

Understanding the Professional Designations of SAQA-Recognised Professional Bodies: Towards SAQA Guidelines for Professional Designations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background, context, research questions

Professional bodies are key role-players in South Africa's system for education, training, development, and work. Their professional registrations and continuing professional development (CPD) play central roles in enabling access to, and progression in, learning-and-work pathways. As well as protecting the public, professional body inputs into qualification development and provision enhance the quality and credibility of learning in their fields, and respect for practitioners nationally and internationally. Professional bodies must collaborate with the Quality Councils for this work .

The mandate of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2008), includes recognizing professional bodies and registering their professional designations – when the bodies meet the criteria for access, redress, progression, quality, and transparency (SAQA, 2020). SAQA's policy for professional bodies is relatively silent on the naming, systems, and publication of professional designations. The research reported here sought to address the following aspects towards possible future guidelines in this regard.

- (a) Sometimes professional designations are given the **same titles as the names of the qualifications** underlying them/ on which the professional designations are based, causing confusion for stakeholders.
- (b) Sometimes professional designations are given the **same occupational titles as related occupations in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)**, again causing confusion for stakeholders.
- (c) Sometimes professional designations include **historical terms such as 'chartered' or 'royal' that may be inappropriate** for South Africa.
- (d) While some professional bodies have small numbers of professional designations (**under five designations**), **others have many (over 25)**.
- (e) While the designations of some professional bodies are hierarchical, requiring enhanced studies, work experience and professional development over time, the designations of others are **not sequenced in systematic ways**.

This report addresses the following seven research questions.

- 1) What are the **current naming practices/ naming patterns** for professional designations by SAQA-recognised professional bodies that are (a) statutory, and (b) non-statutory?
- 2) Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** have the same titles as **NQF-registered qualifications/ part-qualifications** and (ii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- 3) Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** have the same titles as **occupation titles in the OFO** and (ii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- 4) Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** include **terms that may be inappropriate** for South Africa, (ii) **what are these** terms, and (iii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- 5) Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) how many have **high numbers of titles** and what are these numbers? (ii) How many **do not sequence** their designations and how do the designations differ? (iii) Are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- 6) What are some **international practices that SAQA could consider** as it seeks to clarify its criteria for professional designations?
- 7) **What principles and/or criteria could feature in SAQA guidelines** for naming and assigning professional designations?

Sample and methods

At the outset, on 31 August 2021, there were 103 SAQA-recognised professional bodies; during the research two of these bodies were de-recognised, so the analyses focused on all the remaining 101 bodies and their 373 designations registered in the National Qualifications Framework Management Information System (NQF MIS). There were 19 statutory bodies with 112 (30% of) designations, and 82 non-statutory bodies with 261 (70% of) designations.

To address the first five questions, the designation data were extracted from the NQF MIS as well as the professional body websites, and cleaned, coded, and analysed using Excel spreadsheets. Patterns were sought within the categories 'statutory' and 'non-statutory', and overall, as appropriate. Information in the NQF MIS and on professional bodies was compared.

Given that the first level analyses revealed clear as well as less clear systems of professional designations, the international counterpart professional body systems for some of the 'less clear' systems were considered, the idea being to identify alternative possibilities for the less clear systems.

Summary results

Highlights from the results are as follows. Table 1 provides summary counts of designation information in the NQF MIS.

Table 1: Summary counts of designation information in the NQF MIS

Category of information	Count of designations	Percentage (%) of all designations
Total professional designations (PDs)	373	100.0
Statutory body designations	112	30.0
Non-statutory body designations	261	70.0
Statutory body PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	39	10.5
Non-statutory body PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	194	52.0
Total PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	233	60.1
PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	140	39.9
Statutory body PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	73	19.6
Non-statutory body PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	67	18.0

- Regarding the **visibility of designation information on the professional body websites**, 81 (84% of) the designations in the sample set were listed; 10 (11%) were partially listed, and six (seven percent) did not list their designations. Some 71 bodies (74% of the sample set) fully elaborated their designation criteria, 16 (17%) partially described designation criteria, and nine did not give any criteria for their designations.
- Regarding the **visibility of whole designation systems** for the 75 bodies with more than one designation, 36 (48% of) bodies described their designation systems fully, 32 (43%) did so partially, and seven (9%) did not provide this information.
- Regarding **designation titles**, the 373 designation titles were found to consist of a wide variety of terms, including combinations of (30 different types of) prefixes, descriptors, and (10 different types of) suffixes, combinations with more than one prefix or suffix (complex naming), or only one or two of these components.
- Regarding terms used, the word '**Chartered**' was found in 21/373 (6%) of the designations, all but one for non-statutory bodies, ten of which appear to have no links to Charters, and the remainder links with international bodies with Charters. Further, ten professional body names include the word 'Charter'. The term '**Graduate**' is used in two of 373 designations, '**Accredited**' in four of 373, and **acronyms** in three body titles, and 18/373 designations, all for non-statutory bodies.
- Regarding the **extent of similarity between qualification and designation titles**, for statutory bodies, four (10%) of the 39 designations with qualification information in the NQF MIS used *general* qualification terms (e.g., BSc) as the basis for their designations, nine (23%) used *similar* designation and qualification titles, and **22 (56%)** had *identical or almost identical* designation and qualification titles. For non-statutory bodies with the information, 52 (29%) of 181 designations used *general* qualification terms, 80 (44%) specific

dissimilar terms, 19 (10%) similar designation and qualification titles, and **30 (17%)** identical or almost identical designation and qualification titles.

- Regarding the **extent of similarity between occupation and designation titles**, for all professional bodies and designations (n=373), 228 (61%) used dissimilar titles, for 93 (25%) there was partial matching between the designation and occupation titles, and **38 (10%)** of designation titles fully matched occupation titles. In 14 designations (4%) the designation titles were ambiguous (e.g., 'Member', 'Associate', and others).
- The **numbers of designations** per statutory professional body ranged from a single designation to 37 designations. The most common pattern was bodies having a single designation (three of 19 bodies) or bodies with three or four designations per entity (eight of 19 bodies). Two bodies had two designations, and two bodies had seven designations. One body had six, one had eight, one had 12, and one 37 designations. Non-statutory bodies had between one and 16 designations, continuing the trend seen for the statutory bodies. The most common patterns were a single designation (24 of 81), or three (18 of 81) or four designations (15 of 81). Six non-statutory bodies had five designations each, while one or two had six, seven, eight, 10 or 16 designations. Overall, while 14 bodies had six or more designations, most had one designation (27 of 101 bodies), two designations (12 bodies), three (22 bodies), four (19 bodies), or five (six bodies).
- Regarding **hierarchy and progression between the designations ('designation systems')** within professional bodies, information was sourced across the NQF MIS and the professional body websites.
 - The most common pattern in professional designation systems was for bodies to provide single progression pathways ('A', n=39 bodies), followed by bodies that provide single designations ('H', n=27 bodies). The next two most common trends were for bodies to show no progression ('G', n=10) and bodies to have a single progression pathway as well as independent designations ('D', n=9).
 - Fewer bodies had two progression pathways/ designation sub-systems ('B', n=4), while one had three progression pathways/ sub-systems ('C', n=1), one had 'mixed progression pathways' comprising two or three progression paths as well as independent designations ('E', n=1), two had 'mixed progression pathways' with four or more progression paths as well as independent designations ('F', n=2), and for six, the information was not clear/ appeared incorrect.
 - Statutory and non-statutory bodies, while not identical, followed similar patterns in the distribution of their progression pathways, with the five most common categories for each being 'A', 'B', 'D', 'G', and 'H' (not including the categories with uncertainty). Comparing the trends for statutory and non-statutory bodies respectively: from most to least common progression patterns, statutory bodies showed the sequence 'G', 'B', 'D', 'H', 'A', while their non-statutory counterparts showed 'A', 'H',

'G', 'D', 'B'. These differences were difficult to compare directly due to the differences in sample sizes between the designations of statutory and non-statutory bodies.

- As an exercise, the researchers tried to **estimate designation hierarchy and progression** based only on the designation titles and then checked the estimations against information in the NQF MIS and on professional body websites. For almost two thirds of the professional bodies (62 of 101), the researcher estimations correctly identified progression in their designation systems. The systems of 26 bodies were estimated incorrectly, and a further 13 provided insufficient information to enable understanding of the systems. **The hierarchy/ progression/ designation systems were rated for visibility.**
 - In all, 32 (of 101 designation systems) were categorised as 'visible', 25 as 'partly visible', and 20 as 'not visible', while 22 bodies had single designations and information was not found for two bodies.
 - Based on the professional body websites, for statutory entities, the systems of four of 19 bodies were visible, and eight of 19 were partly visible. For non-statutory bodies, 28 of 82 were seen as being visible, and 17 of 82 as partly visible.
 - Looking at designation hierarchy alone across all professional body websites, the researchers found that most professional bodies had either visible hierarchies or single designations, these patterns were found in 40 and 22 bodies respectively – making up 61% of all professional bodies. Mixed hierarchies were found in the designation systems of 19 bodies, and in a further 19, no hierarchies were visible.
- The researchers attempted to sketch a picture of the **clarity of designation information in the NQF MIS**, and on professional body websites, respectively – including designation titles, designation criteria, progression information, and information on hierarchies/ designation systems. Clarity in the NQF MIS, was as follows:
 - I: Designation information + progression information complete (26 of 101)
 - II: Information partial/absent; progression information complete (4 of 101)
 - III: Designation information complete; progression partial/absent (4 of 101)
 - IV: No information other than designation title (19 of 101)
 - V: Body closed down during the course of the study (2 of 101)
 - i: Single designation; information complete (13 of 101)
 - e: Some errors/ unclear aspects/ unknown (22 of 101)
 - Mix of more than one category (36 of 101)
- Similarly, the **clarity of designation information on professional body websites** was as follows:
 - I: Clear (39 of 101)
 - II: Partly clear (29 of 101)
 - III: Unclear (7 of 101)
 - IV: Information not available (7 of 101)
 - V: Single designation (21 of 101)

Meta-analysis/ Cross-cutting observations/ Additional analyses

In considering the data in the NQF MIS and on the professional body websites, additional analyses and cross-cutting observations were made that could feed into policy, criteria, and guidelines. This information was clustered thematically into fourteen areas.

1. Inconsistent information across the NQF MIS and professional body websites, and within professional body websites (different numbers of designations, different designations, designation criteria, and progression information).
2. Progression towards, and between, professional designations – details on:
 - Progression towards and across designations where there are formalised structures such as boards or associations, or informal ‘streams’,
 - Patterns regarding clear information for individual designations but less clarity around progression between designations, and
 - Patterns regarding apparent hierarchy but lack of progression routes.
3. Currency of information (types of information that were outdated).
4. Missing or partial information (trends regarding the provision of necessary information).
5. Confusing information (issues where designation criteria/ hierarchy/ progression/ systems were difficult to understand/ contradictory).
6. Naming of professional bodies (instances where the names of different bodies were too similar).
7. Local and international ‘chapters’ (bodies that were found to:
 - [a] be the local chapters of regional/ global entities [nine],
 - [b] be linked to several international counterparts [one],
 - [c] *require* one/ more international qualifications as the basis for their designations [one],
 - [d] accept local and international qualifications as the basis for their designations [two], and
 - [e] claim explicitly that their designations are valid internationally [two].
8. Ease of website navigation (features that made professional body websites easier or harder to navigate).
9. Websites being ‘down’ (for the duration of the study).
10. Good examples (11 examples of good practice were identified).

11. Several similar bodies within fields (in some fields, there were several non-statutory professional bodies rather than a single body, for example in accounting-related work [seven bodies], audit and risk-related work [eight bodies], the exercise, information technology, and legal fields [two bodies each], health [four bodies], and human resources [six bodies] – further research would be needed to see if the mandates of these bodies overlap).
12. Details that need to be addressed (editorial errors).
13. On offering training (some bodies appear to offer training/ accredit training providers, while all offer Continuing Professional Development [CPD]. In some cases, it seemed as if the lines between CPD and training could be blurred, especially with small units of learning/ work-integrated learning. Further research is needed to understand the nature and form of the training/ development available).
14. Other aspects to note (in one instance, it seemed as if, given the field, a non-statutory body should perhaps be a statutory body).

Considering selected international practices

Of the 101 professional bodies/ sectors analysed, 11 were found to have systems of professional designations that were particularly complex and only partly visible to the researchers. For five of these, the professional designation systems in counterpart fields internationally, were considered. The fields were:

- (1) Accounting and Commerce
- (2) Nursing
- (3) Plumbing
- (4) Veterinary
- (5) Work at Height

In the ***Accounting and Commerce*** field in South Africa, an unusually high number of professional bodies were found, and the designation criteria, progression information, and hierarchy of designations were not necessarily clear.

In the ***Nursing*** field in South Africa, there were five legislated designations, six designations on the body website, and regulations for 15 categories of nurses. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

In the ***Plumbing*** field in South Africa, the system of designations was not clear in the NQF MIS and was partly clear on the body's website. Progression routes were partly clear.

In the ***Veterinary*** field in South Africa, there was an unusually high number of designations: 37 designations registered in the NQF MIS, 33 of which were on the professional body's website, as well as an additional two. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

In the **Work at Height** field in South Africa, sub-sectors are clustered into chambers, each of which has several licensable professions. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

For the fields of Accounting, Nursing, Plumbing, the Veterinary field and Work at Height, countries were scanned across the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe, for professionalisation systems, to see the 'governing bodies' and how these systems were structured. This information was most readily available for **Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, United Kingdom (UK), and Vietnam**. Thus, the professional body systems for Accounting, Nursing, Plumbing, the Veterinary field, and Work at Height were considered in these eight countries.

Accounting

The point of research interest regarding the accounting field, was the numbers of bodies in the field. In considering accounting body systems worldwide, the database of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), a global body that tracks accounting organisations, was used. IFAC is the largest global accounting body with 180 member organisations, including four in South Africa. It operates in 135 jurisdictions around the world and keeps information on accounting legislation, and practice, for each member body as well as non-member accounting bodies of which they are aware. From the IFAC database it was determined within the sample countries that, excepting the UK, countries have several but small numbers of oversight bodies (two to three bodies overseeing practice and legislation). The larger number of in the UK (nine bodies), can be explained partially by the inclusion of the independent regions of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Nursing

The point of research interest regarding the nursing sector was the structuring of the professional designation systems. The sample countries for which information was readily available, appeared to have between three and six designations per body – similar numbers to those in South Africa.

Plumbing

The point of research interest regarding the plumbing field, was how plumbing is governed, and the structuring of designation systems. In the sample countries, how plumbers were designated differed considerably. Systems with levels for plumbers (e.g., Plumber and Master Plumber) accompanied by technical assistance (e.g., Registered Plumbing Worker) appeared to be common; these categories were found in Australia, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom and some of these designations had non-designated specialisations. Less common were systems that had designations for specific plumbers (e.g., Water Plumber or Sewerage Plumber), found in Malaysia. The bodies for the plumbing presented very differently in the sample countries with some being statutory entities (UK, Hong Kong, Malaysia), some being separate local entities that work within a state or province (Australia, Canada, Germany), and some that appear to use international accreditation (Vietnam) however, further research would be needed to confirm these patterns. South Africa's system appears to be like those in Australia, Hong Kong, and the UK, with levels of plumbers and technical workers, but also appears to have additional designations for specialisations. Some of the designation system diagrams on the international websites visited were very clear.

Veterinarians

The point of research interest regarding the veterinary field, was the systems of professional designations. The veterinary body in South Africa was selected for its large number of designations (37). While handled differently, evidence of this pattern was seen in all sample countries. The field appears to be commonly separated into two major 'streams': a 'veterinarian stream' (or 'Veterinary Surgeon') and a 'technical stream' (with designations related to laboratory work, technicians, assistants). Within these streams there are specialisations. In South Africa, this is handled by providing separate designations for all the types of work, however in the sample countries it is more common to have fewer stream-specific designations with specialisations for the main designations.

Work at Height

The point of research interest in the Work at Height field, was the structuring of designations. In the sample countries, Work at Height did not fall under a dedicated professional body. In most cases, information regarding the field was not explicitly mentioned, and where it was mentioned, it was under the umbrella of other bodies in the fields of Building, Safety or Scaffolding.

Rich patterns were found in all the aspects investigated, including the foci in the original brief, as well as the additional aspects that impacted on these foci, namely, the designation criteria, the hierarchy amongst the designations per body, progression pathways between the designations per body, and the designation systems of bodies. The trends found provided clear pointers for the development of policy, criteria, and guidelines for professional designations in the NQF context.

Concluding comments

Based on the first-level and meta-analyses of the professional designations of South African professional bodies recognised by SAQA, it is recommended that the following 14 aspects be considered in the development of SAQA policy, criteria and guidelines for the bodies and their designations. While further research would be needed for the in-depth comparison of professional body and designation systems across countries, the systems of the international counterpart organisations investigated as part of the current research were considered when developing these recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Simplify designation titles

Designation titles consist of various terms, including combinations of prefixes, descriptors, and suffixes. For user-friendliness, and while maintaining the integrity of professional body systems of designations, overly complex naming should be avoided. **One prefix and one suffix should ideally be used, with the descriptor** in a designation title. If a professional body wants to use more than one prefix and/or one suffix, a case should need to be presented to SAQA for consideration and approval.

Recommendation 2: Avoid confusing terms in designation titles

It is recommended that SAQA stops the use of the following terms or defines when they may be used.

- 2.1. Use of the term '**Chartered**' in a professional body and/or professional designation be permitted only when the work of the body is closely linked to, and based on, a charter (legal document).
- 2.2 Use of the term '**Graduate**' in a professional body and/or professional designation title should be disallowed because it causes confusion around the qualification/ part-qualification status of a learner/ worker/ candidate.
- 2.3. Use of the term '**Accredited**' in a professional body and/or professional designation title should be disallowed because it causes confusion around the status of the accreditation with respect to the quality assurance processes of the Quality Councils in the NQF context.
- 2.4. Use of **acronyms** within professional body and/or professional designation titles should be disallowed because they cause confusion.
- 2.5. To avoid confusion, **designation titles must differ from qualification and job titles** – although designation titles can *relate/ be similar to* qualification and job titles.

Recommendation 3: Clarify designation systems

In the South African NQF context, in support of enabling access to, and progression in, **learning and work pathways**, it is recommended that professional bodies must, on their websites:

- 3.1. **List the criteria** clearly and fully for each of their designations (including the qualifications and work experience needed, and RPL possibilities).
- 3.2. **Illustrate and describe the progression pathways** clearly and fully, to and from each designation.
- 3.3. **Provide clear diagrams that illustrate their designation systems**, including showing, clearly, (a) each designation title and pathway, (b) the hierarchies between different designations, (c) where each designation fits in the designation system, (d) how the designation can be accessed, and (e) all the progression possibilities. Designation systems may include one or more distinct pathways.

Recommendation 4: Minimise numbers of designations

Learning-and-work pathways and professional development are easier to access, and advance, when there are **smaller numbers of designations located clearly within the hierarchies and pathways of a designation system**. It is recommended that the numbers of designations within a professional body be minimised by, for example, having the designation '**Practitioner**' (with several specialisations if needed) and '**Specialist**' (with several specialisations if needed), rather than high numbers of separate designations. Designation systems may include one or more distinct pathways.

Recommendation 5: Ensure complete, clear, consistent, current designation information – professional body responsibilities

Professional body and designation information across the professional body website and the NQF MIS must be complete, clear, consistent, and current.

- 5.1. As part the recognition processes, professional bodies must provide to SAQA complete, clear, consistent, and current information for: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, (f) designation systems, and (g) explanatory diagrams of their designation systems. This information includes hierarchy and progression:
 - within 'single streams' of designations,
 - within and across 'parallel streams' of designations per body, and
 - for 'parallel streams' of designations when there are associations/ boards/ chambers/ other entities under a single professional body.
- 5.2. Professional bodies must inform SAQA of any changes to their designation titles/ criteria/ numbers/ hierarchies, pathways to and from designations, and designation systems, including updates and refinements, within a timeframe agreed by SAQA.
- 5.3. After effecting the changes on the professional body website, the body must provide the information to SAQA so that SAQA can update the NQF MIS, within a timeframe agreed by SAQA.
- 5.4. Based on this research each professional body could conduct a self-evaluation to assess the completeness, clarity, consistency, and currency of its designation information. Following this evaluation, each body could effect the changes required, and submit the updated information to SAQA within agreed timeframes.

Recommendation 6: Ensure complete, clear, consistent, current designation information – SAQA responsibilities

SAQA needs to ensure that professional body and designation information is complete, clear, consistent, and current across the professional body website and the NQF MIS.

- 6.1. As part of the professional body recognition processes, SAQA submission requirements need to include complete, clear, consistent, current information on: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, (f) designation systems, and (g) diagrams of designation systems. This information needs to include hierarchy and progression:
 - within 'single streams' of designations,
 - within and across 'parallel streams' of designations under a single professional body, and
 - within 'streams' of designations when there are several associations/ boards/ chambers/ other entities under a single professional body.

- 6.2. SAQA needs to assess and update the NQF MIS information on: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, and (f) designation systems and diagrams, on a periodic basis to be determined by SAQA.
- 6.3. SAQA needs to communicate with professional bodies when it plans to assess their information in the NQF MIS and on the professional body websites.

Recommendation 7: Currency of information

Regarding the currency of information:

- 7.1. Professional bodies need to ensure that the terminology on their websites is up to date in the context of the NQF Act, for example, reference needs to be made to:
 - NQF Act (No. 67 of 2008), that superseded SAQA Act (No. 58 of 1995),
 - NQF Sub-Frameworks and NQF Levels (not NQF Bands),
 - current qualification/ part-qualification titles with their SAQA identity numbers (if reference is made to deregistered/ legacy qualifications/ part-qualifications, the status of these items needs to be made clear), and
 - current designation titles (if reference is made to deregistered designations, the status of these designations must be made clear).
- 7.2. Professional bodies need to ensure that their contact details are up to date on their websites.
- 7.3. SAQA needs to ensure that the NQF MIS contains updated website links for all professional bodies.

Recommendation 8: Clarify international links

SAQA-recognised professional bodies with international links should make these links *explicit* as follows.

- 8.1. SAQA-recognised bodies must make their regional and global links clear, on their websites.
- 8.2. SAQA-recognised bodies that are the local chapters of international counterparts should:
 - have a South African website that describes the larger professional systems of which they are part,
 - add, on their websites, hyperlinks to the relevant international websites,
 - ensure that these hyperlinks also feature in the NQF MIS, and
 - ensure that the local website is relevant and up to date for local members/ prospective members.
- 8.3. Where SAQA-recognised bodies accept or require qualifications/ part-qualifications from systems outside South Africa, bodies need to describe:
 - the positioning/ status of that qualification in its home country system,
 - the South African equivalent of that qualification, where appropriate, and
 - the access and progression criteria for all the qualifications involved.

- 8.4. Where SAQA-recognised bodies use terminology from systems outside the South African system:
 - the terminology needs to be explained, and
 - the related South African terminology needs to be explained.

Recommendation 9: Professional body names

For clarity, SAQA should not permit the situation to arise where a professional body acronym is the same as that of another professional body or provider.

Recommendation 10: More than one body per field

In fields where there are several professional bodies – SAQA needs to note the current arrangements and ensure that the mandates of bodies to be recognised in the future do not overlap. SAQA may want to consider the international picture for any field but can lead instead of follow, good practice.

Recommendation 11: Professional bodies offering training

South African professional bodies are not permitted to offer training, but play quality assurance roles in collaboration with, and under formal agreements with, the three Quality Councils. SAQA-recognised bodies with links to international bodies that offer training, need make their relationships with these bodies clear on their local websites, as well as emphasising their location and role in the South African system.

Recommendation 12: Ease of website navigation

The following are recommended.

- 12.1. SAQA-recognised professional bodies need to ensure that their websites:
 - Contain complete, clear, consistent, current information on their designation titles, criteria, hierarchies, pathways, systems, system diagrams, and international links,
 - Have hyperlinks to their information in the NQF MIS,
 - Have hyperlinks to the websites of international bodies as appropriate, and
 - Explain all terminology used, including NQF terms, special field-based terms, and the relevant terms of the international systems to which they are linked, *in relation* to the South African terms, and
 - Are easy to navigate.
- 12.2. SAQA needs to assess the professional body websites as part of the recognition process, and periodically thereafter at intervals that it decides.

Recommendation 13: Address ‘editorial aspects’

Having two primary sources of information – the professional body websites and the NQF MIS – necessarily leads to the possibility of editorial errors over time, and both should be checked periodically for clarity, completeness, consistency, and currency.

Recommendation 14: Identify and share good practice

The research identified examples of good practices in making professional designation information complete and clear, which could be shared and workshopped for the benefit of all bodies.

Understanding the Professional Designations of SAQA-Recognised Professional Bodies: Towards SAQA Guidelines for Professional Designations

INTRODUCTION

Professional bodies are key role-players in South Africa’s system for education, training, development, and work. Professional bodies – with their professional registrations and oversight of continuing professional development (CPD) – play central roles in enabling access to, and progression in, learning-and-work pathways. As well protecting the public, their inputs into qualification development and provision enhance the quality and credibility of learning in their fields, and respect for practitioners nationally and internationally. Professional bodies collaborate closely with the Quality Councils for this work¹.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is mandated by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2008), to recognise professional bodies and register their professional designations. To be recognised by SAQA, professional body policies and practices must align to and meet, specific criteria regarding access, redress, progression, quality and transparency (SAQA, 2020).

SAQA’s Policy and Criteria for Recognising Professional Bodies and Registering Professional Designations for the Purposes of the NQF Act (SAQA 2012, as amended in 2018 and 2020) are **relatively silent on the conventions and criteria for naming, organising, publicising and communicating professional designations**; the research reported here seeks to provide some evidence for the elaboration of these aspects in possible future SAQA guidelines for professional bodies and their professional designations.

Understanding the term ‘professional designation’

It is useful to clarify what is meant by ‘professional designation’.

What is a professional designation in the NQF context?

SAQA’s (2020: Clause 1[f]) revised policy and criteria for recognising a professional body and recognising a professional designation defines a designation as:

“a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person's expertise and/or right to practise in an occupational field”

The **criteria for registering a professional designation** in the context of the NQF in South Africa include, amongst others, that a designation must include, as an initial requirement, an underlying qualification that is registered on the NQF (Ibid.: Clause

¹ The professional bodies collaborate mainly with two of the three Quality Councils, namely, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

43[e]) and be part of a progression pathway within an NQF Sub-Framework or across NQF Sub-Frameworks (Ibid.: Clause 43[c]).

Other definitions may be useful. The Oxford English Dictionary (Hornby and Leah, n.d.) defines a designation as ‘an official name, description, or title’. The Casualty Actuarial Society, a professional body for actuaries based in the United Kingdom (UK), sees a designation as a reference to specific membership status in an organisation. A professional designation is seen generally, as a ‘the stamp of approval’ that demonstrates to employers, the achievement of standards of practice in a field of work.

Professional designations are **often expressed as letters after a person’s name**. These letters indicate possession of a qualification and/or the related knowledge, skills and competences, work experience and professional development as well as adherence to standards and ethical codes (Phelan, 2010:319). The letters show that a person has ‘completed the requirements’ for a profession – in other words, he or she is considered ‘a professional’ (Ibid.).

Understanding the terms ‘**job**’, ‘**occupation**’ and ‘**competence**’ is also useful for understanding professional designations. In the NQF Pedia (SAQA, 2018:30), a job is defined as “a set of tasks and duties carried out, or meant to be carried out, by one person for a particular employer, or in self-employment”. An occupation on the other hand, is “a set of jobs or occupational specialisations where the main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity (skill specialisation) and are grouped together on the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) as an occupation; occupations include trades and professions” (Ibid.:39). The idea of ‘applied competence’ underpins the NQF Level Descriptors (SAQA, 2012: Clause 6) that describe the dimensions required for qualifications to be registered at particular NQF levels. The NQF level descriptors refer to three types of competence: foundational competence (knowledge); practical competence (the ability to analyse, synthesise, evaluate, and process information to solve problems); and reflexive competence (that includes ethics and autonomy (Ibid.).

A **key role of professional bodies** is to assess and maintain competence in a given profession. Professional bodies set “the conditions for signing off members as fit to practise” and maintain “a minimum standard of ongoing competence” (Lester, 2014:1). The main mechanism through which these bodies achieve these purposes is via the provision of professional designations. Designations are awarded based on the competences indicated by qualifications held at particular NQF levels (or prior learning and work), and the competences demonstrated through work experience and continuing professional development.

Need for SAQA research into professional designations

At the time of drawing data from the NQF Management Information System (MIS) for analysis in August 2021, there were 103² SAQA-recognised statutory and non-statutory professional bodies that utilise various conventions for naming and assigning their professional designations. SAQA was aware of some challenges in this regard, including but not necessarily limited to the following.

² This number changes over time as new professional bodies are recognised and others are derecognised. At the time of concluding the final analyses for the study, there were 101 professional bodies in the sample – these were the bodies used in the analyses.

- (f) Sometimes professional designations are given the **same titles as the names of the qualifications** underlying them/ on the basis of which the professional designations are obtained, causing confusion for stakeholders.
- (g) Sometimes professional designations are given the **same occupational titles as related occupations in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)**, again causing confusion for stakeholders.
- (h) Sometimes professional designations include **historical terms such as 'chartered' or 'royal' that link the learning-and-work pathways to particular contexts that may be inappropriate** for South Africa.
- (i) While some professional bodies have small numbers of professional designations (**under five designations**), **others have many (over 20)**.
- (j) While the designations of some professional bodies are hierarchical and indicate enhanced studies, work experience and professional development over time, the designations of others are **not sequenced in systematic ways**.

This report documents the research conducted by SAQA to deepen its understanding of the professional designation naming and systems of its recognised professional bodies. The report has seven sections. Section 2 presents the research questions, and Section 3, the methods used to address the questions, the sample and coding and analyses conducted. Section 4 goes on to present the results of the analyses, Section 5, meta-analyses to deepen the insights across professional bodies, and Section 6, a brief consideration of selected international counterparts. The report closes with Section 7, recommendations towards guidelines for professional designations.

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE RESEARCH

This report addresses the following seven research questions.

- What are the **current naming practices/ naming patterns** for professional designations by SAQA-recognised professional bodies that are (a) statutory, and (b) non-statutory?
- Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** have the same titles as **NQF-registered qualifications/ part-qualifications** and (ii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** have the same titles as **occupation titles in the OFO** and (ii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) **how many** include **terms that may be inappropriate** for South Africa, (ii) **what are these terms**, and (iii) are there any **patterns** in this regard?

- Considering the designations of professional bodies currently recognised by SAQA, (i) how many have **high numbers of titles** and what are these numbers? (ii) How many **do not sequence** their designations and how do the designations differ? (iii) Are there any **patterns** in this regard?
- What are some **international practices that SAQA could consider** as it seeks to clarify its criteria for professional designations and simplify the naming system, numbers and sequencing of professional designations in South Africa?
- **What principles and/or criteria could feature in SAQA guidelines** for naming and assigning professional designations?

METHODS, SAMPLE, ANALYTICAL/ CODING CATEGORIES

Method and sampling

To address the first five questions, the designation data of SAQA-recognised professional bodies were extracted from the NQF Management Information System (NQF MIS) as well as the professional body websites, cleaned and analysed using Excel spreadsheets. The information pertaining to statutory and non-statutory professional bodies respectively was analysed, and designation patterns within the categories 'statutory' and 'non-statutory', and overall, were sought as appropriate.

There was no sample selection: all SAQA-recognised professional bodies in the NQF MIS at the end of August 2021 were included in the sample. The data were cleaned in September 2021 and a series of thematic analyses and meta-analyses were conducted in the months of October and November 2021 and January 2022. By the time the analyses were concluded, two professional bodies had been deregistered and the sample for which data were included comprised 101 professional bodies, 19 of which were statutory and 82 non-statutory.

Coding and analyses conducted

The thematic analyses conducted focused on the following.

- a) **Designation titles** and in particular, the choice of naming/ descriptors within the designation titles, such as the following, were analysed.
 Assistant –
 Certified/ Certificated –
 Chartered –
 Master –
 Practitioner –
 Professional –
 Registered –
 Senior –
 Specialist/ Advanced Specialist -
 Technician/ Technologist – and others.
- b) **The research team assessed the apparent progression** between the designations within each SAQA-recognised professional body, at face value, based on the naming of the designations. Patterns were categorised as '**0**' if

the designations appeared independent of each other, '1' if there was apparent progression, and '2' if there was only a single designation. Where there was apparent progression, pathways were noted (Stream 1a, 1b, 1c; Stream 2a, 2b, 2c, and so on). Thereafter, the estimations were checked against the data from the NQF MIS and professional body websites and coded '1' if correctly estimated, '0' if incorrect and '2' for a single designation provided for that body. Correct assessment was seen as a reflection of the clarity and user-friendliness of the designation system of that body.

- c) The designation data from the NQF MIS and the professional body websites were coded to assess the **hierarchy and progression between designations** per body, as follows:
- Hierarchy
 - **A:** Present
 - **B:** Mixed
 - **C:** Not visible
 - **D:** Single designation
 - Progression
 - **A:** Visible
 - **B:** Partly visible
 - **C:** Not visible
 - **D:** Single designation.
- d) In a more detailed analysis, the **clarity and quality of professional designation information and progression** in the NQF MIS, per professional body were analysed; the coding was as follows:
I=Information including progression in the NQF MIS (entry appears complete),
II=Partial or absent information but including progression in the NQF MIS,
III=Information but partial or no progression information in the NQF MIS,
IV=No information in the NQF MIS other than professional designation title,
i=Single designation,
e=NQF MIS contains errors/ unclear aspects.
- e) Similarly, the **clarity and quality of professional designation information and progression** per professional body website were analysed; information found by the research team was coded as follows:
I=Clear,
II=Partly clear,
III=Unclear,
IV=Not available,
V=Single designation/ not relevant.
- f) An **expanded analysis** of designation and progression information was conducted, comprising:
- (i) the listing (featuring) of professional designations/ professional designation titles per professional body website,
 - (ii) the clarity of descriptions of the criteria for each professional designation per professional body website,
 - (iii) clarity of the system of professional designations per professional body, across the NQF MIS and professional body website, and

(iv) other relevant remarks.

- g) An analysis was conducted to see **how many** designations have the same titles as **NQF-registered qualifications/ part-qualifications**, based on similarity ratings.
- h) An analysis was conducted to see **how many** designations have the same titles as **occupation titles in the OFO**, by comparing matched terms between the databases.

Meta-analyses were conducted using and combining the data from the analyses in (a)-(f) immediately above. A meta-analysis was also conducted using the over-arching observations regarding the NQF MIS and professional body websites.

Given that the first level analyses revealed clear as well as less clear systems of professional designations, the international counterpart professional body systems for some of the 'less clear' systems were considered, the idea being to identify alternative possibilities for the less clear systems. In all, professional bodies and designations were investigated, briefly, in five fields.

The recommendations at the end of the report are based directly on the findings from the analyses conducted and include aspects for consideration in possible future SAQA policy, criteria and guidelines for professional bodies and their designations.

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSES OF PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION DATA OF SAQA-RECOGNISED PROFESSIONAL BODIES

The results of the analyses of the professional designation data of SAQA-recognised bodies follow.

General designation naming practices

In all, the 373 professional designations of the 101 recognised professional bodies, were analysed. Designation titles were found to consist of a wide variety of terms. Sometimes combinations of prefixes, descriptors and suffixes are used. In other instances, only one or two of these components are used. Examples of prefixes used are as follows.

- Accredited (descriptor)
- Advanced (descriptor)
- Associate (descriptor)
- Associated (descriptor)
- Associated Chartered (descriptor)
- Associated Principle Certified (descriptor)
- Certificated (descriptor)
- Certified (descriptor)
- Certified Associated (descriptor)
- Certified Senior (descriptor)
- Chartered (descriptor)
- Chartered Certified (descriptor)
- Credentialised (descriptor)
- Executive Professional (descriptor)

- Fellow (descriptor)
- Fellow Chartered (descriptor)
- Graduate (descriptor)
- Licenced (descriptor)
- Licenced qualified (descriptor)
- Licentiate (descriptor)
- Master (descriptor)
- Professional (descriptor)
- Professional Certified (descriptor)
- Professional Senior (descriptor)
- Registered (descriptor)
- Senior (descriptor)
- Senior Associate (descriptor)
- Senior Professional (descriptor)
- Specialist (descriptor)
- Technical (descriptor)

Examples of suffixes used are as follows:

- (Descriptor) Associate
- (Descriptor) Certified Practitioner
- (Descriptor) Certified Professional
- (Descriptor) Fellow
- (Descriptor) Junior
- (Descriptor) Licentiate
- (Descriptor) Master
- (Descriptor) Professional
- (Descriptor) Senior Associate
- (Descriptor) Specialist

In the professional body contexts, some of these designation terms appear appropriate. In some instances, such as ‘Associated Principle Certified (descriptor)’, the terms are very complex. The use of some terms is problematic, including the following categories of challenges.

5. Use of the term ‘**Chartered**’, either as part of the professional body name, or as part of one or more of its professional designation titles, when it does not have a charter – the term ‘charter’ understood generally as a legal document granted by a sovereign or legislative power of a country.
6. Use of ‘**Graduate**’ in the designation title can be confused with the qualification status of the designation holder.
7. Use of ‘**Accredited**’ in the designation title can be confused with the quality assurance status in the NQF context.
8. **Contains acronyms** in the either the designation or professional body name that is confusing.
9. **Overly complex** naming.

Further details regarding these issues follow.

- The use of ‘**Chartered**’ was found in 21/ 373 (6% of) designations, all but one of which belong to non-statutory bodies.

- The term '**Chartered**' is used in nine non-statutory professional body titles.
- Of the 18 bodies using the word 'Chartered' in body and/ or designation titles, **two have official South African** documents named Charters, **five are linked** to international bodies with Royal Charters, and for **eleven, no Charters** were found.
- In the South African professional body context, the **word 'Charter'** sometimes, but not always, refers to a Royal Charter issued by a monarch – a piece of legislation that looks like a South African Act. In South Africa, 'Chartered' **also means different things**, such as (1) 'professional competence', (2) a document containing the vision, mission, objectives, philosophy, responsibilities, funds, stakeholders, education professional registration, and other matters, of the body, and (3) the Constitution, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure of a body.
- The term '**Graduate**' is used in two of 373 designations, both of which belong to non-statutory bodies.
- The term '**Accredited**' is used in four of 373 designations, all of which belong to non-statutory bodies.
- In a small number of instances, **acronyms are used** within professional body names and designation titles – these acronyms were not always clear. Acronyms were found in three professional body names, and 19 designations.

Professional designation titles and qualification names

The research included comparing the professional designation titles of professional bodies recognised by SAQA, and the names of qualifications registered on the NQF. Four categories of patterns were identified to establish designation naming trends – the categories were 'A, B, C, and D'.

Category A naming represented designations that used **general terms** to describe the qualifications on which they were based (e.g., 'three-year degree', 'BSc', 'accredited degree'0.

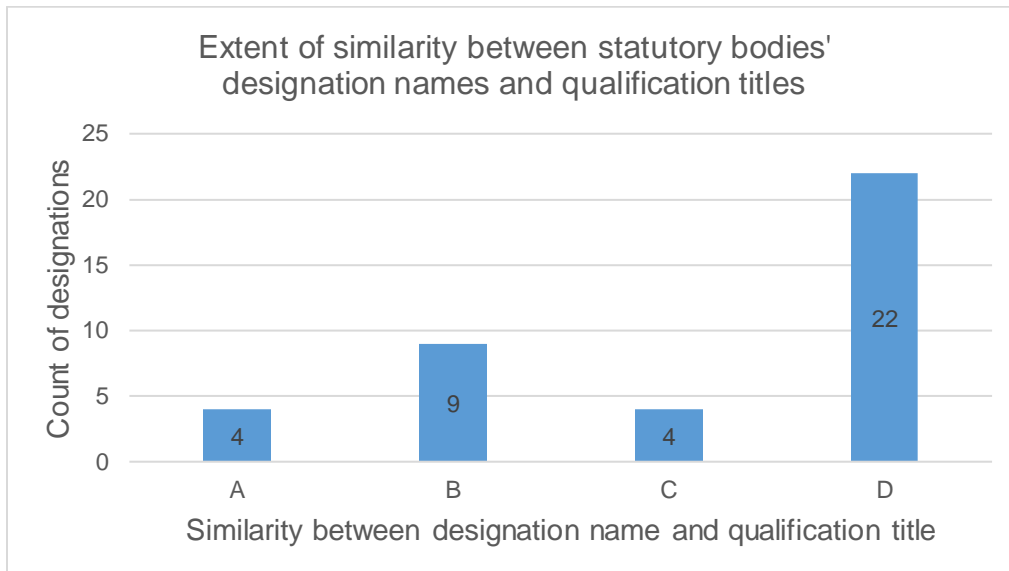
Category B naming represented designations based on **specific qualifications, the titles of which did not match** the designation. For example, on the Batseta (Council of Retirement Funds) website, the qualifications required for the designation 'Licenced Trustee' (LT), 'Associate Principal Executive Officer' (APEO) and 'Chartered Principal Executive Officer' (CPEO) were listed, however, Licensed Trustees required the 'Occupational Certificate: Professional Principal Executive Officer' (NQF Level 5), while the 'Associate Principal Executive Officer' designation was based on the 'Occupational Certificate: Professional Principal Executive Officer' (NQF Level 7). The similarity of the qualification terms could be confusing, as could the fact that qualifications with the same titles were used for different designations.

Category C naming represented bodies with **designation titles similar to the underlying qualifications**, together with alternative pathways/ qualifications to the designation that are **dis-similar** to the designation.

Category D naming represented *designations that shared a name with, or were very close to sharing a name with, the underlying qualifications.*

This analysis was conducted using a sample of 220 designations, 39 for statutory and 181 for non-statutory bodies, using the information on underlying qualifications on the NQF MIS at the time of the research – as shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 below.

Figure 1: Comparing designation and underlying qualification titles (statutory bodies)

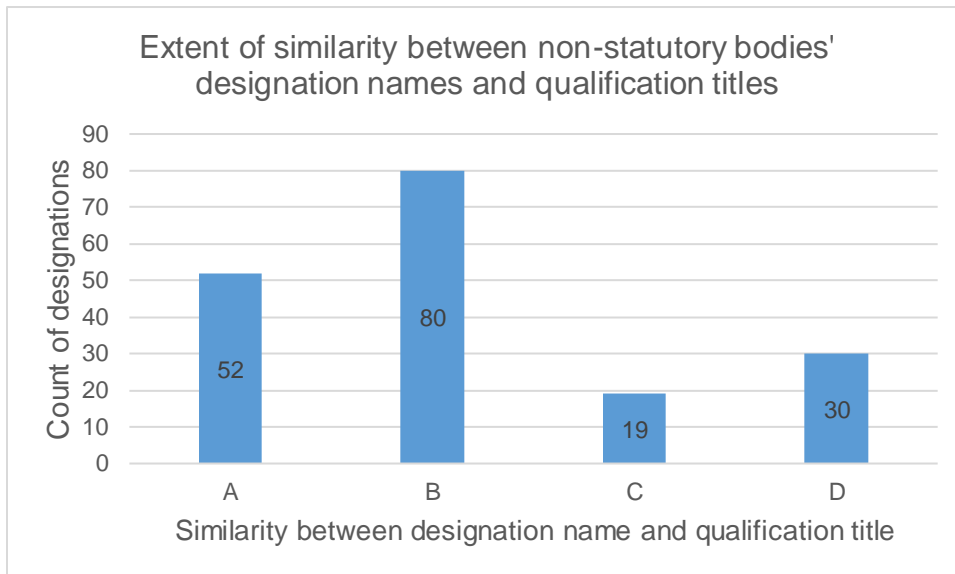


Legend:

A	General qualification terms (e.g., 'BSc' or 'three-year degree')
B	Specific qualification titles dissimilar to designation
C	Designation close to qualification title and additional qualification titles possible
D	Designation identical/ almost identical to qualification title

Figure 1 shows the naming similarities between designation and qualification titles for the *statutory* professional bodies for which information was available. There are few designations (four of 39) with generally listed qualifications, and four of 39 with similar designation and qualification names as well as additional pathways. More common among statutory bodies were designations with specific underlying qualifications, the titles of which did not match the designation names representing (nine of 39 designations). The most common among statutory bodies were designations that shared a name, or were very close to sharing a name with, the underlying qualifications (22 of 39 designations).

Figure 2: Comparing designation and underlying qualification titles (non-statutory bodies)

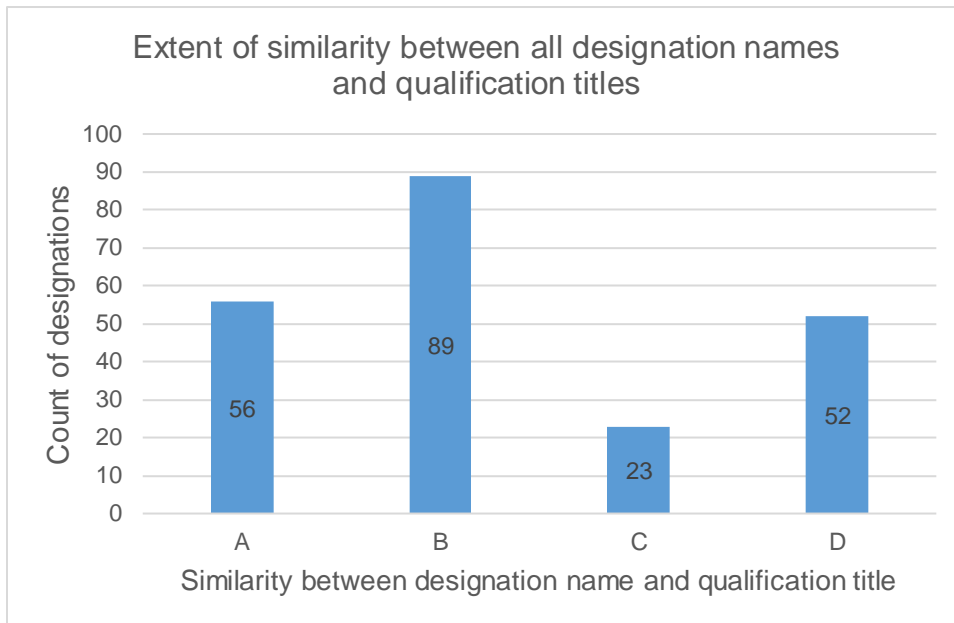


Legend:

A	General qualification terms (e.g., 'BSc' or 'three-year degree')
B	Specific qualification titles dissimilar to designation
C	Designation close to qualification title and additional qualification titles possible
D	Designation identical/ almost identical to qualification title

Figure 2 shows the similarities in naming between designation and qualification titles for the designations of *non-statutory* professional bodies. Within this group, there were a few designations with similar designation and qualification names and additional pathways (19 of 181 designations). There was a slightly higher number of designations that shared a title, or were very close to sharing a name with, their underlying qualifications (30 of 181 designations). Designations using *general terms* for their underlying qualifications numbered 52 of 181. Most common among non-statutory bodies were designations with specific underlying qualifications with titles that did not match their designations (80 of 181 designations).

Figure 3: Comparing designation and underlying qualification titles (statutory and non-statutory bodies)



Legend:

A	General qualification terms (e.g., 'BSc' or 'three-year degree')
B	Specific qualification titles dissimilar to designation
C	Designation close to qualification title and additional qualification titles possible
D	Designation identical/ almost identical to qualification title

Figure 3 shows the naming similarity between designation and qualification titles for both statutory and non-statutory bodies together. The overall trends in this figure are similar to those in Figure 2 because the higher number of non-statutory bodies skews the visual representation to its trends. The overarching patterns can also be seen in Table 2 below, that shows the percentage counts of Category A, B, C and D naming for both statutory and non-statutory bodies.

