

Good Practice Guide: The Education, Training, and Development of Accounting Technicians



**International Federation
of Accountants**

IFAC Developing Nations Committee
International Federation of Accountants
545 Fifth Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10017 USA

The mission of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) is to serve the public interest, strengthen the accountancy profession worldwide and contribute to the development of strong international economies by establishing and promoting adherence to high-quality professional standards, furthering the international convergence of such standards and speaking out on public interest issues where the profession's expertise is most relevant.

Copies of this paper may be downloaded free-of-charge from the IFAC website at <http://www.ifac.org>. The approved text is published in the English language.

Copyright © March 2009 by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). All rights reserved. Permission is granted to make copies of this work provided that such copies are for use in academic classrooms or for personal use and are not sold or disseminated and provided that each copy bears the following credit line: "*Copyright © March 2009 by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). All rights reserved. Used with permission of IFAC. Contact permissions@ifac.org for permission to reproduce, store or transmit this document.*" Otherwise, written permission from IFAC is required to reproduce, store or transmit, or to make other similar uses of, this document, except as permitted by law. Contact permissions@ifac.org.

ISBN: 978-1-934779-28-6

Introduction

The Mission of IFAC is to serve the public interest by continuing to strengthen the worldwide accountancy profession and contribute to the development of strong international economies. This is achieved by establishing and promoting adherence to high-quality professional standards, furthering the international convergence of such standards and speaking out on public interest issues where the profession's expertise is most relevant.

The IFAC mission is accomplished in a number of ways, including supporting the development of professional accountants and accounting technicians and the development of good practice guides on topics relevant to the development of the profession. This publication, *Good Practice Guide: The Education, Training and Development of Accounting Technicians* (Accounting Technicians' Guide), will contribute to the achievement of IFAC's mission by raising awareness of the need for and role of accounting technicians, especially in developing nations. The Guide is issued specifically for professional accountancy organizations, including IFAC member bodies, associates and potential IFAC members. Although the International Education Standards, issued by the International Accounting Education Standards Board, set out accountancy education requirements for professional accountants, some of its principles are relevant to the education and development of accounting technicians and have been referred to.

The Accounting Technicians' Guide complements other IFAC good practice guides intended to assist IFAC members and potential members in developing sustainable capacity. In particular, the Guide is designed to assist professional accountancy organizations in developing qualified accounting technicians through education, training, and assessment of skills and competence. The Guide also recommends professional accounting organizations provide ongoing professional development of accounting technicians and have activities in place to monitor their compliance with ethical requirements.

The Developing Nations Committee acknowledges the significant contribution of the Association of Accounting Technicians (UK) and the Eastern, Central, Southern Africa Federation of Accountants in the preparation of the Guide. A joint editorial board comprised of members of the Developing Nations Committee and the International Accounting Education Standards Board was established to oversee the development of the Guide, report on progress to the Developing Nations Committee, and review drafts throughout the process.

**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE: THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT
OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS**

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction.....	5
2. Who is This Guide Written for?.....	5
2.1 Professional Accountancy Organizations.....	5
3. Definition and Role of Accounting Technicians	6
4. Objectives of the Accounting Technicians' Guide	7
5. Framework for the Development and Support of Accounting Technician.....	8
6. Pre-Qualification.....	8
6.1 Entry Requirements.....	8
6.2 Education Content	9
6.3 Ethics, Values and Attitudes.....	10
7. Qualification	10
7.1 Assessment	10
7.2 Assessment Methods	11
8. Post-Qualification	12
8.1 Practical Experience for Admission to Membership.....	12
8.2 Continuing Professional Development.....	12
8.3 Code of Ethics	13
8.4 Investigation and Disciplinary Action.....	14
9. Progression to Professional Accounting Qualifications	15
Appendix 1 to the Accounting Technicians Guide	16

