

2025 GEC POLICY UPDATE

GEC MASTER TRAINERS

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PURPOSE OF THE PRESENTATION

To provide an update on developments relating to the GEC policy



INTRODUCTION



THE GEC ASSESSMENT MODEL

- a) The GEC was approved as a programme for improving teaching and learning and assessment in the GET band by the Council of Education Ministers.
- b) The General Education Certificate (GEC) is seen as an important qualification that will improve career pathing, employability and reduce dropout rates of South African youth.
- c) It allows for learners, after 10 years of schooling (Grade R-9), to be recognised for their levels of curriculum attainment, general capabilities, and talents through the issuing of a report card or certificate.



Goals of the GEC

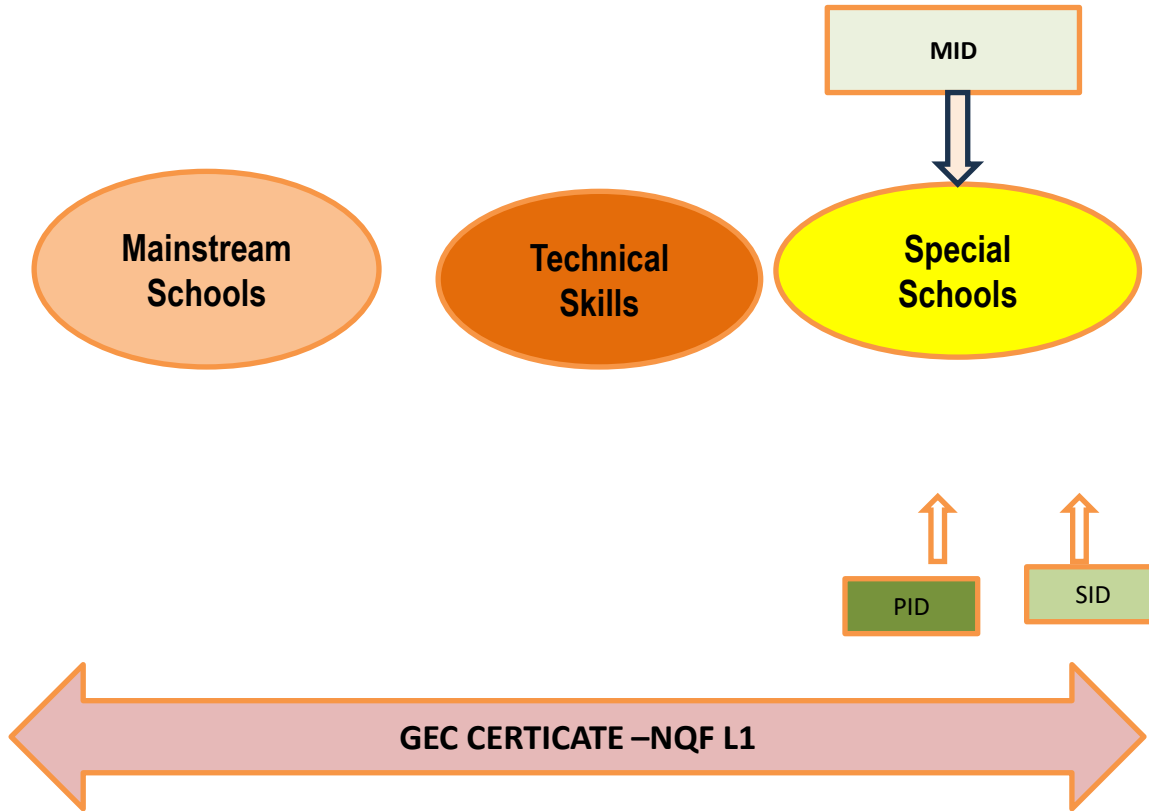
- a) Recognise the holistic skill-set for learners over schooling in GET.
- b) Set an appropriate curriculum/assessment standard to be achieved at the end of Grade 9.
- c) Enable learners to access further education streams linked to 3-stream model.
- d) Integrate and facilitate the assessment of 21st century skills (critical thinking; creative thinking; collaboration; communication; and cognition (meta)).
- e) To award learners a report card/certificate that reflects the skills, talents and competencies that will be inclusive to all learners and assist them transition from school to work or further education.



