



**ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SECTOR  
ACCOUNTING EDUCATION  
MODELS IN SIX COUNTRIES**

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACCA</b>	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
<b>CIPFA</b>	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>EduCoP</b>	PULSAR Education Community of Practice
<b>IES</b>	International Education Standards
<b>IFAC</b>	International Federation of Accountants
<b>IFRS</b>	International Financial Reporting Standards
<b>IPD</b>	Initial Professional Development
<b>IPSAS</b>	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>PAO</b>	Professional accounting organization
<b>PFM</b>	Public Financial Management
<b>PSA</b>	Public Sector Accounting
<b>PULSAR</b>	Public Sector Accounting and Reporting Program
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority
<b>VPSAS</b>	Viet Nam Public Sector Accounting Standards
<b>ZICA</b>	Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants
<b>ZQF</b>	Zambia Qualifications Framework



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## PREFACE

The Public Sector Accounting and Reporting (PULSAR) Program offers regional and country-level support to Western Balkan and European Union Eastern Partnership countries in the development of public sector accounting (PSA) and financial reporting frameworks in line with international standards and good practice.

The PULSAR Education Community of Practice (EduCoP) brings together representatives of ministries of finance, universities, and professional accountancy organizations to work towards improving public sector training, education, and continuous professional development aligned with international standards and good practice. It aims to foster dialogue and cooperation among stakeholders nationally

and regionally; enable sharing of experience and good practice examples; and encourage collective development of solutions to shared challenges.

This study contributes an analysis of PSA education models in six countries from different parts of the world. The study considers the similarities and differences and the successes and challenges for PSA education. The study will be used by the EduCoP to inform discussions on the role of education in ensuring the availability of highly qualified public sector accountants equipped with up-to-date skills and competences, the implementation of new accounting standards, and their contribution to public financial management reform.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Effective education of public sector accountants is important to ensure they are competent, adhere to standards, behave ethically, and contribute to the reliability and accuracy of financial reporting in the public sector. This plays an important role in supporting public trust, economic stability, and effective financial management.

While the educational requirements of accountants in the public sector have much in common with accountants in the private sector, there are also important differences. To gain some insight into different PSA education frameworks, the PULSAR EduCoP undertook a detailed review of accounting education in six countries: Albania, Georgia, the Philippines, South Africa, Viet Nam, and Zambia. These countries were selected to illustrate the different levels of development of the various elements of PSA education across regions.

The study covers the following key elements of PSA education:

1. Accounting education frameworks.
2. Coordination of the education process.
3. University and initial professional development (IPD) level education.
4. Professional accountancy organization (PAO) and continuing professional development (CPD) level education.

The study is based on the discussions of the PSA education models, presented by six countries within two consequent Smart Interactive Talks (SIT),<sup>1</sup> which were organized within PULSAR Education Community of Practice. Key stakeholders in these countries,

representing regulator, PAO or leading university outlined the model of public sector accounting education, implemented in their countries. The SIT discussion was supplemented by the survey, completed by the presenters, and followed by interviews conducted by EduCoP team with key counterparts to ensure consistency in coverage.

Key findings are:

- The transition to International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) has highlighted the need to improve the skills of public sector accountants.
- None of the countries reviewed has specific PSA qualifications or consistent certification requirements for accountants in the public sector. This may lead to gaps in basic skills and knowledge of PSA.
- Countries are increasing their focus on specific PSA training but it remains patchy.
- Both IPD and CPD tend to focus on general accountancy and the needs of the private sector.
- Regulation of PSA education is often shared among relevant ministries with active cooperation of PAOs.
- Very few PSA topics are included in most IPD level education, but this is improving.
- Few countries have specific qualification/certification requirements for accountants to be able to work in the public sector, and where there are such requirements they are not PSA specific.
- Some countries are considering a more formal specific legal requirement for certification for accountants in the public sector.

<sup>1</sup> <https://cfr.worldbank.org/news/pulsar-smart-interactive-talk-accounting-education-public-sector-international-experiences-0>

- Some countries are looking to introduce PSA labelled qualifications and education programs.
- PAOs play a vital role in shaping the education, training, and professional development of accountants, but tend to focus on the private sector so public sector accountants lack PAO oversight, specific professional certification, or targeted CPD.
- Public sector accountants that are members of PAOs are required to undertake CPD, but this may not apply to all accountants in the public sector.
- CPD is provided mostly by PAOs. Some countries have government training institutions and some involve universities and other training providers.
- Driven by programs to implement IPSAS, all surveyed countries are making significant efforts to address the challenges and to implement or improve a coherent and comprehensive system of education, training, and certification of public sector accountants, generally coordinated with a requirement for CPD.
- Reform efforts are often supported by international donor organizations and can offer a model for other countries on the same journey. The PULSAR program actively supports improvements in the capacity and skills of public sector accountants.

The findings support the following conclusions:

- The main challenges to efficient systems of PSA education relate to the fragmented manner of its implementation and inadequate coverage of public sector topics in IPD offered by universities and PAOs.



## 1



# INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

## ACCOUNTING EDUCATION FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

1. Accounting education for the public sector has an important role in ensuring transparency and accountability of financial information generated by public entities. This contributes to efficient and effective management of public finances.

2. Good PSA education contributes to:

- **Ensuring Accountability:** The public sector is responsible for managing public funds and resources, and accounting education helps to ensure that public sector accountants have the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain accurate and transparent financial records. This helps to promote accountability and prevent fraud and corruption.
- **Compliance with Standards:** The public sector is subject to various financial reporting standards, such as IPSAS and generally accepted accounting principles, and accounting education helps to ensure that public sector accountants are familiar with these standards and can comply with them.
- **Effective Financial Management:** Accounting education provides public sector accountants with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively manage public funds and resources, including budgeting, financial analysis, and performance measurement.

- **Professionalism and Ethics:** Accounting education emphasizes the importance of professionalism and ethics in the accounting profession, which is particularly important in the public sector where public trust is essential.
- **Career Development:** Accounting education provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue careers in the public sector, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and other public sector entities. CPD is important for a career in accounting.

3. The main goal of the educational process is to ensure a flow of accounting professionals, with appropriate training, qualifications, and experience, equipped to support the management of public resources and help ensure accountability who, in turn, will support the education of the next generation of specialists.

4. A framework of accounting education specifically focused on the needs of the public sector is important because it helps to ensure that public sector accountants have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage public funds and resources, comply with financial reporting standards, and maintain public trust and accountability, as well as keep their own professional skills and knowledge up to date. The absence of distinct educational or certification requirements for accountants to work in the public sector can result in staff lacking sufficient knowledge and background on public sector specific

accounting policies, tasks, and terminology. This can lead to significant time spent on in-work training of accounting specialists, high staff turnover, and, as a result, can impact the reliability and timeliness of accounting information.

5. Accounting education typically involves a number of stages, which include:

- **IPD** at university or PAO level. It comprises:
  - Technical competence
  - Professional skills
  - Professional values, ethics, and attitudes
  - Practical experience
  - Assessment of professional competence
- **CPD** through PAOs, other providers, and self-directed study. It aims to:
  - Ensure that accountants maintain ongoing compliance with professional standards
  - Help them stay updated with the latest developments, regulations, and best practices in the accounting field.

6. The **International Education Standards (IESs)** are issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). They set out the principles to build a national accountancy profession that is fully capable of fulfilling complex demands. IESs present the underlying principles, concepts, and definitions that enhance accounting education. While the IESs are not specifically tailored to PSA, they are designed to build core competencies which may be adapted to any industry sector or role.

