



PERSPECTIVES FOR
THE FUTURE

TOOLKIT: Public Sector Accounting Education Plan

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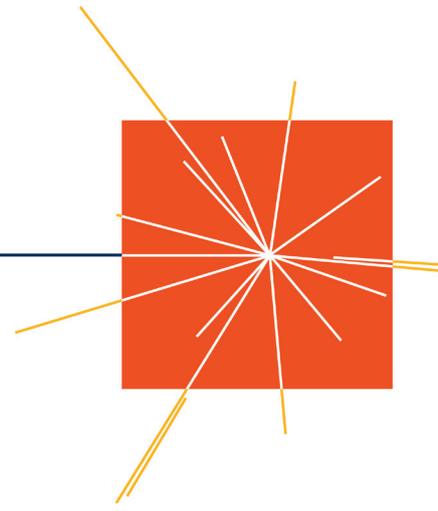
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TOOLKIT:

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING EDUCATION PLAN



The purpose of this toolkit is to assist countries integrate public sector accounting (PSA) into educational curricula by developing a pathway for the development of PSA professionals that is achievable and appropriate for the needs of individual countries.

Using International Education Standards as a benchmark of good practice

The toolkit is based on International Education Standards (IES) issued by the International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB) which serve as an international benchmark of good practice. The IAESB is an independent standard-setting body that develops education standards, implementation support materials, and application guidance for use by member bodies of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and other interested stakeholders in professional accounting education, such as: universities and education providers, employers, regulators, government authorities, accountants, and prospective accountants.

The overall objectives of professional accounting education, as articulated by the IAESB, are to develop the professional competence of aspiring professional accountants, and develop and maintain the professional competence of professional accountants. Professional competence goes beyond knowledge of principles, standards, concepts, facts, and procedures; it is the integration and application of technical competence, professional skills, and professional values, ethics, and attitudes.

While IES are not specifically tailored to public sector accounting, they are designed to build core competencies which may be adapted to any industry sector or role. In developing public sector accountants, education providers may include additional competence areas; increase the level of proficiency for competence areas; or develop additional learning outcomes to suit particular needs, such as those identified in the Public Sector Competency Framework developed in the PULSAR EduCoP.

Possible educational pathways

The Toolkit presents three pathway examples :

Pathway A

Maintains the existing framework, with PSA topics delivered as supplemental learning

Pathway B

Integrates some new PSA specific topics with existing elements to create a revised framework

Pathway C

Establishes a separate professional education and certification framework specific to PSA

A**Pathway A**

This approach relies on the existing initial professional education and certification framework already in place in the country for the development of accounting professionals. All PSA specific education and on-the-job (OTJ) training is then delivered separately through a Government Finance Academy.

B**Pathway B**

In this “hybrid” approach, PSA topics would be integrated into the existing initial professional education and certification framework already in place in the country for the development of accounting professionals. Any additional PSA specific education and OTJ training would be delivered through a Government Finance Academy.

C**Pathway C**

This pathway would establish a separate professional education and certification framework specific to PSA. Any remaining job specific education and OTJ training would be delivered through a Government Finance Academy.

Developing Accounting Technicians

Accounting Technicians (AT) are a cost-effective resource, and play an important role in the establishment of a holistic finance function. They may fill various operational accounting roles required in a public sector environment. These generally require a foundational level of knowledge, which may be obtained through initial AT training followed up with on the job training. AT are not fully qualified chartered or certified accountants, but may be proficient in the practical skills of bookkeeping, controls, cash management, budgeting, etc. AT programs generally focus on providing students with hands-on instruction, and can lead to a diploma or certificate.

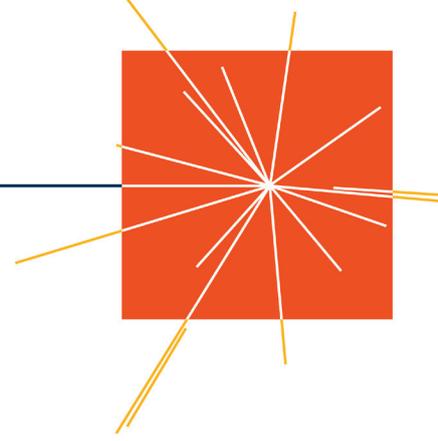
Role of national professional accountancy organizations

National professional accountancy organizations (PAO), recognized by IFAC, can support PSA professionals under Pathways A and B by creating a public sector membership tier and delivering continuing professional development (CPD) focused on public sector topics. Under Pathway C a separate public sector specific PAO, recognized by IFAC, would be envisaged. PAO should also consider offering a membership tier for AT which, among other benefits, would enable AT to participate in continuing education offerings and more fully engage them with the broader profession. Membership in an IFAC recognized PAO would commit all PSA professional members to the IFAC Code of Ethics.

Coordination and mutual recognition of learning

Coordination between the various educational providers is critical to ensure a holistic and well harmonized PSA educational framework. Each element of a pathway should build on previous components. Certification programs and Government Finance Academies should consider offering “exemptions” for learning objectives met through other pathway components such as university level education or other programs. Additionally, cooperation between the Government Finance Academy and PAO should exist to ensure that PSA education delivered through the Government Finance Academy is recognized toward professional and continuing education requirements.

USING THE TOOLKIT



The toolkit has been designed to help assess the existing educational provision in PSA and to assist with the process of designing and implementing a revised framework which effectively meets the needs of the country. The toolkit offers guidance to reform through the following steps:

1

Plot the current public sector accounting educational framework in the country. This should be at all levels - technician, undergraduate, and postgraduate – and include all providers – universities, PAO, Government and/or Government Finance Academy, any available certifications/qualifications, and public sector continuing professional development offerings. Once all elements of the current framework are plotted, the preparer may gain a sense of any missing elements by the prevalence of “white space” contained within the document.

2

Develop a holistic PSA education pathway. The Sample Pathways, IES Learning Outcomes, Competency Framework for Public Sector Accountants, and also public sector education models and curricula presented in the PULSAR EduCop (April 2018), should be used to create a country pathway. Taking account of the country context and PSA education needs, the pathway should consider any missing elements in the current framework and should ensure effective linkages and coordination between the various elements, so that each component recognizes and compliments the learning achievements of the others. The desired profile of instructors and students should also be identified.

3

Plot the newly developed PSA education pathway and assess its resource implications. The new framework can then be used to determine obvious constraints and resource limitations. These may include human resources, information technology, educational materials, facilities, budget, language, etc. Consideration should be given to whether potential instructors can be recruited locally and how potential instructors may be developed and trained. The pathway should identify potential partners and funding sources to support implementation of the framework.

4

Collaborate with relevant in-country stakeholders to further refine and develop the proposed education pathway. The aim is to gain consensus, and develop an action plan with defined roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder. It is good practice to establish an in-country PSA education steering committee or focus group. Relevant in-country stakeholders may include the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, the Supreme Audit Institution, selected universities, national and sub-national PAOs, training centers, government finance academies, international network or “Big 4” accounting firms, and other educational institutions.

5

The PULSAR EduCoP Program will help elaborate the contents and elements of curricula, and will introduce potential partners and resources to help implement plans.

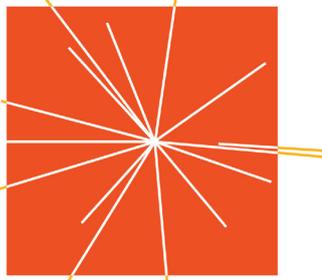
6

Monitor, update and revise the pathway as needed. The PSA Educational Pathway is meant to be a living document. The process should be monitored by the in-country PSA Steering Committee or Focus Group to ensure the pathway is modified as needed, and that knowledge and learning remain relevant and meet the needs of the public sector and the country circumstances.

PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING EDUCATION PATHWAYS - EXAMPLES

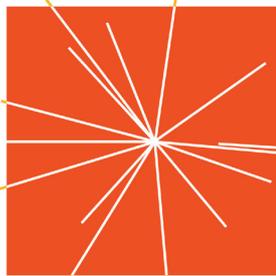
	Technician	Initial Professional Education (IES 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)		
		University Level - Bachelor's	University Level - Master's	Professional Accountancy Organization
A	Accounting Technician programs are often offered as vocational training to individuals to develop occupational skills in accounting; Vocational training may be provided at the secondary school level (grades 10-12) or at the postsecondary level and may be delivered through standalone courses, certificate/ diploma-granting programs, associate's degree programs and/ or apprenticeships.	<p>Introduce foundational PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPSAS Fundamentals • Introduction to Public Financial Management • Fundamentals of Budgeting and Management Analysis • Government Structure and Institutions 	<p>Develop Masters program(s) focusing on PSA topics</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Include advanced level PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula</p>	Rely on existing IES compliant professional education programs offered through the national PAO or international providers which, although not specifically targeting the PS, provide aspiring accountants with basic core competencies to prepare them for the public sector
B	Accounting Technician programs are often offered as vocational training to individuals to develop occupational skills in accounting; Vocational training may be provided at the secondary school level (grades 10-12) or at the postsecondary level and may be delivered through standalone courses, certificate/ diploma-granting programs, associate's degree programs and/ or apprenticeships.	<p>Introduce foundational PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPSAS Fundamentals • Introduction to Public Financial Management • Fundamentals of Budgeting and Management Analysis • Government Structure and Institutions 	<p>Develop Masters program(s) focusing on PSA topics</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Include advanced level PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula</p>	Incorporate PS topics into existing IES compliant professional education programs offered through the national PAO or international providers which build on the basic core competencies to prepare aspiring accountants for the public sector. The additional PS learning objectives incorporated at this stage will allow for a fewer number of PS and job specific learning objectives which must be attained through supplemental learning.
C	Accounting Technician programs are often offered as vocational training to individuals to develop occupational skills in accounting; Vocational training may be provided at the secondary school level (grades 10-12) or at the postsecondary level and may be delivered through standalone courses, certificate/ diploma-granting programs, associate's degree programs and/ or apprenticeships.	<p>Introduce foundational PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPSAS Fundamentals • Introduction to Public Financial Management • Fundamentals of Budgeting and Management Analysis • Government Structure and Institutions 	<p>Develop Masters program(s) focusing on PSA topics</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Include advanced level PS courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula</p>	Develop an IES compliant professional education program specific to the public sector. This may be delivered through partners recognized by IFAC such as the national PAO or in partnership with an international or regional provider. The additional PS learning objectives incorporated at this stage will allow for a fewer number of job specific learning objectives which must be attained through supplemental learning.

