

**SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA)**

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

**Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene**

registered by Organising Field 09 – Health Science 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.saq.org.za](http://www.saq.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 30 November 2009**. All correspondence should be marked **Standards Setting – Task Team for Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene** and addressed to

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



## SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

**QUALIFICATION:**  
**Bachelor of Dental Therapy**

SAQA QUAL ID		QUALIFICATION TITLE	
74451		Bachelor of Dental Therapy	
ORIGINATOR		PROVIDER	
TT - Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene			
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	360	Level 6	Regular-ELOAC

New NQF Level: NQF Level 07

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

**PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE QUALIFICATION**

Purpose:

The purpose of this Qualification is to provide the learner with the necessary scientific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be able to function as a practitioner in oral health care, independently and/or as a part of the multi-disciplinary healthcare team. The practitioner will focus on the holistic care of patients, which ranges from prevention of oral disease and promotion of oral health to the alleviation of oral abnormalities, pain and disease. The practitioner will be able to provide a service for individual patients as well as the broader public in both public and private sectors.

Although the sub-field indicated is that of curative health, the practitioner will also function in the sub-fields of preventive, promotive and rehabilitative health, on primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

The qualifying learner will be able to:

- Function legally, ethically and professionally within the relevant scope of practice.
- Apply management principles in the oral healthcare environment.
- Apply universal precautions to maintain the highest standards of health and safety.
- Enable the individual and/or community members to maintain oral health and assist when remedial interventions are necessary.
- Explain and demonstrate the various preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative interventions expected in terms of the relevant scope of practice.
- Develop research skills and carry out an applicable research exercise.

On successful completion of this Qualification, the learner will be eligible for registration with the Professional Board for Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as an independent practitioner.

Rationale:

Oral diseases are highly prevalent in South Africa and impact on the physical, social, psychological and economic well being of individuals and communities. The oral disease profile, potential burden of oral diseases and the oral consequences of health problems all require intervention to be addressed at various levels such as promotion, prevention, therapeutic and curative, surgical and rehabilitative measures. The need for oral health care is required for individuals and communities across the social and economic spectrum and this practitioner can provide care within the South African context that ranges from rural and disadvantaged communities to sophisticated, highly technological urban communities.

The South African community requires the services of a practitioner who has the competence to provide cost effective oral care within and beyond the traditional service models. Furthermore, to produce competent practitioners who will take cognisance of, and be able to adapt to, the unique circumstances of a changing South Africa with emphasis on equity in health care. This qualification, which will address the oral disease burden, placed on the health care system, will be cost effective and relevant in terms of meeting the human resource needs of our country.

#### **RECOGNIZE PREVIOUS LEARNING?**

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#### **LEARNING ASSUMED IN PLACE**

- Communication at NQF Level 4.
- Mathematical Literacy at NQF Level 4.
- Biology or Life Sciences at NQF Level 4.

It is strongly recommended that the learner is proficient in end-user computing skills at NQF Level 3.

#### **Recognition of Prior Learning:**

This Qualification may be achieved through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Portfolios of Evidence, endorsed by previous mentors or employers may be presented and may include learning outcomes achieved through formal, informal/non formal learning and work experience. Recognition of Prior Learning may be awarded in accordance with the decision of the relevant provider and in agreement with the relevant ETQA.

#### **Access to the Qualification:**

Admission is open to all learners in possession of a Senior Certificate or equivalent NQF Level 4 qualification, subject to the additional requirements laid down by the providing institution and/or relevant ETQA.

#### **QUALIFICATION RULES**

All the Exit Level Outcomes must be achieved for the learner to be awarded the Qualification.

#### **EXIT LEVEL OUTCOMES**

1. Apply the principles of ethics, relevant legislation and professional behaviour within the oral healthcare milieu.
2. Apply management principles in a clinical oral healthcare environment.
  - Range of administrative duties include but are not limited to: Preparation and maintenance of clinical oral health facility and equipment, patient record keeping, patient bookings, stock control, correspondence, bookkeeping, occupational health and safety legislative requirements.
3. Apply universal precautions to avoid cross infection and maintain the highest standards of health and safety.

