



**South African Nursing Council**  
*Regulating nursing, advocating for the public*

**CIRCULAR 3/2021**

**To: NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH  
NURSING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (NEIS)  
ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

**SUBJECT: ARTICULATION FROM THE LEGACY TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS  
SUBFRAMEWORK (HEQSF)- ALIGNED NURSING QUALIFICATIONS**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1** The purpose of this circular is to provide information to the National Department of Health, Provincial Departments of Health, Nursing Education Institutions (NEIs) and other relevant stakeholders on the engagement between the South African Nursing Council (SANC) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) regarding articulation possibilities from the legacy to the HEQSF- aligned nursing qualifications.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Transformation in education, specifically higher education in South Africa which is spearheaded by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, has necessitated transformation in all earning fields, including Nursing Education. The introduction of the HEQSF, as part of South Africa's National Qualifications Framework, created a need to align the Nursing qualifications with the HEQSF. There was a conscious decision by the nursing profession that all nursing qualifications should be under higher education for ease of progression and articulation.
- 2.2** The SANC has throughout the years since 2010 shared progress about the transformation with National Department of Health, Provincial Departments of Health, Nursing Education Institutions (NEIs) and other relevant stakeholders, including unions, in various platforms e.g. circulars, SANC electronic news, SANC stakeholder forums meetings, Nursing Indaba and workshops etc.
- 2.3** In 2016, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, in line with the provision of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997, declared through a notice published in a gazette, that the last enrolment date for the first-time entering students into academic programmes that are not aligned to the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF) was 31 December 2019. It therefore meant that the legacy programmes, including legacy nursing education programmes will no longer be offered after this date except to complete the pipeline students.



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- 2.4** The minimum requirements for admission to higher education are prescribed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training and not the SANC. In terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997 as amended, the decision to admit a student to higher education is the right and responsibility of the higher education institution, herein referred to as Nursing Education Institutions.
- 2.5** The Department of Higher Education and Training, through the Council on Higher Education (CHE), has further made determinations regarding progression (career-pathing) to be followed by persons who undergo the HEQSF-aligned qualifications. However, a clear articulation pathway from legacy qualifications to the new HEQSF-aligned qualifications is not yet determined. This is negatively affecting nurses who underwent the legacy qualifications but may not meet the minimum requirements to access the new HEQSF-aligned qualifications. This has highlighted the importance of initiating a discussion about articulation with the CHE.

### **3 PROGRESSION AND ARTICULATION**

- 3.1** To mitigate the anticipated challenge, the SANC conducted a three-day workshop from 3-5 March 2021, whose purpose was to identify similarities and differences between the legacy and HEQSF-aligned nursing qualifications in order to determine if there were gaps in learning content between the old and the new qualifications, and if there were, what would it take to bridge them. Nursing Education and Training stakeholders were represented. The findings were to assist SANC in mapping out articulation pathways for the nurses who underwent the legacy qualifications.
- 3.2** The report of the findings of the workshop, including recommendations, was presented and approved by Council of the SANC. The Council further resolved that the recommendations should be discussed with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) since CHE is the Quality Council for Higher Education.
- 3.3** Much as there have been several engagements held between SANC and CHE about the proposed recommendations on articulation pathways, no concrete agreements have been reached regarding the matter, especially regarding the access to the post-graduate diploma programmes by nurses who underwent the four-year diploma programme from Public Colleges of Nursing; and access by nurses who underwent Bridging programme for Enrolled Nurses with a Midwifery qualification. The agreement was that once the decision had been reached, the Nursing Education Institutions would be informed formally. The SANC was hoping that by this time a conclusion would have been reached, however this is not the case.
- 3.4** Progress will be provided as and when there are agreements that are reached.

For further information in respect of this Circular, you are advised to contact Ms SJ Nxumalo, Acting Deputy Registrar: Professional Affairs at (012) 420 1022 or on e-mail at: [jnxumalo@sanc.co.za](mailto:jnxumalo@sanc.co.za)

Yours Sincerely



**MS SA MCHUNU**  
**REGISTRAR AND CEO**  
**SOUTH AFRICAN NURSING COUNCIL**

**2022 -03- 24**

**DATE**