

**POLICY FOR  
CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION,  
RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER**

**UMALUSI**



Council for Quality Assurance in  
General and Further Education and Training

# **POLICY FOR CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION, RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER**

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**21 August 2015**

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General and Further Education and Training

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## FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF UMALUSI

Section 8(2)(e) of the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008) provides for the Minister to determine the three sub-frameworks of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and publish them in a Gazette. To that end, the Minister determined the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework through Government Gazette No 36006 of 14 December 2012, which was amended by Government Gazette No 36803 of 30 August 2013.

In terms of Section 27(h)(ii) of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), Umalusi must develop and implement policy and criteria, taking into account the policy and criteria contemplated in section 13(1)(h)(iii), for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer.

Umalusi hereby publishes the *Policy for Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* as it is applicable to the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mafu S Rakometsi', is located above the printed name and title of the Chief Executive Officer.

**Dr Mafu S Rakometsi**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
21 August 2015



# POLICY FOR CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION, RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER

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## Definitions

In this document, any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008) as amended, and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001) as amended, has the same meaning when used in this document, unless the context otherwise indicates.

Accreditation	<p>The recognition of-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the capacity of a private provider to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework, and the independent school's implementation of the curriculum in support of the qualification, at the required standard; and</li> <li>(b) the capacity of a private assessment body to assess a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework and the quality and standard of the assessment services and products provided by the private assessment body.</li> </ul> <p>As part of a quality assurance process accreditation attests to the capacity and the quality of the offering in a private provider or in a private assessment body.</p>
Act	<p>The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001) as amended.</p>
Articulation	<p>The process which formally creates recognisable (and recognised) connections between qualifications and part qualifications.</p>

Assessment	The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to- (a) assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching; and (b) evaluate and certify competence in order to ensure qualification credibility.
Assessment body	A department of education or a juristic body accredited by the Council as a body responsible for conducting internal assessment and external examinations.
Council	Umalusi, the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training; as contemplated in the <i>National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008)</i> and the <i>General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001)</i> .
Certification	The formal recognition of a qualification or part-qualification awarded to a successful learner.
Curriculum	The curriculum encompasses three components: a) The intended curriculum: an official guideline document which provides the core features, principles, topic areas, specified content and skills and levels of expected cognitive demands. b) The enacted curriculum: the enactment/ implementation / delivery of the curriculum in an institution which includes leadership and management, the ethos and values, teaching and learning,



	<p>extra-curricular activities, learner support, institutional performance and the management of quality towards improvement.</p> <p>c) The assessed curriculum: the internal assessment and the external examination of the intended curriculum.</p>
Exit point	A point in General and Further Education and Training at which a learner is required to demonstrate competence with a view to obtaining documentary proof of proficiency.
External assessment	Any assessment conducted by an assessment body, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification.
Further/Continuing Education and Training	All learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from Levels 2-4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
General Education and Training	All learning and training programmes leading to a qualification on Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework, which level is below further education and training.
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework	The sub-framework of qualifications developed and managed by Umalusi Quality Council for NQF Levels 1- 4 as envisioned in sections 4 – 7 of the <i>National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008)</i> .
Minimum outcomes and standards	As contemplated in the policy document, <i>National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12</i> , published Government Gazette No. 34600 of 12

	September 2011; and any other policy documents promulgated by the Minister(s) pertaining to qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of Qualifications and their institutions of provision.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	The South African ten-level framework provided for the registration of national qualifications.
Part-qualification	An assessed unit of learning or subject that is registered as part of a qualification/ recognition accorded to the achievement of part of a qualification registered on the sub-framework.
Programme	Means the same as curriculum.
Qualification	A registered national qualification.
Registered qualifications	A qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework by SAQA in terms of section 13(1)(h) of the <i>National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008)</i> .
Standard	Statement of level of quality or attainment required.
Umalusi	The Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training established in terms of the <i>General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001)</i> .

