Addressing the Skills Shortage: South African Case Study New Occupational Certificate: Library Assistant

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Abstract

This paper will focus on the steps followed to develop the new library qualification in South Africa using the new National Qualification Framework. New NQF will be explained, the integration of the three NQF sub frameworks (MALUSI, Council for Higher Education and Quality Council for Trades Occupations) will be discussed. Difference between the SAQA Unit Standard qualification vs the new QCTO Module based qualification, Vocational qualification vs Academic qualification. The new library assistant modules will be discussed, the course break down and the certification process will be explained. The process of developing a new qualification will be explored, different role players and their responsibilities will be identified and discussed. The development of this qualification places LIASA at the centre of quality assurance as the professional body, the proposed status of LIASA as the SAQA registered professional body will give the association status of being an Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) for library vocational training. The four modules and three learning components will be explained, the articulation with the current existing qualification will also be discussed.

Background

Research done by the Department of Arts and Culture found that there is currently a dire need for qualified Library Assistants and that the need is nationwide, in urban libraries but even more so in community resource centres in the rural areas. Input from the CEP also indicated that unqualified persons have been appointed as Library Assistants and are currently still in employment, in dire need of appropriate training.

ETDPSETA is tasked by the Skills Development Act to address the skills needs of the ETD sector which includes library and archives, the National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III) gives 5 year targets to address skills development for the sector. ETDPSETA in conjunction with LIASA, Department of Arts and Culture, Provincial library services and Metro formed a task team to do a scoping for the new library assistant vocational qualification to be registered with Quality Council for Trade Occupation (QCTO)
QCTO

The QCTO will manage and coordinate the qualifications in the occupational qualifications framework in terms of their development, provision, assessment and impact. Its scope will be the development and quality assurance of fit-for-purpose occupational qualifications and unit standards as required by the labour market for work and employment purposes.

The QCTO will develop fit-for-purpose occupational qualifications that will be certificated as National Occupational Awards or National Skills Certificates. The awards will name the relevant occupation that the learner is now competent to practice. The focus of occupational qualifications will be the development of occupational competence which, in turn, contributes to increased employment rates and productivity. The envisaged structure and functions of the QCTO reflect a new approach to quality assurance, in which quality assurance permeates all activities and is not seen as a separate function.

This model was developed in response to appeals to bring qualifications development and quality assurance ‘under one roof’. The quality assurance of the learning process for the QCTO’s qualifications can be visualised as a structure in which the roof is supported by two pillars: design and development on the one side, and the assessment of occupational competence on the other. The system is quality managed from the overarching ‘roof’, representing monitoring and evaluation through data analysis and research. This entire structure illustrates the quality-assurance model.

The QCTO recognises the need for all occupational learning to build on general knowledge and theory, and provides for linkages and partnerships with both public and private provider systems. In order to fulfill its mandate, the QCTO will cooperate closely with SAQA, the other QCAs and professional bodies.

An improved qualification model that suits occupational learning. Workers need to be competent in three areas of learning in order to be able to practice a particular occupation effectively, namely with regard to the –

1. Knowledge and theory component
2. Practical skills component
3. Work experience component.

The new model values each of these components equally. It differs from the previous qualification model in that it includes a structured work experience component. A qualifications design process that is responsive to labour market skills needs

As a starting point, the new model analyses the relevant occupations as listed in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO), and identifies skills and tasks associated with each occupation and the kind and scope of work experience required to develop
competence. This process results in occupational curricula and occupational qualifications that are directly linked to labour-market skills needs.

The sub-framework introduces two types of qualifications to be registered on the Occupational Qualifications Framework (OQF). The National Occupational Qualification will be the main qualification. It is a full qualification of 120 or more credits, and will be associated with a trade, profession or occupation (or specialisation within an occupation). Occupational Awards will be the second type of qualification in the OQF, with a minimum of 25 and maximum of 119 credits. Occupational qualifications will be based on occupations listed in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO), and could be on all 10 NQF levels.

**OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE**

*Occupational Purpose*

Library Assistants issue and receive library materials, sort and shelve information resources and assist the librarian in service delivery to library users.