4. Promote oral health to prevent oral disease in a community.
5. Explain and demonstrate the various preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative interventions expected of the dental therapist.
6. Develop research skills, conduct a research project in the area of oral health and present the findings in the required research format.

Critical Cross-Field Outcomes:

- Identifying and solving problems are demonstrated in patient examination and treatment planning.
- Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community is demonstrated in the interactions between the dental therapist and other members of the oral healthcare team.
- Organising and managing self is demonstrated in the successful management of clinical facility and patients.
- Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information is indicated in the successful generation of patient treatment plans.
- Communicating effectively is demonstrated through the successful delivery of oral health education sessions.
- Utilising science and technology effectively and critically is clearly indicated in the successful treatment of patients.
- Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems is indicated in all the activities of a successful dental therapist.

**ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 1:

- 1.1 Ethical and legal responsibilities pertaining to oral healthcare practice are explained and applied during all interactions with patients, colleagues and/or the community.
- 1.2 All treatment is rendered in terms of the Bill of Rights and the Patient Charter and patient confidentiality is maintained throughout.
- 1.3 Professional and personal growth is achieved through the assumption of various roles within the clinical or community setting and is evidenced during interactions between practitioner and patient and/or practitioner and colleagues.
  - Range of roles include but are not limited to: Clinician, educator and administrator.
- 1.4 All interactions with colleagues, patients and communities promote human dignity and indicate due sensitivity to ethnic, cultural, religious and gender diversity.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 2:

- 2.1 The legal requirements governing the operation of a private practice are explained and applied in accordance with the relevant current legislation.
- 2.2 Personal work plans and/or practice protocols for all personnel within the practice are drawn up and utilised.
- 2.3 All equipment is regularly checked for efficient working and faulty equipment is timeously reported and/or sent for repair.
- 2.4 Booking registers and patient records are maintained in a manner that ensures patient confidentiality and efficiency of practice.
- 2.5 Stock is classified and controlled to ensure currency of all products and efficiency of availability.
- 2.5 Accounts, receipts, petty cash and banking are managed in a manner that ensures safety, efficiency and, where applicable, maintenance of patient confidentiality.
- 2.6 Hazardous and scheduled materials are kept in controlled storage, appropriate inventory counts regularly are taken and recorded and relevant reports are made.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 3:

- 3.1 Cleanliness of the clinical oral health facility is maintained through adequate supervision of the cleaning assistant and personal management of professional equipment and instruments.
- 3.2 Personal protective equipment is consistently used by clinical staff and supplied to patients when appropriate.
- 3.3 All bio-hazardous medical products are consistently securely stored and waste is appropriately deposited in the special waste container/s for removal by the dedicated hazardous-waste collection agency.
- 3.4 Sterilisation of instruments is overseen to ensure efficacy of the process and integrity of instruments.
- 3.5 All body-waste spillages are immediately cleaned away using the required cleaning agent and method of disposal.
- 3.6 Medical emergencies are dealt with by applying appropriate First Aid measures and sending for professional assistance.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 4:

- 4.1 Epidemiological statistics are used to determine the oral health status of the target community.
- 4.2 Environmental conditions are assessed and probable risks and/or barriers to behaviour change are identified.
- 4.3 Quality, type and availability of dental services and associated resources are assessed in terms of promoting behaviour change.
- 4.4 Daily living practices and nutritional changes are explained and recommended to advance general health and thereby, oral health.
- 4.5 Patient education is provided, outlining risk factors that threaten oral health and specifying preventive measures to ensure oral health.
  - Range of risk factors include but are not limited to: Diet, tobacco product usage and poor personal hygiene.
- 4.6 Preventive care is provided in order to maintain the current oral health status and prevent the onset of oral disease.
  - Range of preventive measures include but are not limited to: regular oral health checks, plaque removal, remineralisation, sealant application and fluoridation.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 5:

