



DSSPACE

<https://dspace.org/>

A critical analysis of the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations: Case studies in the Financial Sector

Naidoo, Vijayendran Dharmananthen

2025

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

<https://hdl.handle.net/10539/49433>

Naidoo, Vijayendran Dharmananthen. (2025). A critical analysis of the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations: Case studies in the Financial Sector [Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg]. WIREDSpace.

A critical analysis of the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations: Case studies in the Financial Sector

Vijayendran Dharmananthen Naidoo

Student Number 1558393

University of the Witwatersrand

Supervisor: Professor Stephanie Allais

Co-Supervisor: Dr Glynnis Vergotine

14 April 2025

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

The copyright of this thesis vests in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy. No portion of the text may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including analogue and digital media, without prior written permission from the University. Extracts of or quotations from this thesis may, however, be made in terms of Sections 12 and 13 of the South African Copyright Act No. 98 of 1978 (as amended), for non-commercial or educational purposes. The full acknowledgment must be made to the author and the University. An electronic version of this thesis may be found in the Library's online catalogue. Please contact the University Legal Office or the University Research Office (www.wits.ac.za) for permission requests.

A critical analysis of the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations: Case studies in the Financial Sector

Vijayendran Dharmananthen Naidoo

Student number: 1558393

A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by a combination of coursework and research, April 2025.

ABSTRACT

The primary focus of the research was to obtain an understanding of how professional bodies in the financial sector use the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) to develop occupational qualifications against which they could register professional designations with SAQA. By mapping the relationship between Occupational Qualifications and Occupational Regulations, this research explores the role of professional bodies in the South African skills development ecosystem by focusing on the relationship between occupational qualifications and their use in regulating occupations by professional bodies in the finance sector.

The research seeks to explore transitions from legacy qualifications and provider-based qualifications (also commonly called pre-2009 qualifications as they were developed prior to 2009) to the replacement occupational qualifications developed under the auspices of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). During the process of developing occupational qualifications, tensions emerged between professional bodies (in this case, in the financial sector) regarding what should or should not be included in occupational qualifications.

The tensions referred to above emanate from the different professional bodies using the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) to develop qualifications against which to map the designations awarded by the professional bodies. These “tensions” are also related to debates on the definition of an occupation and the relationship (mapping) between occupations and qualifications.

The QCTO has witnessed these contestations play out when professional bodies are consulted in developing national occupational qualifications to replace the legacy qualifications. This study, therefore, seeks to critically analyse the relationship between the OFO, the development of occupational qualifications, and how professional designations are then mapped against these qualifications.

In this qualitative study, a case study methodology was adopted within the financial sector using four professional bodies. Data was gathered using semi-structured

interviews with six (6) professional body executives. Grounded theory relying on thematic analysis was used as the primary tool to analyse the data.

A critical finding was the view strongly expressed by professional bodies that they are responsible for linking all the elements of the skills development process. Professional bodies also hold the view that the OFO is applicable to trade and trade-related occupations and is not user-friendly for professional bodies higher up in the financial sector hierarchy.

The research findings, however, concur more strongly with the argument that qualifications seem to be diminishing and are being replaced by a weaker and more fluid relationship between qualifications and the labour market. The research shows that professional designations have become the mechanism for regulating the labour market and that different bodies have different pathways leading to attaining a designation.

The research also showed that the relationship between the OFO and the development of occupational qualifications in the professional body space, particularly in the financial sector, is not well established. The research also reveals that professional bodies do not directly use qualifications for occupational regulation but use them as the basis or entry towards the attainment of a professional designation (as a form of regulation).

The research strongly indicates the need for further research into how professional bodies may contribute to the establishment of a skills development ecosystem.

KEYWORDS

Professional Body, Occupational classification system, Organising Framework for Occupations, Professional Designations, Occupational Qualifications, Regulation of professions, Market Shelters.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



Vijayendran Dharmananthan Naidoo

14 April 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

My supervisor, Professor Stephanie Allais, for her invaluable guidance and belief in me. She constantly challenged and inspired me to do better. Her patience throughout this process is much appreciated.

My co-supervisor, Dr Glynnis Vergotine for her guidance and constant motivation.

My mentor, the late Professor Lolwana who unknowingly transformed my thinking and approach to all things educational. I will forever remain indebted to her for her significant contribution to my personal and career advancement.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	iii
DECLARATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background and Context.....	1
1.2 South African Policy Context.....	3
1.3 Financial Sector Regulatory Framework.....	9
1.4 Problem Statement.....	11
1.5 Aim	11
1.6 Importance and Significance of the Research	12
1.7 Disclaimer.....	13
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Professions and Occupations.....	16
2.3 An Overview of Occupational Classification Systems	21
2.4 Occupational Qualification Reform	33
2.5 Occupational regulation: Professional bodies and sector regulation	35
2.6 Qualifications as Regulatory Instruments	37
2.7 Conceptual Framework.....	38
2.8 Conclusion	40
CHAPTER 3 Research Design.....	42
3.1 Introduction.....	42
3.2 Research Design	42
3.3 Primary focus of the research and research questions	43
3.4 Research Approach.....	44
3.5 Research Sample.....	45
3.6 Data collection methods	46

3.7 Data Analysis	49
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	51
3.9 Role of the Researcher in the Research	53
CHAPTER 4: Research Analysis and Findings	54
4.1 Introduction.....	54
4.2. Section One: The role of Professional Bodies in the Skills Development landscape....	55
a. Regulatory role over Professions	55
b. Market regulation and public confidence	57
c. Linking all the elements of the skills development landscape	59
d. Summary of Section One.....	60
4.3. Section Two: The role and purpose of Qualification Classification Systems.....	61
a. OFO as a tool for Skills Classification vs a framework for occupational qualifications ..	61
b. Applicability of the OFO	62
c. Complexity of the OFO.....	64
d. The OFO as a classification system for the mapping of professional.....	64
designations.....	64
e. Summary of Section Two.....	65
4.4. Section Three: The relationship between Occupational	66
Classification Systems and the Development of Occupational	66
Qualifications	66
a. Applicability of the OFO to “professions”	66
b. Market Segregation	67
c. Summary of Section Three	69
4.5. Section 4: Varieties or different forms of Occupational Regulations	70
a. Alignment between Designations and Occupational Qualifications.....	70
b. Methods for awarding the designation	71
c. Significance of a professional designation in the Skills Arena.....	72
d. Summary of Section Four.....	73
4.6. Section 5: The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations	73
a. Occupational qualification development processes	74

b. Qualification Overlap	76
c. Summary of Section Five.....	77
4.7 Summary of Overall Findings.....	78
Chapter Five: Reflections on Findings and Analysis	81
a. Main research question: In what ways do professional bodies use the OFO (as a Qualification Classification System), and occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?	81
b. Sub-question One: In what ways do the professional bodies use the Organising Framework for Occupations for the development of occupational qualifications?	82
c. In what ways do professional bodies use occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?	83
Reflections emanating from the study	84
a. Status of Professional Bodies and Occupational Regulation	84
b. The role of professional bodies in the skills development landscape	86
c. The effectiveness of the OFO as a tool for the development of occupational qualifications and regulation of occupations.....	87
6. References	89
APPENDIX 1	94
APPENDIX 2	95
APPENDIX 3	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Major ISCO-08 groups related to skill level.

Figure 2: Example of ESCO occupational group and relationship to ISCO

Figure 3: Mapping of the skill levels to the OFO major groups

Figure 4: Synchronization of the NSDS Levels, NQF levels, Skills Levels, and OFO
Major Groups

Figure 5: Conceptual framework

Figure 6: Research design

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Mapping of Interview questions to the broad categories

Table 2: Analytical Framework

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard for Classification of Occupations
CHE	Council for Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DQP	Development Quality Partner
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
ESCO	European Skills/Competences Qualifications and Occupations
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labor Organisation
ISCO	International Standards of Occupations
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSB	National Standards Generating Bodies
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications sub-framework
QAP	Quality Assurance Partner
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASCO	South African Standard Classification of Occupations
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context

The purpose of the study is to understand the relationship between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications, and the regulation of Occupations. The financial sector was chosen as a case study to focus the study. The interest in this area emanates in part from the need to clarify the role of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) vis-a-vis the role of Professional Bodies broadly and, more specifically, the relationship between occupational qualifications developed by the QCTO and the Professional Designations registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). This is unpacked further under the problem statement. The study is located within two broad contextual conditions.

Context One

The first context relates to the mapping of qualifications to occupations. Firstly, the literature (Vorwerk, 2014; Allais, Marock, and Molebatsi, 2014) argues that internationally, there is substantial interest in mapping qualifications to occupations or alternatively mapping occupations to qualifications. They argue that the appeal of these mapping exercises lies in generating better matching between the supply of skills by education and training institutions and the demand for skills expressed in the labour market. This study is limited to the mapping of occupational qualifications to designations that fall within the scope of the professional bodies registered with the South African Qualifications Authority, and which are also currently approved as Quality Assurance Partners (QAPs) by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). Quality Assurance Partners (QAPs) are Bodies with delegated powers to undertake quality assurance activities on behalf of the QCTO. These professional bodies previously enjoyed Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) status in terms of the South African Qualifications Authority Act, (Act No. 58 of 1995).

Context Two

The second context describes how qualifications are used to regulate the labour market. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop,2013) argues that qualifications are commonly seen as one of the core instruments for governing and regulating the labour market and that, by being linked to access to occupations and professions, qualifications define what a person needs to know and be able to do to carry out a certain activity. The Cedefop report makes the point that firstly, “while various public health motivations, from health and safety to consumer protection and quality assurance, are given to justify the use of qualifications in the governance of occupations and professions, they might also be used to defend the private interests of particular occupational and professional groups and bodies” and secondly “depending on the sector and occupation, national legislation, regulation or other kinds of agreements determine which qualifications are required to practice specific occupations” (2013:8). In the research Cedefop, provides an analysis of how qualifications are used to regulate access to occupations in ten countries and five economic sectors. They found that direct regulation of occupations and professions through qualifications seems to be diminishing and is being replaced by a weaker and more fluid relationship between qualifications and the labour market. They postulate that some aspects underpinning this development may include:

- (a) the emergence of new awarding bodies at sector and international levels, challenging the traditional gatekeeper role of national governments;
- (b) rapid technological and economic change, requiring constant modernisation of qualifications and occupations;
- (c) the growing importance of transversal skills, emphasising cross-sectoral and intra-occupational competences and challenging the one-to-one relationship between qualifications and occupations;
- (d) the emergence of new occupations and the constant redefinition of existing occupations and professions;
- (e) growing resistance to legal or administrative regulation of the economy in general and of the relationship between qualifications and occupations more specifically. (ibid)

These two conceptual contexts, juxtaposed with the prevailing policy context in South Africa as outlined in the next section have been selected as they form the “backbone”

of this research. Context one speaks to the relationship between occupations and qualifications, and context two speaks to the relationship between qualifications and occupational regulation of labour markets. The three elements, viz. occupations, qualifications, and occupational regulation, and the links between them are at the core of this research.

1.2 South African Policy Context

There are three different ways in which these contextual conditions play out in the South African context.

Firstly, South Africa has been struggling for more than twenty years with the issue of skills development and the nature of occupational qualifications necessary to support a developing economy. The first attempt was the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) implemented under the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995). In 1998, Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies were established under the SAQA Act. All Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) then established ETQA units to oversee monitoring and auditing of national standards or qualifications (RSA, 1998). In summary, this meant that the process is one where SETA implementation of its Sector Skills Plan (SSP) and contribution to broader sector development is funded through the provision of learning and skills development programmes (both qualifications and unit standards) which were monitored and quality assured by the ETQA. SAQA also accorded ETQA status to Professional Bodies. In 2000, the Departments of Education and Labour began a review of the NQF. However, the review took some years to finalise, ostensibly because the two Departments could not agree on the way forward. (Allais, 2011) records that during this hiatus period, some changes to the original thinking and implementation of the NQF occurred, inter alia:

- The 'legacy' qualifications (referred to above) were extended and were now called 'provider' qualifications.
- The National Standard Generating Bodies (NSBs) were disbanded and interim arrangements for standards setting were put in place.

Once the Departments of Education and Labour finalised the review of the NQF, the NQF Act of 2008 was passed (RSA 2008). The following changes to the NQF and SAQA's role are significant. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established as a Quality Council responsible for occupational learning and qualifications. The establishment of the QCTO also meant that it would replace the ETQAs over time as the original outcomes-based qualifications and unit standards developed after 1995 (and which were quality assured by the ETQAs) expire or are withdrawn. The future role, functions and form of the SETA ETQAs was and still remains somewhat uncertain, as the QCTO to date is not adequately funded to take over the quality assurance functions delegated to the SETAs and some professional bodies.

Buchner (2012:1) argues that research indicates that the underpinning conceptual issue to the NQF and the outcomes-based and unit standards approach it has undertaken has created an unwieldy and contested approach to qualification development which undermined a discipline-based approach to curriculum development. As a result, unit standard based qualifications and curriculum appeared not to contribute to skills development. The implementation of the NQF Act 67 of 2008 resulted in the QCTO being classified as a Quality Council responsible for Trades and Occupations. The QCTO model is to develop "full" and "part" occupational qualifications (consisting of compulsory knowledge, practical and workplace components) linked to the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO).

Secondly, the OFO is being used as the mechanism for mapping Occupational Qualifications. The OFO is a skills-based coded classification system primarily intended to be used by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to collect information regarding skills demand and supply. It is used by employers to report on their annual workplace skills plans and is used by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to draw up sector skills plans which are intended to highlight scarce skills and national priorities. The OFO is aligned to the 2008 version of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 08 compiled by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), an organ of the United Nations. The OFO in essence, is a coded occupational classification system and is constructed from the bottom-up by

- Analysing jobs and identifying similarities in terms of tasks and skills.
- Categorising similar jobs into occupations.
- Classifying occupations into occupational groups at increasing levels of generality.

In terms of the OFO therefore:

- A job is seen as a set of tasks and work-related responsibilities designed to be performed by an individual in return for payment/remuneration.
- An occupation is a set of jobs whose main tasks and associated responsibilities are of such similarity that they can be grouped together. The OFO classifies Occupational groups according to levels (commencing at the broadest category of a major group, then sub-major group, minor group, unit group, occupation, and then alternative titles and specialisations). The following example drawn from the Financial sector is provided. Major Groups classified as professionals (e.g. Chartered Accountant), Sub-Major Groups comprise Business and Administration Professionals. Minor Groups are classified as Finance Professionals and Unit Groups comprise Accountants while Management accountant is classified as Occupations (Employer Guideline to the Usage of OFO Codes in the FASSET sectors (2016)).

In South Africa, this plays out in the policy environment through an Organizing Framework for Occupations, which was developed under the Department of Labour in 2004 and then taken over by the Department of Higher Education and Training in 2009. The QCTO adopted the OFO occupational qualification classification system in 2013 to guide the development of occupational qualifications.

The QCTO, as a quality council in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008, is responsible for quality assurance of full qualifications and part qualifications on the Occupational Qualifications sub-framework (OQSF) which is one of three sub-frameworks comprising the NQF. With respect to the Skills Development Act 37 of 2008, the QCTO is responsible for setting occupational standards and developing qualifications. What this means in practice is that the QCTO is responsible for the development of occupational qualifications in line with sector and/or industry standards (where such exists) and submitting them to the South

African Qualifications Authority for registration on the NQF. This is done in consultation with a particular industry. Industry in this context includes a profession or occupation. The “consultation” in itself poses a huge challenge due to the fact that South Africa does not have a well-coordinated market economy. Authors working in the political economy institutional tradition, such as Busemeyer and Trampusch (2012), explain that there are fundamental political and historical differences between countries and these differences play out in the education and training system of a particular country. Countries that have successful education and training systems, such as Switzerland, Austria, and Germany, are termed collective market economies (CMEs). In these countries, the state, intermediary associations (SETAs or professional bodies in the South African context), employers, and unions all cooperate with one another and play an active role in the process of skills formation. Even though the QCTO has an approved sub-framework of qualifications of the NQF, referred to as the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF), it has not yet developed a full suite of qualifications. The qualifications are, in theory, developed based on demand by industry. The current practice is that the industry approaches the QCTO and develops qualifications using the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) as the starting point. Any occupational qualification to be developed must first of all be mapped to an occupation or specialisation reflected on the OFO. The QCTO appoints Development Quality Partners (DQPs) to develop occupational qualifications and Assessment Quality Partners (AQPs) to ensure credible assessments for the developed qualifications.

Thirdly, in many occupational areas in SA and internationally, there are professional bodies that regulate the license to practice, which has implications for qualifications and curricula. In terms of the NQF Act, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) may accredit a body constituted to represent and/or regulate a recognised community of expert practitioners as a Professional Body. The professional body can confer a professional designation which recognises a person’s expertise and/or right to practice in an occupational field. The professional designation is aligned to or dependent on the attainment of the appropriate qualification. This means that, apart from the statutory professional bodies which exist in terms of legislation to regulate participation e.g., the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), etc., the SAQA process also makes

provision for the recognition of non-statutory professional bodies who attempt to “self-regulate” or “quasi regulate” practice in the occupational area. The current SAQA process allows for multiple bodies to be recognised in the financial sector. Examples relevant to this study include bodies such as the Chartered Institute for Management Accountants (CIMA), the Chartered Institute for Business Accountants (CIBA), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants South Africa (ACCA), the Institute of Accounting and Commerce (IAC).

The QCTO receives a significant number of requests for the development of occupational qualifications from professional bodies. For many of these qualifications, the professional bodies have played significant roles in the qualification development process and, in some instances, have also been appointed as the Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) as these professional bodies are able to assemble the community of experts required to fulfill the AQP roles. The qualification development process could become highly contested, especially where there are several professional bodies operating in the same occupational field. For example, in the finance sector, there are no fewer than five active professional bodies – mainly non-statutory, as indicated above. The number of professional bodies in the financial sector has resulted in the development of Occupational Qualifications to replace the legacy qualifications becoming highly contested, with qualifications being divided and subdivided to demarcate areas of specialisation linked to professional designations of particular professional bodies. For example, distinctions are made between management accountants, business accountants, certified accountants and bookkeepers. The bookkeeper qualification is further divided into senior bookkeeper and junior bookkeeper. This contestation manifests itself in the occupational qualification arena, with professional bodies advocating qualifications to suit the almost artificial divides (specialisations and jobs) within the financial field. The previous unit standard-based occupational qualifications registered on the NQF aided these divisions, as the professional bodies were able to “package” unit standards into learning programmes to suit their areas of focus. The new QCTO occupational qualifications do not provide the latitude for such a selective combination of unit standards as the occupational qualifications are “full” qualifications requiring broader underpinning disciplinary knowledge and a measure of specialisation which will replace the unit standard-based qualifications and thus provide access to a number of occupations/jobs in the financial

sector. The QCTO occupational qualifications consist of compulsory knowledge, practical and workplace modules. The attempt by the QCTO to develop occupational qualifications underpinned by broad disciplinary knowledge and the demonstration of competencies is viewed by the professional bodies as being “inflexible” and not job-specific. This has resulted in major contestations in the qualification development process, with different stakeholders (more especially professional bodies) presenting strong arguments for the inclusion of particular topics and modules relevant to their areas of specialisation and which will lead to specific designations registered with SAQA.

