

**The ideal of an integrated national qualifications framework**

Thesis

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## SUMMARY

This study deals with the extent to which the South African education and training system reflects in principle, perception and practice, the ideal of an integrated national qualifications framework. It examines the uses and meaning of ‘integration’ through a number of lenses. These lenses include policy symbolism and a guiding philosophy for the emerging system; pragmatic and technical considerations; communities of practice; the complementarity of education and training; and curricular integration. In relation to the first two lenses, it is evident that an integrated framework is a powerful symbol of the break from a past system characterised by inequality, unfairness and deliberate mediocrity, to the extent that ‘integration’ has become the underpinning guiding philosophy for a new education and training system. However, such socio-political aspirations tend to place unreasonable demands on the system. The second set of lenses indicate that the ‘comprehensiveness’ of the system could work against the notion of integration, and in South Africa, has led to acute paralysis of the system. The strongest evidence of integration emerges from the last set of lenses namely, the grounded, meaningful practice through principled partnerships, as reflected in the development of sub-frameworks and communities of practice and the necessary collaboration needed for curricular integration and education and training delivery. Thus, it seems, to make integration meaningful, the persuasive logic of innovative, grounded practice, could be enabled and facilitated by less, not more, regulation and could be enhanced by structures that reflect the grounded practice.

## KEY WORDS

National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	Policy symbolism
Guiding philosophy	Parity of esteem
Scope	Architecture
Policy breadth	Communities of practice and trust
Continuum of learning	Curricular integrability



## ACRONYMS

### A

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
ASDSFSA	Association of Skills Development Facilitators of South Africa

### C

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals (now part of Higher Education South Africa – HESA)
CUMSA	Curriculum Model for South Africa

### D

DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour

### E

ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance Body
EU	European Union

### F

FASSET	Financial and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training

**G**

GET General Education and Training

**H**

HDI Historically Disadvantaged Institution

HEQC Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education

HET Higher Education and Training

HPCSA Health Professions Council of South Africa

HRD Human Resource Development Strategy

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

HWSETA Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority

**I**

ILO International Labour Organisation

IMWG Inter-Ministerial Working Group

INSETA Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority

**N**

NAPTOSA National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa

NQF National Qualifications Framework

NSA National Skills Authority

NSDS National Skills Development Strategy

**O**

OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**R**

RAU Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg)

RPL Recognition of Prior Learning

**S**

SACP South African Communist Party

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SANQF	South African National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African Vice-Chancellors' Association (now Higher Education South Africa - HESA)
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generation Body
<b>V</b>	
VET	Vocational Education and Training
<b>W</b>	
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
<b>U</b>	
UCT	University of Cape Town
UMALUSI	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation