

SECTION B : STARTING FROM THE SAME PAGE

Ensure that you understand the following concepts **before** you start the real task of programme design—it helps to have the ‘bigger picture’ in place first.

Is there a difference between a curriculum and a learning programme?

Many people use the terms ‘curriculum’ and ‘learning programme’ interchangeably, as they are so closely related. The definitions set out in other SAQA publications provide more clarity on this, as illustrated below:

How does SAQA define Curriculum?

- SAQA takes a broad view of the term ‘curriculum’. Our documents define curriculum as being:

... more than a syllabus ... refers to all of the teaching and learning opportunities that take place in learning institutions including:

- purpose and values of the learning
- learning outcomes
- content, activities, methods, media
- teaching, learning strategies
- forms of assessment
- evaluation of delivery, moderation

(The National Qualifications Framework and Curriculum Development, SAQA, p.6)

From this definition then, we could say that curriculum deals with

- standards setting
- learning programme development and delivery, including assessment
- quality assurance of delivery and assessment processes

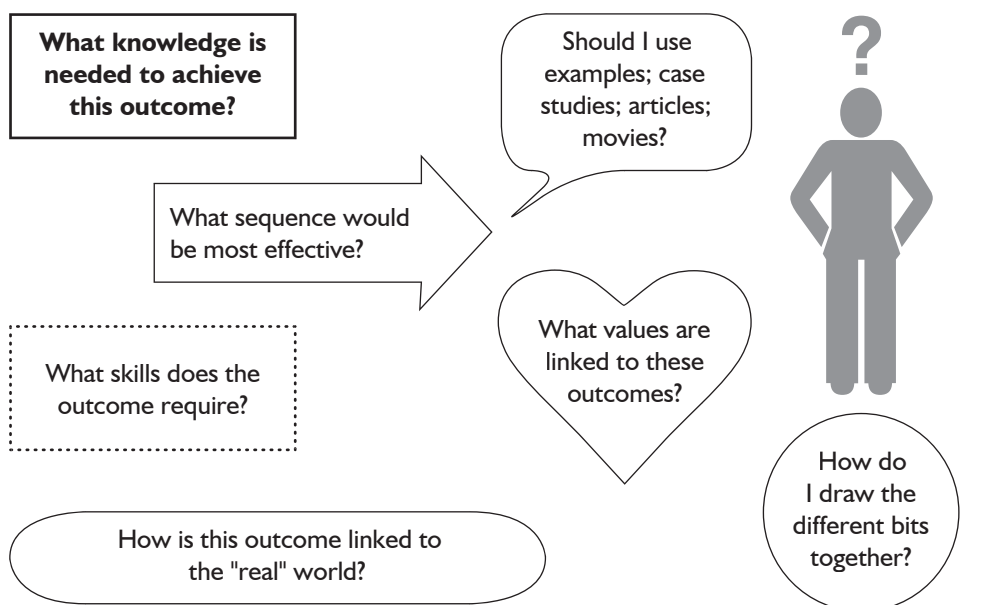
How does SAQA define a learning programme?

- A learning programme is defined in SAQA documents as:

... the sequential learning activities, associated with curriculum implementation, leading to the achievement of a particular qualification or part qualification.

(ibid, p.5)

In view of the above, the ‘learning programme’ constitutes the ‘plan’ for getting the learner to meet the specified outcomes as set out by the curriculum. This manual is focused on designing the learning programme rather than setting standards and quality assurance which happens elsewhere in the system.

