

## STATE OF THE ART

## CREDITS AND RECOGNITION IN AFRICA

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The vision of African Union, to build an integrated continent, requires a harmonized education system, where intra-Africa mobility and skills portability are key elements in its realization. Harmonized education and training systems are essential for effective implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and Agenda 2063. In the 'Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework' (PAQAF), linked to these strategies, harmonization is intended to capitalize on African higher education for the African vision of integration. The African Union Commission developed PAQAF to build a common language for quality assurance in Africa, to facilitate the mutual recognition of academic qualifications, and to raise the overall quality and relevance of African higher education.

The implementation of PAQAF involves, among others, the definition of a Credit System for Africa to further advance student mobility and contribute to harmonization processes. A political definition of an African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) was elaborated in 2018 by a group of national and regional bodies<sup>1</sup> led by the European Commission and the African Union Commission in the framework of the "Tuning Africa" project. The process that followed had three stages. Firstly, information about the state of the art of credits in 35 African countries was collected. Secondly, scientific research was conducted, based on a large survey<sup>2</sup> focusing on the estimation of African Student Workload from the perspective of academics and students. Finally, a general report was elaborated, with a number of strong recommendations:

- i. *There is a compelling need to have a common agreement on the definition and value of a credit in the African higher education systems in order to promote transferability and comparability—key to harmonizing the African higher education space and promote mobility.*
- ii. *There is a need for consensus on the workload of a credit unit. The general trend is that 60 credits are equivalent to the workload of full-time student during one academic year. We thus recommend to adopt this widespread international trend of 60 credits for Africa.*
- iii. *There is a need for consensus on the number of credit units for each year and for the different programmes, i.e. Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate.*
- iv. *There is a need for a consensus on the student workload over a period of a year which straddles between 1,350 and 1,800 hours. We thus recommend to adopt between 1,350 and 1,800 hours of workload for Africa which sits well within the international norms.*
- v. *There is a need for a harmonized continental credit system that balances the different systems that span the continent: Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries.*

<sup>1</sup> Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE), Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Associations (ECCSA), All- African Students Union (AASU), Erasmus Mundus Students and Alumni Association (EMA), African Council For Distance Education (ACDE), Pan African University (PAU), Association of Arab Universities (AARU), National Council for Assessment and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (CNAQ), The African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN), Association of West Africa Universities (AWAU), ECOWAS Commission Abuja, National Authority for Quality Assurance (NAQA-Sud), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), Fórum da Gestão do Ensino Superior nos Países e Regiões de Língua Portuguesa (FORGES), and African Association of Universities (AAU).

<sup>2</sup> 5266 students and 571 academics from 123 African Universities were surveyed.

Although the proposal was intensively discussed and approved within the framework of the “Tuning Africa II” project, it was not finally validated and it was not made visible in the larger contexts of African higher education stakeholders (associations, ministries, universities, etc.). Since 2018, no concrete activities were identified in relation to the elaboration of or decision about an African Credit Transfer System (ACTS).

The **HAQAA3 project** integrates the work initiated by the “Tuning Africa” project on the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS), as well as the work done in HAQAA2, particularly the activities to revitalise the discussion on academic credits which resulted in a roadmap on how to pursue this initiative.

Consequently, ACTS, as an important action line of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF), is one of the five pillars of HAQAA3. In addition to seeking political endorsement, ACTS will be further **developed and piloted in Higher Education Institutions across the five African regions**.

The main result in relation to the promotion and implementation of a common credit system for Africa in the framework of HAQAA 3 is that *“the ACTS (as proposed by TUNING II and promoted in HAQAA2) is finalized and supported in higher education authorities and HEIs in all five African regions, through regional university associations and QA/accreditation networks”*.

To achieve this result, an **ACTS Expert Team** was set-up and led by OBREAL Global and AAU, with the collaboration of four African experts and DAAD. The composition of the team is as follows: Olusola Oyewole (AAU) and Pablo Beneitone (OBREAL Global) as co-coordinators and Work Area leads, Robert Ayine (Higher Education Expert of IUCEA), Senghane Mbodji (Higher Education Expert of Senegal), Youhansen Eid (Higher Education Expert of Egypt), Ana Maria Nhampule (Higher Education Expert of Mozambique) and Stefan Bienefeld (DAAD).