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CHE	Council on Higher Education
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NC (V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QRG	Qualifications Reference Group
QSC	Qualifications Standards Committee
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
USA	Universities South Africa

# POLICY FOR CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION, RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER

## Purpose

The Umalusi Policy for *Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer (CAT)* provides for the implementation of credit accumulation, exemption, recognition and transfer for qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF) within the context of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act 67 of 2008).

## Preamble

In terms of the National Qualifications Framework 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).

In terms of the GENFETQA Act, Umalusi Council is responsible for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF) of the National Qualifications Framework.

Section 27 of the NQF Act outlines the functions of the QCs. In terms of section 27 (h) (ii) Umalusi, must develop and implement policy and criteria for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer for the qualifications on its sub-framework.

## Scope of this policy

This policy gives effect in part to the requirements of Section 27(h) (ii) of the NQF Act.

This policy only refers to Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition as well as Transfers. Umalusi's policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (2013) is captured in a separate but related policy document.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- a) *Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework*
- b) *Policy for the management of qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework*
- c) *Standards and Quality Assurance for General and Further Education and Training Policy (September 2014);*
- d) *Policies associated with the qualifications under consideration; and with*
- e) *SAQA's Policy for Credit Accumulation and Transfer within the National Qualifications Framework (2015)*

This policy applies to:

- a) All qualifications and part qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.
- b) The specific policy for each qualification or part qualification referred to in (a) above must be considered in the interpretation of this policy.
- c) All institutions of education and training accredited by Umalusi (private) or “deemed to be accredited” (public), to offer qualifications and part qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.
- d) In the event that there is any noted contradiction between the qualification policies referred to in (a) above and this policy in terms of Credit Accumulation and Transfer matter, this policy shall take precedence.

This policy addresses responsibilities associated with existing qualifications as with the development of new qualifications on the sub-framework.

## **THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK (GFETQSF)**

The NQF is an integrated framework made up of three coordinated sub-frameworks each overseen by a Quality Council.

The NQF makes provision for an interdependent three-part structure for the development and management of the qualifications framework in South Africa, one which will recognise the distinctions and relations between knowledge domains, 'between mastery of a body of knowledge in formal

education' and the mastery of work-based competencies certified by professional or occupational designation.

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework is a sub-system of the National Qualifications Framework which 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.

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework is constituted as a register of **qualification types (academic and general vocational)**, some with designated variants, and each consisting of different combinations of 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 curriculum. These standards relate to domains of knowledge and associated skills, and to the curriculum and assessment practices through which they are achieved.

*The Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework* outlines the nature and extent of the qualifications on the sub-framework and supports a common understanding of the relationship of one qualification to another. Through related policy, the framework establishes parameters for the design of national qualifications. These parameters facilitate general comparability of qualifications across the national system thus allowing for greater ease of access and the possibility of credit transfer for learners.

The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework comprises of qualifications in formal education which are offered in institutions. Exceptions would include qualifications which, by design and intent, could be obtained without necessarily attending formal classes (e.g. National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA)).

All the qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework require the mastery of a body of (disciplinary) knowledge and related skills.

Quality assurance of the delivery of the qualifications forms an intrinsic part of the development of the educational system, and of the sub-framework itself.

Consequently, Umalusi monitors the implementation and quality assures those qualifications which it has registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework. It certifies the qualifications which it quality assures in accordance with the prerequisite Umalusi policies.

Umalusi is committed to the use of credit accumulation, exemption and transfer to support learners in accessing new learning and to avoid, where possible, the repetition of learning already acquired.

## **CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION, RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER**

Articulation is the process which formally creates recognisable (and recognised) connections between qualifications and part qualifications, whether within a sub-framework or across sub-frameworks. These connections may allow access to other qualifications; the exemption of some part of the prerequisites usually required for a qualification; or the acceptance of resulted learning from one qualification for the purposes of another qualification.

Credit accumulation, exemption and transfer, along with the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), are regarded as the major mechanisms within the national education and training system to facilitate articulation.

*Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* is the process whereby learners' achievements are recognised. Credits previously obtained may be recognised as meeting the requirements for a different qualification, and, subject to identified limits, the credits achieved towards one qualification may be recognized as meeting part of the requirements for another qualification. Decisions regarding the transfer of credit are made by the Quality Council(s) responsible for the qualifications in question, once the necessary evaluations have been completed.