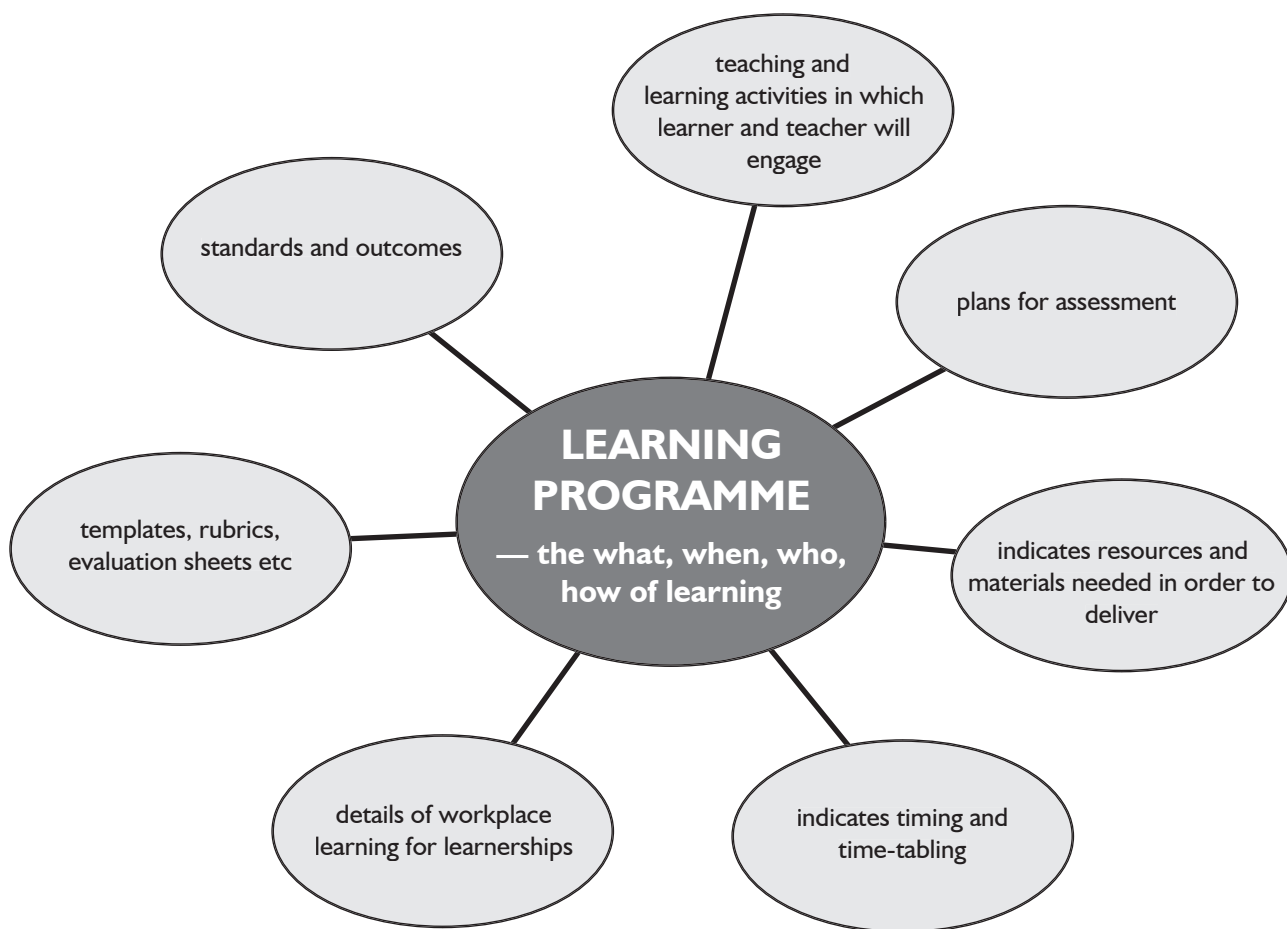


What is the difference between a qualification and a learning programme?

Qualifications and unit standards, governed by the NSB regulations and developed by expert stakeholder groupings, prescribe the outcomes, assessment criteria and other relevant detail for learner achievement. These guide the educator/assessor with regard to what the learner needs to know, do and apply.

A *learning programme* consists of learning and assessment activities derived from the outcomes that make up the qualification. This is what the provider designs, based on sound educational principles (for example, learner-centredness). This manual offers a systematic way of planning learning and assessment activities that will assist the learner to achieve the desired knowledge, skills, applications and attitudes.

