Recognising your Competencies

Editorial

This is the last edition of our Newsletter for the year 2016.

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) is proud to showcase some of its major achievements for the second half of the year.

The close of the year also marks the end of the SQA's three year Strategic Plan (2014-2016). The Authority has managed to achieve considerably in terms of the objectives of its second Strategic Plan. However, due primarily to resource constraints, certain objectives remain to be achieved. The SQA will endeavour to ensure that the new Strategic Plan addresses these objectives.

In July, there was an accreditation visit of the Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA). The Accreditation Team of five members included two international consultants and was led by Prof. David Woodhouse, one of the international consultants. Congratulations are in order for the STA that has achieved considerably in institutional quality assurance. The Academy's recognition of the need to safeguard the interest of the students in its care led to its hard work and dedication to ensure that

all its ten (10) programmes reach the standard for the Authority to award full validation status. This is a major achievement for the Academy and subsequently the SQA.

Monitoring visits by accreditation teams of the SQA are necessary so that the Authority can gauge the extent to which tertiary education institutions that are provisionally accredited are making progress towards implementation of the recommendations of institutional accreditation visit reports. It is in this context, that there was a monitoring visit of three (3) days at the National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS). The Monitoring Visit Report of the NIHSS highlighted the many achievements of the Institute in the implementation of its action plan to address the recommendations of its Accreditation Visit Report. The SQA is without doubt that the NIHSS will be eligible for full accreditation status in the near future.

The SQA also engaged the services of Prof. David Woodhouse in July to assist tertiary education institutions to better understand the aspects of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and improve quality assurance procedures within their respective institutions. He was assisted by Mrs. Stella Anthony also an international consultant who is well known internationally for her work in quality assurance in education.

Another major achievement of the Authority for this second half of the year has been in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Training for RPL Personnel from

all Professional Centres, UNISEY and the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources Development was organised in October and was facilitated by a consultant from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA). The training marked another milestone in the Authority's effort to move the RPL agenda forward.

The SQA ends the year 2016 on a high note and with the conviction that the New Year will bring even more great achievements and successes.

On a final note, I wish the SQA team and all our stakeholders a happy and prosperous New Year 2017!

Validation Process of Programmes of Tertiary Education Institutions

Programme validation approves, for a specified period of time, a specific education and training programme or course, offered by an education and training provider or institution, leading to the award of a specific qualification or part of a qualification to be registered on the Seychelles National Qualification Framework (NQF).

A provisionally validated qualification meets the majority of the requirements of the NQF to be offered to learners but minor changes are required to achieve full validation status.

By validating a qualification or credit bearing course, the SQA has ensured that the qualification or course has met certain national quality assurance criteria which enable it to be registered on the framework at a specific level of the NQF.

A qualification / course registered on the NQF means that there can be confidence that the qualification / course is at the level at which the provider or institution has pitched it.

During the second half of the year 2016 twenty-two (22) Applications for Validation were submitted to the SQA by tertiary education institutions. This represents an increase of six (6) Applications compared to the first half of the year. Overall, the SQA looked at a total of thirty-eight (38) Applications for Validation for the year.

The 38 Applications were re-submissions with the exception of three (3) that were first time applications. Of these thirteen (13) reached the standard for the award of full validation status and for the qualification to be registered on the NQF.

The tertiary education providers or institutions that submitted Applications for validation of their programmes in 2016 are as follows:
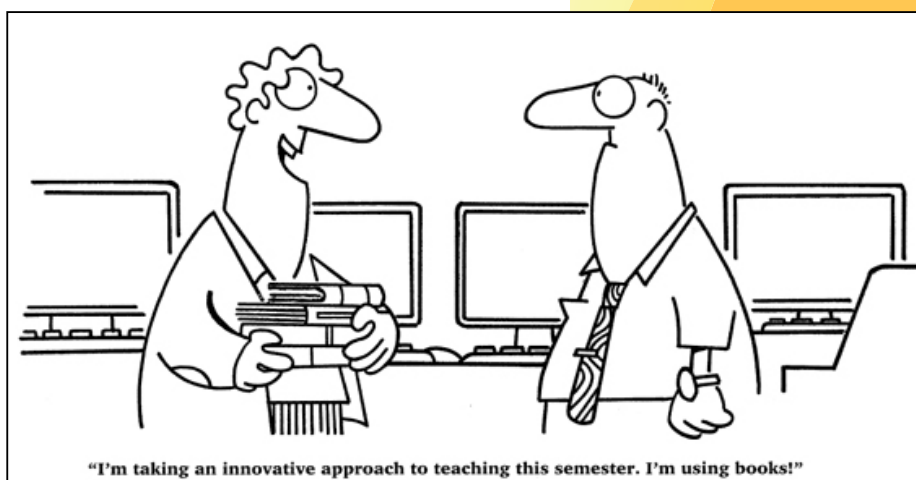
- University of Seychelles (Uni-iSey)
- Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education (SITE)
- Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA)
- Seychelles Institute of Technology (SIT)
- Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL)

As we reach the close of 2016, the SQA has on record seventy-three (73) locally developed programmes (inclusive of eight (8) credit bearing short courses/part qualifications) that have reached the standard for the Authority to award full validation status. This is thirteen (13) more than the overall total of fifty-seven (57) as at the end of 2015.

At this juncture the Authority notes with satisfaction that three (3) institutions ended the year with all their programmes fully validated: Seychelles Business Studies Academy (SBSA); Seychelles Institute of Art and Design (SIAD); and, Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA). Their hard work and commitment are to be commended. Congratulations!

The SQA is also proud to highlight that it has achieved the goal it set itself, i.e. that by the end of the year tertiary education providers would be at the stage where all or the majority of their locally developed programmes and/or courses known to the SQA would have reached the standard for the Authority to award full validation status.

On a final note, as tertiary education providers develop new programmes they will need to abide to standards set by the Authority. This means that all new programmes or courses deemed the merit of part qualifications must be fully validated prior to offering.

"I'm taking an innovative approach to teaching this semester. I'm using books!"

SQA Conducts Institutional Accreditation Visit at the Seychelles Tourism Academy

Institutional accreditation certifies, for a specified period of time, that an institution fulfils the quality requirements of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority and has the capacity to provide education and training programmes leading to the award of qualifications to be registered on the Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (NQF); and to assess the performance of learners participating in such programmes.

The first accreditation visit of the Seychelles Tourism Academy (STA) was conducted in 2011 followed by a monitoring visit in October 2013. The second accreditation visit took place from the 18th to 22nd July 2016. For this visit, the accreditation team was comprised of two international consultants and three local consultants.

Each member of the Accreditation Team made a presentation on their quality areas of focus

Name	Role
David Woodhouse	Leader of the Accreditation Team *(International Consultant)*
Vivek Ramnarain	Accreditation Team Member *(International Consultant)*
Jacqueline Gertrude	Accreditation Team Member
Mahrookh Pardiwalla	Accreditation Team Member
Marie-Therese Purvis	Accreditation Team Member
Prisheila Sophola	Coordinator

The Accreditation Team

Each member of the committee focussed on a specific area for the accreditation process and an initial report compiled during the visit was presented to the STA Management and staff on the last day of the accreditation visit.

Based on the Accreditation Team's evaluation, the STA has managed to address several of the recommendations recorded in the 2011 SQA Accreditation Report. This has resulted in significant improvement and progress in the work of the Academy. At the end of this second accreditation visit, the STA has received Provisional Accreditation valid for another two years. Given its commitment and engagement to fulfil the requirements towards the development of the Academy and the enhancement of tertiary education in our country, it is anticipated that the Academy will be able to address the recommendations of the second accreditation visit within the two year period.

The Accreditation Team presents the initial Accreditation visit report to the STA management, staff and invitees.

Meeting of SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation held on 20-23 September 2016, Johannesburg, South Africa

The SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) held a meeting from 20–23 September 2016 in Johannesburg, South Africa under the theme: "Accelerating Implementation of the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF)".

The meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officers and Directors of national institutions responsible for Certification and Accreditation of education and skills training, and experts from UNESCO, JET Education Services and the SADC Secretariat to review progress made by Member States to align National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to the RQF. The Seychelles was represented by the member of the Technical Committee Ms Fiona Ernesta, Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority.

The RQF provides regional standards and guidelines that enable common understanding, greater co-operation and integration in education and skills training in SADC. It enables comparability and recognition of qualifications and credit transfers, and facilitation of quality assurance on qualifications among all Member States. Furthermore, the implementation of the RQF will contribute to the implementation of the Addis Convention adopted in 2014 on the recognition of higher education qualifications across the African continent.

The Meeting had as main purpose to follow-up and discuss implementation of the decisions of SADC Ministers on the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) and provide update on recently approved and planned international, continental and regional commitments on qualifications frameworks. In particular, the Meeting would review the Level Descriptors of National Qualifications Frameworks in the region to determine the alignment of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to the RQF.

Delegates of the Meeting agreed that full implementation of the RQF is an urgent priority to equip the predominantly youthful labour force of SADC with relevant skills and expertise required for the region. It will also facilitate mobility of learners and workers in the region to realise its objectives for socio-economic development and alleviation of poverty as articulated in the revised SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RIS-

A souvenir photo of the SADC Technical Committee Members in attendance at the Meeting

DP) 2015-2020. In particular, SADC has agreed on an Industrialisation Strategy and Road Map 2015-2063 committing the region to industrial transformation through value addition of raw materials, and beneficiation of its abundant mineral wealth. This requires the development, quality assurance and imparting of new skills and competencies that are not currently available in the region, while upgrading existing ones.

The SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) reviewed its Terms of Reference to strengthen its technical and advisory mandate to Member States to accelerate implementation of the RQF to ensure that adequate skills and competencies are timely available to realise the demands of the renewed sense of urgency and focus for regional industrialisation and development.

As part of providing technical support and common understanding among Member States to fast-track alignment to the RQF, the TCCA developed a set of Regional Guidelines for Aligning NQFs to the RQF.

Delegates also deliberated and agreed on a comprehensive two-year Plan of Action which sets out the urgent actions that should

Meeting of SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (cont)

be implemented to effectively co-ordinate, facilitate and expedite implementation of the RQF. The priority actions include:

- Establishing and strengthening the institutional mechanism to effectively coordinate and support implementation of the RQF. As an interim in the short to medium term, some Member States offered to provide human resources/experts at institutional level, each for a period of six months on a rotational basis beginning October 2016 to support the SADC Secretariat, while a long term proposal is being explored to establish the Implementation Unit for the RQF as approved by the Ministers in 2011;

- Popularizing and facilitating understanding of the benefits of the RQF and NQFs among different stakeholders at regional and national levels through distributing of the RQF, conducting national consultative forums, developing and maintaining a web portal, and information dissemination and sharing through social media platforms;

- Building capacity of Member States and supporting the development and alignment of NQFs to the RQF in all Member States;

- Establishing and facilitating the work of a SADC Network of agencies for verifying qualifications at national and regional levels, and ensuring collaboration on verification in the African continent; and

- Monitoring and reporting progress on the development and alignment of NQFs to the RQF in SADC.

The Meeting ended on a high note, with delegates committing to expedite full implementation of the RQF in their countries.

SQA Conducts Monitoring Visit at the National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS)

As the SQA forges ahead with its activities to ensure that tertiary education institutions engage fully in the processes for institutional accreditation, a lot of emphasis is placed on fulfilling the recommendations laid down in institutional accreditation visit reports. It is in this context that the SQA conducts regular monitoring visits to the training providers working towards the full accreditation of their respective institutions. The monitoring visits enable the Authority not only to follow up on the achievements and progress the institutions have made in implementing their accreditation action plan but to also ensure that the institutions are provided with the support that will allow them to be eligible to apply for full accreditation.

The National Institute of Health and Social Studies (NIHSS), currently situated at North East Point, submitted its Application for a monitoring visit in September 2016. The monitoring visit was conducted from the 24th to the 26th of October 2016 with an accreditation team of three local consultants as follows:

The report of the monitoring visit highlighted that the NIHSS has made significant improvements in addressing many of the recommendations of the Accreditation report of 2012. The achievements include improved communication between management and staff, better access to modern technology, more programmes validated and better recreational facilities for students.