Table 2: Comparing designation and underlying qualification titles (statutory and non-statutory bodies)

Naming category	% Designations of statutory bodies	% Designations of non-statutory bodies
Category A	10%	29%
Category B	23%	44%
Category C	10%	10%
Category D	56%	17%

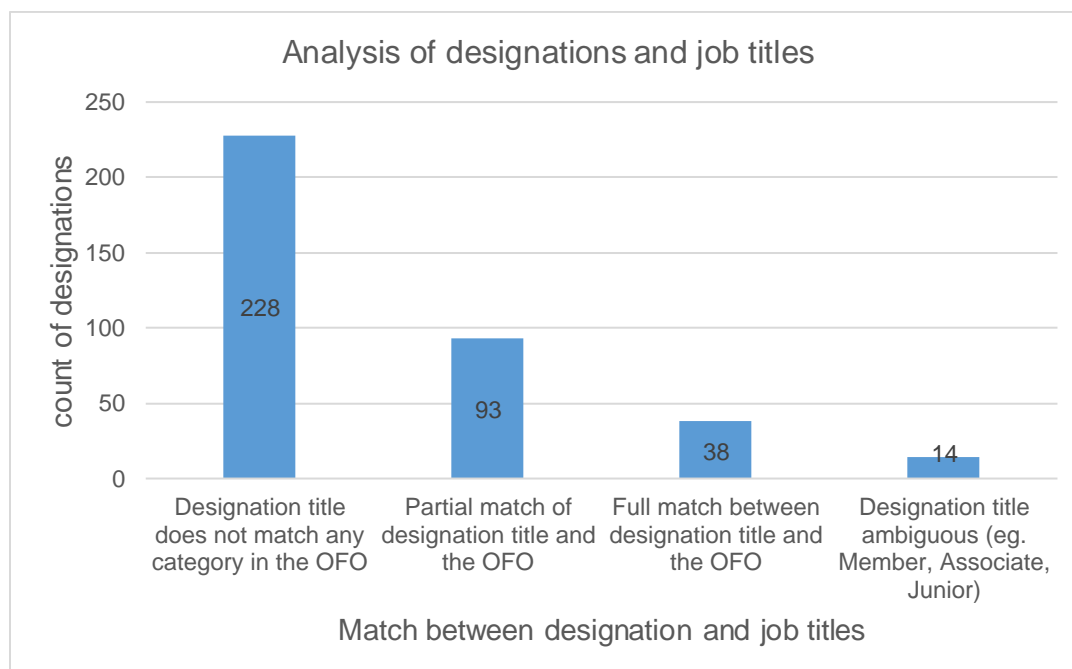
Table 2 shows that the distribution of the categories of designations versus qualification titles is quite different between statutory and non-statutory professional bodies.

Professional designation and occupation titles

The naming of the professional designations of the 101 bodies recognised by SAQA at the time of data gathering in the research was compared to occupation titles in the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO). To cover a wide variety of naming conventions, designations were compared with naming in different sections of the OFO including, 'Occupations, Specialisations, Trades, Green Occupations, Green skills, and Alternative Titles'. The degrees of similarity were sorted into four categories for ease of analysis; these categories were as follows.

- Designation and OFO category not matching
- Designation partially matching an entry in the OFO, for example, 'Pharmacist's Assistant (Post-basic)' versus 'Pharmacist Assistant', or 'Certified Financial Planner' versus 'Financial Planner'
- Designation and OFO entry matching
- Designation title being ambiguous, making matching with job types impossible (e.g., 'Member' and 'Junior')

Figure 4: Comparing designation and occupation titles (statutory and non-statutory bodies)



The total number of designations of the statutory and non-statutory bodies recognised by SAQA at the time of the research, was 373. Figure 4 shows that most of the designations (229 of 373) did not match any naming category in the OFO. The second most common trend was a partial match between the designation and an OFO entry – 93 of 373 (25% of) designations partially matched entries in the OFO. Matching designations and entries in the OFO only occurred in 38 of 373 (10% of) designations. In total, 14 (4% of) designations had ambiguous names that could not be matched to entries in the OFO.

Numbers of professional designations per professional body

The numbers of designations per professional body were analysed to determine common numbers of designations per body and other patterns in the data.

Figure 5: Number of professional designations per recognised statutory professional body

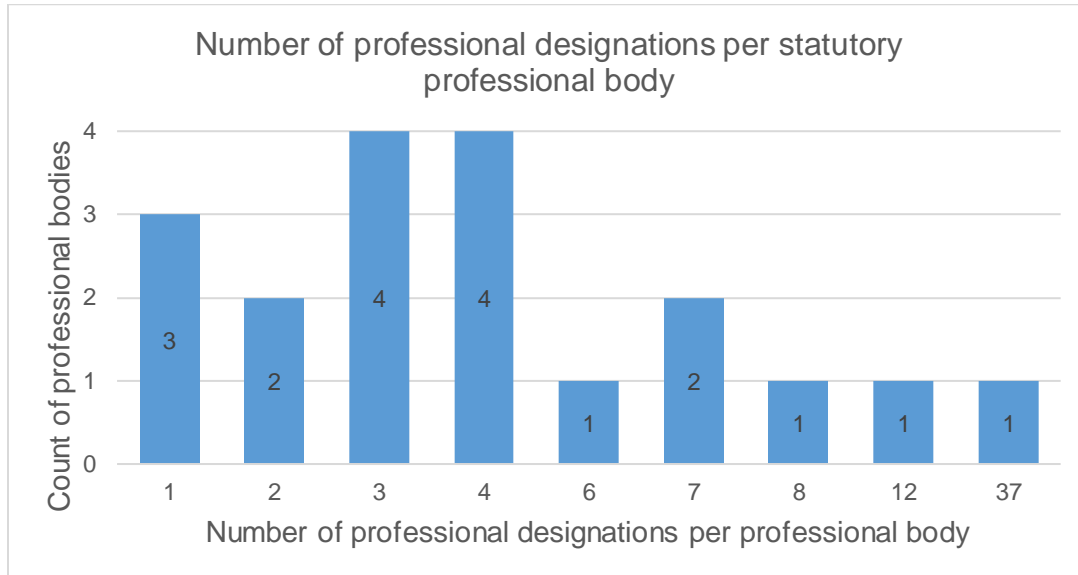
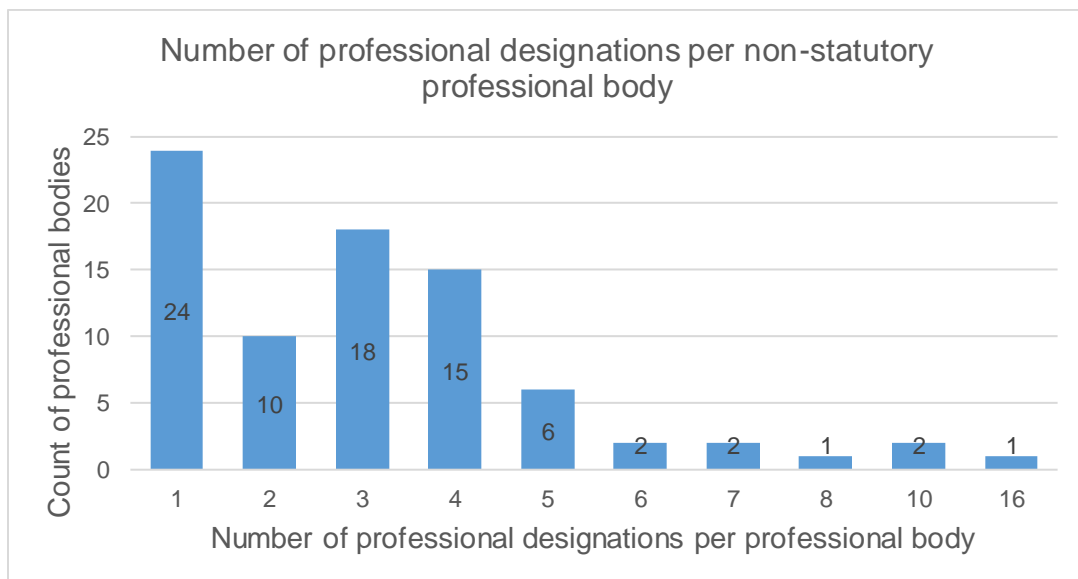


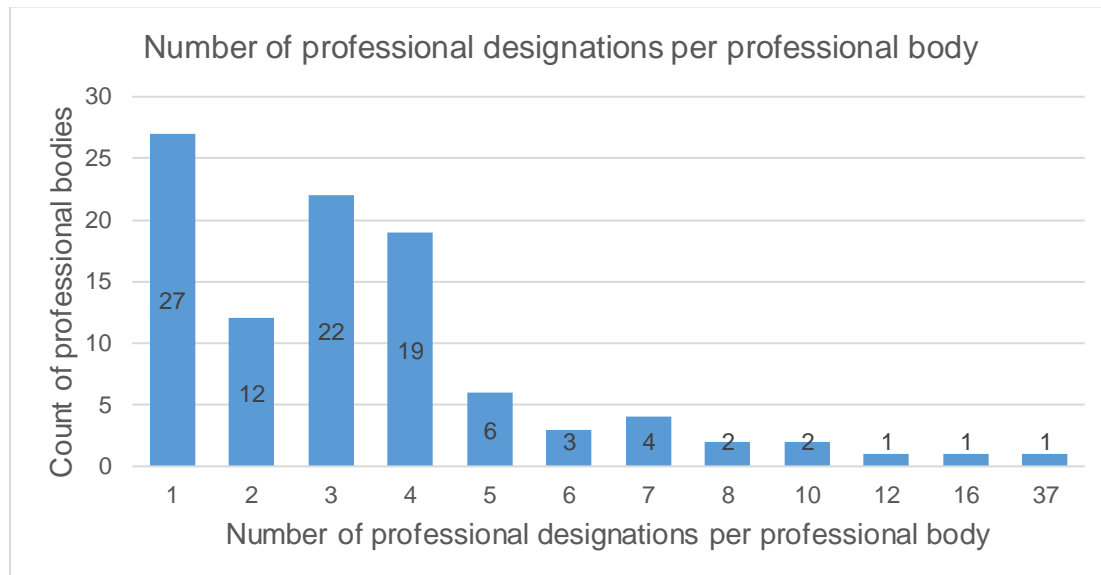
Figure 5 shows that the number of designations per statutory professional body range from a single designation to 37 designations. In the statutory bodies the most common pattern was bodies having a single designation (three of 19) or bodies with three or four designations per entity (eight of 19).

Figure 6: Number of professional designations per recognised non-statutory professional body



The number of designations per non-statutory body ranged from a single designation to 16 designations per body. The trend seen in statutory bodies continued in non-statutory bodies with the most common pattern being bodies having a single designation (24 of 81) as well as three or four designations (23 of 81).

Figure 7: Overall number of professional designations per recognised professional body



Overall, it appeared that while there were some bodies with six or more designations, these bodies were in the minority (14 of 101). Most professional bodies had five or fewer designations per body with the most common numbers of designations being one, three and four respectively.

Hierarchy and progression between professional designations

Given the importance of learning-and-work pathways, and learner and worker mobility in the NQF context, the research team sought to identify and analyse progression pathways between designations within professional body systems. The team drew on information in the NQF MIS and professional body websites for this analysis. For the purposes of the analysis, professional body ‘progression systems’ were categorised as follows.

- A:** The body has a single progression pathway between its designations.
- B:** The body has two progression pathways/ sub-systems between its designations.
- C:** The body has three or more pathways/ sub-systems between its designations.
- D:** The body has ‘mixed progression pathways’ comprising a single progression path as well as independent designations.
- E:** The body has ‘mixed progression pathways’ comprising two or three progression paths as well as independent designations.
- F:** The body has ‘mixed progression pathways’ comprising four or more progression paths as well as independent designations.
- G:** The body has no progression pathways between its designations.
- H:** The body has a single designation.
- 100:** The progression information was not clear.
- [e]:** Progression information was unclear/ appeared incorrect – and was categorised as ‘errors’ or [e].

Figure 8: Analysis of progression within professional designation systems

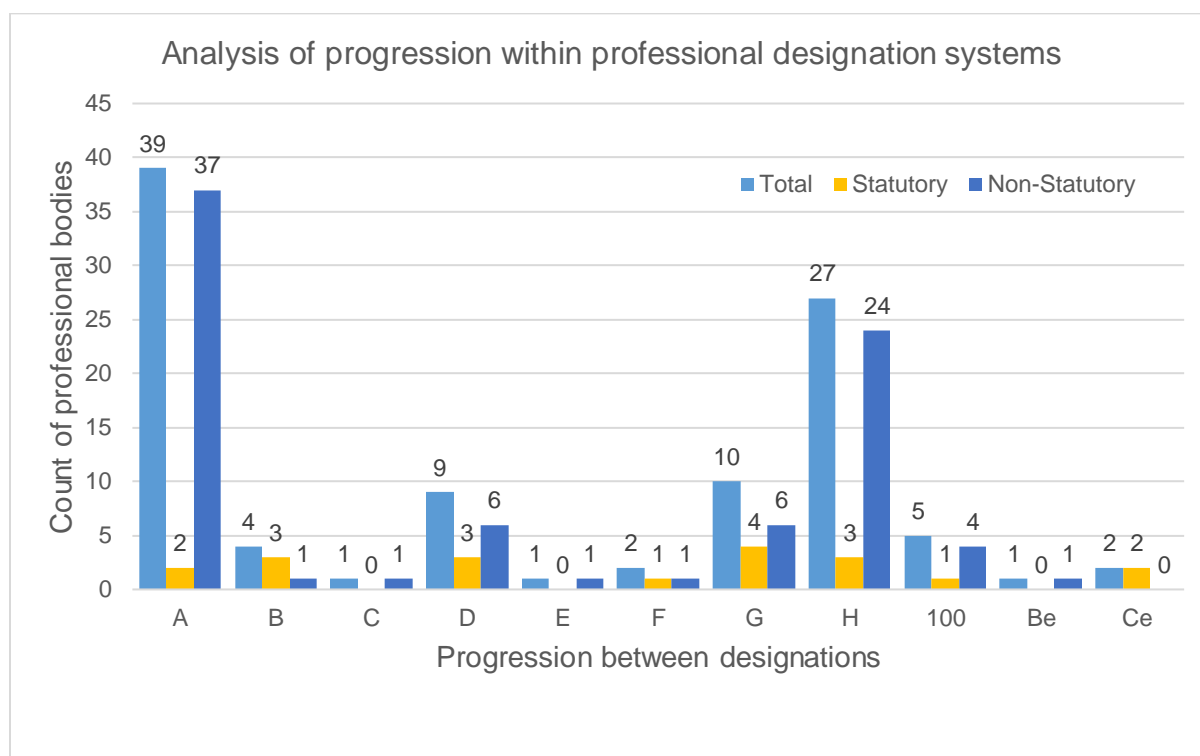
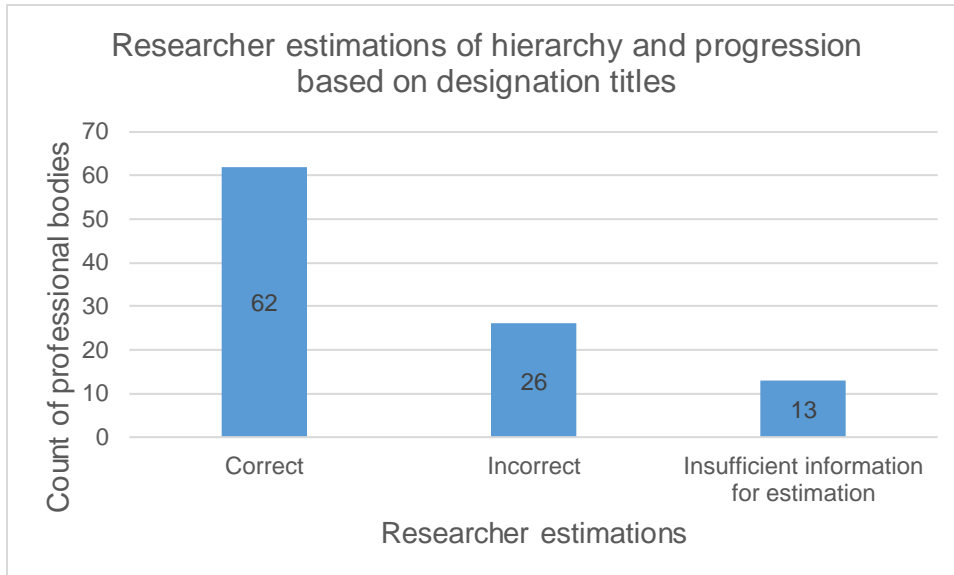


Figure 8 shows that the most common progression pattern in professional designation systems was for bodies to provide single progression pathways ('A'), followed by bodies that provide single designations ('H'). The next two most common trends were for bodies to show no progression ('G') and bodies to have a single progression pathway as well as independent designations ('D'). Statutory and non-statutory bodies, while not identical, followed similar patterns in the distribution of their progression pathways, with the five most common categories for each being 'A', 'B', 'D', 'G', and 'H' (not including the categories with uncertainty). Comparing the trends for statutory and non-statutory bodies respectively: from most to least common progression patterns, statutory bodies showed the sequence 'G', 'B', 'D', 'H', 'A', while their non-statutory counterparts showed 'A', 'H', 'G', 'D', 'B'. These differences were difficult to compare directly due to the differences in sample sizes between statutory and non-statutory bodies.