7. 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.<sup>2</sup> The education of public sector accountants should cover peculiarities of the budget execution process, i.e., specifics of the budget process implementation, as well as connections between public financial management reform and accounting. Therefore, establishing a clear framework of professional development of accountants in public sector with the defined set of skills and qualifications plays an important role in further high-quality service provision by these professionals, and achieving the overall goal of efficient and effective public finance management.

8. The following section considers the elements of PSA education at both IPD and CPD level in the surveyed countries: PSA education frameworks; coordination of the education process; PSA-specific education provision at universities and IPD level, and at PAO and CPD level. It focuses on the education coordination process and stakeholders' involvement in an effort to better understand the approach and requirements of different countries for PSA education, to identify examples of reforms and of good practice that may be useful for PULSAR countries in their efforts to develop competent and ethical PSA specialists.

<sup>2</sup> <https://cfr.worldbank.org/publications/toolkit-public-sector-accounting-education-plan>

## 2



## PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING EDUCATION IN SIX SELECTED COUNTRIES

9. For this study, the EduCoP identified six countries to survey in different parts of the world: Albania, Georgia, the Philippines, South Africa, Viet Nam, and Zambia. They had all initiated reform of the accounting system on the basis of direct or indirect implementation of the IPSAS and the government of each selected country had demonstrated strong engagement to address the provision of high-quality education for PSA within a modern conceptual framework. The selection of countries was aimed at ensuring diversity of coverage by region and the level of development of various elements of PSA education.

10. Surveys were completed by each of the countries and then follow up interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. The findings were reviewed to make comparisons and draw conclusions.

### OVERVIEW OF PSA EDUCATION

11. The availability of a sufficient number of highly qualified professionals in PSA is crucial to ensure

transparent and high quality financial information for the effective management of public funds and resources and maintenance of public trust and accountability. Developing a sustainable cohort of PSA professionals that meet and maintain high standards of professional capacity requires significant efforts from regulators, PAOs, academia, and other stakeholders. PSA education should aim to:

- train a sufficient number of professional accountants to meet the needs of the public sector of a particular country;
- support maintaining up-to-date professional knowledge and skills of public sector accountants throughout their career.

12. For the purpose of this report the entire educational framework for accountants in the public sector was considered, including IPD, CPD, and certification programs, if available. The following tables provide a brief overview of the educational frameworks for public sector accountants in the reviewed countries.

## ALBANIA



**IPSAS status** A multi-phase project for the application of IPSAS in the Albanian public sector started in 2018 and is planned to be completed by 2027.

**Requirements of public sector accountants** There is no PAO for public sector accountants. No professional PSA education or qualification is offered.

**IPD** Albanian universities offer various accounting programs at the different education levels, however they have low coverage of public sector financial reporting curricula and particularly IPSAS. Albania is actively developing its PSA education framework and has made significant progress in developing a single PSA educational system. In cooperation with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Albania is in the process of modifying the syllabuses of bachelor's and master's levels accounting qualifications to include appropriate public financial management and PSA content and, potentially, to add a separate PSA module in the coming academic years based on IPSAS. This will be a significant step.<sup>3</sup>

**CPD** There is not a strong connection between the university system and CPD. There are no relevant legal requirements for CPD of accountants in the public sector.

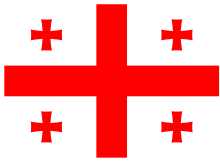
**Sources of PSA training** As part of public financial management reform implementation, the Ministry of Finance and Economy, in cooperation with Albanian School for Public Administration, organize training for public sector accountants on request. A training of trainers program was implemented in 2022,<sup>4</sup> aiming to train public sector accountants in IPSAS.<sup>5</sup> Implementation of a professional qualification on IPSAS is being discussed.

<sup>3</sup> A CIPFA/World Bank study in November 2022 of PSA in various Albanian universities found limited or no coverage of the subject at bachelor's or master's level.

<sup>4</sup> <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/220821534747695850/pdf/129511-WP-PUBLIC-benchmarking-study.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The program included: training of trainers (program on public sector financial reporting and accounting) based on IPSAS (28 participants); piloting first-time training of the finance and accounting staff in central government institutions on public sector accounting and financial reporting based in IPSAS (100 accountants from about 20 different institutions); training for accountants and financial officers regarding financial reporting and public sector accounting based on IPSAS (400 accountants).

## GEORGIA



**IPSAS status** The State Treasury`s mandate has included the standard-setting function since 2009. It has initiated the transition to accrual-based accounting in the public sector in line with IPSAS. This began with the central budget, then from 2017 local governments became involved, and since 2021, public sector agencies submit financial statements based on 24 IPSAS.

**Requirements of public sector accountants** There are no legal or regulatory requirements relating to specific skills and knowledge applicable to public sector accountants. Professional certification programs, proposed by the Georgian Federation of Professional Accountants and Auditors (leading PAO in the country) are general programs for training accountants, based on the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) curriculum, which do not cover much PSA. No separate certification for public sector accountants is proposed by PAOs or the Ministry of Finance Academy.

**IPD** Higher education is regulated by the framework of two laws: the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Education Quality Enhancement; as well as by other legislative and regulatory acts. There are not yet separate qualifications for public sector accountants at bachelor's or master's level but subjects in the area of PSA are partly reflected in the bachelor's programs of several universities. The need to strengthen PSA education at both IPD and CPD levels are widely recognized by regulators and the professional community

**CPD** There are no CPD requirements for accountants in the public sector.

**Sources of PSA training** Teaching PSA is largely the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance Academy. It conducts IPSAS related training or training of trainers events based on sector needs.

## THE PHILIPPINES



**IPSAS status** The decision to adopt IPSAS was taken by the Government of the Philippines in 2014. The change process was led by the Commission on Audit, responsible for accounting and financial reporting.

**Requirements of public sector accountants** The Accountancy Act of 2004 and relevant by-laws formally recognize practice in the public sector as one of the four sectors of the accountancy profession. Two-tier certification of accountants and auditors also covers public sector accountants. There is no separate qualification for accountants in the public sector. Requirements for accreditation of all practicing accountants, including those in the public sector, include: 3 years minimum experience in public practice; completion of 120 CPD credits; and Quality Assessment Review Compliance, renewed every 3 years.

**IPD** There are well developed educational programs at both IPD and CPD levels. The PSA education system has been updated to include IPSAS. Several universities have specific PSA qualifications and programs at bachelor's and master's levels (the Philippines University, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, the University of Manila, University of San Agustin).

**CPD** There is a strong link between university education (IPD) and following CPD level. The Government Association of Certified Public Accountants, the public sector accountants' PAO, provides CPD training for members on an ongoing basis.

**Sources of PSA training** Universities and PAOs. The need for capacity strengthening throughout government was widely recognized, which led to an extensive training program that involved finance staff at all levels of government. More than 21,000 government staff took part in training courses organized by the Commission on Audit.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.coa.gov.ph/>

## SOUTH AFRICA



**IPSAS status** South Africa has implemented the Generally Recognized Accounting Practice, developed by the South African Accounting Standards Board based on IPSAS.

**Requirements of public sector accountants** The technical competency dictionaries, developed by the National Treasury, cover the major occupational groups in the field of public finance management. They describe the knowledge, skills, and work experience required of a competent practitioner in carrying out a number of standard tasks at various levels of responsibility within the overall function. A total of 10 dictionaries have been developed with the intention of contributing to human resource development. The Public Finance Management Competency Dictionary addresses issues relating to IPD, practical work experience, and CPD, thereby combining all the accounting education elements into one interrelated and harmonized education system.

**IPD** South Africa has a strong and well-structured system of PSA education. IPD is mostly provided by universities and other learning institutions based on the syllabuses registered on the National Qualification Framework (NQF). Several universities have specific PSA qualifications and programs at entry level (post school) through to bachelor's and master's levels.

