

Terms of Reference (ToR)

APPOINTMENT OF A SERVICE PROVIDER FOR PROVISION OF RESEARCH SERVICES TO CONDUCT A TRACER STUDY

1. Brief background

- 1.1. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010 under the amended Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998. It is the custodian of the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF), one of the three integrated Sub-Frameworks of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- 1.2. One of the chief responsibilities of the QCTO is to develop qualifications, part qualifications and skills programmes that give people access to occupations and trades. The organisation has a role to ensure that there are occupational qualifications that respond to South Africa's skills development priorities.
- 1.3. In their nature, occupational qualifications make work experience a crucial component of learning; therefore, the objective of the QCTO is to develop occupational standards as well as qualifications that equip learners with the relevant skills necessary for employment. Most QCTO qualifications are demand-driven; they are designed to address the needs of industry and the labour market.
- 1.4. Additionally, the QCs are required to conduct and publish research on issues of importance to the development and implementation of the sub-framework.
- 1.5. The QCTO is also required to conduct and publish research on issues of importance to the development and implementation of the sub-framework and inform the public about the sub-framework.
- 1.6. The QCTO seeks to appoint a professional and competent research service provider to support it in conducting an empirical research project on tracking graduates with Occupational qualifications and skills programmes.
- 1.7. The study's primary objective is to trace learners who have enrolled in and completed occupational qualifications and skills programs, examining the impact of these programs on their employment status.
- 1.8. The QCTO needs to assess whether the qualifications designed to prepare learners for the labour market are effectively serving their purpose in their respective sectors.

2. Objectives

2.1. The study aims to address the following objectives for employed graduates:

- To determine the destination of learners who have completed occupational qualifications and skills programmes.
- To understand the factors associated with employment/unemployment.
- To determine the nature of employment of learners who received employment.
- The relevance of the graduates' skills in the labour market.
- The graduates' satisfaction with their qualifications and training retrospectively.
- Finally, the impact of the qualifications on their social and economic status.

2.2. For unemployed graduates, the study will explore the following:

- Investigate from the graduates' perspective why they are unemployed.
- To determine what barriers and challenges they face leading to their unemployment.
- To determine how well their qualifications prepared them to enter the job market.
- To find out what kind of support they need and their plans for the future.

3. Technical specifications

- 3.1. The successful service provider must have a proven capacity to undertake a project of this nature and complete it by the due date.
- 3.2. The Team leader must have at least a Master's degree or higher in Statistics and data management, Economics, Development Studies or a related discipline with a minimum of 10 years total experience in designing and leading tracer studies in South Africa, of which at least 5 years to be related to education, skills development, vocational education and training programmes.
- 3.3. They must demonstrate an understanding of tracking and tracing, as well as the role of the QCTO in the skills development sector in South Africa.
- 3.4. They must provide evidence that they have undertaken similar studies.
- 3.5. The service provider must provide an overview of the key personnel to be used on this project, including their roles, accompanied by their curriculum vitae and relevant experience of all team members who will be responsible for this project.
- 3.6. The service provider must be able to implement the project in an innovative and cost-effective manner.

3. Work schedule

- 3.1. The service provider will report to the QCTO Research & Analysis Unit.
- 3.2. The Deputy Director in Statistical Reporting will serve as the Project Manager for the QCTO and will hold regular meetings with the service provider to report on deliverables and track progress.
- 3.3. The provider will be expected to share and deliver the survey and interview data in the format approved by the QCTO.
- 3.4. The QCTO shall be the owner of all data collected; the survey and interview datasets, reports, and other documents prepared for this research project. All records, reports, and information related to the project must be submitted to the QCTO before the final payment.

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- 3.5. In circumstances where the provider wishes to publish the findings derived from the research project data, the provider must submit a special request to Research & Analysis, which the CEO of the QCTO will approve.
- 3.6. The QCTO will provide the contact details of the Occupational Qualifications and Skills Programmes graduates. In cases where data gaps exist, the QCTO will collaborate with suppliers to source the necessary information from providers and relevant SETAs.
- 3.7. The population data will be the QCTO Certification database, which consists of the following:
 - The total number of records in the Certification database is about 25,000 graduates certified from 2016-2025.
 - The qualification make-up consists of about 70 Occupational qualifications and 35 Skills Programmes.
 - Proportionally, about (22 500) 90% of candidates graduate with Occupational qualifications, while the remaining 2,500 (10%) graduate from the Skills Programmes.
 - All the Skills Programmes graduates should be sampled (100%).
 - For the Occupational Qualifications (70 qualifications and about 22,500 graduates), the sample should be representative not less than 10% of the population.
- 3.8. The services of the service provider will be required for 6 months from the date that the provider is appointed, and the key deliverables will be targeted as such:

Activity No.	Phase	Key Deliverables	Timelines
1.	Inception Phase	An inception report covering the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadmap of the project. • Detailed work plan of activities. • Defining project objectives and deliverables. • Detailed methodology. 	2 Weeks
2.	Design Phase	Finalisation of the data collection instrument (The questionnaire and the interview guide) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of the sampling type and sampling size. • Finalisation of participants (sample group) for surveys. • Pilot Study to test the survey instrument and interview guide. 	4 weeks
3.	Data collection	Completion of the field survey and interviews, and submission of the raw data in an approved format.	12 weeks

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4.	Implementation Phase	Clean and analyse the data collected from the graduates' survey and interviews. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit the cleaned data in the format approved by the QCTO.	4 weeks
		Initiate the report writing and submit the draft report to the QCTO.	3 weeks
		The QCTO will review the draft report and share the comments and inputs with the provider.	4 weeks
		Submit the final report to the QCTO.	2 weeks

4. Pricing Schedule

- a) Agreement Term: 6 months
- b) Payment Frequency: Payments will be made in tranches, in accordance with the key deliverables and targets.

The enquiries can be made via email to:

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