*Occupational Tasks*

- Assisting library users in accessing basic library materials, e-resources and making interlibrary loans
- Practicing circulation and shelving of library materials
- Maintaining library records relating to the acquisition, and accessioning of books and other materials
- Performing administration and auxiliary activities such as filing, word processing, keeping statistics and perform basic material repairs and maintenance
- Assisting with the delivery of outreach and reading development programmes, marketing and displays

*Occupational Task Details*

Assisting library users in accessing basic library materials, e-resources and making interlibrary loans

*Unique Product or Service:*

Relevant library and information resources identified and supplied to library users

*Occupational Responsibilities:*

- Relevant library and information resources identified and supplied to library users
- Informed library users
Occupational Contexts:
- Information provision to library clients

**Practicing circulation and shelving of library materials**

*Unique Product or Service:*
- Managed library materials and client care

*Occupational Responsibilities:*
- Managed library materials and client care

*Occupational Contexts:*
- Circulation of library materials and customer care

**Performing administration and auxiliary activities such as filing, word processing, keeping statistics and perform basic material repairs and maintenance**

*Unique Product or Service:*
- Application of a well organised functional administration system
- Perform administrative duties in a library

*Occupational Contexts:*
- Support administrative processes in the library
- Perform administrative duties in a library

**Assisting with the delivery of outreach and reading development programmes, marketing and displays**

*Unique Product or Service:*
- Marketing, outreach and reading development programs

*Occupational Responsibilities:*
- Market libraries and making services attractive and inviting to users in order to improve a culture of reading
- Support with the creation of a reading culture.

*Occupational Contexts:*
- Support marketing, outreach and reading development programmes
• Market libraries and making services attractive and inviting to users in order to improve a culture of reading

**Assisting library users in accessing basic library materials, e-resources and making interlibrary loans**

*Unique Product or Service:*

Informed library users

*Occupational Responsibilities:*

• Relevant library and information resources identified and supplied to library users
• Informed library users

*Occupational Contexts:*

• Information provision to library clients

Based on the scoping above the ETDPSETA applied to QCTO for the development of the Vocational Certificate: Library Assistant in November 2013. It was approved and the task team started writing the qualification. This Qualification will provide occupational education and training for people who are employed in all communities of Library and Information Services (LIS). They may work in the public, academic or private sectors or in rural or urban organisations. The areas of employment in which the qualifying learners will operate are public libraries/community libraries, school libraries/resource centres, academic libraries, corporate libraries, state departments etc.

The Qualification is aimed at the unemployed, school leavers, library support staff, new entrants to LIS and adult learners. The demand expressed by employees and employers for support staff to be formally recognised for LIS skills, knowledge and experience has influenced the development of this qualification at NQF level 5. Furthermore, the South African government has recognised the significant role of LIS in community development and the advancement of literacy for nation building.

The majority of LIS staff provides support services with no formal Qualification. This Qualification will provide the opportunity to enhance the skills and service delivery of library and information services staff. The qualification will be Module based which will comprise of Knowledge, Practical and Workplace.
Differences between a Legacy Unit Standard Based qualification and New Modular Based Qualification

Knowledge Module Specifications

List of Knowledge Modules for which Specifications are included

441101000-KM-02, Information retrieval and storage.
441101000-KM-03, Marketing, Client Liaison and Supervision.
441101000-KM-04, Library Administration.

KM-01-KT01: History and development of libraries (15%)
KM-01-KT02: Legislation pertaining to libraries, library services and information (15%)
KM-01-KT03: Circulation and membership (35%)
KM-01-KT04: Role and functions of the library and information services in the community (35%)
KM-01-KT01: History and development of libraries (15%)

Topic elements to be covered include:
KT0101 Library concepts and terms
KT0102 History of information sources
KT0103 Different types of libraries
KT0104 Functions of the different types of libraries
KT0105 Information concepts and terms such as information systems, classification catalogue, database, Internet, collection and media
KT0106 Organisational structure of the profession

Internal Assessment Criteria and Weight
IAC0101 Library and information services development in South Africa is compared with worldwide developments
IAC0102 The socio-political factors that have influenced the development of library and information services are explained in the context of South Africa
IAC0103 The origin, development and current status of libraries are explained in the context of South Africa
IAC0104 Types of library and information services and their functions are described in
South Africa

IAC0105 Library concepts, terms and systems are explained in relation to the institutional operations

**KM-01-KT02: Legislation pertaining to libraries, library services and information (15%)**

*Topic elements to be covered include:*

KT0201 Legislation pertaining to library information services (LIS)

KT0202 Policies pertaining to library information services which guides the librarian to do their functions

