

Make Sure Your Training Is Accredited

TRAINING for a career is important, but there are so many courses on offer that students and parents can easily become confused. Nicola Young, academic executive for Damelin, offers some pointers for choosing the right programme.

Ensure the training provider is accredited.

The two main education and training quality assurance bodies in South Africa are **Umalusi**, the quality assurance body for **General and Further Education and Training**; and the **Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)**, the quality assurance body for **Higher Education Training**.

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) for the various sectors also accredit providers that offer unit standard-based qualifications. However, these providers must also be accredited by Umalusi.

Does the provider have an official accreditation number?

Ask your provider for its official accreditation number; or some official document proving that the institution is at least provisionally accredited.

If you are unsure if a provider of general or further education is accredited by Umalusi, go to www.umalusi.org.za, click on the “Accreditation” link, and then click on the link “Search Accredited Providers”.

All higher education providers must be registered with the Department of Education, and all general and further education providers must be in the process of registering with the department. If you are planning to enrol with a provider of higher education, ask the provider for its official Department Education registration number. For the list of registered private higher education institutions go to www.education.gov.za

If you are planning to enrol with a provider of general or further education, ensure that your provider has applied for registration. All providers of further education must at least be provisionally registered with the Department of Education by January 2008.

Training programmes are broadly divided into two categories formal and informal.

Formal programmes are national qualifications. They are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and have formal SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA) identity numbers. They have a fixed credit value and are presented at a fixed NQF Level. Providers must obtain programme accreditation before they can claim to be offering these formal NQF qualifications. When you successfully complete an accredited national qualification, your credits will be uploaded to the National Learner Records Database (NLRD). Formal short courses (for which you will receive credits) are called skills programmes.

Non-formal programmes are all other programmes that are not formal national qualifications. The three main types of non-formal programmes are formal-in-progress programmes, agent programmes, and non-formal provider programmes. Formal-in-progress programmes are presented by providers that were already offering learning programmes when the new regulatory process started, but now find them in an interim period where some of their programmes are in the process of being formalised.

This means they have aligned the programme to the NQF and are in the process of submitting the programme for accreditation, but the programme has not yet been formally accredited. During this interim period, the provider cannot claim that it is offering a formal national qualification. Agent programmes are presented by one provider and the final assessment is managed and the certification is done by another body.

The provider only delivers the teaching of the programme. Examples include MSCE studies through Microsoft (you write a Microsoft exam and receive a Microsoft award), or an Estate Agent Certificate (you write an exam set by the Estate Agents Affairs Board and receive your certificate from that body).

Non-formal provider programmes include self employment programmes; orientation programmes, self-enrichment programmes, continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, and non-formal occupational programmes.

If you want to study for a formal national qualification, make sure that your provider is accredited to offer the programme, and if you want to study a non-formal programme, make sure you choose a provider you can trust.

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In Summary

- 1. Make sure that your provider is registered with the Department of Education (DoE).**
www.education.gov.za
- 2. Make sure that your chosen provider has been accredited to offer the said programme either by Umalusi (for General and Further Education and Training), or the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (for Higher Education and Training).**
www.umalusi.org.za
www.che.org.za
- 3. Also make sure that in the case of a full qualification or unit standards leading to a full qualification, that the respective qualifications/unit standards as well as the provider, are registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).**
www.saqa.org.za