**CPD** CPD requirements are set out in the Public Finance Management Competency Dictionary.

**Sources of PSA training** Specific PSA technician level qualifications offered by the Accounting Technicians–South Africa PAO (established by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants in 2008), have been delivered to over 5,800 public sector employees in 59 different national, provincial, and municipal offices across the country.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://saicawebprstorage.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/A-Professionalisation-of-the-Public-Service-26.02.pdf>

## VIET NAM



<b>IPSAS status</b>	The Ministry of Finance has published a roadmap on transition to accrual IPSAS-based standards (Viet Nam Public Sector Accounting Standards [VPSAS]) by 2024. Viet Nam's PAOs are in the process of adopting VPSAS. By October 2023, 11 VPSASs had been issued with a further five VPSASs issued by end of 2023.
<b>Requirements of public sector accountants</b>	Certified public accountant certification is used for accountants in both private and public sectors. There is no separate certification for PSA although this may become an area for development.
<b>IPD</b>	Accounting education in the public sector is fragmented but developing rapidly. Currently there are two programs related to PSA, (i) a qualification program for public sector accountants at bachelor level is offered by several leading universities; (ii) a short-term course program to gain a Chief Accountant Certificate at Administrative and Non-Business Entities. Development of a specialized master's program is also being considered.
<b>CPD</b>	It is planned to organize close interaction of IPD and CPD.
<b>Sources of PSA training</b>	Universities and Viet Nam Association of Certified Public Accountants.



## ZAMBIA



**IPSAS status** In the process of transition to full IPSAS, to be completed in 2024.

**Requirements of public sector accountants** There is no specific certification for public sector accountants. All accountants must have a recognized professional accounting qualification, which are offered by Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants (ZICA) and other local and international PAOs, like ACCA etc. All practicing accountants (including in the public sector) should be members of a PAO to carry out their professional activities as accountant.

**IPD** PSA education is quite well developed, though fragmented. It will continue to develop in line with current implementation of public financial management reform. PSA education is provided at both IPD and CPD levels and follows IFAC guidelines on education standards. IPD level is provided by ZICA approved tuition providers, which are nationally accredited higher education institutions. The IPD programs are at Diploma and master's level: respectively the ZICA-examined Diploma in Public Sector Accounting and the Chartered Accountant Zambia program.

**CPD** CPD requirements apply to all accountants including public sector accountants. CPD training is provided by PAOs.

**Sources of PSA training** Higher education institutions and PAOs.

## REGULATION OF PSA EDUCATION

13. There are several approaches to regulation of public sector accounting education in researched countries:

- a. The ministry of finance plays a leading role in setting the standards for professional accountants at both IPD and CPD levels, and the ministry of education sets the standards for education programs offered by higher education institutions;
- b. Regulation of professional education through PAOs;
- c. Hybrid approach where regulators closely coordinate their efforts in regulating professional accounting education with PAOs.

14. **The first approach** is used in Albania, Georgia, the Philippines, South Africa, and Viet Nam. Ministries of finance in these countries set up minimum requirements for accountants in the public sector (in some cases these are minimum requirements for both public and private sector accountants) or set up benchmarks that professional accountants need to follow, and they monitor compliance with these requirements. None of the reviewed countries have a legal requirement relating to separate professional certification for accountants in the public sector, however some countries (Albania, Zambia) considered or are considering the introduction of such certification in the future.

15. **The second approach** is used quite broadly in developed countries with a mature accounting profession. There are no specific requirements imposed by the state but instead the profession is allowed to self-regulate PSA accountancy education through PAOs. It is not implemented in any of reviewed countries.

16. **The third approach** is used in Zambia and partly in the Philippines (where the leading PAO nominates members of the regulatory board). Coordination of accounting education is carried out by the regulator (ministry of finance, national treasury, or other relevant state body) in close cooperation

with PAOs, including on development of minimum qualification frameworks, model curricula, CPD, and other requirements, which are monitored by PAOs in relation to their members.

17. In practice, there is not much of a distinction between the first and the third approach. In all reviewed countries the regulation of PSA education is to some extent the joint responsibility of ministries of finance and PAOs, just in different combinations.

18. The rest of this section provides brief overviews of the regulation of education for public sector accountants in the reviewed countries.

### ALBANIA

19. The Ministry of Finance and Economy is in charge of overall regulation and monitoring of PSA reform implementation, which includes an objective of development of professional capacities and skills in the field of accounting. To meet this, the Ministry has committed to develop an educational framework for the development of PSA professionals, a CPD program, and (in the medium-term) a certification program for accountants in the public sector, aiming to establish a holistic public sector education pathway. The reforms are being implemented in collaboration with PAOs, universities, and international recognized institutions.

20. There is no professional education or qualification offered in the field of public sector finance and accounting, nor is there a professional body in Albania for public sector finance staff. However, a new qualification module, the IPSAS Certificate, has been developed jointly with CIPFA to position public sector accountants at an equivalent level in the acquisition of knowledge and skills as the National Accounting Standards and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in the private sector. The IPSAS certificate is similar in the amount of teaching, the scope of content, the quality of materials included in the program, and its assessment to the relevant private sector qualifications. More detailed information is provided in Annex 1 to this report.

## GEORGIA

21. The State Treasury under the Ministry of Finance is responsible for overall coordination and monitoring of implementation of PSA reform. All organizations involved in the education process are responsible for ensuring the quality and content of training within their academic freedom and autonomy. The National Center for the Development of the Quality of Education conducts assessments of education programs of the higher education institutions to evaluate their quality.

22. There are no standalone education programs for public sector accountants at bachelor's or master's levels. A limited number of universities in the country offer courses on PSA as part of the general education program for accountants. However, universities that offer public sector related topics within their programs are updating their study syllabuses and textbooks in line with the changes in the accounting policies introduced as part of the ongoing reform.

23. Capacity building of the profession as part of PSA reform is implemented through development of a comprehensive PSA education framework by the Government as a part of public financial management reforms with the involvement of relevant stakeholders.

24. The Ministry of Finance Academy is currently responsible for the majority of PSA education. Training in line with the new conceptual framework included a train the trainers program and subsequent mass training effort for finance and accounting staff in central government institutions on IPSAS-based public sector accounting and financial reporting. Training modules cover public finance and information systems; financial accounting and financial reporting; advanced financial reporting (IPSAS); and business processes and procedures.

25. The government and Ministry of Finance Academy are jointly developing the CPD policy and program for accounting and finance management staff across central and local government, along with an assessment methodology and tools to maintain an up to date CPD program.

26. Professional organizations have mostly private sector accountant members. As a result, there is a lack of PAO oversight of public sector accountants and no specific professional certification aimed at PSA.

## THE PHILIPPINES

27. The Philippines accountancy profession is one of the oldest in Southeast Asia. The practice of accountancy is regulated through the Philippines Accountancy Act of 2004. Under the law, the practice of accountancy shall include, but not be limited to: (a) public practice, (b) practice in commerce and industry, (c) practice in academia / education, and (d) practice in government. The Certified Public Accountant title is protected by Law. The Professional Regulation Commission is a national government agency mandated to enforce laws regulating the various professions. Its mandate includes conducting and administering licensure examinations to aspiring professionals and regulating and supervising the practice of the professions exercised in partnership with the Professional Regulatory Boards. These Boards govern their respective professions' practice and ethical standards and accredit the professional organizations.

28. The Board of Accountancy is the Professional Regulatory Board for the accountancy profession. Its seven members are nominated by the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants, a leading PAO, recommended by the Professional Regulation Commission, and appointed by the President. In accordance with the Revised Accountancy Law 1975, the Board of Accountancy is responsible for supervising, controlling, and regulating accountancy practices.

29. Formed in 1929, the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants was recognized in 1975 by the Professional Regulation Commission as an official body represented by members in the public practice, industry, government, and education sectors in the Philippines.

