

## QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification is a title or attribute gained in education, through examination or by certification.

- ✚ There are various types of qualifications.
- ✚ It is important to know what they are and how they allow you to progress.
- ✚ It is important to know and understand the different qualifications available to you so that you select one that sparks your particular interest.



### HIGHER CERTIFICATE (HC)

HC is registered on\_NQF Level 5 with 120 Minimum credits.

**Designation:** Not applicable

**Qualifiers:** maximum two years

#### **Purpose and characteristics:**

- ✚ This is an entry-level higher education qualification.
- ✚ The qualification is primarily vocational, with a strong industry-oriented focus.
- ✚ The qualification also serves to provide students with the basic introductory knowledge, cognitive and conceptual tools and practical techniques for higher education studies in their chosen field of study.
- ✚ It emphasises selected general principles together with more specific procedures and their application.
- ✚ This qualification signifies that the student has attained a basic level of higher education knowledge and competence in a particular field or occupation and is capable of applying such knowledge and competence in an occupation or role in the workplace.
- ✚ The Higher Certificate typically includes a simulated work experience or work-integrated learning (WIL) component.

#### **Minimum admission requirements:**

The minimum entry requirement is the National Senior Certificate or the National Certificate Vocational with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement as defined in the Minister's policies.

#### **Progression**

- ✚ Completion of the Higher Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to an appropriate Advanced Certificate.
- ✚ Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into a cognate Diploma.
- ✚ A Higher Certificate may also allow access to an appropriate Bachelor's degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Higher Certificate programme.<sup>1</sup>

### ADVANCED CERTIFICATE (ADV. CERT)

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Registered on NQF Level: 6 with 120 minimum credits

**Designators:** Not applicable

**Qualifiers:** maximum two years

### **Purpose and characteristics**

- ✚ This qualification is primarily vocational or industry-oriented.
- ✚ The qualification provides students with a sound knowledge base in a particular field or discipline
- ✚ Provides an ability to apply knowledge and skills to particular career or professional contexts, while equipping oneself to undertake more specialised and intensive learning.
- ✚ Programmes leading to this qualification tend to have a strong vocational professional or career focus and students.
- ✚ Holders of this qualification are normally prepared to enter a specific niche in the labour market.
- ✚ Advanced Certificate programmes typically include a work integrated learning (WIL) component.

**Minimum admission requirements:** The minimum entry requirement is a Higher Certificate in the appropriate field.

### **Progression**

- ✚ Completion of the Advanced Certificate meets the minimum entry requirement into a cognate Diploma programme or Bachelor's degree.
- ✚ Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into cognate Diploma or Bachelor's degree programmes.
- ✚ A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from an Advanced Certificate programme.

### **DIPLOMA**

Registered on the NQF Exit Level 6 with

(i.) Minimum total credits: 240

Or

(ii.) Minimum total credits: 360

**Designators:** Not applicable

**Qualifiers:** maximum two or three years

### **Purpose and characteristics**

- ✚ This qualification primarily has a vocational orientation, which includes professional, vocational, or industry specific knowledge that provides a sound understanding of general theoretical principles as well as a combination of general and specific procedures and their application.
- ✚ To develop graduates who can demonstrate focused knowledge and skills in a particular field. Typically they will have gained experience in applying such knowledge and skills in a workplace context.

- ✚ To provide a depth and specialisation of knowledge, together with practical skills and experience in the workplace,
- ✚ Enables successful learners to enter a number of career paths and to apply their learning to particular employment contexts from the outset.
- ✚ Diploma programmes typically include an appropriate work-integrated learning (WIL) component.

**There are two key distinctions between the 240- and 360-credit Diploma variants.**

- ✚ The latter may provide for up to 120 credits of workplace-based learning, while the 240-credit variant does not,
- ✚ The 240-credit variant may only be offered where it leads to a professional designation or occupational role as determined by a professional body.

**Minimum admission requirements**

- ✚ The minimum entry requirement is the National Senior Certificate with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement,
- ✚ Alternatively a Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate in a cognate field will satisfy the minimum requirement.

