



Qualifications and Training

The National Treasury, as a commitment to assisting municipalities with training in financial management, is continuing with the development of unit standards, the promotion of learnerships and accreditation of training courses. This is aimed at satisfying future requirements of the MFMA for municipal financial officials to meet prescribed competency levels in financial management and supply chain management.

Municipal Finance Management Qualifications

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) registered a unit standard-based certificate in Municipal Financial Management Qualification on 14 October 2004 as a National Qualification Framework (NQF) level six qualification. LGSETA (formerly LGWSETA) has registered the relevant Learnership with the Department of Labour and, in cooperation with one of the donor agencies, has commissioned the development of training material, which should be available by 31 May 2005. Seven of the required training module materials are presently undergoing review and evaluation, as outlined in MFMA circular No. 9 (Training).

Upon further research and, based on the demands of the public sector, a Public Finance Management and Administration diploma, now out for public comment, has been drafted and submitted to SAQA for registration. The diploma is an NQF level 5 unit standard-based qualification intended to provide an important platform for learners wishing to progress from NQF Level 4 to the NQF Level 6 qualification. It is anticipated that this NQF Level 5 qualification will be registered by 31 May 2005.

The development of unit based standards in municipal finance management and supply chain management will form the basis for future competency levels for finance officials of municipalities and municipal entities.

Accredited training providers

It has come to the National Treasury's attention that municipal officials are still attending unaccredited courses on municipal finance management. The National Treasury held meetings with training providers to ensure that they are fully conversant with MFMA implementation priorities and the need for them to offer accredited training leading to certificates of competence. During these meetings, education and training providers were asked to submit their training materials to the National Treasury's evaluation committee. Accredited training courses that meet the National Treasury evaluation requirements will be published on the National Treasury's website (see address below). At the time of releasing this circular, training materials for seven modules had been submitted for evaluation.

In terms of in-house training, municipalities are required to integrate the exit level outcomes of the relevant NQF-registered qualification into any workplace training they provide. This is particularly the case for interns employed under the Municipal Financial Management Internship Programme.

Steps to participate in Learnerships

In terms of the existing skills development legislation, municipalities are allowed to participate in Learnerships implemented by the LGSETA. With regards to municipal financial management learnerships (based on NQF registered qualifications), certain steps have to be undertaken by municipalities to ensure their full participation. As employers and a training ground for the on-the-job training, it is recommended that municipalities:

1. Organise a council resolution to support participation in the Learnership based on an NQF registered qualifications. Details of the available learnership can be obtained from the LGSETA's Learnership Manager
2. Nominate candidates (employed staff or unemployed). At least 10 per cent of the nominated candidates should be drawn from the unemployed population group. This requirement is normally enforced by the SETA.
3. Select an accredited education and training provider to support the training in accordance with SAQA registered qualification.
4. Enter into a standard Service Level Agreement with the preferred education and training provider (NB: An employment contract signed by employed candidates is not a substitute for a Service Level Agreement.)
5. With support from a preferred training provider, ensure that nominated candidates undergo screening to identify the entry point of each candidate.
6. Apply for a Learnership grant from the LGSETA. For LGSETA to process the application the participating municipalities are required to provide the following:
 - Learnership Agreement signed between the learner, municipality and training provider
 - Service level agreement with the training provider (draft agreement can be provided by LGSETA)
 - Work contract for unemployed learners (a draft contract can be obtained from LGSETA)
 - Funding Agreement with the LGSETA (available from LGSETA)

In order to participate in the Municipal Finance Learnerships administered by LGSETA, municipalities are requested to contact the LGSETA's Learnership Manager, PO Box 1964, Bedford View, 2007. Telephone: (011) 456 8574; (011) 450 4948; e-mail address: rickyn@lgwseta.co.za

Mentorship skills training

The interns appointed in terms of the Municipal Finance Management Reform Programme must receive ongoing support from suitably qualified mentors as per the programme guidelines and SAQA registered qualification. The programme, which is supported by a financial management grant, is designed to support and implement the MFMA and forms part of government's capacity building initiative focusing on building in-house municipal capacity. The National Treasury is providing four two-day mentor training workshops for municipal officials serving as mentors to the interns. These workshops will be followed by assessor

training for the same municipal officials to enable them to integrate municipal finance management qualification with on-the-job training.

Conclusion

Municipalities must ensure that training in municipal finance management is accredited against the published SAQA registered unit standard and that the course material relating to the MFMA has been evaluated by the National Treasury. Training courses that meet these requirements will be published on the National Treasury website (see address below). At the time of releasing this circular, training materials for seven modules had been submitted for evaluation by education and training providers.

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