points requiring development.

“Sec Req”

This refers to the AQP considering sub-sector specific requirements and/or limitations. Research participants noted that the current model of requiring learners to go off the site of employment, to an assessment centre, would not be feasible for sub-sectors such as retail stores, which require staff to be on-site in order to ensure productivity. Learners attending assessments off-site would effectively be absent for most of the day, if travel is also considered. In addition, service station attendants are required to be assessed at the place of work, for practical purposes, but logistics and practicalities may imply that the knowledge component could not be able to be assessed there as well.

“Info Int”

This refers to sharing information with internal stakeholders in each phase of the assessment. Research participants noted that information was not easily disseminated, internally within SETAs, and that the AQP should ensure a broad communication strategy.

Figure 1 illustrates the research participants' opinions about these challenges

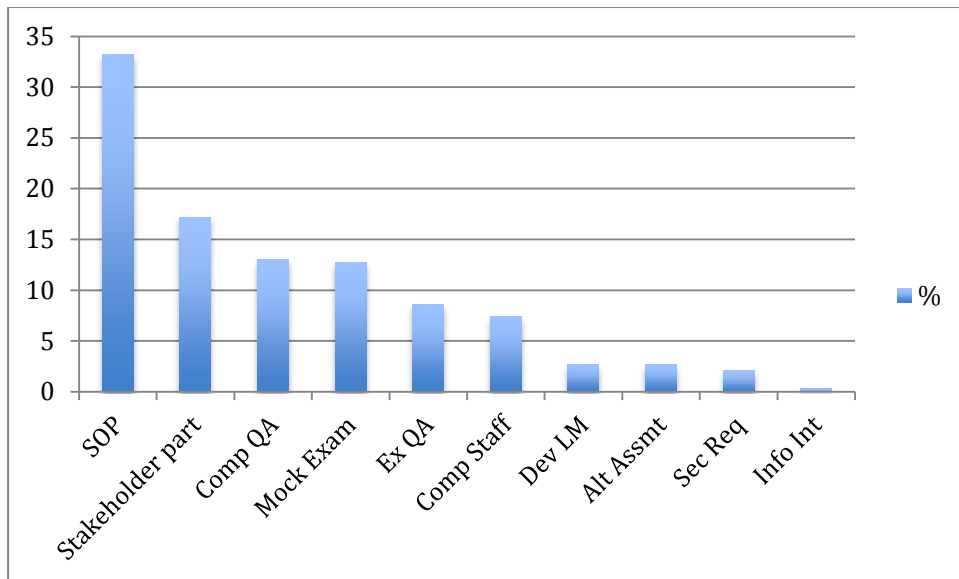


Figure 1: Participant feedback regarding current QCTO challenges

- (SOP) 33,23% of research participants noted the need for standardised operating procedures as well as the use of project management methodology by the AQP.
- (Stakeholder part) 17,21% of research participants noted the need for stakeholder participation in all parts of the development and implementation of assessments.
- (Comp QA) 13,05% of research participants noted the need for competent quality assurance staff.
- (Mock Exam) 12,76% of research participants noted the need for clear instructions as well as a mock examination to help learners prepare.
- (Ex QA) 8,60% of research participants noted the need for an external quality assurance partner.
- (Comp Staff) 7,43% of research participants noted the need for competent staff within the AQP.
- (Dev LM) 2,67% of research participants noted the need for the AQP to provide standardised learning material.
- (Alt Assmt) 2,67% of research participants noted the need for alternative assessment methods.
- (Sec Req) 2,07% of research participants noted the need for consideration of sub-sector specific requirements.
- (Info Int) 0,30% of research participants noted the need for the dissemination of information within the AQP

4.2.6 Initial findings on industry perceptions

Although no model has been recommended by the sector, three concepts can be summarised from the information supplied:

A standard operating procedure should be the basis of engagement with the AQP. In order to meet this requirement, the AQP must have clear guidelines and standard operating procedures itself, against which to benchmark its own development of policy. The current frustration noted is because the current SAQA system does have guidelines, but these are not implemented consistently across current quality assurance bodies.

The second concept is that there needs to be consultation with the industry to ensure, amongst other things, that industry needs have been met, that sector or work requirements are understood, that planning includes the “how and when” of assessment in order to minimise the disruption of employer operations.

The third concept is that there needs to be a formalised process by which roles are linked to standard operating procedures, and where the ability to perform competently against them is managed. The current challenges noted include frustration with a high turnover of staff as well as interfacing with staff members that may not have the requisite technical knowledge or sector experience.

In addition to only engaging with sector specific research participants, there was also a need to validate the capacity, for evaluating model development, of whether assessment centres that have been identified are able to conduct the national summative assessments.

4.2.7 Assessment Centre Capacity

4.2.7.1 TVET and Private Provider Capacity to act as Assessment Centres

Seven TVET Colleges were evaluated for their ability run both the knowledge-based and practical-based assessments of the identified qualifications. The selected

TVETs were from six of South Africa's provinces to ensure that a representative sample could be considered.

All seven TVET Colleges noted that they would be able to run, and have been running, examinations and had experience with running paper-based, controlled examinations. Based on this response, this would meet the requirements of three of the identified occupational certificates/qualifications. Therefore, there is no further interrogation of data linked to them. They are:

1. Occupational Certificate: Receiving Clerk/Officer
2. Occupational Certificate: Retail Supervisor
3. National Occupational Qualification: Retail Manager: Retail Store Manager

It is in considering the practical capability with regard to the other four qualifications that the capacity is explored (and illustrated in Figures 3 to 5). This has been done per occupational certificate to demonstrate the sub-sector specific requirements, which have in turn required a practical assessment. In each of the explanations, there is also a descriptor of why they are unable to offer the practical assessment, if applicable.

