

DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

NOTICE 2169 OF 2023



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

**POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR
CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER (As amended, 2022)**

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**POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR
CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER**

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1. Definitions and glossary

Any word or expression in this document to which a meaning has been assigned in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act 67 of 2008) as amended, and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GFETQSF) (Act 58 of 2001) as amended, or SAQA's NQF Glossary of Terms (the 'NQF Pedia'), a copy of which may be found at https://www.saqa.org.za/sites/default/files/2019-11/NQFPedia_0.pdf has the same meaning when used in this document, unless otherwise indicated. Where a gloss is needed for the GFETQSF this is provided in the following glossary, and where a term is not defined in either the Act or the NQF Pedia, its usage in this policy document bears the meaning given below.

Access	Means the opportunity to pursue education and training, including relevant qualifications, part-qualifications, professional designations, opportunities in the workplace and career progression.
Accredited provider	In the context of the GFETQSF, 'accredited provider' means recognition of (a) the capacity of a private provider (independent school, private college or private adult learning centre) to offer a qualification on the GFETQSF, including the provider's implementation of the curriculum in support of the qualification at the required standard; and (b) the capacity of a private assessment body to assess a qualification on the GFETQSF, including the quality and standard of the assessment services and products provided by the private assessment body.
Articulation	Means the process of forming systemic, specific and individual possibilities of connection between qualifications and/or part-qualifications to allow for the horizontal/lateral, vertical and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work: i. Horizontal articulation is articulation within and between NQF sub-frameworks on the same NQF level; ii. Vertical articulation is articulation between NQF levels within an NQF sub-framework; iii. Diagonal articulation is articulation between NQF levels and across NQF sub-frameworks; iv. Systemic articulation is a 'joined up' system including qualifications, professional

	<p>designations, policies and various other official elements that support learning and work pathways;</p> <p>v. Specific articulation means aligning qualifications in inter- or intra- institutional agreements such as memoranda of understanding, credit accumulation and transfer and other mechanisms;</p> <p>vi. Individual articulation refers to learners being supported in their learning and work pathways by flexible admission, curricula, learning and teaching, and learner support systems such as the quality of qualifications and learning, career development services, and other mechanisms.</p>
Assessment	<p>Means the processes used to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies in a qualification, part-qualification or professional designation in order to:</p> <p>(a) make judgements about a learner's achievement;</p> <p>(a) assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching; and</p> <p>(b) evaluate and certify competence to ensure qualification credibility.</p> <p>Assessment includes evaluations that lead to judgements.</p>
Assessment body	<p>Means a department of education or a juristic body accredited by the Council as a body responsible for conducting internal assessment and external examinations.</p>
Council	<p>Means Umalusi, the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training, as contemplated in the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008) and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001).</p>
Certification	<p>Means the formal recognition of a qualification or part-qualification awarded to a successful learner.</p>
Comparability	<p>Means the degree of similarity between two or more qualifications/part-qualifications in terms of purpose, level, credits and learning outcomes used to determine the extent of credit accumulation and/or transfer within or between entities. The matching of curricular properties</p>

	should also be considered when comparability is determined.
Credit accumulation	Means the totalling of the relevant credits required to complete a qualification or part-qualification.
Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT)	Means the practice of accumulating credits from one or more cognate learning programmes through a provider and transferring those credits to be recognised towards a qualification/part-qualification in the same or different provider context. CAT is the recognition of formal learning.
Credit matrix	Means a system in which learning outcomes can be arranged and compared in levels of increasing complexity based on agreed groupings of credits, such as in modules/subjects or part-qualifications.
Credit transfer	Means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal relocation of credits towards a qualification or part-qualification on the same or different NQF level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions.
Credits	Means the amount of learning contained in a qualification or part-qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning.
Curriculum	Means a statement of the training structure and expected methods of learning, teaching and assessment that underpin a qualification or part-qualification, and intended to facilitate a general understanding of its implementation in the education system. The curriculum encompasses three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The intended curriculum: an official guideline document that provides the core features, principles, topic areas, specified content and skills, and expected level of cognitive demand. b) The enacted curriculum: the enactment/implementation/delivery of the curriculum by an institution. This includes leadership and management, the ethos and values of the curriculum, teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, learner support, institutional performance and the management of quality towards improvement. c) The assessed curriculum: the internal assessment and the external examination of the intended curriculum.
Designated variants	Means the layers of qualification specialisation nested within the qualification type in the GFETQSF (for example, the National Certificate (NC) as a qualification type at Level 4 of the NQF has the following designated variants:

	SC(a), NSC, NC(V), and NASCA; and the General Certificate (GC) as a qualification type at Level 1 of the NQF has the following designated variants: GCE, ABET and GETCA.
Exclusionary practices	Means any systems and processes that are designed to limit the opportunities of specific individuals or groups of people seeking access to further learning or professional development when they meet the legitimate criteria for admission or professional registration. Unfair exclusionary practices limit opportunities and are based on illegitimate criteria including but not limited to population group, disability, gender and affordability, and may be contested.
External assessment	Means any assessment conducted by an assessment body that is not directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning programme, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification.
Formal learning	Means learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment and is explicitly designated as such.
Further Education and Training	Means all learning and training curricula leading to qualifications on NQF Levels 2–4.
General Education and Training	Means all learning and training curricula leading to a qualification on Level 1 of the NQF, the level below further education and training.
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)	Means the sub-framework of qualifications on NQF Levels 1–4 developed and managed by Umalusi Quality Council as envisioned in sections 4–7 of the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008). The GFETQSF is a sub-system of the NQF that requires co-ordination with the sub-frameworks developed and managed by the Quality Council for Higher Education and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations.
Informal learning	Means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure; it can include deliberate self-teaching.
Learner	Means anyone of any age engaged in learning at any level of the NQF, and in any NQF, work or social context, including formal, informal and non-formal learning; used interchangeably with 'student'.
Learning pathways	[See 'Articulation']

Learning programme	Means a structured and purposeful set of learning experiences comprising modules/subjects and other learning activities, which together contributes towards the achievement of specified learning outcomes.
Level descriptor	Means a statement that describes learning achievement at a particular level of the NQF and provides a broad indication of the type of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate to a qualification/part-qualification at that level.
Lifelong learning	Means learning that takes place in the context of everyday life, from a life-wide, life-deep, and lifelong perspective. It includes learning behaviours and developing knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values and competencies for personal growth, social and economic well-being, democratic citizenship, cultural identity, and employability.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	Means the comprehensive ten-level framework and system approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation for the classification, coordination, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications and part-qualifications.
Non-formal learning	Means planned learning activities not explicitly designated as learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part-qualification; non-formal learning is often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice.
Notional hours of learning	Means the agreed estimate of the learning time required by an average learner to meet the defined outcomes. It takes into account contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent on structured learning in the workplace and individual learning. Ten (10) notional hours equate to one (1) credit.
NQF Act	Means the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008, as amended.
Outcomes	Means the contextually demonstrated end-products of specific learning processes; outcomes include knowledge, skills and values, and may be generic or specific.
Parity of esteem	Means granting equal value and status to qualifications that are on the same NQF level but have different routes of study. Parity of esteem is achieved when both qualifications progress equally to employment and/or to further studies.
Part-qualification	Means an assessed unit of learning that is registered as part of a qualification on the NQF.
Professional body	Means any statutory or non-statutory body that sets professional standards and registers individual expert practitioners in an occupational field.