However, it was not necessarily easy to identify designation progression pathways and the research team carried out some related analyses in this regard. To assess the ease of identifying designation progression systems within professional bodies, a variable was made where the research team attempted, with no prior knowledge, to emulate a member of the public trying to find progression routes within a professional body's system of designations. This variable (the estimations) was based on designation title only and was measured against the 'correct system' based on the progression information in the NQF MIS and/or the professional body website. Where the estimations (judgments) matched information in the NQF MIS/ professional body website, the rating was categorised as '1'. Where the research team was incorrect in

their estimations, the rating was categorised as ‘0’. Figure 9 below shows the results of this exercise for statutory and non-statutory bodies combined.

Figure 9: Researcher estimations of hierarchy and progression in designation systems, based on designation titles (statutory and non-statutory bodies)



Legend: [X axis]:

Researcher estimations='1' (Correct)

Researcher estimations='0' (Incorrect)

100=Insufficient information for estimation

Figure 9 shows that for almost two thirds of the professional bodies (62 of 101), the researcher estimations correctly identified progression in their designation systems. The systems of 26 bodies were estimated incorrectly, and a further 13 – over a third altogether – provided insufficient information to enable understanding of the systems.

Given the apparent gaps in the system, the research team went on to examine professional body websites to identify the extent to which progression between their designations was visible. In this investigation, the websites were considered independently from the information in the NQF MIS, and each website was assessed as a ‘closed system’. Where the information on the body’s website was ambiguous, the researchers consulted the NQF MIS to clarify understanding – however, this clarity was used to assist the categorisation of the data, and not to alter it. The professional body website data on visibility was categorised as follows:

- **‘visible’** – when progression pathways were fully visible within the designation systems of bodies,
- **‘partly visible’** – when progression was either visible between some pathway elements but not others, or that the progression information was present but insufficient to show clear paths between designations,
- **‘not visible’** – when progression pathways were not found,
- **‘single designation’** – when a body had a single designation, and
- **‘unknown’** – when there was insufficient information to make a clear assessment regarding the progression between the designations of a body.

Figure 10: Visibility of progression between designations (all body websites)

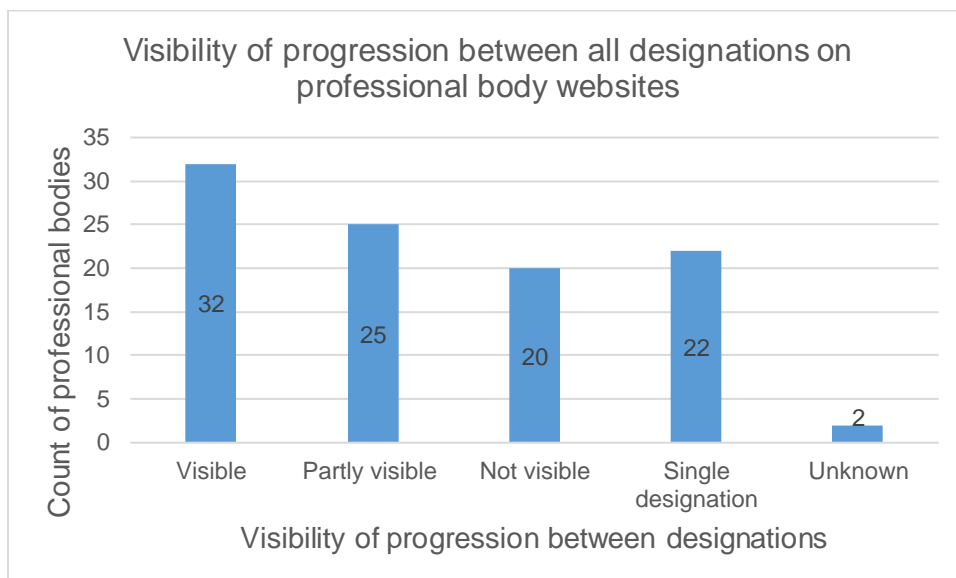
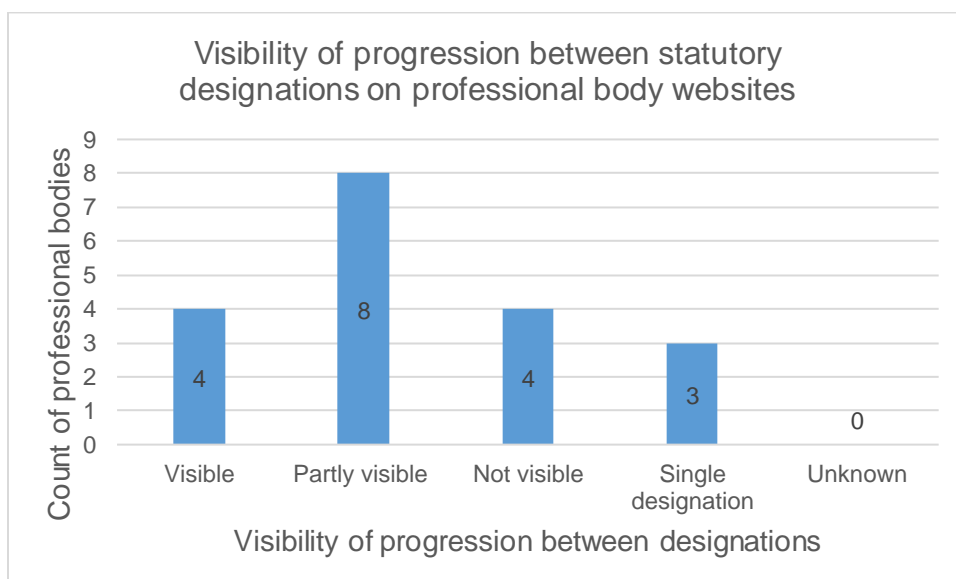


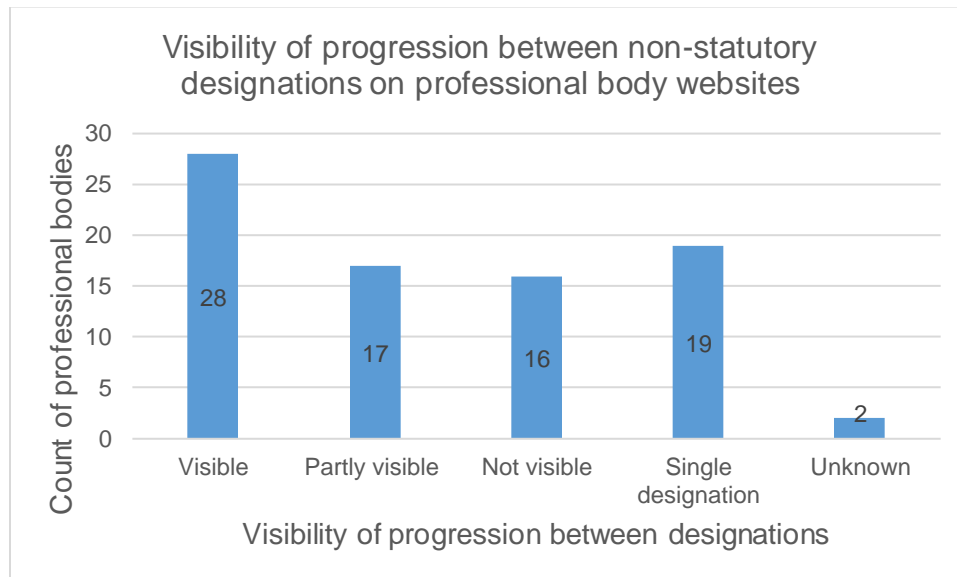
Figure 10 shows that the information on progression between designations/ the designation systems of professional bodies were visible to the researchers for around a third (32) of the bodies. The visibility of progression between designations/ designation systems was broadly similar across statutory and non-statutory bodies for most of the categories – details on some of the differences are shown in Figures 11 and 12 below. Designation systems and the progression between designations was partly visible, or not visible, in most cases (54% of bodies) overall.

Figure 11: Visibility of progression between designations on statutory professional body websites



Considering the statutory professional bodies as a sub-group, the researchers assessed four of 19 bodies (21% of statutory bodies) as making progression between their designations visible, while for 12 of the 19 bodies, progression was partly visible or not visible (63% of statutory bodies).

Figure 12: Visibility of progression between designations on non-statutory professional body websites



Considering the non-statutory professional bodies as a sub-group – Figure 12 shows that the researchers assessed 28 of 82 bodies (34% of non-statutory bodies) as making progression between their designations/ their designation systems visible, while 33 of the 82 bodies (40%) were found to make this information partially visible or not visible.

In addition to the *visibility of progression* between designations, data were collected on the *visibility of hierarchies* within professional body designation systems. This hierarchy was understood as being the possibility of progressing ‘upwards’ (in the authority hierarchy) in a designation system/ field, whereas ‘progression’ was understood in terms of both horizontal and vertical pathways between designations. Hierarchy was categorised as follows:

- **‘visible’** – when hierarchy was fully visible within the designation systems of bodies,
- **‘mixed’** – when designation systems were partly hierarchical and/or some of the designations in a body’s system were within and outside hierarchies,
- **‘not visible’** – when the researchers did not find hierarchies within designation systems,
- **‘single designation’** – when a body had a single designation, and
- **‘unknown’** – when there was insufficient information to determine the presence of a hierarchy.

Figure 13: Visibility of designation hierarchy on professional body websites

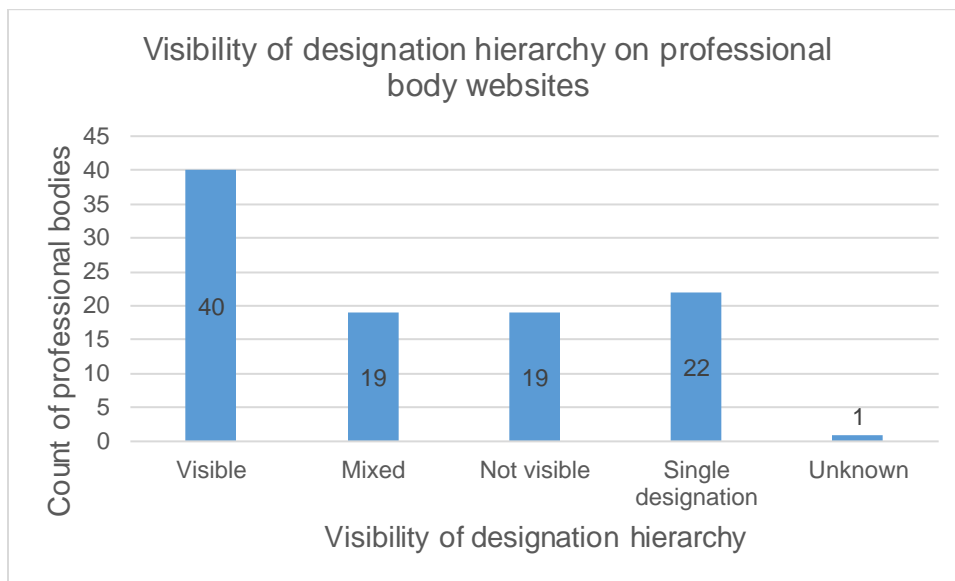


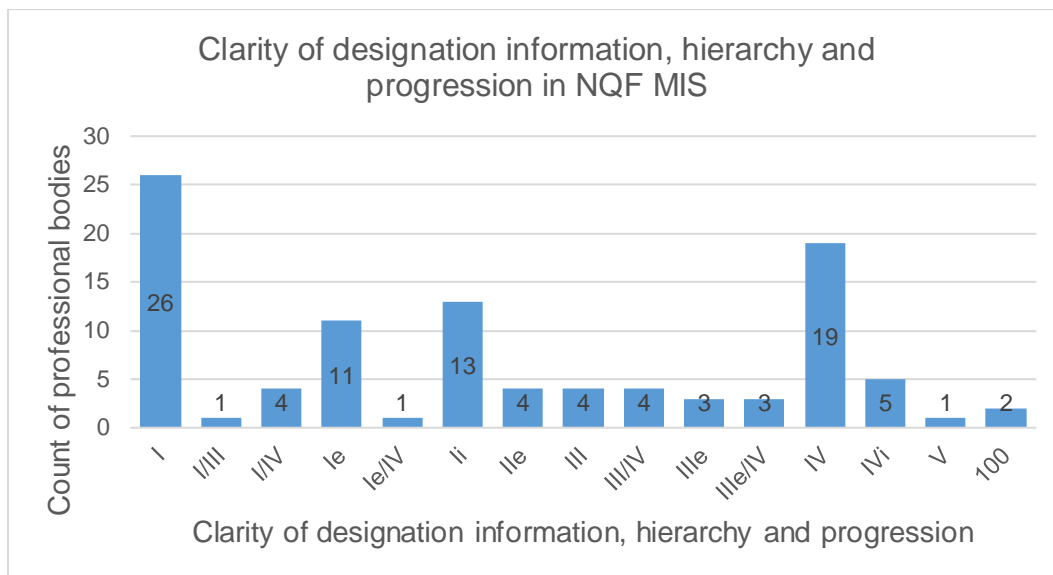
Figure 13 shows that the researchers found that most professional bodies have either visible hierarchies or single designations, these patterns found in 40 and 22 bodies respectively – making up 61% of all professional bodies. Mixed hierarchies were found in the designation systems of 19 bodies, and in a further 19, no hierarchies were visible.

Clarity of designation information, hierarchy, and progression

Figures 14 and 15 attempt to show the clarity of designation information in the NQF MIS, and on professional body websites, respectively – including designation criteria, progression information, and information on hierarchies in designation systems, on the whole.

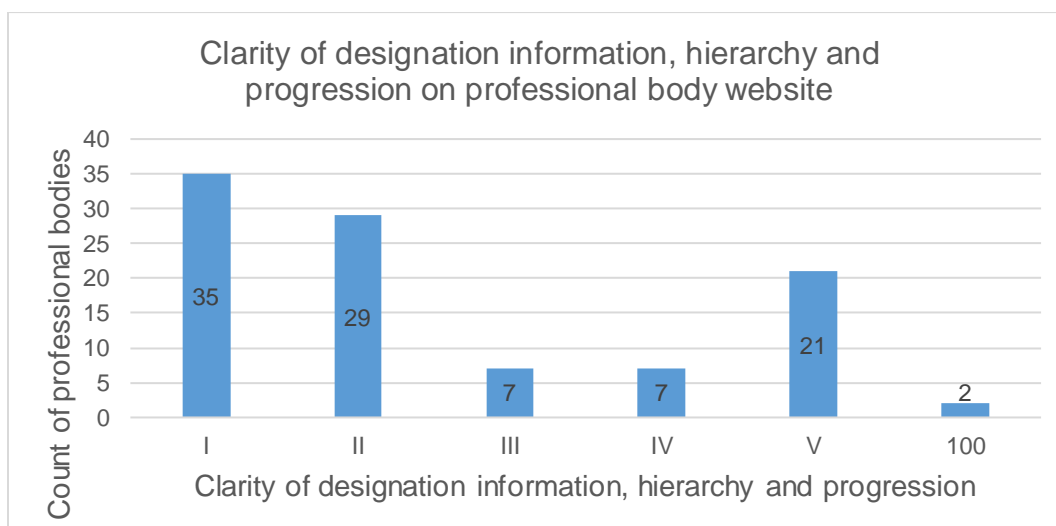
It was not an easy/ straight-forward task to describe the designation systems of professional bodies. In attempting to do so, the information in the NQF MIS was triangulated with that on the professional body websites – but information was also assessed separately for the NQF MIS versus the professional body websites. In some instances, different designation entries for the same body fell into different analytical categories – in these cases, the symbol ‘/’ was used to denote that both situations occurred within the professional body’s entry. Use of ‘i’ indicates that the professional body has one designation, while use of ‘e’ denotes suspected errors in the NQF MIS entry.

