

CEO Roadshow South Africa 15 July 2020

The questions below (in bold) were raised by members who reside in South Africa at the CEO Roadshow that took place on 15 July 2020.

The answers were given by the relevant SAICA managers at the event.

1. **I am a registered with SAICA under the designation of AGA(SA) and I am very passionate about the public sector. There seems to be very little to no actual focus on the potential impact, recognition and upliftment of the group within SAICA. The main focus of SAICA seems to lie more on the CA(SA) designation, which is understandable. How relevant is the AGA(SA) designation in the public and private sector and how do the current and potential members obtain direct opportunities linked to the designation? AGA(SA) members who are experienced within the public sector find themselves unable to access opportunities that match their skill levels and experience. Given the skills crisis within the public sector, surely an opportunity exists within SAICA in partnership with government to provide a data base of skills that may be the solution to the dire state of financial management in the public sector institutions? Is there a partnership that exists and if so, how can members make use of that opportunity?**

The answer to this question is twofold:

1. The AGA(SA) brand promotion: SAICA actively promotes the awareness and brand positions of the AGA(SA) as well as the AT(SA) designations. The focus is on public relations and advertising, social media and digital advertising, including placements in Business Day, Business Report, Mail & Guardian, Power FM, and CliffCentral. Content in this regard include member profiles and thought leadership pieces as well as podcasts. SAICA also promotes these designations to the public sector and to recruiters. AGA(SA) is also promoted to SAICA's CA(SA) members in an effort to help them build their financial management operations in business by employing AGAs(SA).
2. Member engagement: SAICA is actively trying to find a way of addressing the skills shortages in the public sector by promoting the AGA(SA) and AT(SA) designation in this sector.

We encourage all SAICA's associate members to get involved in the TechTalk sessions and the Friday Knowledge Café sessions in order to get more information on how SAICA is working towards professionalising the public sector.

Following Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu's auditor report that was released a few weeks ago, SAICA also commented on its approach to professionalising the public sector. Members can read the response [here](#).

Furthermore, SAICA through its CA2025 programme, is working on a framework (known as Pathways to Relevance) that focuses on a holistic approach to the competencies the accountant of the future will need. Members can visit <https://ca2025.co.za/> for more information in this regard.

2. **I understand SAICA is promoting the AGA(SA) designation, but the registration for this designation is delayed by approximately 8-10 weeks.**

Usually the period of registration for AGAs(SA) takes one to two weeks, given SAICA has all the required information to register a new associate member. If there is information outstanding, the timeline can be delayed. However, SAICA management will follow up with the membership department in an effort to ensure that the process is not unnecessarily delayed.

3. **How do you view and position the AGA(SA) qualification in perspective to the AT(SA)?**

SAICA uses a brand architecture to promote the three different designations. Each brand (designation) has its own brand positioning in the market place.

The AGA(SA) is a professional designation for technically minded general accountants, with strong technical accounting skills with the ability to integrate strategic and tactical financial operations in organisations. They demonstrate the appropriate rigour and analysis required of

them in their job and exercise good judgement, ethical discipline, and uphold high professional standards.

The AT(SA) is a skills-based accounting qualification designed to professionalise entry-level finance clerks and equip them with practical expertise required to prepare and produce reliable financial information that can be trusted.

The way that the qualification processes for AT(SA) and AGA(SA) have been structured and the competencies that SAICA seeks to develop during the initial professional development process prepare individuals to fulfil the roles mentioned above.

For more information on these designations, kindly visit the [AGA and AT website](#).

4. What is SAICA doing to help people who have completed CTA but don't have a training contract?

SAICA is officially not a recruitment agency, so the institute does not play a significant role in placing trainees with training offices. However, considering the current economic climate, SAICA is concerned about the smaller training offices shutting down and we want to ensure that people who are already in a training contract get the opportunity to complete their contract.

In this regard, SAICA set up a facility where trainee officers can indicate that they are looking for staff and where people who have been retrenched can indicate that they are looking for work.

SAICA will then try to match them up.

To date, our experience is that the demand for staff far exceeds the number of people who have been retrenched. There are opportunities out there and SAICA recommends you try to find the training offices on the SAICA website and send your CVs to a wide range of training offices rather than just the big four.

Generally, individuals who have completed the post-graduate diploma and either already have or are about to write the ITC, should be able to very easily find a training contract. SAICA also regularly conducts research that still shows there is a high demand for trainees and an insufficient supply of people with post-graduate diplomas.

There are 720 training offices who are always willing to take on candidates, particularly if you have completed your post-graduate diploma. Please visit the [Find a Training Office](#) page on the website for more information.

5. I am aware of the agreement between NASBA and AICPA and SAICA, do I have to complete a master's degree / MBA in order to fulfil some of the education requirements in certain states to become a CPA? I am trying to figure out what is the highest qualification needed in the USA to become a CPA as I would like to keep my options open by ensuring I have the education requirement sorted for all states.