1. Introduction

The accountancy profession includes skilled individuals working in a variety of roles including both professional accountants and accounting technicians.¹ In recent years, the role and demand for accounting technicians, in both the private and public sector, has become increasingly evident. This is especially the case in developing and emerging economies where individuals do not have the resources to qualify as professional accountants. Consequently, there are generally fewer available professional accountants and many countries are not able to retain professional accountants in-country because of the global shortage.² In the public sector of developing nations, accounting capacity development is a problem which has been identified as being particularly apparent. Accounting technicians are therefore an essential resource in the public sector because of the difficulty of recruiting, training and retaining professional accountants. Developed economies also need accounting technicians both in cases where smaller entities may not require the skills of a professional accountant or where the size of larger entities is such that much work needs to be undertaken at a technician level in addition to the work undertaken by professional accountants.

Although some countries have IFAC members and associates or education providers who offer accounting technician certification programs, many countries do not. In these latter cases the accounting technician obtains his or her skills through on the job training often without ongoing support for continuing development. This Guide has been prepared to provide a framework for the certification of accounting technicians and their ongoing support and supervision through continuing professional development programs. The Guide also sets out possible mechanisms to ensure to accounting technicians comply with ethical requirements.

2. Who is This Guide Written For?

2.1 Professional Accountancy Organizations

This Guide is primarily written to assist professional accountancy organizations including IFAC member bodies and associates to understand the role of accounting technicians, and to provide a framework for the development of an accounting technician program. This Guide is not intended to set out specific membership criteria into a professional accountancy organization but recognizes the need for ongoing support of qualified accounting technicians especially in the area of continuing professional development opportunities and complying with ethical requirements. Professional accountancy organizations, by including qualified accounting technicians in their membership, can fulfill this role to ensure qualified accounting technicians maintain their qualifications. Those who do not appear to meet ongoing membership requirements should be supported to help them to comply.

Professional accountancy organizations operate in unique environments and are at different stages of organizational development. Professional accountancy organizations that may be at an earlier stage of development may not have the resources, mechanisms, and programs in place to

¹ “Professional accountant” is the term used within this document to refer to qualified chartered or certified accountants. However, different terms may be used in different jurisdictions.

² The Africa Region Learning Workshop in Nairobi in September 2006 documented these challenges and identified the development of skilled accounting technicians as a solution.

implement an accounting technician program or provide ongoing support for qualified accounting technician members. Developing professional accountancy organizations are encouraged to review the Developing Nations Committee publication entitled *Establishing and Developing a Professional Accountancy Body*³ to obtain guidance about the role of professional accountancy organizations including the establishment of membership criteria.

This Guide may also be of interest to employers who have a role to play in the preparation and development of accounting technicians. Employers provide the environment for prospective accounting technicians to gain practical experience and also benefit from the skills applied by developing and qualified accounting technicians.

Development agencies seeking to support accounting capacity development projects will also find the Guide useful in supporting initiatives to provide additional accounting technicians in the market place.

3. Definition and Role of Accounting Technicians

The tasks and activities involved in an organization's accounting and financial reporting functions are so varied in nature and complexity that not all tasks need to be performed by professional accountants and may be performed by accounting technicians.

*An accounting technician is a skilled person who undertakes many of the day to day functions in the accounting environment. Accounting technicians may work alone in smaller organizations but in larger organizations usually work in support of senior accountants. Accounting technicians generally work at an operational level, making decisions appropriate to their role, with guidance from a senior accountant as appropriate. Accounting technicians work in all types of organizations, including commerce and industry, government, public services and private practice. Accounting technicians may progress to higher level jobs or qualifications once they have completed their technician level training.*⁴

Accounting technicians play a key role at an operational level in the production of timely, credible and reliable financial information which is fundamental to successful investment, effective governance, and service delivery. This in turn contributes to economic development and benefits the public interest.

The nature of the accounting technician's work will depend on the individual's skills and experience, the environment within which they are working, such as the type and size of organization, and whether the organization operates in the private or public sector. Where organizations do have professional accountants in their employment, the organization's capacity may be severely restricted without sufficient operational support. Properly trained and experienced accounting technicians are often able to operate and manage financial systems with the minimum of supervision. In smaller entities and organizations, accounting technicians are capable of managing the accounting systems without supervision. Professional accountants are

³ IFAC publications are available through IFAC's website at www.ifac.org.