The learning programme is really *the what, the when and the how* of implementation. It is about what happens in the classroom: the teaching/ learning and assessment activities associated with achieving outcomes. It is clearly the task of providers to structure exciting, challenging and innovative learning and assessment experiences for learners, while it is the job of the *ETQA* to consider whether providers have offered learners a fair opportunity to acquire the outcomes by monitoring the learning programme and quality assuring the learning achievement.



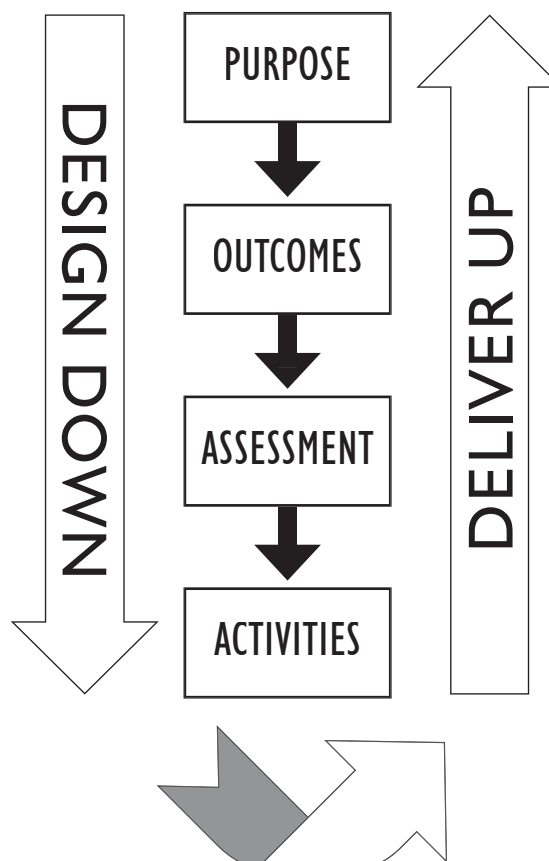
A ‘Design Down, Deliver Up’ Approach

We have chosen to adopt a ‘design down’ approach, which moves from an analysis of the qualification (if the full qualification is being offered), to the unit standard, and finally to a close examination of the outcome, its assessment criteria and other relevant information. Since a unit standard ordinarily consists of two or more outcomes, the idea is to fully analyse each outcome first, and then put the analyses together in order to identify overlaps and points at which learning and assessment could be integrated.

It is important to note that the learner achieves outcomes which build up to the *purpose of the unit standard*, and achieves *unit standards which build towards the purpose of the qualification*. This is why it is important to *design down* from the purpose of the qualification or the unit standard, so that it is always foregrounded when we plan learning and assessment for the outcomes.

The 'design down' approach can be represented as follows:

1. What is the *purpose* of the qualification/ unit standard?
2. How can this purpose be achieved? What will my students need to *know* and *be able to do* in order to achieve this purpose? What *values* are embodied in the purpose? The answers to these questions are written up as *outcomes*.
3. How will I know if my students have achieved the outcomes? What evidence will I look for? In other words, how will I *assess* whether my students have achieved the outcomes or not?
4. How will I prepare my students for the assessment? What *teaching and learning activities* will produce the knowledge, skills and values required by the assessment activity?



Deliver up

Once the design down process is complete you will 'deliver up', that is, conduct *learning activities* which will prepare your learners for the *assessment activities*. These in turn will provide evidence that they have met the *outcomes* and thereby have achieved the *purpose* of the qualification.

Qualifications, Unit Standards and Outcomes

Our workshop process assumes that providers will be offering registered qualifications and unit standards. While much of the process works with unit standards, a similar methodology can be adopted for exit level outcomes. Remember that only *qualifications* and *unit standards* are registered on the National Qualifications Framework and are assigned credit value. Individual outcomes and Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) are not. This means that a learner will only receive credits once s/he has achieved all the outcomes in a unit standard, or completed the qualification. Outcomes can be grouped together into unit standards, or can be set out as ELOs under a registered whole qualification.

How is a level described?