In order to be registered as a professional body with SAQA, the professional body must have a qualification linked to the registered designation. Currently, these are, in the main, broad academic qualifications with specified years of experience required. Registered occupational qualifications, especially for high and mid-level occupations, are being used in different ways by professional bodies to lead to the awarding of a professional designation status. However, the QCTO has observed that many of these professional bodies are migrating to occupational qualification as a route to award professional designations. The main reason is that the QCTO occupational qualification offers much more flexibility than the higher education route and the workplace component is an integral part of the occupational qualification. This in itself is not a problem and actually bodes well for the value of occupational qualifications. The problem is that aspects or components of the occupational qualification are being used towards the awarding of the professional designation as explained below:

- Many of the professional bodies appointed as assessment quality partners (AQPs) collapsed the occupational qualifications External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) and the professional bodyboard exams into one in an attempt to “kill two birds with one stone” i.e., the awarding of the qualification as well as the awarding of the designation. The problem is that entrance requirements for the professional body board exam may have vastly different requirements. The external integrated summative assessment is a national single assessment administered at the end of the period of study to determine the students level of competency measured against the outcomes

as stipulated in the qualification and does not necessarily include the specific professional body board requirements. The qualification is awarded if the learner is found competent through assessment against the learning outcomes as stipulated in the qualification. The board examinations, on the other hand, are specific to the professional body for the awarding of the professional designation. In some cases, these are international examinations especially where the body operating in South Africa is an extension of an international professional body.

- In other instances, certain Higher Education Institutions are using the knowledge component of the occupational qualification as modules within their qualification and programmes which also lead to the awarding of professional designations. The problem with this is that the qualification requirements, and not the designation requirements, will be honoured for entrance to the external integrated summative assessment.
- Candidates completing the higher education programmes (or parts of it) are being granted recognition of prior learning (RPL) for the knowledge and practical components of the occupational qualification and thereby achieving access to the external integrated summative assessment.

1.3 Financial Sector Regulatory Framework

The Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) is a statutory body that supervises market conduct in relation to the provision of financial products and financial services in South Africa, including the conduct of financial institutions licensed in terms of various financial sector laws, such as banks, insurers, retirement funds and administrators, and market infrastructures. The mandate of the FSCA is significantly broader than that of its predecessor, the Financial Services Board. The FSCA is the only statutory body empowered to license practitioners to operate as financial advisors.

The Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) is the entity responsible for setting auditing standards in South Africa and has adopted International Standards on Auditing (ISA) as issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) through

the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB). IRBA is the statutory body controlling that part of the accountancy profession involved with public accountancy in South Africa. Their strategic focus is to protect the financial interests of the public by ensuring that only suitably qualified individuals are admitted to the auditing profession and that registered auditors deliver services of the highest quality and adhere to the highest ethics standards. The IRBA accredits voluntary bodies and accepts membership of its accredited voluntary bodies for continued registration of auditors. At this stage, the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) is the only voluntary body accredited by the IRBA. The IRBA is, furthermore, the only professional regulator that registers professional practices as well as individuals.

Other bodies operating in South Africa include the Southern African Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA), The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA): South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA), South African Institute of Business Accountants (SAIBA), Institute of Certified Bookkeepers (ICB): Institute of Administration and Commerce (IACSA) and Institute of Internal Auditors (IISA).

Apart from registered auditors, there are various professional designations in the field of accounting that are attached to membership of professional bodies, e.g., Chartered Accountant is the designation awarded by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants or Chartered Global Management Accountant awarded by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. These designations indicate to the market the competencies of professionals, and they are generally highly regarded by employers. All the professional bodies hold their members to standards of professional conduct and discipline them if necessary.

Almost all the professional designations in the accounting field are registered as qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework and most of the learning paths towards those qualifications are registered as learnerships. Qualifications in the accounting field fall within the scope of the SETA for Finance, Accounting, Management Consulting, and Other Financial Services (Fasset). All the professional bodies (in this study) work very closely with Fasset on all matters regarding the quality

assurance of the qualifications, the administration of learnerships and the promotion of the qualifications.

The number of professional bodies and designations in the financial sector has resulted in a very complicated and contested area of practice, with each professional body guarding its place in the hierarchy. This contestation and stratification in the financial sector has given rise to a proliferation of occupational qualifications being developed – each designed to align to a specific designation. Not only have professional bodies exercised “gatekeeping” but also want to retain education and training quality assurance functions which in terms of legislation is the responsibility of the QCTO unless such functions have been delegated to the professional bodies.

1.4 Problem Statement

Professional bodies are using the QCTO processes as an opportunity to develop occupational qualifications that lead to the attainment of a professional designation. While this is within the policy framework, it may not be helpful for the broader goals of occupational preparation, qualification, and regulation as the various competing professional bodies operating within a particular field advocate for occupational qualifications with specialisations and utilise the OFO to motivate such requests. This study seeks to understand how the OFO supports the development of specialised occupational qualifications linked to professional designations.

1.5 Aim

At the commencement of the research project, the main aim was to explore the relationship between Occupational Qualifications and their use in the regulation of occupations by professional bodies. The primary focus was to obtain an understanding of how professional bodies were attempting to use the development of occupational qualifications against which they could register professional designations with SAQA. In mapping the relationship between Occupational Qualifications and Occupational Regulations, this research explores the role of professional bodies in the Skills Development Ecosystem by focusing on the relationship between Occupational

Qualifications and their use in the regulation of occupations by professional bodies in the financial sector.

The main research question is:

In what ways do professional bodies use the OFO (as a Qualification Classification System) and occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

Sub-questions

1. In what ways do the professional bodies use the Organising Framework for Occupations for the development of occupational qualifications?
2. In what ways do professional bodies use occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

1.6 Importance and Significance of the Research

The importance and significance of this research are amplified by the current debate on the role of professional bodies in the education and training space and whether these should be included in the NQF Act (the SAQA is currently reviewing the NQF Act). The contentious role of professional bodies is not a new phenomenon. In their article “Professional Bodies and Quality Assurance of higher education programmes: Towards an appropriate framework” (Ballim, Mabizela, Mubangizi, 2014: 1141) argue that:

As social institutions interested in a particular outcome – in this case the knowledge, abilities, competencies and professional values of graduates from particular degree programmes – universities by themselves cannot completely develop the appropriate learning context together with the necessary standards of academic and professional excellence without engaging with professional bodies for guidance. For their part, professional bodies need to be assured of the knowledge and competence levels of graduates who enter their profession. This is necessary to ensure that graduates are suitably prepared to engage with the demands of professional practice at the entry

level as well as to participate in the next (candidacy or internship) phase of formal professional learning necessary for full registration as a practicing professional.

They argue further that a lack of a regulatory framework to direct the relationship between professional bodies, universities, and the Council for Higher Education (CHE) (as the primary custodian of quality in higher education) has allowed professional bodies to reach into the academic activities of universities in ways that have the potential to undermine the quality and effectiveness of higher education qualifications and that, while some professional bodies have done well in self-regulating such relationships, this has largely been based on understanding and goodwill and has certainly not been the approach of all professional bodies. In this research, I contend upfront that contestations between Universities and professional bodies pertaining to content built into the university qualifications also manifests in the QCTO Occupational qualifications space and which in part informed the conceptualisation of this research. This research aims, therefore, to contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of the role of Professional Bodies in education and training in general and in the Skills Development Ecosystem in particular.

1.7 Disclaimer

The research commenced with interviews with the identified professional bodies in 2018. The finalisation of the research report was drawn out for a number of personal reasons. However, of significance to this research report is the “fluidity” of the education and training sector in terms of the shifting mandates of the relationship between QCTO, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and Professional Bodies) in relation to occupational qualification quality assurance functions viz. qualification development, accreditation of providers and assessment methodologies. The second important disclaimer is that the researcher, by virtue of the position occupied as an employee in the QCTO, is located in the research and is central to many of the changes highlighted in the research report.

In this research report, I attempt to balance the responses from interviews conducted within the prevailing context in 2018 with the evolving context over the period 2018 to

2024. In this regard, the research explored the interactions between occupational qualifications, occupational regulation and the roles played by different stakeholders bodies at the commencement of the transition from the legacy qualifications to occupational qualifications. These interactions reflect some of the broader issues impacting skills development. However, every attempt has been made to respond to the original aim of the research. This required that the original case study methodology be supplemented with elements of an autoethnographic study viz., personal narrative and reflective purpose (du Preez, 2008).

The rest of the research report is set out as follows:

Chapter 2 covers an analysis of the literature which underpins the conceptual framework developed to guide the study. In the literature review, the distinction between professions and occupations is explored. This is followed by a review of occupational classification systems, current occupational qualification reforms, professional bodies and sector regulation and qualifications as regulatory instruments. The chapter concludes with the conceptual framework within which the research is framed. The conceptual framework consists of the three critical components viz. Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and Regulation of Occupations as the relationship between these components as expressed in the contexts provided in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 covers the research design and methodology. The study researched how a sample of professional bodies in the financial sector use the OFO and occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation. The most appropriate research method was the case study. The chapter also describes the research methodology, which involved six in-depth interviews with participants from four professional bodies. I was an active participant in the interviews as I had to continuously reflect on the policy and processes as well as my personal involvement in these processes.

Chapter 4 presents the research analysis and findings. Each section of the findings chapter addresses the various components identified in the conceptual framework and the relationships between these components to provide responses to the main research question and the two sub-questions. It is important to emphasize the

centrality of the conceptual framework in framing the sections presented in this chapter.

In Chapter 5, I present overarching reflections on the findings and analysis and the contribution that professional bodies (if properly regulated) could make to the country's Skills formation system.

CHAPTER 2 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is sequenced to cover the theoretical discourses and debates which underpin the research question, and which provide the conceptual framework for the research. The literature review commences with Section One which provides an overview of Professions and Occupations. Section two provides an overview of the occupational classification systems and their utility in developing occupational qualifications. Reference is also made to the South African context. Section three is the discourse around occupational qualifications reform. The fourth section provides a review of occupational regulation and the role played by professional bodies in the regulation of occupations. The fifth and final section looks particularly at qualifications as regulatory instruments. Each of the sections aligns with key constructs and concepts that form part of the research. Much of the literature on professional bodies relates to the “sociology” of professions. The literature identified that speaks to occupational regulation, professions and occupational regulation and its impact on the supply of skills is also fairly dated. The literature on professional bodies and their role in the education and training space and is very limited.

2.2 Professions and Occupations

In this section, I review the literature on professions and occupations to determine whether it supports these as two distinctive categories. Establishing this upfront is important as the phenomenon being researched involves professional bodies that interact with the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) and occupational qualifications to satisfy the requirements leading to a professional designation registered by the SAQA.

The literature on professions and occupations suggests that the need to distinguish between professions and occupations is a fairly contested area among writers in the field. During the literature review, I found that the article by Evetts (2003) entitled: The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World

to represent one of the more recent articles that juxtaposes the views of authoritative authors in this area, such as Friedson, Larson, Parsons, and Abbot amongst others. While the literature review will highlight the views of other writers in the field, I rely heavily on the article by Evetts as it provides an adequate framework (focussing on four key areas) for arguing the interchangeability of these two concepts (viz. profession and occupation) in the research report.

The first focus suggests that a shift is required “from a preoccupation with defining ‘profession’ to analysis of the appeal to ‘professionalism’ as a motivator for and facilitator of occupational change” (Evetts, 2003: 395). Abbot (1998:21) argues that definitions must follow from theoretical questions and makes the point that the definition of professions as “exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases” is weak and argues that the focus should rather concern the “evolution and interrelations of professions, and, more generally, the ways occupational groups control knowledge and skill”. Evetts (2003) argues that some researchers, such as Hanlon (1998) and Abbot (1988), have avoided defining a profession by resorting to offering a list of relevant occupational groups. Citing Hughes (1958) and Crompton (1990), Evetts (2003) makes the point that it no longer seems important to draw a hard definitional line between professions and other occupations but, instead, to regard both as similar social forms that share many common characteristics.

Freidson argued that the important differentiation is within the occupation and not between occupation and profession and that professions are occupations, and occupations are productive pursuits by which people gain their living in the labor market. With respect to differentiation among occupations, Friedson argues that the focus can be the variation in the way occupations relationship to the labor market is structured; or the differentiation by the nature of their productive pursuits -- that is, the kind of work their members perform and the way they perform it; or one can differentiate occupations by control – who controls or commands the determination of what the work shall be, and how it shall be performed and evaluated. (Freidson, 1989, in Allais &Shalem, 2018:4)

Evetts (2003:397) argues that “Professions are essentially the knowledge-based category of occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience”. However, she also makes the important point that professional groups sometimes use licensing as a mechanism of market closure, referred to by Friedson (1982) as “market shelters”. The view expressed by Evetts (2003:399), that “expansion of the service sector and knowledge work in the developed world and the growth or re-emergence of professions in both developing and transitional societies, indicates the appeal of the concept of ‘professionalism’ as well as the strength and persistence of ‘professions’ as an occupational form”. This aptly describes the current situation in South Africa, with the shift away from a manufacturing economy to one based on services. The growth in the financial sector underscores the significance of this research.

The second focus of the article contrasts “sociological interpretations of professionalism (as a normative value system and as the ideology of occupational powers)” (Evetts, 2003: 395). Evetts identifies Parsons (1951) as one of the best attempts to clarify the special characteristics of professionalism and its normative values. According to (Dingwall and Lewis,1983:2), Parsons tried to clarify the importance of professionalism through a theoretical base in the sociology of knowledge, in terms of a socially grounded normative order. Evetts (2003: 400) argues that, unlike Parsons, Hughes (1958) regarded the difference between professions and occupations as differences of degree rather than kind and that “common identity is produced and reproduced through occupational and professional socialisation by means of shared and common educational backgrounds, professional training and vocational experiences, and by membership of professional associations”.

With regards to Professionalism as Ideology, Evetts (2003:401) argues that the “critical attacks on professions in general as powerful, privileged, self-interested monopolies, that were prominent in the neo-Weberian research literature of the 1970s and 1980s” and which “resulted in a general scepticism about the whole idea of professionalism as a normative value”.

Evetts (2003: 401) argues further that “during the 1970s and 1980s, when sociological analysis of professions was dominated by various forms of professionalism as

ideology theorizing, one concept that became prominent was the “professional project”. The concept of the professional project is critical to this research report as it pertains specifically to the field of Accountancy. The concept was developed by Larson (1977) and included a detailed and scholarly historical account of the processes and developments whereby a distinct occupational group (Accounting Field) sought a monopoly in the market for its service, status and upward mobility (collective as well as individual) in the social order. Events (2003:402) indicates that the idea of a professional project was developed in a different way by Abbott (1988), who “examined the carving out and maintenance of a jurisdiction through competition and the requisite cultural and other work that was necessary to establish the legitimacy of the monopoly practice.” The underlying principles of the professional project are similar except for the fact that Abbott identified the element of ‘jurisdiction’ to establish the continuing monopolisation.

The third focus of the article introduces a third interpretation of professionalism which includes both normative and ideological elements. Evetts (2003:395) argues that “sociologists have returned to the concept of professionalism in an attempt to understand occupational and organizational change and the prominence of knowledge work in different social systems and global economies”. Of significance to this research is the observation by Evetts (2003:403) that “one line of development has been the view that the demand-led theory of professionalization needs to be complemented by an understanding of the supply side”. Evetts (2003:403) proceeds to argue that “Instead of the question – How do professions capture states? – it is suggested that the central question should be – Why do states create professions, or at least permit professions to flourish?”. Evetts contends that this has resulted in a renewed interest in the professionalism as normative value system interpretation and the creation of modern nation-states and of modern professions in the same period.

In a fourth focus, Evetts (2003) reflects on the appeal of the concept of professionalism in promoting and facilitating occupational change and considers how the balance between the normative and ideological elements of professionalism plays out differently in occupational groups. Evetts (2003:407) asserts that:

the ideology of professionalism that is so appealing to occupational groups and their practitioners includes aspects such as exclusive ownership of an area of expertise and knowledge, and the power to define the nature of problems in that area as well as the control of access to potential solutions.

Allais and Shalem (2018:4) argue that there are two aspects to the notion of organisation with the first being the division of labour which creates a range of occupations and relations between them and that occupations try to control a slice of the labour market using a variety of regulative structures, practices do so including a license to practice. The second aspect is authority relations, which regulate the social relations between people within an occupation, including rules of promotion and recognition. They further assert that power relations structure the stratification between (inter-occupations) and within occupations (intra-occupations). This assertion underpins, in part, the aim of this research.

Of importance to this research study is McClelland's (1990:107) categorisation of 'professionalisation "from within" (successful manipulation of the market by the group) and "from above" (domination of forces external to the group)'. Evetts (2003:409) argues that this "categorization was intended to differentiate Anglo-American and German forms of professionalisation but it might be used instead to indicate and explain the various usages of and indeed returns to the appeal of professionalism in different occupational groups". She argues further that "where the appeal to professionalism is made and used by the occupational group itself, 'from within', then the returns to the group can be substantial" and that "in these cases, historically the group has been able to use the normative aspects (and the discourse) in constructing its occupational identity, promoting its image with clients and customers, and in bargaining with states to secure and maintain its (sometimes self) regulatory responsibilities. In these instances, the occupation is using the ideology partly in its own occupational and practitioner interests but sometimes also as a way of promoting and protecting the public interest".

The four discourses identified above are critical to this research study. As indicated in my introduction to this section I have relied heavily on this article by Evetts because of its succinct juxtaposition of the views and positions of the various authoritative

writers in the field. However, after articulating the four discourses I am of the view that professional bodies identified in this research find themselves at the nexus of the dimensions characterising each of these discourses.

The four discourses unpacked revealed a number of key concepts that have relevance to this study. One of the key concepts is ways in which professional bodies and groups (formations) attempt to control knowledge and skills. Another critical concept is the use of “licensing” as a mechanism for “market closure” or “market shelters”. As indicated in the introduction chapter, there are only two statutory bodies issuing licenses to practice in specific occupations such as auditing and financial advisors. It is clear that in these instances, the purpose of such licensing is to provide protection to the public utilising these services. I make the argument that the non-statutory bodies argue to provide the same security to the public, but that actually their attempts are to create “market shelters” through membership and the awarding of professional designations. Being granted professional body recognition and the mandate to issue professional designations allows these bodies to have jurisdiction over certain occupations. While this in itself is not necessarily wrong, the challenge is when these bodies overreach by attempting to exercise control over the qualifications linked to these occupations. This research, therefore, considers how professional bodies in the financial sector understand and use occupational classification systems and occupational qualifications to map their professional designations.