KT0203 Code of conduct as a guideline for workplace performance

KT0204 The role of procedures in workplace services and performance

KT0205 By-laws pertaining to LIS

KT0206 Sound work ethics

*Internal Assessment Criteria and Weight*

IAC0201 The constitution is explained as the supreme law in the context of South Africa

IAC0202 Heritage legislation (National Library Act, PAIA, Batho-Pele, etc.) is summarised on how it influences LIS

IAC0203 Relevant legislation is listed

IAC0204 The impact of relevant legislation on the delivering of library services is explained

IAC0205 The concept of compliance to legislation, by-laws, policies, procedures and code of conduct is evaluated as a guide for workplace conduct and performance

IAC0206 The work ethics of the company and individual is evaluated and the impact thereof on the workplace and the library user is identified and compared

**KM-01-KT03: Circulation and membership (35%)**

*Topic elements to be covered include:*

KT0301 Circulation services of the library

KT0302 Membership and membership requirements

KT0303 Circulation system of the library services

KT0304 Front desk management
**Internal Assessment Criteria and Weight**

IAC0301 The circulation services of the library are analysed in terms of its membership and community profile and justified

IAC0302 Membership requirements are analysed according to legislation, Bhato pele and policies and justified

IAC0303 The use of the library circulation system is evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency

IAC0304 The manual and electronic circulation systems are compared and contrasted for effectiveness and efficiency

IAC0305 The correct conduct towards library users is evaluated

IAC0306 The code of conduct / library rules is analysed and the implication thereof on attitude and general conduct is reasoned

IAC0307 The circulation process (manual and electronic systems) of the library is interpreted in terms of application for the circulation of library material and membership

IAC0308 Library systems, catalogues, archiving, electronic records management is applied

**KM-01-KT04: Role and functions of the library and information services in the community (35%)**

*Topic elements to be covered include:*

KT0401 Overview of Library and Information services

KT0402 Composition of diverse communities

KT0403 Characteristics of the community and the influence thereof on the LIS services

KT0404 Nature and ranges of library services

KT0405 Socio-political factors influencing the need for LIS

KT0406 Library driven programmes in support of information literacy in the community

KT0407 Community profiles

**Internal Assessment Criteria and Weight**

IAC0401 The planning, implementing and monitoring of programmes within the community are evaluated to what extend it is appropriate to the community profile and need for information

IAC0402 The role of Library and information services in communities is explained in terms of social, educational, cultural and democratic purposes

IAC0403 The role of Library and information services as a development agency is explained in terms of social and economic development
IAC0404 The role of Library and information services in social inclusion is explained in terms of community building

IAC0405 Community profiles are assessed and analysed in terms of the diverse sectors, institutions and organisations in the relevant community and the impact thereof on the library services and library collection is evaluated

IAC0406 The various services that would benefit a community are described in relation to the community profile

IAC0407 Community information services are rendered according to the needs reflected in the community profile and institutional procedures

IAC0408 Tasks to develop a database of all role-players as indicated in the community profile are evaluated in terms of effectiveness

IAC0409 Application of knowledge of a community is analysed in the context of Library and Information Services using examples

**Provider Accreditation Requirements for the Knowledge Module**

*Physical Requirements:*

Access to appropriate facilities (conducive environment): (Large room – Table and chairs, space for group activities, good light, good ventilation)

Learning material aligned to the qualification

Appropriate learning aids such as DVDs, illustrations, audio-visual equipment, etc. in support of the qualification requirements

*Human Resource Requirements:*

Staff allocation as per QMS

Facilitator – Qualified Librarian and 3 years’ experience as a librarian in a general library (not specialised library)

Facilitator/ Learner ratio not to exceed a ratio of 1:15;

Registered assessor and moderator with B Degree in LIS and 3 years’ experience as a librarian;

Facilitator and assessor have professional registration with LIASA;

*Legal Requirements:*

Legally compliant venue, (i.e. fire protection devices, OHS and other legislation);

Quality Management System which includes all relevant policies and procedures;

Code of Conduct;

Professional registration with LIASA
Critical Topics to be Assessed Externally for the Knowledge Module

None

1.5 Exemptions

None but the module can be obtained in full through a RPL process

Practical Skill Module Specifications

List of Practical Skill Module Specifications

441101000-PM-01, Relevant library and information resources identified and supplied to library.

441101000-PM-02, Shelve material accurately according to the library classification systems.

441101000-PM-03, Issue and receive library material from library members in a customer friendly manner.