30. A two-tier certification system for certified public accountant is implemented. There is no specific certification program offered for public sector

accountants, they follow the general qualification and professional development requirements set for the profession. The Board of Accountancy determines and prescribes the minimum requirements for the certified public accountant examination; administers the examination; and issues certificates to successful candidates.<sup>9</sup>

31. There is a strong professional education framework, based on international standards and good practices. The IPD level is aligned with the Higher Education Act (1994) and requirements introduced by the Commission on Higher Education, which works with the Board of Accountancy on evaluating accountancy programs offered by Higher Education Institutions. The Board of Accountancy is represented on the Commission's technical committee. In terms of monitoring, the Commission on Higher Education carries out periodic site visits, enabling it to identify low performance and offer support to address identified issues.

## SOUTH AFRICA

32. The National Treasury<sup>10</sup> is responsible for coordinating education for accountants in the public sector at local, provincial, and national levels. It has developed a series of technical competency dictionaries, issued following consultations with professional society and academia, which make up a competency framework. These dictionaries set out a series of descriptions of the skills and knowledge required of a competent practitioner in carrying out a number of standard tasks at various levels of responsibility within the overall function. A total of 10 technical competencies dictionaries have been developed with the intention of contributing to human resource development in public financial management.

33. The National Treasury works with government departments, PAOs, and education institutions to ensure that their respective competency frameworks align with the technical competence dictionaries.<sup>11</sup> There is no common curriculum, instead the dictionaries include guidelines for developing the qualification for accountants in the public sector. Individuals are required to follow study pathways that meet the necessary requirements.

34. Certification of accountants in the public sector is based on achievement of qualifications listed in the NQF.<sup>12</sup> The consistent accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities of public sector accountants takes place by levels of the NQF, approved by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).<sup>13</sup> SAQA, regulated by the National Qualifications Framework Act,<sup>14</sup> oversees the development of the NQF by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications.

35. Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions (Guide APX-03) states that all private higher education institutions must submit an audited list of all qualifications they offer, including full qualifications that belong to the general and further education and training qualifications sub-framework, the occupational qualifications sub-framework and the higher education qualifications sub-framework. SAQA provide written confirmation of which qualification sub-framework the cited qualifications belong to. Efforts to further professionalize PSA are underway. It is expected that this will result in the requirement for both certification against NQF qualifications and membership of a professional body.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/27548/diagnostic-study-accounting-auditing-philippines.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.za/about-government/contact-directory/departments/departments/national-treasury>

<sup>11</sup> <https://oag.treasury.gov.za/Publications/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FPublications%2F18.%20Competency%20Framework%20for%20Public%20Financial%20Management%2FTechnical%20Competency%20Dictionaries%20-%20Explanatory%20Notes&FolderCTID=&View=%7BEA6E6B15-593D-4839-A804-A91A49CB20A0%7D>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.saqa.org.za/national-qualifications-framework/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://allqs.saqa.org.za/>

<sup>14</sup> National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 // <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-qualifications-framework-act>

## VIET NAM

36. At IPD level, universities follow the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Training.

37. The Ministry of Finance Accounting and Auditing Strategy Department is in charge of issuing regulations on accounting and auditing. Implementation of VPSAS, in line with IPSAS, is underway. Training materials for the 11 issued VPSAS are being developed for trainees, public accountants, students, and management.

38. There is no specific certification for public sector accountants, internal auditors, or state auditors. All professional accountants in Viet Nam are required to complete annual CPD requirements to maintain their respective license and certificates to practice. CPD is offered by various bodies and the MOF is responsible for accrediting all CPD providers.<sup>15</sup>

## ZAMBIA

39. The Ministry of Finance coordinates accounting education in Zambia. It sets the requirements for professional accountants, coordinated with leading PAOs. PSA is a part of the general accounting education program at university and PAO levels.

40. Zambia follows IFAC guidelines on education for professional accountants for IPD and CPD. According to the Law 2021, ZICA is authorized to approve university programs on PSA. ZICA is mandated to develop, promote, and enforce internationally comparable accounting practice standards in Zambia. It adopts international standards issued under the auspices of IFAC and works closely with the Ministry of Finance on skills training. The Higher Education Authority is mandated to register and regulate private higher education institutions and to approve the content of their accounting curriculum. The Higher Education Authority and ZICA must both approve accounting programs.

41. The Zambian qualification for public sector accountants was developed by ZICA and is endorsed by the Ministry of Finance, but is not a compulsory certification for employment.

## PSA EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES

42. PSA-related subjects in the six countries analyzed are partially included in general accountancy courses offered by universities at IPD level as part of bachelors' and masters' programs. However, they tend to be covered in quite general terms, for example the organization and methodology of PSA with some coverage of linkages between accounting and state finance. Topics are not always interlinked or systematic.

43. The scarcity of specialized training for public sector accountants, including the lack of standalone PSA bachelor's or master's qualification programs, can result in possible gaps in basic PSA skills and knowledge of aspiring accountants.

44. Universities in three of the countries (South Africa, Viet Nam, and Zambia) are proposing a standalone program with a PSA major.

## ALBANIA

45. Higher education in Albania is offered by 13 public universities and 46 private universities, of which over 20 offer accounting and auditing courses. Approximately 80% of all students are admitted to public universities, of which the largest, oldest, and arguably most respected is the University of Tirana with 35,000 students.<sup>16</sup>

46. The Faculty of Economics of the University of Tirana offers a number of courses with coverage

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ifac.org/about-ifac/membership/profile/vietnam>

<sup>16</sup> Activity 5 Report Develop an educational framework for development of public sector accounting professionals Development of Professional Accounting Skills and Sustainable Public Sector Accounting Mechanism SAFE Grant No. TF0A3277 (Portion A) SAFE Grant No. TF0A5134 (Portion B) Albania – Development Public Sector Accounting Project

of PSA. According to CIPFA Activity 5 Report On Educational Framework for Development of Public Sector Accounting Professionals (November 2022), the syllabus of accounting courses compares well to the IES but less well to the benchmark CIPFA public sector syllabus because of low coverage of PSA topics, particularly of public sector financial reporting including IPSAS, and as they are mostly provided only at master's level.

47. Several leading universities in Albania offer a master's level PSA program (University of Tirana, Agricultural University of Tirana, University of Elbasan, University of Korça). Two other universities, (the University of Durres, University of Gjirokastra) have a PSA program at bachelor's level, but not at master's level.

48. As part of the PSA reform process, an integrated system of training for accountants in the public sector is planned to be implemented, with curricula at both bachelor's and master's levels aligned with the CIPFA syllabus (see Annexes 1 and 2).

## GEORGIA

49. A limited number of universities provide PSA-related elements in the educational program for accountants at bachelor's level or master's level. This is often a module on PSA and reporting.

50. Universities do not have any formal agreements or arrangements with the Ministry of Finance or PAOs regarding the introduction of PSA-related subjects into current curricula or teaching practices on these disciplines.

51. There is little teaching of IPSAS and accrual accounting as applied in the public sector at leading Georgian universities.

## THE PHILIPPINES

52. The Philippines has over 2,000 institutions of higher education, of which over 1,500 are in the private sector. The Commission on Higher Education is responsible for the plans, policies, priorities, and programs on higher education: setting minimum standards for programs and institutes; monitoring and evaluating performance; and imposing sanctions for poor performance. None of the leading universities reviewed confirmed offering a public sector-focused accountancy program. An accredited BSc Accountancy Program is offered by over 100 public and around 500 private institutions which includes some basic elements of PSA. Average graduation is 12,000 students per year. The Commission on Higher Education set the curriculum requirements, adopting an outcomes-based approach, and striving to meet international best practices. The curriculum includes both general and professional modules based on 210 credit units over a four-year period. The Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants is based on courses taken in the BSc Accountancy degree.