2.3 An Overview of Occupational Classification Systems

Occupational classification systems emerged in the mid-18th century to address the growing need to identify the composition of the labour force. In its simplest form, an occupational classification system attempts to classify occupations according to specific principles and can be used for different purposes. While, on a broad level, occupational classification systems are designed to map the world of work, more specifically, the use of data on occupations collected depends on how occupations are defined within the system. Occupations can be defined through tasks, duties, skills, earnings, job environment, cognitive abilities, educational requirements, etc.

(Hoffmann, 2004; Tippins & Hilton, 2010). The definition of occupations in these systems drives how they are ultimately used.

Hoffman (2004:3) argues that occupational classification systems consist of two components that work together. First, there is an occupational dictionary, which includes descriptions of occupations within a set of occupation titles and occupational groups. Second, the classification system provides guidelines by which occupations are classified into detailed groups and specifies how the details within groups are aggregated into broad groups. The organisation of occupational classification systems often follows a hierarchical structure where occupations are coded and associated with a more general group of occupations.

International Standard of Occupations (ISCO-08)

Most countries conduct a mapping of the world of work at a very aggregate level and then modify an occupational classification system to meet specific needs (Hoffmann, 1998a). The ILO developed the International Standard of Occupations (ISCO) through consultation with employers, workers and several stakeholders across countries to build the groupings and occupations (International Labour Office, 2012). Most European and other countries have used the ILO's ISCO as a foundation for their own national occupational classification system (Elias, 1997).

The most updated version of the ILO's ISCO is called ISCO-08. ISCO-08's occupational definition is based on two concepts (International Labour Office, 2012). The first is the kind of work performed, which means that the classification unit is occupations while the classification variable is the tasks and duties under each occupation (or the work expected to be performed). Occupations are subsequently grouped together by similar tasks and duties in occupational groups. The second concept is skill and is understood in two dimensions: skill level and skill specialisation (International Labour Office, 2012). Skill level is related to the nature of the work performed, the level of formal education to competently perform these duties and tasks, and the amount of on-the-job training needed to be competent at the tasks and duties (International Labour Office, 2012). Skill specialisation is considered in terms of the field of knowledge required, tools and machinery that are used, materials that are worked on or with, and kinds of goods and services provided (International Labour Office, 2012).

The main ISCO occupational groups and their skill level association are depicted in Figure 1 below.

Code	ISCO-08 Major groups	Skill Level			
		1	2	3	4
1	Managers			X	X
2	Professionals				X
3	Technicians and Associate Professional			X	
4	Clerical Support Workers		X		
5	Services and Sales Workers				
6	Skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers				
7	Craft and Related Trades Workers				
8	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers				
9	Elementary occupations	X			
0	Armed forces occupations	X	X		X

Source: (International Labor Office (ILO) 2012). Skill levels correspond to the following International Classification of Educational Levels (ISCED-97) education levels: 1 - Primary level of education; 2 - Lower secondary level of education, Upper secondary level of education, Post-secondary non-tertiary education; 3 - First stage of tertiary education (short or medium duration); 4 - First stage of tertiary education, 1st degree (medium duration), Second stage of tertiary education (leading to an advanced research qualification).

Figure 1: Major ISCO-08 groups related to skill level. (Ospino Hernandez, 2018, p. 4)

The international and local discourse on what constitutes an occupation has been ongoing. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) consolidated the various views and approaches and compiled the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). ISCO is structured in terms of two core features, skill level, and skill specialisation. Skill level is used to rank occupations, while skill specialisation is used to categorise them. The resulting classification system consists of 130 minor groups, 43 sub-major groups, and 10 major groups (ILO, 2012).

ISCO defines a job as a set of tasks or duties performed by one person for employment or self-employment (ILO, 2012). An occupation is a set of jobs sharing similar main tasks. A skill is the ability to carry out tasks within a particular job (ILO, 2012). Skill level in ISCO-08 relates to the complexity of the tasks within a particular job, and includes consideration of:

- The nature of work relative to other tasks and duties within the same skill level;
- The level of formal education required to perform the tasks within a particular job;
- And the amount of experience or on the job training required to competently complete tasks (ILO, 2012).

ISCO includes 4 skill levels. Occupations at skill level 1 typically involve the performance of simple, routine physical or manual tasks, and may require physical

strength and endurance. Some level of literacy or numeracy may be required, but should not form a major component of the job. Some occupations at skill level 1 may require the completion of the first stage of basic education, and possibly a short period of on the job training (ILO, 2012). Skill level 2 occupations generally involve tasks such as operating machinery and electronic equipment, driving vehicles, maintenance and repair of electrical and mechanical equipment, and the manipulation, ordering, and storage of information. These occupations are likely to require more advanced levels of literacy and numeracy, as well as good communication skills. These occupations generally require the completion of at least the first stage of secondary education but may require the completion of the second stage of secondary education and extensive on the job training (ILO, 2012). Occupations at skill level 3 involve the performance of complex technical and practical tasks that require extensive knowledge of a particular field. These occupations generally require a high level of literacy and numeracy, including the ability to understand complex written material, prepare factual reports and communicate verbally in difficult circumstances (ILO, 2012). These occupations usually require knowledge and skills obtained through 1 – 3 years of post-secondary education, and in some cases may require extensive relevant work experience and on the job training (ILO, 2012). Finally, occupations at skill level 4 usually involve the performance of tasks that require complex problem-solving, decision-making, and creativity, based on extensive theoretical and factual knowledge of a particular field. These occupations require extended levels of literacy and numeracy and excellent interpersonal communication skills. The knowledge and skills required for these occupations usually require study at higher educational institutions for 3 – 6 years, leading to the award of a first degree or higher qualification. In some cases, extensive experience or on the job training may substitute for formal education or may be required in addition to it (ILO, 2012). Skills specialisation focuses on the field of knowledge required to perform requisite tasks; the tools and machinery used; and the kind of product or service produced (ILO, 2012). The ten major groups mapped to their relevant skill levels are shown in Figure 1 above. The OFO used in South Africa is underpinned by a similar logic followed by ISCO.

A Research report (PSETA, 2022) summarises the Strengths of ISCO-08 to be the following:

- ISCO-8 takes the middle road, it is not too complex or difficult to operationalise and utilize to generate macro-level occupational data for statistical and national human resource purposes (gender, occupational health and safety, immigration etc.).
- The occupations available are conceptualised at a sound level of generality allowing them to be applied in multiple diverse national contexts.
- ISCO-08's international comparability makes it possible for countries without occupational classification systems to use it for their purposes and the fact that many countries in the world draw from it increases the likelihood of comparing skills dynamics across countries (although this can be a negative as well since although we find ourselves in a globalised economy there are still regional, national differences).
- The focus on title and tasks provides just enough information per occupation to be useful for the generation of national occupational data. Nevertheless, considering the contestation surrounding skill level and skill specialisation its utility for skills planning/forecasting is highly debatable.
- Experience: Though ISCO-08 identifies in the actual definitions of each skill level previous experience in a related occupation required for competent performance of the tasks and duties, as one of the dimensions of skill level, it speaks only of the possibility of experience substituting for education. Experience is not identified as a possible requirement in itself, potentially an additional requirement that could justify a higher skill level. This can have an impact on the skill level placement of occupations fed through internal job ladders, specifically, for example, supervisors, who may require years of experience in the jobs of those they supervise.

Allais (2014), however, cautions that categorisations of occupations are primarily based on similarities in the tasks, jobs, and skills specializations within them rather than skill levels. So skill levels cluster within groups due to similarities in the jobs and tasks comprising them, but occupation group does not determine skill levels. Different occupations have differing requirements in terms of the actual work performed in them, and it is unlikely that a single occupation will require employees to be skilled to the highest level possible across all 10 categories of the level descriptor (Allais, 2014) clarifies this point by using the following example viz. that the medical profession would

not have qualifications at levels 1, 2, or 3 of the qualifications framework, while carpentry may not have qualifications at higher levels.

Statistics South Africa adapted this classification system for South Africa which resulted in the South African Standard Classification of Occupations (SASCO). The SASCO was used for the purpose of conducting the national census data and to track the changes in the occupational profile of South Africa's workforce. During 2004, the Department of Labour (DoL) attempted to link skills demand and supply in the labour market, by using "occupations" as the common denominator for analysis. SASCO has been proven to be a powerful information tool, but it did not provide the detail that was required for effective skills development planning and intervention endeavours. An investigation regarding international development was initiated to find a more representative framework and during the same time, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Statistics New Zealand, initiated a similar comprehensive consultative process. These investigations and consultative processes culminated in 2005 in the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). ANZSCO 2005 reflected the occupational environment more accurately and included occupational descriptors. The OFO code was compiled by extending the ANZSCO with the incorporation of additional occupations and occupational categories identified through research and consultation. In 2005, the DoL in South Africa adopted the use of the OFO as a tool for identifying, reporting and monitoring scarce and critical skills and maintained it through an annual updating process. In 2009, the responsibility for the OFO was transferred to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

European Skills/Competences, Qualification and Occupations (ESCO)

European Skills/Competences, Qualifications, and Occupations (ESCO) is the multilingual classification of skills competences, qualifications and occupations relevant to the EU labour market and education and training. It is intended to remove communication obstacles for information exchanged among stakeholders across the European Union by providing a reference vocabulary for the labour market and education institutions (Vrang et al., 2014). In ESCO, each occupation is mapped to an ISCO code and follows the same occupational pillar by using the four levels within a group, which means that ESCO occupations are at level 5 and below (see Figure 2).

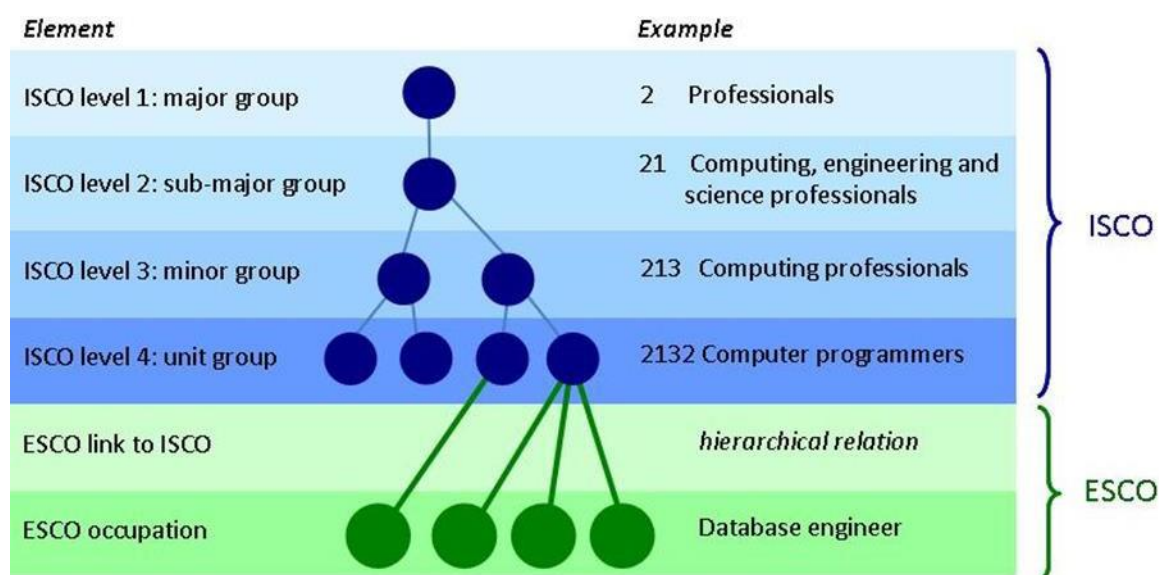


Figure 2: Example of ESCO occupational group and relationship to ISCO (ESCO - Occupations - European Commission, n.d.).

ESCO is an expert-derived system where occupations are related to skills (Djumaieva & Sleeman, 2018). The European Commission made a public effort to systematise occupational information for the EU and map relationships between skills, qualifications and occupations that are aligned with the ISCO (Djumaieva & Sleeman, 2018). CEDEFOP is assisting EU member states in moving towards learning outcomes which are used in qualifications within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as descriptors and standards for assessment and curricula (Djumaieva & Sleeman, 2018). The learning outcomes are drawn from ESCO occupational definitions.

Occupational Classification Systems in South Africa

There are two occupational classification systems in South Africa, the South African Standard Classification of Occupations (SASCO) and the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO), which are used for different purposes. First published in 1986, the 2012 version of SASCO is based on ISCO-08 and is used by Statistics South Africa to provide a national framework for the identification of occupations and as a basis for international comparability (Lehohla, 2012). SASCO serves as the systematic basis for the classification of occupations obtained through the Population Census, causes of death, marriages and divorces, and the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS).

The OFO emerged from the Department of Labour (DoL) in 2004, supported by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). It is a coded hierarchical occupational classification system based on the International Labour Organisation's International Standard of Occupations (ISCO-08) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Within the conceptualisation of the OFO is the idea that employers would update occupations on the OFO through the employer skills plans, which would lead to occupational definitions being a more accurate reflection of the labour market.

In essence, the "Organising Framework for Occupations" (OFO) is a coded occupational classification system.

The OFO is constructed from the bottom-up by:

- Analysing jobs and identifying similarities in terms of tasks and skills
- Categorising similar jobs into occupations
- Classifying occupations into occupational groups at increasing levels of generality

It is worth bearing in mind, in terms of the OFO:

- A job is seen as a set of tasks and work-related responsibilities designed to be performed by an individual in return for payment/remuneration.
- An occupation is a set of jobs whose main tasks and associated responsibilities are of such similarity that they can be grouped together.

The OFO contains standardised definitions for occupations that are organised hierarchically in groups and was developed within the Department of Labour (DoL) to support national skills planning. In the early 2000s, the DoL was experiencing difficulties with matching employer requirements for skills with graduates trained in educational institutions. There are several reasons found in academic literature for this perceived skills mismatch (Allais & Nathan, 2014; Streeck, 2012; Winch, 2011).

For the DHET, the OFO was a common language that would allow all actors (educators, employers, trade unions and professional bodies) to discuss requirements

for training programmes (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). During the same period, a significant policy reform within the National Qualification Framework (NQF) saw the addition of sub-frameworks to provide more relevant quality assurance to parts of the education and training system (Minister of Education and Minister of Labour, 2007; National Qualifications Act, 2008 (Act No 67 of 2008); Occupational Qualifications Sub- Framework Policy, 2014). The Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework, which is overseen by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), introduced a new type of qualification into the system Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework Policy, 2014). While not explicitly legislated, the OFO occupational definitions were to be used by the QCTO for the creation of new occupational qualifications to prepare learners for the workplace (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The DHET described the OFO as a bottom-up approach which means:

- analysing jobs and identifying similarities in terms of tasks and skills;
- categorising similar jobs into occupations; and
- classifying these occupations into occupational groups at increasing levels of generality. (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2017).

The OFO designates skills levels relative to the NQF and uses the four ISCO-08 skill levels to define occupational skills levels relative to the NQF. Skill level 1 on ISCO includes NQF levels 1 and 2, skill level 2 links to NQF levels 3-5, and skill levels 3 and 4 to NQF 6-10 (Reddy et al., 2017). Figure 3 indicates the mapping of the skills levels to the OFO major groups.

MAJOR GROUPS	SKILLS LEVEL
1 – Managers, senior officials and legislators	3 + 4
2 – Professionals	4
3 – Technicians and associate professionals	3
4 – Clerks	2
5 – Service and sales workers	
6 – Skilled agricultural, craft and related trade workers	
7 – Plant & machine operators, and assemblers	
8 – Elementary occupations	1
0 – Military occupations	1 + 4

Figure 3: Mapping of the skills levels to the OFO major groups. Adapted from www.ilo.org

Figure 4 below reflects a synchronization of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) Levels, NQF levels, Skills Levels, and OFO Major Groups.

NSDS	NQF LEVEL	OFO SKILL LEVEL	OFO MAJOR GROUPS			
HIGH	7-10	4	2 Professionals			1 Managers
INTERMEDIATE	6	3	3 Technicians and Associate Professionals			
	5	2	4 Clerical Support Workers	5 Service and Sales Workers	6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft & Related Trades Wokers	7 Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers
	4					
ENTRY	3					
	2	1	8 Elementary Occupations			
	1					

Figure 4: Synchronization of the NSDS Levels, NQF levels, Skills Levels, and OFO Major Groups.

Source: LGSETA Skills Development Handbook

Allais et al. (2014:13) argue that the classification of occupations is not a straightforward or simple matter, as it depends on interests and perspectives; divisions of labor within and across occupations are not just technical but also reflect power relations. They argue further that the notion of occupation varies in different languages, countries, and systems. Different traditions of the occupation-based organization of work and of vocational education and training lead to different conceptualizations of occupations, occupational qualifications, and occupational curricula. Further, occupations in real work contexts are multidimensional, while classifications systems are not, and attempts to integrate the multidimensional structure in one hierarchical structure causes confusion.

Malhotra and Krosnick (2007) argue that the primary goal in the development and maintenance of an occupational classification system in the US is to encompass the totality of the work being done in the US and which is also flexible to be useful to a diverse group of agencies. In the US for example, the 1998 Standard Occupational

Classification System (SOC) is a four-tiered structure that includes 23 major occupational groups; within them, in a hierarchical arrangement, are 98 minor groups, 452 broad occupations, and 822 detailed occupations.

The OFO in South Africa comprises six levels consisting of 8 major groups, 39 sub-major groups, 125 minor groups, 440 unit groups, 1448 occupations and 5678 alternatives/specialisation. It is clear that the OFO with its many specialisations facilitates the development of very specific jobs at this level. Based on Skill Level and Skill Specialisation, occupations are divided into Major (one digit), Sub-Major (two digits), Minor (three digits), and Unit (four digits) groupings. Occupations (six digits) are subdivisions of the unit groups and are further detailed through Specialisations and alternative Occupation Titles.

The following divisions are applied in the financial sector. These divisions underpin the analyses of this research report.

Major Groups (1 digit) – e.g. Major Group 2. Professionals) – are:

- The broadest level of the classification, and
- Distinguished from each other on the basis of skill level and the broadest concept of Skill Specialisation.

Sub-Major Groups (2 digits) – e.g. 24. Business and Administration Professionals – are:

- Sub-divisions of Major groups, and
- Distinguished from other Sub-Major groups on the basis of broadly stated Skill Specialisation.