Qualifications and unit standards are registered at particular *levels* of the NQF. Level descriptors are statements about the kind of learning that can be expected of a qualification or unit standard registered at a particular level of the NQF. These descriptions are broad and generic but they help to show

what a qualification at a particular level will demand of a learner. Outcomes must be comparable with the level descriptors for that particular level.

The level descriptors are statements about the *applied competence* i.e. the knowledge, skills and applications at a particular level, and the *autonomy* of the learning process i.e. how much responsibility does the learner have for his/her own learning? Level descriptors can be found on the SAQA website as well as the Council on Higher Education website, but we have attached the approved descriptors for Levels 1-4 of the NQF, as Appendix A. The NSB regulations require that for a qualification to be registered at any level of the NQF, a minimum of 72 credits has to be at the level at which it is registered. To illustrate, a Certificate at NQF 5 means that there are 72 credits of the certificate at Level 5 and that the outcomes meet the requirements of the level descriptors at Level 5.

What are credits?

Credits are a measure of the notional hours or learning time that it would take the *average learner* to meet the prescribed outcomes. This includes contact time, structured learning, workplace learning and self-study. (10 notional hours = 1 credit.)

Do credits dictate learning time?

The number of credits assigned to a unit standard or a qualification can only be a *guide* to the average learning time. Learners learn in different ways, some learn faster and others more slowly. Experienced educators will adjust their learning programme accordingly to accommodate particular groups of learners. For example, it may mean that you have to prepare, in advance, additional material that the faster learner can be challenged by, or set up a peer group which can assist slower learners to grasp new concepts. *There is no 'exact' measure of learning time which will apply to every learner!*

Before a qualification is registered on the NQF, it has to satisfy the following criteria, which are applied by the Standards Generating Body (SGB) during the standards setting process:



Let's make sure we understand some of the terms used in the mind-map above:

What is Applied Competence??

Applied competence means an *integration of the knowledge, the skills, the attitudes and the applications* that a learner is able to perform in a way that suits the learning context. It is described as the *foundational* (knowledge), the *practical* (skills) and the *reflexive* (application in context) competence which the learner needs in order to be judged fully competent.

Where do the Critical Cross Field Outcomes fit in?

- They are the broad, over-arching outcomes which all learning programmes work towards.
- They are critical for the development of the capacity for lifelong learning.
- They are about the needs of the individual and the needs of society.
- Learning programmes must offer learners opportunities to acquire critical outcomes
- ETQAs must consider how the critical outcomes have been learned and assessed in the programme delivery.

Unit standards will not include all the critical outcomes, but it is expected that a learner would have achieved *all the critical outcomes by the time s/he has completed the full qualification*.

The following are the prescribed Critical Outcomes

Learners must be able to:

- Identify and solve problems
- Work effectively with others in teams
- Organize themselves effectively
- Collect, analyse, organize and evaluate information
- Communicate well orally or in writing
- Use science and technology responsibly
- Understand that the world is a set of related systems
- Explore strategies to learn more effectively
- Participate as responsible citizens in community life
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive
- Explore education and career opportunities
- Become entrepreneurial

What does ‘integrated assessment’ entail?

The concept of integration applies both to the learning and assessment process of a learning programme, as you can see below. Consult the SAQA document “*Criteria and Guidelines for Integrated Assessment*” for more examples and a fuller discussion on this aspect.

Integration can take place in various ways, for example:

- Using one learning/assessment activity for more than one outcome
- Using one learning/assessment activity for more than one unit standard
- Integrating the critical outcomes with the specific/learning outcomes in learning and assessment activities
- Teaching and assessing both theory and practice within the same activities
- Using a big assessment task eg. a project to integrate all the outcomes which learners have dealt with throughout the learning period.
- Assessing across learning areas.

How is RPL possible?

