

**SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)**

In accordance with Regulation 24(c) of the National Standards Bodies Regulations of 28 March 1998, the Task Team for

**Dietetics**

registered by Organising Field 09 – Health Sciences and Social Services, publishes the following Qualification for public comment.

This notice contains the titles, fields, sub-fields, NQF levels, credits, and purpose of the Qualification. The full Qualification can be accessed via the SAQA web-site at [www.saqqa.org.za](http://www.saqqa.org.za). Copies may also be obtained from the Directorate of Standards Setting and Development at the SAQA offices, SAQA House, 1067 Arcadia Street, Hatfield, Pretoria.

Comment on the Qualification should reach SAQA at the address below and **no later than 31 Augusts 2009**. All correspondence should be marked **Standards Setting – Task Team for Dietetics** and addressed to

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D. MPHUTHING**ACTING DIRECTOR: STANDARDS SETTING AND DEVELOPMENT**



## SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

**QUALIFICATION:**  
**Bachelor of Science: Dietetics**

| SAQA QUAL ID               |   | QUALIFICATION TITLE                         |               |
|----------------------------|---|---|---------------|
| 73169                      |   | Bachelor of Science: Dietetics              |               |
| ORIGINATOR                 |   | PROVIDER                                    |               |
| TT - Dietetics             |   |   |               |
| QUALIFICATION TYPE         | FIELD                                   | SUBFIELD                                    |               |
| Professional Qualification | 9 - Health Sciences and Social Services | Promotive Health and Developmental Services |               |
| ABET BAND                  | MINIMUM CREDITS                         | NQF LEVEL                                   | QUAL CLASS    |
| Undefined                  | 480                                     | Level 7                                     | Regular-ELOAC |

***This qualification does not replace any other qualification and is not replaced by another qualification.***

**PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE QUALIFICATION**

**Purpose:**

This Qualification is intended to develop a learner with the scientific knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to practice independently in any of the areas of therapeutic nutrition, community nutrition and food service management, in line with national and international trends.

The qualifying learner will be able to function independently within the public and private sectors by competently applying an integration of theoretical principles, proven techniques, practical experience and appropriate skills in order to:

- Provide an independent, specialized nutritional service to all sectors of the community.
- Apply management, education and research skills in a supervisory, clinical governance and/or quality assurance capacity within the healthcare and food service environments.
- Uphold professional and ethical standards of practice.
- Become a reflective practitioner and life long learner within the area of nutrition.

Successful completion of this Qualification will enable the learner to register as a Dietician with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

Although the Qualification falls within the sub-field of Promotive Health and Developmental Services, it is also applicable to the other three sub-fields, viz., Preventive Health, Curative Health and Rehabilitative Health and Services.

**Rationale:**

This Qualification in dietetics is based on a need in the market for competent dietetic practitioners (dietitians) who are in possession of graduate-level scientific knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to practice independently in any of the areas of therapeutic (clinical) nutrition, community nutrition and food service management, in line with national and international trends and who can be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as independent practitioners.

This Qualification aims to promote an understanding of the multi-disciplinary approach to effective, efficient patient care. In addition, this Qualification aims to produce a professional

practitioner who will take cognisance of South African history and will be able to adapt to the unique circumstances of a changing South Africa with emphasis on equity in health care, social upliftment and reduction of the burden of disease.

**RECOGNIZE PREVIOUS LEARNING?**

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**LEARNING ASSUMED IN PLACE**

It is assumed that learners are competent in:

- Communication at NQF Level 4.
- Mathematics at NQF Level 4.
- Life Sciences at NQF Level 4.

It is strongly recommended that the learner also be competent in basic computer skills.

Recognition of Prior Learning:

This Qualification may be achieved in part through Recognition of Prior Learning, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the individual institutions and in agreement with the relevant ETQA, on presenting relevant evidence that meets the outcomes stated in the Qualification document.

Access to the Qualification:

Learners accessing this Qualification will be expected to be in possession of a Grade 12 Qualification or recognised equivalent, at NQF Level 4, and comply with the selection policy of the relevant Provider with the agreement of the relevant ETQA.

**QUALIFICATION RULES**

The Fundamental Component of the Qualification is compulsory and comprises natural sciences that form the basis of nutritional and dietetics learning, as well as the managerial, ethical and legal learning components, to the value of 144 Credits.

The Core Component of the Qualification is compulsory and comprises all the learning essential to the practice of dietetics, to the value of 320 Credits.

The Elective Component must be completed for the learner to be awarded this Qualification and takes the form of a research project based on professionally directed subjects/areas of choice to the minimum value of 16 Credits.

**EXIT LEVEL OUTCOMES**

1. Apply the principles of professional ethics and relevant current legislation in interactions with clients and colleagues.
2. Apply and uphold the principles of the Bill of Rights whilst interacting with colleagues and patients taking human diversity into account.
  - Range of diversity: Race, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, political orientation, age, differential abilities, socio-economic status.
3. Apply the foundational knowledge and principles of natural sciences in a nutritional context.
4. Assess and evaluate the nutritional status and concomitant health risks of individuals and groups in communities and institutions.