⁴ Source: Occupational Standards for Accounting Technicians in the ECSAFA Region produced 2005. For the purposes of this Guide, the term "professional accountant" has been used for senior accountants.

therefore able to delegate tasks with confidence to accounting technicians and are thus freed to focus on the strategic roles for which they are qualified.

Consequently, qualified accounting technicians can contribute significantly to the work of professional accountants and their ability to perform effectively.

4. Objectives of the Accounting Technicians' Guide

A clearly-defined skills development and skills maintenance framework of technical competence, from the accounting technician entry level to the professional accountant level, enables economies to develop their capacity in a cost-effective way. In addition, the formalization of the role of the accounting technician engenders public confidence in the accounting technician level of the accountancy profession and provides a reference to a standardized level of knowledge, competence, ethics and performance of the individual.

In July 1999, IFAC's International Education Committee⁵ published *An Advisory on Education and Training of Technical Accounting Staff*. This Guide builds on that advisory document and sets out a framework to support the education, technical competency and development of the accountants working at the technician level. This framework also emphasizes the need for ongoing support of accounting technicians through continuing professional development activities and mechanisms to monitor compliance with ethical requirements. Although the International Education Standards set out education requirements for professional accountants, many of its principles are relevant to the education and development of accounting technicians and are referred to in this Guide.⁶

Accounting technician work ranges from basic level financial administration, to supervisory and managerial roles. In addition, many accounting technicians go on to develop their skills further and progress to attaining professional accountancy qualifications. Consequently, this framework follows a logical progression from entry level to an accounting technician level training program, through to qualification as an accounting technician.

It is important that organizations seeking to develop accounting technician programs take a practical approach to using the framework. The framework can be used by professional accountancy organizations as appropriate and adapted to their own needs according to their environment and resources available to develop the elements of the framework. Professional accountancy organizations can adopt elements of the framework according to what they consider to be priorities and taking into account existing education, certification, and supervision arrangements that they have in place for their members. Implementing just one part of the framework is certainly beneficial and organizations need not wait until they have the necessary resources to implement the full framework before introducing the earlier elements of the framework. Professional accountancy organizations may choose, for example, to focus at first on the introduction of a qualification process and to address post-qualification elements once the qualification process has been implemented.

⁵ IFAC's previous International Education Committee is now the International Accounting Education Standards Board.

⁶ International Education Standards are freely available on IFAC's website at www.ifac.org.

To accommodate the broad range of individuals who may be interested in obtaining an accounting technician qualification, the accounting technician education program could be structured so that it can be undertaken part time or full time, by prospective accounting technicians with no relevant work experience, or with varying levels of work experience.

5. Framework for the Development and Support of Accounting Technician

The conferring of professional status and membership designation in a professional accountancy organization engenders public confidence in the technician level of the accountancy profession. It also provides a reference to a standardized level of knowledge, competence, ethics and performance of the qualified accounting technician.

The Guide is organized according to pre qualification, qualification, and post qualification stages. It also discusses the opportunity for technicians to develop their skills further and progress to a professional accountancy qualification.

- Pre-qualification for accounting technicians:
 - Entry requirements
 - Education content
 - Ethics, values and attitudes
- Qualification as accounting technicians:
 - Assessment
 - Assessment methods
- Post-qualification requirements for accounting technicians:
 - Practical experience for admission to membership
 - Continuing professional development
 - Code of ethics
 - Investigation and disciplinary action for non-compliance
- Progression to professional accountancy qualifications.

6. Pre-Qualification

6.1 Entry Requirements

Prospective accounting technicians need an appropriate level of prior education and learning to have the foundation necessary to acquire the skills, knowledge and competence to become an accounting technician. The prospective accounting technician's point of entry into a program will depend on his or her capabilities, previous education and work experience. In essence the prospective accounting technician should have attained a reasonable level of literacy and numeracy i.e. should be able to complete written assignments and make numerical calculations without difficulty.

Generally it can be assumed that individuals who have successfully completed their high school education (or equivalent) are likely to have the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to enable them to enter an accounting technician program. In some jurisdictions, the appropriate level of formal education required may vary due to differences in the education system e.g., in terms of age of completion and qualifications gained. It is recommended that no formal entry requirements be put in place, as many potential accounting technicians may be mature students who left education early and have improved their skills in the workplace rather than through formal qualifications. Some organizations might choose to implement a short, literacy/numeracy test, which could be used either as a self assessment or as a formal entry test. A literacy / numeracy test may be especially useful in those circumstances where an individual has not completed high school but through work or other education training may have the equivalent education to enter the accounting technician program.

6.2 *Education Content*

IFAC's International Education Standards for Professional Accountants set out to ensure that prospective professional accountants have the "knowledge base and strong skills in order to produce competent professional accountants with appropriate values, ethics and attitudes."

Accounting technicians need to develop skills and the knowledge and understanding that underpin these skills. This knowledge and understanding enables them to fully understand how and why a particular task is undertaken. When knowledge is taught in isolation from the skills that it underpins, there is a risk of learning without the development of real understanding. Their education should therefore be competence based and aiming for an outcome, rather than being academic and being measured on input, or the number of hours of learning they undertake. The desired outcome is to produce an accounting technician who can perform effectively and efficiently in the workplace. This in turn, means that they may still undertake the tasks if the context or working environment changes e.g., if they were to move from a public sector environment to public practice, or to apply their skills in another country. The design of qualification structures needs to enable individuals to progress through the levels of technician training to achieve their full potential. Competence at each level should, however, be credited, providing for their recognition and value in the marketplace.

A suggested accounting technician qualification structure can be divided into three levels:

- The first level covers introductory areas including double entry bookkeeping, an introduction to administrative processes, bank and ledger reconciliations, and manual and computerised accounting systems.
- The second level introduces more complicated accounting tasks, including the preparation of final accounts for sole traders and partnerships, how to maintain cost accounting records and how to prepare reports and returns.
- The third level covers drafting financial statements for limited companies, performing more complex management accounting tasks and developing management skills. It can also include some choice of subject areas so students can start to specialise in their preferred areas e.g., personal/business tax, public sector etc.

It is particularly important for accounting technicians at each level to develop not only knowledge and understanding, but also the practical accounting skills and the broader business skills required to operate accounting systems effectively. It is short-sighted to focus on theoretical aspects alone and leave the practical and business skills to be acquired after qualification. To do so make demands on employers that they are seldom able to fulfill and skills are likely to develop in a haphazard way.

An illustration of recommended skills and the underpinning knowledge and understanding which lead to competence are provided in Appendix 1. Appendix 1 is based on regional occupational standards for accounting technicians developed by the Eastern Central Southern African Federation of Accountants (ECSAFA).⁷ The skills indicated in the unit and element titles were developed for ECSAFA's environment and may need to be adapted for different jurisdictions. The content is unit based and each unit is a measurable task that is carried out in the workplace.

6.3 Ethics, Values and Attitudes

As set out in IFAC's International Education Standard 4, states "education programs need to deal with ethical rules in a positive, participative way, for example, by exploring links between ethical behavior, corporate failure and fraud. It is important for professional accountants to learn from their experiences." Accounting technicians also need to develop appropriate professional values, ethics and attitudes. This is essential to enable accounting technicians to provide services of consistently high quality in the public interest and to protect public confidence in the accountancy profession.

It is recommended that this part of the program be taught in a discursive way, involving discussion and drawing on prospective accounting technicians' real experiences and those they have witnessed as observers through news reports etc. It is important to recognize that some of the potential ethical issues they need to cover will be areas where they have no direct experience, so the teaching will also need to focus on hypothetical situations, and will need to take into account confidentiality considerations.