	Government Training / Finance Academy	Entry into the Profession / Certification / Qualification (IES 6)	Continuing Professional Development (IES 7)
	<p>To supplement established core competencies, provide:</p> <p>(1) Comprehensive, structured training and education tailored to specific job requirements at various levels of competency and responsibility. A combination of classroom, on the job, on-line, and self-study may be used for this purpose. Partnerships may be leveraged in the delivery of such training and courses may be waived for any learning objectives achieved through prior education; and</p> <p>(2) Practical experience that is relevant to developing professional competence. Practical experience is integral to Initial Professional Development (IES 5).</p>	<p>Rely on existing IFAC recognized certifications/qualifications offered through the national PAO or international provider which, although not specifically targeting the PS, provide aspiring accountants with basic core competencies to prepare them for the public sector.</p> <p>Partner with the sponsoring organization to establish a Public Sector membership tier.</p> <p>Membership in an IFAC member PAO will necessitate compliance with IFAC's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants.</p>	<p>Provide training and development to maintain professional competencies. Such CPD may be delivered by a combination of both government and outside providers, such as the national PAO or international provider. In order for Government programs to be recognized as CPD for purposes of maintaining professional qualifications, the training institution must qualify as a recognized provider.</p>
	<p>To supplement established core competencies, provide:</p> <p>(1) Comprehensive, structured training and education tailored to specific job requirements at various levels of competency and responsibility. A combination of classroom, on the job, on-line, and self-study may be used for this purpose. Partnerships may be leveraged in the delivery of such training and courses may be waived for learning objectives achieved through prior education; and</p> <p>(2) Practical experience that is relevant to developing professional competence. Practical experience is integral to of Initial Professional Development (IES 5).</p>	<p>Incorporate existing PS topics into existing IFAC recognized certifications/qualifications offered through the national PAO or international provider which build on the basic core competencies to prepare aspiring accountants for the public sector.</p> <p>Partner with the sponsoring organization to establish a Public Sector membership tier.</p> <p>Membership in an IFAC member PAO will necessitate compliance with IFAC's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants.</p>	<p>Provide training and development to maintain professional competencies. Such CPD may be delivered by a combination of both government and outside providers, such as the national PAO or international provider. However, in order for Government programs to be recognized as CPD for purposes of maintaining professional qualifications, the Government training institution must qualify as a recognized provider.</p>
	<p>To supplement established core competencies, provide:</p> <p>(1) Comprehensive, structured training and education tailored to specific job requirements at various levels of competency and responsibility. A combination of classroom, on the job, on-line, and self-study may be used for this purpose. Partnerships may be leveraged in the delivery of such training and courses may be waived for learning objectives achieved through prior education; and</p> <p>(2) Practical experience that is relevant to developing professional competence. Practical experience is integral to Initial Professional Development (IES 5).</p>	<p>Develop or adopt an IFAC recognized certification/ qualification program specific to the public sector. This may be delivered/adopted through partners recognized by IFAC such as the national PAO or in partnership with an international or regional provider.</p> <p>Membership in an IFAC member PAO will necessitate compliance with IFAC's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants.</p>	<p>Provide training and development to maintain professional competencies. Such CPD may be delivered by a combination of both government and outside providers, such as the national PAO or international provider. However, in order for Government programs to be recognized as CPD for purposes of maintaining professional qualifications, the Government training institution must qualify as a recognized provider.</p>



CURRENT PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

		Technician	Initial Professional Development		
			University Level - Bachelor's	University Level - Master's	Professional Accountancy Organization
Providers					
Programs					
Goals					
Competencies	Area				
	Level				
Partnerships					
Funding					
Profile of Instructors					
Profile of Students					



PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING EDUCATION PLAN

		Technician	Initial Professional Development		
			University Level - Bachelor's	University Level - Master's	Professional Accountancy Organization
Providers					
Programs					
Goals					
Competencies	Area				
	Level				
Partnerships					
Funding					
Profile of Instructors					
Profile of Students					

THE PULSAR PROGRAM IS

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