



THE
QUANTITY
ASSURANCE
POLICIES



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ACRONYMS

- | | |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 1. CEO | Chief Executive Officer of SQA |
| 2. LIN | Learner Identification Number |
| 3. MoA | Memorandum of Agreement |
| 4. PSET | Post School Education and Training |
| 5. QMS | Quality Management System |
| 6. ROA | Record of Achievement |
| 7. SQA | Samoa Qualifications Authority |
| 8. SQF | Sama Qualifications Framework |

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RELATED PUBLICATIONS

1. Post School Education and Training Strategic Plan 2008 - 2016
2. The Samoa Qualifications Framework Policies
3. Guidelines for PSET Provider Registration, including:
 - Provider Listing Form
 - 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 and Registration of National Qualifications

INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the mid-1990's the Government has been developing a more enterprise-based and competitively structured economy aimed at sustained and sustainable economic growth. Key to this goal is the focus on human resource development to ensure a sufficiently well qualified population to take advantage of the new opportunities created by the reforms in the public and private sectors of the economy. It has always been the Government's belief that economic prosperity is premised upon a well educated population.

The Government's intention is for Samoa to have a post school education and training¹(PSET) sub-sector that is well coordinated with adequate provision to meet the needs of society and individuals, through the development of the necessary skills and knowledge to improve national economic and social development. Dovetailed into the maintenance of quality education and training is the need to maintain international comparability.

In setting up the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Government demonstrated its intentions to strengthen post school education and training through the introduction of quality standards and criteria for providers and their teaching programmes. SQA will coordinate the post school education and training activities across the entire PSET sub-sector. This sub-sector comprises of formal post school institutions such as the universities and the theological colleges, the apprenticeship scheme, the various technical-vocational education and training activities conducted either by individuals, companies, religious mission systems as well as the many non-formal trainings conducted by non-government or community-based organisations and private agencies.

¹ See the Glossary for a definition of "post school education and training" (page 33)

SQA's Quality Assurance Responsibilities

Section 4 of the Samoa Qualifications Authority Act 2006 lists sixteen functions of the Authority, including:

- h) 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 the post school education and training institutions;*
- i) Develop criteria and processes for the registration of all post school education and training providers;*
- j) Develop criteria and processes for the accreditation and quality audit of all post school education and training providers;*
- k) Promote quality in community-based education and training;*
- l) Develop criteria and processes to support quality improvement throughout post school education and training;*
- m) Work collaboratively with all post school institutions, in particular to verify that they are using quality management policies and processes that ensure qualifications meet or exceed international standards, and that their programmes align with national priorities;*
- n) Work with overseas government agencies and other institutions to recognise overseas qualifications in Samoa and to achieve international recognition for qualifications awarded in Samoa;*
- o) Provide assurance that post school education and training in Samoa maintains international comparability.*
- q) Regulate qualifications and quality standards for all post school education and training providers in Samoa [SQA Amendment Act 2009]*

SQA aims to:

- protect the interests of learners;

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SQA developed these policy statements with advice from the Quality Assurance Focus Group:

- Gatoloaifa'ana Tilianamua Afamasaga (Director, NUS Oloamanu Centre);
- Letuimanu'asina Dr Emma Kruse-Vaai (Deputy Vice Chancellor, NUS IoT);
- Lemalu Lemi Taefu (Campus Manager USP Alafua);
- Rev. Muao Su'a (Malua Theological College);
- Beverly Barlow (Samoa Hotels Association);
- Rev. Taumafai Komiti (Director, Methodist Schools);
- Faafetai Koria (MWCSO);
- Fepulea'i Sinapi Mōli (Chief Executive Officer, SQA);
- Sina Mualia (ACEO HRD Policy, SQA);
- Lemalu Lafi Sanerivi (ACEO Quality Assurance, SQA);
- Tepora Afamasaga-Wright (Principal QD Officer, SQA) and
- Kovi Fonoti-Aiolupotea (Principal QA Officer, SQA).

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.

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 classification structure indicating the levels and types of quality assured qualifications.

Twinning Cross Border Education Arrangement

A situation whereby a provider in source Country A collaborates with a provider located in Country B to develop an articulation system that allows students to take course credits in Country B and/or source Country A. Only one qualification is awarded by the provider in the source country. This may or may not be on a commercial basis.²⁹

²⁹ International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO), 2007: Regulating and assuring the quality of cross border providers of higher education

- recognise non-formal² as well as formal education and training
- ensure that qualifications are meaningful and credible;
- ensure that qualifications are obtained in safe environments using appropriate teaching and assessment systems;
- assure the learner and all stakeholders that SQA-approved qualifications are recognised nationally and internationally.