53. PSA professionalization mostly takes place at the CPD level, organized by the Government Association of Certified Public Accountants as the sectoral PAO for accounting professionals working in government agencies of the Philippines. It is the first sectoral association of certified public accountants in the country. Its members are accounting professionals working individually in various government agencies nationwide.<sup>17</sup> There are strong connections between universities and the PAO CPD program.<sup>18</sup>

## SOUTH AFRICA

54. A multi-level accumulative system of accounting education has been developed in South Africa: from bachelor's level, through professional qualification, and CPD lasting throughout the professional career of the accountant.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gacpa.com.ph/index.php/about-gacpa/gacpa-profile>

<sup>18</sup> Republic of the Philippines – ROSC Accounting & Auditing, June 2017

55. There are specific PSA qualifications and programs at universities and other learning institutions. Some universities have public sector leadership departments/schools.

56. The competency framework for public sector accountants is contained in the technical competence dictionaries, covering the major occupational groups in the field of public financial management. They set out the skills, knowledge, and work experience required of a competent practitioner in carrying out a number of standard tasks at various levels of responsibility within the overall function.

57. The PSA educational process for accounting technicians includes the following qualifications:

- Public Sector Certificate Accounting Technician (NQF Level 3);
- Public Sector FET Certificate Accounting Technician (NQF Level 4);
- Public Sector Certificate Accounting (NQF Level 5);
- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Sector Accounting, which includes:
  - Public financial management;
  - Public sector financial reporting (reporting environment for public sector entities; reporting framework– generally recognized accounting practice principles; accounting processes in the public sector; preparing financial statements; non-current assets; revenue and working capital; net assets and liabilities; other generally recognized accounting practice standards; interpretations and other reporting issues);
  - Public sector structures and functions;
  - Public sector audit and governance (internal controls and external audit; public sector audit environment; accountability and governance; risk identification and response in the public sector, including forensic auditing; practical applications)<sup>19</sup> (see Annexes 4 and 5).

58. PSA education at IPD level is well linked to CPD provided by PAOs.

## VIET NAM

59. Universities establish the general framework of curriculum for all their programs based on training program standards and guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Training.

60. There is generally only limited overall coverage of PSA accounting at the IPD level, however some universities cover PSA-related subjects within their bachelor programs, including:

- Public sector accounting (covering a range of topics)
- Public sector accounting software
- Public sector accounting and financial mechanisms
- Public sector auditing – Internal audit in the public sector
- Budgeting and performance assessment in the public sector
- Public sector financial statement analysis
- Public sector management accounting
- IPSAS vs VPSAS.

61. Some universities offer different bachelor's accounting majors, including corporate accounting, auditing, and PSA. The PSA major program covers: 1) academic subjects (related to specific features of public financial management and of budget execution) including: public finance regime; public accounting and financial statements analysis; public auditing; public sector control and forensics; and public sector standards; and 2) professional subjects including: accounting information security; human resources management for public organizations; leadership in public sector; public sector management accounting; corporate financial accounting; corporate finance; and the taxation system.

62. The PSA specialism is currently only available at bachelor's level but is planned to also be implemented at master's level. PSA curricula are designed in line with the educational block of knowledge.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.mic.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image\\_tool/images/78/PSA%20FLYER%202019.pdf](http://www.mic.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/78/PSA%20FLYER%202019.pdf)

## ZAMBIA

63. ZICA has developed a Diploma in Public Sector Financial Management syllabus. There are entry requirements which depend on the level of certification, including level of prior qualification and school certificate with 5+ credit grades in math and English.

64. Programs include the following key blocks:<sup>20</sup>

- PFM 1 Public Sector Accounting
- PFM 2 Legal Aspects of Public Sector Finance and Administration
- PFM 3 Governance and Management in the Public Sector
- PFM 4 Public Sector Financial Management
- PFM 5 Public Sector Audits
- PFM 6 Financial Reporting Framework for Public Sector Entities .

65. Between 2021 and 2023 ZICA approved about eight university programs on PSA programs.<sup>21</sup>

66. The Chartered Accountant Zambia program, accredited by the Higher Education Authority, includes PSA education offered through two different routes at master's level:

67. Public Sector:

- CA 3.7 Public Sector Audits and Assurance
- CA 3.8 Public Sector Financial Management

## PAOS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PSA

68. PAOs play a crucial role in accounting education for the public sector. This includes:

- **Setting Standards:** PAOs support establishing and maintaining national accounting standards and guidelines.

- **Curriculum Development:** PAOs collaborate with regulators and educational institutions to develop and update accounting curricula aligned with international standards and benchmarks.

- **Accreditation and Certification:** PAOs are involved in professional accreditation and certification and usually offer training to achieve relevant levels of qualification.

- **CPD:** PAOs are key providers of CPD training programs, workshops, and seminars to support the ongoing professional development of accountants. They also provide opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing among professionals in the field.

- **Advocacy and Representation:** PAOs advocate for the interests of accountants and contribute to policy discussions related to accounting education and practice. They represent the profession in dialogue with government bodies, regulatory authorities, and other stakeholders to ensure that the needs and concerns of public sector accountants are addressed.

69. PAOs play a significant role in the PSA education process in all six countries surveyed, including interacting with government institutions, regulators, universities, and other PAOs at local and international level. However, their focus is significantly on the private sector. As a result, there can be a lack of PAO oversight of public sector accountants, an absence of specific professional certification, and few PSA themed CPD courses.

70. Of the reviewed countries only the Philippines has a public sector specific PAO, uniting accounting professionals working in various government agencies nationwide.

71. Two of the six surveyed countries – the Philippines and Zambia - have established qualification requirements for accountants to be able to work in the public sector. However, the qualification required is not specific to the public sector but is the general professional level qualification offered by national or international PAOs. Some surveyed countries

<sup>20</sup> [www.zica.co.zm/students](http://www.zica.co.zm/students)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.zica.co.zm/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Accredited-Tuition-Providers-for-the-ZICA-Qualifications.pdf>



(Albania, South Africa, Viet Nam) are moving towards developing a more formal specific requirement for certification of accountants in the public sector.

72. Public sector accountants, who are members of PAOs, are required to undertake CPD in all the countries surveyed (for example, license renewal in the Philippines requires achievement of 15 credit units every three years, in South Africa all practicing members who wish to possess the Association's practicing certificate must complete at least 40 hours of CPD each year, in Zambia 40 hours of CPD are expected per annum), but these requirements mostly relate to being a certified accountant member of a PAO, and are not public sector specific.

73. Government training institutions provide CPD in two surveyed countries, Albania and Georgia. CPD is provided mostly by PAOs in the other countries. In some cases, universities and other training providers are involved in CPD.

## ALBANIA

74. All accounting professionals in the public and private sectors have to comply with CPD requirements. The CPD is provided by PAOs. They work closely with the Ministry of Finance and Economy and universities to develop IPSAS knowledge, curriculum, materials, trainers' capacity, and certification (based on the provision for accountants in the private sector).<sup>22</sup> Albania is in the process of developing a single consistent system of CPD for accountants in the public sector, the Educational Framework for Development of Public Sector Accounting Professionals.<sup>23</sup>

75. The Albanian Institute of Certified Accountants is a leading PAO in Albania, involved in implementation of the PSA reform agenda. Its membership is comprised solely of certified accountants. As of September 2020, the Institute is the only PAO for accountants

recognized by the Public Oversight Board. Members of the Institute provide a variety of services including bookkeeping; compilation of financial statements; preparation of prospective financial statements; tax consulting; financial management consulting; internal control systems design and internal audit services; non-statutory auditing; and other services in both<sup>24</sup> public and private sectors. The Institute is working with CIPFA to develop IPSAS certification (see Annex 3 to this Report).