Minor Groups (3 digits) – e.g. 241. Finance Professionals – are:

- Sub-divisions of Sub-Major groups, and
- Distinguished from other Minor groups in the same Sub-Major group on the basis of less broadly stated Skill Specialisation.

Unit Groups (4 digits) – e.g. 2411. Accountants – are:

- Sub-divisions of the Minor groups, and
- Distinguished from other unit groups in the same Minor group on the basis of a finer degree of Skill Specialisation.

Occupations (6 digits) – e.g. 241102. Management Accountant – are:

- Sub-divisions of the unit groups,
- Distinguished from other Occupations in the same unit group on the basis of detailed Skill Specialisation, and
- A set of jobs which involve the performance of a common set of Tasks.

Winch (2015:165) argues that many of the problems affecting vocational curriculum design are related to the fact that specific task-related behaviors are specified as learning outcomes and that the focus remains on skill and narrow forms of vocational agency. Allais et al (2014: 7) argue that the standard setting should take place for core qualifications with broad profiles – related to the major (work) tasks and processes of an occupational field and not to specific branch or expertise workplaces and that the implementation of new occupational profiles for every highly specified task is not recommended.

Vorwerk (2014:9) argues that it was not until the OFO was developed and entrenched within the Department of Labour (DoL) (Now the Department of Employment and Labour) and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) systems that occupational qualifications became recognised as a distinct entity. Vorwerk (2014:1) posits that the OFO defines “the world of work” and argues that the use of the OFO must be located in the context of the evolving policy discourse and contending contentions of how to capture the education-work nexus in the later period of the NQF. This mapping of qualifications to the OFO codes in this study is located in the education–work nexus in that, while it is argued that the OFO defines the world of work, it is at the same time used to define the world of study, i.e., qualifications to be offered by educational institutions.

The context of the OFO and its development trajectory is critical to this study. As indicated in Chapter One the OFO has been adopted by the QCTO as an Occupational Qualifications Framework. This means that all occupational qualifications must be mapped against an occupation on the OFO. The aim of this study is to investigate how professional bodies use the OFO as a basis for developing qualifications underpinning the designations they register with SAQA.

2.4 Occupational Qualification Reform

This section commences with a discussion of international occupational reforms and then briefly overviews occupational reforms in South Africa.

In the case of the UK, Keep (2015:120) argues that the main implications for Vocational Qualifications (VQs) were that a new set of separate apprenticeship-specific VQs were to be created, based on new apprenticeship frameworks for each qualification or trade. The new set of qualifications to be developed was in reaction to the findings of the Richard Review of Apprenticeships (2012). Keep indicates that the Richard Review was not enthusiastic about continual assessment of competence in the workplace, and that the new model was intended to focus much more heavily on some form of final assessment, including a practical test, with examiners who were to be neutral parties with no interest in the outcome. Awards were also to be used and graded rather than the simple competent/not fully competent model embodied in the original model of NVQs. The final element in the reform equation was injected by the national qualification regulator, Ofqual, which at the time also announced significant changes in the way that it seeks to regulate the market for qualifications, with a new stress on validity as a means it will deploy to benchmark how fit for purpose any qualification is. Keep (2015:122) argues further that one of the central and long-standing problems with English VQ design has been the general inability to confront and address the tensions that often seem to exist between the 'internal logic' of the neat, technocratic design principles and assumptions that drive the VQ design and the rather different (external) logics generated by how VQs interface with and are used within a complex and messy labour market. Forces within the labour market and recruitment and selection processes are often powerful enough to defeat the good intentions and expectations encoded in the VQ design.

After the implementation of the NQF Act, one of the first attempts at occupational reform in SA was the introduction of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) in 2007 to replace the National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) Programmes. Almost sixteen years later, the NATED programmes are still in place and have higher enrolment figures than the NC(V). Furthermore, the usefulness of the

NC(V) in preparing the learner for the workplace is still in question as it is argued that this is still very much a broad vocational qualification. The current second wave of reform in the South African context seeks to replace the unit standard-based occupational qualifications developed under SAQA with “full” modularised occupational qualifications developed under the auspices of the QCTO. The structure of the QCTO Occupational qualification responds to some of the criticism of the NVQs in that it is based on an apprenticeship framework, consisting of knowledge, practical and workplace components as well as an external integrated summative assessment.

Bauer, Marock and Durango (2015) in their review of the QCTO, reported on how qualifications were identified for development under the QCTO. Based on their findings, they indicated that the OFO was used to identify occupations for the development of qualifications. The QCTO model is based on individual occupations and a policy of ‘one occupation equals one qualification’ was applied (Bauer et al., 2015). There are debates about whether the one qualification per occupation model is satisfactory, with, on the one side, concerns that there would be too many fragmented qualifications and a myriad of extraneous occupations while, on the other side, there were concerns about contextual specializations.

Observations about qualification development in the report mentioned that:

- There is a high acceptance of the principle approach of qualification development which is regarded as demand-driven and work-related. However, the need for different types of qualifications is raised as a possibility that may need to be revisited.
- The direct linkage of developing occupational qualifications to the Organising Framework for Occupations (the one-to-one model) is an obstacle for designing need-based occupations.
- The implications of the funding model (where the development of a qualification is funded by the proposer of the qualification) can result in a Development Quality Partner (DQP) that is not as representative as anticipated. It is considered critical that industry plays a key role, however, in reality many SETAs dominate the development process, which may result in qualifications that are focused on the needs of a single industry rather than the industries that require the qualification. (Bauer et al., 2015).

Individual qualifications are identified for development by relying on the DQP, which the QCTO delegates to, although the QCTO quality assures the process. In their review, Bauer et al. (2015) also reported on a challenge raised by one of the SETAs involved in qualification development regarding how qualifications are identified for development. It is not always clear which qualifications should receive priority for development as demand data was not available from the Department of Labour (Bauer et al., 2015).

This debate is useful to this study, which investigates how the industry perceives the process of qualification reform and development and how professional bodies influence qualification reforms to ensure that occupational qualifications satisfy the requirements for professional registration. The focus will be on the financial Sector.

2.5 Occupational regulation: Professional bodies and sector regulation

Standing (2009:188) argues that occupations have always been subject to regulation, with the state's role varying from minimal to almost complete regulation, and that regulation is complicated because it takes different forms and because there are layers of internal and external regulation. Standing, further explains that some occupations have formed associations to self-regulate their activities while others have persuaded the state to regulate for their benefit. He argues that self-regulation has developed as part of the modern regulatory state and has become a feature of modern capitalism. Standing further indicates that, while full self-regulation exists, in the main this is mixed with statutory regulation citing as an example the survey of the accountancy profession in 38 countries that have members of the International Federation of Accountants and found that 8% were regulated entirely by government, 74% by a combination of government and their professional associations and 18% had complete self-regulation.

This discussion requires going back to the sociology of professions and focuses on the first four central attributes of professionalism brought up by this body of scholarship. The four are (a) expert knowledge, (b) technical autonomy, (c) a

normative orientation toward the service of others, and (d) high status, income, and other rewards (Gorman and Sandeffur: 2011:278). Gorman and Sandeffur argue that the study of professions from a sociological perspective has slowed down, as it is associated with a limited number of traditional occupations and with outdated theoretical frameworks. This study, to some extent, uses the four attributes as they have some overlap with the four discourses presented in the literature review on professions and occupations. With respect to expert knowledge, Gorman and Sandeffur (2011:282) argue that substantial attention has been paid to the question of rationalization and codification of knowledge and its implications for the nature of professional work. Rationalization and codification have implications for expert occupations' ability to maintain control over "their" bodies of knowledge. This statement is a critical element for the study in that it provides the framework for ascertaining how professional bodies codify knowledge in the occupational qualifications developed. Professional associations may also lead efforts to redefine or enlarge the boundaries of their occupation's body of knowledge, as the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) sought to do in the 1990s.

Professional *designations* are different from *qualifications* and are associated with developing the required level of competence to practice independently. Designations are generally conferred by Statutory Councils or Professional Bodies, which have developed assessment processes to ensure that public interests, health, and safety are protected. The assessment and conferment of the designation is outcomes based, and independent of both the type of training received and the route followed to develop competence. Professional qualifications are intended to prepare candidates to meet the requirements for registration in a profession. In terms of SAQA Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part Qualifications on the NQF (SAQA, 2013) a qualification represents a planned combination of learning outcomes, which has the purpose of providing qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning. However, qualifications are interpreted differently depending on the context and, therefore, do not have much meaning in the world. The attainment of a professional or occupational qualification does not in itself automatically lead to a professional designation. However, certain registered qualifications are pre-requisites to practicing certain occupations which are regulated.

Standing (2009:182) further identifies five types of occupational regulation:

1. mandated, in which a collective body is required or designated by the state to formulate and enforce norms, standards and practices within a framework laid out by the state;
2. sanctioned, in which the collective association formulates its own rules, which are then approved by the state;
3. coerced, in which the collective formulates and imposes regulations under threat of statutory regulation;
4. voluntary, where there is no state involvement;
5. quasi-regulation, which refers to situations where indirect, non-coercive pressure leads to self-regulation by several bodies.

In the context of this research, both statutory councils and non-statutory professional bodies award designations. Understanding of how statutory and non-statutory bodies award designations is critical as this research seeks to understand how professional bodies map qualifications to the OFO and the link (if any) that exists between the designation and the OFO.

2.6 Qualifications as Regulatory Instruments

The Cedefop report (2013) argues that there is a need to question the use of qualifications as a means to protect particular interests, creating barriers to innovation and the use of new but relevant knowledge, skills and competencies. Cedefop (2013) indicates that there are different approaches to the governance of qualifications. The set-up and management of qualifications structures in several countries display a clear move towards more use of labour-market-based instruments and higher involvement of private actors such as employer organisations and trade unions while in other countries such as the UK, a business-centred approach, both in terms of instruments and actors involved, is used. Qualifications – at this level – are commonly perceived as an instrument for signaling or translating occupational aspects (skills, competences) into educational actors. In turn, at a micro level, they are supposed to be relevant in signaling educational outcomes to labour market actors i.e.,

qualifications are instrumental in determining the entry and practice within occupations and professions.

Lester (2009), in his study of 23 professional bodies in the UK, found that 21 formally specify an academic requirement of some kind, and all except one require entrants to meet minimum standards of practice, gain a specified period of experience, or both. His study further reveals that the academic requirement most commonly takes the form of a mandatory or recommended first degree and/or postgraduate qualification and, less commonly, a qualification or examination set and validated by the professional body. Of the 21 professions in the study having an academic requirement, 15 use exclusively higher education qualifications, three have compulsory professional examinations, and for the remaining three both exist. A minority allows external diplomas and, to some extent, NVQs to substitute. The research also identified that a common pattern in some professions is to specify two academic requirements, one relating either to general academic ability or to a foundation level, while the other is more explicitly concerned with initial professional development. This is often expressed as a requirement for a first degree or equivalent, sometimes with a conversion course for holders of less relevant degrees or a foundation course as an alternative for non-graduates.

Understanding the mechanisms that professional bodies use to regulate the sectors they are active in is critical to this study. Firstly, it is important to understand how an individual is admitted as a member of a professional body and, secondly, what form of regulation the professional body exercises over the individual. Understanding the various forms of regulation are critical to identifying the professional body type as categorised by Standing (2008)

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Figure 5 provides the conceptual framework underpinning the research with each of the areas of analysis represented as the vertices of a triangle. These being:

1-Occupational Classification Systems; 2-Occupational Qualifications and

3- Regulation of Occupations. The relationship(s) established between each of these critical research areas are labeled as Context One and Context Two (as was identified in the Introductory Chapter). Context one speaks to the relationship between occupations (occupational classification frameworks) and qualifications, and context two speaks to the relationship between qualifications and occupational regulation of markets.

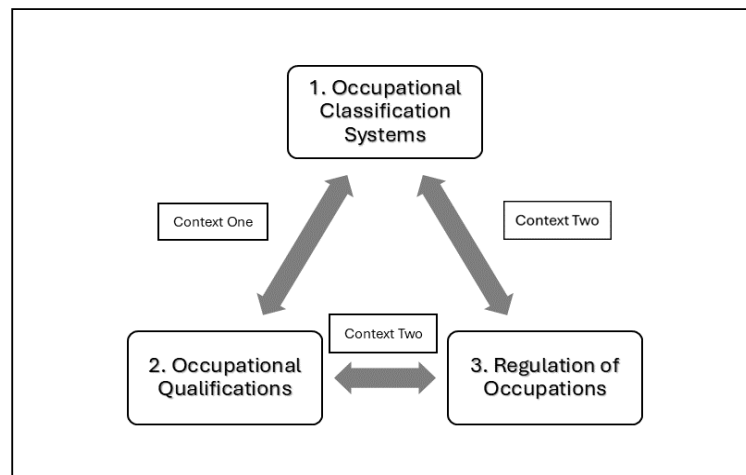


Figure 5: Conceptual framework

Furthermore, the research is framed within five broad categories which have been synthesised from the literature review to answer the research study questions and are linked to the conceptual framework outlined above.

The five broad categories are:

1. The role of professional bodies in the Skills Development Landscape.
2. The role and purpose of Occupational Classification Systems - the purpose of this category was to establish the research participants understanding of occupational classification systems.
3. The relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the development of occupational qualifications- the purpose of this category was to establish how professional bodies use occupational classification systems to develop qualifications.

4. Varieties or different forms of occupational regulations– this category was intended to understand the different forms of regulation prevalent in the financial sector.
5. The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations – this category was intended to establish the relationship between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations.

2.8 Conclusion

In this literature review chapter, I have sought to provide an overview of the literature applicable to the various components relating to the study. This chapter provided an overview of the different theoretical discourses on professions and occupations. This is fundamental to the study as the study is located within the professional bodies operating in the occupational space. It was also important to understand the distinctions between professions and occupations. This research report adopts the position that both are similar social forms that share many common characteristics. For this reason, the two terms will be used interchangeably in the report.

The history pertaining to how and why the OFO was developed was also discussed. The OFO serves many purposes in the South African context including being adopted as an Occupational Qualification System by the QCTO. As such this is a critical tool for the identification of occupations as well as for the development of occupational qualifications. This section also provided a description of ISCO and the OFO to highlight their impact on qualifications and regulation (with respect to Major, Sub-Major, Minor, and Unit groupings).

The discussion on Occupational qualifications reform highlighted the challenges associated with qualification design to meet the demands of the country. In this regard, reference was made to some of the qualification reform undertaken in the United Kingdom as well as locally. From the literature, it seems as though the Occupational qualification design (knowledge, practical, and workplace components) adopted in South Africa is in line with international practice.

The review of professional bodies and sector regulation is critical to this study. The professional bodies sampled in this study are non-statutory, so it is important to understand how they regulate (or attempt) to regulate the sector. The five categories identified by Standing(2009) will be used to locate these professional bodies within the appropriate category which will provide a better understanding of how these bodies regulate the market.

The literature review presented indicated how professional bodies use qualifications as regulatory instruments. The literature presented will provide the basis against which the findings will be mapped to determine whether the assumptions (viz. that qualifications are commonly seen as one of the core instruments for governing and regulating the labour market and that, by being linked to access to occupations and professions, qualifications define what a person needs to know and be able to do to carry out a certain activity) of the Cedefop report articulated in chapter one of this research report holds true in the South African context.

Hordern (2014:163) argues that:

pathways and processes of professional formation are influenced by relations between professional associations, educational institutions and employing organisations, by notions of professional knowledge, and the organisation of professional work.

From the literature, it is clear that there is no significant difference between an occupation and a profession, but it is important to be able to assess and evaluate the normative and ideological control mechanisms exercised by different occupational groups to elevate occupations to professions in order to exercise control and regulation of these occupations. The literature also indicates how instruments such as occupational classification systems are used to influence the development of qualifications to respond to the needs of occupational groups (or professions). The literature review contributed to the development of the conceptual elements framing the research.

CHAPTER 3 Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design used for this study. I describe the research design, the research approach, the rationale for selecting the sample and target group, the data collection and analysis process, the study's limitations, the ethical considerations, and a reflection on the researcher's role in the study.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is an adaptation of the qualitative process outlined by Collins and

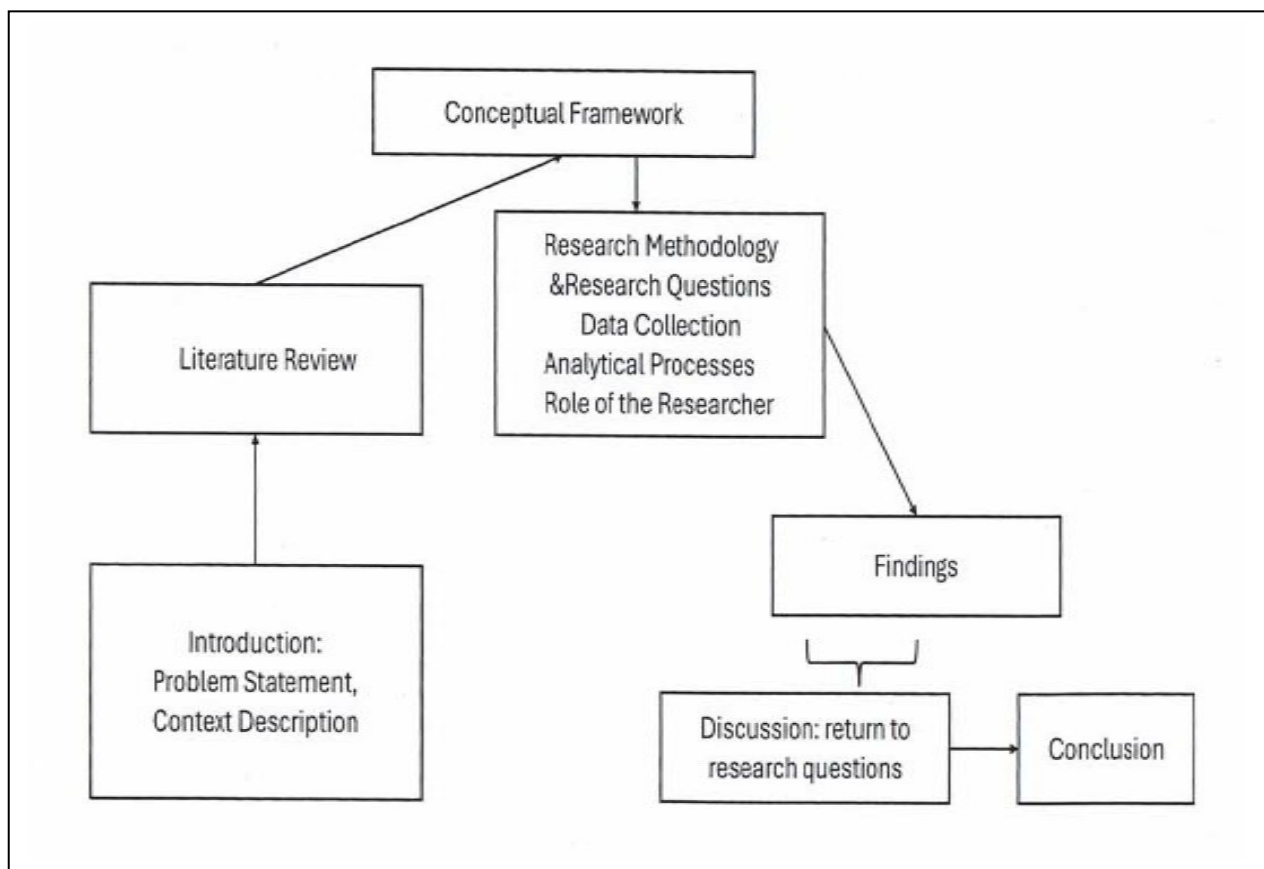


Fig 6: Research Design

Stockton (2018) in their article “The Central Role of Theory In Qualitative Research”. The adaptation was necessary as no theoretical framework was identified within which

to locate this research. The research is located in the conceptual framework (Figure 5 in section 2.5 of this research report). Collins and Stockton (2018:6) make reference to the “Confounded Conceptual Framework”. They cite Maxwell’s (2013) articulation that “the conceptual framework includes the systems of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that support and inform research”. They argue that Maxwell further confounds, or even conflates, the terms conceptual and theoretical by saying, “I use the term in a broader sense, to refer to the actual ideas and beliefs that you hold about the phenomena studies, whether these are written down or not; this may also be called the ‘theoretical framework’ or ‘idea context’ for the study”. Maxwell’s description of the conceptual framework influenced the conceptual framework designed in section 2.5. The conceptual framework was constructed from the “contexts” as outlined in chapter one and supplemented by the relevant systems of concepts from the literature review in chapter two. This design also assists by allowing me, as the researcher, to bring my ideas, experience, and insight to bear on the phenomenon being researched.