SQA is meeting these aims by setting a national quality standard for PSET providers in the following key areas:

- Registration of providers;
- Accreditation of their programmes;
- Quality audit of providers' on-going effectiveness in providing high quality education and training services;
- Registration of qualifications on the Samoa Qualifications Framework (SQF); and
- Quality assurance of non-formal learning

These five key areas link to form an integrated system for assuring the quality of qualifications and the programmes of learning, and for recognising non-formal learning activities.

For each key area SQA has developed policies, procedures and criteria. The consistent application of these policies, procedures and criteria provides confidence that quality provision of PSET is both promoted and achieved in Samoa.

Fitness for purpose is the underpinning philosophy of the quality assurance approach, continuous improvement of quality being the result of systematic activities.

What is Quality Assurance?

The assurance of quality is accepted internationally as the result of systematic management activities. 'Quality assurance' in education is defined as:

All activity which ensures that the educational services of an organisation are being delivered effectively and efficiently and are in line with published goals and objectives. Quality assurance should

² See the Glossary for a definition of 'non-formal learning' (page 33)

be conducted in the first instance by an educational organisation to ensure it is delivering education services to a high standard, and also by an external regulatory body, verifying that the education services are meeting prescribed standards.

A study of international best practice shows that national educational quality assurance systems contain two important interrelating levels:

- a. Within the organisation – a reliable internal quality management system focused on ensuring the quality of the education and training services provided.
- b. At the national level – a process of external evaluation and accreditation by an independent standard setting agency according to procedures and standards advertised by the agency.

The systematic management of quality within an organisation is seen as depending on a 'quality management system' (QMS), which is:

An integrated set of policies, procedures and evaluation which together define the standards to be met, the procedures required for the policies to be put in place, and the evaluation processes which confirm the extent to which the policies and procedures are being followed and, as a consequence, the organisation is focussed on the achievement of its goals and objectives.

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.

Qualification

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

Qualification Component

An identifiable part of a qualification. Each component is a set of learning outcomes that a learner must achieve in order to receive credit towards a qualification.

Quality

Quality in education and training may be viewed in terms of:

- Exceptional (highest standards);
- Conformance to standards;
- Fitness for purpose;
- Effectiveness in achieving institutional goals; and
- Meeting customers' stated or implied needs²⁸

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

²⁸ Stella, A 2007: Understanding Quality Assurance Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region - Indicators of Quality; Published by Asia Pacific Quality Network

qualification is awarded by a provider in Country A. This is usually a for-profit commercial arrangement²⁹.

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.

Non-Formal Learning

Organized learning which occurs outside the context of formal educational institutions.

Post School Education and Training (PSET)

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
- Apprenticeships
- 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, or units designed to meet the requirements of a qualification.

A. THE QUALITY STANDARD

1. The quality of education and training activities is best assured by the organisation itself through the implementation of a quality management system that includes self evaluation, internal review and/or internal audit processes that enable the provider to identify improvement opportunities and modify its own operations accordingly³.
2. External evaluation processes, conducted by an independent body, are designed to provide assurance that the organisation's operation of its internal quality management system is delivering the expected results and outcomes.
3. The SQA Quality Standard for post school education and training providers is made up of ten elements. These are:
 - a. Organisation
 - b. Programme development and review
 - c. Programme delivery
 - d. Financial resources
 - e. Personnel
 - f. Learner information, entry and support
 - g. Physical and learning resources
 - h. Assessment and moderation
 - i. Reporting learner achievement
 - j. Research

(See **Schedule 1** on page 23 - 24 for details)

4. The SQA Quality Standard is an integrated set of standards and criteria. It provides a framework for both an organisation's internal quality management system and for SQA's external provider registration, programme accreditation, recognition of non-formal learning, and quality audit processes.
5. The Quality Standard has been designed for flexible application. SQA encourages organisations to apply the Standard in ways that suit their unique values, culture and style.
6. Under each element, criteria have been set for the registration of PSET providers, for the accreditation of their education and

³ See Schedule 2 for more information on Self Evaluation, internal review and internal audit (page 25)

training programmes, and for the recognition of non-formal learning.

7. SQA will conduct regular quality audits of PSET providers to examine compliance and effectiveness against the elements of the Standard.

Policies and criteria for provider registration, programme accreditation, recognition of non-formal learning, and quality audit are set out in sections E, F, G and H of this document.