## GEORGIA

76. Currently there are two PAOs whose certification programs are recognized by the Georgian Service for Accounting, Reporting, and Auditing Supervision:

- the Georgian Federation of Professional Accountants and Auditors,<sup>25</sup> recognized for conducting CPD, examinations, and professional certification of accountants and auditors; and
- the Georgian Federation of Auditors, Accountants, and Financial Managers,<sup>26,27</sup> recognized for CPD and certification of auditors, but not for administering examinations.

77. There are no PAO certification programs focused on PSA.

78. There is no mandatory PAO CPD requirement in the field of PSA. The Ministry of Finance Academy remains the primary source of updated knowledge and information.

## THE PHILIPPINES

79. There are five PAOs in the professional accountancy community of the Philippines, one is a sectoral PAO specifically focused on PSA issues.

<sup>22</sup> [https://cfrr.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/ENG\\_ALBANIA\\_PATHWAYS.pdf](https://cfrr.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/ENG_ALBANIA_PATHWAYS.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [https://cfrr.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/ENG\\_ALBANIA\\_PATHWAYS.pdf](https://cfrr.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/ENG_ALBANIA_PATHWAYS.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Development of Professional Accounting Skills and Sustainable Public Sector Accounting Mechanism. Albania –Stewart Macleod, November 2022

<sup>25</sup> <http://gfpa.ge/site/index.php>

<sup>26</sup> <http://gfaafm.ge>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.saras.gov.ge/Content/files/Georgia%20Benchmarking-report-eng.pdf>

80. The leading PAO in the country is the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants. It is a recognized national professional organization and the accredited professional organization for certified public accountants. It performs four important functions: (i) Implementing the Code of Ethics promulgated by the Board of Accountancy, (ii) overseeing implementation of the CPD Program, (iii) publishing pronouncements of the Accounting Standards Council and the Auditing Standards and Practices Council, and publishing the quarterly Accountants' Journal and the quarterly Accounting Times, and (iv) advocating on behalf of the accounting profession. It derives its revenue from annual membership fees. Another source of revenue is the provision of CPD and the accreditation of CPD providers and programs.

81. The Government Association of Certified Public Accountants is the first and only sectoral association of certified public accountants in the country, under the umbrella of the Philippines Institute of Certified Public Accountants.<sup>28</sup> It is an organization of accounting professionals who work individually in various government agencies nationwide. It has about 10,000 members and 25 Chapters throughout the country.<sup>29</sup> It organizes and conducts a range of professional development programs for accountants in the public sector and monitors CPD requirements by its members. Public sector accountants gain sufficient PSA related knowledge within CPD programs offered by this sectoral PAO.

## SOUTH AFRICA

82. There are several professional membership bodies and public sector accountants choose one to join.

83. The leading PAO is the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, which is actively involved in the educational process of public sector accountants.

It is a member of IFAC and is registered with the South African Qualifications Authority as a professional body. The Institute is committed to assisting its members and the government to enhance and professionalize the public sector through regular engagement with key stakeholders in the public sector (such as the Auditor General, Local Government Association, National Treasury etc.), providing technical support, and advocating for improvements in legislation and standards.

84. The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants is a voluntary, not-for-profit membership organization that operates in terms of its constitution. Primary sources of revenue are membership fees, fees from seminars and events, as well as donor funding. The Institute is an active member of a number of international forums as part of advocacy roles and participates in knowledge-sharing and global standard-setting.

85. The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants offers several accounting technician qualifications, that are recognized by employers and the profession for their quality, rigor, and practical approach (Annex 4). For public sector accountants, three qualifications are offered—Public Sector: Accounting Technician Qualification: NQF level 3 (120 credits), NQF level 4 (120 credits), and NQF level 5 (120 credits). These cover subjects from understanding the budget process to the preparation of accounting reports based on the results of budget execution (Annex 4). A doctoral level qualification is also available (Annex 5).<sup>30</sup> The Institute provides high quality PSA Competence and Compliance with CPD, a Code of Conduct, and a Code of Professional Ethics.

86. The accountancy profession in South Africa is largely self-regulated at the professional level of accountancy, except for registered auditors. In order to maintain their Certified Public Accountants Association practicing certificate, members must complete at least 40 hours of CPD each cycle. These 40

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gacpa.com.ph/index.php/about-gacpa/gacpa-profile>

<sup>29</sup> There are three classes of membership: (1) regular (certified public accountants who are employed in any branch, agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of government including government-owned or controlled corporation), (2) life (may be granted to any regular member who has been in good standing for the last 5 years and has contributed to the advancement of the accounting profession), (3) honorary (may be granted to any person regardless of training or profession who has significantly contributed to the enhancement of the accounting profession) ([https://gacpa.com.ph/images/gacpa\\_by\\_laws.pdf](https://gacpa.com.ph/images/gacpa_by_laws.pdf)).

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.saica.org.za/become-a-member/how-to-become-a-member/accounting-technician-atsa/accounting-technician-atsa-qualifications>

hours must comprise 20 hours verifiable (structured) CPD and 20 hours non-verifiable (non-structured) CPD.

## VIET NAM

87. There are two PAOs in Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Association of Accountants and Auditors and the Viet Nam Association of Certified Public Accountants.

88. The Viet Nam Association of Certified Public Accountants is a member of IFAC, participates in the national standard-setting process and, is engaged with the promotion of IPSAS adoption and activities related to implementation of national PSA standards including participation and contribution to the National Accounting General Project and Treasury and Budget Management Information System. The Viet Nam Association of Certified Public Accountants does not promote a PSA qualification but, given the number of its members involved in the public sector, is developing CPD training to meet their needs in understanding and applying new public sector standards and regulations.

## ZAMBIA

89. The ZICA PAO is actively engaged in educating PSA specialists. It introduced Diploma in Public Sector Accounting. ZICA is a member of IFAC and a charter member of the Pan African Federation of Accountants.

90. All professional accountants, including accountants in the public sector, must first be a member of ZICA and obtain a professional accounting qualification recognized by ZICA. The most common qualification is the Chartered Accountant Zambia, which consists of three levels: CA Certificate in Accountancy (Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF) Level 4) (Technician); CA Application Advanced Diploma in Accountancy (ZQF Level 7) (Licentiate); CA Advisory Professional in Accountancy (ZQF Level 9) (Graduate). Each level has its own set of exams and requirements that must be met before progressing to the next level.

91. The Diploma in Public Sector Financial Management was introduced in 2017. The program is targeted at accountants working in the public sector or those trainee accountants intending to pursue a financial management career in the public sector.<sup>31</sup>

92. In addition to the Chartered Accountant Zambia qualification, public sector accountants in Zambia may also pursue other professional qualifications such as ACCA, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, or the certified public accountant qualification.