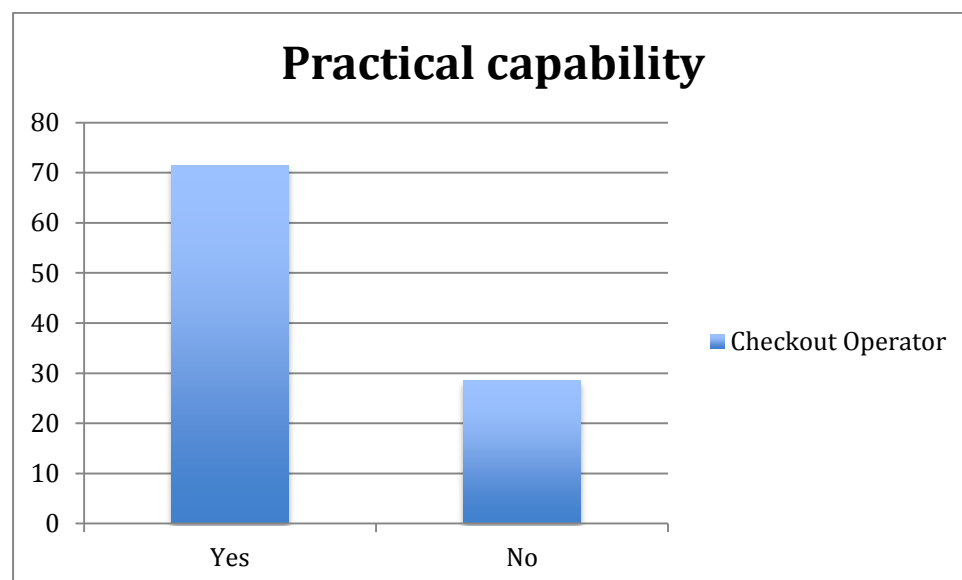


Figure 2: Participant feedback regarding practical capability of TVET Colleges to conduct summative assessment for the OQF qualification for Checkout Operator

- 71,42% of the participating TVET Colleges were capable of providing resources, which include equipment and simulation opportunities for learners. There was one concern noted, which was that although a particular College

could offer the practical assessment, it only had one checkout assessment simulator and therefore could only do one assessment at a time.

- 28,57% of the participating TVET Colleges were unable to assess the practical component of the occupational certificate. The reason most cited was that there no simulation centre at the College, which could supply the required specialised equipment.

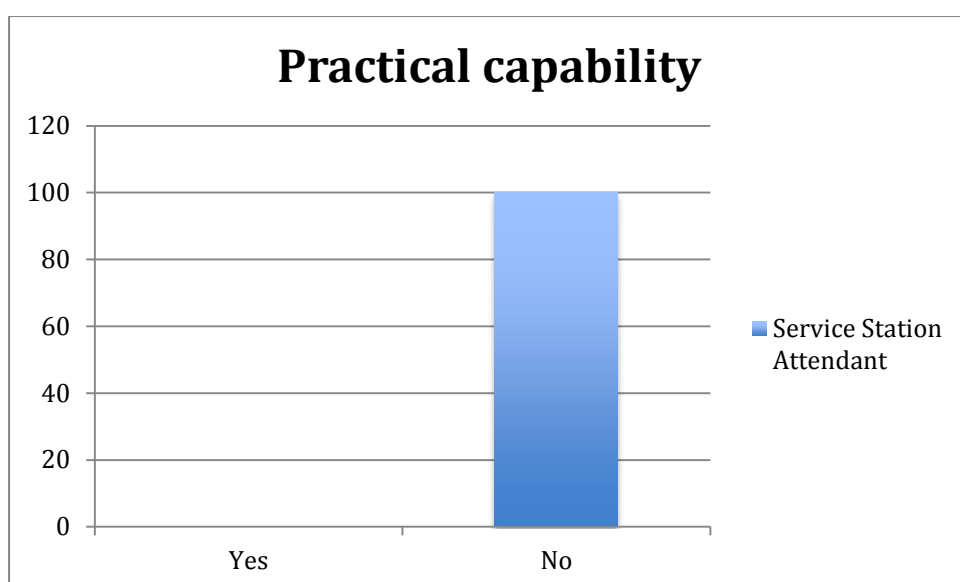


Figure 3: Participant feedback regarding practical capability of TVET Colleges to conduct summative assessment for the OQF qualification for Service Station Attendant

- 0,00% of the participating TVET Colleges were capable of providing resources, which include all the equipment and forecourt of a service station for learners.
- 100,00% of the participating TVET Colleges were unable to assess the practical component of the occupational certificate. The reason most cited was that they did not have the required licensing requirement required to operate a service station, even a simulated service station, which utilised petroleum-based products.

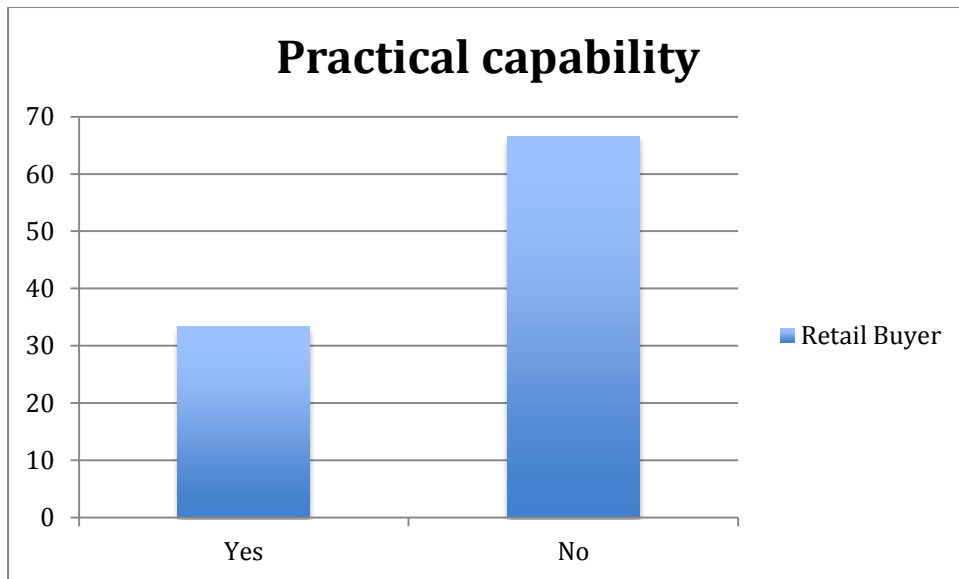


Figure 4: Participant feedback regarding practical capability of TVET Colleges to conduct summative assessment for the OQF qualification for Retail Buyer

- 33,33% of the participating TVET Colleges were capable of providing resources, which include equipment and simulation opportunities for learners.
- 66,67% of the participating TVET Colleges were unable to assess the practical component of the occupational certificate. The reason most cited was that there no simulation centre at the College, which could offer the required specialised equipment.

Due to the nature of the assessment, which includes the requirement of a computer based system that the assessment would be loaded onto (as one of the outcomes to be assessed is the learner's ability to use a computerised stock system), computers were a requirement. Thus for this purpose, the Colleges were evaluated on their ability to meet the requirement of having computers available for the purposes of assessment, on site.

- 50,00% of the participating TVET Colleges indicated that they had the required equipment to conduct the assessment.
- 50,00% of the participating TVET Colleges indicated that they did not have the required equipment in order to be able to conduct the assessment.

