



Skills Programme Study Schools

**National Certificate:
Beauty Technology**

NQF level 3

Learner Guide

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List of Acronyms

Throughout this guidebook, repeated reference is made to certain bodies and terms. Thus, it is easier to use the acronyms. Until you are familiar with all the meanings, you may need to refer to these pages for clarification.

BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
DoL	Department of Labour
ETDP	Education, Training and Development Practitioner
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance body
IT	Information Technology
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDLA	Skills Development Levies Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	Standards Generating Body
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
OBET	Outcomes-Based Education and Training
QA	Quality Assurance
QMS	Quality Management System
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

Glossary of Terms

Assessment	A structured process for obtaining evidence about a learner's competence against a standard in order to make a judgement of <i>competent</i> or <i>not yet competent</i> .
Certification	On successful completion of the Skill Programme Study Schools, the learner is awarded a qualification in the form of a certificate, issued by the relevant ETQA.
Learners	<p>Anyone who wants to gain a qualification may apply for an existing Learnership and/or Skill Programme Study Schools. Learnership and Skill Programme Study Schools are intended for employees as well as people who are not yet employed (pre-employed) or who are unemployed. There are two categories of learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those already employed by an employer (referred to as "18(1) learners", as this is the section of the Skills development Act that refers to them); and - Those not employed by the employer before entering the Skill Programme Study Schools (referred to as "18(2) learners").
Skill Programme Study Schools Enrolment Form	<p>A Skill Programme Study Schools enrolment form is a legally binding document that must be signed by the Lead Employer, the training provider and the learner.</p> <p>The Skill Programme Study Schools enrolment form must be signed and submitted to the SETA by the Lead Employer.</p>
Quality Assurance	<p>Quality management and assurance is an integral part of the Learnership and Skill Programme Study School system. Quality of training is achieved through the following mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skill Programme Study Schools are registered with the Department of Labour and undergo an evaluation based on set criteria. - The accreditation of employers as workplace providers and institutional providers ensures that they become centres of quality for the provision of education and training.
The Workplace	This is the place where workplace experience and training takes place. Companies might be formal as well as informal employers, including small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs).
Training Providers	The term <i>provider</i> is used to refer to the place where theoretical knowledge and skills are developed. Training providers are organisations or individuals who provide learning, and include technical colleges, technikons, distance education institutions, universities, private providers or a company's in-house training facility.
Unit Standard	The smallest independent parts of a qualification are the unit standards. When these standards are put together in a meaningful combination it can form a qualification. Each unit standard describes the skills, knowledge and values used by a competent person to perform a task.

1. Before you begin

What is a Study Schools?

A Study Schools is a short learning programme consisting of one or more unit standards grouped together. It is related to a particular job and provides credits towards a qualification registered on the NQF. The Skill Programme Study Schools is broken up into a number of logical stand-alone Study Schools. The average Skill Programme Study Schools might comprise between five to ten separate Study Schools.

Study Schools

- Are clusters of unit standards or (sometimes) single unit standards
- Enable learners to achieve credits towards a qualification, but do not constitute a full qualification
- Are not governed by compulsory agreements, and
- Are building blocks towards qualifications?

Who is involved in the Skill Programme Study Schools?

THE LEARNER

The most important person involved in the Skill Programme Study Schools is obviously the learner. The purpose of all this work by all the role-players is to provide the learner with knowledge & skills.

What are the expectations of the learner? He or she

- Is provided with institutional and workplace learning opportunities
- Receives recognition for competence in the form of certificates for unit standards covered in the learning programme of the Skill Programme Study Schools
- Participates in learner induction programmes
- Signs a Skill Programme Study Schools enrolment form with copy of ID and CV attached to the form
- Identifies existing skills and knowledge and helps develop a training plan
- Takes responsibility for his or her own learning, collects evidence, and works with the evidence collection facilitator to check evidence
- Submits a portfolio of evidence for assessment and moderation when he or she is ready to be assessed.

THE EMPLOYER

While the learner is clearly the focus of all Skill Programme Study Schools, Skill Programme Study Schools cannot happen without the participation of employers.

In this context, employers are organisations that assist learners, provide learning opportunities and sign the Enrolment Forms. Employers are involved in all stages of the Skill Programme Study Schools from inception.

The employer also

- ❑ Aligns the Skill Programme Study Schools assessment system with the relevant ETQA and makes it available to all stakeholders
- ❑ Makes sure that the organisation is ready for Skill Programme Study Schools, provides support and guidance for learners, sets up mechanisms to select learners;
- ❑ Could participate as a member of the team to register, develop, prepare for, implement, monitor and evaluate the Skill Programme Study Schools, and
- ❑ Is responsible for ensuring that the learner has opportunities to provide sufficient evidence of skills and that the evidence is up-to-date and accurate.

THE TRAINING PROVIDER

The third important party in the Skill Programme Study Schools partnership is the institution that provides the theoretical training, commonly known as the training provider. The training provider must be accredited with an ETQA.

The training provider must

- ❑ Provide the institutional learning component of the Skill Programme Study Schools
- ❑ Interact with the people responsible for workplace learning to ensure an integrated learning experience
- ❑ Visit the learner on site to check progress, if necessary
- ❑ Align assessment systems for Skill Programme Study School implementation with the relevant ETQA agency and make this information available to all stakeholders
- ❑ Be accredited as a training provider by the relevant ETQA on the basis of an established Quality Management System (QMS)
- ❑ Develop and schedule training programmes and establish systems to maintain learner records in line with the relevant ETQA requirements
- ❑ Could participate as a member of the team to register, develop, prepare for, implement, monitor and evaluate the Skill Programme Study Schools.

Note

Multiple employers and training providers may enter into one Skill Programme Study School agreement. In such a situation, a Lead Employer or Lead Training Provider must be identified to manage the Skill Programme Study Schools.

THE SETA

The fourth partner in the Skill Programme Study Schools is the SETA, whose function is to play the watchdog over the whole process.

The SETA must

- ❑ Keep records of registered Skill Programme Study Schools enrolment forms
- ❑ Review Skill Programme Study Schools applications, make amendments and submit them to the Department of Labour for registration
- ❑ Promote the Skill Programme Study School as part of its communication function

- ❑ Fulfil the quality assurance function, i.e. accredit training providers, register assessors, verify moderation systems and establish a certification process.

2. The rights and duties of the learner and other role-players

This section deals mainly with how learners are selected, and how Skill Programme Study School enrolment forms get signed. The first step for a learner is to apply to participate in a Skill Programme Study School.

Apply to participate in a Skill Programme Study School

Learners can apply for Skill Programme Study Schools at the different Skill Programme Study Schools agencies, such as the Labour Centres of the Department of Labour. They can contact the SETA to find out where the nearest agency to them can be found.

How learners are selected

At the Skill Programme Study School agency, potential candidates undergo a thorough screening process. They are first of all evaluated against the learning assumed to be in place for the qualification and the unit standards included in the qualification.

Thereafter they undergo a full evaluation comprising various tests that will be different for every Skill Programme Study Schools. For example, some of the criteria for selecting learners for the First Line Management Skill Programme Study School are:

- ❑ Grade 12 or equivalent
- ❑ English at NQF level 4
- ❑ Numeracy at NQF level 4, and
- ❑ Additional criteria relevant to the specific first line management context, e.g. learners entering management in the financial sector will have to meet criteria relating to finance and accounting.

Those learners that pass the selection process can now enter the Skill Programme Study School.

This means that learners will be allocated to an employer where they can do the practical component of the learning, and a training provider where they can undertake the theoretical component of the learning.

Sign a Skill Programme Study School enrolment form

The Skill Programme Study School enrolment form is a document that must be signed by the Lead Employer, the Lead Training Provider and the learner. The form outlines the unit standards which form part of the study school and also specifies the start and end date of Skill Programme Study Schools. Any Study School enrolment form must be forwarded to the SETA where it is formally captured and registered.