LEARNERS EXITING THE GET BAND



UNDERSTANDING THE GET BAND



LEARNERS EXITING GET BAND

School	Learner intellectual Ability	Subjects	Pathway
Mainstream (Academic)	Do not have any intellectual disabilities	Academic subjects i.e :Languages; EMS, Technology, Math;SS,CA	FET Phase TVET Colleges
Mainstream (Vocational)	Do not have any intellectual disabilities	Occupational and Vocational Subjects-No technology and EMS i.e Technology subjects (Mechanical'Civil, Electrical),Agricultural Sciences	FET Phase TVET Colleges
School of Skills	No intellectual disabilities Moderate intellectual disabilities Severe intellectual disabiliities	National Level and School Level (DBE provides framework)	TVET Colleges Apprenticeships, trade tests, and direct work placement



CERTIFICATION AT THE END OF THE GET BAND



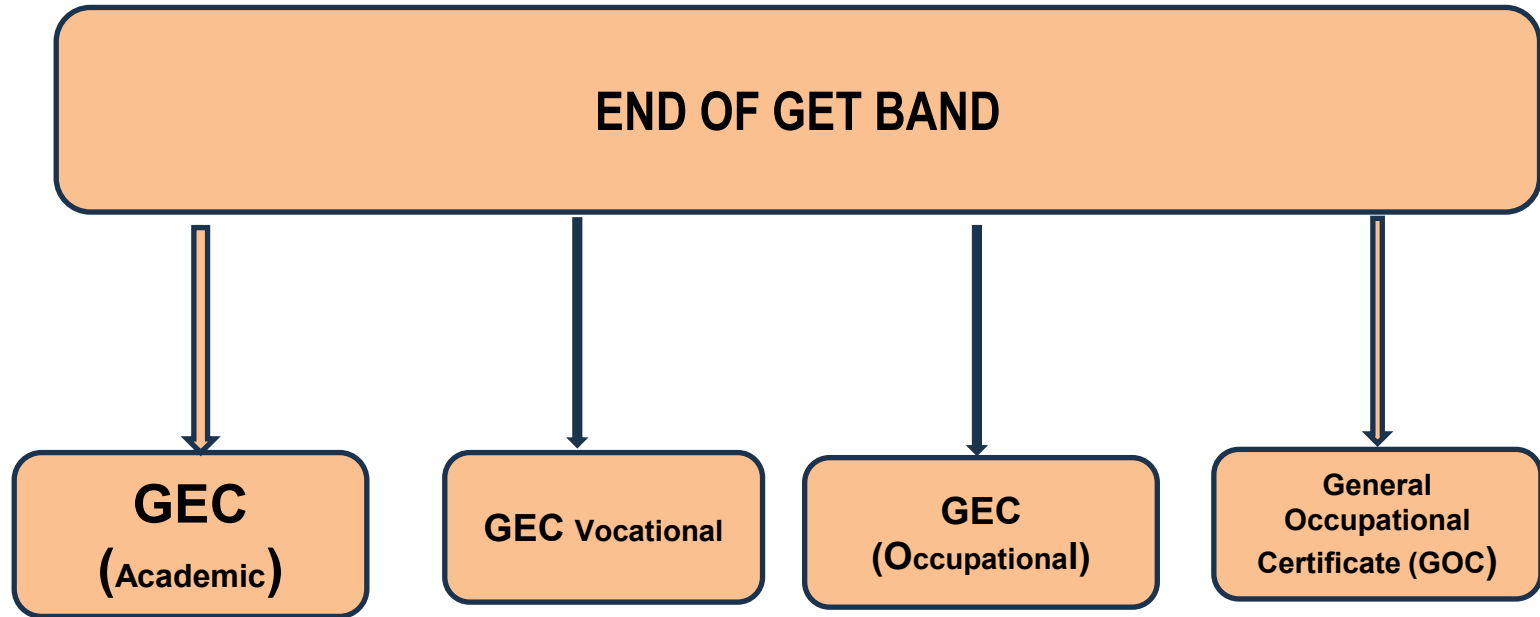
CORE PRINCIPLE

Learners should be exposed to a broad general education in their first ten years of schooling and therefore all learners should be issued with a General Education Certificate (GEC) at the end of the GET band.

However, the only exception would be the learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities (SoS) that may not be able to satisfy the requirements of the GEC. Such learners must be accommodated through an Occupational Certificate that provides them with the necessary occupational skills to enter the workplace.



