

5. Vocational learning has a very poor uptake in South Africa because, amongst other reasons, work in such fields is somehow considered inferior in status. However, the common structure of the NSC and the NC(V) points to the fact that the NC(V) remains a *general vocational qualification* even though the NC(V) includes a strong practical vocational emphasis. This comparable structure, designed to improve the status of vocational study, is intended to create the conditions for parity of esteem between the two pathways of study, a goal which the review aims to strengthen. Uptake and the ultimate value of the qualification depends, however, on sustained quality of delivery, selection of only the most suitable of candidates, and a well thought-through advocacy process for the renewed qualification.
6. The NC(V) is based on the premise that a good grounding in a language, such as English, and in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, remain the most generally useful and valued vocational skills on offer. When these subjects are combined with a sound practical and theoretical grounding, which focuses on productive thinking and mastery of the needed skills, the whole qualification will support successful students to enter the workplace well prepared or to embark on further technical and vocational study.
7. In South Africa (as in many developed countries) where full-time education or training up to the age of 18 has become the intended norm, and is largely paid for by the state, the quality of education in the last three years of schooling and college ought to make a critical difference to the future lives of those leaving school or college and to their ability to contribute to and strengthen the economy of the state. This is a responsibility which all institutions offering the qualification must take to heart: the reworking of the qualification has been focused on providing (a) greater flexibility in delivery, and (b) direction in respect of the extent and quality of the practical component, which has frequently failed to be of high quality in the delivery of the NC(V).
8. Vocational programmes require a co-operative approach to curriculum which brings the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Basic Education, higher education institutions (individually and through USAf), Umalusi, private assessment bodies, experienced lecturers and/or teachers, the QCTO, professional bodies (where relevant) and industry together to create the curricula for a qualification with currency in both the workplace and higher education. This injunction for co-operation between the public and private sector, between further education and its higher education counterpart, and between the quality councils intends to drive the articulation agenda for this qualification as well as the drive for widespread recognition. Nonetheless, the primary purpose of the qualification must remain the holistic