## 1.2 Methodology

The first activity developed by the ACTS Expert Team was the organization of a broad consultation of relevant national and regional authorities and HEIs in order to complete the definition of the Credit Transfer System and endorse a finalized ACTS proposal. This activity was planned in order to update the information collected in 2018 about the state of the art of credit systems in Africa.

The state of the art analysis carried out in Africa started with an in-depth literature review to assess the current state of recognition as well as credits in the different regions. This was followed by an on-line survey conducted with authorities from various countries supported by HAQAA's regional partners.

More specifically, the study aimed to identify insights relating to the following questions:

- What is the current situation regarding credit system in the different African regions?
- What differences exist between African countries in policy and practice in credit system?

The questionnaire<sup>3</sup> had two parts, a general one with a description of the higher education system, the legislation and institutions/bodies that govern it, data on the number of universities and other higher education institutions, as well as the number of students. The second part of the questionnaire opened up two possible response scenarios:

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex II - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTING DATA

- Countries that already have a credit system at national level were surveyed on the following issues:
  - *Since when is the credit system in place?*
  - *Level of development of the Credit system in the country? (initial stage, pilot stage, partial implementation, full implementation stage)*
  - *What is the purpose of the credit system?*
  - *How is the credit measured? (contact hours? contact hours and independent work? others?); How many credits per year does a degree programme have? How are the credits allocated to a degree programme?*
  - *How were universities supported in the implementation process, and was capacity building conducted.*
- Countries that do not have a credit system, surveyed on:
  - *Are there any plans for developing a National Credit System?*
  - *Since there is no credit system in the country, how are the partial periods of study recognized both between universities/ institutes of higher education in your country and between these universities /institutes of higher education and others in other countries? If there are many variations, briefly describe the most commonly used.*
  - *What are the main barriers for the uptake of a credit system at national level?*
  - *What should be done to implement a credit system in the universities (political decisions, new regulations, training, etc.)?*
  - *What framework do you have in place as a country to support mobility of students from other countries?*

For each country, the national authorities<sup>4</sup> that should be targeted to respond to the questionnaire were identified. The questionnaire was translated into 4 languages (English, French, Portuguese and Arabic). A cover letter was sent from the AAU inviting the identified respondents to complete the questionnaire.

The consultation was conducted between February and March 2024, and responses were received from 47 countries, which were analyzed by the Group of Experts. The main results of this consultation process are presented in the following sections.

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<sup>4</sup> See Annex III - NATIONAL AUTHORITIES CONTACTED

## **Chapter 2: Southern Africa Regional Report**

The SADC Region integrates 14 countries or Member States, namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

All SADC countries are encouraged to participate in the process of harmonization of their educational systems based on the regional policies and strategies, such as the Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP), and the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (signed in 1997 and entered into force in 2000). The first RISDP was for the period 2005-2020 and it is now revised for 2020-2030<sup>5</sup>, including references to the Regional Vision 2050.

Under those SADC Policy and Strategic frameworks, in 2011, the SADC Region established its Regional Qualifications Framework which was revised in 2017 and named “SADC Qualification Framework (SADC QF)”<sup>6</sup>. The purpose of the SADC QF is to improve harmonization of education and training systems and comparability of qualifications to ensure citizens’ mobility between the SADC Member State. It includes 4 action lines: 1. Development and alignment of the National Qualifications Frameworks to the SADC QF; 2. Quality Assurance; 3. Verifications; and 4. Advocacy and Communication.

The SADC QF was developed by the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) established in 2000, comprising nominated qualifications and quality assurance experts from the Member States and with support of the SADC Secretariat, to develop and recommend policy guidelines, instruments, structures, and procedures that would facilitate equating, harmonizing and eventual standardization of accreditation and certification of qualifications in SADC.

After the adoption of the revised SADC QF in 2017, the mandate of the TCCA was reformulated by the SADC Ministers of Education and it became “to oversee the implementation of SADCQF which plays a key role in setting the regional standard for comparing qualifications obtained in SADC, thereby enabling easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally”.

Several achievements on the implementation of the SADC QF were made, among them the adoption of the proposal for the establishment of SADC Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SADC CATS)<sup>7</sup>, presented by the Southern Africa Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN).

In 2023, a new SADC QF roadmap for the period 2023-2026<sup>8</sup>, was designed following recommendations of the report “Review of SADC QF implementation and way forward”<sup>9</sup>, which was adopted by the Joint Meeting of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI) Ministers, held in Malawi in June 2021.

In the new roadmap, the SADC QF is mentioned as “a regional mechanism for comparability and recognition of full qualifications, credit transfer, creation of regional standards and facilitation of

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sadc.int/pillars/regional-indicative-strategic-development-plan-2020-2030>

<sup>6</sup> <https://acqf.africa/resources/nqf-inventory/regions/sadc/sadcqf-booklet/@@display-file/file/sadcqf-booklet.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bing.com/search?q=sadc+credit+accumulation+and+transfer+system&q=n&form=QBRE&sp=-1&ghc=1&lq=0&pq=sadc+credit+accumulation+and+transfer+system&sc=11-44&sk=&cvid=B57846CC495740F4B930EF495669EF09&ghsh=0&ghacc=0&ghpl=>

<sup>8</sup> <https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/support-to-countries/southern-african-development-community-sadc/special-tcca-meeting-may-2023-summary-report-22052023-final-to-sadc-secr-web.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> [https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/support-to-countries/southern-african-development-community-sadc/sadcqf-review-and-way-forward-updated-2023/@@display-file/file/SADCQF\\_review%20implem%20report\\_FINAL%20Updated%2001052023\\_EN\\_WEB.pdf](https://acqf.africa/capacity-development-programme/support-to-countries/southern-african-development-community-sadc/sadcqf-review-and-way-forward-updated-2023/@@display-file/file/SADCQF_review%20implem%20report_FINAL%20Updated%2001052023_EN_WEB.pdf)

quality assurance (QA)". It consists of a set of agreed principles, practices, procedures, and standardized terminology intended to meet the five objectives of the SADCQF:

- Providing a mechanism for comparability and recognition of qualifications in SADC.
- Facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications in all member states.
- Harmonizing qualifications wherever possible.
- Promoting the transfer of credits within and among member states and even beyond.
- Creating SADC regional standards where appropriate.

This seems to be the first time in which credit transfer is clearly mentioned as one of the purposes of the SADC QF. In addition, a more consistent debate on SADC CATS is in place, including the setting up of a module on SADC CATS guidelines.

According to the module on CATS guidelines, the SADC CATS is "a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer in SADC region based on the principle of transparency in the learning, teaching, and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate the planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and student mobility by recognising learning achievements and qualifications and periods of learning."

The guidelines also appoint as purpose of the SADC CATS to facilitate greater student mobility in the region, providing a framework for establishing credit transfer arrangements to expand opportunities for mobility of SADC citizens between countries as well as between various institutions and education levels.

The SADC CATS defines credit as "the amount of learning contained in a qualification or part-qualification whereby one (1) credit is equated to ten (10) notional hours of learning." The notional hour corresponds to the student workload. In this context, 1 academic year corresponds to 1200 notional hours or 120 credits.

Some SADC member states make reference to the SADC CATS for the development, implementation and revision of their national credit accumulation and transfer systems. However, it is important to note that SADC CATS is a system that is in the piloting stage of implementation.

As SADC QF is recognized internationally and alignments with the ACQF are in place, it is hoped that SADC CATS will promote more transparency and comparability of qualifications acquired in SADC context and beyond by facilitating recognition and mobility in continental and global levels.

Under the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) some training activities for SADC member states were carried out to accelerate the implementation of the SADC QF, including SADC CATS. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that most participants in those training sessions are the members of the TCCA and there is a strong need to run specific actions on CATS for larger numbers of various higher education stakeholders, including regulators, universities, and other actors in HEIs.

Although it is still in the piloting stage, SADC CATS related processes and the actual outputs of these processes can contribute to the current debates on the establishment of an African Credit Transfer System (ACTS).

Excluding Malawi, all other SADC Member States developed their own national CATS referring to the SADC QF. However, they are in different stages of implementation. Some are in the piloting stage, while others are in the full implementation stage. South Africa is the most advanced country in the implementation of the national CATS and is playing a very important role for the implementation of the SADC QF, including SADC CATS.

SADC State Members have legislative instruments, policies and systems for curricula design following the principles of student-centred and competency-based education, according to the recommendations of several international instruments such as the 1997 SADC Protocol on Education and Training, the SADC QF that includes guidelines on quality assurance, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and other international references.



All SADC State Members formally (i.e. in their legal instruments) define academic credits in terms of student workload. However, when they refer to notion hours in the responses to the questionnaire, some of them refer to contact time (e.g. Zimbabwe). This situation calls for the need of a clarification of concepts and building common understanding of both theoretical and practical aspects of credit systems.

Most SADC State Members are using the same average of credits per year (120 credits per year) as they all use the same measurement inspired by the SADC CATS (1 credit equal to 10 hours). The only country mentioning a different average is Mozambique where 1 credit is equal to 25 or 30 hours and the average of credits per year is 60 credits.

The project on African Qualifications Framework is playing an important role in the debate on the implementation of the SADC QF, including the revision of the purpose of this framework to integrate the development and strengthening of credit systems in the SADC region and at the national level.

Despite the fact that most SADC countries are not providing clear information on the resources for capacity building to support institutions in the implementation of credit systems, the information provided by some countries like Mauritius is to be considered as an exemption. In Mauritius the following exists:

- Capacity building and training for university administrators, faculty members, and staff.
- Development of resources, guidelines, and manuals to support institutions in implementing and managing the credit system effectively.
- Collaboration with international partners, experts, and organizations with experience in credit systems to provide technical assistance, guidance, and best practices.
- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration.
- Establishment of advisory committees or task forces comprising representatives from academia, industry, and government to provide input, guidance and oversight on the implementation of the credit system.
- Communication strategy and awareness raising. Building transparency and accountability in the implementation process by providing regular updates, progress reports and opportunities for feedback and input from stakeholders.

Below information on the Credit System in SADC member states is provided, describing each country according to their responses to the questionnaire and consultation with some national policies and instruments relevant for the implementation of the national credit system.

## 2.1 Angola

In Angola, there is a Ministry responsible for Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (*Ministério do Ensino Superior, Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação*). Higher education is regulated by a Legal Regime of the Higher Education Subsystem, approved by Presidential Decree No. 310/20 of 7 December 2020, which covers all higher education institutions that are part of the higher education subsystem under the terms of the general law of the education and teaching System<sup>10</sup>.

There are several central actors responsible for setting standards, performing accreditation and checking compliance with the policy and standards, such as:

- The National Institute for Assessment, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education (INAAREES)<sup>11</sup>, the quality assurance agency, which is responsible for

<sup>10</sup> <https://mescti.gov.ao/ao/documentos/legislacao/pagina-1/#>

<sup>11</sup> <https://mescti.gov.ao/ao>



undergraduate and postgraduate program<sup>18</sup>. This regulation includes standards on the duration of study programmes, establishing the range of total hours of studies for diplomas and degrees, as well as the minimum graduation requirements in terms of credits and hours to be judged to have completed a course of studies and the academic program. Programs in medicine and health have specific standards different from other fields of studies.

It is possible to change the place of study between Angolan universities and other HEIs according to the two norms for curricula design mentioned above (i.e. Presidential Decree No. 193/18, of 10 August 2018 and Presidential Decree No. 450/22, of 30 September 2022. Both include norms for curricular integration processes. These instruments also determine the norms of the credit system but in terms of implementation it is still in a piloting stage for undergraduate (since 2018) and postgraduate programs (since 2022).

The credit system is mandatory for all public and private universities and other HEIs. The purpose of this system is to ensure accumulation and transfer of credits for mobility purposes and recognition of qualifications within the same institution and among Angolan institutions. The above-mentioned regulations for curriculum design also mention curriculum innovation as the purpose of the entire body of norms and procedures that are part of the Presidential Decrees.

The academic credit is measured in terms of student workload hours, which are divided into contact activities (theoretical classes, theoretical-practical or practical classes), the autonomous study activities (individual or in group), the tutorial orientation sessions for students and the assessment tests.

The Angolan credit system is compatible with other countries in the SADC Region as it is aligned with the SADC Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SADC CATS)<sup>19</sup> and the principles of curriculum design follow the SADC Qualification Framework (SADC QF)<sup>20</sup> principles and the SADC Recognition Manual<sup>21</sup>. However, the credit system of Angola is not yet compatible with other countries in the continent and at the global level.

The national credit system allows mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. No additional credit system (different from the national one) exists in Angolan universities and other HEIs.

The credit system is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation requirements and classification of qualifications. Per year, study programs have on average the following number of credits: undergraduate program – 160 credits; masters' program – 120 credits; and doctoral program – 240 credits.

In Angola, there is no framework of transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for the purpose of progression and validation of qualifications.

To support the implementation process of the credit system in the ongoing piloting stage and capacity building for universities and other HEIs several training activities have been carried out. Those activities were complemented by other activities in the context of the SADC regional initiatives for harmonization of education. The most relevant international training initiatives were those related to the SADC QF and SADC CATS.

<sup>18</sup> <https://mescti.gov.ao/ao/documentos/regras-e-procedimentos-para-a-criacao-e-licenciamento-de-ies-e-cursos-de-graduacao-e-pos-graduacao/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bing.com/search?q=sadc+credit+accumulation+and+transfer+system&qsn&form=QBRE&sp=-1&ghc=1&lq=0&pq=sadc+credit+accumulation+and+transfer+system&sc=11-44&sk=&cvid=B57846CC495740F4B930EF495669EF09&ghsh=0&ghacc=0&ghpl=>

<sup>20</sup> <https://acqf.africa/resources/nqf-inventory/regions/sadc/sadcqf-booklet/@@display-file/file/sadcqf-booklet.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2022-07/SADC\\_Qualifications\\_Reognition\\_Manual\\_Final.pdf](https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2022-07/SADC_Qualifications_Reognition_Manual_Final.pdf)

It is important that since the process of implementation of the credit system in Angola is still in the piloting stage not all universities and other HEIs have already implemented the legal measures that establish the credit system.

## 2.2 Botswana

In Botswana, there is no specific ministry or secretariat for higher education. The subsector is regulated by the only authority for education and training called Botswana Qualifications Authority<sup>22</sup>. Its responsibility is to provide for and maintain the National Credit and Qualifications Framework, as well as to coordinate a common quality assurance platform for education, training, and skills development. The Botswana Qualifications Authority regulates all levels and sub frameworks in the National Credit and Qualifications Framework, namely general education, TVET and higher education.

Higher education is regulated by the Tertiary Education Policy<sup>23</sup>. In addition, the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act<sup>24</sup> regulates quality assurance for all levels of education including higher education.

The Botswana Qualifications Authority is the only one entity that sets standards for quality and grants accreditation for different levels of the education system.

There are in total 17 universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs), divided into 4 public universities, 3 private universities, 5 other public HEIs and 5 other private HEIs. Currently no information on the number of students attending undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the Tswana universities and other HEIs is available.

Botswana has a National Qualifications Framework<sup>25</sup> since 2016 and there is a provision in the Botswana Qualifications Authority Act to develop standards for curriculum design. There is flexibility and a provision of fundamental/generic, core/mandatory, elective/optional courses in higher education programs.

Botswana is implementing outcomes based education and training and a credit based education system. The duration of studies is usually determined by the credit weighting with the minimum duration for degree programs legally established but with differences for various professions or field of studies. Accordingly, among, undergraduate programs some take 3 years, but others can take 4 or up to 6 years, following the minimum graduation load for the award of a qualification stated in the National Qualifications Framework and other legal instruments for curriculum design such as the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System.

Botswana has partially implemented the credit system established in 2016 by the Botswana Qualifications Authority National Credit and Qualifications Framework Regulations. Procedures and tools are set up in the manual for development, validation and registration of qualifications in the National Credit and Qualifications Framework.

The credit system is mandatory for all public and private universities and other HEIs. To support institutions in the implementation, the Qualifications Authority conducted capacity building activities for universities and other providers.

The purpose of the academic credit system in Botswana is mobility, education transformation, lifelong learning, and skills development. It determines that an academic credit is defined in student workload and one credit equates to 10 notional learning hours.

<sup>22</sup> [www.bqa.org.bw](http://www.bqa.org.bw)

<sup>23</sup> [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/botswana\\_tertiary\\_ed\\_policy.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/botswana_tertiary_ed_policy.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <https://botswanalaws.com/consolidated-statutes/principle-legislation/botswana-qualifications-authority>

<sup>25</sup> [www.bqa.org.bw](http://www.bqa.org.bw)

There is possibility for mobility between programs within the same institution and between different institutions in the country through the National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System.

The Tswana's credit system is compatible with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and follows the principles and guidelines of the SADC QF and SADC CATS. Internationally, it is also compatible with New Zealand and Australia.

The national credit system allows mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. There is no additional credit system being implemented by universities or other HEIs.

The credit system is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation load and classification of qualifications. But no framework of transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for the purposes of progression and validation currently exists. The provision is there in theory, but the system is still being constructed.

The credit system determines the minimum loads for graduation. On average an (undergraduate) degree program has between 360 and 480 credits, a master degree has 240 credits, and a PhD or doctoral degree has 360 credits.

As mentioned above, universities and other HEI were supported through capacity building activities in the implementation of the credit system by the Botswana Authority for Qualifications. However, there is still a need for capacity building to expedite the implementation of the credit system.

### 2.3 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

DRC has a fully-fledged Ministry of Higher Education and Universities. The body responsible for regulation of higher education institutions and universities is the *Commission Permanente des Etudes*. DRC universities operate under a framework law (No/14/004 of February 11 2014) on national education which introduces 21 areas of innovation. The sixth innovation area is the gradual introduction of the LMD system (*Licence-Master-Doctorat*, equivalent to Bachelor-Master-PhD in anglophone system) in universities with the aim of harmonizing curricula in higher education and promoting staff and student mobility on a global scale.

The central bodies responsible for higher education include the government ministry responsible for higher education, the higher academic council, the permanent commission for studies and the university board of directors.

In DRC, there are 200 public universities and 72 private ones, 299 *Institutes Supérieurs Techniques et Pédagogiques* and 400 private other tertiary institutions. In terms of enrolment, 404,151 students are in public universities and 160,270 in private universities.

DRC has a National Qualifications Framework and its implementation is guided by the National Education Framework No.14/004 of February 11, 2014. Several legal instruments on curriculum design and provision for flexibility in courses and modules exist. These include the following:

- Ministerial Order N0. 093/MINESU/CAB, MIN/MNB/RMM/02023 of 10/02/2023 on the normative framework for the contextualized LMD system in the DRC
- Vade Mecum for managers of Higher Education Institutions
- The Ministry's annual academic instructions laying down guidelines for each academic year
- Ordinance No. 16/071 of September 2016 on the organization and operations of the administrative bodies of higher education.
- Obligation to draw up curricula based on job descriptions, skills descriptions and descriptions from teaching units under the validation policy of the *Commission Permanente de Etudes* (CPE)



It should be noted that curriculum design in higher education institutions is done centrally. With regards to competency-based approaches, it was reported that the LMD system adopted in DRC was primarily based on the professionalization of higher and university education, guided by a competency-based and student-centred approach.

The duration of studies is clearly defined in the LMD normative framework in DRC. There is a maximum and minimum number of years. Bachelors is 3 years with 180 credits as graduation requirement, master degree is 2 years with 120 credits and PhD is 3-5 years with a load of 180 credits. Options of change of career are possible since the curriculum design is centralized.

The higher education system is guided by a credit system which is mandatory. The credit system is being fully implemented in 2023, by a Ministerial Order No. 401/MINESU 28/08/2023 establishing the modalities for evaluation of progress and orientation in the study cycles with a view to obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees in DRC. The objective of the credit system is to facilitate mobility of students, curriculum development and innovation and accumulation of credits.

Capacity building of managers, staff and administration staff of HEIs was conducted in order to promote the credit system internally. In DRC, credit is defined by hours and 1 credit is equal to 25 hours. The credit system in DRC favorably compares with credit system at international level especially considering the shift to the LMD system. The credit system also supports mutual recognition of qualifications at the national level and is also used in the determination of volume of learning and the graduation load. However, the credit system in DRC does not address the issue of micro-credentials and progression based on it. In terms of graduation load, undergraduate is at 60 credits, master's 60 credits and PhD at 30-60 credits per year.