Professional designation	Means a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person's expertise and/or right to practise in an occupational field.
Programme	[See 'Learning programme'].
Provider	[See 'Recognised provider'].
Qualification	Means a registered national qualification.
Quality council	Means one of three councils, each tasked with developing and overseeing one of the three sub-frameworks that comprise the NQF to ensure that agreed quality standards are met: the Council on Higher Education (CHE) for the HEQSF, Umalusi for the GFETQSF and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF).
Recognised provider	Means, in South Africa, a public or private entity that offers any learning programmes that lead to qualifications and/or part-qualifications registered on the NQF, that is, (1) accredited by Umalusi or deemed accredited in the GFETQSF context, or (2) that is accredited by the QCTO as a skills development provider in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF) context, or (3) is a public institution or registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to offer programmes that are accredited by the CHE. Independent schools, private higher education institutions, private colleges and private community and adult learning centres must be registered with the relevant education department.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Means the principles and processes through which a person's prior knowledge and skills are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of one or more of the following: alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development. RPL is a recognition of informal and/or non-formal learning.
Registered qualification	Means a qualification registered on the GFETQSF of the NQF by SAQA in terms of section 13(1)(h) of the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008).
Standard	Means a statement of the level of quality or attainment required.
Sub-framework of the NQF	Means one of the three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks that make up the NQF as a single integrated system, namely the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework (HEQSF), the GFETQSF and the OQSF.

Umalusi	Means the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training established in terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001).
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2. Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CETC	Community Education and Training College
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EC	Elementary Certificate
FET	Further Education and Training
GC	General Certificate
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GEC	General Education Certificate
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GETCA	General Education and Training Certificate for Adults
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework
IC	Intermediate Certificate
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NC	National Certificate
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SC(a)	Senior Certificate (amended)

3. Preamble

- 3.1 Umalusi's Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) provides for the implementation of CAT in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF) within the context of the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008.
- 3.2 This Policy should be read together with the Level Descriptors for the South African NQF, SAQA's National Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of RPL (as amended) and Umalusi Policy for the Implementation of RPL in the GFETQSF. Where supplementary work or assessment is needed to address gaps found in the CAT processes, the relevant recognised provider may conduct an RPL process to assess the informal and non-formal knowledge and skills of the applicant that may address the gap, and award credits in terms of the RPL policy and rules.
- 3.3 CAT provides for the recognition of credits previously obtained through meeting the relevant credit requirements towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF. These credits accumulated towards a qualification or part-qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements towards another qualification or part-qualification. Decisions regarding the transfer of credit are made by fully recognised providers of education and training, in line with this *CAT Policy and Criteria* and the aligned Umalusi policy for CAT, once the necessary evaluations have been completed {section 5 of the SAQA Policy and CAT within the NQF (As amended, 2021)}.
- 3.4 In implementing this CAT Policy and Criteria, SAQA and Umalusi seek to achieve the objectives of the NQF by:
- a. developing, fostering and maintaining an integrated and transparent national framework for the recognition of learning achievements;
 - b. ensuring that South African qualifications meet appropriate criteria, determined by the Minister as contemplated in section 8 of the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008, and are internationally comparable; and
 - c. ensuring that South African qualifications are of an acceptable quality.

4. Background

- 4.1 The NQF is a single integrated system that comprises three qualifications sub-frameworks, coordinated by SAQA, as follows:
- a. the HEQSF overseen by the CHE,
 - b. the GFETQSF overseen by Umalusi, and
 - c. the OQSF overseen by QCTO.

The NQF structure recognises the distinctions and relations between various knowledge and skills domains in the basic, higher, vocational and occupational NQF sub-framework contexts.

- 4.2 The GFETQSF is constituted as a register of qualification types (general and vocational), some with designated variants, and each consisting of combinations of various subjects, each of which is supported by a prescribed curriculum and is subject to external national assessment. Umalusi sets and maintains standards through the quality assurance of the intended, enacted and assessed curricula. These standards relate to domains of knowledge and associated skills, and to the curriculum and assessment practices through which they are achieved.
- 4.3 Umalusi's Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (2014) outlines the nature and extent of the qualifications on the GFETQSF and supports the building of a common understanding of the relationships between qualifications. Through related policy, parameters for the design of national qualifications in the GFETQSF context are established. These parameters facilitate the general comparability of qualifications across the national system thus allowing for greater ease of access.
- 4.4 The GFETQSF comprises qualifications offered in formal education contexts.
- 4.5 All qualifications on the GFETQSF require the mastery of a body of (disciplinary) knowledge and related skills.
- 4.6 Quality assurance of the delivery of GFETQSF qualifications forms an intrinsic part of the development of the system of basic education as a whole, and of the GFETQSF specifically. Consequently, Umalusi monitors the implementation and quality assures those qualifications that it has registered on the GFETQSF. Umalusi certifies qualifications it has quality assured in accordance with the applicable policies.