What are the rights and duties of the parties?

As is the case in all agreements, the various parties acquire certain rights but also incur certain responsibilities.

THE LEARNER

Rights of learners

In the first place, the learner gains the **right to receive education and training** as set out in the Skill Programme Study Schools enrolment form. The learner must receive enough training to gain a particular level of knowledge and skills described in the unit standards incorporated in the study school.

Learners have a right to **accurate information** regarding the Study School.

Learners should be able to discuss any **problems** with their managers or mentors. If this does not help, there are procedures in place to take the matter further. In fact, learners can even contact the SETA and Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) with serious problems. Learners may raise **grievances** in writing with the SETA regarding shortcomings in their training. They must follow the procedures established by the SETA.

Learners are entitled to **fair assessment** of their performance in training and are allowed to see the assessment results. Their assessment should be conducted in a fair and structured way, according to a clear and open assessment policy.

Learners must receive a **certificate** upon completion of the every Study School. This certificate is recognised nationally and must state the specific Unit Standards attained by the learner.

Learners are entitled to a fair **hearing** in disciplinary matters.

The learner also has to perform certain duties in terms of the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement.

Duties of learners

Learners must **sign a Skill Programme Study School Enrolment Form**, which will legally bind them to complete the learning process. This Study Schools Enrolment Form may be ended if the learner fails to comply with stipulated requirements.

During the training period the learner has to perform work in the form of tasks and activities that the employer will explain. A manager will give work instructions.

Learners must be **available** for learning and work experience.

The learner must **attend all study and learning sessions** with the specific training provider and do the **work accurately and well**. If a learner fails to do so, the training provider may recommend that the

employer start disciplinary procedures, which can lead to the end of the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement.

However, special circumstances will be taken into account if a learner cannot attend all study and learning sessions.

Learners must **adhere to all workplace policies and procedures**. For example, they must arrive at work on time and wear the correct clothing. When a learner starts the Skill Programme Study School, the employer will explain the rules of the company to ensure understanding and compliance.

Learners must complete any **timesheets** or any **written assessment tool** given by the employer to provide related work experience.

THE EMPLOYER

Rights of the employer

The employer may **negotiate** with the learner and the training provider on

- When, where and how theoretical and practical training will take place, and
- The selection of an assessor.

The employer may require the learner to **follow the rules and regulations** of the employer's business.

The employer has the right to **release** the learner from the training provider to enable the learner to gain structured work experience, in terms of the Skill Programme Study School agreement.

Duties of the employer

The employer must -

- Comply** with relevant employment **legislation**
- Provide **facilities** to train the learner to the training programme requirements
- Ensure that the learner has enough **supervision**
- Allow the learner to attend **off-the-job training**
- Ensure that workplace **assessment** is conducted
- Inform** the learner of workplace policies and procedures relating to conditions of employment
- Apply** the same disciplinary, grievance and dispute resolution **procedures** to the learners as to other employees
- Ensure that the learner receives **proper training in a supportive work setting** to achieve all the learning outcomes of the unit standards covered in the Skill Programme Study School
- Ensure that a **record of learning** is kept up to date and that progress is discussed periodically with the learner
- Provide any **timesheets** or written assessment tools, and

THE TRAINING PROVIDER

Rights of the provider

The training provider **may negotiate** with the learner and the employer on

- When, where and how theoretical and practical training will take place, and
- The selection of an assessor.

The provider may also **negotiate the release the learner** from the employer when the time is due for the learner to attend training as reflected in the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement. If this is not possible for whatever reason, the employer must obtain permission from the SETA to withhold the learner from such training. Such permission must be obtained at least thirty days before the learner is due for such training.

Finally, the training provider may submit a written application to the SETA to **end the Skill Programme Study School agreement** if there is evidence that the learner is not following the provisions thereof, performs poorly or behaves badly.