7. Qualification

7.1 Assessment

It is recommended that assessment of a prospective accounting technician be an assessment of competence, rather than of academic learning. This will confirm whether the prospective technician has the necessary skills, and related knowledge and understanding, to perform the tasks required.

Where candidates are able to gain work experience while working towards their qualification, the experience provides an earlier opportunity to put their skills into practice. Often, however, candidates at the earlier stage of their employment or working in developing nations may not have access to full time accounting technician roles. It is, however, possible for a candidate to complete the initial accounting technician qualification without being employed within an

⁷ To obtain a complete copy of the regional occupational standards, please contact ECSAFA at email: ecsafa@africaonline.co.ke.

accountancy role or requiring candidates to complete a minimum number of years of practical experience.

Since the education and training for accounting technicians is skills based rather than purely academic, it is important for the program content to include an appropriate balance of subject areas that focus on skills' development. The assessment process discussed below and in particular those conducted through work-based scenarios, provides a basis to evaluate whether the candidate has obtained the necessary skills and competence.

7.2 Assessment Methods

Assessment methods will vary depending on local circumstances, but it is recommended that all assessment schemes include some formal, recorded examination, to guarantee consistent standards of assessment. Examinations can most appropriately be used to assess underpinning knowledge and understanding, preferably through a test of application. Recording the formal examination results through a written or computer-based process provides evidence of the prospective accounting technician's results.

For some skills and competences, assessment would naturally be best undertaken in the workplace. Work-place or work-based assessment can most appropriately be used to assess the application of knowledge and understanding in a real-life, or simulated, scenario. In some circumstances, this is not always practical as many accounting technician students are not yet working in an accountancy environment; in addition, many employers do not wish confidential information to be disclosed, or do not have the skills or time to undertake formal assessment. It is therefore recommended, that where workplace assessment is not possible, simulated work-based scenarios be used to assess competence.

One, or a combination of the workplace or simulated work-based methods described above, should be used in conjunction with formal examinations testing the application of knowledge and understanding to work-based scenarios. These forms of assessments test competence as well as underpinning skills and knowledge in a controlled environment rather than simply testing memory recall or academic ability. The split between work based assessment and formal examinations may vary from jurisdiction to another. Factors affecting the ratio might include the availability of qualified assessors to undertake workplace assessment, the culture surrounding validity and credibility of workplace assessment, and the resources available to set and mark formal written or computer recorded examinations.

All assessments should ensure that the evidence prospective accounting technicians provide of their skills, knowledge and competence is valid, sufficient, reliable, recent and authentic. Appropriate quality assurance measures should be put in place to ensure that those responsible for assessment have the necessary skills to make sound judgments and that these judgments are made consistently across prospective accounting technicians and across time; they should be appropriately qualified and trained assessors and their role is likely to include verification of assessment decisions, or sample checks in the case of work-place or work-based assessment and some form of moderation of formal examinations and marking.

Once assessment has confirmed that the prospective accounting technician has the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding, he or she can be granted certification for this initial qualification.

It is recommended that prospective accounting technicians have at least one year's relevant work experience as part of their qualification requirements. This will ensure that they have had the opportunity to put their skills into practice in an actual work situation; this experience could either be gained whilst studying, or post qualification. The practical experience should be verified by a suitably qualified person.

8. Post-Qualification

Once qualified, accounting technicians will need the same support and monitoring as professional accountants. This support and monitoring function may be undertaken by a professional accountancy organization with the qualified accounting technician included in a membership category of the organization.

8.1 Practical Experience for Admission to Membership

Where professional accountancy organizations would like to offer a technician level category of membership, it is recommended that the membership criteria includes a practical experience requirement. This will ensure qualified accounting technicians have had the opportunity to put their skills into practice in an actual work situation for at least one year (or equivalent). This will ensure they have had the opportunity to put their skills into practice in an actual work situation. This practical experience could either be gained while the individual is completing the accounting technician program and working towards qualification or after they have qualified. Different approaches are available to determine whether the prospective member has obtained the relevant practical experience. Although applicable to professional accountants, IES 5, *Practical Experience Requirements*, contains guidance on the monitoring of practical experience which may be useful in developing a process to verify experience obtained by accounting technicians.

