



# **Accreditation Guidelines for South African Accounting Diplomas and Degrees**

June 2020

# Policy amendments

These policies are amended from time to time to provide for developments within the profession and the education system. Please make sure you have the most updated version by downloading the relevant policies at [www.saiba.org.za](http://www.saiba.org.za).

## SAIBA contact details

Physical Address: The Workspace, Melrose Arch, 44 Melrose Boulevard, Birnam, Johannesburg

Postal Address: PO Box 7905, Centurion, 0046

Tel: 012 643 1800

E-mail: [saiba@saiba.org.za](mailto:saiba@saiba.org.za)

# Introduction

The SAIBA accreditation process contributes to the development of the accountancy profession by ensuring that suitably competent persons are allowed the use of the SAIBA designations.

This is achieved by assuring the quality of educational programs offered by Higher Education Institutions registered with the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology and professional qualifications offered by recognized Professional Accountancy Bodies.

This guideline document:

- Sets out the professional standards applicable to accounting programs that should be achieved to obtain SAIBA accreditation. This includes new, existing or planned accounting programs
- Provides details on how to maintain SAIBA accreditation by submitting annual reports and five-yearly review requirements, if applicable.

# Section 1: Principles underlying accreditation

## Principles

The principles governing the relationship between SAIBA and the program providers, including higher education providers and recognized professional bodies, are the following:

- ▣ Partnership: developing and applying the accreditation standards should be implemented as a collaborative process between SAIBA and the providers
- ▣ The accreditation process should review both the content and the process of obtaining an accountancy qualification. This will guide providers in delivering graduates that are able to accept entry-level jobs within the profession
- ▣ The program content and delivery should ensure that graduates are able to perform inquiries and critical analysis, think independently, apply logical thinking to abstract problems, and develop appropriate written and oral communication and interpersonal skills
- ▣ The program life cycle managed and implemented by providers should provide a clear path to completion. The program should demonstrate the objective to be achieved, the means to achieve the objective. The program should provide evidence that the objectives have been achieved and provide for a mechanism of review.

## Objectives

The SAIBA accreditation process has the following objectives:

1. Aligning the technical content of the program with the needs of the accounting practice and workplace
2. Obtaining confirmation that providers implement a quality assurance framework
3. Ensuring that the program enables the graduate to think critically, work independently, and develop good written and oral communication and interpersonal skills

## Technical content

Providers are required to indicate how the knowledge component of their programs aligns to the outcomes as set by SAIBA. Outcomes are determined with reference to:

- ▣ IFAC International Education Standards
- ▣ Accreditation standards and required knowledge areas outlined by the Professional Bodies

Where necessary a SAIBA representative will assess the content as included by the provider and refers the decision to a relevant SAIBA committee for final accreditation

## Quality assurance framework

SAIBA recognized the fact that in accordance with the Higher Education Act (1997), Higher Education Institutions are required to register with the Department of Education and that the Council on Higher Education (CHE) accredits their programs.

SAIBA therefore accepts programs accredited as higher education programs, at least at the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Diploma and Bachelor Degree level. Currently the minimum qualification level to obtain a SAIBA designation is NQF level 6 with at least 280 notional hours.

SAIBA also accepts programs as offered or awarded by professional bodies as recognized by the relevant SAIBA committee for the purposes of obtaining a SAIBA designation. Currently the following programs are accepted for accreditation purposes:

- ACCA Advanced Diploma in Accounting and Business
- CIMA Advanced Diploma in Management Accounting
- CSSA Program 3: Professional Advanced Qualification: Governance and Administration
- ICB – Financial Accounting (Certified Financial Accountant)
- IAC Diploma Cost and Management Accounting and Diploma Financial Accounting

## Section 2: Accreditation standards

Providers are assessed against the SAIBA accreditation standards. Successful accreditation provides evidence that the provider and the relevant program delivers graduates that have the required competence and professional attributes to accept entry level positions in an accounting practice or workplace.

Candidates for membership of SAIBA should gain enough advanced professional accountancy knowledge to enable them to function as competent business accountants in an increasingly complex and changing environment.

To obtain a SAIBA designation a candidate has to obtain a relevant qualification, practical experience and be assessed by the relevant SAIBA admissions committee. Assessment includes obtaining references from employers and others.

Successful candidates may use the designations Business Accountant (SA), Business Accountant in Practice (SA), Certified Business Accountant (SA) or Certified Financial Officer (SA).

The education program is therefore the entry point to obtain a SAIBA designation. This study should be long enough and intensive enough to permit candidates to gain the professional knowledge required for professional competence.