Duties of the provider

The training provider has to provide and use relevant outcomes-based course **material**, focusing on the development of applied competence in conjunction with practical training provided by the employer. The provider must also ensure that course material and the presentation of such course material is without bias and prejudice.

The provider must furthermore

- Record, monitor and retain details of training provided to the learner
- Assess the performance of the learner in terms of the relevant criteria (for this purpose the provider is entitled to access to the learner's books, learning material and the workplace, if required), and
- Report the learner to the employer in cases of misconduct, poor performance or incapacity.

3. How a Skill Programme Study Schools works

What is my role as learner?

Learning in the workplace means that you are learning new skills and knowledge as part of everyday work. It is your responsibility to be an active learner and use every opportunity to listen, read, practice, observe, ask questions, and keep up-to-date records of your achievements.

Your evidence collection and your facilitator are there to provide support and encouragement. However, they are not the ones learning ... you are.

Here are the things you need to do:

- ❑ Understand what the learning programme is about.
- ❑ Identify your existing skills and knowledge.
- ❑ Develop a **Training Plan** in consultation with your facilitator and training provider.
- ❑ Use the checklist in the Tracking and Monitoring Book in the **Skill Programme Study Schools Implementation Guide** to record skills you already have.
- ❑ Provide evidence to show you have the skills and knowledge you say you do.
- ❑ Read the Evidence Guides for the Study Schools and complete the learning activities.
- ❑ Collect physical evidence of your work in a file (e.g. work samples, letters you have prepared, and documents). This is called a Portfolio of Evidence.
- ❑ Ask the facilitator questions about what you are learning to clarify issues you do not understand or need more information on.
- ❑ Share your ideas with your colleagues so that you learn from one another.
- ❑ Take responsibility for telling your facilitator when you are ready to be assessed.

Follow these steps and make your learning enjoyable and worthwhile!

How to get started

Skill Programme Study Schools are intended for everybody. You might be employed, a student, or unemployed. You may find that your approach to the Skill Programme Study School might vary depending on your situation.

If you are an unemployed student who wants to enter into a Skill Programme Study School you should do the following:

- ❑ Contact DoL or the SETA for a list of the current Skill Programme Study School available.
- ❑ Go through the list of Skill Programme Study Schools, look at your options and consider your interests.
- ❑ Discuss them with your family and with friends whose opinion you value and respect.
- ❑ Make sure you meet the entry requirements of the Skill Programme Study School you are interested in.

This may mean that you

- ❑ need to have a certain level of education or have certain skills that are specified as a prerequisite for the Skill Programme Study School you selected.

Choose a Skill Programme you are interested in and call the relevant person (this may be a Career Centre or a business) to put your name down on the potential learners' list. You may put your name down on more than one list. If you do not hear from the person you contacted within two weeks, you can call them to check on what is happening with the Skill Programme Study School you put your name down for.

Working with your employer

The responsibility for making your learning experience meaningful lies with you, the learner. The support offered through a facilitator or manager is only a guide, as you are expected to drive your own learning process. You have to make the learning journey a success.

This learning experience will include:

- Planned, systematic training
- Being assessed in what you know and can do, and
- Attending classroom training.

Knowledge and theory can be gained in various ways such as attending lectures, learning through distance education, and part-time studies. Practical knowledge can be gained through working in the workplace. An evidence collection facilitator or coach might give you practical demonstrations and help you to learn how to do a task at work. You should discuss and agree this with your manager at the beginning of the Skill Programme Study Schools.

The facilitator will arrange which specific tasks you have to complete. You will also agree to the time of assessments and the method of assessment.

Working with your training provider

To learn the theory you have to be trained and study.

A representative of the training provider will make an appointment to see you. At this meeting you work through the training plan and identify the relevant skills and knowledge you already have.

It is possible you may already possess some of the skills covered in this learning programme. For example, you may have computer skills or have work experience that is relevant.

