



Southern African Association for Institutional Research

Foundations of HEMIS 2019

Qualifications and Courses: Key concepts and issues

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Acknowledgements

- Council for Higher Education (CHE) documentation
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) documentation
- Presentations by the author on related aspects

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to **explain** the **nature and scope** of the South African *Higher Education Management Information System* (HEMIS), in particular the role of qualifications and courses



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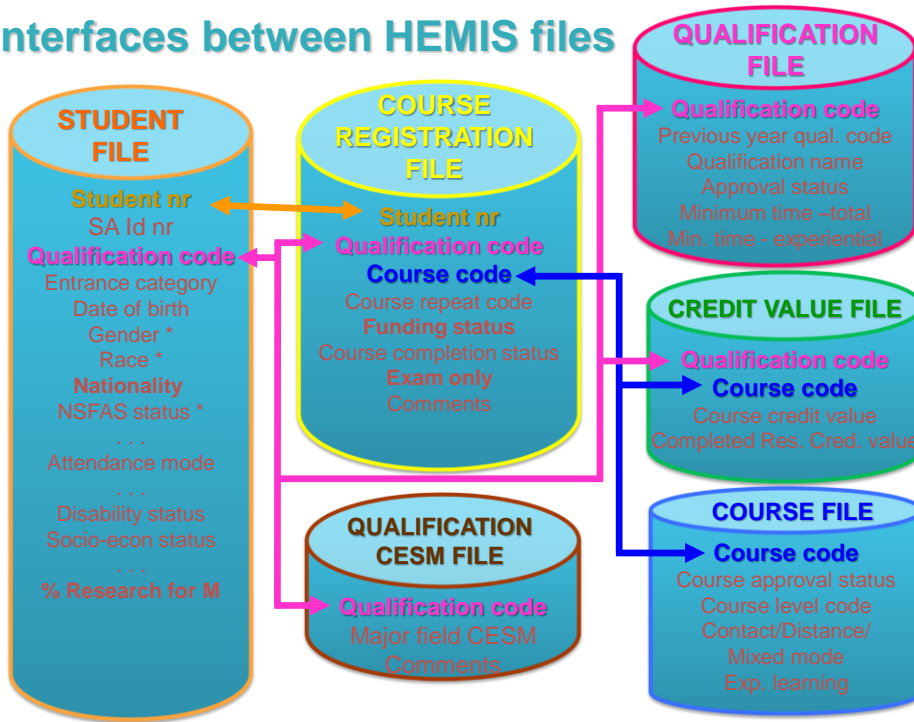
Role of Qualifications and Courses

- Qualifications play a very important role in funding and quality assurance
- Courses are the building blocks that leads to a qualification
- The importance of ensuring the role of qualifications and courses are properly understood cannot be emphasized enough
- It is critical that qualifications and course are reported correctly



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Interfaces between HEMIS files