5. Legislative context

- 5.1 In terms of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), Umalusi is the Quality Council (QC) for General and Further Education and Training as provided for in the GENFETQA Act (Act 58 of 2001) (as amended in 2008). It was established under the SAQA Act (Act 58 of 1995). It continues under the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), which came into effect on 1 June 2009.
- 5.2 In terms of the *GENFETQA Act*, Umalusi Council is responsible for the GFETQSF of the NQF. Section 27 of the NQF Act outlines the functions of the QC. To achieve the objectives of the NQF regarding the qualifications within the GFETQSF, section 27(h)(ii) states that Umalusi must develop and implement policy and criteria for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer for the qualifications within the GFETQSF.

6. Scope and application of this policy

- 6.1 This Policy and Criteria gives effect in part to the requirements of section 27(h)(ii) of the NQF Act. The policy refers to Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) as well as to exemptions.
- 6.2 This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies:
- a) Umalusi's Policy for the GFETQSF
 - b) Umalusi's Policy for the management of qualifications in the GFETQSF
 - c) Umalusi's Policy and Criteria for the development, registration and publication of qualifications for the GFETQSF
 - d) SAQA's Policy and Criteria for CAT within the NQF
 - e) SAQA's Policy and Criteria for the Implementation of RPL
 - f) SAQA's Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications and Part-Qualifications and Professional Designations in South Africa and
 - g) DHET Articulation Policy.
- 6.3 This policy applies to:
- a) All qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the GFETQSF
 - b) The specific policy for each qualification or part-qualification referred to in (a) above, which must be interpreted in relation to this policy
All public and all accredited private institutions of education and training that offer qualifications and part-qualifications registered on the GFETQSF.
- 6.4 This Policy and Criteria addresses responsibilities associated with credit accumulation and transfer in existing qualifications and with the development of new qualifications on the GFETQSF.

7. Purpose

- 7.1 The Policy and Criteria for CAT is intended to promote learners' articulation/learning pathways and lifelong learning, their access to new learning and the avoidance, where possible, of the repetition of learning they have already acquired.
- 7.2 The purpose of the policy for CAT outlined in this document is to provide guidelines for the General and Further Education and Training sector regarding the development of institutional RPL, CAT and assessment policies in the context of the national policies developed by SAQA and within the GFETQSF.
- 7.3 The Policy and Criteria for CAT strengthens the implementation of the NQF objectives, especially to:
- a. facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education and training and career paths {section 5 (1)(b) of the NQF Act}; and
 - b. accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training, and employment opportunities {section 5 (1) (d) of the NQF Act}.

- 7.4 This CAT policy and Criteria:
- a. facilitates the development of credible, efficient and transparent processes for CAT within and between the sub-frameworks of the NQF; and
 - b. intends to benefit individuals seeking to progress between qualifications and part-qualifications and the world of work.