**Progression**

- ✚ Completion of a 240- or 360-credit Diploma meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a Bachelor's degree.
- ✚ Accumulated credits may also be presented for admission into a cognate Bachelor's Degree programme.
- ✚ Completion of a 360-credit Diploma also meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to an Advanced Diploma.
- ✚ Candidates who complete the 240-credit Diploma may enter an Advanced Diploma upon successful completion of a work- integrated learning component or a combination of work-integrated learning and coursework equivalent to 120 credits that is approved and accredited by an education provider and/or a professional body and a QC.
- ✚ A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Diploma programme.

**ADVANCED DIPLOMA**

Registered on the NQF Exit Level 7, with 120 Minimum total credits

**Designators:** Not applicable

**Qualifiers:** maximum two years

**Purpose and characteristics**

- ✚ This qualification has a number of different purposes, depending on a student's circumstances and the nature of the programme.
- ✚ It may provide entry-level vocational or professional preparation or specialisation for Bachelor's Degree graduates or diplomas by offering an intensive, focused and applied specialisation which meets the requirements of a specific niche in the labour market, e.g a BSc graduate might register for an Advanced Diploma in Education (or PGCE,

- ✚ see exceptions) in order to become a science teacher
- ✚ Programmes offering this qualification are therefore particularly suitable for continuing professional development through the inculcation of a deep and systematic understanding of current thinking, practice, theory and methodology in an area of specialisation.

This qualification may also be designed to prepare students for postgraduate study through the deepening of their knowledge and understanding of theories, methodologies and practices in specific academic disciplines and fields, as well as the development of their ability to formulate, undertake and resolve more complex theoretical and practice-related problems and tasks through the selection and use of appropriate methods and techniques.

**Minimum admission requirements:** An appropriate Diploma or Bachelor's Degree

### Progression

- ✚ Completion of an Advanced Diploma may be presented for entry into a Postgraduate Diploma, a Bachelor Honours Degree or a Bachelor's Degree.
- ✚ Accumulated credits may also be presented for entry into a cognate Bachelor's degree.
- ✚ A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from an Advanced Diploma.

### Bachelor's Degree

Registered on the NQF Exit Level 7 with 360 minimum credits

And

Professional qualifications are registered on the NQF Exit Level 8 with 480 minimum credits.

### Designators:

Bachelor's Degree designators are specific and indicate only broad and generic areas of study, disciplines or professions. Examples include: *Bachelor of Arts*, *Bachelor of Social Science*, *Bachelor of Science*, *Bachelor of Commerce*, *Bachelor of Engineering*, *Bachelor of Architecture*, *Bachelor of Agriculture*, *Bachelor of Law*, *Bachelor of Education*, *Bachelor of Nursing*, and *Bachelor of Business Science*.

**Qualifiers:** maximum two years

### Purpose and characteristics

There are two types of Bachelor's Degrees, namely general and professionally-oriented Bachelor's Degrees. Both types of degree may be structured as a 360-credit qualification with an exit at level 7 or as a 480-credit qualification with an exit at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. (It is also possible to structure a 480-credit Bachelor's degree with an exit at NQF level 7). The 480-credit Bachelor's Degree at NQF level 8 has both a higher volume of learning and a greater cognitive demand than the 360-credit degree at Level 7 and should prepare students to be able to undertake Master's level study by providing them with research capacity in the methodology and research techniques of the discipline.

The primary purpose of both the general and the professional Bachelor's Degree is to provide a well rounded, broad education that equips graduates with the knowledge base, theory and methodology of disciplines and fields of study, and to enable them to demonstrate initiative and responsibility in an academic or professional context. Both the 360 and 480-credit Bachelor's Degrees may require students to undertake research in a manner that is appropriate to the discipline or field of study in order to prepare them for postgraduate study.

The general Bachelor's Degree emphasises general principles and theory as preparation for entry into general employment or for a postgraduate programme. The professional Bachelor's Degree prepares students for professional training, post-graduate studies or professional practice in a wide range of careers. Therefore it emphasises general principles and theory in conjunction with procedural knowledge in order to provide students with a thorough grounding in the knowledge, theory, principles and skills of the profession or career concerned and the ability to apply these to professional or career contexts. The degree programme may contain a component of work-integrated learning. Some professionally-oriented Bachelor's Degree programmes are designed in consultation with a professional body and recognised by a professional body as a requirement for a licence to practice that profession.

#### Minimum admission requirements

The minimum entry requirement is the National Senior Certificate or the National Certificate (Vocational) with appropriate subject combinations and levels of achievement, as defined in the *Minister's policies: Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes Requiring a National Senior Certificate*, Government Gazette, Vol 751, No 32131 of 11 July 2008, and *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Certificate (Vocational)*, published in the *Government Gazette*, Vol. 533, No. 32743, November 2009. Alternatively, a Higher Certificate or an Advanced Certificate or Diploma in a cognate field may satisfy the minimum admission requirements.

#### Progression

A Bachelor's Degree is the minimum entry requirement for admission to a Bachelor Honours Degree or Postgraduate Diploma. A Level 8 Bachelor's Degree with 480 credits may also meet the minimum requirement for admission to a cognate Master's Degree. Entry into these qualifications is usually in the area of specialisation or in the discipline taken as a major in the Bachelor's Degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Bachelor's degree.

### **Bachelor Honour's Degree**

#### Type specifications

NQF Level: 8

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 8: 120

#### Designators

Bachelor Honours Degree designators are specific and limited to broad and generic areas of study, disciplines or professions. Examples include: Bachelor of Arts Honours, Bachelor of Social Science Honours, Bachelor of Science Honours, Bachelor of Commerce Honours.

### Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one

Examples: Bachelor of Science Honours in Microbiology or Bachelor of Arts Honours in Applied Linguistics.

### Abbreviations

BAHons, BScHons, BSocSciHons, BComHons, BScHons (Microbiology), BAHons (Applied Linguistics)

### Purpose and characteristics

The Bachelor Honours Degree is a postgraduate specialisation qualification, characterised by the fact that it prepares students for research-based postgraduate study. This qualification typically follows a Bachelor's Degree, and serves to consolidate and deepen the student's expertise in a particular discipline, and to develop research capacity in the methodology and techniques of that discipline. This qualification demands a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence. In some cases a Bachelor Honours Degree carries recognition by an appropriate professional or statutory body.

Bachelor Honours Degree programmes must include conducting and reporting research under supervision, worth at least 30 credits, in the form of a discrete research component that is appropriate to the discipline or field of study.

### Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Bachelor's Degree or appropriate Advanced Diploma.

### Progression

Completion of a Bachelor Honours Degree meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Master's Degree. Entry into a Master's Degree programme is usually in the area of specialisation of the Bachelor Honours Degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Bachelor Honours degree.

## **Postgraduate Diploma**

### Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 8

Minimum total credits: 120

Minimum credits at Level 8: 120

### Designators

Not applicable

### Qualifiers

Specific, maximum two

Examples: Postgraduate Diploma in Organisational and Management Systems;

Postgraduate Diploma in

Gender Studies or Postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture in Rural Resource Management.

### Abbreviations

PGDip (Organisational & Management Systems), PGDip (Gender Studies), PGDip (Agriculture) (Rural Resource Management)

### Purpose and characteristics

A Postgraduate Diploma is generally multi- or interdisciplinary in nature but may serve to strengthen and deepen the student's knowledge in a particular discipline or profession. The primary purpose of the qualification is to enable working professionals to undertake advanced reflection and development by means of a systematic survey of current thinking, practice and research methods in an area of specialisation. This qualification demands a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence, as well as the ability to relate knowledge to a range of contexts in order to undertake professional or highly skilled work. A sustained research project is not required but the qualification may include conducting and reporting research under supervision. In some cases a Postgraduate Diploma carries recognition by an appropriate professional or statutory body.

### Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Bachelor's Degree or an appropriate Advanced Diploma.

### Progression

Completion of a Postgraduate Diploma meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Master's Degree, usually in the area of specialisation of the Postgraduate Diploma. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Postgraduate Diploma.

## **Master's Degree**

### Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 9

Minimum total credits: 180

Minimum credits at Level 9: 120

### Designators

The designators for the Master's Degree describe the broad academic knowledge area of the qualification. Examples include: *Master of Arts*, *Master of Science*, *Master of Social Science*, *Master of Commerce*, *Master of Laws*, *Master of Education*. A Master's by dissertation with a strong theoretical base may be known as a Master of Philosophy.

### Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one.

### Abbreviations

MA, MA (Linguistics), MSc, MPhil, MSc (Astrophysics)

### Purpose and characteristics

The primary purpose of a general Master's Degree is to educate and train researchers who can contribute to the development of knowledge at an advanced level.

There are two variants of the general Master's Degree: A research Master's Degree by dissertation, or a research Master's Degree by coursework and dissertation. Both variants must include a significant research component in the form of a discrete research project.

The requirements for the successful completion of a general Master's Degree are as follows:

- Master's Degree by dissertation: A single advanced research project, culminating in the production and acceptance of a dissertation or other forms of research as indicated below.

- Master's Degree by coursework and mini-dissertation: A coursework programme requiring a high level of theoretical engagement and intellectual independence, and in some cases demonstration of the ability to relate knowledge to a range of contexts for professional practice. In addition, this variant of a general Master's degree must contain a research project comprising a minimum of 60 credits at level 9, culminating in the acceptance of a mini-dissertation or other forms of research as indicated below.

Master's Degree graduates in general must be able to reflect critically on theory and its application. They must be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, design and critically appraise research, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks with a theoretical underpinning and continue to advance their knowledge, understanding and skills.

The research component or components of a general Master's Degree should be commensurate with the characteristics of the discipline and field as well as the purpose of the programme, and in addition to a dissertation or treatise may take the form of a technical report, one or more creative performances or works, or a series of peer-reviewed articles or other research-equivalent outputs.

#### Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is a relevant Bachelor Honours Degree or a relevant Postgraduate Diploma. A relevant Bachelor's Degree at level 8 may also be recognised as meeting the minimum entry requirement to a cognate Master's Degree programme.

#### Progression

Completion of a Master's Degree meets the minimum entry requirement for admission to a cognate Doctoral Degree, usually in the area of specialisation in the Master's Degree. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Master's Degree.

### **DOCTORAL DEGREE**

#### Type specifications

NQF Exit Level 10

Minimum total credits: 360

Minimum credits at Level 10: 360

#### Designators

The designator *of Philosophy* is typically used for general doctoral degrees by thesis. However, other designators may be used to denote the area of study or the name of the discipline.

#### Qualifiers

Specific, maximum one if required

#### Abbreviations

PhD, DPhil, DLitt

#### Purpose and characteristics



The doctorate provides training for an academic career. It requires a candidate to undertake research at the most advanced academic levels culminating in the submission, assessment and acceptance of a thesis. However, candidates may also present peer-reviewed academic articles and papers, and, in certain fields, creative work such as artefacts, compositions, public performances and public exhibitions in partial fulfilment of the research requirements. Coursework may be required as preparation or value addition to the research, but does not contribute to the credit value of the qualification. The defining characteristic of this qualification is that the candidate is required to demonstrate high level research capability and to make a significant and original academic contribution at the frontiers of a discipline or field. The work must be of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication. The degree may be earned through pure discipline-based or multidisciplinary research or applied research. This degree requires a minimum of two years' full-time study, usually after completing a Master's Degree. A graduate should be able to supervise and evaluate the research of others in the area of specialisation concerned.

An additional type of doctorate, the Higher Doctorate, may be awarded on the basis of a distinguished record of research in the form of published works, creative works and/or other scholarly contributions that are judged by leading international experts to make an exceptional and independent contribution to one or more disciplines or fields of study.

#### Minimum admission requirements

The minimum admission requirement is an appropriate Master's degree.

#### Progression

A Doctoral Degree (including the Higher Doctorate) is the highest qualification type awarded within this framework. A qualification may not be awarded for early exit from a Doctoral Degree.