B. FORMAL PROVIDERS OF PSET ACTIVITIES

8. An organisation providing PSET is deemed to be 'formal' and is required to maintain its registered status, seek programme accreditation and meet the SQA Quality Standard if it falls into one or more of the following categories:
 - a. Provides an education or training programme that leads to a qualification registered on the SQF;
 - b. Receives or applies for funding from Government or from any other donor through the Government for education and training programmes designed to meet the requirements of qualifications;
 - c. Uses or wishes to use a protected term⁴ in the name of the organisation or in the names of any of the courses, programmes or qualifications that it provides;
 - d. Enrols foreign students for a period of more than two months, in the aggregate, in a calendar year in any of the education and training programmes it provides;
 - e. Is a Samoa-based organisation providing programmes or courses in Samoa through cross-border arrangements with a foreign-based provider using any arrangement such as double or joint degree, twinning or franchising,⁵ (see section R on page 20)

⁴ See Schedule 3 for the List of Protected Terms (page 27)

⁵ Refer to Glossary on Pages 32 and 35 for definition of these cross border education arrangements

- e. Is a Samoa-based organisation providing programmes or courses in Samoa through cross-border arrangements with a foreign-based provider using any arrangement such as double or joint degree, twinning or franchising, and articulation (see section R on page 20)
- f. Is an organisation based in a foreign country that wishes to provide education and training programmes in Samoa.

Course

A course is an integrated education delivery or training package that includes appropriate content, teaching and learning approaches, resources, assessment activity, delivery modes and duration designed to achieve a set of learning outcomes.

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.

Double or Joint Degree [Cross Border Education Arrangement]

An arrangement whereby providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which a student receives a qualification from each provider or a joint award from the collaborating providers. Normally this is based on academic exchange²⁷.

Evidence

Information which can be proved reliable valid and authentic, based on facts obtained through observation, measurement, test or other means.

Franchising [Cross Border Education Arrangement]

An arrangement whereby a provider in the source Country A authorizes a provider in another Country B to deliver their course/programme/service in Country B or other countries. The

²⁷ International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO), 2007: Regulating and assuring the quality of cross border providers of higher education

GLOSSARY

Accreditation

It is a prescribed process through which SQA endorses an educational or training organisation to offer post school education and training programmes, and includes but is not limited to an evaluation process which assesses the general capabilities of an organization in providing support for a specified programme and provide assurance that the programme is delivered or is to be delivered in a manner that is effective, efficient and to the required standard or level as approved by the Authority

Accredited Provider

An organisation that has been quality assured to offer one or more post school education and training programmes.

Assessor

A person who evaluates assessment evidence presented by learners and/or candidates.

Formal Providers of Post School Education and Training

An organisation providing PSET is deemed to be 'formal' if it falls into one or more of the following categories:

- a. Provides an education or training programme that leads to a qualification registered on the SQF;
- b. Receives or applies for funding from Government or from any other donor through the Government for education and training programmes designed to meet the requirements of qualifications;
- c. Uses or wishes to use a protected term²⁶ in the name of the organisation or in the names of any of the courses, programmes or qualifications that it provides;
- d. Enrols foreign students for a period of more than two months, in the aggregate, in a calendar year in any of the education and training programmes it provides;

²⁶ See Schedule 3 for the List of Protected Terms (page 27)

- f. Is an organisation based in a foreign country that wishes to provide education and training programmes in Samoa.
9. An organisation that wishes to establish itself as a new 'formal' provider of PSET is required to meet SQA's provider registration criteria⁶ and complete a Provider Listing Form⁷ before applying for accreditation⁸ to deliver programmes of learning.
10. Provider registration and programme accreditation will only be granted by the SQA when it is satisfied that the organisation meets the relevant criteria of the Quality Standard.
11. If an organisation fails to continue to meet the Quality Standard, procedures for removing accreditation and registration will be initiated by SQA.

C. THE SQA RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT

12. The Record of Achievement (RoA) is a national record of an individual's learning achievements that have been quality assured. This is of value to the learner:
 - for formal recognition of skills and competencies;
 - for creating incentive for learning more skills and competencies;
 - when applying for a new job nationally and internationally;
 - for recognition or status in the community; and
 - for possible credit towards further learning opportunities
13. Organisations that facilitate the delivery of non-formal learning and wish to have the achievements of their learners recorded on the SQA Record of Achievement are required to meet SQA's criteria for the recognition of non-formal learning.
14. SQA will, on request, issue a Record of Achievement to learners

⁶ Section E on page 10

⁷ Section D on page 9

⁸ Section F on page 11

who have achieved the following:

- a. One or more SQF registered qualifications, as the result of the successful completion of programmes of learning delivered by PSET providers that are accredited⁹ by SQA; and/or
 - b. Components of registered qualifications that have been assessed by or on behalf of an accredited PSET provider and/or
 - c. Non formal learning achievements that have been assessed by or on behalf of an organisation¹⁰ that is recognised as quality assured¹¹ by SQA.
15. Each learner will be allocated a unique Learning Identification Number (LIN) which will be included at the top of their Record of Achievement.

D. PROVIDER LISTING

16. An organisation intending to establish itself as a PSET provider with SQA for the first time must complete a Provider Listing Form¹² as the first step towards Full Registration.
17. The Provider Listing Form is only filled in once by all PSET providers and must provide accurate information on the organisation and its contact details, the nature of its expected education and training activities, and the profile of its potential learners.
18. Upon receipt of a completed Provider Listing Form, SQA will
 - a. record the organisation in its Record of potential PSET Providers

⁹ Note that these programmes lead to the award of qualifications that are registered on the Samoa Qualifications Framework. See also the “Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Non-formal Learning” and “Guidelines for Programme Accreditation”(separate documents)

¹⁰ Such organisations support the people facilitating non-formal learning.