3.3 Primary focus of the research and research questions

The primary focus of the research was to obtain an understanding of how professional bodies in the financial sector use the OFO to develop occupational qualifications against which they could register professional designations with SAQA. By mapping the relationship between Occupational Qualifications and Occupational Regulations, this research explores the role of professional bodies in the skills development ecosystem by focusing on the relationship between occupational qualifications and their use in regulating occupations by professional bodies in the finance sector.

The main research question is:

In what ways do professional bodies use the OFO (as a Qualification Classification System) and occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

Sub-questions:

1. In what ways do professional bodies use the OFO to motivate for the development of occupational qualifications?

2. In what ways do professional bodies use occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

3.4 Research Approach

The research is confined to the financial sector, hence the case study research method was selected. The research attempts to determine how the different professional bodies in the finance sector utilise the Organising Framework for Occupations to influence the development of occupational qualifications and how these occupational qualifications are used in the awarding of professional designations. Four in-depth informative interviews were conducted with professional bodies operating in the financial sector. Using the case study method produces “detailed, specific accounts of particular circumstances rather than broad, generalizable findings” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 345). Carter (2020:1) indicates that “case study is a common approach in qualitative research as it offers methodological flexibility allowing for the utilisation of different paradigmatic positions and further it offers research design and methods flexibility”.

The research is located in both the Interpretivists and Phenomenological paradigms, as it relies on qualitative data to respond to the “how” question of the phenomenon being researched. Within the interpretivism paradigm, the researcher holds that there are multiple socially constructed realities, and that truth is context-dependent. On the other hand, Interpretivists hold the view that values are an integral part of social life and that no group’s values are wrong but only different (Wagner et al., 2012). The interpretivists mainly use qualitative research methodologies to gather their data and argue that generalizations which are time and context free are neither possible nor desirable (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The focus of the interpretative researcher is on gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied and generating ‘detailed, rich and thick descriptions’ (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 14) of what is being studied.

3.5 Research Sample

The sample for this research was identified through “purposeful” sampling. In this study, I selected four professional bodies operating in the financial sector. The criteria for selecting these professional bodies was primarily due to the fact that they are recognised by SAQA as professional bodies and have registered designations with SAQA. Furthermore, these professional bodies were previously granted ETQA status by SAQA and which have also been delegated as Quality Assurance Partners by the QCTO.

I wrote to the Chief Executive Officers (Heads) of all four professional bodies requesting permission to conduct the research. All confirmed participation. I then agreed on dates for the interviews, which were conducted at the premises of each professional body.

For two of the professional bodies, one respondent each were interviewed. For the other two professional bodies there were two respondents each. In the instances where there were two respondents, they were interviewed simultaneously. With the benefit of hindsight, they should have been interviewed separately. This would have provided the researcher with the opportunity to contrast the views of respondents from the same professional body. On the other hand, however, there was much more of an interactive discussion where the two respondents were interviewed simultaneously. It must also be indicated that one of the professional bodies linked to an international body sponsored one respondent from the local office (South Africa)_ and one from the international office (UK). The respondent from the international office joined the interview session virtually (Teams)

Codes A to D were used for the professional bodies for confidentiality purposes.

- The interviewee from professional body A is coded as respondent A
- The interviewees from professional body B are coded as respondents B1 and B2
- The interviewee from professional body C is coded as respondent C

- The interviewees from professional body D are coded as respondents D1 and D2

3.6 Data collection methods

In this phase, data was collected through the use of four semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire was used to guide the interviews. This is a qualitative research method that combines a pre-determined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or further responses. The original intention was to use two different questionnaires as interview tools. The first interview questionnaire (Annexure 1) was intended for professional bodies involved as Development Quality Partners (DQPs), and the second interview questionnaire (Annexure 2) was directed at professional bodies that have been granted Quality Partner (QP) status by the QCTO. When this research was conceptualised, this distinction was critical as the responsibility of development quality partners was limited to qualification development alone while quality partners were “delegated” the eight quality assurance functions and were therefore able to exercise much more regulation over the spaces they occupy in the financial sector. Each interview questionnaire contained eleven (11) questions with seven (7) similar questions. However, both questionnaires were used simultaneously during the interviews as the selected professional bodies fulfilled both roles, i.e., as a quality partner and development quality partner.

The interviews were audio-taped with consent. The recordings for the interviews indicate the following times for each interview.

Professional Body A – 46 minutes
Professional Body B – 63 minutes
Professional Body C – 32 minutes
Professional Body D – 71 minutes

The length of the interviews is indicative of the depth of the discussions, especially with Professional Bodies A, B, and D. The audio recordings were then transcribed.

To aid in the data collection and analysis, the questionnaires were mapped against the five broad categories synthesised from the literature review to answer the research study questions.

The five broad categories are:

1. The role of professional bodies in the Skills Development Landscape.
2. The role and purpose of Occupational Classification Systems
3. The relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the development of occupational qualifications
4. Varieties or different forms of occupational regulations
5. The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations.

The questions which were not the same in questionnaires One and Two were differentiated by an (a) in questionnaire one and (b) in questionnaire two. The table below indicates the mapping of the eleven (11) interview questions against the five broad categories. As an example question 5a (To what extent did the professional designation registered by your organisation influence the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification developed) found in the first questionnaire (Annexure 1) was intended for professional bodies involved as Development Quality Partners (DQPs), and question 5b (To what extent does the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification link with the professional designation registered by your organisation) was in the second questionnaire (Annexure 2) which was directed at professional bodies that had been granted Quality Partner (QP) status by the QCTO. In the first instance, I was probing how the designation influences the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification, whereas in the second, I was probing how the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification linked to the designation.

Table 1 maps the interview questions against the broad categories which emerged from the literature review.

Broad Categories	Questionnaire 1	Questionnaire 2
1. The Role of Professional Bodies in the Skills Development Landscape.	Question 1	Question 1
2. The role and purpose of Occupational Classification Systems	Questions 2 and 11	Questions 2 and 11
3. The relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the development of Occupational Qualifications	Question 3	Question 3
4. Varieties or different forms of Occupational Regulation	Questions 4,8a,9 and 10	Questions 4,8b,9 and 10
5. The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations.	Questions 5a,6a,7a,9,	Questions 5b,6b,7b,9,

Table 1. Mapping of Interview Questions to Broad Categories

With hindsight, it must be stated that the interview questionnaires could have been better constructed. The fact that semi-structured interviews were used mitigated some of the challenges. One such mitigation strategy was to probe participant responses to elicit information to either confirm or negate my perceptions of how professional bodies were using the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) and occupational qualifications as a “means to an end” and to establish what the end is.

In chapter one, I indicated that the original case study methodology was supplemented to some extent with elements of an autoethnographic study, viz., personal narrative and reflective purpose (du Preez, 2008). In the research, I have depended to some extent on reflective practice by virtue of being “located in the research” and having a relatively vast knowledge base and understanding of the phenomenon being researched. The reflective practice was used in probing responses made by the respondents, which resulted in additional data being elicited, which then became part of the data which was analysed. In doing so, I was guided by the five criteria for evaluating ethnography (of which autoethnography is a variant): does the work make a substantive contribution to our understanding of social life; does it possess aesthetic merit; does it exemplify reflexivity, impact on the reader, and articulate an expression of reality? (Richardson, 2000 in du Preez, 2008:517).

3.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of the transcripts was conducted inductively, which means that it was “moving from specific data to general categories and patterns” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:367) and identifying and making explicit any specifically contextual dependencies that might be inherent to the specific case studies. Indicative categories were derived from the literature and then refined into codes based on the emerging trends in the data. The codes were then grouped to generate themes emerging within the five broad categories.

Grounded theory relying on thematic analysis was used as the primary tool to analyse the data. This refers to an inductive method of developing a theory grounded in data. Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012) in (Chapman, Hadfield & Chapman, 2015) describe four basic steps in undertaking thematic analysis:

1. Familiarisation with, and organisation of transcripts.
2. Identification of possible themes
3. Review and analysis of themes to identify structures
4. Construction of theoretical model

Chapman, Hadfield & Chapman (2015), in their article “Qualitative Research in Healthcare: an introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis,” provides guidance on the four steps indicated above. Chapman et al., (2015:203) indicate that “In the first stage, the researcher becomes ‘immersed’ in the raw data through reading and re-reading interview transcripts, cross-referencing, and making notes of ideas.” This means that the researcher has to work inductively, i.e., drawing from the data, attempting to avoid overlaying their own professional judgments and viewpoints onto those of the participants. Data is then organised into a series of ‘codes’ which are short statements that capture the meaning of the phrase and can be used to index the data and group together phrases with similar ideas or meanings.

Chapman et al. (2015:202) argue that the “second stage of coding is critically important to the whole analysis since codes form the building blocks for the further analysis.” Because of the subjectivity of this process, the validity of the coding has to be guarded by minimising researcher bias. The codes are combined and contrasted to develop themes or categories that group similar codes together, thereby generating a network of associations.

In the third stage, the themes are then reviewed to ensure that they encompass all the codes derived from the data, and whether they can be combined or subdivided into further themes.

In the final stage of analysis, themes emerging from the coded data are used to build a theoretical model. In this research, the themes were utilised to respond to the provide responses to the research questions and not necessarily to construct a theoretical model

Analytical Framework

Firstly, five broad categories were captured (Column 1). The identified research questions are recorded in Column 2. The main quotes, statements, and extracts from the transcripts were captured in Column 3. The codes are captured in Column 4. Coding is critically important to the analysis since codes form the building blocks for further analysis. The codes were then combined and contrasted to develop themes or categories that group similar codes together, thereby generating a network of associations (Column 5). The broad categories and research questions are as captured in Table 1. Table 2 below provides an example of how the analysis was conducted.

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>	<u>Column 5</u>
BROAD CATEGORIES	RESEARCH QUESTION RELATING TO BROAD CATEGORY	QUOTES/EXCERPTS OR EXTRACTS FROM THE DATA	CODES	THEMES
1.The role of the professional body in the Skills Development Landscape	1. How do you see your role as a professional body in the skills development landscape to be?	A: So I think our role is threefold. First of all, it is going to be around the advocacy for the professional qualification. I think it's also around the influence in terms of embedding the professional qualification and its linkage with the skills required in the Accounting and Finance Professional sector and I think the third thing is to show that the qualification links to capability building. So I think those are the three prongs that we actually see our role as in terms of what we are adding	Qualification vs. Designation	Conflating/confusion between the Occupational Qualification and Designation. Stems from previous ETQA status and perpetuated through QCTO DQP and AQP model.

		to the skills development landscape. I: What do you mean when you say a professional qualification? A: let me rather use the term professional designation.		
		BN: But you see you can't, you don't decouple it because you need the qualification under it so when we, so when you registered as a professional body with SAQA you have an underlying qualification and SAQA actually asks you how are you going to quality assure that qualification because it's a king pin for designation.	Qualification vs Designation, Quality Assurance responsibility	

Table 2: Analytical framework with an example

Limitations of inductive analysis

Chapman et al. (2015:204) note that:

a key criticism is that truly inductive analysis is not possible and is always limited by the unconscious application of prior knowledge to the thematic analysis process – either from the researcher's own experience or from the reading of the literature. Pre-existing theories and knowledge can therefore over-influence interview outlines, resulting in topics that 'generate' themes rather than letting them emerge, or can affect the choice of themes being formulated from codes.

Therefore, the researcher must develop a critical subjective awareness to maximise reliability and illuminate the analysis process's inherent reflexivity. Considering the aforesaid, the analytical framework of this study is found in Table 2 and was developed to incorporate the key elements of the research.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, 292), there are “three main areas of ethical concern” that impact interviews, namely, “informed consent, confidentiality, and the consequences of the interviews”. In this regard, written informed consent was obtained from the professional body participants. Interview schedules were forwarded

concurrently with the requests for participation to ensure transparency. While complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the nature of the research, pseudonyms are used to assure anonymity.

The necessary ethical clearance was obtained prior to the research being initiated. Ethics approval number 2017ECE016M.

Before agreeing to participate in the study, the participants were informed about confidentiality and that they would not be referred to by name to secure their anonymity. The participants are referred to using pseudonyms such as Professional Body A and Respondent A1. Participants were informed that even though pseudonyms would be used, the identity of the professional body could not be guaranteed, as any reader of the report with insight into the professional bodies would be in a position to identify the professional body.

It was also indicated that all recordings and transcripts would be safely secured to maintain the confidentiality of participants' responses. Participants provided their written consent to participate in the interviews and agreed to have them recorded and transcribed.

All documents, recordings and transcripts have been recorded and stored securely for the stipulated period of five years.

Another critical ethical issue taken into consideration is the fact that the researcher is an employee of the QCTO and thus is part of the system involved in the quality assurance of occupational qualifications, which includes aspects of qualification development as well as external integrated summative assessment. Due consideration was also given to the existing power and collegial relations between the researcher and the participants, as the occupational learning space is small and practitioners are generally familiar with each other.

This was moderated by awareness, reflexivity and professionalism on the part of the researcher whose primary interest is the understanding of the link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulation. Such understanding may ultimately contribute to a policy that will benefit the system, including the learner wanting to achieve a professional designation.

3.9 Role of the Researcher in the Research

As pointed out above, the researcher is a 'participant observer' because he is an insider in the context of the quality assurance and certification of occupational learning. As a QCTO employee, the researcher has access to 'inside information' and has established networks in the areas being researched. Due to this insider status, appropriate reflexivity in terms of conscious intention to "minimize predispositions" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.333) was employed to ensure that the research remains as objective as possible.

CHAPTER 4: Research Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises five sections. The sections align with the five broad categories synthesised from the literature review and the research questions. Each section is linked to the conceptual framework to structure the findings, with the conceptual framework framing the research. The conceptual framework is reproduced here for ease of reference.

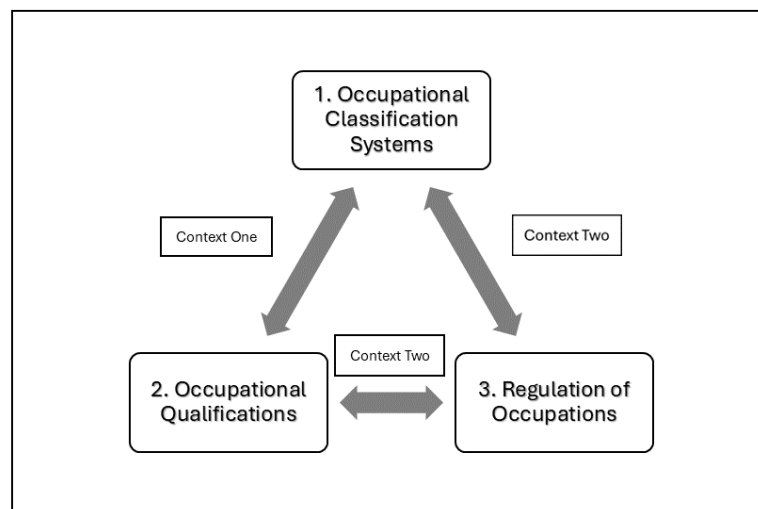


Figure 5. Conceptual framework

The first section pertains to how the professional bodies see their roles in the Skills Development landscape. Section two presents the findings related to understanding the role and purpose of Qualification Classification Systems (vertice 1). Section three unpacks the relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the development of Occupational Qualifications (vertice 2 and context 1 - which is the mapping of occupations to qualifications). Section four covers the broad category of the varieties or different forms of occupational regulation (vertice 3). Finally, section five explores the link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations (context 2 - which argues that qualifications are commonly seen as one of the core instruments for governing and regulating the labour market). These findings will then be summarised to answer the main research question and the two sub-questions.

4.2. Section One: The role of Professional Bodies in the Skills Development landscape

As indicated previously, this was just meant to serve as an introductory aspect for the interviews. The information, however, was quite insightful, and hence, it has been included in the findings section.

a. Regulatory role over Professions

One of the recurring themes across all the professional bodies is the argument that their primary role is to regulate the profession or occupation, despite the fact that none of the bodies in the sample are regulated under any legislation in the country.

Respondent D1 articulated their role as follows:

For us it's about them then becoming members of a professional body and at that point they then become, they have to adhere to rules of membership and we will regulate those members to ensure that they are complying with those rules and that's to protect the public because they're offering accountancy services

Respondent A articulates the role of professional bodies as:

....we are also responsible for the quality assurance of the designation.

The views expressed by the respondents resonate with the argument made in the Cedefop Report (2013) that while various reasons are given for the governance of occupations and professions, they are also used to defend the interests of the particular occupational or professional group. The responses above cite “protection of the public” and “quality assurance of the designation” to justify their roles as professional bodies.