As the NIHSS prepares for its next accreditation visit, the institution remains committed to give due considaration to the recommendations stated in the Monitoring Visit Report of September 2016.

Name	Role
Monica Servina	Leader of the Accreditation Team
Cynthia Renaud	Accreditation Team Member
Marie-Therese Purvis	Accreditation Team Member
Prisheila Sophola	Coordinator

The Accreditation Team

Education brings about opportunity and in turn inspiration.
By: Bill Frist

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

In its endeavour to build capacity for RPL practitioners, the SQA organized training for RPL Personnel from all Professional Centres, UNISEY and the Ministry of Employment and Human Resource Development. The training took place in October 2016 at the Ministry of Education Hall at Mont Fleuri and was facilitated by a consultant from the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA).

Mr. Ramchurun shares the Mauritius experience of the RPL process

The training for RPL Coordinators was held from Tuesday 25th to Wednesday 26th October and the training for RPL Assessors and Moderators took place from Thursday 27th to Friday 28th October. A total of forty five (45) RPL personnel benefited from the training sessions. The participants were provided with information on RPL and were also familiarized with the Implementation of RPL in Mauritius. The areas of focus for the training were Portfolio Development, Assessment and Moderation. Other pertinent aspects in the implementation of RPL were also discussed. Participants were able to engage actively in a series of role plays adapted to the Seychelles context. This activity brought better understanding of the various steps and processes for the effective implementation of RPL.

Participants engage in group discussion

Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think By: Albert Einstein

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)(cont)

During the training, the team of RPL practitioners also benefited from two presentations, one delivered by SQA's local consultant for RPL on the Revised National Policy for RPL and the second on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Unit Standards presented by the SQA Officer for Standards Setting. The two presentations brought fruitful discussions and broadened the knowledge of the RPL personnel.

Mr Hubert Barbe delivers a presentation on the Revised National Policy on RPL

The RPL training was a news item on the national television. This provided the general public with information not only on the mandate of the SQA with regards to RPL but more importantly on the new developments in RPL and its importance for our country.

Participants receive their certificates as trained RPL Assessors and Moderators

SQA Organises Internal Quality Assurance Workshop for Professional Centres

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management that seeks to continuously monitor and improve the performance of its internal systems in order to systematically narrow the gap between what it is actually achieving and what it aspires to achieve in the interest of meeting the needs of its stakeholders.

To assist tertiary education institutions to better understand the aspects of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and improve quality assurance procedures within their respective institutions, the SQA organized a one and half day workshop on internal quality assurance from the 25th and 26th July 2016 with Professor David Woodhouse, international consultant and expert on Internal Quality Assurance as facilitator. He was assisted by Mrs. Stella Anthony whose work on quality assurance is also well known internationally.

Thirty representatives from ten Professional Centres, engaged fully with the subject matter and learned more on the procedures required to successfully incorporate quality assurance mechanisms in their institutions. They had the opportunity to discuss the constraints being faced by the institutions and learned how to overcome these challenges. They also discovered different quality assurance procedures that would better suit their respective structure and purpose.

It was stressed to the participants that an effective IQA sys-

tem needs a designated QA Officer and a Data Analyst.

These roles are essential if the institution is to be sure of the quality of its work, and if it is to meet the SQA's validation and accreditation requirements. For a small institution, these positions need not be full-time ones, but whatever the time fraction, institutions need to be provided with that level of extra resource compared to their current level of funding, as all are currently at full stretch.

As most institutions will not have on staff a qualified data analyst who can be released to support the QA Unit, one solution to providing a fractional position would be for the Secretariat for Professional Centres to employ a full-time analyst who will be able to carry out tasks for each individual (small) institution as required.

Participants have expressed their appreciation for the workshop and they are now better placed to implement and improve the IQA system in their respective institutions. The SQA stands ready to support institutions in this venture.

Workshop participants enhancing their knowledge on internal quality assurance.

CEO SQA engages with the groups during plenary

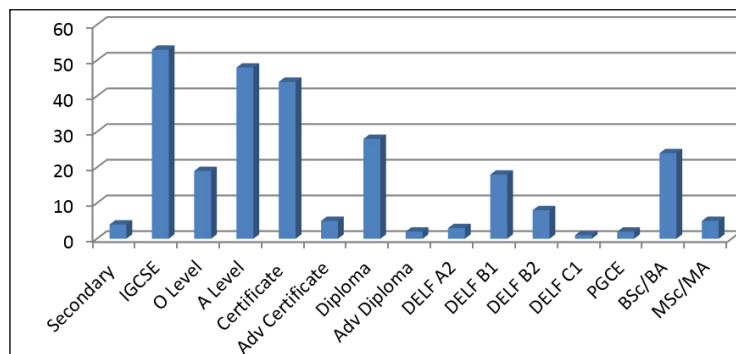# Evaluation and Certification of Qualifications

Certification of Qualifications

Certification of qualifications is a process which establishes the authenticity of qualifications. The SQA welcomes clients on a daily basis for this service. A total of 264 qualifications have been certified true copy from July to December 2016. The majority of learners pursuing tertiary education locally and overseas have certified their qualifications in the first quarter.

Table 1 and Graph 1 below show the qualifications that were certified true copy by type from July to December 2016.

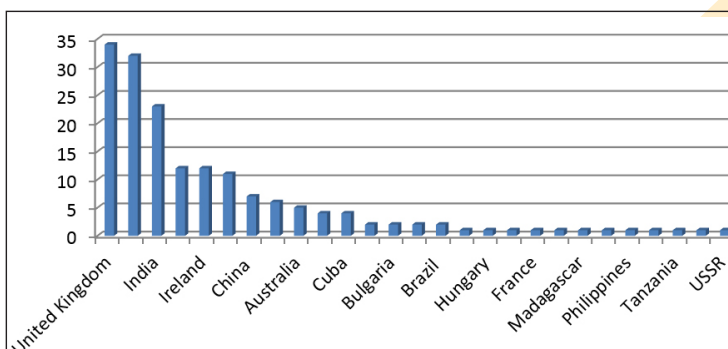| Month Qualification	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
Secondary	1	1		2			4
IGCSE	20	11	5	8	7	2	53
O Level	9	1	5	4			19
A Level	12	10	4	10	8	4	48
Certificate	20	7	3	7	5	2	44
Adv. Certificate	3		1		1		5
Diploma	14	3	4		2	5	28
Adv. Diploma			1			1	2
DELF A2		1	1		1		3
DELF B1	7	3	4	2	2		18
DELF B2	3	2		3			8
DELF C1		1					1
PGCE						2	2
BSc/BA	5	1	2	1	3	12	24
MSc/MA	1			1		3	5
Total	95	41	30	38	29	31	264

Table 1

Graph 1

Evaluation of Qualifications

The process of Evaluation of qualifications establishes the level of qualifications against the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). For this service, it is required that applicants submit their original certificates for verification as well as the academic transcript and proof of identity. The evaluation process may require that the Awarding institutions are verified.

A total of 170 qualifications were evaluated from July to December 2016. The countries with the highest number of qualifications evaluated in this period are the United Kingdom (34), the Seychelles (32) and India (23).

Table 2 and Graph 2 below show the distribution of qualifications evaluated by country of origin from July to December 2016.

Countries	Qualifications Evaluated	Countries	Qualifications Evaluated
United Kingdom	34	Brazil	2
Seychelles	32	Kenya	1
India	23	Hungary	1
Sri Lanka	12	Cyprus	1
Ireland	12	France	1
Botswana	11	Greece	1
China	7	Madagascar	1
South Africa	6	Malaysia	1
Australia	5	Philippines	1
USA	4	Swaziland	1
Cuba	4	Tanzania	1
Mauritius	2	Slovak Rep	1
Bulgaria	2	USSR	1
Pakistan	2		

Table 2

Graph 2

Progress on Unit Standards Development for 2016

The SQA has the overall responsibility for setting of standards for local programmes (Level 3 to 6 of the NQF). Standards are developed by National Standards Setting Committees (NSSC), following which they are evaluated by a Core Standards Committee (CSC), and are then approved by an Executive Committee (EXCO) if they meet all NQF requirements. Approved standards are registered on the NQF for a period of five years after which they are reviewed for re-registration.

