



THE

SAMOA

QUALIFICATIONS

FRAMWORK

POLICIES



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INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the Samoa Qualifications Authority by Government demonstrates its intentions to strengthen post school education and training [PSET] through setting standards and criteria for providers, their teaching programmes and the qualifications they offer.

One of the functions of the Samoa Qualifications Authority is to:

Determine a national qualifications structure for Samoa, including the definition of terms to ensure and maintain the national and international credibility of qualifications and the good standing of post school education and training institutions [Samoa Qualifications Authority Act 2006 Section 4(h)].

This booklet describes policies and criteria for registration of qualifications on the Samoa Qualifications Framework (SQF).

A. THE SAMOA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

1. The Samoa Qualifications Framework [SQF] is a coherent structure encompassing all quality assured qualifications¹ offered in Samoa.
2. The Samoa Qualifications Framework:
 - Provides a structure for establishing national equivalence and comparability of qualifications;
 - Facilitates international comparability of qualifications awarded in Samoa;
 - Facilitates the understanding of the skills, processes and competencies graduates have achieved through clear level descriptors;
 - Facilitates the matching of skills demanded by industry and the supply of skilled workers;
 - Provides opportunities for career development and clear and flexible pathways;
 - Facilitates the recognition of prior learning, previously acquired skills and current competencies;
 - Provides opportunities to facilitate the pursuit of lifelong learning;
 - Facilitates the development of a register of quality assured qualifications.
3. The SQF is responsive to and accommodates a diversity of individual, academic and workplace needs.
4. The SQF recognises regional and local differences, without losing transparency at the national level.
5. The SQF is robust and flexible and improves understanding and acceptance of all qualifications through reinforcing dialogue within providers, between providers and with employers and other relevant stakeholders.

¹ A qualification is formal certification that a person has successfully achieved all learning outcomes and/or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, workplace or community needs.

6. The Samoa Qualifications Framework has the following structure:

The Samoa Qualifications Framework

| LEVEL | QUALIFICATION |
|-------|---|
| X | DOCTORATES |
| IX | MASTERS |
| VIII | POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATES, BACHELOR WITH HONOURS |
| VII | BACHELORS, GRADUATE DIPLOMAS, GRADUATE CERTIFICATES |
| VI | DIPLOMAS |
| V | |
| IV | |
| III | CERTIFICATES |
| II | |
| I | |
| | |

7. Characteristics of the SQF

a. Ten levels comprising:

- i. Four levels of Certificates [Levels I to IV];
- ii. Two levels of Diplomas [Levels V and VI];
- iii. Bachelor degrees, Graduate Diplomas and Graduate Certificates at Level VII;
- iv. Bachelor degrees with Honours, Post Graduate Certificates and Post Graduate Diplomas at Level VIII;
- v. Masters degrees at Level IX;
- vi. Doctoral and Post Doctoral degrees at Level X.

b. Each level is characterised by level descriptors that define the learning outcomes of the qualification in terms of knowledge and understanding, competence, skills and responsibility.

c. Each qualification is also defined in terms of its purpose, outcomes, credit value, components, entry criteria and how it relates to other qualifications.

Qualifications frameworks of other countries such as New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland reflect similar characteristics. Establishing international equivalence of Samoa's qualifications with those of other systems is important given the high degree of mobility of Samoans and the marketability of skilled and semi-skilled labour. This is also important for cultural, social, academic, political, and economic reasons.

8. The SQF includes two broad types of qualifications:
 - a. National qualifications²:
 - i. Qualifications that meet all the criteria for use of the term 'national' as set out in Schedule 3 on page 27 of this booklet;
 - ii. Qualifications developed in accordance with SQA's Guidelines on Development of National Qualifications³;
 - iii. Education and training providers who wish to offer programmes of learning leading to national qualifications must first gain programme accreditation⁴ from SQA.
 - b. Provider/organisation qualifications⁵:
 - i. Qualifications developed by a particular provider or organisation
 - ii. Provider/organisation qualifications are registered on the SQF as part of SQA's programme accreditation process⁶.
9. SQA's programme accreditation processes are used to confirm the provider's capability to offer a programme of learning leading to the award of the qualification. These processes include the registration of the qualification on the SQF.

² Refer to Glossary on page 31 for definition of National Qualifications

³ See "SQA's Guidelines for Development of National Qualifications" (a separate document)

⁴ See "Quality Assurance Policies"(separate document)

⁵ Refer to Glossary on page 32 for definition of Provider/Organization Qualifications

⁶ See SQA's "Guidelines for Programme Accreditation of PSET Providers" (a separate document)

10. Where a new qualification is to replace an existing qualification no current learner should be disadvantaged. Transition arrangements should be documented that provide:
 - a. Specified time limits for the completion of existing qualifications
 - b. Credit transfer or exemptions for specified courses
 - c. An appeals mechanism
 - d. How the arrangements will be managed

B. REGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE SQF

11. Every qualification to be registered on the SQF must meet all the Criteria for Qualification Registration⁷ (See Schedule 3 on pages 25 and 26).
12. Prior to the registration onto the SQF of qualifications at levels VII⁸ and above, SQA may consult relevant overseas institutions to establish the international academic and professional credibility of the proposed qualification.
13. Individual courses⁹ cannot be registered on the SQF. The SQF is a register of complete qualifications only.

C. QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS

Each qualification registered on the SQF has the following characteristics:

i. Qualification Purpose Statement

14. The purpose statement identifies who the qualification is for and how it meets the needs of the individual, profession, workplace and/or community for which it is designed.

⁷ See “Guidelines for Registration of Qualifications on the SQF” (separate document)

⁸ Including Bachelors, Graduate Certificates and Graduates Diplomas, Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas, Masters, Doctorates

⁹ Components of a qualification; also known as modules, units, papers, work-based components

ii. Qualification Titles

15. All qualifications registered on the SQF are assigned a title based on the qualification definition¹⁰ that they most closely reflect.
16. The title of the qualification must be consistent with the purpose, outcomes, and structure of the qualification.
17. For national qualifications, the terms Samoa, Samoan and/or National may be used in their titles. However, the use of these terms is restricted¹¹
18. For qualifications that have been developed by a particular provider or organisation, the title includes the name of the provider or organisation that developed and owns the qualification.
19. The title thus includes the qualification developer, the type of qualification (Certificate, Diploma, etc), its level (for certificates and diplomas), and its field (Business, Agriculture, Engineering, etc). Qualifiers may be included in brackets after the qualification field, if required. Examples are listed in the following table:

| Developer | Qualification Type | SQF Level | Field | Qualifier |
|-----------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|
| Teuila | Certificate | Level II | Computing | (Introductory) |
| Teuila | Certificate | Level III | Hospitality | (Cooking) |
| Teuila | Diploma | Level V | Business | |
| National | Diploma | Level VI | Tourism | (Hotel Management) |
| Teuila | Bachelor | | Engineering | (Mechanical) |

iii. Qualification Outcomes Statements

20. Qualifications registered on the SQF are defined primarily by outcomes and only secondarily by input definitions such as entry requirements and duration.

¹⁰ See Schedule 2 (pages 15-24) for Qualification Definitions

¹¹ See Schedule 4 (page 27) for the List of Protected Terms

21. Qualifications are a meaningful and coherent cluster of learning outcomes or competencies, regardless of whether learning has been in formal or non-formal contexts.
22. Qualification outcomes statements should clearly indicate what the whole qualification represents in terms of the knowledge, understanding, skills and responsibilities of graduates holding the qualification.
23. Qualification outcomes statements should be as specific as possible and allow meaningful comparisons to be made with other qualifications.

iv. Qualification Levels

24. All qualifications registered on the SQF are assigned a level based on the outcome level descriptor that they most closely reflect¹². Each assigned level should also be consistent with the qualification definition and with the qualification outcome statement.

v. Support For Qualifications

25. Each qualification should have sufficient support from relevant national (and, where appropriate, international) industry, professional, academic, community or other interest groups.

vi. Credit Values

26. Every qualification registered on the Samoa Qualifications Framework is assigned a credit value for both the whole qualification and its component parts.
27. In assigning credit values, a qualifications developer estimates how long it would take an average learner to achieve the stated outcomes and/or competencies in the learning context, and at the level, specified.
28. The amount of learning that is typically required in gaining a qualification is estimated in terms of "total notional learning hours", where one credit is the equivalent of ten notional

¹² See Schedule 1 (Page 12)

learning hours. Notional learning hours include time for direct teaching, time in laboratories or workshops, time spent studying and doing assignments, time spent on supervised practical work placements and time spent on assessment.

29. One year of full time learning is normally assigned a credit value of 120 (1,200 notional learning hours). For example: one semester of full time learning is normally assigned a credit value of 60; and three years of full time learning (such as a Bachelor degree programme) is normally assigned a credit value of 360.
30. The sum of the credit values for all the components that make up the qualification must be equal to or greater than the total credit value of the qualification.
31. Credit values are expressed as whole numbers.

vii. Qualification Components

32. The components of the qualification are the courses¹³ that a learner has to be credited with in order to meet the requirements of the qualification.
33. For each course, the following should be specified in the course description or unit of competency¹⁴:
 - i. Title;
 - ii. Purpose;
 - iii. Credit value;
 - iv. SQF level;
 - v. Learning outcomes and/or defined competencies (capabilities that the learner is expected to demonstrate);
 - vi. Pre-requisites and co-requisites, where appropriate;
 - vii. Assessment methodology;
 - viii. Moderation arrangements; and
 - ix. Requirements for successful completion.
34. For some qualifications, all courses are compulsory. Others consist of compulsory courses that represent essential skills and

¹³ Including modules, units, papers, competency packages and, where appropriate, work based components

¹⁴ See Schedule 5 (page 29) for an example of a course descriptor/ unit of competency

knowledge, and elective courses for complementary or specialist skills. Electives allow and encourage depth and breadth, the development of specialisation, and the recognition of different knowledge and skills in the qualification.