THREE OPTIONS AVAILABLE



Implications for Vocational/Technical School



GEC Vocational Stream Pathways

Career Pathway for GEC Vocational Learner in Mainstream



Pathway to Practical Skills & Vocational Opportunities



Implications for School of Skill



LEARNERS AT SCHOOLS OF SKILL

- a) **Learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities** who cannot meet the demands of the traditional academic curriculum.
- b) **Learners with specific learning difficulties** (such as literacy or numeracy challenges) who need a more practical, hands-on approach.
- c) **Learners at risk of dropping out** of mainstream schools due to poor academic performance or socio-economic barriers.
- d) **Learners with strengths in practical or technical skills** who benefit from vocational training rather than purely academic subjects



Key features of the GEC Occupational

Features	Description
Pathways	Academic Stream -traditional curriculum outcomes (Mainstream Academic Schools) Vocational Stream-vocational competence (Mainstream Technical Schools) Occupation Support-needs stream → functional literacy, numeracy, life skills, and occupational competencies (School of Skills)
Assessment Approaches	Differentiated Standards: Same outcomes, different demonstrations (e.g., essay vs oral presentation)
Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)	Projects, practical work, workplace exposure assessed against unit standards
SBA	Greater weight on school-based assessment than high-stakes exams, reducing anxiety and reflecting abilities more accurate

For **Schools of Skills**, the GEC Occupational Stream is not just an academic exit certificate—it is a **policy-driven instrument of inclusion**. It ensures learners with barriers are certified at the same NQF level as their peers, but with recognition tailored to their strengths in **vocational, occupational, and life skills**. This prevents exclusion while avoiding stigma, and creates a bridge into meaningful employment or further training

General Occupational Certificate (GOC)

Feature	Description
Qualification Level	NQF Level 1, Minimum 120 Credits
Sub-Framework	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF) – QCTO
Purpose	Certifies basic occupational knowledge and application in a specific trade or role

- General Occupational Certificate (GOC) is a skills-based qualification designed for learners who want to enter the workforce with practical, job-ready competencies