8. Articulation within the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework

- 8.1 Articulation is the process of forming systemic, specific and individual possibilities of connection between qualifications and/or part-qualifications to allow for the horizontal, vertical and diagonal movement of learners through the formal education and training system and its linkages with the world of work. These connections may allow access to another qualification, the exemption of some prerequisites or minimum admission requirements for a qualification, or the acceptance of resulted learning from one qualification for the purposes of another qualification, i.e. the granting of credit. Articulation needs to take place simultaneously at systemic, specific (institutional/programme), and individual learner levels – and failing to address one of these levels could jeopardise the whole articulation opportunity.
- 8.2 In the context of the GFETQSF, articulation is horizontal/lateral in that it is within and between NQF sub-frameworks on the same NQF level. The intention is to promote learners' learning pathways and lifelong learning, their access to new learning and the avoidance, where possible, of the repetition of learning they have already acquired.
- 8.3 CAT and RPL are important mechanisms within the national education and training system that facilitate articulation. CAT is the practice of accumulating credits from one or more cognate learning programmes from a provider and transferring these credits for recognition for a qualification/part-qualification offered by the same or a different provider. Credits previously obtained may be recognised as meeting the requirements for a different qualification and, subject to identified limits, credits achieved towards one qualification may be recognised as meeting part of the requirements for another qualification. Credits have a direct relationship with notional hours in terms of learning required for a qualification or part-qualification in that one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning. In addition, credit accumulation will mean the sum of the relevant credits required to complete a qualification or part-qualification.

- 8.4 The relationship between qualifications gained by means of CAT is determined by research that establishes the degree of overlap and/or equivalence of related curricula in the respective qualifications that would allow for credit transfer. Qualifications that allow for CAT may be on the same or a different sub-framework.
- 8.5 Credit accumulation relates to the process of achieving subject statements/certificates progressively (i.e. not in a single academic year) towards a qualification. Provided that the subjects achieved over the extended period conform to the rules of combination for the qualification, the full qualification may be awarded upon request.
- 8.6 In the case of some qualifications, the maximum number of years in which to complete the qualification may be stipulated.
- 8.7 Not all subjects will be automatically considered for recognition or credit accumulation and transfer. Acceptance is determined by the nature and structure of the desired qualification and is established by an evaluation of equivalence at curriculum level.

9. Articulation across NQF Sub-frameworks

- 9.1 In the case of large-scale, national qualifications such as those on the GFETQSF, the regulation of articulation options between qualifications is possible, desirable and necessary. The articulation between a national qualification and others such as an NSC, a bachelor's degree, diploma or higher certificate on the HEQSF is possible because criteria for qualification purpose, curriculum, uniform quality assurance, and assessment are explicitly taken into account in determining the degree of comparability. In the same way, the articulation between a national qualification and others such as a GEC or an elementary, intermediate or national occupational certificate in the OQSF is also possible.
- 9.2 The processes used to make connections and enable CAT between qualifications in different NQF sub-frameworks include but are not limited to:
- a. the identification of access possibilities in a qualification policy;
 - b. the regulation of formal relationships between qualifications;
 - c. research that highlights the extent and nature of the overlap that can be used for articulation purposes; and
 - d. the active re-working of curricula and assessment across qualifications to create a functional and recognised bridge between one qualification and another.

10. Principles Governing the Implementation of the Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer

- 10.1 Mutual trust:** In the case of a qualification on the sub-framework, the recognition of credits offered by another system is dependent on the development of a relationship of mutual respect and trust, based on the nature and extent of the quality assurance regimes.
- 10.2 Research-based:** For the purpose of CAT in the GFETQSF, the relationship between qualifications in the GFETQSF context and qualifications in other NQF sub-framework contexts is determined by research that establishes the degree of overlap or equivalence between related curricula in the respective qualifications that would allow for recognition of learning and/or credit transfer.
- 10.3 Specificity:** The recognition of credits for the purpose of *transfer from one qualification to another* is determined by the nature of the qualifications, the relationship between them, the nature, complexity, and extent of the curricula associated with the subjects for which exemption and/or inclusion is required, and the nature of the assessment used.
- 10.4 Explicitness:** Umalusi will publish regulations that govern credit transfer.
- 10.5 Bilaterality:** Ideally, the recognition of some portion of the qualifications involved (generally subjects) should be bilateral, but there may be conditions in which the *recognition occurs in one direction only*. Such decisions are best made by an analysis of the portions to be transferred.
- 10.6 Transparency:** Rules, regulations, and any register of precedents that informs, influences, or governs decisions taken in respect to CAT must be:
- a. valid, fair, reliable and transparent; and
 - b. publicly available and made known to learners prior to enrolment.
- 10.7 Articulation by design:** Possibilities for articulation pathways, including within and between NQF sub-frameworks, and between NQF sub-frameworks and the world of work, must be included in the design and purposes of new qualifications and part-qualifications.
- 10.8 Access to CAT:** To recognise and transfer credit, the recognition of credit in a CAT process may only be considered for credits previously awarded towards a qualification or part-qualification registered on the NQF and offered by a recognised provider in South Africa.

- 10.9 Appeals regarding CAT decisions:** A recognised provider may appeal CAT decisions when credits linked to their NQF-registered qualifications/part-qualifications are not recognised by the providers to which learners seek to transfer.
- 10.10 Supplimentarity:** Where the CAT comparison process finds overlaps of less than 80% between the content and outcomes for which credits have been awarded and the modules/subjects for which CAT is sought, the relevant recognised provider:
- a. may choose not to recognise any accumulated credit and must provide advice and guidance on other learning pathway possibilities for the candidate; or
 - b. may conduct an RPL process to assess the informal and non-formal knowledge and skills of the applicant that may address the gap and award credits in terms of the RPL policy and rules; or
 - c. may require the learner to complete supplementary assessment before credits are recognised in terms of certification policy and regulations.
- 10.11 Parity of esteem is an entrenched principle:** Parity of esteem among institutions requires the ability and commitment to communicate diplomatically, offering constructive suggestions, avoiding the dictating of terms, and providing justification where articulation cannot happen.

11. Criteria for CAT Implementation in the GFETQSF

11.1 The principles will be achieved through the criteria for CAT implementation as explained below:

- a. Criteria for research-based quality comparison
- b. Criteria for transparency
- c. Criteria for currency of credit
- d. Criteria for articulation by design
- e. Criteria for supplementary work
- f. Criteria for parity of esteem
- g. Criteria for appeals regarding CAT decisions

11.2 Criteria for research-based quality comparison

- a. Quality comparison that is based on research must establish the relationship between qualifications and the degree of overlap or equivalence between related curricula in respect of qualifications that would allow for recognition of learning and/or credit transfer.
- b. The degree of similarity or overlap in the content being compared must ensure that learners have the necessary knowledge, skills and background to be successful in more advanced learning.

- c. Quality comparison must also consider the purpose of the learning concerned as well as its broader application.
- d. The comparison of curriculum content for which credit has been achieved must be based on credible methods of research that determine the extent to which Exit Level Outcomes and their curricular properties match, as guided by the NQF Level Descriptors.

11.3 Criteria for transparency in CAT

- a. Recognised providers must develop institutional rules for CAT that are aligned to *Umalusi's Policy and Criteria for CAT* and that also take into account precedents, and:
 - i. Are valid, fair, reliable and transparent; and
 - ii. Are available via the recognised provider's website, career advice office and other relevant and readily accessible public spaces as applicable, prior to student enrolment.
- b. Information about fees for CAT, where fees are charged, must be included in the general information supplied.

11.4 Criteria for articulation by design

- a. Credit transfer may be used towards:
 - i. The same qualification or part-qualification in a different institution; or
 - ii. A different cognate qualification or part-qualification in the same or different institution.
- b. Credit transfer can take place:
 - i. On the same NQF level or across NQF levels;
 - ii. In the same NQF sub-framework or across departments and different institutions; and
 - iii. Within a learning programme or across learning programmes, as applicable.

11.5 Criteria for supplementary work when requirements are not met

- a. In cases where learners do not meet the requirements for CAT, the relevant recognised provider should provide clear practical advice to guide learners to diverse learning pathway possibilities to enable their progression in efficient ways; or
- b. Supplementary work must be determined in a fair, consistent and transparent manner by recognised providers of education and training using credible methods;
- c. Supplementary work can be prescribed for the candidate for the recognition of the credits sought;
- d. An arrangement for supplementary work is established between entities; this arrangement must be governed by a formal agreement between the entity

at which the credit will be accepted and the entity that provides the supplementary learning; and

- e. Guidance for, and access to, the supplementary work must be provided for the students involved.

11.6 Criteria for parity of esteem

Parity of esteem is an entrenched principle: Parity of esteem among institutions requires the ability and commitment to communicate diplomatically, offering constructive suggestions, avoiding the dictating of terms, and providing justification where articulation cannot happen. Credit transfer is provided for transitioning:

- a. within a school
- b. from school to school
- c. from school to TVET college
- d. from schools to CETC
- e. across NQF sub-frameworks
- f. from learning programme to learning programme.

11.7 Criteria for currency of credits

Credits are transferred through CAT processes. These credits are limited to the structure of the qualification and the rules of combination of that qualification.

11.8 Criteria for appeals regarding CAT decisions

- a. There must be an appeal process. Learners, institutions or departments may appeal against decisions taken by providers on the transfer of credits. The appeals should comply with processes agreed to by Umalusi.
- b. If the learner is seeking CAT at the provider of choice and CAT is not approved, the learner will have to approach the provider where the qualification was awarded to lodge an application for appeal.
- c. The provider to which the learner is seeking access must consider and address the appeal via Umalusi.
- d. Each provider will need to have a specific 'Provider CAT Appeals' or 'Student CAT Appeals' process and formal structures in place, with Umalusi providing guidelines.
- e. The appeals procedure must be decided by Umalusi and be made known to the education and training entities and learners.
- f. The notice of an appeal must state the grounds on which the applicant is seeking the appeal.
- g. In appeals against CAT decisions when credits linked to their NQF-registered qualifications and part-qualifications are not recognised by the entity to which a learner is seeking to transfer:

- i. both of the education and training entities involved must be recognised providers and where applicable, registered with the DHET, in order to lodge or accept an appeal;
 - ii. the entity at which the learner obtained the original credits has the right to lodge an appeal;
 - iii. the entity the learner is seeking to access must consider and address the appeal;
 - iv. the CAT comparisons that led to the decision not to accept credits must be shared with and explained to the entity lodging the appeal; and
 - v. failing acceptance of this process and/or failing to reach agreement, both entities must together consult SAQA and the relevant Quality Council for a final opinion.
- h. Where an appeal/complaint cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, including the learner, the matter must be referred to Umalusi. Umalusi will decide what recourse is required to settle the matter, and Umalusi's decision is regarded as conclusive.

12 Responsibilities for the Implementation of Credit Accumulation and Transfer

12.1 As stated in the SAQA Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework (As amended), the development and implementation of CAT is the joint responsibility of the DHET, the DBE, SAQA, the QCs, education institutions and skills development providers, assessment bodies, recognised professional bodies and workplaces. The specific responsibilities of each contributor are outlined below.

a. Responsibilities of the DBE and the DHET

- i. Provide enabling legislative and planning environments for CAT;
- ii. Ensure that CAT principles and criteria are considered when designing and developing qualifications; and
- iii. Ensure the development and implementation at institutional level of policy and criteria for CAT.

b. Responsibilities of Umalusi

- i. Ensure effective alignment of CAT policies and principles within and between SAQA and other quality councils and institutional providers across the NQF;
- ii. Ensure that CAT principles and opportunities are considered when qualifications are designed and developed in the GFETQSF context;

- iii. Develop, promote and publish general and specific CAT regulations and guidelines for all large-scale national qualifications offered within and between sub-frameworks;
- iv. Collaborate with the CHE and the QCTO to ensure that effective CAT takes place;
- v. Determine the maximum number of years allowed to complete a qualification (it is hoped that most qualifications would allow as many years as necessary for adults, bearing in mind that many mature students have difficult life circumstances);
- vi. Work with recognised entities in the GFETQSF context to ensure that CAT is implemented consistently, and to ensure that the capacity to do so is developed;
- vii. Monitor the CAT practices of recognised providers in the GFETQSF contexts.
- viii. Undertake systematic work on the development of credit matrixes for the GFETQSF;
- ix. Initiate and oversee projects within the GFETQSF to strengthen the conceptual understanding of CAT, to build capacity in the use of credit, and to promote good practices where necessary;
- x. As and where applicable, to develop links for articulation and progression to promote CAT within the GFETQSF and between the GFETQSF and the other two NQF sub-frameworks by facilitating and encouraging formal articulation agreements between institutions and coordinated quality assurance systems;
- xi. Promote the collaborative development of curricula and qualification pathways between various types of providers to promote and enable successful CAT;
- xii. Provide a mechanism in the policies for quality partners for assessment and accredited skills development providers in the GFETQSF context to deal with unfair CAT practices;
- xiii. Collaborate in the national monitoring and mediation processes to advise and alert skills development providers in the GFETQSF context regarding potential and actual transgressions of Umalusi's CAT policy; and
- xiv. Report annually to SAQA, in the format prescribed by SAQA, on CAT implementation in GFETQSF contexts.

c. Responsibilities of assessment bodies

- i. Adhere to the principles and responsibilities as outlined in this policy;
- ii. Develop and implement a policy on CAT in accordance with the principles and responsibilities outlined in this policy; and
- iii. Report annually to Umalusi on the implementation of CAT across the GFETQSF.

d. Responsibilities of education institutions and skills development providers

- i. Adhere to the principles and responsibilities as outlined in this policy;
- ii. Develop, promote and implement an institutional CAT policy that is aligned to this policy, SAQA Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework (As amended, 2021, and The Articulation Policy for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa;
- iii. Demonstrate through internal and external quality reviews that institutional CAT practices are in keeping with the policies noted in (ii) above;
- iv. Provide career advice services on career pathways and articulation routes;
- v. Establish appropriate appeal mechanisms that include areas that need to be appealed against such as exclusion and noncompliance to CAT;
- vi. Avoid unfair exclusionary practices related to CAT and establish mechanisms to monitor and deter these;
- vii. Address the bridging of theory and/or practice components that are identified as weaknesses during admission processes, including through RPL;
- viii. Assist learners who seek to transition to the certifying institution as well as those who need to transition from the institution by making the necessary information available in a manner that enables the learner and does not harm the entity; a balance must be found in providing this information;
- ix. Develop and maintain information management systems that are compatible with the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) and other relevant government information management systems and submit the relevant data to SAQA using effective existing systems; and
- x. Report annually to Umalusi on the implementation of CAT across the GFETQSF.

13 Conclusion

- 13.1 A powerful and constructive Credit Accumulation and Transfer system is essential to deal with the realities facing thousands of South Africans who, having dropped out of school, failed matric or fared poorly in their final examinations, may need to start from scratch. As a QC responsible for the GFETQSF, Umalusi strives to foster credit accumulation and transfer as a means of enhancing access and promoting lifelong learning.

14. Implementation and Review

14.1 This Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (As Amended, 2022):

- a. comes into effect on the date of its publication for implementation in the Government Gazette; and
- b. will be reviewed procedurally after five years or earlier, or when necessary.

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework

General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework						
NQF level	Qualification types					Certificates for units of learning
Level 4	National Certificate (NC)					
<i>Designated variants</i>	Senior Certificate and National Senior Certificate (Colleges)	National Senior Certificate (NSC)	National Certificate (Vocational) Level 4	National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA)	Senior Certificate (as amended in 2014)	Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants
Level 3	Intermediate Certificate (IC)					
<i>Designated variants</i>	[NSC – Grade 11]		National Certificate (Vocational) Level 3	Intermediate Certificate of Education		Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants
Level 2	Elementary Certificate (EC)					
<i>Designated variants</i>	[NSC – Grade 10]		National Certificate (Vocational) Level 2	Elementary Certificate of Education		Subject certificates towards one or more qualification designated variants
Level 1	General Certificate (GC)					
<i>Designated variants</i>	General Certificate of Education (GCE)			General Education and Training Certificate: ABET	General Education and Training Certificate for Adults	Subject (LA) certificates for adult learners