Figure 14: Clarity of designation information, hierarchy, progression (NQF MIS)



Legend: [X axis:] Clarity of designation information, hierarchy, and progression
I: Designation information including progression information complete
II: Designation information partial/ absent but progression information complete
III: Designation information complete but progression information partial/ absent
IV: No information other than designation title
V: Body closed down during the course of the study
i: Single designation
e: Some errors/ unclear aspects
100: Unknown

Figure 15: Clarity of designation information, hierarchy, progression (professional body websites)



Legend: [X axis:] Clarity of designation information, hierarchy, and progression
I: Clear
II: Partly clear
III: Unclear
IV: Information not available

V: Single designation
 100: Unknown

Figure 14 shows that in the NQF MIS, the information on designations was complete for 39 of 101 (38%) of the SAQA-recognised professional bodies, 13 of which had single designations, and 26 bodies information on both designation criteria and progression between designations. For the remaining 62 of 101 (61% of bodies), there were either (a) gaps in the designation criteria, or progression information, or both, (b) errors, or unclear aspects, or (c) for around quarter of bodies, designation titles only.

Figure 15 shows that the information on designations, progression, and hierarchy was clear on 35 professional body websites, partly clear on 29, and for a further 21 there was one designation only per body. On 16 professional body websites, designation and progression information was not clear or was not found.

META-ANALYSIS: DETAILED CROSS-CUTTING OBSERVATIONS

This section presents overarching patterns in the data as well as additional detailed observations.

Summary of designation information in the NQF MIS

Table 3 below provides summary counts of designation information in the NQF MIS.

Table 3: Summary counts of designation information in the NQF MIS

Category of information	Count of designations	Percentage (%) of all designations
Total professional designations (PDs)	373	100.0
Statutory body PDs	112	30.0
Non-statutory body PDs	261	70.0
Statutory body PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	39	10.5
Non-statutory body PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	194	52.0
Total PDs with qualification information in NQF MIS	233	60.1
PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	140	39.9
Statutory body PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	73	19.6
Non-statutory body PDs with designation title only in NQF MIS	67	18.0

Summary of designation information on professional body websites

In addition to the analyses already reported regarding the professional body websites – the extents to which designations were listed, designation criteria elaborated, and pathways between designations/ designation systems clarified, were condensed, and coded into a three-variable system. This system was then used to describe how easy it was for a member of the public to extract designation information. In the cleaning of the data, a sample set of 96 professional bodies was used where five bodies were omitted due to some information of their information being unclear.

Figure 16: Count of professional bodies with their designations listed on their websites



Figure 16 shows that most (84% of the sample set), professional body designations were visible on their websites. Ten percent of the websites showed only partial listings of their designations, and six percent did not list their designations.

Figure 17: Count of professional bodies with their designation criteria described on their websites

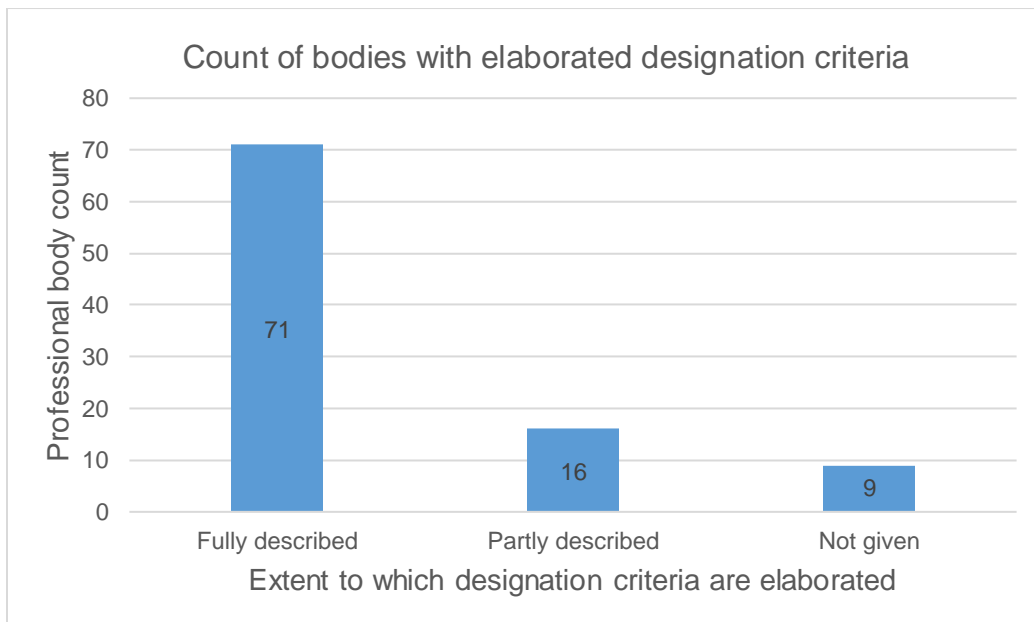
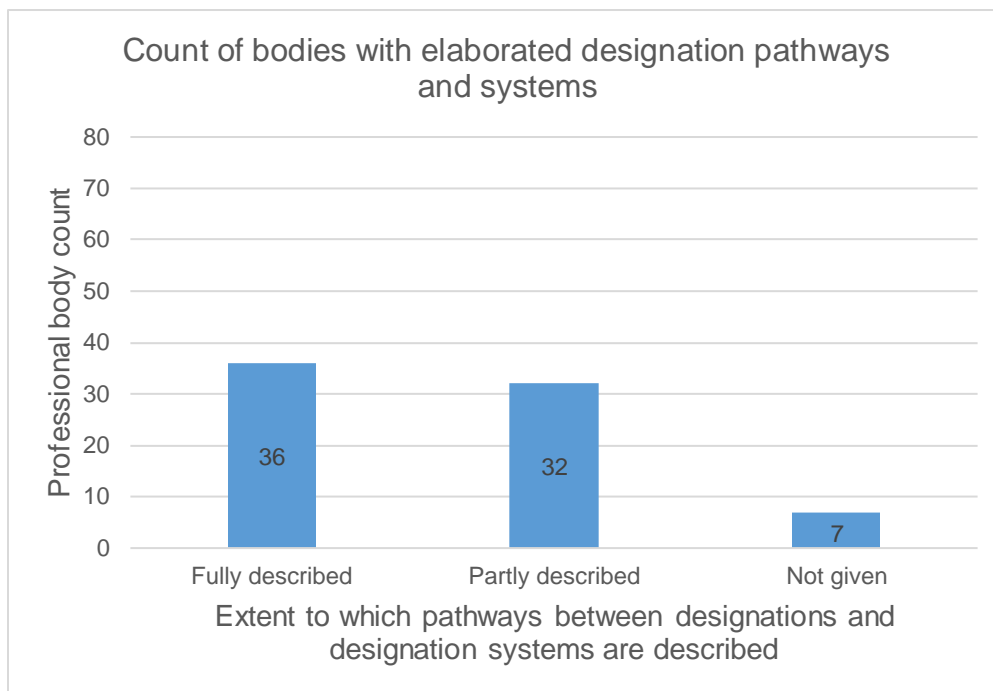


Figure 17 shows that with respect to the visibility of the underlying designation criteria a similar trend was seen with 71 bodies fully elaborating their designation criteria (74% of the sample set). Sixteen (17%) of the websites showed partially described designation criteria, and nine percent did not give any criteria for the designations.

Figure 18: Count of professional bodies with their designation systems elaborated on their websites



The researchers used the concept of ‘designation systems’ to denote the relationships and progression pathways between the designations of a body. A clear designation system, for example, could include the criteria for accessing designations as well as for progressing from one designation to another, and within and/or across sub-fields. Figure 18 shows the extent to which professional bodies elaborated their designation systems on their websites. With respect to professional body websites with full descriptions of their designation pathways and systems, the sample set was reduced to those with more than one designation so as not to skew the findings by including bodies for which progression was not possible. The remaining sample set of 75 bodies showed that a similar number of bodies had well described and partially described systems respectively. Thirty-six (36) (48% of the sample set) presented full descriptions and 32 (43% of the sample set) partial descriptions. A small number of bodies did not describe their designation pathways clearly (9% of the sample set).

Additional observations and discussion

In considering the websites of the 101 professional bodies and related data in the NQF MIS, additional cross-cutting observations were made that shed light on some trends relating to professional designations and potential aspects for which guidelines could be enabling. This information is clustered thematically into fourteen areas.

- 1. Inconsistency of information**
- 2. Progression towards, and between, professional designations: details**
 - Progression towards and across designations where there are formalised structures such as boards or associations, or informal ‘streams’
 - Clear information for individual professional designations but less clarity around progression between designations
 - Apparent hierarchy but lack of progression routes

3. Currency of information
4. Missing or partial information
5. Confusing information
6. Naming of professional bodies
7. Local and international 'chapters'
8. Ease of website navigation
9. Website being 'down'
10. Good examples
11. Several similar bodies within fields
12. Details to address
13. On offering training
14. Other aspects to note

Each of these areas is elaborated in the sections that follow.

1. Inconsistency of information

For 65 of the 101 bodies, the numbers, and details of professional designations in the NQF MIS ***matched the numbers and details*** shown on the professional body websites. However, for 36 of the bodies, the numbers of, and/or details for, designations differed across the NQF MIS and professional body websites. Further, sometimes within professional body websites, the information was ***inconsistent***.

2. Progression towards, and between, professional designations

In 12 of the 101 bodies, there were sub-groups of professions under ***formalised*** structures (e.g., boards or associations) each with related designations, where there was ***progression within but not between sub-groups***. In other cases, the sub-groups were ***implicit*** and visible only when considering the criteria for designations. Often progression was shown ***within but not between*** these implicit streams.

Overall, ***information around progression towards and between designations*** was categorised as being either (1) present on the professional body website and in the NQF MIS; (2) incomplete on the body's website or in the NQF MIS, or both, or (3) absent on the body's website, or NQF MIS, or both. Details follow.

- **Eleven bodies were found to have 'complete sets'** of clear and visible information for achieving designations, progressing between designations, and whole designation systems for the body.
- Twelve bodies were found to be **associated with formal structures such as boards or associations**. Of these, four **were found to have 'complete sets'** of clear and visible information for achieving designations, progressing between designations, and whole designation systems for the body. Eight bodies had some of this information.
- For bodies without formal structures and more than one designation, there were often hierarchies and one or more pathways between designations. **Eight bodies were found to have 'complete sets'** of clear and visible information for achieving designations, progressing between designations, and whole designation systems for the body. For **eleven bodies, there were designation criteria and no hierarchy/ progression** information. For a further eleven

bodies, there were designation criteria and progression information **for some but not all** designations. For three bodies, there were designation criteria and **implied progression** (where the pathways were not stated explicitly).

3. Currency of information

Some of the information on professional body websites – such as the criteria for professional designations – included **outdated terminology** such as "Standard 8", or "Senior Certificate". In other instances, information in the NQF MIS was **not up to date**, while the professional body websites had clear current information on their designation criteria, progression, and designation systems. Other examples of outdated information found were the inclusion of deregistered designations, outdated progression routes, progression routes that include deregistered designations, and website/ contact details that had been superseded.

4. Missing or partial information

In some instances, **information was missing or partly missing** in either the NQF MIS, or on the professional body website, or both – for example, the presentation of designation titles only, without the designation criteria, hierarchy, and progression information.

5. Confusing information

In some instances, the information on professional body websites was internally contradictory, for example: (a) designations, job categories and sub-sectors that are not fully aligned, (b) designation information fragmented/ incomplete across different hyperlinks, (c) designations partly linked to 'accreditations' and 'certifications', (d) a designation having more than one title across sites, (e) inconsistent information across the NQF MIS and professional body websites (see Sub-Section 1 of this report), and (f) job and designation titles that were hard to link, amongst others.

6. Naming of professional bodies and professional designations

In some instances, the naming of different professional bodies led to the same professional body acronym, or to the same acronym as an education provider.

7. Links with international bodies

At least 14 of the SAQA-recognised professional bodies were found to have links with international counterparts in different ways.

- a) Some of the non-statutory professional bodies comprise **local 'chapters' of international bodies or have strong links** with (dependencies on) counterpart international bodies [nine bodies].
- b) Some bodies have **links with several international** counterparts [one body].
- c) Some bodies **require one or more international qualifications** as the basis for its designations [one body].
- d) Some **accept one or more international qualifications** as the basis for their designations [two bodies].
- e) Some claim that **one or more of their designations are valid internationally** [two bodies].
- f) Some bodies have a **regional footprint** [three bodies].

Sometimes this structuring **created complexity**. In some instances, professional designations were obtained via a mix of local and international qualifications. Some local branches of international bodies had no local websites. Some bodies had 'South African' designations together with the designations of other countries. Some international bodies developed/ offered/ assessed qualifications. Some local 'chapters' did not use NQF terminology. Some international links were African, others, global.

8. Ease of website navigation

Some professional body websites were easier to navigate than others. In all, the websites of 16 bodies very easy to navigate and contained comprehensive information on designations and designation systems and could serve as examples. In other cases, the challenges included:

- Professional designations being hard to locate within the links provided (e.g., multiple embedded links/ PDFs that did not always open/ documents that required changes to file extensions to open/ links that did not work),
- Information only available via an embedded email request,
- Links labelled in inviting ways but not populated with designation information,
- Information being distributed across various links at the same levels/ embedded across layers of links,
- Systems of links that were not intuitive,
- Websites that appeared to direct the public to professionals rather than explaining the designations for potential candidates,
- Websites that were not 'modernised',
- Designation information being inside membership application forms only,
- Separate information documents for each designation, and
- Designation information only in the footnotes of documents.

9. Website being 'down'

In two instances, the professional body websites as listed in the NQF MIS were 'down' for the duration of the study and no information was available for these bodies.

10. Good examples

Websites were noted when they pointed towards good practice, such as when they:

- clearly listed and described the criteria for their professional designations,
- described and illustrated progression to and between their professional designations, including the hierarchy between the designations and the structure of their designation system, and
- had well presented, easy to locate information, with user-friendly links.

Some of the useful features found included:

- explaining designations that did not feature in the NQF MIS,

- having a hyperlink for each designation, to the PDF with the information in the NQF MIS, where the qualifications, work experience and other designation criteria, and progression information, featured,
- the body's website listing and explaining the old and new NQF levels in South Africa,
- the body's website providing information on the related professional bodies that its members could also join, and
- diagrams of designation systems, that showed the hierarchy and progression between designations.

In all, 16 professional body websites were considered to point towards good practice. All bodies could learn from each other in this regard.

11. Several similar bodies within fields

It appears that in some fields, there are several non-statutory professional bodies rather than a single body. Examples include **accounting** related work (seven bodies), **auditing/ risk management/ procurement** related work (eight bodies), **business** (three bodies), the **exercise field** (two bodies), **health** (four bodies), the **human resources** field (six bodies), **Information Technology** (two bodies), the **legal field** (two bodies) and jobs relating to **office work/ administration/ management** (three bodies). It is not immediately clear whether the roles of these bodies overlap – further in-depth research would be needed to clarify this issue.

12. Details to address

In some instances, there are '**editorial**' errors either on the professional body websites, or in the NQF MIS, or both. For example, some of the progression information is back-to-front, and some acronyms have unusually sequenced letters.

13. On offering training

Some professional bodies **appear to offer training, and/ or to accredit/ approve training providers**. On the other hand, all professional bodies recognised in the context of the NQF in South Africa provide for **Continuing Professional Development** (CPD). There are instances in which the lines between CPD and training can become **blurred** – especially where small units of learning or work-integrated learning are involved. Further research is needed to understand the nature and form of the training/ development available through recognised professional bodies, towards developing enabling, inclusive and quality-enhancing policy for lifelong learning in this regard.

14. Other points to note

Some non-statutory professional bodies have underpinning legislation, and in some instances, the question arises as to whether the bodies should, in fact, be statutory – given the nature of their fields.

CONSIDERING INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES

Of the 101 professional bodies/ sectors analysed, 11 were found to have systems of professional designations that were particularly complex and only partly visible to the researchers. For five of these, the professional designation systems in counterpart fields internationally, were considered. The fields were:

- (1) Accounting and Commerce
- (2) Nursing
- (3) Plumbing
- (4) Veterinary
- (5) Work at Height

In the **Accounting and Commerce** field in South Africa, an unusually high number of professional bodies were found, and the designation criteria, progression information, and hierarchy of designations were not necessarily clear.

In the **Nursing** field in South Africa, there were five legislated designations, six designations on the body website, and regulations for 15 categories of nurses. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

In the **Plumbing** field in South Africa, the system of designations was not clear in the NQF MIS and was partly clear on the body's website. Progression routes were partly clear.