8.2 Continuing Professional Development

The IESs also express the need for professional accountants to “*continue to learn and adapt to change throughout their professional lives.*”⁸ These objectives are equally applicable to accounting technicians, and professional accountancy organizations are encouraged to establish a continuing professional development (CPD) program for qualified accounting technicians. CPD contributes to the competence of accounting technicians and therefore CPD activities are expected to develop the knowledge, skills and values, ethics and attitudes of the accounting technician, relevant to their current and future work and professional responsibilities.

The key objectives for professional accountancy organizations when establishing a CPD program are to:

- (a) Promote the importance of continuous improvement of competence and a commitment to lifelong learning for all accounting technicians.

⁸ Refer to paragraph 9 of the Introduction to the International Education Standards issued by the International Accounting Education Standards Board.

- (b) Require all accounting technicians to develop and maintain competence relevant and appropriate to their work and professional responsibilities.
- (c) Facilitate access to CPD opportunities and resources to assist accounting technicians in meeting their responsibility for lifelong learning.
- (d) Monitor compliance with the continuing development requirements including enforcement in instances of non-compliance.

As is the case for professional accountants, it is the responsibility of the individual accounting technician to develop and maintain professional competence necessary to provide high quality services to clients, employers and other stakeholders. The only exemption from the mandatory CPD requirement is for members who are fully retired and will not be returning to the workforce in any capacity at any stage in the future.

By requiring accounting technicians to submit information about their learning activities or outcomes to professional accountancy organizations, CPD requirements can be monitored and tracked to ensure the accounting technician meets the defined CPD requirements. Learning activity can be measured in terms of effort or time spent, or through a valid assessment method which measures competence achieved or developed.

CPD could be measured through various different approaches, or a combination of these approaches:

- (a) Input-based approaches — by establishing a set amount of learning activity that is considered appropriate to develop and maintain competence.
- (b) Output-based approaches — by requiring professional accountants to demonstrate, by way of outcomes, that they develop and maintain professional competence.
- (c) Combination approaches — by effectively and efficiently combining elements of the input- and output-based approaches, setting the amount of learning activity required and measuring the outcomes achieved.

More information about CPD including measuring and monitoring compliance with CPD can be found in IES 7.

8.3 *Code of Ethics*

The accountancy profession, including qualified accounting technicians, is committed to the following objectives:

- (a) Development of an ethical approach to work as well as to their employers and clients. This is acquired by experience and professional supervision under training and is safeguarded by strict ethical and disciplinary guidelines;
- (b) Carry out duties to society as a whole in addition to duties to their employer or the client;
- (c) Maintain an objective outlook by being fair minded and free from conflicts of interest;
- (d) Render services to the highest standards of conduct and performance;

- (e) Achieve acceptance by the public that members of professional accountancy organizations provide accountancy services in accordance with these high standards and requirements.

It is expected that accounting technicians will follow guidelines on professional ethics, appropriate to the level of work they undertake, based on the IFAC Code of Ethics' principles. It is recommended that such guidelines:

- (a) Set out a code of ethics based on the five fundamental principles established by the IFAC Code of Ethics:
- Integrity;
 - Objectivity;
 - Professional competence and due care;
 - Confidentiality; and
 - Professional behavior.
- (b) Provide a conceptual framework which accounting technicians are expected to apply to enable them to identify and evaluate threats to compliance with the fundamental principles and to respond appropriately to them.
- (c) Provide guidance and illustrations on how to apply the conceptual framework in practice both generally and in specific problem situations. This will assist accounting technicians in considering ethical matters and apply the guidance as appropriate to ensure that they adhere to the fundamental principles in their own situation.