93. Once a public sector accountant has obtained a professional qualification, they must also complete CPD requirements set by their PAO to maintain their professional status. This includes attending training courses, seminars, and workshops to keep up-to-date with changes in accounting standards and regulations.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.zica.co.zm/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/PSFM.pdf>

## 3



## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

94. Analysis of the approaches to PSA education in the six selected countries shows no uniformity but does highlight some consistent themes and issues, these are summarized below:

- The **transition to IPSAS** had highlighted the need to improve the skills of public sector accountants in all six countries.
- Most countries still **lack a systematized approach to providing training** for public sector accountants. This can result in possible gaps in basic skills and knowledge of aspiring accountants relating to PSA.
- The system of education of accounting specialists in the six countries usually **comprises several levels**. However, the requirements for public sector accountants differ in each jurisdiction and there is no consistency in IPD, CPD, or certification requirements for accountants in the public sector.
- Most of the countries use a **mixed approach to regulation of PSA education**, with the ministry of finance responsible for setting the accounting requirements, the ministry of education setting curricula requirements at university level, and with the active cooperation of the professional community and leading PAOs.
- Countries are increasing their focus on **specific PSA training programs** at both IPD and CPD levels, especially where syllabuses did not previously include specific study of PSA topics.
- Governments and others in most of the countries are making efforts to increase coverage of PSA-related subjects at **IPD level** so that potential public sector accountants have better knowledge and understanding when they join the public sector. PSA modules aimed at training accountants of general specialization are being offered by universities as part of Bachelors and Masters` programs.
- Although there is a continued prevalence of general accountancy education, some **qualifications are being labelled with a public sector specialism** (e.g. degrees, technician, or professional qualifications). University degrees specific to PSA are being offered in the Philippines, South Africa, and Zambia. Albania, Georgia, and Viet Nam are considering introducing a standalone university degree for accountants in the public sector. A technician-level qualification specifically labelled for the public sector offered by the PAO in South Africa stands out as the only PSA-labelled qualification offered by a PAO among the six countries reviewed.
- Public sector accountants, who are members of PAOs, are **required to undertake CPD** in all the countries surveyed, but these requirements mostly relate to their status as members of PAOs, not as public sector accountants, and thus do not apply to all accountants in the public sector.
- **CPD is provided mostly by PAOs** in all reviewed countries. Government training institutions provide CPD in Albania and Georgia, and in some

countries, universities and other training providers are involved.

- Approaches to **qualifications for public sector accountants differ** in each jurisdiction. No specific qualification or consistent certification requirements seem to have emerged for accountants in the public sector, although South Africa, the Philippines, and Zambia have each made national progress on this.
- Of the six countries surveyed, only two (the Philippines and Zambia) had **specific qualification requirements** for accountants to be able to work in the public sector. Even then, the qualification required is not specific to the public sector but is the general professional level qualification offered by national or international PAOs. Some of the countries (Albania, South Africa, Viet Nam) are moving towards developing a more formal specific requirement for certification for accountants in the public sector.
- **PAOs play a vital role** in shaping the education, training, and professional development of accountants, both in public and private sector, as they contribute to the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of financial management in relevant sectors.
- In all six countries, the professional community is largely private sector accountants so **PAOs mostly focus on the private sector**. Only the Philippines has a sector specific PAO for accounting professionals working in government agencies. As a result, public sector accountants lack PAO oversight, specific professional certification, or CPD courses targeted at their needs.

## CONCLUSIONS

95. The findings support the following conclusions:

- The efficient provision of targeted education for public sector accountants is hampered by the fragmented manner of its implementation. Many existing IPD programs offered by universities and PAOs have little or no coverage of public sector topics and there are few public sector specific IPD courses (nor is it clear that there would be sufficient interest in such a focus at the initial stages of accountancy education). Enhancing all existing bachelor's courses to include more and better PSA related topics would be a good first step, followed by the introduction of more public sector focused master's courses to begin to deepen the specialism.
- The implementation of IPSAS has been a driver in all of the countries surveyed to focus on improving PSA. The need for a competent, well-trained cadre of public sector accountancy staff to effectively implement accrual-based accounting has encouraged significant efforts to address existing challenges. The countries are all working towards implementing or improving a coherent and comprehensive system of education, training, and certification of public sector accountants, generally coordinated with a requirement for CPD.
- Reform efforts are often supported by international donor organizations and can provide a useful model for other countries on the same journey to learn from or follow. The PULSAR program actively supports its member countries in this important area of reform to improve the capacity and skills of public sector accountants.

# ANNEX

# 1

## ALBANIA: PLANNED INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING TRAINING

Level	Content of approach
<b>Technician</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 degree programs, and / or apprenticeships.
<b>Bachelor</b>	Introduce foundational PSA courses into existing IES compliant accounting curricula, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPSAS Fundamentals</li> <li>• Introduction to Public Financial Management</li> <li>• Fundamentals of Budgeting and Management Analysis</li> <li>• Government Structure and Institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Master</b>	Develop master's program(s) focusing on PSA topics <b>OR</b> Include advanced level PSA courses into existing IES-compliant accounting curricula.
<b>AO</b>	<p><b>Professional education programs:</b></p> <p>Incorporate PSA topics into existing IES-compliant professional education programs offered through the national PAO or international providers that build on the basic core competencies to prepare aspiring accountants for the public sector. Incorporating additional public sector learning objectives at this stage will leave fewer to be attained through supplemental learning.</p> <p><b>Entry into the profession / certification / qualification:</b></p> <p>Incorporate public sector topics into existing IFAC recognized certifications/qualifications offered through national PAOs / international providers which build on the basic core competencies to prepare aspiring accountants for the public sector. Partner with the sponsoring organization to establish a public sector membership tier. Membership of an IFAC member PAO will necessitate compliance with IFAC's Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants</p>

Level	Content of approach
<b>Government training / finance academy</b>	<p>To supplement established core competencies, provide:</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Practical experience that is relevant to developing professional competence. Practical experience is integral part of Initial Professional Development (IES 5).</p>

# ANNEX

# 2

## CIPFA MODULES FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING CERTIFICATION

Stage	Content of approach
CIPFA Certificate in Management and Financial Accounting	Management Accounting
	Financial Accounting
CIPFA Diploma in Financial Management and Audit	Audit and Assurance
	Business Planning and Financial Management
	Developing Strategy and Data Analysis
CIPFA Diploma in Governance, Risk and Taxation	Business Reporting
	Governance and Risk Management
	Tax and Law (UK and international options)
CIPFA Diploma in Public Financial Management, Reporting and Business Change	Implementing Business Change
	Strategic Public Financial Management
	Public Sector Financial Reporting (UK and international options)
	Strategic Case Study
CIPFA Diploma in Public Financial Management, Reporting and Advanced Audit	Advanced Audit
	Strategic Public Financial Management
	Public Sector Financial Reporting (UK and international options)
	Strategic Case Study



# ANNEX

# 3

## ALBANIAN INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS – DRAFT IPSAS CERTIFICATION ROUTE

Session <sup>32</sup>	Content
1	Introduction to IPSAS IPSAS and IFRS compared Conceptual framework Public sector characteristics and impact on financial reporting of PSOs
2	Financial statements under IPSAS framework
3	IPSAS 1 Presentation of financial statements IPSAS 2 Cash flow statements IPSAS 3 Accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates, and errors IPSAS 24 Presentation of budget information in financial statements (format only)
4	Revenue and funding of PSOs IPSAS 9 Revenue from exchange transactions IPSAS 23 Revenue from non-exchange transactions
5	Public sector specific topics (i.e., with no IFRS equivalent) IPSAS 22 Disclosure of financial information about the general government sector IPSAS 24 Presentation of budget information in financial statements (detailed content and examples) IPSAS 32 Service concession arrangements: grantor IPSAS 42 Social benefits
6	Non-current assets IPSAS 17 Property, plant and equipment

<sup>32</sup> Sessions are three hours, but this may be modified to suit the practical arrangements of the Institute of Certified Accountants and for individual groups' needs