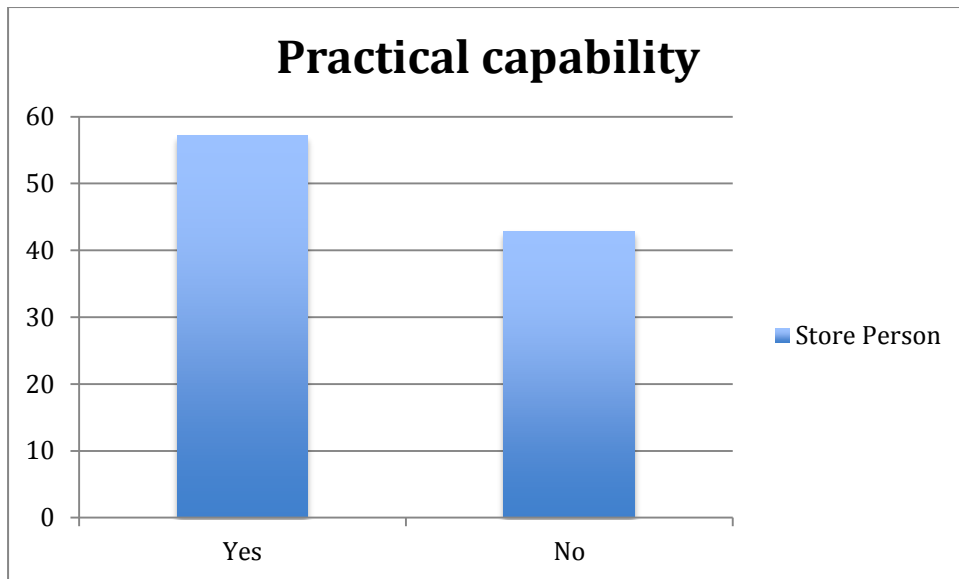


Figure 5: Participant feedback regarding practical capability of TVET Colleges to conduct summative assessment for the OQF qualification for Store Person

- 57,14% of the participating TVET Colleges were capable of providing resources, which include equipment and simulation opportunities for learners.
- 42,86% of the participating TVET Colleges were unable to assess the practical component of the occupational certificate. The reason most cited was that there no simulation centre at the College, which could offer the required specialised equipment.

What is noted as positive in terms of being able to conduct the following occupational certificate assessments is that there is simulation equipment for the Checkout Operator and for the Store Person at TVET Colleges. Although some Colleges would require capacity building, there are resources in place in the form of the requisite equipment.

The research indicates that there are concerns noted about the following two occupational certificate assessments, which require specialised equipment and for which there is anyway currently no capability at TVET Colleges: Service Station Attendant (0% capacity) and Retail Buyer (50% capacity).

Based on the criteria of whether they had conducted assessments, and specifically paper-based or online assessments, the response of all seven TVET Colleges was positive. This would meet the requirements of four of the identified occupational certificates/qualifications. Therefore, there is no further interrogation of data linked to them. They are:

1. Occupational Certificate: Receiving Clerk/Officer
2. Occupational Certificate: Retail Supervisor
3. National Occupational Qualification: Retail Manager: Retail Store Manager
4. Retail Buyer (a computerised system could meet the requirements of the assessment specification and therefore no further interrogation is required)

4.2.7.2 Private Assessment Centres

Responses from potential Private Assessment Centres indicated that they did not have practicum rooms, nor did they have the capability to provide practical assessments for:

1. Occupational Certificate: Checkout Operator
2. Occupational Certificate: Service Station Attendant
3. Occupational Certificate: Store Person

These organisations would only consider outfitting or setting up simulation centres if the AQP was willing to collaborate with them in terms of cost. In addition, the cost of implementing the assessments would require a partnership model that would enable not only cost recovery but also the ability to make the exercise profitable.

4.2.7.3 Assessment Centres: initial findings

It is apparent from the data provided that no TVET Colleges have the capacity to meet the requirements of the W&RSETA in its role as AQP. In addition to this, the practical component, in one instance, included only one checkout point that would require lengthy waiting periods as part of the assessment process. The cost of ensuring that all TVET Colleges had the equipment for their practicum rooms would require a huge investment that the AQP would, it seems, be expected to fund.

In terms of private assessment centres, the key finding is that in order to be an assessment centre, there needed to be a partnership between industry (practical) and the assessment centre (knowledge assessment).

4.3 CERTIFICATION OF QCTO QUALIFICATIONS FOR WHICH W&RSETA ACTS AS AQP

The model for certification is clearly outlined in terms of national policy. However, what is not known is the different phases of the assessment cycle and how partial certification from each phase is validated and stored. This is noted in the following policy statement: (the final external summative assessment) “culminates in statements of results by accredited skills development providers. For work experience statements of work experience will be issued by approved workplaces” (QCTO, 2013c, p8).

4.3.1 National policy

The QCTO Certification Policy (2013) notes the following:

- AQP to “request certification for competent learners within 14 days after receiving the assessment results” (p7).
- AQPs will recommend to the QCTO the certification of learners for occupational qualifications or part qualifications within their scope. The QCTO will forward the issued certificates to the relevant AQP for distribution to the learners within 21 days (p7).

Thus, within 35 working days of the assessment process being completed, learners will be able to access their certificates from the AQP.

4.3.2 Research participants’ recommendations

The following responses received from the research participants outline the various recommendations and suggestions made, regarding certification processes.

4.3.3 Data coding

“O/P”

This refers to being able to access assessment results online, or at least a statement of results, while waiting for the certificates. This addressed the issue related to timeously receiving certificates.

“Output”

This refers to certificates and results being tracked based on output and within a specific timeline. This deals with the issue around timeously receiving certificates.

“Current Mod”

This refers to the current model, in which the ETQAs distribute the certificates after verification has taken place.

“F Time Spec”

This refers to agreed quarterly issuing of certificates, in which they are guaranteed to be printed and be available for collection. This indicates the issue around timeously receiving certificates.

“Out Proj”

This refers to outsourcing the function to ensure that it is managed based on output. This indicates the issue around timeously receiving certificates.

“D-Lrn”

This refers to directly issuing the certificate to learners.

“Grad”

This refers to issuing certificates at graduation ceremonies, similar to those held by Higher Education Institutions.

“On-Dem”

This refers to the on-demand model, which would ensure that the certificate could be provided on demand by the assessment centre to the AQP or learner. This indicates the issue around timeously receiving certificates.

“QCTO”

This refers to the QCTO distributing the certificates and ensuring they reach the learners directly.