35. Elective courses may be required from a specified list of courses, from a specified subject area, from any subject area, or from a combination of these, depending on the structure of the qualification.

viii. Entry Requirements

36. Any necessary entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications should be specified. Entry requirements should not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs. They should be reasonable for the level and complexity of the qualification.
37. Whenever possible, open entry and recognition of prior learning¹⁵ is encouraged, in order to provide access to learning opportunities.

D. QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW

38. Qualifications registered on the SQF are subject to periodic reviews to ensure that they maintain relevance and that the outcomes are still appropriate and consistent with other similar qualifications. The normal period of SQF qualification registration is five years but SQA may initiate an earlier review if circumstances demand it.
39. If a developer or provider wishes to change the purpose, title, outcome statement, level or credit value of a qualification registered on the SQF, approval must be sought from SQA as soon as practicable. The changes should not be implemented until they have been approved by SQA.

¹⁵ See “Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning in Samoa”

E. MISREPRESENTATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

40. It is an offence under the Samoa Qualifications Authority Amendment Bill 2009 to misrepresent the purpose, title, outcomes or level of a qualification registered by the Authority, or falsely or fraudulently claim that a qualification has been registered by the Authority.

F. DEREGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

41. Where SQA considers that there may be grounds for deregistering a Provider's qualification from the SQF, it will give written notice to the governing body of the Provider:
- a.* setting out the grounds for its decision/action
 - b.* stating a reasonable and defined period (normally two to four weeks) within which to make submissions on the matter.
 - c.* considering any written submissions and may give a further defined period of time to address the specified issues.
 - d.* making a decision after that period of time,
 - e.* sending a final written notice, specifying the details and the effective date of its decision.
42. SQA may take the above action as a result of a special purpose audit or an external quality audit.

G. REGAINING QUALIFICATIONS REGISTERED STATUS

43. A provider whose qualification was deregistered from the SQF as a result of an investigation, special purpose audit or an external audit will need to re-apply to the SQA for reinstatement of that status.

H. COMPLIANCE NOTICES

44. SQA may issue a compliance notice to a Provider requiring the Provider to take, or refrain from taking, a particular action in relation to registration of any of its qualifications on the SQF.
45. Every compliance notice will be in writing (a formal letter from SQA) and must:
 - give the date on which is it issued; and
 - specify a time on or before which, or a period within which, the Provider must comply with the notice; and
 - state the consequences or possible consequences of non-compliance with the notice.
46. A Provider that receives a compliance notice must comply with it within the time period specified, which will normally be between a minimum of ten and a maximum of twenty working days from the date of issue of the notice.
47. SQA may publish any compliance notice, or a summary of a compliance notice, in a manner designed to inform the public of the compliance notice.
48. SQA may extend the period of time for a provider to rectify compliance.
49. If the Provider does not comply with the compliance notice, SQA may immediately impose new, or amend or revoke any existing condition(s) on registration of any of its qualifications on the SQF.

SCHEDULE 1: SQF OUTCOME LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

| Qualification | Level | Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes and Competencies | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | Knowledge and Understanding | Specific Competencies that: | General Skills | Responsibilities |
| C E R T I F I C A T E | I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of basic facts and ideas in a subject/ discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable the performance of routine tasks given clear direction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use very simple communication and numeracy skills with assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in directed activity under close supervision - No responsibility for the work and learning of others |
| | II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic knowledge in a subject/ discipline - Knowledge of solutions to familiar problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable the performance of a range of tasks where choice between a limited range of options is required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use simple communication and numeracy skills - Use a problem solving approach, with guidance, to deal with a situation or issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in directed activity under general supervision - With limited responsibility for quantity and quality - No responsibility for guiding others |
| | III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General knowledge in a subject/ discipline - Knowledge of basic processes, materials and terminology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable the performance of a range of tasks where some discretion and judgement is required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a range of straightforward communication, IT and numeracy skills - Use a problem solving approach to deal with a situation or issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in directed activity with some autonomy under general supervision - With significant responsibility for quantity and quality of output - With possible responsibility for the output of others |
| | IV | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good knowledge and understanding of a subject/ discipline - Knowledge and understanding of processes, materials and terminology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable the performance of a wide range of technical or scholarly tasks where considerable choice between options is required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a range of communication, IT and numeracy skills - Obtain, organise and use factual and theoretical information in problem solving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in self-directed activity under broad guidance - With complete responsibility for quantity and quality of output - With some responsibility for quantity and quality of the output of others |

| Qualification | Level | Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes and Competencies | | | |
|---------------|-------|---|---|---|---|
| | | Knowledge and Understanding | Specific Competencies that: | General Skills | Responsibilities |
| Diploma | V | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad knowledge and understanding of a subject/discipline with depth in at least one study/work area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require a wide range of specialised technical or scholastic skills - Involve a choice of standard and non-standard procedures - Are employed in a variety of routine and non-routine contexts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a range of routine skills and some specialised skills associated with a subject/discipline - Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues - Analyse and interpret a wide range of data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work in self-directed and sometimes directive activity - Within broad general guidelines or functions - With full responsibility for the nature, quantity and quality of outcomes - With possible responsibility for the achievement of group outcomes |
| | VI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised knowledge and understanding of subject/discipline with depth in more than one study/work area - Outline knowledge and understanding of research and scholarly/academic processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require wide-ranging highly specialised technical or scholastic skills - Involve a wide choice of standard and non-standard procedures, often in non-standard combinations - Are employed in highly variable routine and non-routine contexts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a range of routine, advanced and specialised skills in support of established practices in a subject/discipline - Undertake critical analysis, evaluation and/or synthesis of ideas, concepts, information and issues - Identify and analyse routine professional problems and issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage processes - Within broad parameters for defined activities - With complete accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes |

| Qualification | Level | Distinguishing Features of Learning Outcomes and Competencies | | |
|---|-------|--|---|---|
| Bachelors, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates | VII | <p>Carry out processes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require a command of highly specialised technical or scholastic and basic research skills across a major discipline - Involve the full range of procedures in a major discipline - Are applied in complex, variable and specialised contexts | <p>Requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of a major discipline with areas of specialisation in depth - The analysis, transformation and evaluation of abstract data and concepts - The creation of appropriate responses to resolve given or contextual abstract problems | <p>Applied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In planning, resourcing and managing processes - Within broad parameters and functions - With complete accountability for determining, achieving and evaluating personal and/or group outcomes |
| Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, B(Hons) | VIII | <p>Involves skills and knowledge that enable a learner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a systematic and coherent account of the key principles of a subject area; and - Undertake self-directed study, research and scholarship in a subject area, demonstrating intellectual independence, analytic rigor and sound communication | | |
| Masters | IX | <p>Involves knowledge and skills that enable a learner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate mastery of a subject area; and - Plan and carry out – to internationally recognised standards – an original scholarship or research project. - Demonstrated by the completion of a substantial research paper, dissertation or in some cases a series of papers. | | |
| Doctorates | X | <p>Involves knowledge and skill that enable a learner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an original contribution to knowledge through research or scholarship, as judged by independent experts, applying international standards. | | |

SCHEDULE 2: QUALIFICATIONS DEFINITIONS

I. CERTIFICATE [Levels I to IV]

Characteristics of the Programme

Certificates may be used in a wide range of contexts across all levels, and are often used to prepare candidates for both employment and further education and training. A certificate is the smallest size qualification that can be registered.

Certificates at levels II & III can be benchmarked against school qualifications (Samoa School Certificate and Pacific Secondary Schools Certificate).

“National Certificates” (certificates approved to use the term “National”) recognise skills and knowledge that meet nationally endorsed standards.

Credit Requirements

A certificate must have a minimum of 40 credits. The top 40 credits defines the level at which the certificate is registered on the SQF unless, in the view of the approval body, particular circumstances warrant the recognition of smaller qualifications.

The top 40 credits is determined by beginning with the highest level credits and counting back until a total of 40 credits is reached. The level at which the total of 40 credits is reached determines the level of the certificate.

Examples

| | Cert A | Cert B | Cert C | Cert D |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Credits at Level IV | 0 | 0 | 10 | 40 |
| Credits at Level III | 0 | 10 | 50 | 20 |
| Credits at Level II | 20 | 30 | 40 | 0 |
| Credits at Level I | 20 | 20 | 20 | 0 |
| Total Credits | 40 | 60 | 120 | 60 |
| Level of Certificate | I | II | III | IV |

II. DIPLOMA [Levels V and VI]

Characteristics of the programme

Diplomas often prepare learners for self-directed application of skills and knowledge. These qualifications recognise capacity for initiative and judgement across a broad range of educational, vocational technical, professional, and/or management roles and often build on prior qualifications or experience.

“National Diplomas” (diplomas approved to use the word “National”) recognise skills and knowledge meeting nationally set standards.

Credit Requirements

A diploma must:

- be registered at level V or above – with the top 72 credits defining the level at which it can be registered; and
- have at least 120 of all credit contributing to the qualification at level IV or above.

The level of a diploma is determined by beginning with the highest level credits and counting back until a total of 72 credits is reached. The level at which the total of 72 is reached determines the level of the diploma.

Examples

| | Dip A | Dip B | Dip C |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Credits at Level VI | 0 | 75 | 120 |
| Credits at Level V | 80 | 105 | 120 |
| Credits at Level IV | 40 | 20 | 0 |
| Total Credits | 120 | 200 | 240 |
| Level of Diploma | V | VI | VI |

III. BACHELORS DEGREE

Characteristics of the Bachelors Degree programme

A Bachelors degree is a systematic and coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject (or

subjects, in the case of a double degree or a double major). It requires meeting specified requirements, as set down in the relevant degree regulations, and involves at least one sequential study programme in which content is progressively developed to the point where a candidate is prepared for postgraduate study and supervised research. It prepares a candidate for advanced study as well as directed research and scholarship in the major subject(s) of the degree.

Bachelor degree programmes are taught mainly by people engaged in research; and emphasise general principles and knowledge as the basis for self-directed work and learning.

Entry

A programme of study leading to a Bachelors degree builds upon prior study, work or experience and is open to those who have met the specified entrance requirements.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor degree requires a minimum of 360 credits from levels IV to VII. Some Bachelors degrees, notably in professional fields such as engineering, the health sciences and law, encompass additional credits and may require a longer period of study. For example, an eight semester (four year) degree would normally be equivalent to 480 credits.