There has been significant progress in the area of Unit Standards development for qualifications for the year 2016. This has been possible through the intensive one to one training conducted for the individual institutions by the SQA in 2016. The SQA conducted several sessions with different institutions with the objective of giving more in depth knowledge on standards development to the developers. The development of unit standards for tertiary education institutions for the year has focused in the areas of Office Management and Administration, Business Studies and Accounting, Engineering and Construction, Health, Art and Design. At the time of writing, unit standards for a total of forty eight (48) qualifications are at different stages of development/review or have been approved for registration on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as follows:
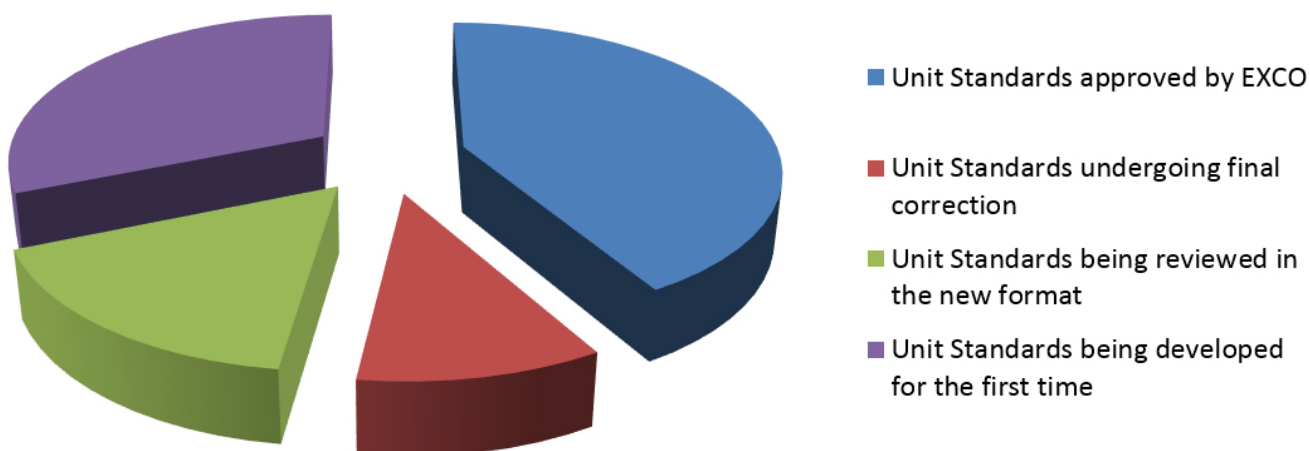
- Unit Standards for twenty (20) qualifications have been approved for registration on the NQF

- Unit Standards for five (5) qualifications are in the final approval stage/undergoing final revisions

- Unit Standards for eight (8) qualifications are being reviewed to satisfy the revised format adopted by SQA as of 2012;

- Unit Standards for fifteen (15) qualifications are being developed for the first time.

Sensitization is ongoing in other fields and sectors. In November 2016 unit standards were approved for an Advanced Certificate programme in Traditional Music Theory. The SQA hopes to intensify its efforts in one to one training with individual institutions to ensure standards for all locally developed programmes (Level 3 to 6) are developed and approved.

Status of Unit Standards Development

- Unit Standards approved by EXCO
- Unit Standards undergoing final correction
- Unit Standards being reviewed in the new format
- Unit Standards being developed for the first time

Change your thoughts and you change your world.
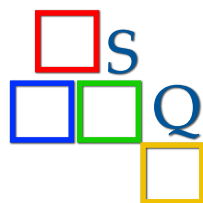*By: Norman Vincent Peale*

Within the SQA

Birthdays

Ms Fiona Ernesta
Ms Prisheila Sophola
Ms Edwina Payet
Ms Joan Amade

SQA staff members who celebrated their birthday during the months of July to December 2016. The SQA wishes all of you a very *Happy Birthday !!!*

"Are you busy, Mom? I need help with History from someone who was there when it happened."

Knowing is not enough, we must apply; willing is not enough, we must do By: Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

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