Session <sup>32</sup>	Content
7	Non-current assets
8	IPSAS 5 Borrowing costs IPSAS 16 Investment properties IPSAS 21 Impairment of non-cash-generating assets IPSAS 26 Impairment of cash-generating assets IPSAS 31 Intangible assets
9	IPSAS that are similar in form and content to IFRS equivalents, but requiring public sector application, examples, or context
10	IPSAS 11 Construction contracts
11	IPSAS 12 Inventories IPSAS 14 Events after the reporting date IPSAS 18 Segment reporting IPSAS 19 Provisions, contingent liabilities, and contingent assets IPSAS 20 Related party disclosures IPSAS 27 Agriculture IPSAS 39 Employee benefits
12	Financial instruments IPSAS 28 Financial instruments: presentation IPSAS 29 Financial instruments: recognition and measurement IPSAS 30 Financial instruments: disclosure IPSAS 41 Financial instruments
13	Consolidated financial instruments
14	IPSAS 34 Separate financial statements IPSAS 35 Consolidated financial statements IPSAS 36 Investments in associates and joint ventures IPSAS 37 Joint arrangements IPSAS 38 Disclosure of interests in other entities IPSAS 40 Public sector combinations
15	Interpretation of financial statements Ratio analysis Public sector performance measures and performance indicators Financial and non-financial targets (internal and external)
16	Current developments in the IPSASB program Leases Heritage Infrastructure
17	Revision
18	

# ANNEX

# 4

## SOUTH AFRICA PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING QUALIFICATIONS

<p>Public Sector Accounting Technician NQF Level 3 (1 Year - 120 Credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Accounting</li> <li>• Workplace Skills</li> <li>• Working with Computers</li> <li>• Professional Ethics</li> <li>• Budgeting and Reporting</li> <li>• Making and Recording Payments</li> <li>• Recording Revenue and Receipts</li> </ul>
<p>FET Certificate: Public Sector Accounting Technician NQF Level 4 (1 Year - 120 Credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Supervision</li> <li>• Use of Technology in Accounting</li> <li>• Professional Ethics</li> <li>• Preparation of Reconciliations and Trial Balances</li> <li>• Financial Statements</li> <li>• Recovery of Debtors</li> <li>• Budget Preparation and Monitoring</li> </ul>
<p>Certificate: Public Sector Accounting NQF Level 5 (1 Year - 120 Credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Managing a Team</li> <li>• Economic Reporting Format and SCOA Classification</li> <li>• Professional Ethics</li> <li>• Budget Management</li> <li>• Accounting for Assets and Inventory</li> <li>• Financial Reporting</li> <li>• Internal Control, Internal Audit and External Audit</li> </ul>

# ANNEX

# 5

## SOUTH AFRICA PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING PHD PROGRAM



### POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTING (CG034ACC11)

This programme focuses on the acquisition of skills in Public Sector Accounting, including legislation and regulations, the role of government, recording and reporting of financial transactions, controls and audits in government entities, preparation of budgets and forecasts, and other reporting issues. The programme has been offered since 2015, in response to the urgent need in South Africa for competent and accountable public sector financial managers to improve public sector management and reporting. Accounting graduates are provided a route to completing a relevant university qualification to pursue a career in National, Provincial and Local government organisations, as well as with the Auditor General Southern Africa (AGSA).

**Entrance requirements:** B Com (General Accounting) degree, or similar (NQF level 7) undergraduate degree in Accounting.

**Duration:** 1-year full time; or 2-year distance learning.

**Teaching mode:** The programme consists of four courses, each consisting of a number of modules. A pass in all four courses is required in order to be awarded the PG Dip in Public Sector Accounting qualification. From 2019, all four courses will be offered online, using the UCT VULA platform. Students should have access to a computer and internet.

Applications are online and usually close at 31 October, for registration in the following academic year. Visit: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

For more information, contact Ilse Lubbe at [ilse.lubbe@uct.ac.za](mailto:ilse.lubbe@uct.ac.za) or the programme administrator, Olivia Europa, at [olivia.europa@uct.ac.za](mailto:olivia.europa@uct.ac.za)

College of Accounting, Leslie Commerce Building, level 4, Upper Campus, UCT  
Telephone: 021 650 2269

## Compulsory courses

Course code	Course name	HEQF credits	HEQSF level	2018 Fees <sup>33</sup>
ACC4036T	Public Financial Management	36	8	R 14,710
ACC4037V	Public Sector Financial Reporting	36	8	R 14,710
ACC4038V	Public Sector Structures and Functions	24	8	R 11,990
ACC4039T	Public Sector Audit and Governance	24	8	R 11,990
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>		<b>R 53,400</b>

## Assessment

For each of the four individual courses: formative assessments (including regular submission of assignments and essays), at least one test per semester and final exams.

Students are required to achieve a year mark of 40% for each course in order to qualify to write the final examination in that course. The results of the assignments submitted and semester tests during the year will constitute the year mark for each course. The year mark constitutes 40% of the final mark, and a final examination (including an integrated assignment) constitutes 60% of the final mark.

To qualify for the PGD PSA, students must attain a minimum mark of 50% in each of the separate courses. A student who fails only one of the four courses of the diploma may be permitted by senate to write a supplementary examination in that course.

## Readmission rules

A student who fails to complete the requirements for the programme within two years of study will be allowed to re-register in the third year for each of the courses that the student failed in the prior academic year.

No student will be readmitted to the programme if they have failed any course in the programme twice.

## Teaching and learning strategy

The programme uses a combination of teaching and learning strategies that promote student self-directedness and a lifelong learning philosophy among students. This is in line with UCT's mission of being an outstanding teaching university educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society. Students will have individual access to all staff participating in the programme for academic support, in the form of consultation and in an advisory capacity.

<sup>33</sup> Details of fees for 2019 are not yet available

## Outlines of modules (course curriculum) and specific outcomes for each course

<b>Module</b>	<b>Public Financial Management (ACC4036W)</b> <b>Students will demonstrate the ability to</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, present, monitor and evaluate forecasts, budgets and project appraisals</li> <li>• Evaluate and report financial management outcomes against predetermined objectives based on financial management policies</li> <li>• Apply management accounting and financial management techniques which achieve the strategic objectives of the organisation</li> </ul>
1	Strategic management accounting
2	Budgeting and management control systems
3	Capital budgets and project appraisal
4	Public finance and financial management
5	Supply chain management
6	Performance management
7	Asset management
8	Taxation management

<b>Module</b>	<b>Public Sector Structures and Functions (ACC4038H)</b> <b>Students will demonstrate the ability to</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret, introduce, monitor and apply relevant legislation within the public sector organisation (e.g. PFMA, MFMA, National Treasury Regulations, etc.)</li> <li>• Apply public and administration policies within the public sector organisation</li> </ul>
1	The role, structure and administration of governments
2	The government in South Africa, its structures and administration
3	The Public Finance Management Framework in South Africa
4	Government Revenue and Expenditure
5	Public Entities, Municipal Entities and Organs of State
6	Current issues

<b>Public Sector Audit and Governance (ACC4039H)</b>	
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to:</b>	
<b>Module</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, analyse and evaluate financial and related information systems for business monitoring and control purposes</li> <li>• Identify risks and plan work to meet the objectives of an internal or external audit assignment</li> </ul>
1	Internal Controls and External Audit
2	Public Sector Audit Environment
3	Accountability and Governance
4	Risk identification and response in the public sector, including forensic auditing
5	Practical applications

<b>Public Sector Financial Reporting (ACC4037W)</b>	
<b>Students will demonstrate the ability to</b>	
<b>Module</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare, present and monitor information reported in compliance with financial reporting frameworks and applicable standards of disclosure, for government institutions (I e GRAP and modified cash basis)</li> <li>• Interpret and analyse financial information and statements for national, provincial and local government organisational forms (e.g. municipalities, government entities, etc.)</li> </ul>
1	Reporting environment for public sector entities
2	Reporting framework - GRAP principles
3	Accounting processes in the public sector
4	Preparing financial statements
5	Non-current assets
6	Revenue and working capital
7	Net assets and liabilities
8	Other GRAP standards
9	Interpretations and other reporting issues

## THE PULSAR PROGRAM IS

### MANAGED BY:



### CO-FUNDED BY:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
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Education and Research EAER  
**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO**