

African Academic Credit System (ACTS)

Report of the Policy Country Visit to GHANA

(Accra, 23rd October 2024)

Date: Wednesday 23rd October 2024 – 10.00 – 12.00

Location: Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) Block A Boardroom, Ghana

ACTS Experts who participated in the visit:

- Pablo Beneitone (Higher Education Expert of OBREAL)
- Senghane Mbodji (Higher Education Expert of Senegal)
- Adewale Obadina (AAU)
- Larissa Odzebe Gidisu (AAU)
- Nodumo Dhlamini (AAU)

List of participants from Ghana are in the Appendix

1. Purpose of the site visit

To present the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) initiative, emphasizing its role in enhancing international academic mobility and qualification recognition and to discuss the main challenges for its implementation at a national level in Ghana.

2. Introduction

The meeting commenced with a welcome from the GTEC Director General, Professor Ahmed Jinapor Abdulai, who reiterated the meeting's objectives. Attendees, listed in Appendix 1, introduced themselves, establishing a collaborative and formal environment for discussions.

3. Presentations and Key Discussions

a) Overview of the HAQAA3 Initiative

Nodumo Dhlamini presented the background of the HAQAA (Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation) project, outlining its goals for supporting higher education standards across Africa.

b) Introduction to the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS)

Pablo Beneitone presented the ACTS initiative, detailing the study findings relevant to Ghana, Africa, and globally. He underscored the primary aim of ACTS: to serve as a common reference to align credit systems across African nations, thus facilitating academic mobility and credential recognition.

Key topics covered during the feedback and Q&A session included:

- National Credit Transfer System Development: Ghana is currently developing its national credit transfer system, with policies expected by December 2024 and full implementation in 2025.
- Ghana has been working with the ACQF to develop the national Qualifications Framework. Working with ACQF had helped GTEC learn about the processes of referencing.

- Strengthening National vs. Continental Systems: Questions were raised on whether HAQAA3 supported countries develop their credit systems. There was a notion that national systems needed to be strengthened before prioritizing the continental credit system.
- Pablo Beneitone gave the example of Europe where they started with the ECTS to promote mobility. Several European countries also did not have their credit systems in place at the time. They started engaging in student mobilities and the Bologna process inspired the strengthening and development of national credit systems and regulations. The ECTS was used to initiate national policies. Not having a national system is not a barrier. The continental reference point can still be helpful.
- Validation and Accreditation Framework: Discussions focused on the need for an accreditation framework to validate the ACTS system. The starting point is the recognition. A credit system solves the recognition system by giving transparency to a degree program. Is a learning process. Independent learning by students is mostly not accounted for. Credits give information on time and what the students have learned. Institutions must express the programs in terms of learning outcomes and student-independent learning time. In Spain, it was difficult because the information on learning outcomes and student-independent learning hours was not known. The work of recognition must be done at the university / national level. The ACTS will rely on recognition practices, aiming to make degree programs more transparent and account for both contact and independent study hours.
- Standardization and Flexibility of ACTS: ACTS does not aim to change national laws. ACTS promotes the provision of more information concerning the time spent on contact hours, independent learning, and outcomes – ACTS will be able to say e.g. 3 credits in Ghana translates to 2 credits on the ACTS. But this translation is not automatic – it must be backed up by data and actual practice. ACTS will promote a uniform understanding of what the credits represent and the same understanding of the learning outcomes.
- Documentation and Consistency in Learning Hours: ACTS places emphasis on the documentation of contact hours and independent hours. Countries are different and ACTS supports the comparison of apples with apples. In Ghana, the system that is to be defined implies one academic year 120 credits and 1 credit 10 notional hours.
- Finally, a correction was made to the data presented in the PPT on the number of HEIs in Ghana, which totals 313.

4. Future Engagement and Next Steps

A Ghana National Tertiary Education Conference would be hosted in November 2024. Ghana is very committed to the credit transfer system. Ghana is committed to the ACTS -since AAU is involved GTEC respects the opinion of AAU concerning ACTS.

Avoiding Duplication with ACQF: Ghana expressed concern about ensuring that the efforts with the ACQF are harmonized with ACTS to avoid redundant efforts. Collaboration strategies between ACQF and ACTS will be key to aligning objectives.

5. Conclusion

The meeting concluded with an affirmation of Ghana's commitment to advancing its credit transfer system in alignment with ACTS. With over 313 higher education institutions, Ghana recognizes the significance of ACTS and looks forward to further discussions at the upcoming National Tertiary Education Conference.

This report summarizes the discussions and outcomes, setting a roadmap for Ghana's continued engagement with ACTS and GTEC's alignment with continental standards.

6. Opinion of the ACTS Technical Team on Ghana's participation in the implementation phase

In the opinion of the ACTS Expert Team, no significant commitment from the authorities was perceived. They were informed about the credit, its scope and the possibility of being part of the implementation, but did not emphatically express a willingness to be part of the implementation process. Without significant support from the authorities it would be very difficult to work at country level. It is recommended not to include Ghana in the pilot cases.