

Comments on the:

**General Education and Training Certificate for
Adults (GETCA), A Qualification at NQF Level 1**

From John Aitchison

Chapter 1

1. Policy Framework

1. The state has a constitutional responsibility to make **adult and continuing** education available and accessible, ...

No it doesn't - it has a constitutional obligation to make **basic education** available to all. Adult education and continuing comprises a huge domain, most of it which the state has no obligation to make available.

It should read "**adult basic education**".

7. This policy, and the policy and regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of assessment for the *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults: A qualification at Level 1 on the NQF (to be developed)* describe the rules and provisos for the award(ing) of the GETCA at Level 1 on the NQF. **The GETCA is awarded to successful adult learners for the achievement of the exit level outcomes in terms of the rules of combination stipulated in the qualification and curriculum documents underpinning the GETCA.**

This sentence combines two different things. The GETC is awarded for the successful completion of the assessment for the GETCA. AND. The GETCA will have certain rules of subject combination that must be adhered to. Keep them separate.

2. Rationale

1. The *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA): a qualification at Level 1 on the NQF* services an identifiable need for adult learners in the education system not currently met by other qualifications on the NQF. It is designed to provide opportunities for adults who have had limited or no access to other forms of **formalised** learning. ...

Replace with "**formal certificated**"

3. Purpose

5. The capabilities expressed in the exit level outcomes for the qualification will be developed through—and during—the achievement of the outcomes for the individual subjects which the adult learner studies. The breadth and depth of learning as well as the levels of cognitive demand associated with the exit level outcomes are explicated in greater detail in the individual subject **curricula**.

Should be “**curriculum documents**” or “**curriculum guidelines**”

4. General Requirements

2. Adult learners **may register for the qualification** in terms of the *Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006) as amended by (Act No. 3 of 2012 and Act No. 1 of 2013)* at:

- (a) Colleges/Community Learning Centres, registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training, and

- (b) Private colleges that are accredited by Umalusi and registered as examination centres through an assessment body that is accredited by Umalusi.

3. Adult learners not wishing to register for the GETCA at a learning institution **may study independently**, and may then register at an examination centre, which is registered with an accredited assessment body, prior to the examination sitting.

I find these two clauses confusing.

One needs to distinguish between enrolling in a programme or course of instruction run by an institution and registering to sit a public examination. Clause 2 confuses the two.

ABET historically has also been provided by NGOs and industrial programmes who may decide that only some of the learners will sit the public examination.

If one keeps clause 4.2 as is then clause 4.3 should be changed to read.

"Adult learners may also study independently or enrol in non- accredited programmes but must then register at an examination centre which is registered with an accredited assessment body, in advance of being admitted to the examination sitting."

7. A South African identity document is compulsory for all South African adult learners registering for the GETCA examination; alternatively, **a valid study/work permit for foreign nationals** is compulsory for registration for the GETCA examination by an adult learner.

There are many foreigners legitimately in South Africa who have neither a study or a work permit. Surely a more open wording should be:

" an authentic identity document for foreign nationals"

5. Type of qualification

2. The *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA)*: A qualification at Level 1 on the NQF, like its predecessor, has three preparatory steps as building blocks that may be used to prepare learners for entry into the qualification. They are as follows:

Old qualification	New qualification
ABET level 1	AET 1
ABET level 2	AET 2
ABET level 3	AET 3
ABET level 4 – GETC: ABET Qualification	GETCA Qualification

No it doesn't. The GETCA is a qualification, not a qualification framework or a system of provision.

This wording suggests that NQF level 1 ABET is just like schooling with levels/grades/steps. It would be far better to start by saying that there are no restrictions on registering for the GETCA but that it is recommended that candidates have gained competence through the lower levels or their equivalents. The "may" is not strong enough and is contradicted by the clause 8:1

The use of the AET 1 to 3 to replace ABET 1 to 3 is ridiculous and a guarantee of confusion. If officials are no longer going to use the term ABET then drop it entirely but do not replace it with AET 1 to 3. Having ABET levels within the NQF level 1 had a utility (in the same way as school grade levels 1 to 9 within NQF level 1 has a utility). What is important is that it did not compromise the logic of NQF levels. With AET 1 to 3 there is no logic and huge scope for confusion. Will NQF 2 now be AET 4 and NQF 4 now be AET 5, etc.?

For the GETCA, preparatory steps are known as AET 1, AET 2 and AET 3, a terminology in keeping with current developments and these replace ABET Level 1 - 3. Even though the AET levels below the GETCA can serve as entry levels into the GETCA, they are not the only route for gaining access into the GETCA.

The only development known to me is that the Directorate for AET has done a mechanical search and replace operation on ABET in all their documents without considering logic and the scope for future confusion. No serious academic would use the AET 1 to 3 terminology. ABET is the perfectly logical and correct form of terminology for basic education at NQF 1 level (General education and Training). AET is not just low NQF level work and includes

educational provision in the world as a whole that is now larger in scope than formal schooling and higher education.

5. The GETCA is underpinned by **curricula** for all subjects. ...

Misuse of the term curricula. Should be "**syllabi**", "**curriculum documents**" or "**curriculum guidelines**".

6. In accordance with regulation 8(1) of the *Regulations under the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995)*, the *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults: A qualification at Level 1 on the NQF*:

- i. represents a planned combination of Learning Outcomes that has a defined purpose or purposes, and is intended to provide qualifying adult learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning;
- ii. **adds value to the qualifying adult learner;**
- iii. **provides benefits to society and the economy;**
- iv. complies with the objectives of the NQF; and
- v. indicates the rules governing the award of the qualification

ii. and iii are not amenable to regulation but only by evaluation of implementation.

"adds value to the qualifying adult learner" is neo-liberal gobbledegook.

6. Entrance requirements for the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults: A qualification at Level 1 on the NQF

1. Subject to the limitations expressed in Paragraph 4, sub-paragraphs 4 – 7, adult learners may register for the *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults: A qualification at Level 1 on the NQF* by:
 - (a) **Demonstrating competence** in basic communication and numeracy skills at **AET Level 3** or equivalent
 - (b) **Demonstrating competence** in basic communication and numeracy skills at **AET Level 3** through a recognition of prior learning process, subject to the enforcement of quality assurance measures by the relevant assessment body, and in compliance with the recognition of prior learning policy developed by Umalusi as contemplated in Section 27 of the NQF Act (Act No. 67 of 2008).

This clause is confusing. Either access to the GETCA examination is open access or it is not. It should be open access – how can one have NASCA as open access when this is not? The clause confuses the examination with the forms of instruction and preparation which would be necessary to prepare for the examination. How do you “register by demonstrating competence” – surely you fill in a form and present a copy of a certificate of previous level of education obtained. The jargon obscures.

It could be re-phrased (as in NASCA) that there are no restrictions on registering for the GETCA but that the learner should be competent And then list the (a) and (b)

AET 3 should be ABET 3 [this applies throughout this document.]

7. Duration and general enrolment and registration requirements of the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults

2. ... to complete **AET** Levels 1 – 3.

8. Articulation

1. In order to access the GETCA the successful completion of fundamental subjects/modules passed at AET 3 or in an equivalent qualification will be required.

This denies any open access and contradicts clause 5:3. In any case it is not about articulation.

Chapter 2

Structure and Design of the *General Education and Training Certificate for Adults*

10. Qualification rules

- (d) An adult learner may not register for more than one language from each of the following language groups:
 - (i) IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Siswati;
 - (ii) Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana.

This is a stupid rule. It should say “may not gain credit” towards the qualification. Surely a person should be allowed to do other languages for non-credit purposes,

3. An adult learner intending to study further must register for at least one language which is used as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT) at institutions of continuing/further education and training.

This should not be mandatory. It should be replaced by “will need to”.

Definitions

Curriculum	A curriculum is the underpinning policy provided for a qualification to facilitate a more general understanding of its implementation in an educational system. ... This is a narrow definition and faulty definition and certainly does not encompass the 3 components in a, b. and c below it. I think it should be reworked to be a definition of "Curriculum guidelines".
Learner	Any person, receiving education at a public or independent learning institution linked to an accredited assessment body or a person engaged in guided self-study directed towards the achievement of the GETCA. Fails to include learners enrolled in non-accredited or non-formal programmes [which is not the same as self-study, guided or otherwise].