¹¹ See “Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Learning”.

¹² The Provider Listing Form is attached in the “Guidelines for PSET Provider Registration”

6. The processes of programme accreditation and quality audit will be operated by SQA in a manner that is consistent with the rights of the university under the legislation

The University of the South Pacific

7. USP was established as a regional body by a Royal Charter issued by the Queen of England in 1970, exercising prerogative powers under the laws of Fiji at the time²⁵.
8. SQA will collaborate with USP to ensure a smooth interface between the organisations as SQA implements its quality assurances processes and USP implements its quality strategy.
9. Mechanisms that enable the qualifications that USP delivers in Samoa to be registered on the Samoa Qualifications Framework will be developed and implemented.

²⁵ USP, 2004: “A Regional University of Excellence Weaving Past and Present for the Future”; Background Paper 12, Legal Framework of the University

SCHEDULE 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SQA AND UNIVERSITIES

The National University of Samoa (NUS)

1. The National University of Samoa 2006 Act Section 3 grants academic freedom and gives NUS the right to regulate its programmes and its courses and to teach and assess in a manner that the University considers best promotes learning.
2. The NUS is under obligation to take all steps necessary to ensure that the international academic community accepts the University's standards in education, training and research. This includes registering NUS qualifications on the Samoa Qualifications Framework and gaining programme accreditation from SQA.

The Oceania University of Medicine (OUM)

3. The Oceania University of Medicine 2002 Act Section 5 grants academic freedom to OUM. Notwithstanding the grant of academic freedom Section 5 (3) requires that:

In exercising its academic freedom and autonomy, the University shall act in a manner that is consistent with the need for the maintenance of the highest ethical standards and the need to permit scrutiny to ensure the maintenance of those standards.

4. OUM is obligated to seek accreditation for the programmes that are provided. Section 14 (k) of the Act requires the OUM Council to arrange for the accreditation of the University to provide and teach courses in medicine and health care in its various disciplines inclusive of medical, dental and nursing by any body or authority in or outside of Samoa.
5. As a result, Section 14 (k) requires the OUM to seek accreditation from SQA as the Government of Samoa's educational quality agency and consequently OUM must comply with SQA Quality Standard , criteria and processes.

- b. enter the organisational details and information on the Registration Application Form
- c. send out the Registration Application Form¹³ to be completed by the organisation and returned to SQA
- d. conduct a preliminary evaluation of the organisation by visiting its delivery site(s)

E. REGISTRATION OF PROVIDERS

19. Provider registration is an evaluation of the capability of an organisation to provide and maintain a well organised, sound and stable learning environment encompassing all its modes of delivery. It is a process that examines the basic organisation, ensures that it is established for educational purposes, has suitable management structures and systems and has the necessary financial resources, staff, and necessary equipment and materials to provide educational programmes.
20. Organisations that the Government of Samoa has established under legislation to provide education and training are deemed to be registered.
21. Organisations that were established as 'formal' providers of PSET prior to the SQA Amendment Act 2009 coming into force are also deemed to be registered only for the first twelve months commencing on the date the SQA Amendment Act 2009 comes into force.
22. Provider registration will be conducted by SQA or its agents and will involve a site visit to the organisation.
23. A Provider's registered status is maintained annually through payment of the annual renewal registration fee by 31st January of each year. The PSET Provider's registered status is also reviewed through the processes of programme accreditation and/or quality audit.

¹³ Details from the Provider Listing Form will be entered by SQA on the Full Registration Application Form which is sent to the Provider for completion

The Criteria for Provider Registration are in Schedule 1 on page 23. Registration processes are detailed in the current version of SQA's "Guidelines for Post School Education and Training Provider Registration" (a separate document).

F. PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

24. Programme accreditation is the process used to evaluate an organisation's capability of delivering an education or training programme to the required standards.
25. It is an evaluation of how the general capabilities of the organisation are being (or will be) used to provide focused support to a particular programme so that the participants and stakeholders can be assured that the programme is being (or will be) delivered effectively, efficiently and to the required standard and level.
26. A registered organisation may be accredited to offer programmes that lead to many registered qualifications. However, each programme will need to be accredited separately. Accreditation of several programmes may be conducted concurrently.
27. Programme accreditation may be conducted concurrently with the consideration of provider registration.
28. Providers will be required to conduct an internal self evaluation prior to submitting each application for programme accreditation.
29. Programme accreditation will be conducted by SQA or its delegated agents and will involve site visits to the organisation^{14,15}.
30. Requirements for programme accreditation include the requirements for registering the associated qualification or qualifications on the Samoa Qualifications Framework.