Of the credits required for a Bachelors degree, a minimum of 72 credits should be at level VII. A maximum of 20 credits should be at level IV (such that the integrity of the qualification at the higher levels is maintained).

Examples

| | Bachelors A | Bachelors B | Bachelors C |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Credits at Level VII | 75 | 120 | 140 |
| Credits at Level VI | 120 | 120 | 160 |
| Credits at Level V | 145 | 120 | 180 |
| Credits at Level IV | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Credits | 360 | 360 | 480 |

The degree should specify a spread of credit across levels so that the qualification reflects the requirements of the degree definition and achieves the associated learning outcomes in a way that is appropriate to the subject area.

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds a Bachelors degree may be permitted to enrol for the Postgraduate Diploma or the Masters degree.

IV. BACHELORS DEGREE WITH HONOURS

A Bachelors degree may be awarded with honours to recognise advanced or distinguished study in advance of a level VII Bachelors degree. This may occur by:

- recognising outstanding achievement in a 480 credit (or more) Bachelors degree especially in relation to work of a research nature (typically at level VIII); or
- achieving 120 credits at level VIII following a level VII Bachelors degree (either as part of an integrated honours degree or as a separate qualification).

A person with a Bachelors degree with honours may be permitted to enrol for a Masters degree or a doctoral degree.

V. GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

Characteristics of the Programme

A graduate certificate is designed primarily as a vehicle for graduates to pursue further study at an undergraduate level. The graduate certificate can be designed as a bridging programme for candidates developing educational, professional or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, professional or subject area and/or as a broadening or deepening of skills or knowledge already gained in an undergraduate programme.

Entry

Entry is usually open to graduates or to those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind. This may include other level VI or VII qualifications.

Credit Requirements

The graduate certificate:

- can be registered at levels VI or VII;
- requires at least 60 credits (0.5 EFTS) from levels V to VII; and
- has its level defined by the top 40 credits.

Relationship with other qualifications

The graduate certificate may provide an entry point to postgraduate study.

VI. GRADUATE DIPLOMA

Characteristics of the Graduate Diploma Programme

A graduate diploma is designed as a vehicle for graduates to pursue further study at an undergraduate level. The programme can be designed to broaden knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline or develop knowledge in a new area.

Entry

Entry is usually open to graduates or to those who have been able to demonstrate equivalent practical, professional or educational experience of an appropriate kind. This may include other level VI or VII qualifications.

Credit Requirements

A graduate diploma:

- is registered at level VII and requires a minimum of 72 credits at level VII; and
- requires a minimum of 120 credits from levels V or above.

Relationship with other qualifications

A graduate diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study.

VII. POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

Characteristics of the Postgraduate Certificate programme

A Postgraduate Certificate involves credits from a specified subject and, where appropriate, the cognate areas. It serves as a qualification recognising continuing professional development in the

same area as the candidate's original degree. A candidate will normally have completed all requirements of a Bachelors degree or, in special circumstances, a Bachelors degree with Honours. The Postgraduate Certificate is designed to extend and deepen a candidate's knowledge and skills through formal instruction and directed inquiry.

Entry

Postgraduate Certificates require a Bachelors degree in a cognate subject or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.

Credit requirements

A programme leading to the Postgraduate Certificate requires a minimum of 40 credits at level VIII.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for further Postgraduate study.

VIII. POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

Characteristics of the Postgraduate Diploma programme

A Postgraduate Diploma is designed to extend and deepen a candidate's knowledge and skills by building on attainment in the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree. It provides a candidate with a systematic and coherent survey of current thinking and research in a particular body of knowledge and may include instruction in the relevant research methodologies.

Entry

A candidate for the Postgraduate Diploma in a specified subject or, where appropriate, a cognate area will normally have completed all requirements of the relevant Bachelors degree. A provider may also admit to a programme leading to the Postgraduate Diploma a person who has completed all requirements of the Bachelors degree with Honours in a cognate subject, or who is deemed to have acquired

the relevant skills and knowledge through appropriate work or professional experience.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Diploma requires a minimum of 120 credits from levels VII and above with a minimum of 72 credits from level VIII.

Relationship with other qualifications

A Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded with distinction. It prepares a candidate for independent research and scholarship in the principal subject of the diploma. A person who holds a Postgraduate Diploma may be enrolled for a Masters degree or a Doctoral degree.

IX. MASTERS DEGREE

Characteristics of the Masters degree programme

A Masters degree is normally designed to build on the principal subject(s) of the qualifying degree. Alternatively, a Masters degree may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from occupational experience, as in the Master of Business Administration (MBA). Different discipline areas have different traditions. Thus national and international comparisons are relevant for a Masters degree in a particular area.

Typically they require students to demonstrate mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter; to evaluate critically the findings and discussions in the literature; to research, analyse and argue from evidence; to apply knowledge to new situations; and to engage in rigorous intellectual analysis, criticism and problem-solving.