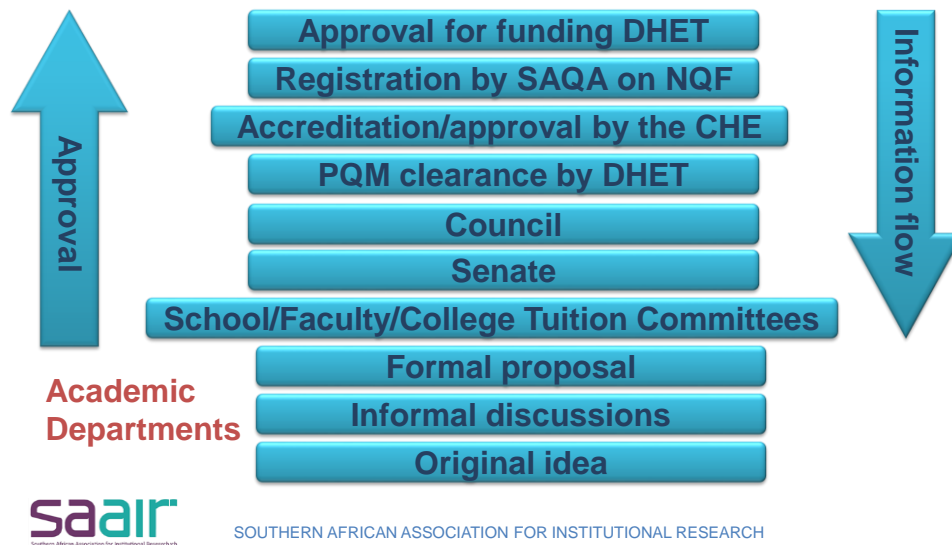
HEMIS Qualification approval status

- An indicator of whether or not the qualification has been approved for funding by the Minister
- Approved (A) / Not approved (N)



Please take note of the process and links between qualifications, PQM and funding

Process for the introduction of new and revised Programmes



Internal approval process Qualifications / Programmes

- Varies from institution to institution
- Normally initiated from academic departments
- Depending on the internal committee structures will be going through a number of steps before it serves at Senate as highest academic authority
- Final approval by Council

External approval process Qualifications / Programmes

After internal approval process have been completed successfully:

- Obtain **principle approval (PQM clearance)** from DHET to register the proposed qualification / programme on the NQF (HEQSF)
- **Accreditation** of the proposed programme leading to a qualification by the CHE
- **Registration** of the proposed qualification/ programme on the NQF (HEQSF) by SAQA
- Obtain **approval for funding purposes** from DHET



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Naming of Qualifications

- The naming of qualifications must be in line with the appropriate national academic policy applicable
- For the HEQSF, the qualification type is the first name given to a qualification and for degrees but not for certificates and diplomas, the designator is the second name for the qualification
- The approved name as on the PQM must be used for HEMIS purposes
- Institutions may use an internal name and provision will in future be made to capture that on HEMIS as well



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Official “forms”

- Online program to capture applications
- Registration of Qualification (SAQA)
- Accreditation and Approval of Academic Qualifications (CHE)
- Application for Additions and Changes to Approved Academic Programmes (DHET)
- With minor changes (< 50%) the DHET is informed for notification purposes

Updates need to be made to the Approved PQM



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Internal forms

- Each Institution decides what is required
- It is useful to use the official forms plus a coversheet that contains additional information that is required in the approval process and to have the application as complete as possible



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Structural integrity

In order to ensure the structural integrity of the academic structure the documentation that serves at Senate and where appropriate Council and external bodies and Senate/Council Minutes and feedback documents should be used as source documents for:

- *Calendar*
- *Updating of the Student database*



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Qualification type (HEQSF) Undergraduate



- **Higher Certificate** – NQF exit level 5, minimum tot credits = 120
- **Advanced Certificate** – NQF exit level 6
minimum total credits 120, including PGCE
- **Diploma** – NQF exit level 6
minimum total credits 240 (exceptions only) or 360
- **Advanced Diploma**– NQF exit level 7, min. total credits=120
- **Bachelor's degree** – NQF exit level 7, min tot credits = 360, exception BEd NQF exit level 7, minimum total credits = 480
- **Bachelor's degree** – NQF exit level 8, min total credits = 480
- **Professional Bachelor's degree** (*exception*) may follow on 1st Bachelor's degree min tot credits = 240, e.g. LLB



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Qualification type (HEQSF) Postgraduate



- **Postgraduate Diploma** – NQF exit level 8, min tot credits = 120
- **Bachelor Honours Degree** – NQF exit level 8, minimum total credits = 120
- **Master's Degree** – NQF exit level 9, min tot credits = 180
excluding Master's degrees in Health Sciences, e.g. MMed, MedVet, MDent
- **Professional Master's Degree** – NQF exit level 9, minimum total credits = 180
- **Doctoral Degree** – NQF exit level 10, min tot credits = 360
- **Professional Doctorate** – NQF exit level 10, min tot credits = 360



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Qualification type from previous dispensations

- Transitional arrangements may be required for qualification types offered under the HEQF and Legacy qualifications (prior to HEQF) when students are transferred to HEQSF-aligned qualifications
- This include, arrangements for the phasing out of qualifications from previous dispensations



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HEQSF implications for HEMIS

The changes to the HEQSF as published in the government gazette of January 2013 required changes in qualification types, which have been clarified and is now included in the Valpac documentation



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HEQSF articulation with other Sub-Frameworks of the NQF

It needs to be noted that the HEQSF articulation with other Sub-Frameworks of the NQF will have to be specified in the admissions/entrance requirements:

- General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GENFETQSF)
- Trades and Occupations Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)



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Category of Education Subject Matter (CESM)



- Subject areas are classified into 20 CESM categories (before 2010, 22 CESM categories)
- Each of these categories have further hierarchical subcategories (reported to the third order)
- Each qualification has a major field of study for the qualification
- Each course (subject) is linked to a CESM category (to third order)
- CESM categories are clustered together in funding groups for funding purposes



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Major fields of study



- The major field(s) of study for an instructional programme can be categorized by one or more CESM categories
- The major field(s) of study for a particular student is/are the subject area(s) in which the student may specialize in the final year of study
- Can be more than one (list all)
- If a student has several areas of specialisation, the order in which it is reported is of no consequence



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CESM Categories

- 01 Agriculture, etc
- 02 Architecture/Built Environment
- 03 Visual & Perf. Arts
- 04 Business, Econ, Man.
- 05 Communication, etc
- 06 Computer & Inf. Science
- 07 Education
- 08 Engineering
- 09 Health Sciences, etc
- 10 Family Ecology, Cons. Science
- 11 Languages
- 12 Law
- 13 Life Sciences
- 14 Physical Sciences
- 15 Mathematical Sciences
- 16 Military Science
- 17 Philosophy & Religious Studies
- 18 Psychology
- 19 Public Admin & Social services
- 20 Social Sciences



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HEMIS Course Approval Status



- An indicator of whether or not a course forms **part of a qualification that has been approved for funding** by the Minister - Approved (A) or Not approved (N)
- Normally approved by the Senate of the institution to form part of a qualification



A person registered for a course which has not been approved for subsidy purposes cannot be considered to be a student and must not be included in the HEMIS-submission



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Process for the introduction of new and revised Courses



Internal forms for Courses

- Each Institution decides what is required
- No official forms required as Senate decides
- It is useful to make use of standardised forms and where appropriate combine it with the Forms for Qualifications / Programmes

Structural integrity

In order to ensure the structural integrity of the academic structure the documentation that serves at Senate and where appropriate Council

Senate/Council Minutes and feedback documents should be used as source documents for:

- Calendar
- Updating of the Student database (academic structure)



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Course levels



- If a course is offered at **more than one level** it must in all instances be reported at the lowest level that it is offered
- **Concurrent registrations** for courses at different levels are not acceptable to the DHET and must not be reported in HEMIS. Adjustments will be made in subsidy earnings totals of institutions where the FTE totals are inflated in this manner. Substantial numbers taking more than a standard course load will not be allowed
- Course levels on the HEQSF are aligned to NQF levels



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Course Levels (HEQSF)



- Pre-tertiary [40]
- NQF level 5 [41]
- NQF level 6 [42]
- NQF level 7 [43]
- NQF level 8 (non-research) [44]
- NQF level 8 (research) [45]
- NQF level 9 (non-research) [46]
- NQF level 9 (research) [47]
- NQF level 10 (non-research) [48]
- NQF level 10 (research) [49]



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Funding credits



The properties of a qualification determine the total number of units of state subsidy (funding credits) approved for that qualification by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology (before 2019 restructuring Minister of Higher Education and Training)



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Qualification weight/ Funding credit



- For subsidy-purposes, all qualifications are give a weight relative to a first bachelor's degree

- Student/lecturing staff ratio



For subsidy-purposes, different student/lecturing staff ratios have been introduced for the different subject matter areas (funding groups)



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Course Credit/ Funding Credit



- Each distinct instructional offering must be allocated a weight (course credit) which is the funding credit

- E.g. subject with papers Business Management III may consist of five courses



- Interchangeable offerings (options) should carry the same credit or weight
- Calculated for qualification course combination



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Calculation of the Course Credits for Teaching

The course credits can then be easily calculated using the relative proportion of NQF credits for the course to the total NQF credits for the qualification

$$\frac{\text{Credits for course}}{\text{Total credits for qualification}}$$

For HEQF-qualifications, the use of NQF-credits are also recommended. For legacy qualifications, this is not possible and other methods were used.



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Calculation of the Funding Credits for Teaching

The funding credits for teaching offerings can be calculated using the relative proportion of the NQF credits of the course to the total NQF credits of the qualification

$$\frac{\text{Credits for course}}{\text{Total credits for qualification}} \times \text{Funding credits for qualification}$$

Experiential learning is not funded and although it contribute to the total NQF credits, the funded credits for experiential learning is 0.



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Calculation of the Course Credit for Research Offerings



- In most cases, the total credit for master's degrees are 1,000 and for doctoral degrees are 2,000. Due to the fact that the research degrees are normally spread over more than one year, a special mechanism had to be devised



- The total credit value are divided by the average time that students took to complete the qualification over the last three years
- For practical reasons, qualifications are clustered together



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Calculation of the Course Credit for Research Offerings



Number of graduates for the degree or cluster
Number of years the graduates were enrolled

= Average time for completion



Credit value = $\frac{\text{Total credit value}}{\text{Average time for completion}}$

Where Total credit value would typically be 1,000 for research masters and 2,000 for doctoral degrees



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Applying the Graduates test to Course credits



- Students often do not follow the fixed curriculum and the original credit values would then have to be adjusted. This needs to be confirmed each year based on the course credits of the students that graduated in the particular degree
- The course credits could be adjusted per year for each degree for practical reasons



- An adjustment factor is then calculated that will satisfy the Graduates test (originally 2% test, later 0% test) and multiplied with the original course credits to obtain an adjusted course credit that would satisfy the Graduates Test



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Implications for funding



- The PQM is based on approved qualifications
- Funding groups are based on the CESM-categories and the funding levels are based on the course levels
- The Teaching input funding grid of funding groups and funding levels is determined by the CESM and course level of courses
- Output subsidy is based on qualifications and their relative weights
- Qualifications and courses play a pivotal role in funding



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Problem areas

- The allocation of CESM-categories for qualifications and courses can be problematic due to lack of clarity, ambiguous
- The fact that funding groups are derived from CESM-categories further aggravates problems
- Course levels, NQF-levels and funding levels are not aligned in all cases - HEQSF aims to resolve this

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Problem areas (Continued)

- The allocation of course weights can be problematic – easier in HEQSF
- Where the same course with the same NQF-credits are offered for more than one qualification, different course credit values can create confusion
- The boundary between contact and distance education is not clear in all cases



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Discussion and Questions



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Terminology

- HEMIS = Higher Education Management Information System
- Valpac = Validation Package
- PQM = Programme and Qualification Mix
- SAQA = South African Qualifications Authority
- NPHE = National Plan for Higher Education
- MHET = Minister of Higher Education and Training
- DHET = Department of Higher Education and Training
- CESM = Categorisation of Education Subject Material
- CHE = Council for Higher Education
- NQF = National Qualification Framework
- NSFAS = National Student Financial Aid Scheme
- HEQSF = Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework
- HEQC = Higher Education Quality Committee
- EFC = Enrolled Funded Credits also FTE = Full-Time Equivalent
- CFC = Completed Funded Credits
- WFTE = Weighted FTE
- TIU = Teaching Input Units
- TOU = Teaching Output Units
- ROU = Research Output Units
- TDG = Teaching Development Grant
- RDG = Research Development Grant



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