If you can show enough evidence to prove it, you do not need to repeat what you already know, although your skills and knowledge must be current. For example, you may have done a basic computer course. However, the learning programme of the Skill Programme Study Schools may require you to work with more advanced applications. You must make sure that your skills and knowledge are up to date and match the requirements of the programme.

Your facilitator or training provider will help you to decide what skills you already have and what evidence you need to provide to prove you have the skills. Do not worry if you do not have any of the skills.

Remember, this is a programme to help you gain the required skills and knowledge; you are not expected to have the skills yet.

The training plan that you agree on at the meeting with the training provider will show:

- ❑ The skills you already have and the type of evidence you need to prove you have these skills.
- ❑ Which skills you need to gain.
- ❑ What training you need to acquire the necessary skills?
- ❑ The time needed for you to gather evidence and demonstrate competence in your existing skills.
- ❑ When and where the training will take place.
- ❑ How to allow sufficient time for you to practice the skills.
- ❑ A likely time for your skills to be assessed.
- ❑ The times you will have to be away from your workstation to do the theory.

The completed training plan is a guide to help you manage your overall learning programme.

You and your evidence collection facilitator should try and stick to it as closely as possible.

Understand your Skill Programme Study Schools

Your end goal in completing a Study School is to achieve competence against the unit standards that make up a qualification. If you complete a Skill Programme Study School successfully, you will receive a certificate for the unit standards that will ensure that your skills are recognised across industry. In other words, all employers and training providers will recognise the certificate.

A Skill Programme Study School is made up of a number of outcomes, each leading to unit standard credits and finally building up to a qualification. In any Skill Programme Study School, you will find that the unit standards are divided into three categories:

- ❑ Fundamental
- ❑ Core, and
- ❑ Elective

Fundamental unit standards

These unit standards relate the foundational learning relevant to the qualification and include communication and numeracy.

Core unit standards

These unit standards are specific to an occupation or type of learning, and might include specific processes or procedures.

Elective unit standards

These unit standards provide learners with specific or special skills and knowledge that make it possible for them to perform their jobs in the particular context, and include specific product knowledge.

You must become familiar with the content of the Skill Programme Study School that you have just embarked upon. You should review the following:

- ❑ The number of Study Schools that the Skill Programme includes.

- The unit standards that make up the Study Schools.
- The training providers that will be responsible for the delivery of the theoretical training (it may be one or more training provider).
- The intervals and relationship between theoretical and practical training. (Some Skill Programme Study Schools require more theoretical training up front, while others will be totally integrated.)
- The documents that you will have to use throughout the programme and how they are used.

Skill Programme Study Schools are made up of structured learning and on-the-job experience. The recommended ratio of 30% theory and 70% practice ensures that Skill Programme Study Schools will always have a good balance of both components.

Get your previous learning recognised

If you already have some of the skills that will be developed through the Skill Programme Study Schools that you have gained through previous training or learning on the job, you may undergo recognition of prior learning (RPL).

In the context of the NQF, assessment takes into account all learning, including what took place outside the formal learning system. RPL is about assessing what people have learnt on the job and through experience. Through the RPL process, you are given the opportunity to demonstrate your existing knowledge and skills.

If you learned something – it does not matter where or how – you have the right to be formally recognised for your competence. RPL allows you to be assessed for skills and knowledge that you already have. It takes account of formal and non-formal learning, such as seminars and workshops, self-study, in-house training courses and informal on-the-job training.

Compile a portfolio of evidence

It is your responsibility to work through the programme, collect the evidence to prove you have the skills, record it in your logbook and then ask your evidence collection facilitator to check the evidence you collected.

Your facilitator will use a combination of methods such as observing you at work, asking you questions, looking at your file of evidence, and talking to people you have done work for.

You have to prepare a file as you progress through the Skill Programme Study Schools. In this file you place any work samples, word-processed activities you have completed, and a list of the workplace tasks you perform for each unit.

