

Circular No : 10/2023



MINING QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

2023/24 MQA FINAL RESEARCH AGENDA



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) was first established under the Mine Health and Safety Act No.29 of 1996 and later registered as a Sector Education and Training Authority under the Skills Development Act No.97 of 1998. To this end, the MQA is Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) responsible for the administration of skills development programmes for the Mining and Minerals Sector in South Africa

2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 2.1** Promote efficient and effective governance and administration.
- 2.2** Improve skills development planning and decision –making through research.
- 2.3** Promote work-based skills development to support transformation in the mining and minerals sector (MMS).
- 2.4** Facilitate access to occupationally directed learning programmes for the unemployed.
- 2.5** Support training initiatives in mining communities.
- 2.6** Ensure the delivery of quality learning programmes in the mining and minerals sector.

3. LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE MQA

The MQA is a statutory entity that has the primary mandate of coordinating skills development processes and programmes in the MMS. The primary objective of the MQA is to support the MMS to continuously develop sufficient and competent workforce in occupations that are related to the MMS.

The legislative framework that the MQA operates under, comprises **three primary legislative instruments** which are:

- a) **Mine Health and Safety Act of 1996.**
- b) **Skills Development Act of 1998;** and
- c) **Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 2002.**

The Mine Health and Safety Act, 1996(Act 29 of 1996) Section 41(3)	The Skills Development Amendment Act, 2003(Act 31 of 2003)	Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act of 28 of 2002.
Established the MQA on June 1996 to advise the minister of Mineral and Energy (now the Minister of Mineral Resources) on: a) The creation of a framework for qualifications and learning achievements in the mining industry to improve health and safety standards through proper training and education; b) Standards and competency setting, assessment, examinations, quality assurance and accreditation in the mining industry and c) Linking and qualifying framework for the manning industry to the National Qualification Framework referred to in the National Qualifications Framework Act, 67 of 2008	Section 4A of schedule 2 “re-established” the MQA as follows: Despite anything to the contrary in either this Act or the Mine Healthy and Safety Act, 1996 (Act 29 of 1996 and with effect from 20 March 2002, the Mining Qualifications Authority, established in terms of section 9(1) of this Act as SETA 16	Establishes that the Minerals and Mining Development Board must in terms of Section 58(1) of this Act “in consultation with the MQA, ensure the promotion of human resources development in the minerals and mining industry”

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has recently promulgated the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) which took effect on 1 April 2020. The plan identified priorities across sectors of the economy with various outcomes to address the skills shortages and gaps. The MQA is guided by the policies of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Therefore, any policy changes will be incorporated into the operations, programmes, and activities of the MQA as and when the need arises.

4. IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

Scientific research is necessary to increase knowledge regarding nature, extent and state of skills demand and supply in the MMS. Research is required in order to provide the labour market intelligence about skills requirements, factors shaping the skills development to inform better skills planning and skills development interventions. Overall, research is aimed at improving the quality of life through skills development of the worker population and especially in the MMS. It is fundamental in improving skills profile. Research is therefore defined as a systematic investigation, including research developments, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. It also aims to establish facts and reach new conclusions about various skills development related topics of legislative and functional imperative. It is therefore a detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding. To this extent, research is key to the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system in realising the vision outlined by the White Paper for PSET. It can provide insights into the PSET system and the constituencies it serves; about the success or otherwise of policies and their implementation; and about the experiences of other countries with similar challenges. It also enables practitioners to test and compare diverse theories and approaches to the provision of PSET as well as the development of leading-edge information, services, and applications for the system. Most importantly, research can make available evidence on which the MQA is able to make decisions, review policies and improve systems, services, and practices.

5. THE MQA's RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The MQA research agenda sets to outline research projects to be prioritised for the period April 2023 to March 2024. It is informed by the strategic objective 2 outlined in the MQA strategic plan and annual performance plan. The research agenda aims to lead and collaborate on research projects in skills development priorities within the MMS for the purpose of making informed decisions and creating a credible institutional mechanism for skills development planning and research in the sector.

The purpose of the NSDP is to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate and high-quality skills that contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development through attainment of eight outcomes.