A Masters degree programme contains a significant element of supervised research. The results of that research are normally embodied in a thesis, dissertation or substantial research paper, but in some cases are incorporated in a series of papers. Creative work may also contribute to the research output. The research should demonstrate a capacity in the candidate for independent thinking.

Entry

A candidate for the Masters degree will normally have completed the Bachelors degree, the Bachelors degree with Honours, the Postgraduate Diploma or, in special circumstances, the Postgraduate Certificate.

A provider may enrol a person who is not a graduate but who is deemed to have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge through work and/or professional experience. Before being enrolled, a person must have attained through formal study, work or other experience, a high order of knowledge about the principal subject(s) of the degree or diploma, and have demonstrated interest in, and an aptitude for, original research.

Credit requirements

The Masters degree requires either:

- 240 credits at levels VIII and IX, with a minimum of 40 credits at level IX; or
- when a candidate has a relevant postgraduate diploma or Bachelors degree with honours – or equivalent professional experience – 120 credits at levels VIII and IX with a minimum of 40 credits at level IX.¹⁶

Relationship with other qualifications

A person who holds the Masters degree may be admitted to a programme of advanced study and original research leading to a Doctoral degree.

X. DOCTORAL DEGREES

Definition of Doctoral Degrees

With the exception of the Honorary Doctorate (see page 23) the doctorate is a research degree that is at a significantly higher level and of significantly higher status than a masters degree. It is normally the culmination of a structured sequence of instruction at educational institutions which begins at the Bachelors level and reaches a stage beyond the Masters degree when the student

¹⁶ Note that the 40 credit level IX research aspect of the Masters degree may be met by a dissertation, or in some instances a series of papers.

becomes an increasingly independent scholar and makes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge. For the PhD/DPhil and the named doctorate this development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances which allow the student access to appropriate research resources. The doctorate is awarded on the basis of an original and substantial contribution to knowledge as judged by independent experts applying contemporary international standards. The hallmark will be the candidate's capacity for substantial independent research or creative activity as attested (for the PhD/DPhil and the named doctorate) by his/her educational institution and/or as demonstrated by submitted work.

With the exception of the Honorary Doctorate the major component of all doctorates is original research. The body of work that leads to the award of a doctorate will be one of the following:

- a thesis (the PhD/DPhil);
- creative work in the visual or performing arts (the PhD/DPhil);
- a thesis or equivalent creative work in combination with coursework (the named doctorate);
- a thesis in combination with a creative work in the visual or performing arts (the named doctorate);
- published work (the higher doctorate);
- exceptional contribution to society (the honorary doctorate).

Credit Requirements

A doctorate requires at least 240 credits worth of advanced research at level X.

The following types of doctoral degree are recognised:

Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD/DPhil)

The thesis constitutes the entire body of work on which the award of the qualification will be judged. Coursework may also be prescribed for the student, but this will only contribute to the preparation for research and acceptance into the doctoral programme. Students in the visual or performing arts may present a creative work in the place of the thesis.

Doctorate in a specified field or discipline – the named doctorate (e.g. EdD or the DMus)

For a doctorate in a specified field, coursework may contribute to the assessed programme of study but research and its associated thesis must occupy at least two full time academic years and contribute not less than two thirds of the overall credit for the degree. The coursework, which is to be at a standard in advance of that expected for a masterate paper, must be part of a coherent programme with the research work and should normally cover no more than one full time academic year.

A candidate for a named doctorate must gain a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis or its creative work equivalent.

Higher Doctorate (e.g. the DSc or the DLitt)

Higher Doctorates are awarded for independent work of special excellence, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed before a person makes an application to enrol for the degree. Candidates will normally be expected to have completed at least ten years of independent work and to have published extensively. Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Candidates in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.

Honorary Doctorate

Honorary Doctorates are awarded for recognition of exceptional contributions made by the recipient to the institution awarding the degree, to a profession, or to society at large whether at the local, the national or the international level. An institution awarding an honorary doctorate must be accredited to award “earned” doctorates.

SCHEDULE 3: CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE SAMOA QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

| CRITERIA | Evidence/Evaluation Guide |
|--|---|
| A. Qualification Purpose Statement | |
| The stated purpose is related to identified needs | There is a clear purpose stated for the qualification |
| | The purpose is related to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs |
| | The purpose supports the priorities established in the Statement for the Development of Samoa and the PSET Strategic Plan 2008 - 2016 |
| B. Qualification Title | |
| The title is appropriate and complies with title definitions and protected terms | The title is indicative of the purpose and outcomes |
| | The title indicates the qualification type and level |
| | The title is appropriate and complies with qualification definitions |
| C. Qualification Outcomes Statement | |
| Outcomes for whole qualification reflect the stated purpose | Outcomes are clearly stated |
| | Outcomes for the whole qualification are reasonable and reflect the stated purpose |
| | Outcomes for whole qualification reflect the stated purpose |
| | Outcomes for qualification components are logical |
| D. Qualification Level | |
| The qualification level is appropriate | The level is consistent with the qualification definitions |
| | The level is consistent with the outcome level descriptors |
| | The level is consistent with the qualification outcome statement |