5. Develop, implement, evaluate and document community-based nutritional services for specific groups.
  - Range of groups: Children from birth to puberty; adolescents; adults; pregnant women; the elderly.
6. Integrate and apply appropriate approaches and techniques to effectively manage a clinical nutritional service.
7. Develop research skills and conduct a research project within the field of nutrition and present the project according to required research practice.

**Critical Cross-Field Outcomes:**

- Identifying and solving problems using critical and creative thinking are demonstrated in the assessment and treatment of patients.
- Working effectively with others as a member of the team, group, organisation and community is demonstrated within the context of providing a comprehensive nutritional service.
- Organising and managing oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively is demonstrated in the preparation for presenting and managing a nutrition service.
- Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information is demonstrated in the assessment and treatment of patients.
- Communicating effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and or written presentation is demonstrated through reports and the handover of patients to other services and in demonstrating cultural and aesthetic sensitivity when dealing with patients, colleagues and communities.
- Effective use of science and technology, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others is demonstrated in all the actions required in providing a successful nutrition service.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation is demonstrated in all the actions required in providing nutrition services in a variety of settings.

**ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

**Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 1:**

- 1.1 Patients' physical and psychological needs are recognised, assessed and responded to with due regard for human dignity.
- 1.2 Ethical codes, professional accountability and responsibility and standards for the practice of dietetics are applied consistently in interactions with patients, colleagues and social contacts outside of the working milieu.
- 1.3 All interactions with patients, colleagues and other stakeholders promote human dignity and are undertaken with due sensitivity to ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and gender diversity.
- 1.4 Ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy, justice, truth telling, promise keeping and confidentiality are appropriately applied in all contexts in accordance with the provisions and rules of the Codes of Ethics of the Health Professional Council of South Africa and professional associations.

**Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 2:**

- 2.1 Patient rights are acknowledged and adhered to at all times according to the Bill of Rights and Patient Charter.
- 2.2 Effective and appropriate communication is engaged in with the patient and other members of the health care team in a multicultural context with due regard for human dignity and patient confidentiality.
- 2.3 Practice demonstrates awareness of different viewpoints and values and the ability to appreciate these in relation to own views and values.

- 2.4 Assessments explicitly include analyses of possible elements of diversity that may impact on the professional relationship.
- 2.5 Interaction and teamwork within the practice context reflect understanding and acceptance of diversity.
- 2.6 Referrals are appropriate to and in accordance with the unique needs of each patient.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 3:

- 3.1 Limitations in the use of biochemical measurements in the assessment of an individual's nutritional status are described in terms of interpreting biochemical data.
- 3.2 Various techniques used for assessing dietary intake in individuals and groups are explained in terms of quality assurance and use of instruments/tools.
- 3.3 Anthropometric evaluation of the human body is explained in terms of equipment, sites of measurements and significance of findings for estimation of nutritional status.
- 3.4 The role of a community profile is explained in terms of assessing the socio-demographic status of specific individuals and groups.
- 3.5 Clinical assessment is described and demonstrated in terms of the estimation of nutritional status, the recognition of nutritional deficiencies and the steps to be taken to rectify recognised problems.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 4:

- 4.1 Standard screening tools are applied to predict the type and severity of nutrition-related health issues in individuals and communities.
- 4.2 A nutritional diagnosis is compiled based on the integration of assessment data.
- 4.3 The effects of disease on the nutritional status of individuals and groups is described in terms of the underlying mechanisms of disease processes.
- 4.4 The interrelationship of culture and religion with food preferences and eating behaviour is explained in terms of the effects on nutritional status.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 5:

- 5.1 Relevant stakeholders are approached to collaborate in the development of a community-based nutritional service.
- 5.2 Relevant intervention strategies to address nutrition and related health issues are designed and tested with the assistance of the community leaders.
- 5.3 A nutrition care and education programme is developed to address the specific disease conditions and special nutritional needs for identified groups within the community.
- 5.4 The procurement, control, storage and distribution of food is managed in terms of special needs for special patients and/or groups.
- 5.5 Caregivers are educated in the compilation of food and special nutritional products under hygienic conditions to meet the needs of the identified target groups.
- 5.6 The uptake and acceptance of the the nutritional programme by community members are monitored over a specific period and observations and outcomes are documented.
- 5.7 A report is delivered to the nutrition service manager with recommendations in terms of continuity, changes to and expansion of the service.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 6:

- 6.1 The functions and resource requirements for a clinical nutritional service are identified and discussed with the multidisciplinary healthcare team.
- 6.2 An operational or business plan is compiled in terms of the identified functions.
- 6.3 Human resource management principles for a clinical nutritional service are described and contextualised for a community service.
- 6.4 An operational budget to cover the needs of a specified clinical nutritional service is calculated according to the relevant institutional policies and budgeting restraints.