¹⁴ The registration and accreditation of degrees will always involve expert panels.

¹⁵ The registration and accreditation of certificates and diplomas may also involve expert panels.

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 3: 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.

31. The awards conferred by accredited providers on learners who complete SQA accredited programmes and achieve the learning outcomes of registered qualifications can include the logo of SQA and the statement '*This qualification is registered on the Samoa Qualifications Framework*'.
32. The organisation whose programmes are accredited bears the programme accreditation costs. The costs are based on SQA's Fee Structure¹⁶.

The Criteria for Programme Accreditation are in Schedule 1 on page 24. Programme Accreditation processes are detailed in the current version of SQA's "Guidelines for Programme Accreditation of PSET Providers" (a separate document).

G. RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL LEARNING

33. Organisations that support the people facilitating non-formal learning activities are required to meet SQA's criteria for the recognition of non-formal learning.
34. Such organisations may apply to SQA to have the achievements of their PSET learners recognised and recorded on the SQA Record of Achievement.
35. SQA will work with these organisations so as to apply the SQA Quality Standard and associated criteria in contextually and culturally appropriate ways.
36. The focus of SQA's evaluation process will be on the systems that the organisation has in place to support the facilitators and assessors of their non-formal learning activities, rather than on each individual activity.
37. SQA may directly contract assessors to enable the recognition of non-formal learning achievement that has taken place without the involvement of a specific organisation¹⁷.

The Criteria for the Recognition of Non-Formal Learning are in Schedule 1 on page 24. Recognition processes are detailed in the

¹⁶ See SQA Fee Structure (a separate document)

¹⁷ For example: traditional Samoan tattooing and weaving; work-place learning

current version of SQA's "Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Learning" (a separate document).

H. QUALITY AUDIT

38. Quality audit is the process used to evaluate an organisation's effectiveness against the SQA Quality Standard, and to ensure that it continues to comply with registration and programme accreditation criteria.
39. The purposes of quality audit are:
 - a. To assure both the audited organisation and its clients and stakeholders that the service provided by the organisation consistently meets the SQA Quality Standard; and
 - b. To identify for the organisation opportunities for improvement.
40. PSET providers are required to conduct internal self evaluations and/or internal audits as part of their quality management responsibilities. Ultimately, for external confidence, audit by an independent third party is required.
41. The outcome of an SQA quality audit determines whether the registration and accreditation status of a PSET Provider should be continued.
42. A PSET provider that is registered and/or accredited remains with that status for its period of registration and/or accreditation unless a full quality audit or a special purpose audit results in the need to make a change.
43. External audits will be conducted by SQA or by its agents¹⁸, following a defined audit cycle, which will be between one and five years in most cases. Such audits will usually involve a panel of relevant experts.
44. External audit panels members will be independent of the organisations being audited and will not have any on-going contact through moderation, programme review and/or monitoring.

¹⁸ See SQA's "Guidelines for Quality Audit of PSET Providers" (a separate document)

- c. Writing the report:
 - Choose an appropriate format
 - Limit the number of recommendations
 - Include examples of good practices
- d. Informing:
 - Send a summary of results to all staff
 - Make sure examples of good practice are published, distributed and discussed
- e. Taking action:
 - Develop specific action plans with named responsible people and dates for completion of each action
 - Implement these action plans and monitor the outcomes
- f. Reflecting:
 - Has quality improved as a result?
 - How do you know?
 - What needs to be improved?

SCHEDULE 2: SELF EVALUATION

1. Quality is best assured when it is embedded into the provider's own internal quality management system.
2. Providers are responsible for the quality of their own education and training programmes. SQA expects providers to regularly conduct self evaluations, internal reviews and/or internal audits of their organisation and report their findings to the Authority as a requirement of programme accreditation and quality audit.
3. Self evaluation means an organisation can assess its effectiveness against good practice criteria and determine whether it continues to comply with its own quality management system as well as the Authority's Quality Standard.
4. Self evaluation should help an organisation to identify areas where it needs to improve and to develop action plans for improvement.
5. SQA's Self Evaluation Form²⁴ can be used as a guide to evaluate provider programmes before a SQA programme accreditation or quality audit. Providers can, of course, use their own self evaluation tools.
6. The following six steps are recommended for conducting a self evaluation, internal review or internal audit:
 - a. Planning:
 - Begin with clear aims
 - Consider what resources are needed
 - Get agreement and permission on the purpose and scope
 - Use realistic timeframes
 - b. Doing:
 - Ensure adequate administrative support
 - Balance work commitments and workloads
 - Give people time to talk
 - Ensure that sufficient evidence is collected to support findings

²⁴ See "Guidelines for Quality Audit of PSET Providers" and "Guidelines for Programme Accreditation of PSET Providers" (separate documents)