- 5.1 A patient examination is followed by the generation of a comprehensive, patient-specific oral healthcare plan, which is based on current scientific information.
- 5.2 Various dental therapeutic treatments are delivered in accordance with the scope of practice of the dental therapist.
  - Range of therapeutic treatments include but are not limited to: Anaesthesia administration, sedation, remineralising, coronal polishing, arresting carious lesions, sealing, scaling, periodontal debridement, root planning, adjustment and/or removal of intra-oral appliances, prostheses for repair, impressions, bleaching, prescriptions for medication and therapeutic agents in accordance with relevant scope of practice.
- 5.3 Operative dentistry procedures within the specified range are carried out as required.
  - Range of operative dentistry procedures include: Preparation of carious teeth, placement and removal of rubber dam, temporary restorations, wedges, matrix bands, pulp capping, carve, contour, finish restorations, place direct resin veneers, core build-up with pins, existing posts, re-contour and polish existing restorations, treat sensitive dentine, cervical abrasions.
- 5.4 The special management of children is explained in terms of required treatment modalities, instruments, primary and secondary dentition and correctional devices, in accordance with the relevant scope of practice.

5.5 Patient education in terms of special treatment required for endodontic, periodontic, orthodontic or prosthodontic procedures an/or treatments is provided in a positive and reassuring manner.

5.6 The dentist is assisted with surgical procedures, and pre-and post-operative instructions or any required referrals are provided in an empathetic manner.

5.7 Specific oral surgical procedures are carried out when required in accordance with the relevant scope of practice.

- Range of Surgical procedures include but are not limited to: Primary and secondary tooth extraction, incision and draining of abscesses, removal of non-impacted roots.

5.8 Treatment of dentition and surrounding tissues following traumatic injury is demonstrated and appropriate instructions for post-operative management are provided to the patient and/or significant other (including caregivers).

- Range of post-traumatic treatment includes but is not limited to: Re-implantation of avulsed teeth; splinting displaced teeth; suturing; control of excessive bleeding.

Associated Assessment Criteria for Exit Level Outcome 6:

6.1 Background reading is carried out and an appropriate area for research is identified.

6.2 Qualitative and quantitative research methods are explained and the appropriate method for own research needs is selected.

6.3 Research proposal is developed, presented and motivated.

6.4 Research is conducted according to established, ethical research practice.

6.5 Research findings and conclusions are prepared and presented according to the required research format.

Integrated Assessment:

Formative and Summative assessment strategies should be used throughout the qualification programme to ensure that exit level and cross critical outcomes are met.

Formative assessment may include:

- Tests.
- Written and practical assignments.
- Reports of dental therapy practice in the roles of the dental therapist-clinician, educator/health promoter, administrator, change agent.
- Practical application of specific roles such as patient carer and health promoter.
- Literature reviews.
- Case studies.
- Class presentations.
- Seminars.
- Peer evaluation.
- Simulations in structured learning environments.

Summative assessment may include:

- Written examinations.
- Oral examinations.
- Practical examinations.
- Supervisor reports where appropriate.
- Objective Simulated Clinical Evaluation Scenarios (OSCEs).

#### **INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY**

This qualification, compared to similar qualifications internationally, produces a more comprehensive and balanced graduate, equipped to deal holistically with the adult and child patient alike.

In keeping with the SADC countries, the South African qualification more than adequately meets the necessary criteria in fulfilling the needs and demands placed on the graduate when treating this community.

The qualification, compared to countries like Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Australia, is different in that it allows the graduate to practise independently of other dental practitioners.

Graduates may be eligible for registration with relevant professional regulatory bodies in the SADC countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, The United Kingdom and The Netherlands, after presenting course outlines to the applicable bodies and/or writing the required entrance examinations.

#### Conclusion:

This Qualification compares favourably with international like-qualifications and will further the services already offered in terms of learner training for sub-Saharan and SADC countries.

#### **ARTICULATION OPTIONS**

This Qualification articulates horizontally with like qualifications in other paramedical fields such as orthotics, prosthetics, medical laboratory techniques and clinical technology.

This Qualification articulates vertically with the qualification in Dental Science.

#### **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.

- Assessors and/or moderators must be in possession of a professional Dental degree, with a minimum NQF Level one higher than the qualification.

- A minimum of five years of appropriate experience in the field being assessed.

#### **NOTES**

Registration with the HPCSA as a Learner 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 with the HPCSA can be obtained.

#### **UNIT STANDARDS**

***This qualification is not based on Unit Standards.***

**LEARNING PROGRAMMES RECORDED AGAINST THIS QUALIFICATION****None**