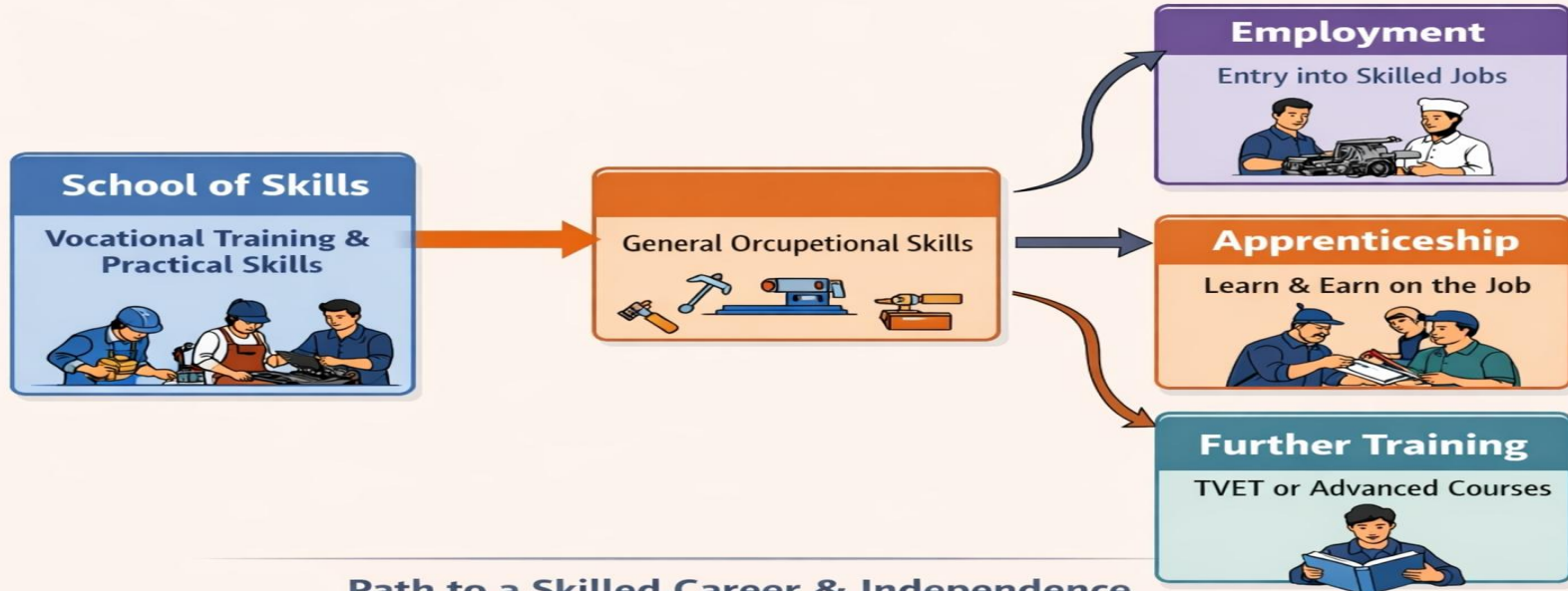
Key features of the GOC

Features	Description
Industry-Oriented Focus	The GOC is tailored to specific occupations (e.g., Commercial Cleaner, Bricklayer, Carpenter), preparing learners for real-world role
Three-Part Curriculum Structure	Knowledge/Theory Modules— foundational understanding of the occupation Practical Skills Modules – hands-on activities and applied techniques. Work Experience Modules – simulated or real workplace exposure
Assessment Model	Internal Assessments during training (formative and summative) External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) for final certification
Progressive Learning Design	The qualification can be delivered over multiple years (e.g., 3-year apprenticeship for trades like bricklaying), with meaningful exit points for industry.



General Occupational Certificate (GOC)

Career Pathway for School of Skills Learner



Path to a Skilled Career & Independence



GEC Occupational Stream

Policy Dimension	Implications for Schools of Skills
Equity & Inclusivity	Certification must balance fairness for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities alongside academically inclined peers. The principle of equality applies: standards are not diluted, but recognition is differentiated to reflect learners' capabilities.
Framework Alignment	The GEC Occupational Stream is formally recognised at NQF Level 1 , the same as mainstream GEC. For SoS learners, outcomes are modified to emphasise occupational and life skills rather than purely academic mastery.
Recognition of Achievement	Certificates validate what learners <i>can do</i> (skills, practical knowledge, employability). Even if mastery in traditional subjects is limited, learners can demonstrate workplace numeracy, basic accounting, or practical problem-solving.
Layered Certification	A shared umbrella qualification (GEC Level 1) with differentiated pathways:

GEC Occupational Stream

Career Pathway for GEC Occupational Learner in School of Skills



Pathway to Practical Skills & Vocational Opportunities



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GEC (OCCUPATIONAL) AND GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE



GEC Occupational Versus GOC

Dimension	GEC Occupational Stream	General Occupational Certificate (GOC)
Qualification Level	NQF Level 1, Minimum 120 Credits	NQF Level 1, Minimum 120 Credits
Sub-Framework	GFETQSF – Umalusi	OQSF – QCTO
Purpose	Recognises holistic skills at Grade 9 exit. Provides pathways into academic, technical, or occupational streams. Ensures inclusivity for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.	Certifies occupational competence in a specific trade/role. Strong industry focus with practical, hands-on training. Prepares learners directly for employment or apprenticeships.
Policy Perspective	Equity-driven: certification must balance inclusivity and credibility. Differentiated recognition without diluting standards. Layered certification (academic, technical, support-needs streams).	Industry-driven: certification validates competence in a workplace role. Includes simulated work experience. Designed to meet employer expectations and occupational standards.
Curriculum Focus	- Fundamentals: Language & Mathematics (30 credits each)	



GEC Occupation Stream Pros and Cons

PROS	CONS
Inclusive certification for learners with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.	Schools of Skills struggle with assessing 21st century skills.
Equity-driven: differentiates recognition without lowering standards.	Certification complexity: balancing inclusivity, credibility, and fairness is difficult.
Holistic: covers academic, vocational, and life skills.	Sometimes perceived as a “lesser” qualification compared to academic Grade 9 exit.
Flexible pathways into TVET, apprenticeships, or occupational programs.	Assessment burden: requires SBA, inclination tests, integrated projects, PoE.
Layered certification (academic, technical, support-needs streams).	Transition gaps: progression into higher-level qualifications can be limited.