The priorities that stand out in the NSDP for the MMS are as follows:

- Identify and increase production of occupations in high demand
- Linking education and workplace
- Improving the quality of education, skills development and innovation
- Support the growth of the public college system
- Skills development for entrepreneurship
- Support worker-initiated training
- Support career development service

Each focus area could generate an indefinite number of themes and topics, and many cross-theme changes are possible. The MQA has, however, identified specific focus areas and topics that are of particular priority for the MMS. The MQA works and partners with key public institutions such as universities and other research institutions, to develop an institutional mechanism for skills planning.

To ensure the continual objective decision making and skills development planning; the research projects below are proposed for the 2023/24 financial year.

5.1 Sector Skills Plan 2024/25 (Annual Update) - Legislative Imperative

The focus of the SSP is to identify skills demand and supply issues to inform intervention for the next years

Key focus areas include the:

- MQA's sector profile including
 - Identifying the key role players
 - Economic Analysis of the MMS
 - Employer and Labour Market analysis
- Key change drivers of the sector and alignment with national strategies and plans
- Key skills issues to be addressed for the sector
- Occupational shortages and skills gaps within the MMS
- Supply and demand imperatives in the MMS
- Current and future sector partnerships
- Sector priorities in skills development

5.2 WSP_ATR Trends Analysis Update (2020-2023) - Functional Imperative

The broad them for this study to the skills development trends in respect to demand and supply to inform more appropriate interventions in the MMS.

Key focus areas include the:

- Trends analysis of WSP-ATR submissions by subsector, company size, and province
- Profile of the MMS' workforce by occupational level, race, gender, nationality, age and disability over the past 3 years
- Hard-to-fill vacancies in terms of province, sub-sector as well as reasons why employers identify them as hard-to-fill.
- Trends analysis of training undertaken and planned for employees as reported on the WSP-ATRs in the past 3 years

5.3 Exploring the nature and future of AET programmes in the MMS - Functional Imperative.

The broad theme for this study is the nature and extent of the integration of 4IR into the AET programmes in subsectors in the MMS.

Key focus areas include the:

- International experience, sectoral experience, and organisational experiences (benchmarking with other SETAs such as AGRISETA, Energy & Water SETA and Construction SETA) to gain insight into real experiences: successes, challenges, and practical lessons to develop critical success factors for integrating 4IR into the AET programmes for the beneficiaries within the MMS.
- Explore different funding models and mechanisms for achieving better outcomes in the MMS.
- The nature of support required from the MQA to support the national senior certificate for adults.
- State of readiness (infrastructural, human resource) for training providers to roll out the AET in the context of changing landscape.
- Nature of elementary digital skills necessary for future training
- Enabling mechanism: infrastructure, modes of delivery, models, systems for rolling future AET programmes.

5.4 Investigating the state of the MQA funding policy with respect to grants (Learnerships including RPL for non-artisans, occupational health and safety, candidacy, work experience and coaches programmes) - Functional Imperative

The broad theme for the study is real experiences, successes, challenges, and practical lessons learned from implementing grants for an improved grant allocation.

Key focus areas include:

- Benchmarking with other SETAs for best practices to develop fit to purpose models for ensuring efficient, effective, and efficacious grants allocation.
- Review the MQA funding policy with regards to grants allocation to identify mis(matches) between policy and implementation.
- Developing a fit to purpose grant model which could be subjected to scrutiny and ongoing review for improved performance including monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures.

5.5 Assessing the effectiveness of partnership between the MQA and Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs)

Key features:

- What is the scope and aim of CETCs from the DHET perspective?
- What is the nature (purpose and goals, principles) and scope underpinning this partnership in the MQA?
- Identifying the Intention of NSDP in expanding skills development through CETCs and how the MQA is implementing this vision
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships? What works and what does not work and why?
- What role can the MQA play in assisting the CETCs?
- Based on the key findings develop a model for effective and efficient partnership, a model that will lead to improvement of synergy between the MQA and CETCs.

5.6 Investigating factors impeding attainment of equity targets with respect to people with disability in the MMS

Key features:

- What is the nature of employment profile with respect to provincial, sub-sectoral, racial, gender, age and occupational distribution of people living with a disability?
- What are the factors influencing the attraction of employees with disability in MMS?
- What training interventions are put in place for employees with disability in the MMS to enable employment of people with disability in the MMS?
- Provide specific recommendations necessary to improve absorption of people with disability in the labour market within the MMS.
- Provide specific recommendations that are necessary to improve absorption of medically boarded employees in the MMS.

5.7 Exploring employers' perceptions about the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in South Africa: A case study of Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, and Gauteng provinces

Key features:

- Thoughts, feelings, expectations, concerns, and experiences of the employers on the governance, curriculum, programme delivery and output (quality of TVET college graduates).
- Correlation between perceptions and absorption into the MMS' labour market of TVET college.
- Alignment of employment criteria and TVET college outcomes.
- Recommendations that are necessary to improve synergy between employers and TVET colleges to ensure fit to purpose workforce in respect of the requisite competencies in the MMS.

5.8 Exploring the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in the subsectors of the Mining and Minerals Sector and its skills development implications - Functional Imperative

The study's broad theme is the 4IR in the MMS. Thus, the focus is on the more nuanced analysis of the 4IR related developments in the subsectors and explore the implications on skills development with the purpose of developing a framework for future skills needs anticipation within the MMS.

5.6.1 Investigating the extent of 4IR innovation and related impact on occupational profiling in the subsectors within the MMS.

Key features include the:

- 'As is situation', a more specific analysis of the level or extent of innovation and application with regard to 4IR in the subsectors within the MMS.
- Technological developments are affecting the occupational landscape. (Or the effects of technological developments on the occupational structure, and the current occupations and the ways they are affected and reasons thereof).
- Skills gaps and specific ways of addressing them.
- The nature (positive and negative) of the impact of 4IR.
- Technological developments and the way they shape the labour dynamics in the landscape.

- Current nature of skills supply.
- Specific recommendations on strategic and practical innovative ways of responding to skills development related to 4IR in the MMS.

5.6.2 Investigating skills demand and the nature of supply for the skills required with the changing technology within different subsectors in the MMS.

Key focus areas include:

- Nature of skills demand in relation to the occupational profiling.
- Extent and nature of the current skills supply (education and training provision).
- Skills mismatch between supply and demand.
- Kind of interventions that can be implemented to address the identified skills mismatch.
- Ways of leveraging on cross- sectoral training to address the skills demand in the MMS.

5.6.3 Developing a framework to determine (anticipate) future skills needs in the MMS (applicable across subsectors).

Key focus areas include the:

- Key drivers influencing skills requirements in the MMS.
- International experience, to distil the best practices and the lessons that can be learned from the 'success stories' for application in the MMS.
- Critical success factors (key features) necessary for the development of a framework for skills anticipation in the MMS.
- Framework that could applied in the MMS for skills anticipation and the nature of the procedure and process to be followed in applying it.

6. RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS: PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS REGARDING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE MMS

One of the principles of the NSDP is to encourage greater inclusivity and collaboration amongst key stakeholders. As such, the NSDP seeks to promote.

- Collaboration through partnerships within the public sector as well as between the public and private sectors to support effective skills development.
- A focus on quality education and training provision and articulation
- between programme and qualification offerings to ensure effective

learning to work pathways.

- A strong focus on workplace-based learning in both public and private sectors.
- Partnerships across the skills development system with both private and public providers; and
- Effective and meaning stakeholder engagement to support ownership and participation among stakeholders including social partners, individuals, employers, labour, providers, prospective learners, and the public.

7. RESEARCH FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT

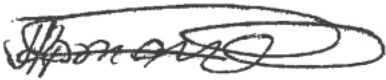
The MQA's procurement practice is governed by section 217 of the Constitution of RSA, Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999) and Treasury Regulations. Therefore, procurement decisions on research provision always considers cost, equity, fairness, accountability, transparency, functionality, and quality considerations. In addition, the MQA as a SETA has put in place systems and procedures to put in effect its approved Supply Chain Management Policy as well as the Discretionary processes.

The MQA shall enter into private and public partnerships with institutions that express interest form a partnership/s to undertake research in line with the MQA mandate especially its research agenda. The MQA intends to fund research within the parameters of its own financial resources.

8. CONCLUSION

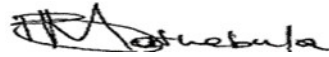
The MQA research agenda is informed by the mandate which finds expression in its five-year strategic plan and annual performance plan. Through research, labour market intelligence is gathered to continually inform and support objective decision making for skills development planning in the sector.

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