The responses indicate the conflation of qualifications and designations by some professional bodies. The respondents make reference to qualifications as (professional body A qualification, etc.) as well as referring to the designation as a

qualification. I draw on the existing policy to amplify the confusion that exists between qualifications and designations. In South Africa we have two categories of professional bodies. The one category is those classified as statutory or regularity bodies and derive their status from legislation pertaining to the profession or occupation. The second category, often referred to as “voluntary associations,” is where a community of experts formally establishes an association and then applies to SAQA for recognition as a professional body. In both instances, the professional body registers a professional designation(s) with SAQA, which the bodies award to qualifying individuals. The bodies surveyed in this study all fall into the category of voluntary bodies. Based on my work in the sector, I find that these bodies derive their mandates from the fact that they “confer” designations to qualifying candidates. Furthermore, under the SAQA Act (Act No.58 of 1995), these professional bodies were granted Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) status, which delegated quality assurance functions to these bodies, so they exercised full control over the qualifications leading to the awarding of the designation. The SAQA Act was repealed through the promulgation of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), but the ETQA regulations issued under the SAQA Act continue until they are formally repealed. More recently these bodies were delegated Development Quality Partners (DQP) and Assessment Quality Partner (AQP) status by the QCTO. The DQP and AQP roles were assigned to the professional Bodies to reflect the QCTO model at the time viz. that the roles of qualifications development and quality assurance were delegated to SETAs and professional bodies as the QCTO was not adequately resourced to undertake its envisaged mandate as per the Skill Development Act (Act 97 of 1998).

The findings indicate the delegations regarding qualifications development and the quality assurance of assessments are conflated with the professional bodies' responsibilities with respect to the designation they award.

The conflation referred to above is evidenced by the comment made by respondent B2:

Well, at the moment and I know that the landscape of the QCTO will change, may change what the current position is but the current position is that those are still (professional body B) qualifications and we accredit providers to offer

the qualification as such.....you don't decouple it because you need the qualification under it so ...so when you registered as a professional body with SAQA and you have an underlying qualification and SAQA assesses how are you going to quality assure that qualification because it's a kingpin for designation..

The above statement clearly indicates that the professional body views its role as awarding the designation and conducting quality assurance and regulatory roles over the qualification itself. This view may be symptomatic of the professional body wanting to retain control of the qualifications or ignorance of the fact that the occupational qualifications are national qualifications registered on the NQF and, therefore, could be offered by any provider accredited by the QCTO.

b. Market regulation and public confidence

The second theme that emerged is the argument that professional bodies exist to provide surety to the public. This is achieved by holding members accountable to uphold the code of conduct and ethics as prescribed by the professional body. This is captured in the following response made by D2:

For us its about them becoming members of a professional body and at that point they have to adhere to rules of membership and we will regulate those members to ensure that they are complying with those rules. That's to protect the public because they're offering accountancy services so some countries will choose to regulate accountancy, the law of accountants so that members of the public are protected. However, in other countries it's the public or it is market regulation and we, the public, can choose to get their services for somebody that is a member of a professional body that they know and trust and then they know they are able to trust the person providing those accountancy services.

A careful analysis of the above comment indicates that the respondent is aware of the various arguments made by professional bodies to justify their existence. The respondent introduces the concept of “membership” to regulate practitioners' conduct but also understands that, in some cases, the profession is regulated by the market.

The respondent argues that “membership” provides recourse to the public in the event that the service offered by the practitioner is not of the required standard. This is evident in the following response by D2:

They have an opportunity of recourse if they are unhappy with those services that they were offered or the member was found to act in a nonprofessional or non-ethical manner and they can then come to us and complain about that member and we will discipline these members. So, regulator can mean different things but for the education world, we're not a regulator. We are a regulator for members, for accountancy members but not a regulator in terms of education, we look to the education regulators to provide that service of external regulation of our qualifications.

The comprehensive response from D2 is critical because it clearly articulates what, in the respondent's view, constitutes the role of the professional body. The response also makes the distinction that in some countries, the accountancy profession is regulated (although the respondent does not describe the mechanisms used), while in other countries, it is market-regulated. This is consistent with the view expressed by McClelland's (1990:107) categorisation of professionalisation “from within” (successful manipulation of the market by the group). This view links back to context two captured in the introduction chapter of this research. The Cedefop (2013) report indicates that while professional bodies justify their existence by citing consumer protection and quality assurance, they might also be used to defend the private interests of particular professional and occupational groups.

Respondent D2 was the only respondent who distinguished between regulating the profession and regulating the qualification. This could be attributed to the fact that this professional body has no specific qualification underpinning its designation. From the interview, it was indicated that to achieve the designation, the professional body requires that the candidate pass a certain number of board examinations set by the professional body, and the candidate may obtain exemptions from certain examinations based on the qualifications held by the candidate.

These findings link back to context two captured in the introduction of this research. The Cedefop (2013) report indicates that while professional bodies justify their existence by citing consumer protection and quality assurance, they might also be used to defend the private interests of particular professional and occupational groups.

c. Linking all the elements of the skills development landscape

The third major theme is that the professional bodies see themselves as linking all the elements of the skills development process. Whilst I do not agree with all the aspects contained in the following response, I consider this a critical finding in that professional bodies can locate themselves in the entire skills development value chain. This is succinctly captured in the in the response B2:

I think professional bodies are firstly custodians of the entire pipeline from qualifications to membership and beyond so that's quite critical. They link together all the elements of a skills development process from a school leaver into an institution into a practical workplace and then into membership. When I say beyond, it continues with CPD's and lifelong learning. So, they pull all those strings together if you like. Then the professional bodies provide the tools that develop skills in the country so they will have various access routes, they will look at opening up new routes, they accredit institutions public and private so they facilitate quality education, they do bridging support for learners, there are learnerships, internships etc. Those translate into benefits for employers so it facilitates workplace learning and so on, so I think the role of professional bodies is quite critical.

This means that professional bodies view themselves as critical in providing input into the curriculum as well as being responsible for accrediting qualifications and providers to offer the qualification. The response also suggests that the professional body develops the skills required by the country and ensures the “continuous professional development” of practitioners.

Although the statement by respondent B above may sound “over-reaching,” I believe it captures the salient components of a skills development value chain, which, if properly coordinated, could lead to the development of a well-coordinated and responsive skills development eco-system. The key components include developing industry standards that feed into qualification development, continuous professional development to ensure ongoing relevance, market regulation, membership, professionalism and ethics. This view has been articulated across all the bodies surveyed although described in different ways.

Respondent C responds as follows:

as a NQF partner we see our role as a professional body not only in terms of the profession itself in terms of progressing (occupation) but also with regard to the occupational qualifications, with regard to the designations, which in terms of ensuring our members, our stakeholders are informed of the importance of occupational qualifications the importance of professional designations, the importance of professional bodies in the South African landscape.

Respondent A references evolving occupations and the need to develop workers' workforce capability to meet changes in jobs of the future. The comments by respondent C and respondent A demonstrate that they understand the challenges in the skills development landscape and are also seeking ways to remain relevant. Interestingly, professional body C is eager to comply with QCTO policies to remain relevant, while professional body A constantly stresses the role of the professional body in improving the skills development landscape.

d. Summary of Section One

One of the key findings in this section is that the professional bodies surveyed fall into the category of “quasi-regulation”, which refers to situations where indirect, non-coercive pressure leads to self-regulation by several bodies” (Standing, 2009). The second finding is also that professional bodies are finding it difficult to relinquish the education and training quality assurance functions that were previously delegated to them by SAQA and which now reside with the QCTO or SETA's. It is my contention

that professional bodies can play a critical role in the skills development value chain. This is unpacked further in chapter five.

4.3. Section Two: The role and purpose of Qualification Classification Systems.

This section sought to ascertain and test the participants' understanding and purpose of the OFO, i.e., how in what ways the OFO is used to develop occupational qualifications and whether the OFO provides a good enough classification system for the mapping of professional designations. The findings indicate that the different professional bodies interpret the OFO differently. The interesting finding is the view that the OFO is a tool for skills anticipation. From my experience it is more a case of the OFO being manipulated to accommodate identified "jobs" rather than occupations. It is clear that the OFO is being used as a mechanism to add jobs and occupations for which qualifications will then have to be developed. It, thus, in the main, is a "means to an end" for these professional bodies.

a. OFO as a tool for Skills Classification vs a framework for occupational qualifications

Two interviewees identified the OFO as a tool for skills classification and skills anticipation. Participant A explained it as follows:

I think it would be classified as skills required in a particular sector, I would also think it would be undertaking the kind of research to understand what are the sectoral skills deficit. I also think it will be looking at having a future focused orientation where it would be looking at what are the competencies, what are the occupations, evolving occupations and what do we need to do to develop and get our workforce's capability ready to meet the future orientation.

Participant C amplified this by identifying the OFO as an instrument for planning and implementation for skills development in the country for all stakeholders:

It is to organize the different occupations within the South African landscape in our economy. It should be a guiding document for all stakeholders of the framework in terms of employers, professional bodies, higher education institutions, the relevant government departments in terms of both planning and implementation for skills development in South Africa

Respondent B1 argues as follows:

so because these are occupational directed qualifications, you actually need a framework that arranges them in a way that makes sense to the labour market okay? So in my understanding that is what the OFO is designed to do okay? Whether it does that in a way that's user friendly is still a question for me.

This is a critical finding as it is indicative of the participant's understanding of the “tension” between the OFO as an instrument to record occupations (or combination of jobs) versus being a qualifications framework as adopted by the QCTO.

b. Applicability of the OFO

All except one of the participants questioned the applicability of the OFO to professions. It is evident that although the bodies sampled operate in the occupational space, they identify themselves to be operating in the professional category. The validity of such a distinction has been argued in chapter two. Evetts (2003) makes the point that it no longer seems important to draw a hard definitional line between professions and other occupations but, instead, to regard both as similar social forms that share many common characteristics. The following extracts indicate that the distinction still persists. Respondent D1 views the OFO as a tool for more regulated occupations such as apprenticeships but not broad enough to cater for professions in the more academic space. Respondent D1 states it as follows:

Yes, the answer to your question is yes, we believe that it is a useful and valuable tool, it provides consistency and from our analysis it's similar to what happens elsewhere because of our global reach, ... but also other markets. However, there is something that we thought we should share with you, we feel

that because it's intended to be all encompassing, maybe it's too broad and maybe it's trying to cover too wide a range, so some of the experience we have is that when you talk about artisan trades in particular there's probably a need for rigidity in the frameworks that supports it. For example, we still have in some markets within the SADC region and elsewhere technician trades being developed through the polytechnics or technikons as in the past in South Africa. We think that is right and proper, however, you start looking at professional body space because of the academic levels and complexity required and we think that there's probably a need to allow an adaptation to market requirements and I contrast these two so that you can see where I'm coming from.

From the above, it seems to suggest that professional bodies see themselves as having to maliciously comply with the OFO in an attempt to find relevance. Professional body D uses multiple higher education qualifications as entry points for candidates applying for the designation hence the need for flexibility. However, the applicability of the OFO to only trades and occupations is a perplexing one as the OFO is meant to serve as the organizing framework for occupations across the NQF and across all levels. The need for greater flexibility is noted and worthy of further interrogation (outside the scope of this research project).

It is my contention that the view expressed above is largely due to the fact that by adopting the OFO as a qualification classification system, the QCTO will only develop a qualification if it is linked to an occupation on the OFO and has been allocated an OFO code. This is not necessarily a requirement in higher education.

This view is also expressed by Respondent A:

...for me my understanding is that occupations, trades and occupations if you were to be an artisan right that's where I look at the OFO.....but professional designations does not necessarily intersect with the trades and occupations, there are differentials

This view is evidence of how complex the system is for professional bodies to navigate to ensure that they maintain control over their sectors. It also alludes to justification by

drawing distinctions between professions and occupations and further distinctions between occupations and trades.

c. Complexity of the OFO

One of the key issues emanating from the interviews revolved around the usefulness of the OFO for stakeholders because of its complexity. Participant B1 describes it as follows:

Okay so because these are occupational directed qualifications, you actually need a framework that arranges them in a way that makes sense to the labour market, okay? So, in my understanding that is what the OFO is designed to do okay? Whether it does that in a way that's user friendly is still a question for me.

I know the OFO because we work with it, and we've searched for things on it, and all of that is okay, but I don't know that the OFO talks clearly to people that don't work in this space. So, for example, an employer should be able to engage with this, and I don't think that you can ask an employer if they even know what the OFO is.

This “complexity” is one of the areas being researched. From my experience and the responses, the relevance and usefulness of the OFO as a framework for developing qualifications is increasingly becoming a concern because it does not adequately respond to labour market demands.

d. The OFO as a classification system for the mapping of professional designations.

The question of whether the OFO presents a good enough classification system for the mapping of occupational/professional designations was questioned eleven (11) of the questionnaire. It was assumed that, by then, the discussion would have evolved to a point where the participants would articulate the applicability of the OFO as an instrument against which to map occupational designations. The findings, however, highlight that the respondents reverted to discussing the distinctions between

professions and occupations as well as the difference between qualifications and designations. All respondents reverted to contextualising their responses to the issue of occupational qualifications rather than occupational designations. It was, therefore, difficult to ascertain the usefulness of the OFO as a classification system for the mapping of professional designations. However, where the question was understood, it was clear that the participant understood the difference between a qualification and a designation.

Participant C comments as follows:

So, for us it works because we are more than happy to link the occupational qualifications and the designations you know so they are lumped together but for other professional bodies where the designations are not linked to the qualifications at all, they are not using the OFO.

The latter part of the response provides some clarity and raises the critical issue that, in some cases, designations are indirectly linked to or have weak links to qualifications registered on the NQF. This could be the consequence of SAQAs criteria for the recognition of a professional body and the registration of designations. The SAQA criteria places more emphasis on the designation proposed and the value proposition attached to it rather than on the underlying qualification.

e. Summary of Section Two

There were mixed responses on the purposes of the OFO. This suggests that there is, at best, a limited understanding of the purposes of the OFO in the professional body space. The OFO is seen as a tool or instrument for the classification of skills or occupations rather than as a qualifications framework. The link between an occupation, the underpinning qualification, and the designation was not made explicit except in the response to professional body C. The comment by respondent D2 is also of significance to the research and aptly describes the prevailing issues being debated regarding whether professional bodies and designations should be part of the NQF. The current NQF Policy (Act 67 of 2008) makes provision for professional bodies.

Section 28 of the Act stipulates that professional bodies must cooperate with the relevant Quality Council regarding qualifications and quality assurance in their occupational field. As indicated in section 1.5 of this research report, Ballim et.al. (2014) argue that there is no regulatory framework to direct the relationship between professional bodies, universities, and the Council for Higher Education. The same applies to the relationship between professional bodies and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.

4.4. Section Three: The relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the Development of Occupational Qualifications

This section responds directly to the usefulness of the OFO as a classification system for developing occupational qualifications. The OFO is represented by vertice one and Occupational qualifications is represented as vertice two as indicated in Figure 5. Furthermore, this section seeks to also test context one as outlined in chapter one of this research report. Context one is the argument that internationally there is substantial interest in mapping qualifications to occupations, or, alternatively mapping occupations to qualifications, and that the appeal of these mapping exercises lies in generating better matching between the supply of skills by education and training institutions and the demand of skills expressed in the labour market (Vorwerk, 2014; Allais et al. 2014).

a. Applicability of the OFO to “professions”

In this section, as found in the other sections, participants are concerned about the differentiation between occupations and professions. Respondents argued that the OFO was applicable to occupations and, in particular, to trades where stringent (state) regulation is required. Professions were seen to be different from occupations, which, according to the respondents, were higher up on the NQF. Whether there is merit in such distinctions between a profession and an occupation was dealt with in-depth in the literature review. Participant A explains:

I think where the problem might be is if the QCTO were to adopt the OFO as a classification system from its prior existence where it actually serviced the occupations but try to make it fit now into occupations as well as professional designations. I don't know if I'm being clear in that, for me my understanding is that trades and occupations would be something like and I'm going to use a practical example to illustrate what I mean. It would be something like if you were to be an artisan right that's where I look at what the OFO might have serviced well but now you're also bringing under the OFO professional designations but professional designations do not necessarily completely intersect with the trade and occupation, there are differences".

This distinction between professions and occupations has been dealt with in the previous sections and, therefore, will not be elaborated on here.

b. Market Segregation

This section highlights segregation within the finance sector. This is achieved through the hierarchical stratification of professions, with the Chartered Accountant being considered the pinnacle qualification, followed by the Management Accountant, then the Certified Accountant, and finally the Bookkeeper. The segregation even goes as far as distinguishing between a Senior Bookkeeper and a Junior Bookkeeper.

Participant B1 states:

Without an intimate understanding of how accounting works as a continuum, the OFO will not be effective. So we always get things like, and it's not just from the profession saying an accountant is an accountant, one big qualification with all its specializations. It doesn't actually work that way so what you have on the OFO now, I believe is an accounting technician instead of collapsing all the roles or jobs into an occupation, it's almost as if we've taken each role and listed it as an occupation on the OFO.

The observation by respondent B1 about collapsing related jobs into a single occupation is a critical one. This is the envisaged model for occupational qualifications being developed by the QCTO. However, the way in which the OFO is currently being utilised is by developing a qualification for each job (although referred to as an occupation on the OFO).

Professional bodies, on the other hand, who are aligning themselves to the QCTO, are beginning to understand how the OFO can be used to develop qualifications to underpin their registered designations. Participant C mentions the importance of the involvement of stakeholders in developing the occupational qualification:

So it was useful in terms of giving us an idea of where the qualifications would need to lay in terms of level. However, when we had actually looked at the OFO at the time we were not even aware where that information had come from because at no point were we involved in informing the OFO and the definitions under (name of designation) and (name of designation) were not necessarily what we would have put down. So, we actually went through a process of changing, we applied for them to be changed and also there were gaps in terms of (name of occupation) where we wanted specializations, so we went through a process with FASSET to register additional occupations on the OFO.

In this instance, the professional body identified gaps in the OFO and registered additional occupations against which to develop qualifications. At this point, it may be important to indicate that the DHET is the custodian of the OFO and, from time to time, amends the OFO. While amending the OFO from time to time is important to provide for new occupations is understandable, it is also open to abuse where occupations are added with the distinct purpose of creating niche occupations for professional bodies.

Professional Body B has a multiplicity of designation qualifications to cater to various sectors to such an extent that even a single occupation was further categorized to serve a particular sector, e.g., Financial technician: Local Government or Financial Technician Public Sector, etc. The explanation by respondent B1 below suggests that after working with the QCTO, the professional body understood the need for the consolidation of qualifications to address the issue of proliferation of qualifications

which resulted from the previous unit standard-based and provider-based qualification model.