441101000-PM-04, Perform acquisitioning and physical processing of books and other library materials according to generally accepted library standards.

441101000-PM-05, Perform administrative duties in a library.

441101000-PM-06, Market libraries and making services attractive and inviting to users in order to improve a culture of reading.

441101000-PM-01, Relevant library and information resources identified and supplied to library. Credits 9

Purpose of the Practical Skill Modules

The focus of the learning in this module is on providing the learner an opportunity to identify suitable resources using various search strategies to fulfil the user enquiry for information on a range of topics suitable for different target groups

The learner will be required to:

PM-01-PS01: Identify the correct resources to assist with an enquiry
PM-01-PS02: Retrieve library items from its physical location in response to a user request
PM-01-PS03: Apply for an inter-library loan or special request
PM-01-PS04: Refer library users to the correct source or person
PM-01-PS05: Explain the basic concepts of plagiarism, the ethical use of information and the need to acknowledge sources of information
PM-01-PS06: Conduct a basic survey to determine the need for various library materials
of different library users
PM-01-PS07: Conduct a basic library orientation session with library users

Guidelines for Practical Skills
PM-01-PS01: Identify the correct resources to assist with an enquiry

Scope of Practical Skill

Given information on a range of target groups and client requests the learner must be able to:

PA0101 Receive, interpret and understand the request for information by conducting a basic reference interview
PA0102 Search all relevant sources including a catalogue, reference sources, internet or online database and periodicals and list the results
PA0103 Evaluate information using criteria for relevancy and reliability of material
PA0104 Based on the results, compile a bibliography existing of at least two of each source type
PA0105 Verify with the user to assess the applicability of the information

Applied Knowledge
AK0101 Basic problem solving techniques
AK0102 Interpersonal techniques
AK0103 Techniques to deal with work pressure
AK0104 Techniques to go the extra mile ensuring user satisfaction
AK0105 Skills and techniques to refer and discerning when to refer
AK0106 Search strategies and techniques
AK0107 Reference interview techniques
AK0108 Communication techniques
AK0109 Customer care techniques
AK0110 Computer literacy and software application

Internal Assessment Criteria
IAC0101 User requests are correctly interpreted
IAC0102 All types and formats of information are identified
IAC0103 Retrieved information meets criteria for relevancy and reliability
IAC0104 The bibliography of sources found is compiled
IAC0105 The user agrees that the information is relevant
IAC0106 A list of sources meets the requirements of the client
IAC0107 A variety of sources are listed
IAC0108 The catalogue is used correctly

Work Experience Module Specifications

List of Work Experience Module Specifications

441101000-WM-01 Information provision to library clients.
441101000-WM-02 Circulation of library materials and customer care.
441101000-WM-03 Acquiring processes and maintaining records of library material.
441101000-WM-04 Support administrative processes in the library.
441101000-WM-05 Support marketing, outreach and reading development programmes of the library.

441101000-WM-01, Information provision to library clients Credits 10

Purpose of the Work Experience Modules

The focus of the work experience is on providing the learner an opportunity to:

Conduct reference interviews, access and provide information from a variety of library sources to a variety of library users and as such deliver a library information service to the community

The learner will be required to:

WM-01-WE01: Receive and interpret an enquiry from a range of library users such as adults and children
WM-01-WE02: Conduct 20 searches of library material and information sources including print media, electronic media, community sources, DVDs, videos, etc. based on a library user request
WM-01-WE03: Retrieve information from a source (retrieve 10 information requests from both hard copies and electronic sources)
WM-01-WE04: Provide information to a minimum of 20 library users which inform their need and is relevant to their requests
WM-01-WE05: Refer library users to the right source
WM-01-WE06: Compile a library material review portfolio in terms of a wide variety of genres and/or identified focus or specialisation
Guidelines for Work Experiences

**WM-01-WE01:** Receive and interpret an enquiry from a range of library users such as adults and children

*Scope of Work Experience*

The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:

- **WA0101** Conduct at least 20 reference interviews with various types of information sources and various types of library users by interacting (verbal, written or electronic) with the library users
- **WA0102** Identify and clarify the need of the library user by posing the correct questions
- **WA0103** Verify understanding by paraphrasing the need
- **WA0104** Determine the complexity of the information which will determine the type of search and type of source
- **WA0105** Determine the quantity of information

*Supporting Evidence*

- **SE0101** Comment register
- **SE0102** List of resources matches the enquiry register
- **SE0103** Supervisor observation checklist