The only requirement in terms of the agreement between SAICA and the AICPA is that you have to be CA(SA) with 12 months' post-training experience and write a conversion exam in order to qualify to register with the AICPA. It is a very limited exam compared to the normal CPA exam, as it is only four papers. Once you pass the conversion exam you will then need to choose your state where you wish to practice or work and then check with that state what their individual requirements are. Many states are satisfied with only the conversion exam, whereas a few others may require an additional course related to that state, for example an ethics course or tax course.

6. Is there a deadline for the submission of the CPD reflective plan?

All SAICA members are required to undertake relevant CPD activities on an annual basis. The new CPD policy is an output based approach and SAICA no longer recognises the recording of hours, unless you are registered with another regulatory body that still requires hours to be tracked, for example tax practitioners who need to track hours for SARS.

The members' responsibility is to keep track of their CPD activities on a reflective plan, which has to be kept for up to a maximum of three calendar years.

Regarding compliance, members will be requested to submit an annual declaration, stating that they are compliant with the CPD process. A monitoring sample will be selected from those members that have submitted their annual declarations, after which the members chosen for monitoring will have to submit their reflective plan as evidence of having applied the CPD policy.

In summary, not all members will have to submit their reflective plans annually, but only those who have been selected for monitoring. But keep in mind that all members need to declare their compliance with the CPD policy on an annual basis.

Members who have questions regarding the CPD policy or the reflective plan can go to the [dedicated CPD website](#) for more information or send an email to newcpdpolicy@saica.co.za.

7. Is there a template for the reflective plan?

Yes, there is a template for the reflective plan on the [dedicated CPD website](#). However, we don't want members to feel limited by this template, so members are encouraged to only use it as a guideline. Members are therefore welcome to adapt the template to suit their personal needs. There is also a completed example of the template for members to refer to.

SAICA encourages members to read the information on the dedicated CPD website. We will also be sharing some more Frequently Asked Questions to this site soon and members are always welcome to send an email to newcpdpolicy@saica.co.za if they need more assistance regarding the new CPD policy.

Furthermore, to help members prepare for the future world of work, the new Pathways to Relevance framework identifies competencies and career paths that are relevant for the future accountant. Members can then use this information to evaluate their own particular competencies against their identified learning gaps.

The aim of the new CPD policy is to ensure that SAICA members remain professionally competent and relevant for the future world of work. Members can find more information on the Pathways to Relevance framework [here](#).

8. In light of the new CPD policy and or reflective plan, will SAICA continue to provide Seminars/ Webinars to assist members with CPD?

SAICA is currently busy with extensive training in preparation for the seminar and events that will need to be rolled out from 2021 to 2025. SAICA aims to ensure that all its offerings to members in the foreseeable future will align with the Pathways to Relevance framework, which is based on technical, behavioural and enabling competencies. As mentioned, there is a dedicated [Pathways to Relevance website](#) where members can find more information.

SAICA wants to make sure that it supports each member in their career journey and that we not only encourage you to adapt to lifelong learning, but that we also provide you with the resources to do so. We aim to keep our members relevant and prepare them for the future world of work, while making sure that we offer a wide selection of seminars and events that will suit a variety of needs.

9. Why does SAICA not take a leadership role in the fraud and corruption by South African Government and related organisations. i.e implementation of IPSAS

SAICA can only play a supportive role in the fight against fraud and corruption. Leadership in government organisations is ultimately the responsibility of government, however SAICA does support government in this fight to the extent that we work with National Treasury and the Auditor General to contribute to the improvement of financial management and good corporate governance.

Furthermore, SAICA is also in discussions with the NPA to assist them in any way we can. Regarding IPSAS, in South Africa we work with General Recognised Accounting Practices (GRAP) as set out by the Accounting Standards Board (ASB).

SAICA is a membership body who deals with individuals who are members [CAs(SA)] and associates [AGAs(SA) and ATs(SA)]. SAICA is not a prosecutorial authority and therefore we have no jurisdiction to discipline those individuals who work for government and are/were involved in alleged fraud and corruption, unless they are members or associates of SAICA. SAICA expects all its members to adhere to the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct, and those who are alleged to have contravened this Code, will be held accountable, without fear or favour.

10. Does SAICA have a position on the unauthorised expenditure incurred by various municipalities in terms of the Auditor General's recent report?

On 2 July, the day after the release of the Auditor-General's report, SAICA published a press release and communicated to members our concern about the matter. In this [communication](#),

which can be found on the SAICA website, SAICA extended its support and helping hand to the Auditor-General as we feel we can and should play a role in helping to professionalise the public sector. Not only will this improve the economy, but it will help all South Africans.

Irregular expenditure in the public sector is twofold: there are ethical reasons for it, but there is also a lack of technical skill, as the Auditor-General himself stated. This is of course a complex issue and SAICA will continue to work towards upskilling financial teams in the public sector. SAICA's role is therefore to provide a realistic solution in upskilling financial teams, but we also have the responsibility to investigate, and where necessary, discipline any SAICA members and associates who have been allegedly involved in the fraud, corruption and irregular expenditure, as these actions are in contravention of the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct.

