



Credit Accumulation and Transfer Policy

2015

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AET	Adult Education and Training
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework
LLL	Lifelong learning
NoE	Naturally occurring evidence
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

1. Introduction

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act 67 of 2008) requires that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) develops Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT). This was done and gazetted in 2014. This BANKSETA CAT policy aims to assist BANKSETA to contextualise and implement CAT within the banking sector.

This policy for (CAT) is an enabling policy that is closely related to the revised SAQA National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (2013) and the revised SAQA National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment for NQF Qualifications, Part qualifications and Professional Designations. The three policies have been developed in an integrated manner to draw on a common conceptual basis and strengthen the interrelationships between Assessment, RPL and CAT in South Africa.

2. Definitions

The following definitions and observations are quoted from the SAQA CAT policy of 2014:

- **Credit** 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.
- **Credit accumulation** means the totalling of relevant credits required to complete a qualification or a part qualification.
- **Credit matrix** means a system in which learning outcomes can be arranged and compared in levels of increased complexity based on agreed groupings of credits, such as in modules or part qualifications. .
- **Credit transfer** means the vertical, horizontal or diagonal transfer of credits towards a qualification or part qualification on the same or different level, usually between different programmes, departments or institutions.
- A **credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) system** means an arrangement whereby the diverse features of both credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to

facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace. “Curriculum” in the context of this policy means the requirements for learner achievement of a qualification or part qualification in terms of knowledge, skills, and where relevant, also work experience.

3. Purpose of the policy

This policy facilitates the development of credible, efficient and transparent processes both for the accumulation of credit within qualifications and for the transfer of credit between qualifications and BANKSETA accredited providers and workplaces.

This policy intends to benefit individuals seeking to progress from one qualification or part-qualification to another either within the banking sector or between the banking sector and any other sector at any level on the NQF.

4. Rationale for the BANKSETA CAT policy

The drivers for this policy are as follows:

- The banks are large employers who deliver on-going training to their staff. The BANKSETA sector skills plan (SSP) update for 2009/2010 states: “the banking sector’s investment in training and development far exceeds the skills development levy”;
- The training provided by the employers covered: compliance, customer interface, management and leadership skills, specialist financial skills, information technology, and back office process and support skills
- Much of the internal training delivered by the employers is not unit standard aligned, rather it is aligned to the just-in-time needs of the product and services in this highly competitive business sector (although most of the banks are BANKSETA accredited providers – so they do have the disciplines of formal provision in place);
- The Financial Services Board (FSB) regulations demand that certain categories of employees be qualified and the FSB has gazetted a list of qualifications that they consider fit and proper for each category of adviser and financial product (Financial Advisory and Intermediary {FAIS} Act 37 of 2002 and Board Notice 44 of 2010). While the formal qualifications levels in the sector are high (80% are reported to have at least an NQF 4 qualification according to the BANKSETA SSP quoted above), the sector will benefit from a credit accumulation and transfer system (CAT) that provides a mechanism for the accumulation and portability of credit for the short courses delivered by each employer;

5. Description of the BANKSETA CAT system

Given the above rationale, the BANKSETA system has been designed to encompass both credit transfer and credit accumulation as follows:

It is a **credit accumulation system** in that general 'credits' towards the FETC: Banking are awarded to employees who can prove that they have passed matric. The general credits that will be awarded at this level are:

- 20 credits for having passed a South Africa first language at matric level;
- 20 credits for having passed a South Africa second language at matric level;
- 16 credits for having passed mathematics at matric level (note if the employee did not pass mathematics they can still accumulate the 40 credits for the 2 languages).

BANKSETA will **not** re-award these credits (the fundamentals in the FETC Banking); rather they will be recorded as an 'exemption' on the Learner Management System. This is not a transfer of credits because the outcomes of the fundamentals in the FETC: Banking do not match the outcomes of first language/second language/mathematics exactly but the outcomes are comparable enough to allow the full credit value of these subjects at matric level to be accumulated towards the award of the FETC: Banking. This practice is endorsed by the SAQA guideline document on quality assurance of fundamental components of qualifications (SAQA, 2005), which states on page 2:

"Learners who attained credits for languages/communication and mathematics at a schooling level should not be required to redo, or undergo RPL, (except in the sense of access to the qualification), of an equivalent level of learning."