Participant B1 explains:

I still believe that within an occupation, you will need a few qualifications. I don't think we need as many as there are now. It requires quite a lot of thinking to figure out what is common across all the qualifications and, because there is a fairly competitive space, you have each of the professional bodies and training providers leaning towards what they do with a qualification because what we've done with our qualifications, the (name of qualification) is we've started collapsing them all (sectors) to generic accounting into a competency framework and we were looking at what is common across the (sectors) and were able to do that because we're not competing with these qualifications. It's in our best interest to do it and we did this with the QCTO in mind so that when we convert, we don't want to be converting nine qualifications or eight qualifications, we want to convert one suite okay.

The abovementioned statement clearly, outlines the QCTO approach to qualifications development. The QCTO is advocating for the development of Occupational Qualifications that are not linked to “jobs” or even to a particular occupation but to “groups” of occupations. This transition from legacy qualifications (based on granular unit standards) to occupational qualifications underpinned by broader underpinning knowledge is being fiercely resisted. I will not elaborate further as this forms part of the rationale for this research.

c. Summary of Section Three

This section clearly indicates that some professional bodies view professions as superior to occupations without being able to provide the characteristic distinctions other than comparing them with artisan trades. They, therefore, hold the view that the OFO is of relevance to the occupations and to more regulated artisan-type training than to professions. On the other hand, one professional body understands the QCTO

approach to qualifications development. The QCTO advocates for the development of occupational qualifications that are not linked to “jobs” or even to a particular occupation but to “groups” of occupations. This transition from the legacy qualifications (based on granular unit standards) to occupational qualifications underpinned by broader disciplinary knowledge is, however, being contested at the same time by other professional bodies.

4.5. Section 4: Varieties or different forms of Occupational Regulations

This section explores the regulation of occupations (represented by vertice 3) in Figure five and attempts to elicit the different forms of regulation in place in the selected sample of professional bodies and the alignment with occupational qualifications. The section also reflects on the role of SAQA and QCTO with regard to professional bodies and, in particular, professional designations.

a. Alignment between Designations and Occupational Qualifications

One of the dominant themes emerging from the findings is the need for occupational qualifications to be more aligned with the requirements of professional designations in order to establish a link between the OFO and the designation.

Participant B1 explains:

The OFO has got (name of occupation) as an occupation and these designations are all (name of occupation) designations. So way back in 2012 or something maybe a bit before that, we registered (name of occupation) on the OFO in order for us to ensure that there was alignment to the OFO, so we didn't have to apply for something

The research reveals that professional bodies, which are extensions of international bodies, find it very difficult to match their designations with existing qualifications linked to the occupations on the OFO. It is also interesting to note that one of these professional bodies asserts that professional qualifications function outside of the

national education system. The response by B1 highlights the conflation raised earlier between the professional designation and the professional qualification (which professional bodies want to quality assure).

In terms of whether or not the OFO provides a good classification system for the development of occupational qualifications, it is clear that there is, in general, not enough awareness of the OFO. The case made by respondent C is a case in point:

I mean the OFO has been updated recently but I mean if we didn't go through the QCTO process, the OFO would not have been something we would have been keeping our eye on, it was not something we thought of. Employers within our sector are not aware of this so even when they are reporting they do not use the OFO codes so I think maybe if people were more aware of it, it would provide more value.

The exception comes from those professional bodies that have engaged the QCTO in developing qualifications to underpin their designations registered with SAQA.

b. Methods for awarding the designation

In general, it was found that a designation was awarded upon meeting a set of requirements. Although there was some variation between the surveyed bodies, the designation is awarded based on the candidate passing the professional body examinations, which can only be taken after gaining the specified number of years of experience and attaining the relevant qualification.

The question of whether any form of RPL is used in the awarding of designations raised some interesting findings. Granting designations through RPL includes the recognition of qualifications, qualifications, and experience, and/or passing exams on professionalism and ethics.

Professional bodies A and D grant professional designations based on the candidate passing a given number of board examinations. Depending on the qualification and

experience of the candidate, exemption is granted to a candidate for the applicable number of Board examinations. The candidate has then to take the remaining board exams in order to be awarded the designations. Thus, in the sample chosen, there is no one-to-one correlation between a qualification and a designation. Instead, the candidate can follow various routes to achieve a designation. Participant A states:

Rather than a board exam, I'd rather call it our integrated exam. So just to answer your question, in terms of the RPL process and/or prior qualifications, what we would provide are what we call exemptions which if I may equate it to an academic perspective is credits because you've covered the content and the learning outcomes in another form or course of studying. So, once we provide the exemption, it signals to the candidate where your gaps are still and then you would continue with our designation in order to fill in the gaps".

Professional body D (which awards an international designation) goes as far as indicating that due to industry pressure, a candidate with a two-year NQF level 7 qualification needs four years of work experience before being admitted to the board examinations, whereas candidates with an NQF level 8 and above qualification would require two years experience.

c. Significance of a professional designation in the Skills Arena

Overall, professional bodies highlight the significance of a professional designation in the skills arena as a "signal" to the market that the practitioner, having been awarded the designation, possesses the required competencies and professionalism required by the industry and which must be upheld by the practitioner holding such designation. Participant A explains:

I think the (professional body) designation holds immense influence in the industry in so far as how the industry recognizes the individual with the designation. I think that the industry takes confidence that this is a highly professionalised person, this person is subject to adhering to the code of conduct that (professional body) stands for ...

Participant B2 mentions:

In the accounting profession and you've chosen this angle specifically. In the accounting profession, without a designation, your qualification is just generic. Until the profession knows that you are moving into a designation space, your ability to find employment or have career progression is extremely limited.

The above statement argues that a qualification in itself may prove to be insufficient to find employment but a designation indicates a specialization in the field of finance and, therefore, not only improves the chance of employment but also of progression. This begs the question of how do 'graduates' then find employment in order to gain the necessary experience. This question was not prosecuted in this research but is symptomatic of the high number of unemployed graduates.

d. Summary of Section Four

From the above, it is clear that where professional bodies work with the QCTO, they find it easier to develop qualifications that are in line with occupations on the OFO. However, in all cases, the awarding of the designation depends on the qualification, years of experience, training, courses in professionalism and ethics and then sitting for a number of board examinations in order to be awarded the designation. A designation is not only an indicator of competencies but also key to employment and career advancement.

4.6. Section 5: The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations

This section aims to identify the link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations (identified as vertices 2 and 3 in Figure 5). This relationship between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations is located within context two as articulated in chapter 1. The Cedefop article makes two arguments. Firstly, that qualifications are commonly seen as one of the core instruments for governing and regulating the labour market and secondly that qualifications seem to

be diminishing and are being replaced by a weaker and more fluid relationship between qualifications and the labour market.

a. Occupational qualification development processes

The findings indicate that the professional bodies participated in the occupational qualification process out of necessity but found it difficult to reach consensus with “competing” bodies on developing a single qualification. The qualification development process stalled with this stalemate. Only one professional in the auditing space has developed a qualification that meets all the QCTO requirements for an occupational qualification.

Participant B1 explained the qualification development process as follows:

So when we developed our qualifications, we were very excited about aligning to the QCTO because we had already followed that QCTO development process to a large extent; so we consulted initially with the employers, we also consulted with students and we consulted with training providers so the consultation was very broad and it's only after we concluded all of those consultations that we developed what we now call standards of competence and the standards of competence dictated what went into the qualification okay. We also did speak to other professional bodies, not necessarily professional bodies that were providing the qualifications that were at the same level, you will appreciate it's a fairly competitive space but professional bodies that would either feed into ours or that we could articulate into.

This statement captures succinctly the main issues explored in this section. It is evident that, through the QCTO processes, the professional body was able to develop an occupational qualification linked to an occupation. The QCTO, in terms of its mandate, is required to develop standards and occupational qualifications. The standards are determined through what QCTO calls the scoping meeting – “scoping” means consultation with the relevant industry to determine the outcomes of the qualification. This process is then followed by the actual development of the

qualification undertaken by a community of experts. The fact that consultation with other professional bodies only took place with those that would feed into the area of specialisation of the professional body or which their qualification could articulate into is evidence of the competitiveness in the sector. It also confirms, as raised in other sections on the research findings, that the financial sector remains stratified to satisfy self-interests by providing “market shelters” (Evetts, 2003 citing Friedson 1982) as explained by participant B1 above.

The comment made by participant C establishes what the QCTO is aiming to do through its qualification design:

Okay, so it had a massive impact in that when we began developing the qualification, we already had a good idea of the competencies that needed to be included in the qualifications but then we took it further in that we still went through the consultation process and there were new competencies that came out, some were fleshed out further. Now ultimately where we stand now, the qualification and the professional designation, the competencies are exactly the same, the outcomes are exactly the same. There's no difference in either one.

When asked whether this means that the qualification will now suffice for the awarding of the designation the response was as follows:

because now there's the workplace element already built into the qualification; it is compulsory you have to do it. There's no additional requirements.

It is clear that professional body C developed the Occupational Qualification as prescribed by the QCTO which also satisfied the requirements for the designation. While this may be applauded, it raises fundamental questions about the purpose of occupational qualifications. The actions by professional body C could also be interpreted as a move to protect their self-interests by wanting to continue with their assessment quality partner status and thereby retain their monopoly of the qualification.

b. Qualification Overlap

The findings indicate that different professional bodies are unwilling to work towards the development of a common qualification to underpin their registered designations. The argument is that each professional body should have its “own” occupational qualification against which to award its designation, although the qualification development process indicated huge overlaps in the previous unit standard and provider-based qualifications.

Participant B1 clearly explains where there is overlap, there is a reluctance to cooperate with other professional bodies based on the fact the professional bodies have unique designations which create niche markets:

So we are able to see how much we have in common with like a (professional body X - not in sample)) and (professional body D). One of the biggest revelations for us was that our level 5 qualification is yes, it links almost a 100% to (professional body X) and (professional body D) level 6 so we..... we were looking at the alignment between the level 5, there was misalignment but when we looked at our level 4, we actually saw alignment to those qualifications level 5's and vice versa

Participant B1 goes on further to state:

So where we left the conversation last year with the professional bodies and QCTO, it was that professional bodies have their own unique designations but the majority of content is common across professional bodies. So its uniqueness comes in, how do they specialize, how do they deliver etc. and that's where the designation essentially will be attached to, so you could do a generic qualification or part qualification and there would be no designation.

Participant B1 continues:

So if I'm to be totally honest right, there isn't a hell of a lot of uniqueness so an accounting technician must have competencies that enable him or her to fulfil a certain number of roles with an industry and I do believe that a professional body whether it's us or (professional body X) or the (professional body D) it is in a position to be the gatekeeper for that. When you ask if there were contestations and whether they were resolved, yes there were lots and they were not resolved. So right now our differentiator is in how we assess, it's in the fact that we belong to (professional body B) our qualifications fall under (professional body B) okay and the designations give students a professional home within (professional body B) and that's my absolutely honest answer because when we were trying to find what's unique, all of those professional bodies were hanging onto to their brand and that's where we left things so we were almost force to fit a uniqueness that didn't exist.... And what's an employee preference, what graduates aspire to, I think that's what will come down

From the above, it may be concluded that professional bodies admit to overlaps in the content or curriculum but use assessments or additional requirements such as work experience as differentiators to justify the existence of designations. It was previously pointed out that professional body D conducts an international board exam. One professional body uses integrated exams for each of its modules. Another provides for a test of professional competence while yet another offers the global exam as a means to being awarded a designation.

c. Summary of Section Five

This section has highlighted the manner in which the financial sector has been selectively stratified and how designation titles have been used to distinguish and justify this stratification. It has also shown that, where professional bodies are cooperating with the QCTO, qualification development aligned to occupations is made

easier. Of significance is that this cooperation helps to identify the competency standards, which are then built into the occupational qualification.

Up to this point, professional bodies were able to avoid contestation and competition as the Unit standard model of qualification development allowed for professional bodies to develop their own qualifications and register these with SAQA. In terms of the Determination of the Sub-Frameworks that comprise the National Qualifications Framework (Gazette No. 44031 of 24 December 2000), all legacy qualifications and provider-based qualifications registered before 2009 expired at the end of June 2023, with the last enrolment date being June 2024. This means that the professional bodies who rely on these underlying qualifications will have to approach the Financial and Accounting Sector (Fasset) SETA to develop qualifications against which to register their qualifications. The findings in the above section indicate that professional body C, in particular, has been proactive and has registered occupational qualifications based on the OFO to underpin their designations.

4.7 Summary of Overall Findings

In this section, I shall provide a summary synthesising the research findings from Sections 1 to 5.

Section One: The role of Professional Bodies in the Skills Development landscape

This section was intended to serve as an introduction to the interviews, but the participant responses were very insightful, and their initial responses covered some of the areas that were to be covered in other parts of the interviews. One of the key findings is that all the professional bodies indicated that they exercise a regulatory role over the profession, despite none of the professional bodies interviewed being statutory professional bodies. A critical finding was the view strongly expressed by at least two professional bodies that they are responsible for linking all the elements of the skills development process. This finding is expounded under reflections captured in Chapter 5. Because these bodies are non-statutory, they exercise a form of “quasi-

regulation” (Standing, 2009) through the awarding of designations and holding members to account, mostly under the pretext of “protecting the public.”

Section Two: The role and purpose of Qualification Classification Systems

Two interviewees correctly identified the OFO as a tool for skills classification and reporting. One respondent was of the view that the OFO could be a tool for skills anticipation, but my understanding is that they were possibly referring to skills planning related to the sector skills plans. Skills anticipation is a much more complex exercise. An alarming finding is a view held by some professional bodies that the OFO is applicable to trade and trade-related occupations and is not user-friendly for professional bodies higher up in the financial sector hierarchy. It may be because the QCTO adopted the OFO as an occupational classification framework, unlike the Council for Higher Education and Training. The OFO is, therefore, seen to be over-prescriptive. The findings on whether the OFO presents a tool for the mapping of designations are not conclusive, as respondents attempted to respond to this question by drawing distinctions between professions and occupations.

Section Three: The relationship between Occupational Classification Systems and the development of Occupational Qualifications

A key finding (although not made explicit by the participants) is the notion that the OFO is an instrument of the QCTO. One professional body expressed how they (while still being a delegated partner under FASSET SETA) made an application to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for “their” occupation to be added to the OFO and subsequently developed an occupational qualification against which learners would be awarded the designation. Another professional body used multiple qualifications for a single occupation. It seems as though the relationship between the OFO and the development of qualifications is primarily as a result of the QCTO using the OFO as a classification system and insisting that occupational qualifications must be developed against an occupation listed on the OFO.

Section 4: Varieties or different forms of occupational regulations

One of the key findings is the need for occupational qualifications to be aligned with the requirements of the professional occupational designation. This view was expressed mainly by professional bodies that are extensions of international bodies

and who want the occupational qualifications to cover the full scope of the international designation requirements. However, in these cases, the awarding of the designation depends on the qualification, years of experience, training, professionalism, and ethics and then sitting for a number of Board Examinations in order to be awarded the designation.

One professional body uses the occupational qualification and its associated assessment to grant the designation.

Overall professional bodies highlight the significance of a professional designation in the skills arena as a “signal” to the market that the practitioner having been awarded the designation possesses the required competencies and professionalism required by the industry and which must be upheld by the practitioner holding such designation

Section 5: The link between occupational qualifications and occupational regulations

This section has highlighted the manner in which the financial sector has been selectively stratified and how designation titles have been used to distinguish this stratification. Competing professional bodies struggle to map their different designations (mechanisms for occupational regulation) against a single occupational qualification. Therefore, the links between occupational qualifications and regulation are very weak. This section has also shown that, where professional bodies are cooperating with the QCTO, they are able to develop qualifications aligned to occupations is made easier

Chapter Five: Reflections on Findings and Analysis

This chapter provides an analysis of the research with respect to the main research question and sub-questions. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the study and highlights aspects requiring further research.

a. Main research question: In what ways do professional bodies use the OFO (as a Qualification Classification System), and occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

Ideally, occupational qualifications should be developed against occupations registered on the OFO. SAQA then registers these qualifications on the NQF, against which a professional body may register a professional designation.

The findings indicate that not all professional bodies consider the OFO as an appropriate instrument against which to develop qualifications as they see it as a classification tool more appropriate to occupations (such as artisan trades) and argue that the prescriptive nature of the OFO is not suitable for professions. The professional bodies are correct in their view that the OFO is an instrument used to record and report on occupations, as indicated in section 2.3, which presents an overview of Occupational Classification Systems. The challenge is that the QCTO adopted the OFO (as a classification system for the purposes of developing occupational qualifications). This is especially true for those professional bodies who are either linked to international professional bodies (professional bodies A and D) or those who rely on higher education qualifications and award designations based on the qualification and the attainment of other requirements such as work experience or external board examinations. On the other hand, the professional bodies that utilize qualifications lower down on the NQF, i.e., those not classified as higher education qualifications, have developed qualifications linked to the OFO, and these qualifications are then registered on the OQSF as occupational qualifications. Overall, the findings are consistent (albeit very weak) with the arguments put forward by Cedefop (2013) that qualifications are commonly seen as one of the core instruments for governing and regulating the labour market.

These research findings, however, concur more strongly with the argument that qualifications seem to be diminishing and are being replaced by a weaker and more fluid relationship between qualifications and the labour market. The research shows that professional designations have become the mechanism for regulating the labour market and that different bodies have different pathways leading to attaining a designation.

Although it did not come through starkly in the research itself, it is evident that the professional bodies indirectly use occupational classification systems to influence the regulation of professions and occupations. This is evident in how the financial sector has stratified designations registered by professional bodies. It may be argued that the stratification of designations can be mapped against the Major Groups on the OFO, with Professionals being the second group (requiring skill level 4 and equivalent qualifications on levels 7-10 of the NQF), followed by Technicians and associate professionals (requiring skill level 3 and NQF level 6 equivalent qualifications). A possible reason for this is that professional bodies operating at the higher levels view the OFO as being applicable only to Occupational trades and applicable to lower levels of the NQF.

b. Sub-question One: In what ways do the professional bodies use the Organising Framework for Occupations for the development of occupational qualifications?

The research found that, in general, professional bodies experience challenges in using the OFO to develop occupational qualifications. One of the major challenges lies with the fact that occupational qualifications are national qualifications and, as such, must be quality assured by the QCTO. Any provider accredited by the QCTO could also offer the qualifications. Only two professional bodies (B and C) could articulate the relationship between the OFO and the suite of qualifications developed and how these relate to the awarding of professional designations. Professional bodies A and C are linked to international bodies and, therefore, use multiple qualifications as “entry” requirements for attaining a professional designation. The attainment of the professional designation is dependent on satisfying other requirements.

From the above, it can be concluded that the relationship between the OFO and the development of occupational qualifications in the professional body space, particularly in the financial sector, is not well established.