8.4 *Investigation and Disciplinary Action*

It is recommended that in a professional accountancy organization an investigation and disciplinary process is in place to deal with instances of misconduct, breaches with ethical requirements or other regulations. This is essential to maintain public confidence in the technician level of the accountancy profession. As set out in the Developing Nations Committee publication entitled *Establishing and Developing a Professional Accountancy Body*, misconduct includes any and all of the following:

- Criminal activity.
- Acts or omissions likely to bring the accountancy profession into disrepute.
- Breaches of professional standards.
- Breaches of ethical requirements.
- Gross professional negligence.
- A number of less serious instances of professional negligence that, cumulatively, may indicate unfitness to practice.
- Unsatisfactory work.

9. Progression to Professional Accounting Qualifications

As well as being a qualification and career choice in its own right, an accounting technician qualification can serve as a basis for progression to a professional accountant certification program. Qualified accounting technicians will already have a practical grounding in accounting and often make excellent professional accountancy students. The requirements for entry into a professional accountancy program and the requirements to qualify as a professional accountant differ from qualified accounting technician programs. For example, IES 1, *Entry Requirements to a Program of Professional Accounting Education*, states that entry requirements should be at least equivalent to that for admission into a recognized university degree program or its equivalent. IES 5, *Practical Experience Requirements*, states that the practical experience requirement for professional accountancy qualifications should be a minimum of three years. However, many professional accountancy organizations have a process to provide exemptions to qualified accounting technicians who want to enter a qualified professional accountancy program. These examinations include for example, granting the qualified accounting technician exemption from the first tier of exams or specific courses.

To contact an IFAC member or associate about its accounting technician program or professional accountancy program, please refer to the IFAC website www.ifac.org/about.

Appendix 1 to the Accounting Technicians' Guide

This illustration of recommended skills and the underpinning knowledge and understanding which lead to competence is based on regional occupational standards for accounting technicians developed by the Eastern Central Southern African Federation of Accountants (ECSAFA). The skills indicated in the unit and element titles were developed for ECSAFA's environment and may need to be adapted for different jurisdictions.

Each area of competence specifies:

- The skills which need to be developed.
- The underpinning knowledge and understanding relating to each area of competence.
- The range of situations in which the accounting technician must be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake the task.

Level 1

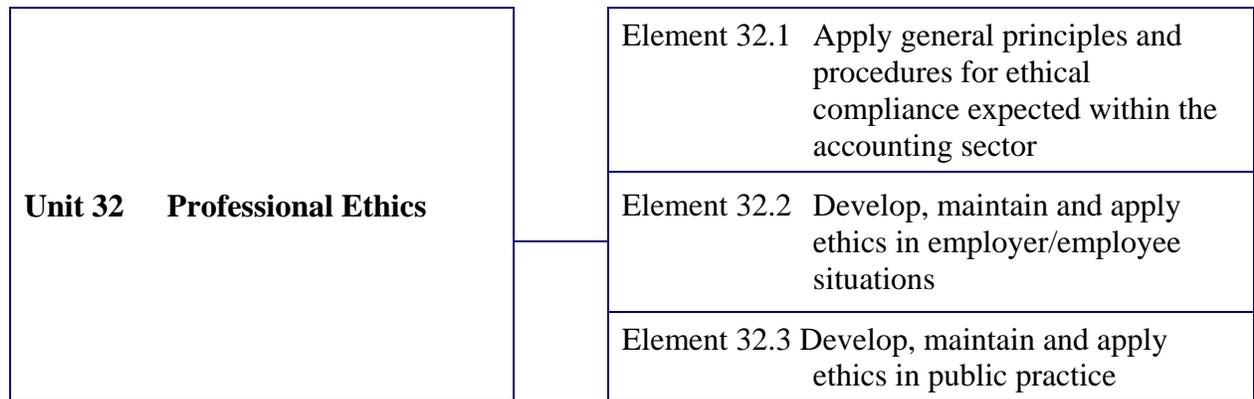
Unit 1 Recording Income and Receipts	Element 1.1 Process documents relating to goods and services supplied
	Element 1.2 Process receipts
Unit 2 Making and Recording Payments	Element 2.1 Process documents relating to goods and services received
	Element 2.2 Process payments
Unit 3 Preparing Ledger Balances and an Initial Trial Balance	Element 3.1 Balance bank transactions
	Element 3.2 Prepare ledger balances and control accounts
	Element 3.3 Draft an initial trial balance
Unit 4 Supplying Information for Management Control	Element 4.1 Code and extract information
	Element 4.2 Provide comparisons on costs and income
Unit 21 Working with Computers	Element 21.1 Use computer systems and software
	Element 21.2 Maintain the security of data

Unit 32 Professional Ethics	Element 32.1 Apply general principles and procedures for ethical compliance expected within the accounting sector
	Element 32.2 Develop, maintain and apply ethics in employer/employee situations
	Element 32.3 Develop, maintain and apply ethics in public practice

Level 2

Units 21 and 32 need not be repeated if they have been completed at Level 1.

Unit 5 Maintaining Financial Records and Preparing Accounts	Element 5.1 Maintaining records relating to capital acquisition and disposal
	Element 5.2 Collecting and collating information for the preparation of final accounts
	Element 5.3 Preparing the final accounts of sole traders and partnerships
Unit 6 Recording and Evaluating Costs and Revenues	Element 6.1 Record and analyze information relating to direct costs and revenues
	Element 6.2 Record and analyze information relating to the allocation, apportionment and absorption of overhead costs
	Element 6.3 Prepare and evaluate estimates of costs and revenues
Unit 7 Preparing Reports and Returns	Element 7.1 Prepare and present periodic performance reports
	Element 7.2 Prepare reports and returns for outside agencies
	Element 7.3 Prepare sales tax returns
Unit 21 Working with Computers	Element 21.1 Use computer systems and software
	Element 21.2 Maintain the security of data



Level 3

Units 21 and 32 need not be repeated if they have been completed at Level 1 or 2.

Unit 8 Contributing to the Management of Performance and the Enhancement of Value	Element 8.1 Collect, analyze and disseminate information about costs
	Element 8.2 Monitor performance and make recommendations to enhance value
Unit 9 Contributing to the Planning and Control of Resources	Element 9.1 Prepare forecasts of income and expenditure
	Element 9.2 Prepare draft budget proposals
	Element 9.3 Monitor the performance of responsibility centers against budgets
Unit 10 Managing Systems and People in the Accounting Environment	Element 10.1 Manage people within the accounting environment
	Element 10.2 Identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness of an accounting system
Unit 21 Working with Computers	Element 21.1 Use computer systems and software
	Element 21.2 Maintain the security of data
Unit 32 Professional Ethics	Element 32.1 Apply general principles and procedures for ethical compliance expected within the accounting sector
	Element 32.2 Develop, maintain and apply ethics in employer/employee situations
	Element 32.3 Develop, maintain and apply ethics in public practice

Level 4

It is suggested that Unit 11 should be compulsory at this level but that some choice be permitted from Units 15 to 19 depending on sector needs.

Unit 11 Drafting Financial Statements (Accounting Practice, Industry and Commerce)	Element 11.1 Draft limited company financial statements
	Element 11.2 Interpret limited company financial statements
Unit 15 Operating a Cash Management and Credit Control System	Element 15.1 Monitor and control cash receipts and payments
	Element 15.2 Manage cash balances
	Element 15.3 Grant credit
	Element 15.4 Monitor and control the collection of debts
Unit 17 Implementing Auditing Procedures	Element 17.1 Contribute to the planning of an audit assignment
	Element 17.2 Contribute to the conduct of an audit assignment
	Element 17.3 Prepare related draft reports
Unit 18 Preparing Business Taxation Computations	Element 18.1 Prepare capital allowances computations
	Element 18.2 Compute assessable business income
	Element 18.3 Prepare capital gains computations
	Element 18.4 Prepare Corporation Tax computations



International Federation of Accountants

545 Fifth Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA

Tel +1 (212) 286-9344 Fax +1(212) 286-9570 www.ifac.org