It is very important that you should select samples of your competence carefully, bearing in mind that some samples may contain confidential information. You must have the permission of your evidence

collection facilitator or employer to include work samples in your file. Any details that *could* be critical to the organisation should be omitted, e.g. confidential information or information that relates to its competitiveness.

Gather physical evidence of the skills and knowledge you already have, and be prepared to answer questions on these and to demonstrate your skills. The training provider and your evidence collection facilitator will have discussed this with you at the first meeting. If you are *still* unsure of the type of evidence required to prove you have the skills and knowledge, read the activities in the evidence guides. They will help you understand the type of evidence you should provide.

Keep adding to your file. It will become a useful resource. Be prepared to show it to your evidence collection facilitator and training provider.

What if I need help?

If you follow the instructions in the learner's guide and are clear about your role and your facilitator's role, you will be able to work steadily through the learning programme.

However, difficulties may occur from time to time. If that happens, you need to discuss the situation with your facilitator, your training provider or SETA, depending on the nature of the problem.

Tips for learners

- Work steadily through your evidence guides.
- Always ask for help as soon as you need it.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of anything.
- Learn to identify the tasks you do that can be part of your evidence.
- Regularly gather and file your evidence.
- Go to your evidence collection facilitator when you are ready to be assessed.
- Always be prepared for meetings with your evidence collection facilitator and training provider.
- Contact your training provider if you would like to discuss any aspects of your work.

When the Skill Programme Study Schools ends

- The Skill Programme Study Schools ends on the termination date specified in the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement, or on an earlier date if
 - the learner successfully completes the Skill Programme Study Schools (competence can be proven before the termination date on the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement)
 - the learner and the employer renegotiate termination dates if the learner cannot complete the specified Skill Programme Study Schools within the agreed time period (This change may be due to special circumstances and must be approved by the SETA.)
 - the learner is fairly dismissed by the employer for a reason related to the learner's conduct or capacity as an employee (If the learner does not comply with the rules, policies and procedures

of the agreement or employment contract, he or she may be dismissed and the Skill Programme Study Schools ends.)

- the employer and the learner agree to terminate the agreement. (This means that either the learner or the employer may decide to end the Skill Programme Study Schools if there are valid reasons and the other party agrees to this.)

The SETA approves a written application to terminate the agreement by the learner, or if the employer shows just cause for termination.

4. Assessment and evidence

Each learner will be assessed a number of times throughout the Skill Programme Study Schools. After completion of the theoretical training you could undergo a formative theoretical assessment.

Once you complete your activities in the workplace, you undergo formative and summative assessments conducted by the workplace assessors. These assessments are done against each unit standard and Study Schools that make up the Skill Programme Study Schools.

Upon completion of the entire Skill Programme Study Schools, a final integrated summative assessment is done.

Assessment

Assessment is one of the most important parts of your Skill Programme Study Schools journey, as it signals that you have learnt what you need for the qualification. Assessment can be very positive, as you get recognised for what you know and what you can do. It also shows you very clearly what you need to do if there are still areas you need to learn about. After you have been assessed as competent, you receive credits towards your Skill Programme Study Schools qualification. Assessment takes different forms. You may be required to demonstrate your skill, or an assessor may watch you working on the job. You might also need to find proof of what you can do and have done on the job. Whatever the case, you will receive clear guidelines and explanations of the assessment process before you are assessed.

Competence

Assessment is based upon the concept of competence. It looks at the *outcomes* produced by the learner against an objective standard. SAQA's definition of "applied competence" makes this clearer. Here it is in simplified form:

- **Applied competence** is the combination of practical, foundational and reflexive competence.
- **Practical competence** is the ability to perform a set of tasks in an authentic context (like a workplace).
- **Foundational competence** refers to the understanding of what the learner is doing and why.

- ❑ **Reflexive competence** is the ability to integrate performance with understanding, meaning that the learner is able to adapt to changes in circumstances, and explain the reason behind an action.