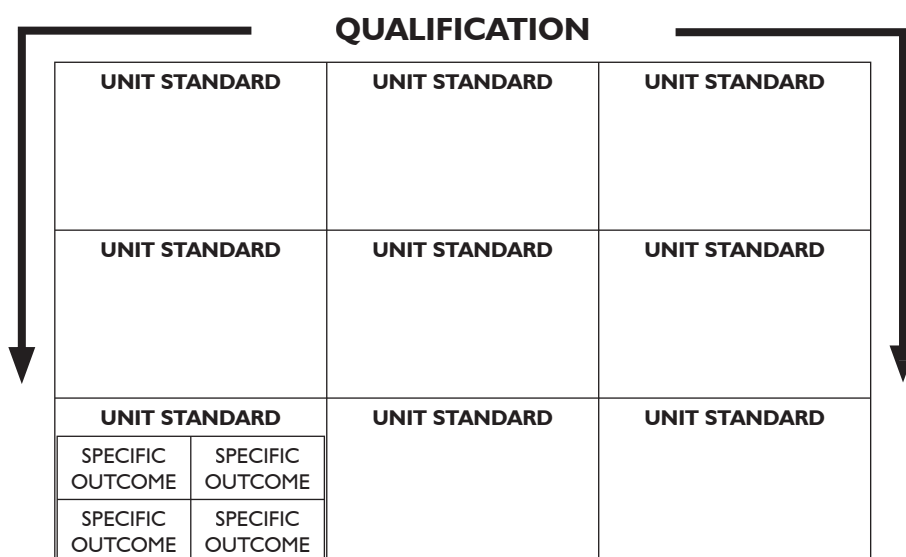
The recognition of prior learning is about assessing competence on the basis of evidence presented. Outcomes and assessment criteria indicate what the learner has to *prove competence* at, and since all qualifications and unit standards state the *outcomes* clearly, providers can design assessment activities where required, using the process which follows.

SECTION C : THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

What follows is a typical workshop process which could be undertaken by groups of educators, with or without a facilitator. The design of a learning programme should proceed sequentially through three major stages of analysis, if the full qualification is being offered:

1. analyse the qualification, then
2. analyse the unit standard or exit level outcome, and finally
3. analyse the outcome together with its assessment criteria and associated information.

It is necessary to complete each stage in order to understand the next, and so that the learning programme does not leave out crucial learning and assessment.



Step 1: Analysing the Qualification

Work with a *qualification within your field* and look at the various parts and implications these have for institutional planning (eg. level, purpose, credits, moderation options). Use the questions on the next page to work through the important information contained in the qualification. The mind-map will also help you. Consult the glossary at the front of this manual if you need any explanations or definitions of terminology.