It would be amiss not to mention the misunderstanding by at least three of the professional bodies that the OFO applies only to trades-related occupations. The OFO, as described in the literature review, indicates that the broad category of professions is the second major group requiring the highest skill level (level 4). The reasons for such a misunderstanding were not probed in this research.

c. In what ways do professional bodies use occupational qualifications for the purposes of occupational regulation?

The research found that professional bodies do not directly use qualifications for occupational regulation in all but one case. Qualifications are used as the basis or entry towards the attainment of a professional designation. Occupations are regulated through the designation more than the qualification itself. This is important, as was pointed out by professional body A that the qualification is part of the education system, whereas the practice is located in the professional body arena.

The challenge arises when the professional body wants to control the entire process, from qualification development to the awarding of the professional designation. Unfortunately, the dispensation of the previous unit standard-based and provider-based qualifications allowed professional bodies to take charge of the entire process. The implementation of the national occupational qualifications by the QCTO is creating a stumbling block for professional bodies in this regard, and therefore, professional bodies are finding it increasingly difficult to use occupational qualifications to regulate the occupation.

Reflections emanating from the study

In concluding this research, it is necessary to reflect on the research findings to elicit other significant insights that emerged through the research process. These reflections and insights are presented under the following headings:

- a) Status of Professional Bodies and Occupational Regulation;
- b) The role of professional bodies in the skills development ecosystem;
- c) The effectiveness of the OFO as a tool for developing occupational qualifications.

a. Status of Professional Bodies and Occupational Regulation

Currently, professional bodies derive their status primarily from being statutory bodies or voluntary associations of a community of experts being recognized by SAQA. The NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008) indicates that a statutory or non-statutory body of expert practitioners in an occupational field must apply to SAQA in the manner prescribed by SAQA to be recognized as a professional body in terms of the Act. The Act also allows the professional body to apply to SAQA to register a professional designation on the NQF.

The contestation between professional bodies and Higher Education is well known. The tensions, as captured by Ballim et al. (2018), have been unpacked to some extent in chapter one of this research report. It was also indicated that these tensions are also reflected in the occupational space. As indicated in the research, this is largely due to the professional bodies being granted ETQA status through the SAQA Act. This research was located directly in the professional body space, and therefore, the findings of this research reflect the views of professional bodies active in the occupational space.

The findings indicate a weak relationship between occupational qualifications and the regulation of qualifications. This weak relationship may be attributed to the fact that

the legacy or provider-based qualifications previously developed by these professional bodies are still current. An interesting finding emanating from this research is that apart from the qualification, the awarding of a designation is dependent on the candidate satisfying other requirements as determined by the professional body. These include stipulating years of work experience as well as passing a specified number of board examinations. Two of the professional bodies surveyed find the OFO useful for developing a qualification against which they register their professional designations. It so happens that both these bodies offer designations lower down the hierarchy characterizing the financial sector as well as qualifications at the intermediate levels of the NQF. It is interesting that one of these bodies has since severed its links to the international body to which it was previously affiliated but rather than being an independent professional body, it has opted to become a subsidiary of another professional body as the designation they offer sits beneath the designation awarded by the “superior” professional body. Many assumptions may be drawn from this but this falls outside the scope of this research report. It, however, does indicate the embeddedness of the professional bodies in the financial sector and that the financial sector is highly “stratified”. The designation of chartered accountant is the pinnacle, followed by chartered management accountant, certified accountant, and so on.

The professional bodies surveyed that are active at the higher levels of the NQF seem to rely less on the qualification acquired by the candidate and much more on the compulsory training in professionalism and ethics and the board exams. In one case, the board examinations are international examinations.

It is clear that the regulatory requirements for being recognised as a professional body are not strong enough to prevent the proliferation of professional bodies or the development of qualifications. The professional bodies surveyed indicate that the designations have market appeal and increase the chances of employability and upward mobility.

In presenting this reflection, I am considering only one side of the coin, viz., market capture. I will capture the other side of the coin in the reflection in part b following.

b. The role of professional bodies in the skills development landscape

Ironically, the role of professional bodies in the skills development landscape was the introductory question asked during the interviews. The responses were of such a nature that this question was then formulated as one of the broad categories framing the data analysis. (See section 2 of chapter 4). One of the major findings across all four professional bodies was that they viewed their roles as central to the skills development system. I have broken this up into the components identified by the professional bodies as components central to a skills development system. Because of their proximity to industry, professional bodies argue that they understand what the market needs are and, therefore, are well positioned to develop the “standards” that will then underpin the development of qualifications. The development of the qualification will be undertaken by the relevant authority. The fact that the qualifications are developed based on industry standards will ensure that candidates are more employable. The qualification, together with the workplace experience, will allow the candidate to sit for the board exams to be awarded the designation. Professional body C indicates that the new occupational qualification they have developed is based on industry standards, and the fact that the design of the occupational qualification comprises the knowledge, practical, and workplace components means that the learner can be awarded the designation based on achieving the qualification. Admittedly, professional body C is a bit of an outlier as it operates on the periphery of the mainline financial sector.

All the professional bodies also referred to continuous professional development (CPD) as a mechanism to ensure that members are abreast with the latest developments in the sector. While those who are already members will be upskilled through CPD on the new standards applicable to the profession, these standards will feed into updating the qualification.

While this positioning of the professional bodies may be viewed with skepticism as this will allow them to embed themselves into the educational and training arena, and therefore result in ongoing regulation of the market, this relationship if managed

through a regulatory framework presents an opportunity to ensure a pipeline of skills development which will address the supply vs. demand balance as well as ensure that qualifications are developed in tandem with the needs of industry. This stance is not dissimilar to that articulated by Ballim et.al. who propose the development of a framework to regulate the relationship between professional bodies and Higher Education institutions. This reflection on the study captures the other side of the coin.

c. The effectiveness of the OFO as a tool for the development of occupational qualifications and regulation of occupations

It was previously indicated in the report that the QCTO adopted the OFO as an Occupational Classification System in 2013. The findings of this research suggest that the QCTO may need to revisit this decision. My reflection is that professional bodies are developing occupational qualifications only for the purposes of compliance and to maintain the status quo previously bestowed on them as DQPs, AQPs and later as Quality Partners. However, using the OFO as a justification for the development of qualifications for each occupation will result in a proliferation of qualifications that characterised the previous unit-standard-based model. Allais et al. (2014) also warn that attempts to integrate the multidimensional structure of occupations into one hierarchical structure will result in confusion. Bauer et al. (2015) also question the QCTO model based on one qualification per occupation and argue that this will lead to the fragmentation of qualifications to suit a large number of occupations. However, they also raise the concern about “contextual specializations.” This complexity also impacts the regulation of occupations in that each professional body seeks to develop its own qualifications against which to award designations and thereby regulate the occupation.

The OQSF was gazetted in 2021 and now provides for a suite of qualification types from NQF levels 1-8, which share nomenclature with the other two sub-frameworks comprising the NQF. This, I believe, presents the QCTO with the opportunity to revisit its 2013 decision to adopt the OFO as the primary system against which to develop occupational qualifications.

I also believe that the reflections above could serve as possible research areas within the context of conceptualising and developing a Skills Formation eco-system to support the country's developmental agenda.

6. References

Abbott, A. (1988). *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labour*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Allais, S. (2011). The changing faces of the South African national qualifications framework. *Journal of Education and Work*, 24 (3-4), pp. 343-358.

Allais, S. (2012). Claims versus practicalities: Lessons about using learning outcomes. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25(3), pp. 331–334.

Allais, S., Marock, C. and Molebatsi, P. (2014). The Development of Occupational Standards in English-speaking countries. Centre for Research into Education and Labour, University of Witwatersrand.

Allais, S. & Nathan, O. (2014). Skills? What Skills? Jobs? What Jobs? An overview of research into education/labour market relationship. *Education, Economy and Society*. Unisa Press, pp. 103-124.

Ballim, Y., Mabizela, S., and Mubangizi, J. C. (2018). Professional Bodies and Quality Assurance of Higher Education Programmes in South Africa: Towards an Appropriate Framework. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 28 (4), pp. 1140-1155.

Bauer, W., Marock, C., & Durango, L. (2015). Analysis and Application of the QCTO Model, Recommendations and Vision for Qualification. GFA Consulting Group. Pretoria.

Bortolotti, B., Fiorentini, G. (1999). Barriers to entry and the self-regulating professions: evidence from the market for Italian accountants. Organised interests and self-regulation: an economic approach. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 131-157.

Buchner, M. (2012). Review of Research on Skills Development and Qualification Structures. Working Paper. Labour Market Intelligence Partnership.

Bussemeyer, M.R., & Trampusch, C. (2012). *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, (pp. 3–38).

Carter, S. (2020). Case Study Method and Research Design: Flexibility or Ambiguity for the novice researcher? University of Southern Queensland.
<https://research.usq.edu.au>

Chapman, A.L., Hadfield, M., Chapman, C.J. (2015). Qualitative Research in healthcare: an introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis. <http://dx.doi/10.4997/JRCPE.2015.305>

Clarke, L. (2011). Trade? Job? or Occupation? The development of occupational labour markets for bricklaying and lorry driving. In M. Brockmann, L. Clarke, & C. Winch (Eds.), Knowledge, skills and competence in the European labour market: What is a vocational qualification (pp. 103-115). London: Routledge

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, M. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed. pp 267-292). London: Routledge Farmer.

Collins, C.S., Stockton, C.M. (2018). The Central Role of Theory in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (17), pp.1-10.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2013). Guidelines: Organising Framework for occupations (OFO). Department of Education.

Dingwall, R. & Fenn, P. (1987). A respectable profession? Sociological and economic perspectives on the regulation of professional services. *International review of law and economics*, 7 (1), pp. 51-64.

Dingwall, R. & Lewis, P., eds. (1983) *The Sociology of the Professions: Doctors, Lawyers and Others*. London: Macmillan.

Djumaieva, J., & Sleeman, C. (2018). An Open and Data-driven Taxonomy of Skills Extracted from Online Job Adverts (Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence. Discussion Paper 2018-13 | SSN 2515- 4664). Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Du Preez, J. (2008). Locating the researcher in the research: personal narrative and reflective practice. *Reflective Practice*, 9(4), pp. 509-519

Elias, P. (1997). *Occupational Classification (ISCO-88): Concepts, Methods Reliability, Validity and Cross-National Comparability*. OECD Publishing

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (2013). The role of qualifications in governing occupations and professions. Working Paper No.20 Luxembourg: Office of the European Union

Evetts, J. (2003). The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism. *International Sociology*, 18 (2), pp.395 – 415.

Gorman, E.H. and Sandeffur, R.L (2011). Golden Age, Quiescence, and Revival: How the Sociology of Professions Became the Study of Knowledge-Based Work. *Work and Occupations*. 38(3), pp. 275 –302

Guest, G. MacQueen, K.M., & Namey, E.E. (2012). Introduction to applied thematic analysis. *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp. 3–20.

Hodson, R., & Sullivan, T. A. (2012). The social organisation of work. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Hoffmann, E. (2004). International Statistical Comparisons of Occupational and Social Structures: Problems, Possibilities and The Role of ISCO-88. International Labour Office.

Hoffmann, E. (1998a). Mapping the world of work: An International Review of the Work with Occupational Classifications and Dictionaries. Bureau of Statistics, International Labour Office

Hordern, J. (2014) Productive Systems of Professional Formation in International Handbook of Research in Professional and Practice-based Learning. Springer New York London. pp 167- 193

Johnson,R., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.

Keep, E. (2015) Thinking about where to go and what next to do in the reform of vocational qualifications. *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(2), pp. 117-125.

Larson, M. S. (1977) *The Rise of Professionalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lehohla, P. (2012). South African Standard Classification of Occupations (SASCO). Statistics South Africa.

http://www.statssa.gov.za/classifications/codelists/SASCO_2012.pdf

Lester, S. (2009). Routes to Qualified status: practices and trends among UK professional bodies. *Studies in Higher Education*. 34 (2). pp 223-236.

Local Government Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) Code Handbook – Technical Handbook (2018). Enterprises University of Pretoria (Pty) Ltd.

Malhotra, N. and Krosnik, J.A. (2007). Procedures for Updating Classification Systems: A study of Biotechnology and the Standard Occupational Classification System. *Journal of Official Statistics*. 23(3), pp 409-432.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7th Ed). Pearson: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Ospino Hernandez, C.G. (2018). Occupations: Labor Market Classifications, Taxonomies, and Ontologies in the 21st Century. Inter-American Development Bank.

Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA). (2022). Occupation and Qualification Classification Report: A Framework to Classify Occupations and Qualifications in the Public Service Sector.

Reddy, V., Wildschut, A., Luescher, T. M., Petersen, I., Rust, J., & Kalina, M. (2017). Skills Development Legislation as a Lever of Change to Reduce Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment. Human Sciences Research Council.

Republic of South Africa. (1998). Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies), No. 58 of 1995. Government Gazette Vol 399, No. 19231. Pretoria.

Republic of South Africa. (2008). National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008. Government Gazette Vol. 524, No. 31909. Pretoria.

Standing, G. (2009). *Work after Globalisation: Building Occupational Citizenship*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK.

Streeck, W. (2012). Skills and Politics: General and Specific. In *The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation*. Oxford University Press. Tippins, N. T., & Hilton, M. L. (2010). *A Database for a Changing Economy: Review of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.

UKCES (2011). A review of occupational regulation and its impact. Evidence report; 40.
<http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-40-occupational-regulation-impact.pdf>.

Vorwerk, C. (2014). Mapping links between occupations and Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM). Working Paper. Labour Market Intelligence Partnership

Wagner, C., Kawulich, B., & Garner, M. (Eds.). (2012). *Doing Social Research: A global context* (1st ed.). Europe and United States: McGraw.

Winch, C. (2011). Skill- a concept manufactured in England. In M. Brockmann, L. Clarke, & C. Winch (Eds.), *Knowledge, skills and competence in the European Labour market; What's in a vocational qualification* (pp. 85–101). Routledge.

Winch, C. (2015) Towards a framework for professional curriculum design. *Journal of Education and Work*, 28 (2) pp 165-186.

APPENDIX 1

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

This questionnaire applies to participants from the professional bodies involved in the Qualification Development process.

1. How do you see your role as a professional body in the skills development landscape to be?
2. What in your understanding is the purpose of the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)?
3. The QCTO has adopted the OFO as a classification system to map the occupational qualifications onto the OFO. How useful is the OFO as a classification system for developing Occupational qualifications?
4. How does the professional designation registered by your organisation link to the OFO?
5. To what extent did the professional designation registered by your organisation influence the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification developed?
6. To what extent did the professional designation registered by other organisations influence the content/curriculum of the occupational qualification developed?
7. How was the needs/demands of the different professional bodies/stakeholders addressed in the qualification development process and were these needs/demands included in the occupational qualification? Were there contestation and how were these resolved?
8. Do you think that the OFO provides a good enough classification system for the development of Occupational Qualifications?
9. What is the significance of a professional designation in the skills arena and how/why is this different from an occupational qualification?
10. What is/should be the role of the SAQA and the QCTO with regard to professional bodies and in particular professional designations?
11. Do you think that the OFO provides a good enough classification system for the mapping of professional designations?

APPENDIX 2

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

This questionnaire applies to participants from the professional bodies approved as AQPs

1. How do you see your role as a professional body in the skills development landscape to be?
2. What in your understanding is the purpose of the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)?
3. The QCTO has adopted the OFO as a classification system to map the occupational qualifications onto the OFO. How useful is the OFO as a classification system for developing Occupational qualifications?
4. How does the professional designation registered by your organisation link to the OFO?
5. To what extent does the content/curriculum of the occupational qualifications link with the professional designation registered by your organisation?
6. How is the occupational qualification or its components used in the awarding of the professional designation?
7. Is the external integrated summative assessment and the professional board exam used interchangeably?
8. Is any form of RPL utilised in the awarding of the professional designation
9. What is the significance of a professional designation in the skills arena and how/why is this different from an occupational qualification?
10. What is/should be the role of the SAQA and the QCTO with regard to professional bodies and in particular professional designations?
11. Do you think that the OFO provides a good enough classification system for the mapping of professional designations?

APPENDIX 3

LETTER TO THE CEO OF THE PROFESSIONAL BODY

DATE:

Dear NAME of CEO

My name is Vijayen Naidoo. I am a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand registered for the M.Ed degree in Education and Work.

I am doing research on the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations, THROUGH case studies in the Financial sector.

My research involves exploring how the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) supports the development of occupational specialisations linked to professional designations and how professional bodies utilise registered occupational qualifications and their various components (knowledge, practical, workplace experience and the external integrated summative assessment) in different ways and in combination with HE programmes and RPL towards the award of the professional designation. The study further seeks to understand how the occupational qualifications are being used as a basis for occupational regulation.

This research is a qualitative study of a sample of cases (professional bodies). The case study method was chosen to elicit detailed, specific accounts of particular circumstances rather than broad, generalisable findings. Data for each case study will be obtained by firstly conducting an analysis of policies and documents relating to how the professional body regulates the profession/ occupation, and secondly through semi-structured interviews with appropriate practitioners from the professional body.

I have chosen the (NAME OF PROFESSIONAL BODY) as one of the professional bodies as the (NAME OF PROFESSIONAL BODY) is an active body in the financial sector.

I am inviting the (NAME OF PROFESSIONAL BODY) to participate in this research and contribute to creating a deeper understanding of the role of professional bodies in developing occupational qualifications and how occupational qualifications are used in the awarding of professional designations.

The intention is to interview relevant officials and/or practitioners from your professional body who are involved in the qualification development process as well as those involved in the quality assurance of the qualification, specifically certification and the awarding of the professional designation. It is envisaged that no more than an hour would be required to conduct the interview.

It would be appreciated if you would give consent for officials/practitioners from (NAME OF PROFESSIONAL BODY) to participate in this study. It would also be appreciated if the names of the relevant officials /practitioners be made available to me. Providing the names does not imply that the officials/practitioners will be compelled to participate. A separate invitation would be forwarded to the nominated officials/practitioners. As the CEO you are also most welcome to make yourself available to be interviewed.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the professional body will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Pseudonyms will be used in the research report. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Vijayen Naidoo

23 Morris Ave
Morehill
Benoni
1504
Naidoo.v@qcto.org.za
Cell: 0832504261
Home: 011 4256419
Work: 012 003 1844

Participant Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my research project called:

A critical analysis of the links between Occupational Classification Systems, Occupational Qualifications and the regulation of occupations: Case studies in the Financial sector.

Name of Professional Body: _____

Name of Participant: _____

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study.

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.

Circle one

YES/NO

YES/NO

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only

YES/NO

YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my professional body will not be revealed in the research report or to any unauthorised party.
- while every care will be taken to ensure anonymity in the research report, given the focused nature of the study, it will be impossible to completely guarantee anonymity.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Sign _____ Date _____