“TVET”

This refers to the TVET Colleges supplying the certificates to the learners.

The research participants’ opinions regarding the certification processes are illustrated in Figure 6.

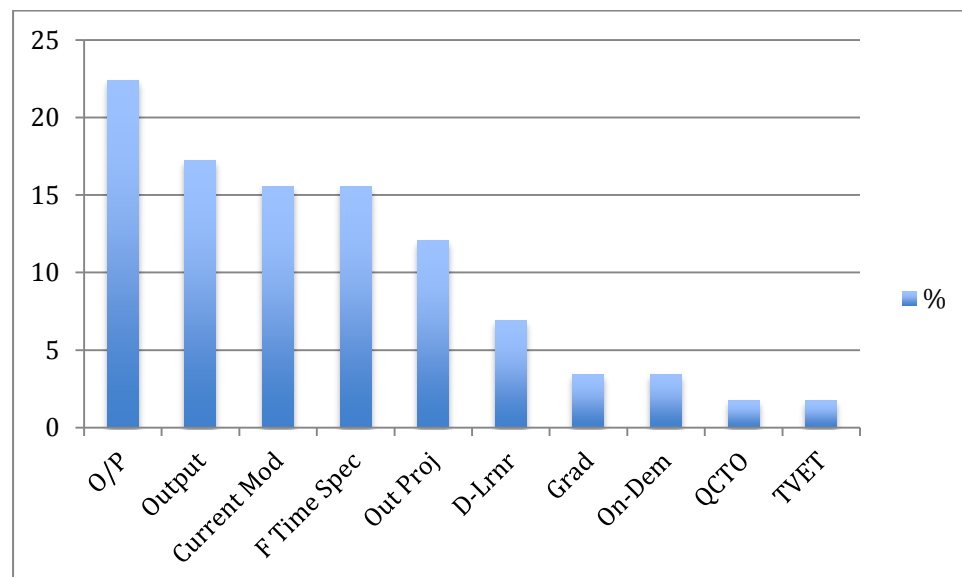


Figure 6: Participant feedback regarding certification for OQF qualifications for which W&RSETA will act as AQP

- 22,41% of research participants noted the need for an online printing option.
- 17,24% of research participants noted that the certificates should consider tracking the certification on outputs.
- 15,52% of research participants noted that the current model of certification could be considered.
- 15,52% of research participants noted a quarterly system of issuing certificates.
- 12,07% of research participants noted the need for an outside project partner to manage the process.

- 6,90% of research participants noted the issuing of certificates directly to the learner.
- 3,45% of research participants noted that certificates could be issued at a graduation ceremony or event.
- 3,45% of research participants noted that certificates could be issued on demand.
- 1,72% of research participants noted that certificates could be issued by the QCTO directly to the learners.
- 1,72% of research participants noted that the TVET Colleges could issue certificates.

4.3.4 Summary

The following has been noted by the research participants in consideration of the model. The issue noted as the most challenging is access to certificates, which in the current situation takes an extremely long period of time. The fact that there is a stipulated timeline in national policy should ensure that learners receive their certificates timeously.

4.4 REGISTRATION OF EXAMINERS AND MODERATORS

Currently the registration of assessors and moderators is done by the SETAs and other ETQA bodies. The evidence of knowledge and skill needs to be demonstrated at one level higher than the NQF level at which the qualification is registered. Research participants considered how examiners could be registered in the new system.

4.4.1 Research participants' recommendations

The following responses from the research participants indicate the various recommendations and suggestions regarding the registration of examiners and moderators.

4.4.2 Data coding

“SME or PD “

This refers to examiners registering with the AQP and having to demonstrate occupational knowledge or alternatively professional recognition in relation to the occupational profile. The research participants noted that this is more detailed than the current registration requirement, in that the potential examiner would need to consider registration with a professional body as well as provide evidence of having fulfilled the job, rather than being a generic assessor.

“Current Reg”

This refers to following the current registration requirements of the SETA. The research participants noted that the current system was fit-for-purpose and that the AQP could consider a similar registration process where an assessor applicant could supply their documentation and be registered, should they meet the criteria.

“Assmt”

This refers to the completion of an assessment to validate the skills and knowledge of the examiner. The research participants considered that a competency assessment could be developed to test the knowledge and skills of the potential

examiner using an instrument similar to that which the learner would complete. Should they meet the requirements of the assessment they could then be considered as examiners.

“Training”

This refers to an examiner undergoing training to be an examiner, specific to an occupational profile. The research participants noted that the examiners could be trained, specifically, in how to be an examiner and then how to apply this to assessing against the occupational certificate.

“Ind Reg”

This refers to providing individual registration numbers per occupational certificate. Research participants noted that each AQP should provide a unique individual registration number to indicate that an assessor has the ability to be an examiner within their mandate.

“Online Reg”

This refers to an online registration process in which the potential examiner could demonstrate knowledge and skills and upload any supporting documents. The research participants considered how technology and uploading data could expedite the registration process. In addition, the information could then be stored on the database to ensure sufficient records for the purposes of verification.

Figure 7 illustrates the research participants’ opinions relating to the registration of examiners and moderators.

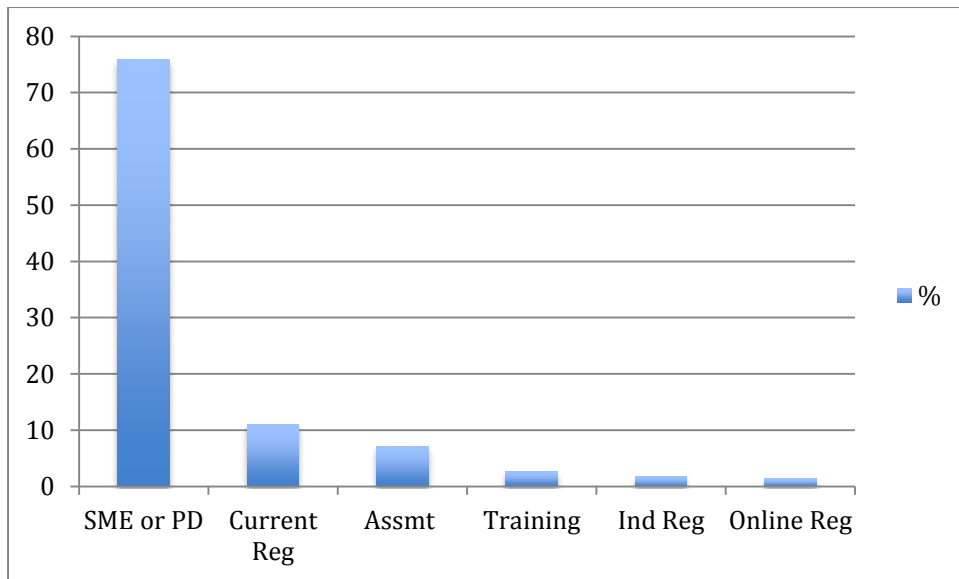


Figure 7: Participant feedback regarding registration of examiners and moderators for OQF qualifications for which W&RSETA will act as AQP

- (SME or PD) 75,00% of research participants noted the need to demonstrate subject matter expertise and possible registration with a professional body.
- (Current Reg) 10,98% of research participants noted that the current registration of assessors process could be used.
- (Assmt) 7,12% of research participants noted the need for assessors to undergo a knowledge and practical assessment to demonstrate their own knowledge and skills.
- (Training) 2,67% of research participants noted the need for examiners to undergo training to understand assessment as well as the information linked to the occupational profile
- (Ind Reg) 1,79% of research participants noted the need for individual registration numbers specific to each occupational profile.
- (Online Reg) 1,48% of research participants noted the possibility of an online registration process to upload documents as well as undergo a basic assessment.

4.4.3 Summary

As the research participants noted, there is still a requirement to register assessors and moderators. Practically, the current model, which requires registration with the ETQA directly, could still be adopted and adapted by an AQP.

Therefore, this would require a process where knowledge and skills as well as assessment certification and experience would need to be evaluated for consideration.

The model would require:

1. Creating a framework that would include duration or expiry of registration, deviations, appeals and examiner/moderator initiated de-registration and AQP initiated de-registration criteria.
2. Developing criteria for requirements to be an assessor and moderator (which could be taken from the assessment specification document).
3. Providing a pre-assessment check for candidates to determine which information they would need to supply as well as whether this would be paper-based or online.
4. Formally applying for registration, which would include validating identity, education, experience and assessment or moderation experience.
5. The process of acknowledging that applicant's information has been received.
6. The evaluation process.
7. Informing applicants of the outcome.
8. Issuing an examiner or moderator scope, specific to an occupational qualification.

Normally this would be a paper-based process but, as noted by some of the research participants, this could now be done through online registration and upload, which would help to reduce timelines and movement of documentation.

4.5 A COSTING MODEL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE AQP

There are various influencers of the cost of the establishment and operations of the AQP. There are also different ideas on how the assessment centre would continue to sustain itself once constituted.

The W&RSETA has taken the decision not to transfer any of the costs to the learner who wishes to, and has access via the requirements to, undertake the national final summative assessment.

4.5.1 QCTO Policy

Using the QCTO Draft Fee Structure Policy for AQPs (2011), the following costs should be considered.

The AQP would need to pay to the QCTO the figures shown in Table 2:

Table 2: QCTO Draft Fee Structure

Delegation Policy Ref.	QCTO Function	Rates
7(a) & 9(a)	Evaluation of AQP application for delegation (per qualification)	R10 000.00
7(e) & 9(f); 7(f) & 9(g)	Accreditation of providers and programmes recommended by AQP Accreditation of assessment centres/sites recommended by AQP	Providers(institution): R10 000.00 Per programme R5 000.00 Per centre R10 000.00
7(n) & 9(h)	Certification of learners recommended by AQP	Per certificate: R100.00
7(b) & 9(i)	QCTO annual monitoring	R8 000.00 plus actual expenses and km traveled @ AA Rates per km
7(b) & 9(i)	Audit – once per cycle (5 years) unless monitoring suggests more frequently	Costs to be determined (based on externally contracted auditors)

The illustration of these costs provides an opportunity to consider how much the accreditation and certification process alone will cost.

Should this draft policy come into effect the AQP would need to meet the requirements. This illustration does not take into consideration any of the other AQP costs, linked to development, management and implementation.

In addition, in the QCTO Assessment Quality Partner Criteria and Guidelines it notes that an AQP must:

xvi. have the financial resources necessary to establish the AQP function and implement effective, efficient and transparent financial management and internal control systems, verified by means of a written commitment by its relevant authority (QCTO, 2013a, 9).

As this has not been considered in respect of the W&RSETA AQP, it is impossible at this stage to determine what the potential costs could be, based on QCTO policies and procedures.

In order to attempt to address this issue, potential sources of funding to set up and maintain the assessment centres were considered by the research participants.

4.5.2 Research participants' recommendations

The following responses from the research participants indicate the various recommendations and suggestions regarding a costing model for establishing and maintaining the AQP.

4.5.3 Data coding

“SDL”

This refers to funds being supplied by the current skills development levy, monies paid to the NSF and distributed to SETAs. What is noted is that 0,5% of the levy, linked to quality assurance, is paid to the QCTO.

“AQP/IND”

This refers to funds being supplied by the AQP as well as by industry. Thus, industry would in effect invest in the AQP.

“AQP”

This refers to funds coming directly from the AQP, using current resources and fees charged to providers and learners as per a fee structure.

“REASSMT”

This refers to funds coming from re-assessments when the learner fails the assessment.

“NSF”

This refers to funds being provided directly from the National Skills Fund.

“LRNR”

This refers to funding coming from learners, who could pay a levy when they register for assessment.

Figure 8 illustrates the research participants’ opinions regarding a costing model for establishing and maintaining the AQP

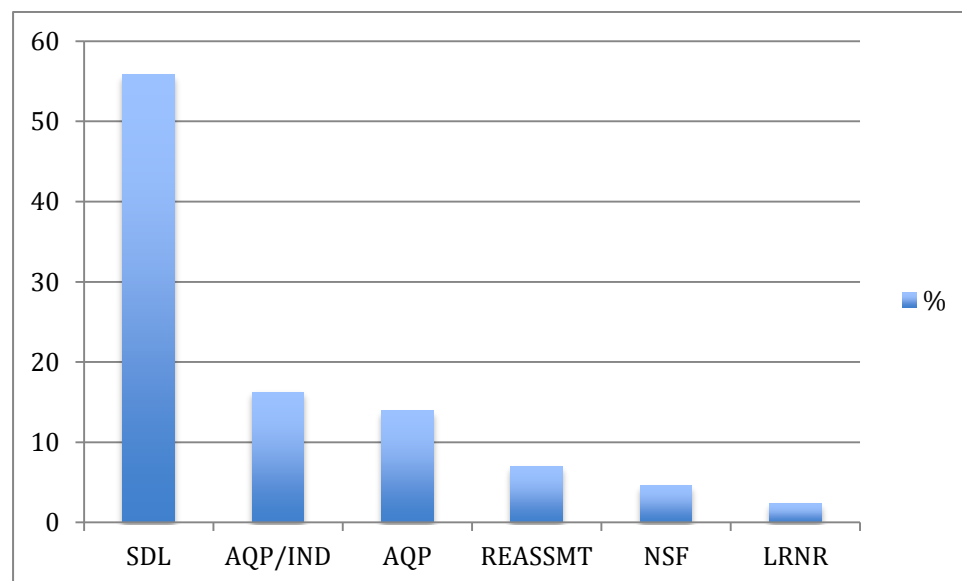


Figure 8: Participant feedback regarding a costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP for which W&RSETA will act as AQP

- 55,81% of research participants thought the costs should be covered by the Skills Development Levy.
- 16,28% of research participants thought there should be a partnership between the AQP and industry to cover the costs of the AQP.
- 13,95% of research participants thought the AQP should cover its own costs.
- 6,98% of research participants thought re-assessment fees charged to the learners could cover the costs of the AQP.
- 4,65% of research participants thought the NSF should pay for the costs of the AQP.
- 2,33% of research participants thought the learners should pay towards the costs of the AQP on registration for assessment.

4.5.4 Summary

The following questions remain unanswered or there is limited information available to answer them:

The initial constitution of the AQP, per qualification, needs a budget, as there are initial costs payable to the QCTO, as well as set-up costs. How is funding going to be made available for this?

What reduces the costs, for example what if one Assessment Quality Partner fulfills the role of the AQP to multiple occupational certificates and part qualifications? Would some of the costs/fees then be waived?

Possible consideration based on the question regarding multiple AQP roles: this would allow for shared resources across multiple occupational certificates and part qualifications and it would allow for setting up a joint or combined assessment centre, thus only requiring the initial cost of setting up the infrastructure once.

The model should consider:

Setting up the infrastructure

Venue hire

Evaluation of need for a singular office or a national office.

Learner Management System (LMS)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Recruiting staff, considering change management

Registering assessors and moderators

Developing Assessment Instruments

Possibly developing learning material

Creating a framework for implementing assessments

Possibly capacity building TVET Colleges or providing the assessment specifications to private assessment centres

For the on-demand model, thereafter, a key consideration would be:

Would the costs allocated to assessment be sufficient to ensure sustainability?

A possible solution to improve cost-effectiveness is to conduct assessments in-house (especially the practical component), but to also manage and administer this independently, by a third party/mobile assessment unit. This would involve:

Implementing assessments

Managing logistics

Tracking assessments to and from assessment centres

Assessment and moderation of assessments

Monitoring and Evaluation

Certification

Until the Draft Fees Policy comes into place and a decision is made regarding the provision of funds for the AQPs, it is not possible to develop a model.

4.6 A STRATEGY TO BUILD CAPACITY AMONGST W&RSETA STAFF

There is a need for a formal strategy to be put into place, as there is a possibility that currently employed staff could fulfill a dual role. This dual role could involve being part of the new (QCTO) framework as well as continuing to work on legacy qualifications until such time as they have all expired.

Without current guidelines on the various functions that AQPs will fulfill, this not having been formalized yet, the capacitation strategy will need to be rolled out in various phases.

Also, what should be noted is the high staff turnover within the various departments, which results in the continuous need for capacitation.

4.6.1 Research participants' recommendations

The following responses from the research participants indicate the various recommendations and suggestions regarding a strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff.

4.6.2 Data coding

“EMSTRAT”

This refers to a formalised human resources and human capital strategy that would carefully document various elements. These would include the job specification, the skills required, the knowledge required as well as the core competencies for the positions identified within the AQP. Should there be a transition from the current SETA structure to the AQP, that same evaluation could be completed to ensure that the personnel meet the requirements of the position. This would ensure that the strategy is benchmarked against future need, and not only against current staff members. Noted from various respondents was the lack of skills and/or knowledge in current staff, which often results in frustration.

“W/SHOP”

This refers to information sharing workshops, focused specifically on AQP matters and functionality. These would also provide the participants with information about SOPs as well as provide guidelines and ensure currency of information.

“CHMNGMT”

This refers to a formal change management strategy linked to current processes and systems and the integration into a new system. All current staff members would be “transferred” to the new entity from which they would perform similar functions to those for which they currently are employed. It is important to note that this would not result in the loss of current employees.

“SECT RG”

This refers to capacitating staff to understand the different sector requirements. This could also consider that the various occupational certificates and part qualifications which will have personnel linked to them that understand or have knowledge of the relevant sector. This would ensure sector requirements were understood and managed accordingly.

“COMP SPEC”

This refers to personnel undergoing competency-based assessments to fulfil their role. The competency assessment would include knowledge of the AQP and its processes as well as sector-specific information. The fact that an assessment is required will ensure and validate the necessary skills required for the position.

“STK IN”

This refers to stakeholder involvement in the capacitation process. This could include information sharing specific to sector requirements as well as ensuring that currency is maintained in terms of sector needs, as well as changes in needs.

“CAP PIL”

This refers to ensuring a continuous strategy that would evaluate and re-evaluate the capacitation of staff based on the pilot of the first AQP management of a national assessment.

Figure 9 illustrates the research participant’s opinions regarding a strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff.

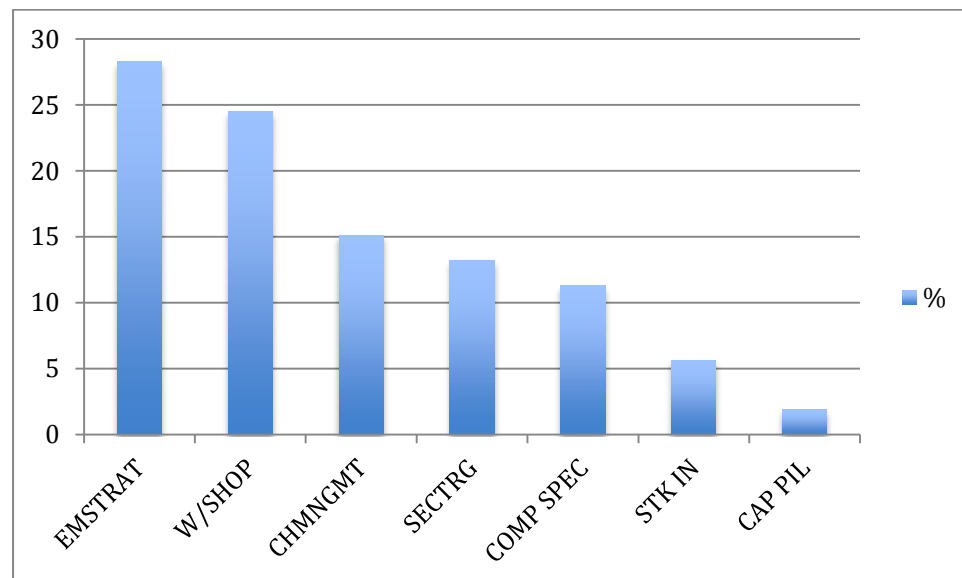


Figure 9: Participant feedback regarding a strategy to build capacity in terms of the AQP amongst W&RSETA staff

- 28,30% of research participants noted the need for a human capital evaluation and implementation.
- 24,53% of research participants noted the needs for information sharing workshops.
- 15,09% of research participants noted the need for a change management process with current staff members.
- 13,20% of research participants noted the need for capacitation specific to the various sectors within the Wholesale and Retail landscape.
- 11,32% of research participants noted that there should be competency-based assessments that staff would need to undergo.
- 5,66% of research participants noted the need for stakeholder to help inform and capacitate the staff about the different sector needs and associated complexities.

- 1,89% of research participants noted a continuous review after the pilot implementation.

4.6.3 Summary

The basic consideration for capacity building with current W&RSETA staff would be a series of training workshops. These would cover both generic information that would explain the QCTO and its processes; and then more specific role-based workshops.

The second phase of capacity building would be a series of sector-specific workshops which would explain sector requirements, and which could be completed by external stakeholders to ensure an understanding of how their work interfaces with, and influences, the sector, the SETA and the AQP.

As part of the capacity building process, there could be an evaluation of the model and variations to this evaluation could be made twice a year, after review.

What is recommended is a formal capacitation strategy for W&RSETA staff. This would be aided by a change management intervention as well as capacity building linked to SOP roles and responsibilities.

In future, there could be competency based recruitment and validation either through:

- Validation of experience; and/or
- Competency based assessment

4.7 A STRATEGY TO BUILD CAPACITY AMONGST W&RSETA STAKEHOLDERS

There are various stakeholders that interface with the W&RSETA and therefore each of the stakeholders' needs, and information preferences, should be considered. In addition to this, as this is a new methodology of assessment and the way in which assessments are administered, the structure will require a comprehensive communication strategy.

4.7.1 Research participants' recommendations

The following responses from the research participants indicates the various recommendations and suggestions regarding W&RSETA stakeholders.

4.7.2 Data coding

“W/SHOP”

This refers to workshops that could be run by the AQP to provide various stakeholders with information about specific standard operating procedures, staff and engagement opportunities, process of assessment including assessment instruments and cycles for assessment, process of implementing assessments, understanding the national summative assessment, certification and currency of information relevant to the AQP functions.

“PROV FOR”

This refers to disseminating information rather than provide specific workshops. The current format that could be utilised is through provincial meetings. Information could be disseminated in a structured manner in cycles, ensuring that information is shared but not in a process or information specific way.

“COM ASSMT”

This refers to stakeholders who should go through an assessment that allows them to participate within the system. Although autocratic in nature, the idea is that the onus lies on stakeholders to empower themselves and, more importantly, ensure that they understand the information that is related to the AQP and its assessments.

“INFO BKLT”

This refers to the development of an information booklet that would supply information about the AQP, and would also list the various processes in it, such as assessment management, how practical assessments would be conducted, certification, for example.

“HLP LNE”

This refers to setting up a help line where any role-player with a problem would be able to connect to and have issues resolved telephonically.

“AQP LNK”

This refers to setting up a link to each of the AQP role-players, such as email and/or Twitter, and being able to liaise directly with them.

Figure 10 illustrates the research participants’ opinions regarding the capacitation of, and communication with, W&RSETA stakeholders

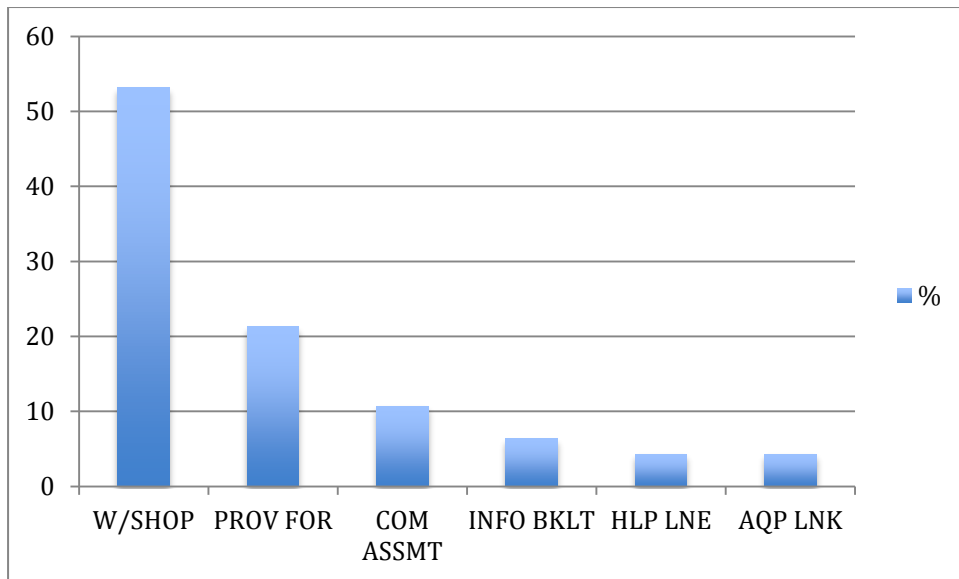


Figure 10: Participant feedback regarding a strategy to build capacity in terms of the AQP amongst W&RSETA stakeholders

- 53,19% of research participants noted the need to have workshops that were available around both generic as well as specific concepts.
- 21,28% of research participants noted the need for sharing information in the current regional forum meetings.
- 10,63% of research participants noted the need to have information tested through a formal assessment.
- 6,38% of research participants noted the need for an information booklet.
- 4,26% of research participants noted the need for a help line.
- 4,26% of research participants noted that there could be information linked to AQP role-players.

4.7.3 Summary

In order to consider an appropriate strategy, considering the respondents as well as the needs of the sector, there is a current perception that information is not shared timeously, or specific to certain issues. There is a sense that there is a tendency towards roadshows which are generic in nature but do not provide specific information for implementation or practical purposes.

Currently, stakeholders shared, their frustration in obtaining information from the current ETQA is at a high level. Therefore, in the new framework there is a need

for engagement which is tracked and which has clear turnaround times. For example, if an email is sent, that there be a tracking system which will ensure action within an agreed timeline. In addition to this, a helpline which could be available to stakeholders could be set up, where they would be able to get information directly from the source.

CHAPTER 5 - RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As each section of the report has indicated findings specific to the requirement of the research brief, they have been reported on separate from each other. Here, the key findings have been integrated into summary findings and recommendations.

There is both national policy and draft policy (referred to separately from national policy), which have been published and which will provide the basis against which compliance will be benchmarked.

There is however a large reliance on the QCTO within this process. Currently the QCTO will manage the accreditation and registration of assessment centres, so that each assessment centre that the AQP considers appropriate still needs to be evaluated by the QCTO and approved. This is one example of the interdependency; this process is currently noted as being a twenty-one day cycle. However, considering the large volume of potential applications for accreditation of assessment centres, there is a genuine concern about capacity, in terms of the QCTO's ability to meet the targets and fulfill the roles it has agreed to fulfill.

Planning can only be done once the scope of work that an AQP is required to do is formalised and documented. For example, the accreditation of training providers, which was initially going to be within the scope of the AQP. This will directly impact on number of staff required.

As this is a pilot programme, it would be helpful to engage directly with the QCTO and to work together in developing the guidelines and standard operating procedures.

5.1.1 A model for the development, management and implementation of assessments

A standard operating procedure should be the basis of engagement with the AQP. In order to meet this requirement, the AQP must have clear guidelines and standard operating procedures itself, against which to benchmark its own development of

policy. The current frustration noted is because the current system has guidelines, but these are not implemented consistently across current quality assurance bodies.

The second concept is that there is consultation with the industry to ensure, amongst other things, that industry's needs have been met, that sector or work requirements are understood, that planning includes the "how and when" of assessments in order to minimise the disruption of operations.

The third concept is that there needs to be a formalised process by which roles are linked to standard operating procedures and the ability to perform competently against them. The current challenges noted include frustration with the high turnover of staff as well as interfacing with staff members who may not have the technical knowledge or sector experience.

In addition to only engaging with sector specific research participants, there was also a need to validate the capacity, for evaluating model development, of whether the assessment centres that have been identified are able to conduct the national summative assessments.

5.1.2 Certification of QCTO qualifications

The QCTO Certification Policy (2013) notes the following:

AQP to "request certification for competent learners within 14 days after receiving the assessment results" (QCTO, 2013, 7).

AQPs will recommend to the QCTO the certification of learners for occupational qualifications or part qualifications within their scope. The QCTO will forward the issued certificates to the relevant AQP for distribution to the learners within 21 days (QCTO, 2013, 7).

Thus in 35 working days from assessment results, learners will be able to access their certificates from the AQP.

5.1.3 Registration of examiners and moderators

The model would require:

1. Creating a framework that would include duration or expiry of registration, deviations, appeals and examiner/moderator initiated de-registration and AQP initiated de-registration criteria.
2. Developing criteria for requirements to be an assessor and moderator (which could be taken from the assessment specification documentation).
3. Providing a pre-assessment check for candidates to determine which information they would need to supply as well as whether this would be paper-based or online.
4. Formally applying for registration, which would include validating identity, education, experience and assessment or moderation experience.
5. The process of recognising that applicant information has been received.
6. The evaluation process.
7. Informing applicants of the outcome.
8. Issuing an examiner or moderator scope specific to an occupational or part qualification.

Normally this is a paper-based process but, as noted by some of the research participants, this could now be done through online registration and upload, which would help to reduce timelines and movement of documentation.

5.1.4 A costing model for the establishment and operations of the AQP

Possible consideration based on the question. This would allow for shared resources across multiple occupational certificates and part qualifications and it would allow for setting up the assessment centre, thus only requiring the initial cost of setting up the infrastructure once.

The model should consider:

Setting up the infrastructure

Venue hire

Evaluation of need for a singular office or a national office.

Learner Management System (LMS)

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Recruiting staff, considering change management

Registering assessors and moderators

Developing Assessment Instruments

Possibly developing learning material

Creating a framework for implementing assessments

Possibly capacity building TVET Colleges or providing the assessment specifications to private assessment centres

For the on-demand model, thereafter, a key consideration would be:

Would the costs allocated to assessment be enough to ensure sustainability?

A possible solution to improve cost-effectiveness is to conduct assessments in-house (especially the practical component) but also independently managed and administered by a third party/mobile assessment unit

Implementing assessments

Managing logistics

Tracking assessments to and from assessment centres

Assessment and moderation of assessments

Monitoring and Evaluation

Certification

Until the Draft Fees Policy comes into place and a decision is made who will provide funds for the AQPs it is not possible to develop a model

5.1.5 A strategy to build capacity amongst W&RSETA staff

The basic consideration for capacity building with current W&RSETA staff would be a series of training workshops. These would cover both generic information that would explain the QCTO and its processes; and then more specific role-based workshops.

The second phase of capacity building would be a series of sector specific workshops which would explain sector requirements, and which could be completed by external stakeholders to ensure an understanding of how their work interfaces with and influences the sector.

As part of the capacity building process there should be an evaluation of the model and consider variations twice a year after review.

What is recommended is a formal capacitation strategy for W&RSETA staff. This would be aided by a change management intervention as well as capacity linked to SOP roles and responsibilities.

In future there could be competency based recruitment and validation either through-

- Validation of experience
- Competency based assessment

5.1.6 A strategy to build capacity amongst relevant stakeholders

- The AQP within its strategy should consider dissemination of information and segment information sharing into the following:
- Generic information, which can be shared at roadshows, where information is to provide an overview rather than specific requirements.
- Workshops for stakeholders, which consider engaging and possibly training stakeholders on policy, procedures and processes. This would also consider things like understanding the LMS, Planning for Examinations. As part of this dissemination, is the consideration of developing online workshops that are the same as the workshops developed. The online workshops could be referred to as part of a communication strategy, so even though a workshop is not necessarily scheduled it could be accessed nationally.

- An information booklet could then also be developed which would be an information-sharing booklet noting the various processes, procedures and processes. This could be provided to stakeholders, as well as a CD with the recorded workshops.

5.2 CONCLUSION

As the W&RSETA has registered as an AQP, it must now have the opportunity to perform against the various policies, templates and criteria provided. In order to do this there needs to be a more formalised partnership that will ensure that the pilot programme is a success. Although the pilot programme does not have a practical component, as some other qualifications do, this should also be taken into account.

The opportunity to provide a successful implementation that can be used as a model for other AQPs is the ultimate goal; however, this requires an engagement with the QCTO.

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