| CRITERIA | Evidence/Evaluation Guide |
|--|--|
| E. Support for Qualification | |
| There is support from relevant national and, where appropriate international, industry, professional, academic, community or interest groups | Evidence is provided to show support for the qualification by relevant national and, where appropriate international, industry, professional, academic, community or interest groups |
| | The evidence of support is sufficient |
| F. Credit Value | |
| The credit total is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions | The total number of credits is shown |
| | Credits are shown for each component |
| | The credit total is appropriate and conforms to qualification definitions |
| G. Qualification Components (Courses) | |
| Qualification components (courses) are defined and reflect the purpose, title and level of the qualification | For each course descriptor, the purpose, title, credit value, level, learning outcomes and/or defined competencies are clearly stated |
| | For each course descriptor the entry requirements, assessment requirements, moderation arrangements and requirements for successful completion are appropriate for the learning outcomes and/or defined competencies |
| | The components (courses) reflect the purpose, title and level of the qualification |
| | The qualification structure is reasonable and shows an appropriate balance between compulsory and elective components, theoretical and practical requirements |
| H. Entry Requirements | |
| Entry requirements are inclusive and reasonable for the level and complexity of the qualification | Any entry requirements or pre-requisite qualifications are stated |
| | Entry requirements do not unreasonably exclude individuals because of descent, gender, social origin, place of birth, family status, or special needs |
| | Entry requirements are reasonable for the level of the qualification |
| | Entry requirements are reasonable for the complexity of the qualification |

SCHEDULE 4: PROTECTED TERMS

National and Samoa/n

The use of the terms National and Samoa/n in a qualification title is restricted to qualifications:

- Whose development has involved, and has widespread endorsement by, the appropriate national industry, profession or community related to the qualification title and outcome of the qualification.;
- That have components for which there is automatically portable (transferable) credit;
- That recognise broad transferable and generic skills as well as specialised industry and professional skills and knowledge;
- That are flexible in structure and provide learners with attainable milestones, career options, and qualification pathways;
- That are registered on the SQF.

National qualifications are available to all registered providers who can meet and maintain the specified programme accreditation requirements.

The use of the terms National and Samoa/n in the title of a provider is also restricted. Permission to use these terms in the title of a PSET provider must be obtained from the Samoa Qualifications Authority.

Degree

A qualification awarded after satisfactory completion of and achievement in a programme of advanced study taught by people engaged in research and which emphasises general principles and basic knowledge as the basis for self-directed work.

Bachelors Degree

A bachelors degree is a systematic, coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject or subjects.

Masters Degree

A masters degree is normally designed to extend the principal subject or subjects of the qualifying degree or may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from occupational experience. A masters degree contains a significant element of supervised research, the results of which are normally embodied in a thesis, dissertation or substantial research paper. Creative work may also contribute to the research output. The research should demonstrate a capacity in the candidate for independent thinking.

Doctorate

A research qualification that is at a significantly higher level than a masters degree, reflecting scholarly independence, and is awarded in recognition of research which has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

University (Iunivesitē)

A University (Iunivesitē) is an institution with a wide diversity of teaching and research, especially at a higher level, that maintains, advances, disseminates, and assists the application of knowledge; has academic freedom and intellectual independence; promotes community learning and has a majority of staff with post-graduate qualifications.

SCHEDULE 5: SAMPLE COURSE DESCRIPTOR/ UNIT OF COMPETENCY

| | |
|--|--|
| Title | Work as a Tour Guide |
| Purpose | This unit deals with the skills and knowledge which underpin effective performance as a guide. It covers key legal, ethical, safety and professional development issues that must be considered by guides in their day-to-day work. As such it underpins all other guiding units. |
| Credit value | 9 |
| SQF level | III |
| Learning outcomes/ elements of competence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply knowledge of the guiding sector 2. Guide tours according to legal, ethical and safety requirements 3. Develop guiding skills and knowledge 4. Communicate with tourism industry operators in English |
| Pre-requisites and co-requisites | This unit underpins all other guiding units and combined training and assessment is appropriate. The unit is part of a competency package including the following units..... |
| Assessment methods | <p>Assessment methods must be chosen to ensure that the application of knowledge to guiding activities can be practically demonstrated. Methods must include assessment of knowledge as well as assessment of practical skills.</p> <p>The following examples are appropriate for this unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and problem solving to assess application of knowledge to different guiding situations and contexts • Role plays to assess the candidate's ability to communicate in English on practical guiding issues • Questions to assess knowledge of different guide roles and legal issues • Review of portfolios of evidence and third party workplace reports of on-the-job performance by the candidate. |
| Moderation arrangements | To be developed |
| Requirements for successful completion | Achievement of all elements of competence/learning outcomes |

GLOSSARY

Articulation

Ensuring that there are links among qualifications so that students can progress easily to further or higher learning.

Bachelors Degree

A bachelors degree is a systematic and coherent introduction to the knowledge, ideas, principles, concepts, chief research methods and problem-solving techniques of a recognised major subject or subjects.

Certificate

A generic term for a qualification; in the context of a national qualifications structure, normally an entry level qualification of any size. Certificates are often used to prepare students for both employment and further education and training.

Courses

Components of a qualification; also known as modules, units, papers, competency packages, work-based components.

Credit

The numerical value assigned to a full qualification, as well as to its components, that represents the estimated time needed for a typical learner to demonstrate that all the specified outcomes have been achieved.

Diploma

Diplomas recognise the acquisition of higher level skill and knowledge and often build on prior qualifications and experience.

Doctorate

A research qualification that is at a significantly higher level than a masters degree, reflecting scholarly independence, and is awarded in recognition of research which has made a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

Graduate Diploma

A graduate diploma is designed as a vehicle for graduates to pursue further study at an undergraduate level. The qualification can be

designed to broaden knowledge and skills in a familiar subject or discipline or develop knowledge in a new area.

Masters Degree

A masters degree is normally designed to extend the principal subject or subjects of the qualifying degree or may build on relevant knowledge and skills derived from occupational experience. A masters degree contains a significant element of supervised research, the results of which are normally embodied in a thesis, dissertation or substantial research paper. Creative work may also contribute to the research output. The research should demonstrate a capacity in the candidate for independent thinking.

Moderation

The processes used for assuring that assessment is fair, valid and consistent with the required standard, across a number of assessors and assessing organisations.

Memorandum of Agreement

The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) is a formal protocol to trigger dialogue between the SQA and organisations involved in PSET activities. It introduces accountability on both sides to discuss planning and developments from an early stage.

National Qualifications

National qualifications are those developed to meet a specific priority national need or interest, and whose development has involved, and has widespread endorsement by, the appropriate national industry, profession or community related to the qualification outcomes.

Non-Formal Learning

The acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for initiation into wider social groupings, equitable and empowered participation in the social leadership of the community, livelihood creation and economic activity. It is aimed at improving the quality of life of the individual, capacity for service of organisations, and building strong, cohesive communities with sustainable futures¹⁷.

¹⁷ Lameta, E 2005; Non-formal Education in Samoa: Report of the research study.

Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma

Postgraduate qualifications are designed to extend and deepen knowledge and skills through formal instruction and enquiry in the same area as the original degree.

Post School Education and Training

The post school education and training sector in Samoa comprises all forms of education and training activities that occur outside the school system utilising any structured mode of delivery. These include:

- University education
- Technical vocational education and training
- Pre-service and in-service professional education and training
- Theological colleges and providers of religious instruction
- Non-formal learning; and
- On-the-job training.

Programme (of Learning)

A coherent set of courses, modules, papers, competency packages or units designed to meet the requirements of a qualification.

Programme Accreditation

The process used to evaluate an organisation's capability of delivering an education or training programme to the required standards.

Provider

An organisation that intends to offer or is offering post school education and training.

Provider/Organization Qualifications

Formal certification that a person has successfully achieved learning outcomes for a qualification / programme developed and awarded by a registered PSET provider.

Qualification

Formal certification that a person has successfully achieved all learning outcomes and/or competencies relevant to identified individual, professional, workplace or community needs.

Quality Assurance

A generic term for all activities which provide confidence that the educational and training services of an organisation are being delivered effectively, to the required standard, and in line with published goals and objectives.

Quality Audit

A systematic and independent examination of an organisation's processes, documents and records to confirm alignment with identified quality standards, and whether these activities are effective.

Quality Management

Coherent management activity within an organisation that ensures quality policies and objectives are set, implemented and evaluated.

Quality Management System

An integrated set of clearly defined organisational structures, policies, procedures, responsibilities and resources which are used to assure quality provision of education and training.

Registration of Providers

Permission granted to an organisation to set itself up as a legitimate education and training provider, and to enter the education and training market along with other institutions recognised by Government, such as universities, mission schools and Government agencies delivering education and training services.

Registration of Qualifications

The process used to recognise that a qualification has met the criteria for inclusion in the list of quality assured qualifications on the SQF.

Samoa Qualifications Framework (SQF)

A coherent structure encompassing all quality assured qualifications offered in Samoa.

University (Iunivesitē)

A university (iunivesitē) is an institution with a wide diversity of teaching and research, especially at a higher level, that maintains, advances, disseminates, and assists the application of knowledge; has academic freedom and intellectual independence; promotes

community learning and has a majority of staff with postgraduate qualifications.

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RELATED PUBLICATIONS

1. Post School Education and Training Strategic Plan
2. Quality Assurance Policies
3. Guidelines for PSET Provider Registration, including:
 - Provider Registration Application Form
 - Provider Registration Checklist
4. Guidelines for Programme Accreditation of PSET Providers, including:
 - Programme Accreditation Application Form
 - Programme Accreditation Self Evaluation Form
 - Qualification Registration Form
 - Qualification Registration Checklist
5. Guidelines for Quality Audit of PSET Providers, including:
 - Quality Audit Self Evaluation Form
 - Quality Audit Plan
 - Corrective Action Form
 - Quality Audit Evaluation Form
6. Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Learning, including:
 - Recognition of Non-Formal Learning Application Form
 - Recognition of Non-Formal Learning Self Evaluation Form
7. Guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning in Samoa
8. Guidelines for Development of National Qualifications
9. Guidelines for Registration of Qualifications on the SQF

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