45. External auditors will be trained in the processes of quality audit according to criteria established by the SQA.
46. Before the external audit visit, the PSET provider will conduct a self evaluation of its quality management system¹⁹. The self evaluation should establish the extent to which the organisation is meeting both the requirements of its QMS and the SQA Quality Standard. The external audit process seeks to validate the organisation's self evaluation.
47. The external audit report, after approval by the SQA Board, will be a public document where the audited organisation is a provider of PSET, as defined in the Glossary on page 33.
48. If the audit report indicates that the organisation has failed to maintain appropriate standards of its education and training services, and where evidence clearly indicates a lack of action to ensure that it continues to maintain its accreditation status, the SQA Board may suspend or withdraw the organisation's accreditation of a particular programme, and/or suspend or withdraw the organisation's registration. (See Section J on page 15)
49. Unless the audit is funded directly by Government, the audited organisation bears the costs of the external audit. The costs are based on the SQA's Fee Structure²⁰.

The SQA Quality Standard is in Schedule 1 on pages 23 - 24. Audit processes are detailed in the current version of "SQA Guidelines for Quality Audit of PSET Providers" (a separate document).

I. INVESTIGATIONS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE AUDITS

50. An investigation is undertaken by SQA to establish the facts and to determine a course of action if:
 - a. there is a written complaint received against a provider, or
 - b. there is evidence of non-compliance with accreditation requirements

¹⁹ See Schedule 2 (Page 25)

²⁰ See SQA's Fee Structure (a separate document)

51. A Special Purpose Audit is conducted when there is a clear case for proceeding as a result of an investigation
52. Depending on the outcome of the Special Purpose Audit, a provider's registration and/or programme accreditation(s) may be suspended or withdrawn.
53. The costs of investigations are borne by SQA.
54. The costs of a Special Purpose Audit are borne by the organisation being audited

Special Purpose Audit processes are detailed in the "Guidelines for Quality Audit of PSET Providers" (a separate document).

J. WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION AND/OR REGISTRATION

55. Where SQA considers that there may be grounds for withdrawing a Provider's programme accreditation, and/or deregistering an associated qualification from the SQF, and/or withdrawing its registration, 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.
56. SQA may take the above action as a result of a special purpose audit or an external quality audit.

Criteria for Programme Accreditation	Criteria for Recognition of Non-Formal Learning
<p>➤ Provider registration criteria continue to be met</p>	<p>1.6 The organisation¹ has a current memorandum of agreement with SQA</p> <p><i>'Such organisations support the people who facilitate the non-formal learning activities</i></p>
<p>2.1 The programme & its components are coherent, & are designed to meet the requirements of the qualification 2.2 Qualification(s) awarded on the basis of successful completion of the programme, meet(s) the requirements for registration on the SQF</p>	<p>2.3 The organisation adequately and appropriately designs, develops and reviews its non-formal learning activities in response to identified community needs</p>
<p>3.1 The programme is being delivered, or will be delivered, in an appropriate way in all modes of delivery</p>	<p>3.2 The non-formal learning activities are facilitated in a culturally appropriate and safe way</p>
<p>4.1 Adequate financial resources are allocated to sustain the programme</p>	<p>4.2 Adequate financial support is available to sustain the organisation's non-formal learning activities</p>
<p>5.1 The provider demonstrates how it applies, or will apply, its policies and procedures to recruit, induct, appraise and develop programme staff</p>	<p>5.2 The organisation ensures that the non-formal learning facilitators, whether paid or unpaid, have the skills, knowledge, cultural competence and status to maintain a quality learning environment</p>
<p>6.1 The provider's application of its policies and procedures ensures adequate and relevant information on entry, progress and support of all learners.</p>	<p>6.2 The organisation or assessor ensures that relevant information is supplied to learners and communities, learner needs are identified and learners are supported to achieve learning outcomes</p>
<p>7.1 The provider has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to deliver the programme</p>	<p>7.2 The organisation ensures the use of adequate and relevant physical and learning resources to deliver inclusive non-formal learning activities</p>
<p>8.1 The provider's application of its policies & procedures will ensure the fair, valid, consistent & appropriate assessment of learners against the learning outcomes of the programme</p>	<p>8.2 The organisation or assessor ensures the fair, valid, consistent and relevant assessment of learners against the learning outcomes</p>
<p>9.1 The provider has adequate and appropriate systems to report on learner achievement for the programme</p>	<p>9.2 The organisation or assessor has adequate and relevant systems for reporting learner achievement</p>
<p>10.1 The provider has adequate and appropriate means of research to meet the requirements of its degrees and postgraduate programmes</p>	<p><i>The organisation should encourage research, enquiry and learning to support its non-formal learning activities</i></p>

SCHEDULE 1: SQA QUALITY STANDARD

Element	Quality Audit Standards	Criteria for Provider Registration
1. Organisation	1. The provider is an enduring legally recognised body with an appropriate name, measurable goals and objectives for the delivery of education and training, and effective governance and management systems to enable the ongoing achievement of its goals and objectives, including self evaluation, review and/or internal quality audit processes	<p>1.1 The provider or its governing body is a legally established or recognised enduring body</p> <p>1.2 The provider's name is appropriate and does not mislead learners about the nature of the organisation.</p> <p>1.3 The provider has a clear statement of its educational purpose, goals and objectives</p> <p>1.4 The provider has adequate and appropriate governance and management to achieve its goals and objectives</p> <p>1.5 The provider has a coherent quality management system (QMS) of adequate and appropriate organisational structures, policies, procedures, responsibilities and resources that cover all elements of the SQA Quality Standard, as listed below:</p>
2. Programme development and review	2. The provider adequately and appropriately designs, develops and reviews its education and training qualifications, programmes and courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme development and review policies and procedures
3. Programme delivery	3. The provider defines and implements effective teaching and learning practices that are educationally sound and appropriate to the programme of study and mode of delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme delivery policies and procedures
4. Financial resources	4. The provider allocates adequate financial resources to achieve the outcomes of its education and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial resources policies and procedures
5. Personnel	5. The provider recruits, manages and develops its people to enable quality delivery of its education and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel policies and procedures
6. Learner information, entry and support	6. Adequate and relevant information, entry and support services are provided to learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learner information, entry and support policies and procedures
7. Physical and learning resources	7. The provider has adequate and appropriate physical and learning resources to support the delivery of its education and training programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical and learning resources policies and procedures
8. Assessment and moderation	8. The provider has fair, valid and effective systems for assessing learners against the programme outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment and moderation policies and procedures
9. Reporting learner achievement	9. The provider adequately and appropriately reports learner achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting learner achievement policies and procedures
10. Research	10. Adequate and appropriate research is conducted to meet the requirements of degree and postgraduate qualifications and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research policies and procedures (where appropriate)

K. REGAINING ACCREDITED OR REGISTERED STATUS

57. A provider whose qualification was deregistered from the SQF or whose registration or programme accreditation status was either suspended or withdrawn 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.

L. COMPLIANCE NOTICES

58. SQA may issue a compliance notice to a Provider requiring the Provider to take, or refrain from taking, a particular action in relation to its registration, programme accreditation, or registration of any of its qualifications on the SQF.
59. Every compliance notice will be in writing (a formal letter from SQA) and must:
- give the date on which 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.
60. 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.
61. 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.
62. SQA may extend the period of time for a provider to rectify compliance.
63. If the Provider does not comply with the compliance notice, SQA may immediately impose new, or amend or revoke any existing condition(s) on any of the Provider's registration, programme accreditation or registration of any of its qualifications on the SQF.

M. COMPLAINTS BY PSET PROVIDERS ABOUT SQA

64. Providers may lodge a complaint of irregularity or non-compliance with procedures relating to registration, programme accreditation or audit decisions against SQA or its agents.
65. A complaint should initially be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of SQA who may deal with it directly.
66. If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been satisfactorily resolved by the CEO, or where the complaint relates directly to the CEO, they may write to the Chair of the SQA Board who may deal with it directly or, if it is not easily resolved, refer it to an ad hoc complaints committee made up of two members of the SQA Board and, where appropriate, up to two external members from other PSET providers.

N. APPEALS BY PSET PROVIDERS AGAINST SQA DECISIONS

67. A Provider who has cause to believe that they were denied a fair registration, programme accreditation or audit decision by the SQA Board may submit a request for a review of the decision, in writing to the CEO, within 14 days of receipt of that decision.
68. Where a Provider is unsatisfied with the decision of the CEO, the Provider shall submit a request for a review of the matter by the Board within seven days of receipt of that decision.
69. To consider the review, the Board shall appoint an ad-hoc SQA Review Committee, which shall consist of three members:
 - The Chair shall be an independent person who is familiar with SQA quality assurance processes, has high standing in industry or the community, and is not employed by the Provider or the Authority.
 - The second member shall be familiar with SQA quality assurance processes, have a high standing in the PSET sub-sector, and is not employed by the Provider or the Authority.
 - The third member shall be a subject/discipline expert who has relevant experience in the discipline area (in the case of

93. National qualifications will display the logo of SQA and the signature of SQA's Chief Executive Officer, in addition to the logo and signature of the awarding accredited provider.
94. The logo of another body, for example a professional body or trade association, may be included on a national qualification, subject to approval by the professional body or trade association and SQA.

91. Local PSET providers that establish any arrangement with a foreign provider must take note of the following before confirmation of intent to do so:
- Providers must amend their internal quality management systems to take full responsibility for the delivery of cross border education and training programmes;
 - Local PSET providers and individuals must closely examine all information and guidance provided by foreign institutions and providers to ensure that they do not fall victim to dubious quality assurance and accreditation claims and low-quality provision, leading to qualifications of limited validity;
 - Where there is doubt about the reputation and standards of a potential foreign provider, their programmes or qualifications, SQA must be consulted immediately, and full contact details of the foreign provider must be submitted to facilitate and expedite solicitation of information;
 - Local providers must ensure that the programmes they offer on behalf of a foreign provider or institution are of the same level and quality as those offered in the country of origin;
 - Local providers must have in place appropriately qualified staff to provide supplementary student support as well as all other relevant resources that support the programmes offered;
 - Assessment standards must be relevant, fair and consistent with programme outcomes, context and the parent organisation's processes in the sending country.

S. USE OF SQA LOGO ON CERTIFICATES

92. An accredited provider that wishes to use the SQA logo on any of its qualifications registered on the SQF must apply to SQA prior to the award of such qualifications having the SQA logo. This is normally addressed during the programme accreditation process.

- a review involving a specialist subject area), and is not employed by the Provider or the Authority.
- The Review Committee shall consult with the Provider, the Panel Chairperson or Audit Team Leader, the Chief Executive Officer of SQA and any other relevant person, such as a legal advisor, it wishes to consult with.
 - The decision of the Review Committee shall be presented as a recommendation to the SQA Board, within one month of Review Committee being appointed.
 - The cost of a successful review shall be covered by SQA. The cost of an unsuccessful review shall be charged to the Provider.
 - A Provider whose review outcome was unsuccessful has the right to appeal to the Minister of Education, Sports and Culture²¹.

O. COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS ABOUT PSET PROVIDERS

- When a written complaint is received by SQA a record and log of the complaint is maintained.
- If the complaint is not resolved easily SQA may write to the CEO of the Provider seeking a response to the matters raised.
- If SQA considers the response to be inadequate, an Investigation (see Section I, page 14) will be undertaken to establish the facts and determine a course of action.
- When there is a clear case for proceeding as a result of an Investigation, a Special Purpose Audit will be conducted. (See section I, page 14 of this booklet and the current version of "SQA Guidelines for PSET Quality Audit" – a separate document).

P. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE RIGHTS OF UNIVERSITIES

- It is accepted internationally that an important factor in ensuring the character and quality of university education is the

²¹ See SQA Amendment Act 2009

preservation of academic freedom. Academic freedom allows university staff and students the freedom to question existing knowledge and theories, put forward new ideas, and to state controversial or unpopular opinions.

79. Guided by their legislations, universities have the right to regulate their programmes and their courses and to teach and assess in a manner that the university considers best promotes learning.
80. The application and operation by universities of the systems and regulations related to the Samoa Qualifications Framework will be guided by a common interest to meet the needs of the people of Samoa. (Refer to the Samoa Qualifications Framework Policies)
81. Universities are under obligation to take all steps necessary to ensure that the international academic community accepts their standards in education, training and research. This includes registering their qualifications on the Samoa Qualifications Framework and gaining programme accreditation from SQA.

Schedule 4 outlines the relationship between SQA and Universities (see page 29)

Q. RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

82. Section 12 of the Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa states that:

(2) Every religious community or denomination shall have the right to establish and maintain educational institutions of its own choice and to provide therein religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination.

83. Section 12 (3) of the Constitution grants the State the right to inspect the institutions to maintain standards of education.

(3) Nothing in clause (2) shall prevent the State from making any law requiring the inspection of educational institutions and the maintenance therein of standards in keeping with the general educational level in [Western] Samoa.

84. The SQA Quality Standard applies to Theological Colleges and all forms of Religious Instructions.

R. CROSS BORDER PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

85. Cross border²² education encompasses all types of education study programmes, sets of courses of study, or educational services (including all forms of open and distance learning) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based²³.
86. SQA will work closely with Government and all PSET providers in Samoa to ensure protection of students and learners from investing in cross border education that is of low or dubious quality.
87. Programmes or courses will be subject to accreditation by SQA if they are provided in Samoa in an organised and directed manner where students enrol, pay fees and attend guided instruction at a particular location or locations.
88. SQA will make available all relevant information on Samoa's qualifications, registration, programme accreditation and quality audit processes to foreign providers who wish to offer cross border education and training in Samoa.
89. SQA will strengthen international co-operation and networking in partnership with international quality assurance and accreditation bodies in quality assuring cross border providers as cross border education and training involves the sending country as much as Samoa who is the receiving country.
90. SQA will coordinate and facilitate the process of recognition or establishing equivalence between the Samoa Qualifications Framework and those of other countries' based on procedures and criteria mutually agreed to.

²² Cross border education is also known as transnational education

²³ Adapted from the UNESCO/OECD Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education, 2002