GOC Pros and Cons

Pros	Cons
Strong industry relevance: aligned with trades (bricklaying, carpentry, hospitality).	Resource-intensive: requires workshops, equipment, and trained facilitators.
Direct workplace readiness: includes simulated work experience.	Narrow specialization: learners may be locked into one trade, limiting flexibility.
Clear employability: prepares learners for jobs, apprenticeships, or entrepreneurship.	Employer awareness: recognition still developing compared to academic qualifications.
Structured progression with meaningful exit points for industry.	Accessibility: entry requirements may exclude learners with higher support needs.
Competency validation through practical and applied knowledge.	Assessment complexity: External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA) can be challenging for learners with barriers.



Policy Development Project Plan



Policy Development Objectives

- Consolidate and analyse pilot study findings (2021–2025).
- Refine the GEC concept note.
- Develop assessed curricula for academic, vocational, occupational, and special schools.
- Review concessions and accommodations for inclusiveness.
- Draft and validate the GEC policy framework.
- Submit the final policy to DBE, UMALUSI, QCTO and Ministerial approval.



GEC Policy Development Project Plan Timelines

Project Plan & Timelines

Phase 1: Month 1: Initiation & Kick-off

Phase 2: Months 2–4: Data Consolidation & Concept Note Refinement

Phase 3: Months 5–7: Curriculum & Concessions Review

Phase 4: Months 8–10: Policy Drafting

Phase 5: Months 11–12: Validation & Finalisation



GEC Policy Development Project Plan

Month	Pilot Report Consolidation	Curriculum & Concept Note	(Accommodation and Concessions	Policy)
1	Develop data consolidation framework	Review GEC assessment model; draft refinement plan for concept notes	Review pilot findings for special schools	Review NQF sub-framework requirements
2	Preliminary analysis (2021–2022)	Refine GEC concept notes with pilot findings	Draft inclusive framework	Map GEC qualification vs NQF
3	Analysis of pilot data (2023–2025)	Draft assessed curriculum for academic schools	Concessions analysis (schools of skills)	Draft certification framework
4	Draft consolidated pilot report	Draft assessed curriculum for vocational schools	Expanded concessions (deaf/blind learners)	Policy drafting outline
5	Provide data insights for curriculum review	Draft assessed curriculum for occupational schools	Draft concessions & accommodations report	Consolidate inputs from other researchers
6	Statistical annex for concessions	Draft assessed curriculum for special schools	Stakeholder engagement with special schools	Draft initial policy framework
7	Refined data tables for inclusivity	Facilitate workshops; gather feedback	Consolidated inclusive findings	Refine framework with stakeholder input
8	Draft data-driven policy sections	Revise curricula based on feedback; integrate inclusivity	Draft inclusive sections of policy	Draft full GEC policy document
9	Integrate qualitative quantitative findings	Align curricula with NQF Level 1 requirements	Align inclusivity with White Paper 6	Integrate QA & certification compliance
10	Final validation of data sets	Collaborate with team to integrate curriculum into draft policy	Final inclusivity recommendations	<u>Revise</u> draft policy based on feedback
11	Statistical annex for stakeholder review	Support stakeholder validation sessions	Validate inclusivity provisions	Prepare final draft for submission
12	Final consolidated pilot report	<u>Finalise</u> curriculum annex for policy submission	Inclusivity annex for final policy	Deliver final GEC policy document



Proposal for Task Team



Proposal to the Task Team

- a) Establish a Task Team established to manage this process inclusive of DBE, Umalusi, QCTO and DHET managed by the DBE
- b) Following Bilateral Meetings conducted
 - Umalusi and QCTO -27 Nov 2025
 - QCTO -23 February 2026
- c) Broader consultation with the stakeholders involved with SoS – April 2026 to interrogate the options available.
- d) A policy development team appointed
- e) A GEC Pilot findings consolidated reports being developed
- f) Post the consultation session, a pilot project will be implemented relating to the GOC and GEC
- g) Infusing GEC Policy has commenced



Conclusion



Challenges

- a) The QCTO in terms of current legislation is not mandated to offer their qualifications in the GET band. If the GOC is accepted as an option, there will be a need for a special Ministerial dispensation to allow the QCTO to share the quality assurance function and certification role with Umalusi, in the GET band.
- b) The profile of the learners in the Schools of Skill are not comprehensively understood and there is a need for urgent research in this regard.



