



## higher education & training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**23 February 2017**

### **MINISTER NZIMANDE SAYS HOLDERS OF FAKE QUALIFICATIONS TO BE PROSECUTED, NAMED AND SHAMED**

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, says serious action will be taken against perpetrators of fake qualifications, including prosecuting and publicly naming and shaming those caught doing so.

Commenting on the scourge, after receiving an update this week from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), as it continues with its work to track forged national and foreign qualifications — as commissioned by the cabinet last year — the Minister said fraudulent qualifications posed a grave danger to the credibility of the country's education system.

"This is a matter which we take very seriously, and it is also the reason why we have embarked on legislative measures to curb these phoney qualifications, where we are proposing a roll of shame for holders of such bogus qualifications.

"One of the most precious things any country can have is the credibility of its qualifications and higher education system, which is why we are acting robustly on the scourge. By the way, if one lies about one's qualifications or produces a false certificate, that is fraud even in terms of existing law," Minister Nzimande said.

The Minister published new regulations late last year, which will force employers to refer their employees' degrees for validation and verification.

"Unless employers, institutions and citizens can feel confident that individuals have earned the qualifications that they purport to have, the entire system will lose its legitimacy," he said.

As part of the regulatory move, SAQA will register the names of holders of bogus certificates on its website — a move that the government hopes will end the growing prevalence of qualification forgeries.

Over the past few years, a number of cases of qualifications fraud — including those involving high-profile figures — have been reported by the media.

The fraudulent qualifications that have been uncovered have ranged in quality from poor copies of legitimate qualifications, to high-quality forgeries that are very difficult to differentiate from the original.

Meanwhile, SAQA reports that between October 1 and December 31 last year (fourth quarter of 2016), 52 foreign qualifications had been found to have been forged, while 17 national qualifications were misrepresented.

As at the end of January 2017, a total of 1 276 qualifications (444 national and 832 foreign qualifications) were also recorded on its list of misrepresented qualifications — with 78 affidavits completed for handover to the Hawks for prosecution.

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**Issued by Government Communications (GCIS) on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training**