In the **Veterinary** field in South Africa, there was an unusually high number of designations: 37 designations registered in the NQF MIS, 33 of which were on the professional body's website, as well as an additional two. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

In the **Work at Height** field in South Africa, sub-sectors are clustered into chambers, each of which has several licensable professions. Professional designation criteria and progression routes were partly clear.

For the fields of Accounting, Nursing, Plumbing, the Veterinary field and Work at Height, countries were scanned across the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe, for professionalisation systems, to see the 'governing bodies' and how these systems were structured. This information was most readily available for **Australia, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, United Kingdom (UK), and Vietnam**. Thus, the professional body systems for Accounting, Nursing, Plumbing, the Veterinary field, and Work at Height were considered in these eight countries.

Accounting

The point of research interest for the accounting field, was the numbers of bodies in the field. To consider accounting body systems worldwide the database of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), a global body that tracks accounting organisations, was used. IFAC is the largest global across-country accounting body with 180 member organisations, including four in South Africa. IFAC operates in 135 jurisdictions around the world and keeps information on accounting legislation, and practice, for each member body as well as all the accounting bodies of which they are

aware, that are not members. Using the IFAC database it was determined within the sample countries that, excepting the UK, countries have several but a small number of accounting bodies (two to three bodies overseeing practice and legislation). The larger number of accounting bodies in the UK (nine bodies), can be explained partially by the inclusion of the independent regions of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Table 6 below shows the accounting bodies found in the selected countries.

Table 6: Professional bodies in the ‘Accounting’ field, in selected countries where the information was readily available

Countries	Numbers/ names of bodies found in the selected countries	Acronym
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Practising Accountant Australia • Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand • Institute of Public Accountants 	CPA CA ANZ IPA
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial accounting bodies of Chartered Professional Accountants • Canadian Public Accountability Board 	CPAs CPAB
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institut der Wirtschaftsprüfer in Deutschland E.V. (Institute of Public Auditors in Germany, Incorporated Association) • Wirtschaftsprüferkammer (Chamber of Public Accountants) 	IDW WPK
Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants 	HKICPA
Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ikatan Akuntan Indonesia/Institute of Indonesia Chartered Accountants • Institut Akuntan Manajemen Indonesia/Indonesian Institute of Management Accountants • Institut Akuntan Publik Indonesia/Indonesian Institute of Certified Public Accountants 	IAI IAMI IAPI
Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malaysian Institute of Accountants • Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants 	MIA MICPA
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of Accounting Technicians • Association of Chartered Certified Accountants • Association of International Accountants • Association of International Certified Professional Accountants • Chartered Accountants of Ireland • Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy • Institute of Chartered Accountants of England Wales • Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland • Institute of Financial Accountants 	AAT ACCA AIA CIMA CAI CIPFA ICAEW ICAS IFA
Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam Accounting Association • Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 	VAA VACPA

Nursing

The point of research interest in the nursing sector was the structuring of the professional designation systems. The sample countries for which information was readily available, appeared to have between three and six designations for nurses within their professional bodies, a similar number to that in the NQF MIS for nursing in

South Africa. Table 7 shows the nursing bodies and designations found in the selected countries; the yellow cells indicate where information was not readily available.

Table 7: Professional bodies and designations in the ‘Nursing’ field, in selected countries where the information was readily available

Countries	Nursing bodies/ designations found in selected countries	Websites sourced
Australia	The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) mentions four designations: Registered Nurse, Enrolled Nurse, Nurse Practitioner and Midwife. The designations mentioned policy, but comprehensive descriptions were not found on the NMBA website.	https://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/
Canada	Canada has 13 Provinces. The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) is a statutory body and further research would be needed to determine if there are other governing bodies. CNO designations include: Registered Nurses (RNs), Nurse Practitioners (NPs), Registered Practical Nurses or Licensed Practical Nurses (RPNs or LPNs), and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs). The CNO website is separated into ‘Public’ and ‘Members’ sections, a very useful design.	https://www.cno.org/
Germany	Nursing in Germany requires a state exam, following an apprenticeship and studies. There are bodies such as <i>Deutscher Berufsverband für Pflegeberufe</i> (DBfK) with which qualified nurses can register. There appear to be three main streams of nurses in Germany: General Nurses, Paediatric Nurses, and Geriatric Nurses, however, whether these categories are designations would need to be confirmed through further research, as more detailed information was not readily available.	https://www.dbfk.de/
Hong Kong	The Nursing Council of Hong Kong (Chinese: 香港護士管理局) is a statutory body. Its listed designations are: Registered Nurses (General), Registered Nurses (Psychiatric), Registered Nurses (Mentally Subnormal), Registered Nurses (Sick Children), Enrolled Nurses (General), Enrolled Nurses (Psychiatric).	https://www.nchk.org.hk/en/home/index.html
Indonesia	Nurses in Indonesia must register with the Indonesian Healthcare Professions Board, for which the researchers struggled to find information. No designations were found.	
Malaysia	Nurses in Malaysia must register with the Malaysian Nursing Board, under the Ministry of Health. There seem to be different Nursing specialisations, but these were not found on the official website and further investigation would be needed to find more detail.	https://nursing.moh.gov.my/homepage/
United Kingdom	The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is a chartered body (It has a Royal Charter). Detailed information was not readily available to confirm the designations, but some of the categories visible were, Nurse, Midwife and Nursing Support Worker.	https://www.rcn.org.uk/

Vietnam	The regulation of Nursing in Vietnam appears to be through the Ministry of health. Candidate application and supporting documents are reviewed by the Minister of Health or the Director of the Provincial Department of Health. No designations were visible.	http://hoinhap.kcb.vn/en/dang-ky-cap-chung-chi-hanh-nghe/
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Plumbing

The point of research interest in the plumbing field, was how plumbing is governed, and how professional designations are structured. In the sample countries, how plumbers were designated differed considerably. Systems with levels for plumbers (e.g., Plumber and Master Plumber) accompanied by technical assistance (e.g., Registered Plumbing Worker) appeared to be common; these categories were found in Australia, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom and some of these designations had non-designated specialisations. Less common were systems that had designations for specific plumbers (e.g., Water Plumber or Sewerage Plumber), found in Malaysia. The bodies for the plumbing presented very differently in the sample countries with some being statutory entities (UK, Hong Kong, Malaysia), some being separate local entities that work within a state or province (Australia, Canada, Germany), and some that appear to use international accreditation (Vietnam) however, further research would be needed to confirm these patterns. South Africa's system appears to be like those in Australia, Hong Kong, and the UK, with levels of plumbers and technical workers, but also appears to have additional designations for specialisations. Some of the designation system diagrams on the international websites visited were very clear. Table 8 shows the plumbing bodies and designations found in the selected countries; the yellow cells indicate where information was not readily available.

Table 8: Professional bodies and designations in the 'Plumbing' field, in selected countries where the information was readily available

Countries	Plumbing bodies and designations found in selected countries	Websites sourced
Australia	Plumbing seems to be governed by localised (possibly statutory) bodies, by state, for example, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) or Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC). Plumbing seems to be separated into two 'streams': Licenced Plumber and Registered Plumber, and within these there are specialisations (in the time available, it was not possible to determine how many specialisations there were). The Licensed Plumber is at a higher level than the Registered Plumber.	https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/registration-and-licensing/ https://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/
Canada	There appear to be many bodies that accredit plumbers in Canada, and these seem to be based on region. A sample of the existing bodies is listed below; in some of the contexts, training and accreditation is done by the same organisation ³ .	(There were many separate entities: see Footnote 12)

³ The Canadian organisations found were as follows.

- Alberta - Apprenticeship and Industry Training Office, Government of Alberta
- British Columbia - Industry Training Authority British Columbia

Germany	Plumbing in Germany is regulated by the 53 chambers of the <i>Handwerkskammer</i> , a joint initiative for the crafts (trades). The chambers govern apprenticeships and learning as well as accreditation. The chambers appear to be a cooperative and not state governed. Plumbing designations were not found.	https://www.handwerkskammer.de/
Hong Kong	In Hong Kong, licencing and registering plumbers is done through the Water Supplies Department (WSD). The designations are: Licenced Plumber, Registered Plumbing Worker, Registered Plumbing Worker (Provisional) and there are two other listed designated persons, "a person who carries out specified plumbing works under the instruction and supervision of a licensed plumber or registered plumbing worker" and, "a public officer authorized by the Water Authority (WA)".	https://www.wsd.gov.hk/en/plumbing-engineering/licensed-plumbers/
Indonesia	Information regarding the designations of plumbing professionals could not be found and requires more in-depth research.	
Malaysia	Plumbers are under the National Water Services Commission (Suruhanjaya Pekhidmatan Air Negara [SPAN]), a statutory body). SPAN provides permits that need to be registered for: 'IPA Type A' (Water Plumber), 'Type B' (Sewerage Plumber), 'Type C' (Works Contractor), 'Type D' (Operation and Maintenance [O&M] Contractor), or 'Type E' (Desludging Contractor).	https://www.span.gov.my/
United Kingdom	Plumbing is governed by the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE) (A body with a Royal Charter), and there is an extensive and clear breakdown of related career pathways on its website. The CIPHE website is separated into 'Public' and 'Members' sections, a very useful design. In addition, CIPHE has well laid out and clear infographics.	https://www.ciphe.org.uk/
Vietnam	There do not appear to be local certifications to become a plumber in Vietnam, however, there are institutions that offer international certifications. Further research would be needed for more details.	-

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- Manitoba - Apprenticeship Manitoba
 - New Brunswick - Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, Government of New Brunswick
 - Newfoundland and Labrador - Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division, Department of Advanced Education and Skills of Newfoundland and Labrador
 - Northwest Territories - Apprenticeship and Trades, Government of the Northwest Territories
 - Nova Scotia - Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
 - Nunavut - Apprenticeship, Trade and Occupations Certification, Government of Nunavut
 - Ontario - Ontario College of Trades
 - Prince Edward Island - Apprenticeship Training and Skilled Trade Certification, Government of Prince Edward Island
 - Québec - Emploi Québec
 - Saskatchewan - Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission
 - Yukon - Apprenticeship and Tradesperson Qualifications, Yukon Education

Veterinarians

The point of research interest in the veterinary field, was how the professional designations are structured. The veterinary body in South Africa was selected for its large number of designations (37). While handled differently, evidence of this pattern was seen in all sample countries. The field appears to be commonly separated into two major 'streams': a 'veterinarian stream' (or 'Veterinary Surgeon') and a 'technical stream' (with designations related to laboratory work, technicians, assistants). Within these streams there are specialisations. In South Africa, this is handled by providing separate designations for all the types of work, however in the sample countries it is more common to have fewer stream-specific designations with specialisations for the main designations. Table 9 shows the veterinary bodies and designations found in the selected countries; the yellow cells indicate where information was not readily available.

Table 9: Professional bodies and designations in the 'Veterinary' field, in selected countries where the information was readily available

Countries	Veterinary bodies/ designations found in selected countries	Websites sourced
Australia	In the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Incorporated (AVBC), there is a Board for Australia and Board for New Zealand. AVBC has four designations: Veterinarian, Veterinary Surgeon, Veterinary Practitioner and Veterinary Specialist. Veterinary Specialist has 28 specialist categories.	https://avbc.asn.au/
Canada	Professionals are required to pass the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) and register with a local authority (Provincial Board/ College). There appear to be two streams (in Ontario): Veterinarians and Registered Veterinary Technicians/ Technologists, but further research would be needed to ascertain whether this is the case in all provinces/ specific to some.	https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/ https://cvo.org/
Germany	According to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany, there are four professions: Veterinary Surgeon, Veterinary Specialist, Veterinary Laboratory Technician, and Specialist Veterinary Assistant. Veterinary Specialist has 42 specialities.	https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/2726.php
Hong Kong	Veterinarian licencing and registering is done through the Hong Kong Veterinary Association (HKVA), a statutory body. From the HKVA website, there are two fields: Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Nurses, each of which seems to have specialisations that do not appear to be listed.	http://www.hkva.org/clinic_accred.asp
Indonesia	Information regarding the designations of veterinary professionals could not be found and would require more in depth research.	

Malaysia	Veterinarians register with the Malaysian Veterinary Council, a government entity. There appears to be a main designation and specialisations, however the registering entity does not list any information on these.	https://www.mvc.gov.my/
United Kingdom	The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) is a chartered body (with a Royal Charter). Designations listed include, Veterinary Surgeon, and Registered Veterinary Nurse. The Veterinary Surgeon designation has 67 specialisations.	https://www.rcvs.org.uk/
Vietnam	Information regarding the designations of veterinary professionals could not be found and would require more in-depth research.	

Work at Height

The point of research interest in the work at height field, was the structuring of designations. In the sample countries, work at height did not fall under a dedicated professional body. In most cases, information regarding the field was not explicitly mentioned, and where it was mentioned, it was under the umbrella of other bodies in the fields of building, safety, or scaffolding. Table 10 shows the work at height-related bodies and designations found in the selected countries; the yellow cells indicate where information was not readily available.

Table 10: Professional body and designation information for ‘Work at Height’ in selected countries where the information was readily available

Countries	Bodies/ designations for work at height found in selected countries	Websites sourced
Australia	In Australia, there was no apparent equivalent as a professional association, but there were localised bodies that included related responsibilities, such as the Scaffolding Association Queensland (SAQ). The closest professional association found was the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) (limited to Queensland). Designations in the field were not apparent.	https://www.saq.org.au/ https://www.qbcc.qld.gov.au/
Canada	In Canada, there was no apparent equivalent as a professional association, but there were localised bodies that included related responsibilities, such as the Scaffold Industry Association of Canada (SIAC), and the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) – Work at Height was not mentioned explicitly. Designations in the field were not apparent.	http://www.siac-ontario.com/ https://www.cca-acc.com/
Germany	Information regarding the designations of Work at Height professionals could not be found and would require more in-depth research.	
Hong Kong	In Hong Kong, there was no apparent equivalent as a professional association, but Work at Height was included in the responsibilities of the Occupational Health and Safety Council, a statutory body. Designations in the field were not apparent.	https://www.oshc.org.hk/eng/main/hot/work_at_height/

Indonesia	Information regarding the designations of Work at Height professionals could not be found and would require more in-depth research.	
Malaysia	Information regarding the designations of Work at Height professionals could not be found and would require more in-depth research.	
United Kingdom	In the UK, there was no apparent equivalent as a professional association, the closest <i>organisation</i> appearing to be the National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC), although NASC may not be recognised as a professional body. The closest <i>professional body</i> was the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). Designations in the field were not apparent.	https://nasc.org.uk/ https://www.ciob.org/
Vietnam	Information regarding the designations of Work at Height professionals could not be found and would require more in-depth research.	

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The current research sought to understand the systems of, and challenges linked to, the professional designations of SAQA-recognised professional bodies. In particular, the study investigated designation naming practices, the extent to which designation titles overlapped with job titles in the OFO or the titles of qualifications registered on the NQF, the use of inappropriate terms, numbers of designations, and international links.

The research commenced by extracting the designation data of the SAQA-recognised professional bodies, from the NQF MIS. It proceeded to triangulate the information found, and deepen the understandings gained, by analysing the professional body websites. Information was coded and analysed. Patterns were sought for statutory and non-statutory professional bodies respectively, and overall, as appropriate. There was no sample selection: all SAQA-recognised professional bodies in the NQF MIS at the time of the research were included.

Rich patterns were found in all the aspects investigated, including the foci in the original brief, as well as the additional aspects that impacted on these foci, namely, the designation criteria, the hierarchy amongst the designations per body, progression pathways between the designations per body, and the designation systems of bodies. The trends found provided clear pointers for the development of policy, criteria, and guidelines for professional designations in the NQF context.

RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS POLICY, CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR NAMING AND SYSTEMS OF PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Based on the first-level and meta-analyses of the professional designations of South African professional bodies recognised by SAQA, it is recommended that the following 14 aspects be considered in the development of SAQA policy, criteria and guidelines for the bodies and their designations. While further research would be needed for the in-depth comparison of professional body and designation systems across countries,

the systems of the international counterpart organisations investigated as part of the current research were considered when developing these recommendations. The following principles and criteria are recommended.

Recommendation 1: Simplify designation titles

Designation titles consist of various terms, including combinations of prefixes, descriptors, and suffixes. For user-friendliness, and while maintaining the integrity of professional body systems of designations, overly complex naming should be avoided. **One prefix and one suffix should ideally be used, with the descriptor** in a designation title. If a professional body wants to use more than one prefix and/or one suffix, a case should need to be presented to SAQA for consideration and approval.

