

Why SAQA's Foreign Qualifications Evaluation Stands Out?



A benchmark for excellence in South Africa

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) stands out in its approach to the evaluation of foreign qualifications, distinguishing itself from others that offer verification of foreign qualification services in South Africa.

Established under the South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995 (repealed) and continuing under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008 as amended, SAQA's mandate is to ensure the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework that contributes to the full development of each learner and the nation's social and economic development.

Legal Mandate And Authority

SAQA's operations are grounded in a democratic and constitutional legal framework, giving it sole mandate, in respect of foreign qualifications, to provide a 'verification or an evaluation and advisory service' (NQF Amendment Act, no. 12 of 2019; S13 (m)).

In addition, SAQA's primary function as stipulated in the founding and current Acts is to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF, including the registration of qualifications and part-qualifications. This legal backing ensures that SAQA's official evaluations are recognised and respected across various countries and sectors, including education, employment, and professional bodies. Section 13(1) (m) requires SAQA to provide an evaluation and advisory service in respect of foreign qualifications, consistent with the NQF Act.

Comprehensive Evaluation Process

SAQA employs a thorough methodical approach to the evaluation of foreign qualifications. This process is based on best practice globally and enshrined in the national legislation and involves several key steps:

01 Document Verification

SAQA meticulously verifies the authenticity of all qualification requirements, a key differentiator that sets SAQA's function apart. The comprehensive three-part evaluation process includes not only verifying the authenticity of qualifications with the issuing institutions but also ensuring that the institution itself holds proper accreditation and that the specific programme is recognised in the home country. The confirmation of accreditation is done

through bilateral engagement with the relevant Ministry or official structure in the issuing country. This process may take some time for certain countries, but it is critical in ensuring that SAQA recognition is not awarded to any programmes from 'paper mills' or 'bogus institutions'. Additionally, each document undergoes a thorough inspection for any signs of tampering or fraud. This multi-layered approach guarantees a higher level of credibility and trust.

02 Qualification Comparability

SAQA evaluates the foreign qualification against the South African NQF to determine its equivalence. This involves analysing the content, level, and outcomes of the qualification to ensure it meets the standards set by the South African education system.

03 Consultation with Experts

SAQA often consults with subject matter experts and professional bodies to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the evaluation. This collaborative approach ensures that the evaluations are thorough and consider all necessary aspects of the qualification.

In contrast, other entities offering foreign evaluation services may offer faster services but often lack the depth and rigour of SAQA's comprehensive evaluation process. SAQA is also a founding member of a global 'regulatory-body-only' network, the Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN), raising awareness of academic fraud. This membership offers SAQA the unique opportunity, to share and learn best practice in relation to authentic qualifications and academic integrity.

Alignment with National Policies

SAQA's evaluations are aligned with national policies and objectives, ensuring that they contribute to the broader goals of the South African education system. This alignment includes:

- **Facilitating Access and Mobility:**

By providing clear and accurate evaluations, SAQA helps individuals with foreign qualifications access education and employment opportunities in South Africa and individuals with South African qualifications access education and employment opportunities outside of South Africa. This aligns with the NQF's goal of facilitating access, mobility, and progression within education and career paths.

• Quality Assurance:

SAQA's evaluations contribute to maintaining high standards within the South African education system. By ensuring that foreign qualifications meet these standards, SAQA helps preserve the integrity and quality of education standards in the country.

• Redressing Past Inequities:

SAQA's role in recognising national and foreign qualifications also helps address historical imbalances and promotes inclusivity within the education system.

Research and Continuous Improvement



Another distinguishing feature of SAQA is its commitment to research and continuous improvement. SAQA undertakes extensive international research and benchmarking to stay updated with global educational trends and practices. This research informs our evaluation criteria and processes, ensuring they remain relevant and effective.

Other evaluation entities may not have the same commitment to research and understanding of foreign systems, which can limit their ability to provide evaluations that are as current and comprehensive as those offered by SAQA.

Alignment with international Policies

SAQA actively collaborates with international counterparts, which enhances its ability to evaluate foreign qualifications accurately.

These collaborations include:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs):

SAQA has established MOUs with various international qualifications authorities. These agreements facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of SAQA's evaluations. SAQA also participates in the country-to-country bilateral led by the respective ministries, to strengthen and formalize bilateral qualification recognition agreements that also improve our ability to exchange verifications data.

- Participation in International Forums:

SAQA participates in international forums and networks, allowing it to stay abreast of global developments in qualifications frameworks and recognition practices. This global perspective enriches SAQA's evaluation processes and ensures we remain abreast of international standards.

Public Information and Transparency



SAQA is committed to transparency and public information. We provide detailed guidelines and information about our evaluation processes on its website, ensuring that applicants are well-informed and understand what to expect. This transparency builds trust and confidence in SAQA's evaluations. The SAQA Policy and Criteria for Evaluating Foreign Qualifications within the South African NQF (As Amended), 2024 as published on the SAQA website (www.saqa.org.za) confirms further transparency.

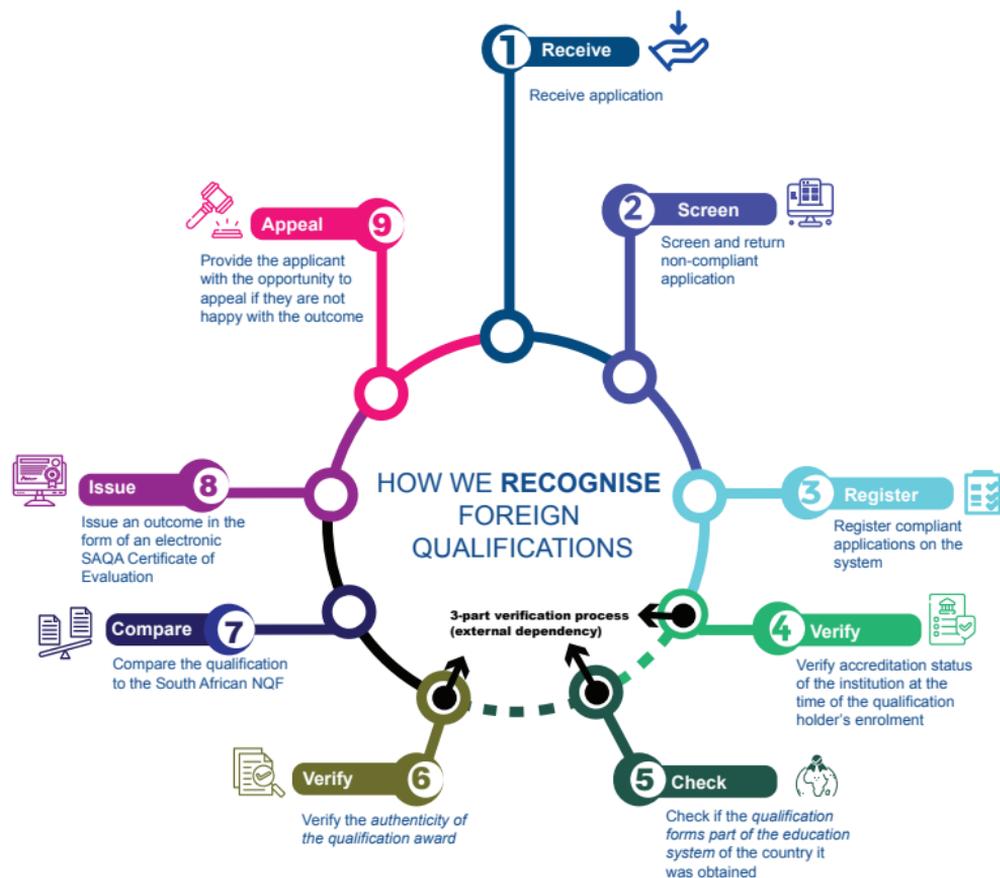


SAQA goes beyond evaluation by offering advisory services to individuals and organisations regarding foreign qualifications. This includes providing information about the South African education system, guidance on further studies, and advice on career development, advising potential applicants on the accreditation status of overseas institutions.

SAQA issues and confirms authenticity of its Certificate of Evaluation (SoE). The QR code displayed on the SAQA certificate of evaluation further assists in verification to ensure that only valid certificates are acknowledged in the system. These services are invaluable for individuals trying to navigate a new education system and integrate into the South African labour market.

In summary, SAQA's approach to foreign qualifications evaluation is distinguished by its legal mandate, comprehensive and rigorous evaluation process, alignment with national policies and international best practice, commitment to research and continuous improvement, international collaboration, transparency, and advisory services. These factors ensure that SAQA's evaluations are credible, accurate, and widely recognised, setting a high standard in the field of foreign qualifications evaluation in South Africa. This distinguishes the SAQA evaluation from others who may offer verification services, which often lack the depth, rigour, and authoritative backing that characterise SAQA's evaluations, making SAQA the obvious choice.

The Process



How to apply?



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Create an account and follow the provided guidelines





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