The Departments of Education will be advised regarding the permissibility of credit transfer: such decisions in respect of qualifications offered by the Departments of Education need to be regulated before being implemented.

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

The relationship between qualifications by means of *Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* is determined through research which establishes the degree of overlap and/or comparability between related curricula in the respective qualifications which would allow for recognition of learning and credit transfer. Qualifications which allow for credit accumulation and transfer may be on the same sub-framework or on different frameworks.

Credit accumulation is defined as the practice of allowing the achievement of credits over a period of time and across examination sittings to be recognised for the completion of a qualification or a part qualification. Credit accumulation thus relates to the process of achieving subject statements/certificates progressively (i.e. not within a single academic year) towards a qualification. Provided that the subjects achieved over the extended period of time conform to the rules of combination for the qualification, the full qualification is awarded upon request for a combination. This practice is extensively used with the qualifications on the sub-framework.

For some qualifications, a maximum number of years allowed to achieve the qualification may be stipulated. Such limitations need to be captured in the qualification policy as well as the relevant directives.

Credit accumulation exemption and recognition refers to the acceptance of credits in relation to a qualification on the same sub-framework and on the same (or lower) NQF level(s). Thus certain credits from the NSC are recognized for the purposes of certification for the NC(V) (at Levels 2 – 4).

The number of subjects which may be recognized for the purposes of credit transfer to a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework may be equal to but not exceed the number of subjects (or credits, where relevant) considered from the receiving qualification at the point where the certification requirements are considered. Not all subjects will automatically be considered for recognition or credit accumulation and transfer: their acceptance is determined by the nature and structure of the receiving qualification and is established through an evaluation of their comparability at curriculum level.



It cannot be assumed that *Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* is bi-directional. It is possible that certain credits may be transferred from one qualification to another without there being a reciprocal arrangement regarding credit transfer.

## Articulation with other sub-frameworks

For large scale, national qualifications such as those on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, the regulation of articulation options between qualifications is possible, desirable and necessary. The regulation of articulation between a national qualification and others (such as a bachelor's degree, diploma or higher certificate on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), for example) is possible because issues of qualification purpose, national curriculum, uniform quality assurance and assessment are considered to be sufficiently understood and adequately managed.

The processes which can be used to forge connections between qualifications include the identification of access possibilities within a qualification policy; the regulation of formal relationships between qualifications; research which highlights the extent and nature of the overlap which can be used for articulation purposes; and the active re-working of curricula and assessment across qualifications in order to create a functional and recognised bridge between one qualification and another.

## PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY FOR CREDIT ACCUMULATION, EXEMPTION, RECOGNITION AND TRANSFER

**Mutual trust:** The recognition, for the purposes of a qualification on the sub-framework, 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 used by the partners to the agreement.

**Research-based:** The relationship between qualifications for the purpose of *Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* is determined through research which establishes the degree of overlap or comparability

between related curricula in the respective qualifications which would allow for recognition of learning and/or credit transfer. Qualifications which allow for credit accumulation and transfer may be on the same sub-framework or on different frameworks.

**Specificity:** The recognition of credits for the purposes 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 specific subjects to be recognized for exemption and/or inclusion, and the nature of the assessment used.

**Explicitness:** Agreements reached will be cast in the directives that govern certification, but also need to be more widely publicized, e.g. through regulation.

**Bi-laterality:** Ideally, the recognition of some portion of the qualifications (generally subjects) involved should be bi-lateral, but there may be conditions in which the *recognition only occurs in one direction*. Such decisions are best made through an analysis of the portions to be transferable.

## CONCLUSION

The need for a powerful and constructive *Credit Accumulation, Exemption, Recognition and Transfer* system is required to deal with the realities facing thousands of South Africans who, if they drop out of school, fail matric or fare poorly in their final examinations, generally need to start from scratch. As a Quality Council responsible for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, Umalusi strives to foster credit accumulation and transfer as a means of enhancing access and promoting lifelong learning.

## Appendix 1:

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### The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework

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





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