Competence is essential in a rapidly changing environment that demands that employees be flexible and responsive to the needs of the organisation. You often have to manage different tasks within the job and respond correctly to irregularities and breakdowns in routine. You also need to take responsibility for what you do, often as part of a team.

More about assessment

During assessment, learners need to provide sufficient evidence of their competence and show that they comply with *all* the requirements of the relevant unit standard.

Assessment is a process where you gather evidence and an assessor judges how well you perform against registered national standards.

There are two types of assessment:

- ❑ **Formative assessment** happens **all the time**, uses many different methods and instruments, and checks on parts of the learning programme.
- ❑ **Summative assessment** is conducted **at the end** of a learning programme, or after completing a section such as a Study Schools, and can be seen as something like the
- ❑ **final exam**. It checks whether you have mastered the outcomes of the **whole** learning programme, or all the outcomes of a specific section.

Assessment is about making judgements and evaluations. In the past workplace assessment was often subjective, discretionary and sporadic, and in the end did little to promote a system of fairness and transparency.

Assessment in the context of the National Qualifications Framework should be a structured, transparent, negotiated and objective activity that helps both the learning process and the skills improvement of the South African work force.

The assessor uses national unit standards and qualifications to assess

- ❑ Whether the learner has achieved the standard, or
- ❑ How far he or she has progressed towards meeting the standard or qualification.

If the learner does not meet the standard at the first attempt, he or she should have access to further learning opportunities and have the opportunity to try again later. The purpose of assessment is not focused on deciding which learners to pass or fail, but to assess whether the learner is already competent against the standard or not yet competent. This method encourages learners to continue learning.

Evidence

Evidence is the term used to describe the information your assessor uses to assess whether you have gained the required skills and knowledge. You must show that you can use those skills and knowledge consistently and in a range of situations.

Methods used by an assessor to check whether he or she can find enough evidence to prove your competence are shown on the next page.

You cannot just use anything you fancy as evidence to prove your competence. You have to follow the rules of evidence. For evidence to be usable in assessment, the evidence must be

- Valid
- Authentic
- Current; and
- Sufficient.

These concepts are explained in greater detail under 'rules of evidence' below.

Assessment methods

Your training provider will use a combination of the following assessment methods to gather evidence of your competence:

Simulation

If it is not possible to assess competence directly in a workplace, the assessor can create an artificial situation imitating the workplace. To be effective, as much as possible of the atmosphere, conditions and pressures of the real situation should be recreated. In a simulation, you are asked to complete a particular task.

Role-play

In a role-play, you are presented with a work situation. You are asked to take on a particular work role and demonstrate the skills required to interact with another person or person(s). Role-play offers the assessor opportunities to assess a wide range of your interpersonal skills and behaviour.

Case Studies

Case studies are usually written descriptions of a work situation, where you have to read and respond to problems that arise and make decisions about what you would do if you were in that situation.

Reports

Reports are used both on and off the job. They are probably most useful where you have to provide written details showing your knowledge in a particular context.

Portfolio

In a portfolio of evidence, you present a variety of evidence that address the criteria of assessment for the specific outcomes of a unit standard, Study Schools or qualification. You can gather evidence for a portfolio over a period of time and it may include a range of direct, indirect and supplementary sources.

Questioning

The assessor may question you. The aim of the questioning is to gather information. Bear in mind the following:

- The information must provide evidence of your competence.
- Questions may either be decided on before the assessment or could arise during assessment.
- Questions should be clear and designed to draw out information about the topic being assessed.
- Questioning a person does not mean interrogation. Skilful questioning invites discussion.

Observation in the workplace

The assessor actually watches you while you work to see how well you perform your tasks against the standard.

Written test

Written tests can take many forms:

- Short answers, matching multiple choices, essays or case studies
- Questions set by an independent assessor (at home or at work)
- Rote learning recalled
- Knowledge remembered
- Analysis and discussion of issues, or
- Debating different viewpoints.