6.5 The clinical nutritional service is managed according to the established operational policy and procedures and reports are submitted every quarter.

6.6 The clinical nutritional service is evaluated in terms of the reports and revised according to quality audit findings.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 6:

7.1 Research needs within the field of nutrition are identified and an appropriate area for research is selected.

7.2 Quantitative and qualitative research methods are explained and discussed as possible solutions to own research needs.

7.3 A professional research proposal within the field of nutrition is developed, motivated and presented.

7.4 Research is conducted ethically according to established research methodology and practice.

7.5 Research findings and conclusions are prepared and presented in a research report according to the required research practice.

Integrated Assessment:

Integrated assessment strategies are applied throughout the course of learning for this Qualification, in both formative and summative assessment. Integrated assessment takes the form of a variety of appropriate assessment methods, which include: Written assignments; practical assessments; literature reviews; field reports and/or workbooks; informal tests; case studies; class presentations; peer evaluation; simulations in structured learning environments.

Formative Assessment:

Learning and assessment are integrated. The scheme of work includes tests and assignments, practical work and competency evaluation of practical skills. The process is continuous and focuses on smaller sections of the work in limited number of outcomes.

Summative Assessment:

Summative assessments evaluate the learners' abilities to manage and integrate larger bodies of knowledge and to achieve the stated outcomes. The summative assessments also focus on the learners' ability to integrate knowledge and skills in the particular area of specialisation. Summative assessments include theoretical and practical assessments.

### **INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY**

The regulations for the profession of dietetics in terms of the Medical, Dental and Supplementary Health Service Professions Act, Act 56 of 1974, state the actions which comprise the Scope of Practice of Dietitians in South Africa. These include:

- Applying knowledge and skills by:
  - Establishing and applying of guidelines for the maintenance of healthy nutritional practices for individuals.
  - Applying of dietary principles as part of the treatment of an individual, relative to a specific disease and following prescription by a medical doctor.
  - Establishing and applying of guidelines for adequate food and nutrition in the community in institutions for healthy and for ill persons.
  - Participating in research on aspects of dietetics.
  - Participating in formal and informal education in the field of dietetics.
- Promoting of community nutrition by:
  - Accurately interpreting the science of normal and therapeutic nutrition.

- Professionally communicating the based nutrition knowledge, according to need, to individuals and groups within the community in order to motivate them to maintain or change nutritional behaviour in order to improve quality of life and to prevent nutrition-related diseases.
- Contributing to therapeutic nutrition by compiling and applying scientifically-justifiable dietary measures as part of the treatment of a patient or client following referral by, or consultation with a medical doctor.
- Promoting food service administration by planning, developing, controlling, implementing, evaluating and guiding suitable food service systems for the provision of balanced nutrition to groups in the community and in institutions for healthy and/or ill persons.

The Association for Dietetics in South African (ADSA) is affiliated to the International Affiliation of Dietetics Associations (IADA). During the generation process this Qualification, in keeping with the terms of the applicable Legislation, was compared with and compiled according to international best practice. This Qualification compares favourably to similar qualifications in the international arena.

South Africa is one of only a few African countries that offers any kind of programme in Dietetics and is recognised as a leader in the Profession of Dietetics on the Sub-continent.

In terms of the international affiliation, graduates from South Africa are known to be eligible for registration with relevant professional regulatory bodies in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand after presenting the qualification course outlines to the applicable bodies and/or writing the required entrance examinations.

#### Conclusion:

This Qualification compares favourably with international best practice and leads the way on the African continent for establishing standards in the field of education in dietetics.

#### **ARTICULATION OPTIONS**

This Qualification articulates horizontally with other like degrees in the fields of health, agricultural and natural sciences, such as the generic Bachelor of Science (ID: 35954).

This Qualification articulates vertically with any applicable Master's degree at NQF Level 9.

#### **MODERATION OPTIONS**

- Providers offering learning towards this qualification must be accredited by the relevant ETQA, currently the HEQC, in conjunction with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). In particular, accreditation is dependent on providers demonstrating that their curricula and/or learning programme/s meet the requirements specified by the HPCSA.
- Moderation of assessment will be overseen by the appropriate ETQA according to moderation principles and procedures.

#### **CRITERIA FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ASSESSORS**

- Assessors must be registered in terms of the requirements of the relevant ETQA.
- Assessors and moderators must be used in a manner that fits into the quality management system of the provider and in accordance with the institutional tuition and assessment policies. This must also apply to the appointment of outside assessors and/or moderators.

#### **NOTES**

Registration with the HPCSA as a Learner Dietician is a statutory requirement when learners engage in providing services to individuals, groups and/or communities.

Following completion of this Qualification, the successful learner is expected to complete a period of community service in terms of current legislative requirements before full registration as a professional dietician with the HPCSA can be obtained.

**UNIT STANDARDS**

*This qualification is not based on Unit Standards.*

**LEARNING PROGRAMMES RECORDED AGAINST THIS QUALIFICATION**

**None**