

AETASA

Adult Educators and Trainers Association of South Africa

Draft

Setting Standards for the Training of Adult Educators and Trainers in the Field of Adult Basic Education and Training

1. What is this document

At the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) National Stakeholders Forum (NSF) meeting held on the 28 June 1995, it was agreed that AETASA would develop a draft document which will outline national standards for the training of adult educators and trainers (practitioners).

It needs to be noted that this is a draft document that represents the thinking, discussions and research of a group of practitioners affiliated to AETASA. While it does not reflect the official position of AETASA, we believe that it can play an important role in the process of setting standards for the training of practitioners.

This document will outline the process that was set up to develop the domains of functioning and the level descriptors that are essential for the setting of standards. The domains of functioning is that which practitioners are expected to know and be able to carry out, and the level descriptor describes the levels for training practitioners.

A limitation of this document is that it does not set standards for the training of practitioners ie. it does not list the outcomes and their assessment criteria for each of the elements that are essential within each area of competence within a domain. It is envisaged that this would be the next step in the process.

One needs to recognise that this document needs to be subjected to vigorous debate and discussion, especially by practitioners. AETASA envisages that such debate and discussion would enrich the document and looks forward to receiving feed-back.

2. The process to set standards

As the first step to setting standards for the training of adult education and training practitioners, AETASA convened a national workshop. Invites were sent to all affiliated provincial fora and national organisations. These fora and organisations were encouraged to send representatives that had some experience and expertise in this area.

This workshop could not complete its objectives and it was agreed that a second workshop would be convened.

At the end of the second workshop, the participants requested that two of the participants draft this document based on the discussions and agreements during the workshops.

3. Domains of functioning

The essential aspects of adult educator and trainer functioning and interaction has been clustered into four domains. These are:

1. Context
2. Teaching and Learning Interface
3. Quality Assurance
4. Content and Subject Specialisation

The four domains represent dimensions in which adult educators are required to function effectively. Within these domains or dimensions, essential areas of competence and their elements have been identified.

Actual learning outcomes and their assessment criteria still need to be stated for each element.

Domain One: Context

This domain delineates the demands made on practitioners with regard to the context in which they work.

Areas of Competence	Elements
Management (of)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- people- operations processes- money- resources- information
Communication and Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- within programmes (learners and peers)- outside of programmes (community and other organisations)- marketing and recruitment- contextual needs assessment
Human Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- determining learning needs of practitioners- career planning- practitioner training- practitioner support
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- historical development- current policy- analysis

Domain Two: Teaching and Learning Interface

This domain delineates the demands made on practitioners with regard to the actual teaching and learning interfaces.

Areas of Competence	Elements
Designing learning events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- assessing learning needs- planning and sequencing- learning environment
Adult Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- motivation- psychology- characteristics of adult learners- learning problems
Curriculum (universal issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- models of curriculum- contextualising curriculum
Materials (universal issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- existing materials: assessing, selecting and adapting- new materials: developing and designing- different media
Learner Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- entry level advising- counselling- referral to other agencies

Domain Three: Quality Assurance

This domain delineates the demands made on practitioners with regard to educational and programme quality.

Areas of Competence	Elements
Assessment of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- purposes of assessment- methods and techniques- recognition of prior learning (RPL)- accreditation issues
Evaluation of Programmes and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- types of evaluation- methods and techniques
Research and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- monitoring- curriculum and materials- research- developing innovations- developing and designing new materials- research methods and techniques

Domain Four: Content and Subject Specialisation

This domain delineates the demands made on practitioners with regard to current ABET curriculum and content options.

Areas of Competence	Elements
Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- approaches- methods- materials- local resources- assessment techniques
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- approaches- methods- materials- local resources- assessment techniques

Communication in English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approaches - methods - materials - local resources - assessment techniques
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4. Level descriptors

A level descriptor is a statement that outlines the levels that practitioners need to attain in the course of their development. The following three criteria are used when describing the levels:

- level of complexity of task
- degree of autonomous, independent and structured/unstructured work.
- range of transferability and application to other contexts.

Five levels have been identified for the training of adult educators and trainers. These are:

Level One

A practitioner who is competent in a basic and appropriate method or approach for use in a defined and supportive context.

Level Two

A practitioner who is competent in a limited number of methods and approaches and who functions autonomously within a defined context.

Level Three

A practitioner who is competent in a broader range of methods and approaches, supported by some theoretical understanding, and who functions in more than one context.

Level Four

A practitioner who is competent in a wide range of methods and approaches, supported by theoretical understanding, and who provides leadership, support and initiates developments.

Level Five

A practitioner who is competent at an advanced level of theory and practice and who provides intellectual and managerial leadership, who initiates new developments and innovations, and formulates new areas of knowledge and understanding.

The above levels are described together with the roles that practitioners are expected to perform (at that level). The roles identified under each level have been taken from the real work that an adult educator and trainer is expected to perform.

Level One

A practitioner who is competent in a basic and appropriate method or approach for use in a defined and supportive context.

Role

- assistant tutor/educator

Level Two

A practitioner who is competent in a limited number of methods and approaches and who functions autonomously within a defined context.

Roles

- tutor/educator
- fieldworker
- assistant trainer
- research assistant (data collection)
- administrative assistant

Level Three

A practitioner who is competent in a broader range of methods and approaches, supported by some theoretical understanding, and who functions in more than one context.

Roles

- senior tutor
- senior fieldworker
- co-ordinator (small project/programme)
- administrator
- trainer/training officer
- junior researcher
- network organiser

Level Four

A practitioner who is competent in a wide range of methods and approaches, supported by theoretical understanding, and who provides leadership, support and initiates new developments.

Roles

- "expert" teacher
- co-ordinator (large project/ngo/programme)
- training manager
- researcher
- senior trainer
- curriculum/course developer
- materials developer
- supervisor of educators
- lecturer
- assessment designer

Level Five

A practitioner who is competent at an advanced level of theory and practice and who provides intellectual and managerial leadership, who initiates new developments and innovations, and formulates new areas of knowledge and understanding.

Roles

- system manager
- policy analyst
- senior researcher
- senior academic
- senior evaluator
- human resources director

How these levels fit into the NQF

Figure 1 outlines how these levels relate to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

FORMAL SYSTEM		NQF LEVELS	ADULT EDUCATION	TRAINING PRACTITIONERS
Ph.D		8		Level 5
Masters		7		
Advanced Diploma		6		
Degree		5		
National Diploma		4		Level 3
Senior Cert. 10	FEC 12	4	National Certificate N3	Level 2
9	11	3	N2	
8	10	2	N1	
7 6	GEC 9	1	ABET A4	Level 1
5 4	7		BEC A3	
3 2	5		A2	
1 B A	3		A1	
Educare	Reception			
Stds	Grades			

5. Way forward

As noted earlier, this is the first draft document on the setting of standards for the training of adult educators and trainers.

This document outlines the first step in the process of setting standards. This first step, to set domains of functioning and the levels for the training of practitioners, is crucial when setting standards. It is envisaged that this will start a series of debates and discussions which will feed into the process of setting standards for training practitioners.

AETASA hopes to encourage such debate and discussion over the next six weeks. Any comments and submissions on this document would be most welcome. Please direct all such submissions to:

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