QCTO Survival Guide for HR Teams:

Practical steps.
Clear answers.
Confident transitions

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The skills development landscape has shifted— is your BEE strategy future-ready?

South Africa's skills development landscape has entered a new era. From 1 July 2024, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) has taken full responsibility for accrediting and certifying occupational qualifications — replacing the previous SETA system.

These changes go beyond compliance — they directly impact how your organisation manages learning, talent pipelines, and workforce reporting.

If you're still navigating what this means, you're not alone. That's exactly why we've created this survival guide - to simplify the transition, break down key concepts, and help HR teams move forward with clarity.

- ✔ What's changed
- ✔ What to do next
- ✔ How to stay compliant

Let's break it down - here's what's changed:

- Accredited training structures
- Registration and rollout of new qualifications
- Learnership models: cost, implementation, and timelines
- Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs) and reporting cycles

What is the QCTO?

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) is South Africa's national body responsible for the development, implemention, and assurance occupational qualifications. Established in 2010 under the Skills Development Act, the QCTO ensures that occupational training across all industries is standardised, quality-driven, and aligned to national economic needs.

All new occupational qualifications, part-qualifications, and skills programmes are now registered under the QCTO framework.

Key Differences Between QCTO and SETA

One of the most significant shifts between SETA and QCTO qualifications is **standardisation across all sectors.** This means that they are recognised nationally — not limited to a specific industry.

Other important shifts include:

SETA Learnerships	QCTO Learnerships
Learnerships comprised of two components:	Learnerships are comprised of three components:
• 30% classroom time	• **Knowledge component** – classroom-based theory
• 70% on the job experience	• **Practical component** – workplace training
• **Ongoing assessments** throughout	• **EISA Exam** – a final external exam written at an Accredited Assessment centre
Duration: SETA learnerships are typically 12 months long	**Duration:** Varies depending on qualification **credit value**

How to Register Learners Under QCTO (Effective 1 July 2024)

As of 1 July 2024, learner registrations follow the updated QCTO process. The steps below apply to both employed and unemployed learners, across full qualifications, part-qualifications, and skills programmes.

Occupational Qualifications	Skills Programmes
Stage 1 - A: Submit Learner Enrolment Spreadsheet within 21 days after the start date of training to learnerenrolments@qcto.org.za	**Stage 1:** Submit Implementation plan to the QCTO within 5 days after training start to SPLearnerEnrolments@qcto.org.za
Stage 1 - B: Submit Workplace Agreements to the Employer SETA within 30 days of signature date.	**Stage 2:** Submit learner achievements within 21 working days of the FISA being conducted to SPResults@qcto.org.za
Stage 2: Submit EISA readiness spreadsheet at least 3 months prior to anticipated EISA date to EISAreadiness@qcto.org.za	

Need help navigating QCTO registration? Contact us — we're ready to support your implementation.

✔ QCTO Readiness Checklist

Not sure where to begin? Use this quick checklist to assess your organisation's readiness for the QCTO framework.

Tick off what you've already done:

○ Identified which of your current training programmes are SETA-accredited
○ Assess which SETA-Accredited qualifications will be phased out and when
○ Mapped existing learning needs to QCTO-aligned qualifications, with guidance from your training provider
○ Confirmed your training provider is QCTO-accredited
○ Aligned your learning paths to full or part qualifications under QCTO
○ Understood the registration and reporting requirements
○ Prepared your internal team for workplace-based learning (where required)
○ Updated your BEE and skills development strategy accordingly

QCTO Myths — Busted

Myth	Fact
QCTO is only for technical or blue-collar industries	QCTO applies across **all sectors** - from finance and IT to sales and management
We won't earn **BEE points** under QCTO	QCTO-aligned training is fully **compliant** for **BEE scorecard** claims - if implemented through accredited providers
Legacy programmes will continue indefinitely	Most **legacy qualifications are being phased out.** Deadlines are in place, and the teach-out period is limited
QCTO makes it harder to train staff	QCTO adds **structure** and **national recognition** - with the right support, it's simpler than you think

Let's simplify your QCTO transition. Whether you're mid-programme or starting from scratch, our team is here to help you get it right.

Need help mapping your training to QCTO-aligned programmes or planning your next steps?
Email us at info@ilearn.co.za or **explore** our full QCTO-aligned offering at www.ilearn.co.za