Candidates may pursue either a general non-commercial or general commerce qualification or a specialized accounting qualification. The former may lead to the designation Business Accountant (SA) and the latter to the designations Business Accountant in Practice (SA), Certified Business Accountant (SA) or Certified Financial Officer (SA). Our designation pathway is detailed below.

The knowledge part of accounting education programs should include the following subject areas:

- accounting, finance and related knowledge
- organizational and business knowledge
- information technology knowledge and competences.

The accreditation standards are used by SAIBA to assess whether a relevant degree will produce graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes required for entry into the SAIBA designation program.

Providers must demonstrate their ability to comply with eight accreditation standards.

The accreditation standards address the following accounting programs:

- an undergraduate program resulting in a Diploma or Bachelor qualification listed and approved on the NQF
- a postgraduate program resulting in a postgraduate qualification listed and approved on the NQF
- a professional program offered by a recognized professional body resulting in an award or qualification at the mid-tier level.

The focus of the accreditation standards is on both the education process and outcomes.

### Accreditation standards– including guideline and evidence requirements

Providers may use their existing program material to show evidence of compliance and submit these documents in electronic or hard copy to SAIBA. Templates of the application documents are included in this guide.

Only providers that have obtained final approval from SAIBA may advertise that they have met all the SAIBA accreditation standards.

A provider that has been successfully accredited by any of the following accreditation bodies or professional bodies is deemed to have achieved the accreditation standards as issued by SAIBA:

• SAQA	• CHE
• SAICA	• SAIPA
• ACCA	• CIMA

## Designation pathway

Designation	Appropriate for	Qualification	Experience
SAIBA	Students and other persons wishing to associate with a professional body	Not applicable	Not applicable
BA(SA)	Finance/Accounting department staff, consultants, non-financial managers working with the finance/accounting department	National Diploma/ Degree e.g. National Diploma Accountancy, B Com Accounting	2 years
CBA(SA)	Senior financial accountants and financial managers that heads up the accounting department	Honours degree e.g B Com Honours / CTA	4 years
Cert. Fin. Officer (SA)	Finance Executives that perform at the highest level within the finance/accounting department	Masters / MBA level qualification	8 years
BAP(SA)	Accountants in practice providing services to the public for a fee typically as accounting officers, independent reviewers	Specific commerce diploma/degree with specific accountancy subjects (Audit, Accounting, Tax, Management accounting, Commercial law)	4 years

## Standard 1: Qualification requirements

The program meets the following criteria:

- leads to the completion of a SAQA accredited bachelor degree, diploma, postgraduate award in South Africa or an award or qualification issued by a recognized professional body
- is delivered by a higher education provider registered with CHE or another entity as accepted by SAIBA.
- Evidence:
  - Proof of registration and reaccreditation due date
  - Declaration by the HOD that the provider is capable of delivering a quality program
  - A declaration of any adverse findings or cautionary notes as issued by an accreditation body to the provider (if any).
  - The most recent annual report for the higher education provider or similar acceptable document.

## Standard 2: Curriculum

The program meets the required knowledge areas and learning outcomes, as detailed in Section 3

### Guideline:

- The provider should map the content of the program to the knowledge areas and outcomes of SAIBA

### Evidence:

- Use the template provided in this document as a guideline to mapping exercise
- Provide subject outlines

A declaration from the HOD that the required knowledge areas are covered in assessment material including final examination papers

## Standard 3: Academic staff

The provider must demonstrate that appropriately qualified academic staff are available and capable of delivering the required learning outcomes.

### Guidelines:

- Academic staff must be in possession of at least the same or higher qualification than the program being taught or must demonstrate members who teach students in the program are equivalent professional experience
- A specialist academic staff member must coordinate knowledge areas
- Effective HR and performance measurement policies and procedures are being implemented

### Evidence:

- A list provided by the HOD showing the names, associated qualification and experience of academic staff, and the areas in which they teach.
- A declaration by the HOD that the provider has comprehensive policies and procedures in place.

#### **Standard 4: Staff development**

Academic staff are subject to continues professional development.

##### **Evidence:**

A list provided by the HOD that details:

- The professional development undertaken by academic staff over the past year, currently undertaken and planned
- Professional and scholarly activities in which staff are or have been involved for the past 1-2 years.