Examples of prefixes

Accredited, Advanced, Associate(d), Certificated, Certified, Chartered, Credentialised, Executive, Fellow, Graduate(d), Licenced, Licentiate, Master, Principal, Professional, Registered, Senior, Specialist, Technical

Examples of descriptors

Accountant, Acupuncturist, Actor, Actuary, Architect, Auditor, Beauty-, Business Advice-, Business Restructuring-, Chef, Chemist, Civil Engineer, Construction-, Contact Centre-, Dental-, Disaster Management-, Electrical Engineer, Employee Assistance-, Environmental Assessment-, Equestrian-, Equine-, Event-, Exercise-, Facilities-, Firefighter, Fraud-, Geomatics-, Holistic Counsellor, Homoeopath, Human Resource-, Hygiene-, Immigration Official, Insolvency-, Interior Designer, Internal Auditor, Landscape Architect, Librarian, Market Research-, Mechanical Engineer, Mobility-, Natural Scientist, Nurse, Ocularist, Osteopath, Pharmacist, Physicist, Physiotherapist, Plumbing-, Property Valuer, Quantity Surveyor, Real Estate-, Religious-, Reward-, Rope Access-, Social Worker, Statistician, Tax-, Veterinarian, Veterinary-

Examples of suffixes

Associate, Certified, Fellow, Junior, Licentiate, Master, Professional, Senior, Specialist, Technician, Technologist, Worker

Recommendation 2: Avoid confusing terms in designation titles

It is recommended that SAQA stops the use of the following terms or defines when they may be used.

- 2.1. Use of the term '**Chartered**' in a professional body and/or professional designation be permitted only when the work of the body is closely linked to, and based on, a charter (legal document).
- 2.2 Use of the term '**Graduate**' in a professional body and/or professional designation title should be disallowed because it causes confusion around the qualification/ part-qualification status of a learner/ worker/ candidate.
- 2.3. Use of the term '**Accredited**' in a professional body and/or professional designation title should be disallowed because it causes confusion around the

status of the accreditation with respect to the quality assurance processes of the Quality Councils in the NQF context.

- 2.4. Use of **acronyms** within professional body and/or professional designation titles should be disallowed because they cause confusion.
- 2.5. To avoid confusion, **designation titles must differ from qualification and job titles** – although designation titles can *relate/ be similar to* qualification and job titles.

Recommendation 3: Clarify designation systems

In the South African NQF context, in support of enabling access to, and progression in, **learning and work pathways**, it is recommended that professional bodies must, on their websites:

- 3.1. **List the criteria** clearly and fully for each of their designations (including the qualifications and work experience needed, and RPL possibilities).
- 3.2. **Illustrate and describe the progression pathways** clearly and fully, to and from each designation.
- 3.3. **Provide clear diagrams that illustrate their designation systems**, including showing, clearly, (a) each designation title and pathway, (b) the hierarchies between different designations, (c) where each designation fits in the designation system, (d) how the designation can be accessed, and (e) all the progression possibilities. Designation systems may include one or more distinct pathways.

Recommendation 4: Minimise numbers of designations

Learning-and-work pathways and professional development are easier to access, and advance, when there are **smaller numbers of designations located clearly within the hierarchies and pathways of a designation system**. It is recommended that the numbers of designations within a professional body be minimised by, for example, having the designation '**Practitioner**' (with several specialisations if needed) and '**Specialist**' (with several specialisations if needed), rather than high numbers of separate designations. Designation systems may include one or more distinct pathways.

Recommendation 5: Ensure complete, clear, consistent, current designation information – professional body responsibilities

Professional body and designation information across the professional body website and the NQF MIS must be complete, clear, consistent, and current.

- 5.1. As part the recognition processes, professional bodies must provide to SAQA complete, clear, consistent, and current information for: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, (f) designation systems, and (g) explanatory diagrams of their designation systems. This information includes hierarchy and progression:

- within 'single streams' of designations,
 - within and across 'parallel streams' of designations per body, and
 - for 'parallel streams' of designations when there are associations/ boards/ chambers/ other entities under a single professional body.
- 5.2. Professional bodies must inform SAQA of any changes to their designation titles/ criteria/ numbers/ hierarchies, pathways to and from designations, and designation systems, including updates and refinements, within a timeframe agreed by SAQA.
 - 5.3. After effecting the changes on the professional body website, the body must provide the information to SAQA so that SAQA can update the NQF MIS, within a timeframe agreed by SAQA.
 - 5.4. Based on this research each professional body could conduct a self-evaluation to assess the completeness, clarity, consistency, and currency of its designation information. Following this evaluation, each body could effect the changes required, and submit the updated information to SAQA within agreed timeframes.

Recommendation 6: Ensure complete, clear, consistent, current designation information – SAQA responsibilities

SAQA needs to ensure that professional body and designation information is complete, clear, consistent, and current across the professional body website and the NQF MIS.

- 6.1. As part of the professional body recognition processes, SAQA submission requirements need to include complete, clear, consistent, current information on: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, (f) designation systems, and (g) diagrams of designation systems. This information needs to include hierarchy and progression:
 - within 'single streams' of designations,
 - within and across 'parallel streams' of designations under a single professional body, and
 - within 'streams' of designations when there are several associations/ boards/ chambers/ other entities under a single professional body.
- 6.2. SAQA needs to assess and update the NQF MIS information on: (a) designation titles, (b) designation criteria, (c) designation numbers, (d) designation hierarchies, (e) pathways to and from designations, and (f) designation systems and diagrams, on a periodic basis to be determined by SAQA.
- 6.3. SAQA needs to communicate with professional bodies when it plans to assess their information in the NQF MIS and on the professional body websites.

Recommendation 7: Currency of information

Regarding the currency of information:

- 7.1. Professional bodies need to ensure that the terminology on their websites is up to date in the context of the NQF Act, for example, reference needs to be made to:
 - NQF Act (No. 67 of 2008), that superseded SAQA Act (No. 58 of 1995),
 - NQF Sub-Frameworks and NQF Levels (not NQF Bands),
 - current qualification/ part-qualification titles with their SAQA identity numbers (if reference is made to deregistered/ legacy qualifications/ part-qualifications, the status of these items needs to be made clear), and
 - current designation titles (if reference is made to deregistered designations, the status of these designations must be made clear).
- 7.2. Professional bodies need to ensure that their contact details are up to date on their websites.
- 7.3. SAQA needs to ensure that the NQF MIS contains updated website links for all professional bodies.

Recommendation 8: Clarify international links

SAQA-recognised professional bodies with international links should make these links *explicit* as follows.

- 8.1. SAQA-recognised bodies must make their regional and global links clear, on their websites.
- 8.2. SAQA-recognised bodies that are the local chapters of international counterparts should:
 - have a South African website that describes the larger professional systems of which they are part,
 - add, on their websites, hyperlinks to the relevant international websites,
 - ensure that these hyperlinks also feature in the NQF MIS, and
 - ensure that the local website is relevant and up to date for local members/ prospective members.
- 8.3. Where SAQA-recognised bodies accept or require qualifications/ part-qualifications from systems outside South Africa, bodies need to describe:
 - the positioning/ status of that qualification in its home country system,
 - the South African equivalent of that qualification, where appropriate, and
 - the access and progression criteria for all the qualifications involved.
- 8.4. Where SAQA-recognised bodies use terminology from systems outside the South African system:
 - the terminology needs to be explained, and
 - the related South African terminology needs to be explained.

Recommendation 9: Professional body names

In the interests of clarity, SAQA should not permit the situation to arise where a professional body acronym is the same as that of another professional body or provider.

Recommendation 10: More than one body per field

In fields where there are several professional bodies – SAQA needs to note the current arrangements and ensure that the mandates of bodies to be recognised in the future do not overlap. SAQA may want to consider the international picture for any field but can lead instead of follow, good practice.

Recommendation 11: Professional bodies offering training

South African professional bodies are not permitted to offer training, but play quality assurance roles in collaboration with, and under formal agreements with, the three Quality Councils. SAQA-recognised bodies with links to international bodies that offer training, need make their relationships with these bodies clear on their local websites, as well as emphasising their location and role in the South African system for education, training, development, and work.

Recommendation 12: Ease of website navigation

The following are recommended.

- 12.1. SAQA-recognised professional bodies need to ensure that their websites:
 - Contain complete, clear, consistent, current information on their designation titles, criteria, hierarchies, pathways, systems, system diagrams, and international links,
 - Have hyperlinks to their information in the NQF MIS,
 - Have hyperlinks to the websites of international bodies as appropriate, and
 - Explain all terminology used, including NQF terms, special field-based terms, and the relevant terms of the international systems to which they are linked, *in relation* to the South African terms, and
 - Are easy to navigate.
- 12.2. SAQA needs to assess and evaluate the professional body websites as part of the recognition process, and periodically thereafter at intervals that it decides.

Recommendation 13: Address ‘editorial aspects’

Having two primary sources of information – such as the professional body websites and the NQF MIS – necessarily leads to the possibility of editorial errors over time, and both should be checked periodically for clarity, completeness, consistency, and currency.

Recommendation 14: Identify and share good practice

The research identified examples of good practice regarding making professional designation information complete and clear. These examples could be shared and workshopped with all professional bodies, for the learning of all.

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- *The content in the websites of the professional bodies was analysed (See **Appendix 3** for a list of professional body websites).*
- *The content in the NQF MIS was analysed (<https://www.pbdesig.saqqa.org.za/>)*

APPENDIX 1: List of professional body websites used

Acronym	Professional Body Name	Website
Statutory Professional Bodies		
AHPCSA	Allied Health Professions Council of SA	www.ahpcsa.co.za
EAAB	Estate Agency Affairs Board	www.theppra.org.za
EAPA-SA	Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of SA	www.eapasa.org

ECSA	Engineering Council of SA	www.ecsa.co.za
FIPSA	Forum of Immigration Practitioners of SA	fipsa.org.za
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of SA	www.hpcsa.co.za
IRBA	Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors	www.irba.co.za
SACAP	SA Council for the Architectural Profession	www.sacapsa.com
SACLAP	SA Council for the Landscape Architectural Profession	www.saclap.org.za
SACNASP	SA Council for Natural Scientific Professions	www.sacnasp.org.za
SACPCMP	SA Council for Project and Construction Management Professions	www.sacpcmp.org.za
SACPVP	SA Council for the Property Valuers Profession	www.sacpvp.co.za
SACQSP	SA Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession	www.sacqsp.org.za
SACSSP	SA Council for Social Service Professions	www.sacssp.co.za
SADTC	SA Dental Technicians Council	www.sadtc.org.za
SAGC	SA Geomatics Council	www.sagc.org.za
SAC	SA Nursing Council	www.SAc.co.za
SAPC	The SA Pharmacy Council	www.pharmcouncil.co.za
SAVC	SA Veterinary Council	www.savc.org.za
Non-Statutory Professional Bodies		
ABP	Association of B-BBEE Professionals	www.abp.org.za
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants SA	www.accaglobal.com
ACFESA	Association of Certified Fraud Examiners SA	www.acfesa.co.za
ACRP	Association of Christian Religious Practitioners	www.acrpafrica.co.za
APSO	Federation of African Professional Staffing Organisations	www.apso.co.za
ASAPA	Association of Southern African Professional Archaeologists	www.asapa.co.za
ASCHP	Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners	www.aschp.net
ASDSA	Association for Skills Development in SA	www.asdsa.org.za
ASSA	Actuarial Society of SA	www.actuarialsociety.org.za
Batseta	Batseta Council of Retirement Funds for SA	www.batseta.org.za
CCASA	Corporate Counsel Association of SA	www.ccasa.co.za
CCMG	Contact Centre Management Group	www.ccmg.org.za
CEEPSA	Council of Equine and Equestrian Professionals of SA	www.ceepsa.org
CIGFARO	Chartered Institute of Government Finance Audit and Risk Officers	www.cigfaro.co.za
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants	www.cimaglobal.com
CIPPT	Chartered Institute for Professional Practitioners and Trainers	www.cippt.org.za
CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	www.cips.org
CISA	Compliance Institute Southern Africa	www.compliancesa.com
COMENSA	Coaches and Mentors of SA	www.comensa.org.za
DMISA	Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa	www.disaster.co.za
EAPASA	Employee Assistance Professionals Association of SA	www.eapasa.co.za
FPI	Financial Planning Institute of Southern Africa	www.fpi.co.za
IAC	Institute of Accounting and Commerce	www.iacsa.co.za
IBA	Institute of Business Advisers Southern Africa	www.ibasa.org.za
ICCSSA	Institute of Certificated and Chartered Statisticians of SA	www.iccssa.org.za
ICFP	Institute of Commercial Forensic Practitioners	www.icfp.co.za

ICITP	Institute of Chartered IT Professionals	www.icitp.com
ICM	Institute of Credit Management of SA	www.icmorg.co.za
IIASA	Institute of Internal Auditors SA	www.iiasa.org.za
IID	African Institute of Interior Design Professions	Website no longer exists
IISA	Insurance Institute of SA	www.iisa.co.za
IITPSA	Institute of Information Technology Professionals SA	www.iitpsa.org.za
ILGM	Institute for Local Government Management of SA	www.ilgm.co.za
IMCSA	Institute of Management Consultants and Master Coaches of SA	www.imcsa.org.za
IMSSA	Institute of Mine Surveyors of SA	www.ims.org.za
IOB	Institute of Bankers in SA	www.iob.co.za
IoDSA	Institute of Directors in SA	www.iodsa.co.za
IPM	Institute of People Management	www.ipm.co.za
IRMSA	Institute of Risk Management SA	www.irmsa.org.za
ITC-SA	Institute for Timber Construction SA	www.itc-sa.org
IWH	Institute for Work at Height	www.ifwh.co.za
LIASA	Library and Information Association of SA	www.liasa.org.za
LSSA	Law Society of SA	www.lssa.org.za
MASA	Marketing Association of SA	www.marketingsa.co.za
NPC(CGISA)	Chartered Governance Institute of Southern Africa	www.chartsec.co.za
OASA	Ocularists Association of Southern Africa	www.oasa.org.za
OPSA	Association for Office Professionals of SA	www.opsa.org.za
PHASA	Professional Hunters' Association of SA	www.phasa.co.za
PIRB	Plumbing Industry Registration Board	www.pirb.co.za
PMSA	Project Management SA	www.projectmanagement.org.za
PRISA	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa	www.prisa.co.za
REPSSA	Register of Exercise Professionals SA	www.repsa.com
SAAHSP	SA Association of Health and Skincare Professionals	www.saahsp.co.za
SAAMA	Southern African Asset Management Association	www.saama.org.za
SABPP	SA Board for People Practices	www.sabpp.co.za
SACA	SA Chefs Association	www.sachefs.co.za
SACAdmin	The SA Council for Administrators	Website no longer exists
SACIA	Southern African Communications Industries Association	www.sacia.org.za
SAESI	Southern African Emergency Services Institute	www.saesi.com
SAFMA	SA Facilities Management Association	www.safma.co.za
SAIBA	Southern African Institute for Business Accountants	www.saiba.org.za
SAICA	SA Institute of Chartered Accountants	www.saica.org.za
SAIFM	SA Institute of Financial Markets	www.saifm.co.za
SAIGA	Southern African Institute of Government Auditors	www.saiga.co.za
SAIOH	Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene	www.saioh.co.za
SAIOSH	SA Institute of Occupational Safety and Health	www.saiossh.co.za
SAIP	SA Institute of Physics	www.saip.org.za
SAIPA	SA Institute of Professional Accountants	www.saipa.co.za
SAIS	SA Institute of Stockbrokers	www.sais.co.za
SAIT	SA Institute of Taxation	www.thesait.org.za
SAMRA	Southern African Marketing Research Association	www.samra.co.za
SAPA	SA Payroll Association	www.sapayroll.co.za

SAPFTC	SA Professional Firearm Trainers Council	www.pftc.co.za
SAPIK	SA Professional Institute for Kinderkinetics	www.kinderkinetics.co.za
SARA	SA Reward Association	www.sara.co.za
SARIPA	SA Restructuring and Insolvency Practitioners Association	www.saripa.co.za
SPBNDT	SAINT Professional Body for NDT	professional-body-ndt.org.za
TMASA	Turnaround Management Association Southern Africa	www.tma-sa.com
VDQGBSA	Vehicle Damage Quantification Governance Body of SA	www.vdggbsa.co.za
WISA	Water Institute of Southern Africa	www.wisa.org.za