SAICA takes this matter seriously and will continue to work with the public sector and the Auditor-General to ensure appropriate financial management and corporate governance is implemented.

11. What transformation developments are taking place at different stages of qualification, especially during the pandemic?

SAICA has intensified its activities during the pandemic, as the greatest challenge for transformation during this time has been data and internet connectivity for Thuthuka students who are currently not on campus. SAICA has provided these students with laptops and data during this time, but unfortunately, some students from rural areas only have Edge connectivity, and not 4G or even 3G. However, SAICA is trying its best to ensure that all students continue learning virtually during this time.

Unfortunately, a lot of the face-to-face engagements initiatives in schools had to be placed on hold, but SAICA is engaging with the provincial departments of education to look at how the institute can be of greater assistance to them during the pandemic.

Regarding universities, SAICA has been meeting with historically disadvantaged universities and also those who had not performed well in the ITC. We are expecting these universities to do a root cause analysis so that the challenges regarding ITC can be properly addressed.

Furthermore, to help candidates who didn't pass the ITC in January prepare for the June sitting, SAICA secured funding from the Financial and Accounting Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Fasset) to run its Thuthuka ITC Repeat Programme – a unique support programme in support of African and Coloured candidates. You can read more about that [here](#). SAICA has also invited its prospective members and young members to the Chartered Accountants Worldwide Building Resilience series of webinars in order to promote a motivational mindset amongst these stakeholders.

In the next few weeks, SAICA will have a webinar with APC candidates to ensure they are supported during this time and the institute has also had discussions with its donors and NSFAS to ensure all students are able to learn online while off campus.

On the 10th of June, SAICA also held a complimentary webinar where professor Wiseman Nkuhlu, Mr Siswe Nxasana and Mr Ignatius Sehoole spoke about transformation.

The pandemic has forced us to look at how we can work better from a digital perspective to ensure that no prospective CA(SA) is left along the way.

12. Should members be more actively involved in transformation?

SAICA believes that transformation plays a large role in ensuring the relevance of the profession, and therefore by extension, everyone who forms part of the profession will benefit from playing a role in transformation. If every member makes a small contribution in some way, the transformation agenda will be pushed forward dramatically. For example, when the country first went into lockdown, some members contacted us to provide support to Thuthuka students – we had members who gifted laptops to students and one member also offered to give a bursary to a student. These types of actions go really far in the transformation agenda and given SAICA's focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the value of these actions cannot be ignored. Small actions ultimately make a big difference and SAICA encourages its members to get involved in any way they can.

13. I would like to thank SAICA in their efforts to support the universities during this difficult time. However, a big majority of my students have very limited to no connectivity. How can we help them?

Unfortunately, although all the Thuthuka students have laptops, connectivity remains a challenge in the South African landscape, given that not all areas (especially rural areas) have good internet connectivity.

SAICA is also reliant on universities to purchase the data and invoice us afterwards. The procurement processes in this regard take a lot of time.

But as mentioned in question 11 above, SAICA is trying to help Thuthuka students where they can.

14. When will the final tax practitioner link be active on the website where the public can access a comprehensive data base of practitioners?

The development of this capability is currently underway, although we do not as yet have a finalisation date. Members will be informed when the database has been uploaded to the website.

15. What is happening with the appointment of the new IRBA CEO? (Tongaat problems?)

SAICA engaged with the former Chairman of IRBA to communicate our thoughts on this matter, but unfortunately the Chairman's term had already expired when the announcement about the new IRBA CEO's appointment was made.

SAICA has also communicated its thoughts to the minister of Finance and the minister has now appointed a new IRBA board, whose first assignment will be to deal with this matter.

It is important to note that SAICA is regulated by IRBA and therefore not involved in the appointment of IRBA's chief executive.

However, members will have seen the [disciplinary update](#) communicated on 27 May, in which we indicated that we are investigating SAICA members who are allegedly involved in the Tongaat Hulett matter. This investigation is still ongoing. SAICA only works with facts in all its disciplinary matters and will deal without fear or favour with anyone involved in contravening the SAICA Code of Professional Conduct.

16. Is SAICA able to assist with the administration issue with the Workman's Compensation Fund department?

Members who have difficulty with the Workman's Compensation Fund department should kindly log their queries via the [Member Portal](https://my.saica.co.za/) (<https://my.saica.co.za/>). Log your query under 'technical queries – legislation' and SAICA will follow up accordingly.

In addition, SAICA has been doing a lot of work earlier in the lockdown to help members who had challenges with UIF-related matters. SAICA works closely with the UIF and have also had a number of webinars where a UIF representative was present to help members. More information on our efforts with the UIF can be found on the [COVID-19 website](#) (click on the Legislation, Ethics and Governance tab) as well as the [SAICA events page](#) (follow the links to webcasts #17 and #18).