1. ANALYSE
QUALIFICATION

2. ANALYSE UNIT
STANDARD

3. ANALYSE
A SPECIFIC
OUTCOME

4. INTEGRATE
OUTCOMES



Discussion Guide: Analysing the Qualification

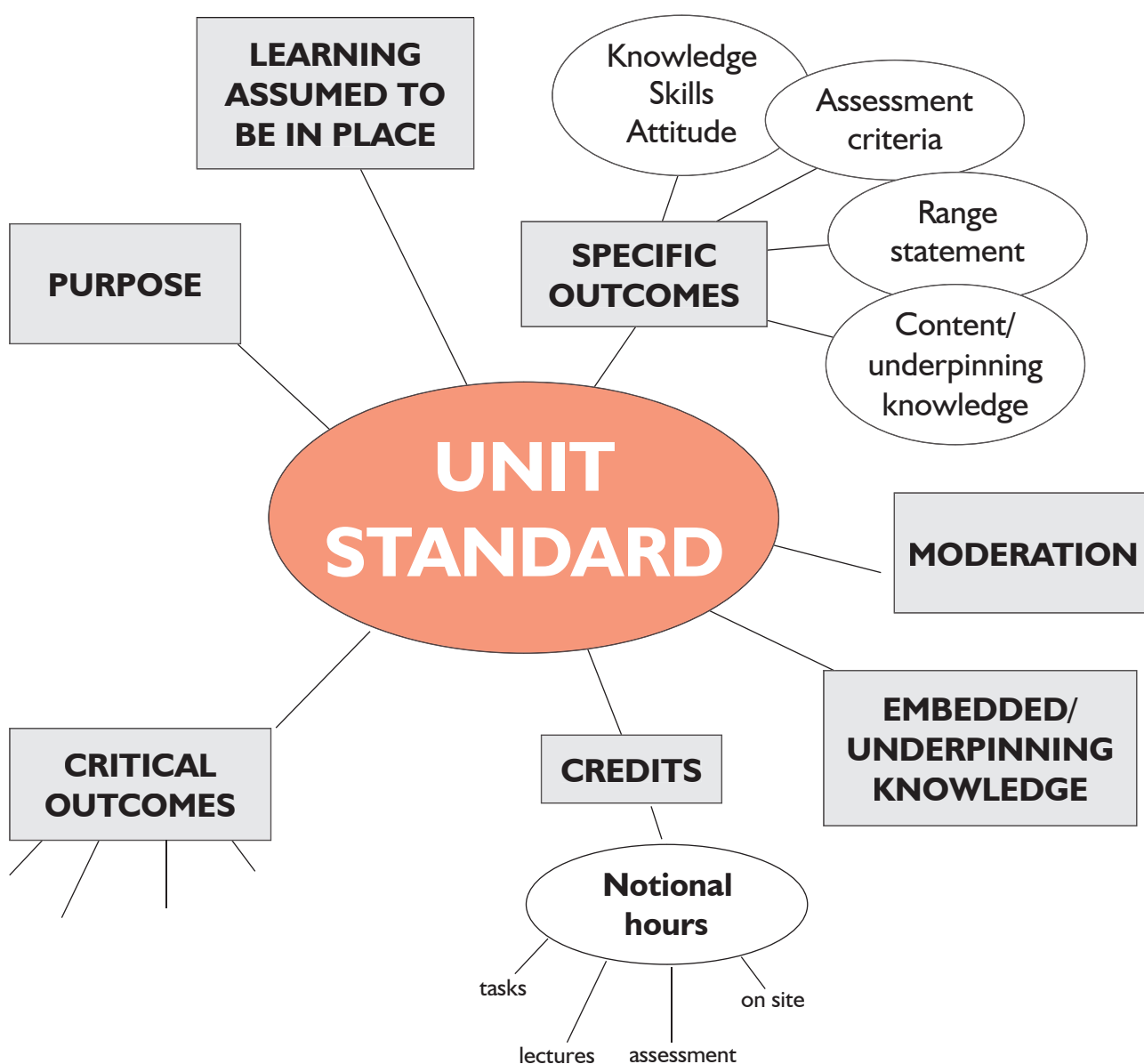
1. Who is the qualification aimed at?
2. Briefly, what is the purpose of the qualification?
3. What is the level of the qualification? Have a look at the level descriptors for this level.
4. What is the access requirement for the qualification?
5. How could 'integrated assessment' be done within the context of this qualification?
6. Look at the spread of credits across the Fundamental, Core and Elective categories. Decide on one implication this would have for you.
7. Look at the moderation options and discuss one implication this has for your institution.
8. Use the list of outcomes and assessment criteria to identify what kind of physical resources i.e. equipment, materials, stationery etc. this qualification would require you to have.

Step 2: Analysing the Unit Standard

(if you are working with exit level outcomes or national curriculum statements, all the questions below might not apply, so answer only those which do)

Use a sample unit standard/exit level outcome within your subject area/s and apply the mind-map (below) to analyse the various parts of the unit standard. It is best to use only one unit standard at this time, so that you work through it completely before tackling others.

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| 1. ANALYSE QUALIFICATION |
| 2. ANALYSE UNIT STANDARD |
| 3. ANALYSE A SPECIFIC OUTCOME |
| 4. INTEGRATE OUTCOMES |



Use the following questions to help you to analyse your unit standard.

- What is the purpose statement of your unit standard?
- What is the 'learning assumed to be in place'? (This refers to the learning which the learner already has, or should have, *before* doing this unit standard.)
- How many outcomes does the unit standard contain?