



Namibia · Qualifications · Authority

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC: NQA TO CEASE RECOGNISING ICM AWARDS 31 DECEMBER 2014

Windhoek - The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) hereby informs the general public that qualifications from the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) will no longer be recognised in Namibia beyond 31 December 2014.

The NQA, as per its mandate under the *Regulations to the Evaluation of Qualifications* (Government Notice 182, 2007) only evaluates and recognises foreign qualifications if these are approved by a recognised quality assurance body in the country of origin.

Recently and in the process of considering applications for the evaluation of qualifications, the NQA identified some discrepancies in the titles and structure of some of the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) registered on the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) the quality assurance body in the United Kingdom (UK).

This prompted the NQA to temporarily discontinue evaluating ICM qualifications, pending research into the extend of the discrepancies.

ICM is an examination and awarding body based in the UK and operates through approximately 500 approved teaching centres in more than 130 countries across the world, including Namibia. Since 2007, the NQA has accredited five (5) privately owned Namibian training providers that offer Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) programmes under franchise arrangements and agreements, namely:

offer Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) programmes under franchise arrangements and agreements, namely:

- ILSA Independent College
- Monitronics Success College
- Ondangwa Commercial College
- Triumphant College.

These providers all offer varying qualifications in different fields of studies viz Accounting and Finance, Marketing, Tourism, Human Resources and Journalism at certificate and diploma levels. There are currently close to 2000 students enrolled in ICM franchised courses in Namibia.

In order to understand the extent of discrepancies in the qualifications that are Ofqual regulated and those that are designated for the international market but in an unregulated environment, NQA appointed external Subject Matter Experts (SME's) to look into the discrepancies found in the ICM qualifications. Their reports indicated that there are indeed varying degrees of differences between the titles, structures and learning outcomes in qualifications registered on Ofqual and those actually offered through local ICM franchisors.

During engagements with ICM in respect of the differences in the titles and structure of its qualifications, ICM also made known their intentions to withdraw from Namibia, underlining the company's resolve not to operate in a regulated environment in the UK. ICM's sudden decision to withdraw from Namibia bears significant consequences for Namibian students as it comes in the middle of their studies, and as such can potentially cause panic and uncertainty.

Corollary to the decision by ICM to withdraw from Namibia and furthermore its preference to operate in an unregulated environment, the NQA Council as a caring and responsible corporate citizen, considered the matter, including the plight of the affected students and qualification holders and resolved to the following.

- 1. The NQA shall evaluate and recognise the ICM qualifications which were temporarily put on hold.**
- 2. Current students may continue with their studies through to the first point of exit but not later than December 2014. Individuals who wish to enrol for further studies will be able to continue their studies at any other accredited institution**

offering similar qualifications with due consideration for credit transfer and articulation agreements.

- 3. Accredited training providers currently offering ICM qualifications must seek for qualifications from alternative bodies, provided that such qualifications are accredited in their country of origin. Alternatively, training providers have the option of developing their own qualifications, which must be quality assured by the NQA before implementation.**
- 4. All prospective Namibian students are advised to cease from enrolling with ICM affiliated institutions in Namibia or anywhere else in the world.**
- 5. Training providers are advised to discontinue offering ICM associated courses and qualifications.**
- 6. The providers are expected to advise the students on articulation arrangements with a view to ensure that disruption of studies is minimized.**
- 7. The NQA cautions all funding institutions from funding students enrolling for any ICM associated qualifications in or outside of Namibia.**

The NQA would like to assure the nation that the situation has been handled with due diligence and that the plight of students were given equal consideration. All affected training providers were consulted and the afore-mentioned decisions were arrived upon with their input. This action is absolutely necessary to safeguard quality within the education sector.


While the NQA acknowledges the need for training providers to accommodate the high number of secondary school graduates and the growing demand for higher education in the country, it should be categorically clear that such institutions must ensure that they have the necessary credentials and that their establishment is consistent with the country's legal requirements, primary of which is the accreditation of its qualifications by the NQA. Furthermore, it should be noted that qualifications from unaccredited training providers will, under no circumstances, be accepted for evaluation by the NQA and shall therefore not be recognised.

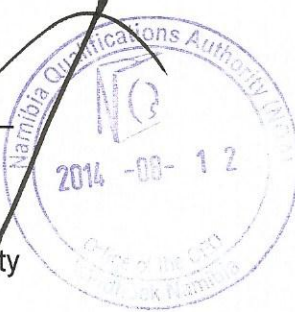
In conclusion, the NQA alerts current and prospective students, in their quest for education, to be wary of unaccredited training providers. In this regard, students are advised to consult the NQA for the verification of the credentials of training providers prior to enrolling for their studies. This cautionary statement is for their own protection as failure to do so may result in students

getting qualifications which are not worth the paper they are printed on, not to mention the waste of their time and financial resources.

About the Namibia Qualifications Authority:

The NQA was established by Act 29 of 1996 and has as its mandate to exercise and perform the statutory powers, duties and functions in line with the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act no. 29 of 1996 which include but are not limited to set up and administer a National Qualifications Framework, set up the occupational standards for any occupation, job, post or position in any career structure; accredit persons, institutions and organizations providing education and courses of instruction or training and advise any person, body, institution, organization or interest group on matters pertaining to qualifications and national standards for qualifications.


Mr Franz Gertze
Chief Executive Officer
Namibia Qualifications Authority



Enquiries:

Ms Asnath Kaperu
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Tel: +264 61 384 100
Email: Asnath.Kaperu@namqa.org

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