It is a **credit transfer system** in that specific credits earned in the workplace are transferred to another institution (an educational provider) and accepted for the purposes of completing the full qualification.

6. Rules for the implementation of the BANKSETA CAT system¹

To ensure credibility of the system the following will be adhered to:

¹ These may be amended from time to time by BankSETA and providers/employers should take care to always use the latest version of this document

1. Only training that has been reviewed by a BANKSETA-appointed provider may be added to the CAT matrix. As new programmes are developed and trained by the employers these can be added to the matrix upon application. Applications must be made to BANKSETA and a fee may be payable after the initial CAT alignment project has been completed;
2. The BANKSETA appointed provider will convene a panel that will review the learning outcomes, content, assessment methodology and level of each employer's training programme and match these to the BANKSETA registered national unit standards in the:
 - a. Further Education & Training Certificate (FETC) NQF 4: Banking (SAQA ID 20185); and
 - b. National Certificate (NC) NQF 5: Banking (SAQA ID 20186);
3. Where a match between the employer's training programme and a registered unit standard is determined to be at least 80%, and where assessment involves more than a self-assessment, then the review panel will recommend a 'match' (note the panel will consider instances where the specific outcomes require learning that is obsolete and will take into consideration new practices in the sector as long as the match for the remaining specific outcomes is clear);
4. This 'match' will allow an employee who can prove that they have attended and met the assessment requirements for the employers' training to transfer the 'matched' credits towards the attainment of either the FETC Banking (SAQA ID 20185) or the NC: Banking (SAQA ID 20186);
5. The employer will be required to print, on approved stationery², a full list of all internal training attended by each employee. This list is to be given to each employee (and ex-employee) who requests it;
6. This list will then be submitted to an accredited BANKSETA provider by the employee with his/her portfolio of evidence for the balance of the qualification;
7. Credits will only be transferred from employer to BANKSETA approved provider (and from there to BANKSETA) when the employee completes the balance of the qualification;
8. Credits accumulated for matric will only be recorded when the employee completes the balance of the full qualification;
9. Employees can complete the balance of the NC: Banking or FETC: Banking through either recognition of prior learning (RPL) or formal accredited training or a combination

² Approved by BankSETA so that fraud can be detected – suggestions include use of standard font, layout, wording, colour, etc. Banks will be required to submit samples of this stationery so that providers can recognise them readily

of RPL and training. This is to ensure that the Exit Level Outcomes, Level Descriptions, Critical Cross Field Outcomes (CCFOs), and reflexive components of the selected qualification are assessed prior to the award of the full qualification and credits;

10. Employees may not earn a full qualification through the CAT process. The following restrictions apply:
 - a. FETC : Banking (20185) : employees must complete at least 30 (out of the required 120) core or elective credits through RPL, training or a combination of RPL and training. Employees can however, accumulate all the fundamentals of the FETC: Banking if they have matric with maths;
 - b. NC: Banking (20186): employees must complete at least 30 (out of the required 120) fundamental or core or elective credits through RPL, training or a combination of RPL and training;
11. Completing the portfolio of evidence will also ensure that the employee submits a portfolio and meets the formal SETA administrative requirements (copy of ID, declaring of authenticity, a certified copy of the employer transcript of internal training, etc.);
12. Credit transfer for an employer's training programme will only be permitted once for the award of one full qualification per employee (the same employer training programme may not be used to earn multiple qualifications). However, some internal courses are so long and detailed that they can be matched to more than one unit standard – this is permitted as long as the matched unit standards are all from one BANKSETA qualification (if they are from different qualifications then the employee must select which BANKSETA qualification he/she wishes to complete through this process). This is in line with the accepted RPL principle that credit should only be awarded for learning once (SAQA Criteria & Guidelines for the implementation of RPL, 2004);
13. BANKSETA accredited providers will have procedures in place to enable learners to apply for credit transfer and accumulation with their portfolios for the balance of the qualification³;
14. Information about the credit transfer and accumulation arrangements will be readily available to all employees whose employers have had their internal qualifications mapped to unit standards by BANKSETA's CAT provider. However, to protect the intellectual property of each bank the specific CAT matrices will not be published in the public domain.

³ A CAT application form has been designed to guide providers with this process. It details the step by step process to be followed. It can be found in annexure 2.

