



LEARNING MATERIAL

LEARNER GUIDE

Conflict Management

SAQA ID	NQF Level / Credits
SP-210409	Level 5 · 8 Credits

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Prepared in accordance with Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) quality assurance requirements

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1. Welcome to the Programme

Follow along in the guide as the training practitioner takes you through the material. Make notes and sketches that will help you to understand and remember what you have learnt.

Take notes and share information with your colleagues. Important and relevant information and skills are transferred by sharing!

2. Skills Programme Summary (QCTO)

NQF Level 10 – Doctoral Degree
NQF Level 9 – Master's Degree
NQF Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree / Postgraduate Diploma
NQF Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree / Advanced Diploma
NQF Level 6 – Diploma / Advanced Certificate
NQF Level 5 – Higher Certificate <i>This qualification: NQF Level 5</i>
NQF Level 4 – National Senior Certificate
NQF Level 3 – Intermediate Certificate
NQF Level 2 – Elementary Certificate
NQF Level 1 – General Education and Training Certificate

Skills Programme Title	Conflict Management
Skills Programme ID Number	SP-210409
NQF Level	5
Credits	8
Quality Assuring Body (QAB)	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

3. Rationale

Conflict in the workplace negatively affect the productivity and quality of work. Effective and efficient management of conflicts to create peace and harmony in the workplace (on a prevention basis).

4. Purpose

To identify and manage the resolution of conflict between persons or parties in the workplace.

5. Exit Level Outcomes

A qualified learner will be able to:

5.1 Exit Level Outcome 1 (ELO 1): Identify and describe the main sources of conflict.

5.2 Exit Level Outcome 2 (ELO 2): Analyse and evaluate conflict submission by affected parties

5.3 Exit Level Outcome 3 (ELO 3): Distinguish types of conflicts

5.4 Exit Level Outcome 4 (ELO 4): Apply appropriate strategies to manage conflict.

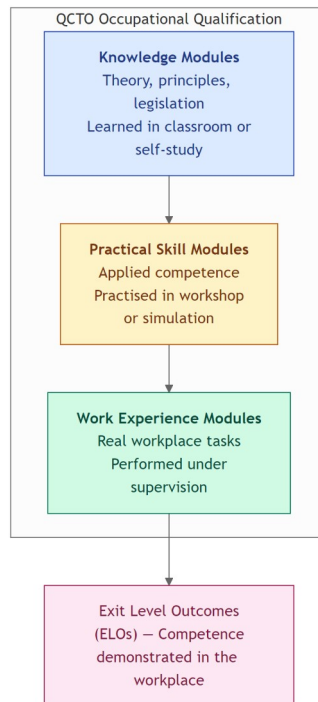
5.5 Exit Level Outcome 5 (ELO 5): Resolve conflict using appropriate techniques in the workplace.

5.6 Exit Level Outcome 6 (ELO 6): Develop and implement follow up plans

5.7 Exit Level Outcome 7 (ELO 7): Compile conflict resolution reports

5.8 Exit Level Outcome 8 (ELO 8): Communicate effectively with an employer and employees with regard to conflict issues.

6. Content Structure



6.1 Knowledge Component

Topic Number	Topic Title
Topic 1	Sources of conflict.
Topic 2	Types of conflicts
Topic 3	Strategies for conflict management.
Topic 4	Techniques in conflict management.
Topic 5	Conflict consequences analysis
Topic 6	Emotional intelligence in conflict resolution
Topic 7	Components of Conflict Resolution Report

6.2 Application (Practical) Component

Topic Number	Application Topic
Topic 1	Apply teamwork in conflict resolution process.
Topic 2	Profile a conflict at a workplace.
Topic 3	Analyse a conflict profile and determine the causes of conflict

Topic Number	Application Topic
Topic 4	Determine and implement appropriate conflict management strategies
Topic 5	Select and apply conflict resolution techniques
Topic 6	Analyse and profile conflict consequences
Topic 7	Apply emotional intelligence in conflict resolution engagement
Topic 8	Compile and implement conflict resolution follow up plan
Topic 9	Compile conflict resolution report

7. Entry Requirements

NQF Level 4 or equivalent

8. Assessment Structure

Assessment Type	Description / Weighting
Continuous Assessment	Ongoing evaluation of learning — 30% of final mark
Written Test	Knowledge test under supervised conditions — 30% of final mark
Portfolio of Evidence (PoE)	Assembled learner evidence — 40% of final mark
Practical Assessment	Continuously evaluated during delivery — pass/fail gate
Supervised Examination	Written examination under exam conditions — pass/fail gate
Final Mark Calculation	$(\text{Written Test} \times 30\%) + (\text{PoE} \times 40\%) + (\text{Continuous Assessment} \times 30\%)$

The curriculum does not specify assessment weightings. The weightings above follow standard QCTO sector norms for this qualification type. Providers may adjust to match their own QMS.

9. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

RPL Provision	Details
RPL for Access	Learners may gain access through RPL for Access in line with the QCTO RPL Policy
Exemption from modules	Learners with existing competencies may be exempted from specific modules
Credit accumulation	Credits achieved may accumulate toward a full or part qualification
CAT	The Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) Policy applies

10. Accreditation Requirements (SDP)

Role / Resource	Requirement
Facilitator	Registered facilitator with subject matter expertise and a recognised facilitation qualification
Assessor	Registered assessor with the relevant QCTO quality partner
Moderator	Registered moderator with the relevant QCTO quality partner
Facilities	Furnished classroom compliant with OHS requirements

Provider-specific accreditation numbers and qualification evidence must be captured in the provider's QMS file.

11. Types of Activities You Can Expect

To accommodate your learning preferences, a variety of different types of activities are included in the formative and summative assessments. They will assist you to achieve the outcomes (correct results) and should guide you through the learning process, making learning a positive and pleasant experience.

The table below provides you with more information about the types of activities.

Types of Activities	Description	Purpose
Knowledge Topics	You are required to complete these activities on your own.	These activities test your understanding and ability to apply the information.
Skills Application Activities	You need to complete these activities in the workplace.	These activities require you to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the workplace.
Applied Knowledge	You need to collect information and samples of documents from the workplace.	These activities ensure you get the opportunity to learn from experts in the industry. Collecting examples demonstrates how to implement knowledge and skills in a practical way.

12. Learner Administration

12.1 Attendance Register

You are required to sign the Attendance Register every day you attend training sessions facilitated by a facilitator.

12.2 Programme Evaluation Form

On completion you will be supplied with a "Learning Programme Evaluation Form". You are required to evaluate your experience in attending the programme.

Please complete the form at the end of the programme, as this will assist us in improving our service and programme material. Your assistance is highly appreciated.

12.3 Learner Support

The responsibility of learning rests with you, so be proactive and ask questions and seek assistance and help from your facilitator, if required.

Please remember that this learning programme is based on outcomes-based education principles which implies the following:

- You are responsible for your own learning — make sure you manage your study, research and workplace time effectively.
- Learning activities are learner driven — make sure you use the Learner Guide and Formative Assessment Workbook in the manner intended and are familiar with the workplace requirements.
- The Facilitator is there to reasonably assist you during contact, practical and workplace time for this programme — make sure that you have his/her contact details.
- You are responsible for the safekeeping of your completed Formative Assessment Workbook and Workplace Guide.
- If you need assistance, please contact your facilitator who will gladly assist you.
- If you have any special needs, please inform the facilitator.

13. How to Use This Guide

This learner guide provides:

- Knowledge required to understand the skills programme topics
- Practical scenarios to support application
- Activities to prepare you for workplace implementation

You will be required to apply this knowledge in assessments and workplace contexts.

14. Learner Information

Please complete the following information. You will be asked to introduce yourself to the instructor and your fellow learners.

Learner Name (required)	
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Learner ID / ID Number (required)	
Programme / Skills Programme Title (required)	
The organisation you represent	
Your position in the organisation	
Workplace / Simulation Context	

What do you hope to achieve by attending this programme / what are your expectations?

(required)

Curriculum Structure at a Glance

Conflict Management

Component	Code	Section	Title	Topics / Activities / Tasks
Knowledge Component	KM-01	Unit 1	Knowledge component	Sources of conflict.; Types of conflicts; Strategies for conflict management.; Techniques in conflict management.; Conflict consequences analysis; Emotional intelligence in conflict resolution; Components of Conflict Resolution Report
Application Component	PM-01	Practical Section 1	Application component	Apply teamwork in conflict resolution process.; Profile a conflict at a workplace.; Analyse a conflict profile and determine the causes of conflict; Determine and implement appropriate conflict management strategies; Select and apply conflict resolution techniques; Analyse and profile conflict consequences; Apply emotional intelligence in conflict resolution engagement; Compile and implement conflict resolution follow up plan; Compile conflict resolution report

Unit 1: Knowledge component (KM-01)

Module code	KM-01
NQF Level	5

UNIT 1 · KM-01 · TOPIC 1

Topic 1: Sources of Conflict

1.1 Introduction

Conflict in the South African workplace is an inevitable reality shaped by historical inequalities, diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and the high-pressure dynamics of modern commercial environments. When individuals from various walks of life are brought together to achieve common organisational objectives, differences in perspectives, values, and working styles frequently surface. Understanding where these frictions originate is the fundamental first step for any NQF Level 5 practitioner seeking to maintain harmonious labour relations and productive organisational output. Without a clear comprehension of these underlying drivers, managers and human resource professionals often treat superficial symptoms rather than addressing the structural core of workplace disputes.

The multifaceted nature of organisational conflict means that disputes rarely stem from a single, isolated trigger. Instead, they are usually the cumulative result of systemic organisational challenges, communication breakdowns, and interpersonal friction. In the South African context, these dynamics are further complicated by transformation imperatives, historical workplace stratifications, and the balancing of diverse socio-economic expectations. By examining the root causes of friction, practitioners can develop proactive interventions that transform potentially destructive disputes into opportunities for organisational growth, innovation, and enhanced team cohesion.

1.2 What You Will Learn

- Identify the primary socio-economic and structural drivers of workplace conflict.
- Analyse the impact of communication breakdowns on team cohesion and morale.
- Distinguish between perceived unfair practices and standard organisational policy applications.
- Evaluate how resource scarcity contributes to competitive and hostile departmental dynamics.
- Explain the role of historical workplace inequalities in modern South African labour disputes.

1.3 Concepts and Definitions

To effectively navigate and resolve workplace disputes, practitioners must establish a shared vocabulary regarding the nature and origins of conflict. Conflict is generally defined as a dynamic process in which two or more parties perceive a threat to their interests, goals, values, or well-being. This perception often leads to opposing behaviours, emotional friction, and a breakdown in cooperative working relationships. Unlike mere disagreement—which can be a healthy exchange of diverse ideas—conflict carries an emotional charge and an element of perceived opposition that hinders operational effectiveness.

Root causes refer to the fundamental, underlying factors that initiate or sustain a conflict, as opposed to the immediate triggering events. For example, a heated argument over shift scheduling (the trigger) might actually be rooted in chronic understaffing and perceived managerial favouritism (the root cause). In organisational settings, understanding this distinction is crucial because resolving the trigger without addressing the root cause guarantees the recurrence of the dispute. Furthermore, practitioners must differentiate between substantive conflict—disagreements over tangible resources, policies, or strategic directions—and emotional conflict, which involves personal animosities, ego clashes, and threats to individual self-esteem.

Structural conflict arises from the design of the organisation itself, including reporting lines, workflow bottlenecks, and the distribution of power and responsibility. When job roles are poorly defined or overlapping, employees frequently experience role ambiguity and role conflict, leading inevitably to friction. Conversely, interpersonal conflict stems from personality differences, contrasting communication styles, and emotional triggers between specific individuals. Recognising whether a dispute originates from structural design or interpersonal chemistry allows practitioners to select the most appropriate intervention strategy, whether it be organisational redesign or targeted mediation.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

To understand how conflicts originate and escalate within organisations, theorists and practitioners rely on structured analytical frameworks. These models provide a lens through which complex human behaviour and organisational systems can be categorised and evaluated. By applying these frameworks, practitioners move beyond subjective guesswork and can systematically diagnose the true nature of workplace friction before selecting an intervention.

Framework	Focus	Example
Relationship	Interpersonal dynamics	Personality clashes
Structural	Organisational design	Resource allocation

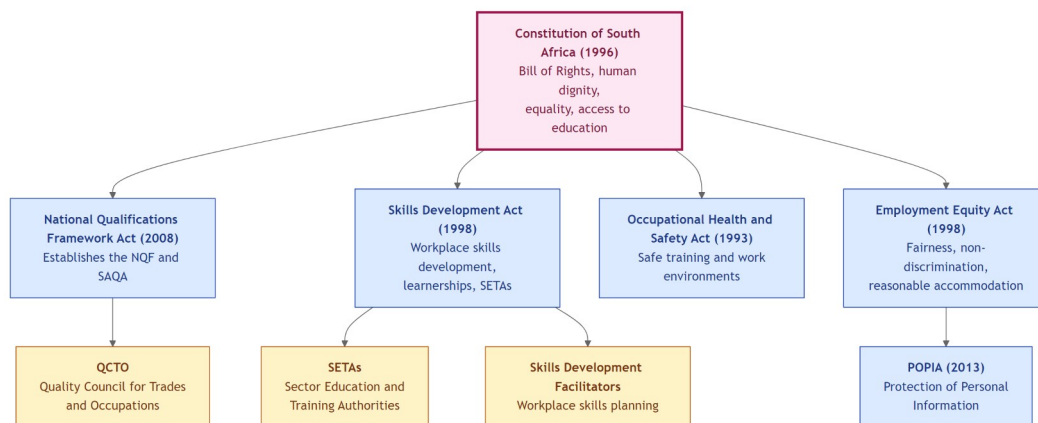
Framework	Focus	Example
Interest-based	Competing needs and goals	Budget distribution

The relationship framework focuses on interpersonal dynamics, emotions, and communication styles. Conflicts in this category often arise from poor communication, misinterpretations, and deep-seated stereotypes or prejudices. In a diverse South African workforce, historical biases and cultural misunderstandings can easily manifest as relationship conflicts if not actively managed through inclusive leadership and cross-cultural training.

The structural framework examines how organisational architecture, physical environments, and systemic constraints contribute to friction. For instance, when two departments are forced to compete for a shrinking pool of operational capital, structural conflict is virtually guaranteed. Similarly, unclear hierarchies and convoluted approval processes create operational bottlenecks that frustrate employees and ignite inter-departmental blame games.

The interest-based framework looks at the underlying needs, desires, and concerns of the parties involved. Unlike positions—which are rigid demands—interests represent the underlying "why" behind a person's stance. When conflict is analysed through this framework, practitioners look past emotional posturing to identify mutual gains and negotiable options, paving the way for sustainable, collaborative problem-solving.

1.5 South African Legislative Context



The South African legislative landscape provides a robust framework for managing and resolving workplace disputes, ensuring that organisational conflict is addressed within a legally compliant and fair environment. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) serves as the primary statutory cornerstone for regulating organisational conflict, establishing structures such as the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and bargaining councils to resolve disputes relating to unfair dismissals, unfair labour practices, and organisational rights.

In tandem with the LRA, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA) addresses conflicts arising from unfair discrimination and the need for workplace transformation. Unresolved grievances regarding unfair treatment, promotion denials, or workplace harassment frequently escalate into legal disputes under the EEA if organisational procedures fail to address them adequately. Additionally, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA) establishes baseline employment standards, reducing conflict by providing clear, enforceable rules regarding working hours, leave, and remuneration.

Furthermore, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 (OHSA) plays a critical role in mitigating safety-related conflicts. Employees frequently initiate work stoppages or grievances when they perceive their physical well-being is compromised by hazardous working conditions. By integrating these legislative requirements into internal policies, organisations demonstrate a commitment to fairness and legal compliance, thereby preemptively neutralizing many common sources of workplace friction.

1.6 Understanding Sources of Conflict

Socio-Economic and Historical Drivers

The South African workplace is unique in its historical trajectory, carrying the legacy of systemic socio-economic stratification. Many contemporary workplace disputes are subtly influenced by historical inequalities in education, wealth distribution, and job opportunities. When transformation initiatives, such as Employment Equity plans, are implemented without transparent communication and genuine engagement, they can inadvertently generate anxiety and resistance among various employee groups. Practitioners must recognise that resistance to change is frequently masked as operational pushback, but its roots lie in perceived threats to job security and career progression.