Documents

Assessment may be based on evidence of what you have done in the past. It can take the form of your own work or indirect evidence from others:

- Reports
- Articles
- Certificates
- Letters from employers, or
- Course outlines of previously studied courses or seminars.

Oral presentation

You are given a topic, time to research and rehearse. It can take the form of reporting, briefing and informing.

Interview with you (the learner)

You discuss issues in a structured interview with the assessor. The assessor may need to clarify your answers, and probe to find out whether you understand and can apply the knowledge.

Note

Remember that it is your responsibility to gather evidence to prove to your evidence collection facilitator and assessor that you have gained the required skills and knowledge.

Rules of evidence

In all assessments the evidence collected must meet the certain requirements. The evidence must be:

- Valid
- Authentic
- Current and
- Sufficient.

Here is how to establish whether your evidence meets these four criteria:

Valid Evidence

The key question to ask about each piece of evidence is: “Does this evidence provide information that is relevant to the standard and outcomes being assessed?”

Authentic Evidence

How does the assessor know that the evidence presented was actually produced by you, the candidate? A skilled assessor will be able to tell through probing questions.

Current Evidence

You may have done a certain type of work before, or acquired some knowledge long ago, but ask yourself: Are you still competent against the standard? If you are not presently competent against the standards, no historical evidence can change that.

Sufficient Evidence

There should be enough evidence to show competence. The evidence should cover:

- All the assessment criteria
- The whole range of variables
- The relevant knowledge and understanding, and
- Only the performance criteria as laid out in the standards, not personal opinion.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

How old must I be to enter a Skill Programme Study Schools?

You must be at least 16 years old to enter a Skill Programme Study Schools. If you are under 21 and unmarried, apply in writing, with written consent from a parent or guardian, to enter into a Skill Programme Study Schools agreement.

What is the period of the agreement?

The learning period is decided on at the time the Skill Programme Study Schools is established and is usually determined by the estimated time that it will take learners to achieve the outcomes covered in the learning programme. The agreement can be extended if agreed upon by both parties.

Previous learning gained through studies or work may be recognised and could reduce your learning period. This process is called recognition of prior learning (RPL), and should be done by an assessor of the employer and the training provider before the Skill Programme Study Schools starts. If the learner fails to meet the required unit standards within the agreed period, the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement may be ended, or an agreement could be reached to extend the Skill Programme Study Schools period.

How do I learn and what support can I expect?

The Skill Programme Study Schools involves both training in a structured workplace and theoretical study. You learn in the actual workplace *and* through a training provider. A facilitator should assist you in gaining competence. Both the workplace and the training provider must assist you during the Skill Programme Study Schools. You may request additional assistance from the SETA if necessary. Your union (if applicable) will also provide you with assistance and advice. In most cases, your main source of support will come from an evidence collection facilitator in the workplace.

What is structured work experience?

“Structured work experience” means gathering meaningful learning through experience in the workplace.

You should ensure that your job rotation (if specified) is meaningful and helps you to complete the unit standards stipulated in the Skill Programme Study Schools.

What happens if I do not complete the Skill Programme Study Schools?

You will receive recognition for each unit standard you are declared competent in by an assessor. The ETQA will issue you with a letter stating the titles and credit value of the unit standards you have achieved.

These achievements will be recognised if you continue with your learning elsewhere, for instance if you move to a training provider. You can therefore take your skills with you and have them recognised in order to complete your learning and assessment for the full qualification. You should not have to repeat those standards that you have already proven competence in.

What if I do not complete my learning and assessment in the time stipulated for the Skill Programme Study Schools?

In special circumstances, the Skill Programme Study Schools period may be extended when a learner cannot complete the Skill Programme Study Schools requirements as per the Skill Programme Study Schools agreement. The learner may have experienced problems and may not have had enough time to complete all his or her assessments. The learner, employer and training provider must agree to such an extension and obtain approval from the SETA.