Annexure 1: Characteristics of CAT systems and BANKSETA's alignment to these

Naudé, Heyns and Keevy (2005)⁴ list eight characteristics of systems that combine both credit accumulation and credit transfer. According to them, a workable CAT system includes a focus on:

1. **Make use of a credit value which is assigned to the amount of learning** – the BANKSETA CAT system makes use of specific credit values for its transfer system (because the workplace training is first matched to specific unit standards which have a specific credit value). The accumulation system recommends that employees with matric may accumulate up to 56 fundamental credits towards the FETC: Banking;
2. **Learning outcomes as the basis for credit values** – while the internal courses trained by the banks are not linked to credits they all specify learning outcomes (and those reviewed to date list assessment criteria as well), thus the credit values can be deduced by matching the internal courses learning outcomes to the learning outcomes stated in the BANKSETA registered national unit standards;
3. **Verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level** – the South African NQF has 10 levels and each unit standard is registered at a particular level. By matching the learning outcomes of the internal training to the registered unit standards the corresponding SAQA level can be identified. Where there was some disagreement amongst the panel members the SAQA Level Descriptors were used as a 'lens' to review the internal training content and the NQF level was then determined for each internal training programme;
4. **Lifelong learning** – the need to catalyse life-long learning is one of the fundamental principles of the NQF and SAQA (2000:10) states that 'learners, in the course of study, may accumulate credits over time towards a qualification'. The banking sector's need for multi-skilling, re-skilling and on-going compliance makes lifelong learning an important driver in their skills development strategy. This has in turn driven the need for a flexible yet credible CAT system in the sector;
5. **Quality assurance of assessed learning** – the employer training reviewed to date is assessed in one of three ways:
 - a. Formal assessment (on-line or paper-based, marked by the facilitator or manager);

1. 4 This is quoted in the SAQA bulletin 9, 2 September 2006. The concepts are repeated and used to evaluate the BankSETA's CAT system

- b. On-the-job assessment done by the manager and recorded on the company learner management system;
- c. Self-assessment.

The courses that only used self-assessment were not given as much 'credibility' by the review panel. This is not to say that the content of these courses was inferior, but rather that there was less certainty that the learner has indeed learnt the material presented;

6. **The need to accommodate non-traditional learners** – this is a definite characteristic of the banking sector's need. These are working adults that are attending short, workplace-based training that is essential for their competitiveness, sustained employment and job enhancement and mobility (both within the current employer and outside in the wider sector). In most cases the employer's training is designed around job requirements and processes as opposed to defined subjects and unit standards and the training modules are not delivered in a standardised and sequential manner. These are not traditional school leavers entering formal education with a pre-determined pathway.
7. **Development of communities of trust** – the emphasis of this characteristic is that each employer needs to trust the quality of the training delivered by the other employers in the sector and trust the review team who analysed each training programme and matched the content/level to registered national unit standards. The oversight role of BANKSETA as a credible quality assurer plays a role here, along with the high levels of cooperation between the large employers in the sector;
8. The final characteristic deals with the **commonality of goals** that the role players in the sector have for their CAT system. BANKSETA has embarked upon this project to allow:
 - a. improved access into, and advanced standing towards, it's nationally registered qualifications;
 - b. recognition of different forms of knowledge – especially workplace knowledge;
 - c. a catalyst for its RPL initiatives;
 - d. credentialing and transferability of learning between employers;
 - e. portability of internal training outside of the providing employer to both different employers and to the formal vocational education sector;
 - f. a more flexible learning system for the sector that will allow employees to accumulate and transfer credits as they go so that they can determine their own pace and direction of learning;

- g. the training that is being delivered in the sector to be recognised so that more money does not have to be spent re-training the same knowledge simply to meet the compliance requirements;

References

1. BANKSETA sector skills plan (SSP) update for 2009/2010
2. Naudé L, Heyns R & Keevy JA. 2005. The call for Credit Transfer and Accumulation in South African
3. South African Qualifications Authority bulletin 9, 2 September 2006
4. South African Qualifications Authority, 2004. Criteria & Guidelines for the implementation of RPL.
5. South African Qualifications Authority, 2005. Guideline document on quality assurance of fundamental components of qualifications.
6. South African Qualifications Authority. 2000. The National Qualifications Framework: An Overview.