#### **Standard 5: Students**

Student entry, management, guidance and support and guided by policies and procedures

##### **Guidelines:**

- Policies and procedures are publicized and available to students
- Academic entry requirements to obtain the SAIBA designations are clearly communicated to students

##### **Evidence:**

- A declaration by the HOD that comprehensive policies and procedures are available, current and continuously updated
- A declaration by the HOD that the various options available to SAIBA membership and relevant designations are made available to students via study guides and other relevant material

#### **Standard 6: Resources and facilities**

Students are provided with adequate resources to successfully complete the program

##### **Evidence:**

- Provide a list of information resources and learning materials available to students.
- Details of how information resources are accessed by students.
- Details of class sizes, program delivery mode, staff: student ratios.

#### **Standard 7: Quality assurance**

Quality control of the program is assured

##### **Evidence:**

- Provide a list of curriculum design and implementation methods and teaching practices.
- Details of the assessment review policy and procedures.
- Details of the policy and procedures for monitoring and evaluating subjects.



**Standard 8: Graduate outcomes**

The provider monitors student placement and accommodates and seeks employer feedback

**Evidence:**

The HOD provides confirmation that these activities are undertaken and explains the process followed.

# Section 3: Required knowledge areas

This section prescribes the knowledge content of the professional accounting education program that candidates need to acquire to qualify as members of SAIBA. The content of the SAIBA professional accounting education program is aligned to that of International Education Standard 2 (IES2) of IFAC.

For these reasons, this section sets out only broad subject headings on the premise that members accountants will need to continually update their knowledge. Candidates should be aware of the Continues Professional Development (CPD) requirements of SAIBA and the additional education requirements for obtaining a practicing certificate and other licenses from SAIBA.

This section only sets the minimum requirement to obtain a SAIBA designation it should be noted that a designation does not imply a right to practice.

## The SAIBA Professional Knowledge Program

1. Professional accounting study is a prerequisite to obtain a SAIBA designation and is therefore part of the pre-qualification program. This study should be long enough and intensive enough to permit candidates to gain the professional knowledge required for professional competence:
  - a. The professional accountancy knowledge component of prequalification education should consist of at least three years of full-time study (or the part-time equivalent).
  - b. Shall consist of a completed degree or diploma.
  - c. Students should pursue and complete a degree or national diploma in an accounting or finance related field at an accredited tertiary institution, or a professional qualification, to gain this knowledge.
  - d. The content of professional accounting education should consist of:
    - I. accounting, finance and related knowledge;
    - II. organizational and business knowledge; and
    - III. information technology knowledge and competences.
2. The accounting, finance and related knowledge component should include the following subject areas:
  - a. financial accounting and reporting;
  - b. management accounting and control;
  - c. taxation
  - d. audit and assurance
  - e. business and commercial law
  - f. finance and financial management
  - g. professional values and ethics.
3. The organizational and business knowledge component should include the following subject areas as integrated parts to the qualification:
  - a. economics;
  - b. business environment;
  - c. corporate governance;
  - d. business ethics;
  - e. financial markets;
  - f. quantitative methods;
  - g. organizational behaviour;
  - h. management and strategic decision making;
  - i. marketing; and
  - j. international business and globalization.
4. The information technology component should include the following subject areas and competences as integrated parts to the qualification:

- a. general knowledge of IT;
- b. IT control knowledge;
- c. IT control competences;
- d. IT user competences; and
- e. one of, or a mixture of, the competences of, the roles of manager, evaluator or designer of information systems.

# Template 1: New higher education provider and new program

## Higher Education Provider contact details

Provider name:	
Faculty (or equivalent):	
Program name:	
Location:	Campus:
Contact name:	Position:
Email:	Telephone:
Signature:	Date:

## Program details

Name of the program	
Internal program identification number	
Level of award	
Duration of program – on full-time/part-time basis, as applicable	
Attendance mode	
Delivery mode	
Campus locations where program is offered	

## Program outline

Provide details of the program outline showing the distribution of compulsory and elective subjects over the duration of the program

## Core curriculum and assessment

Attach subject outlines, including assessment details, for all subjects relevant to the listed topic areas:

Required knowledge area	Subject/s code	Subject/s
Accounting information systems		
Accounting systems and processes		
Accounting theory		
Audit and assurance		
Commercial law		
Corporations law		
Economics		
Finance		
Financial accounting		
Management accounting		
Quantitative methods		
Taxation		

<b>Ethics:</b> Explain how ethics is incorporated across the curriculum		
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Standard	Relevant documents	Attached (please tick)	Page/Doc Ref
Standard 1: Qualification requirements		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 2: The curriculum		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 3: Academic staff		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 4: Staff development		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 5: The students		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 6: Resources and facilities		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 7: Quality assurance		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Standard 8: Graduate outcomes		<input type="checkbox"/>	
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