**WM-01-WE02:** Conduct 20 searches of library material and information sources including print media, electronic media, community sources, DVDs, videos, etc. based on a library user request

*Scope of Work Experience*

The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:

- **WA0201** Use the catalogue of the library to identify suitable material using basic elements of description such as author's name, title of item, publisher, edition, date of publication, classification number and subject heading
- **WA0202** Conduct an internet search using appropriate search engines

*Supporting Evidence*

- **SE0201** List of library resources

**WM-01-WE03:** Retrieve information from a source (retrieve 10 information requests from both hard copies and electronic sources)
**Scope of Work Experience**

The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:

- WA0301 Retrieve information using hard copies and electronic sources
- WA0302 Use the internet and World Wide Web effectively and accurately
- WA0303 Identify different sources such as periodicals, newspapers, encyclopaedia, books, e-sources, electronic media
- WA0304 Select the appropriate information source based on the scope and depth of the user's information need
- WA0305 Follow ethical use of information and acknowledgement of sources and information
- WA0306 Adhere to national and international copyright legislation
- WA0307 Apply current Films and Publications Act in the workplace context
- WA0308 File twenty library books according to library system within 30 minutes
- WA0309 Retrieve ten books within 30 minutes

**Supporting Evidence**

- SE0301 List of sources are appropriate to the request
- SE0302 Checklist for information retrieval
- SE0303 Appropriate sources identified and used
- SE0304 Number of library materials accurately filed and shelved

**WM-01-WE04: Provide information to a minimum of 20 library users which inform their need and is relevant to their requests**

**Scope of Work Experience**

The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:

- WA0401 Determine membership of the library user
- WA0402 Interact with the library user in terms of the information sources
- WA0403 Provide information over the counter (face to face) or telephonically (short and factual) in as context or format appropriate to the user’s need
- WA0404 Provide information as a copy or issued material, or used in-house, given as a note or by word of mouth, reserve information Electronic queries – information will be faxed or e-mailed or reserved
- WA0405 Information or material is presented in a context or format appropriate to the user's need
WA0406 Material is provided within National, Local and institutional legislation, codes and policies
WA0407 The successful completion of the reference query is determined by user's response
WA0408 Any additional user requirements in relation to the requested information are identified and appropriate action is taken to satisfy the requirements

Supporting Evidence
SE0401 Checklist completed by the supervisor on interaction with library user
SE0402 Register of user’s satisfaction rating – enquiry register
SE0403 User statistics

WM-01-WE05: Refer library users to the right source

Scope of Work Experience
The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:
WA0501 Acknowledge and accept limitations of assistance
WA0502 Identify and refer to the appropriate source such as subject experts, inter-library loans and other service sections

Supporting Evidence
SE0501 Referral record
SE0502 Interlibrary loan register

WM-01-WE06: Compile a library material review portfolio in terms of a wide variety of genres and/or identified focus or specialisation

Scope of Work Experience
The person will be expected to engage in the following work activities:
WA0601 Read and review a variety of library material (at least such as but not limited to the following sections: Books, Fiction, non-fiction, children’s and youth, National and international, DVDs – music, presentations and films, CDs – music and presentations, Videos and Magazines
WA0602 Identify the characteristics of each genre and category of literacy (library material) according to the nature of collection
WA0603 Compile a library material review portfolio
Supporting Evidence
SE0601 Library material portfolio
SE0602 Book review

Contextualised Workplace Knowledge
1 Library system
2 Current Films and Publications Act
3 Record keeping system
4 Standard operating procedures of the library
5 Library lay-out and organisation
6 Interlibrary loan system procedures
7 Community profile and information

Criteria for Workplace Approval

Physical Requirements:
Fully operational library
Fully established front desk
Library management system
Computer, printer, fax, telephone and copier
Cash register and safe keeping of moneys
In and out trays
Storing system for files and other records
Library materials
Operating budget for the library
By-laws, policies and procedures

Human Resource Requirements:
One librarian
Assistant librarian or Senior Library Assistant
Minimum of one library assistant on duty (at least)
Qualified Assistant Librarian with 3 years of experience in a Library
Learner supervisor ration 1:3
Legal Requirements:
Legally compliant venue, (i.e. fire protection devices, OHS and other legislation);
Quality Management System which includes all relevant policies and procedures;
Code of Conduct;
Professional registration with LIASA