## 2.4 Eswatini

In Eswatini, there is only one ministry responsible for the whole system of education, the Ministry of Education, which also regulates the higher education subsystem. The law that regulates higher education was stated in 2013 and is called the Higher Education Act<sup>26</sup>.

Within the higher education system, the Eswatini Higher Education Council is the central actor, responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

In Eswatini there are in total 28 universities and other HEIs, distributed in: 3 public universities, 3 private universities, 3 other public HEIs, and 19 other private HEIs.

There are in total 22,000 students in Eswatini public and private universities and other HEIs. From those approx. 14,000 students study in universities and approx. 8,000 in other HEIs, comprising 19,000 undergraduate students in universities and 1,000 postgraduate students in universities.

Eswatini has a National Qualifications Framework, approved by the Government in 2020, "to facilitate development, classification, comparison and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies"<sup>27</sup>. In addition, for curriculum design in both universities and other HEIs, there are legally established the programme design guidelines, that include regulations allowing flexibility in curricula.

With the approval of the Eswatini Qualifications Framework in 2020, the requirement is that all programmes should be competency based (embrace learning outcomes). New programmes

<sup>26</sup> <https://eshec.org.sz/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Higher-Education-Act.pdf.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.eshec.org.sz/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Eswatini-Qualifications-Framework-ESQF.pdf>

cannot be accredited unless they are competency based and embrace a student-centred pedagogical approach.

The Eswatini Qualifications Authority stipulates minimum credits per qualification level. In essence there are thresholds in terms of duration of qualifications in line with the credits as stipulated in the Framework.

In line with the credit framework as contained in the Eswatini Qualification Framework (ESQF), there is a minimum graduation requirement set to complete a programme.

It is possible to change careers between universities and other higher education institutions through the Eswatini policy and guidelines for credit accumulation and transfer<sup>28</sup>, (CATS guidelines). Institutions should ensure that they adhere to guidelines for both horizontal and vertical qualification articulation.

Eswatini has a credit system in place since 2020, when the ESQF was approved, “to serve as a reference tool for allocating credits and supporting students’ mobility within and across institutions, programmes and sub-frameworks of the ESQF”. The ESCATS is in full implementation stage, and it is mandatory for all public and private universities and other HEIs. Qualifications cannot be registered on the ESQF if not adhering to the credit system, the purpose of which is to ascertain the volume of learning and permit mobility of learners.

One credit is equal to 10 notional hours, considering the student workload.

The ESCATS allows students mobility from one programme to another within the same institution as well as between different institutions within Eswatini. It furthermore allows mutual recognition of qualifications at national level as many institutions are migrating from the contact hour approach.

The ESCATS is compatible with other countries in the SADC region, in continental level, and internationally through the SADC QF and ACQF. It is mostly comparable with credit systems in Africa and Europe.

ESCATS is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation load and classification of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has a minimum of 120 credits per year, and a total of 360 credits. Master’s degree has 180 credits, and PhD or doctoral studies has 360 credits.

Eswatini does not have any framework to transform prior learning, micro-credentials and credits for purposes of progression and validation of qualifications.

In the implementation process to support universities and other HEIs the Eswatini Council for higher education established capacity building platforms.

## 2.5 Lesotho

In Lesotho, the Ministry of Education and Training is responsible for the governance of higher education. The law for higher education was approved in 2013, named Lesotho Higher Education Policy<sup>29</sup>.

The Council on Higher Education is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

In Lesotho there are in total 15 universities and other HEIs corresponding to 8 public universities, and 7 private universities. Information on the student’s enrolment in those institutions was not provided.

<sup>28</sup> <https://eshec.org.sz/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CAT-POLICY-GUIDELINES-final-22.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.education.gov.ls/img/HE%20Policy%20Nov%202013.pdf>

The Lesotho Qualification Framework (LQF) was approved in 2019<sup>30</sup>. It serves as reference for curriculum design in universities and other HEIs and includes provisions allowing for flexibility of curricula giving students the opportunity to choose elective courses.

Lesotho's higher education is implementing a competency-based education. There are standards set in the LQF on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions. For example, a diploma is completed in a minimum of 2 years, and first degree in a minimum of 3 years (360 credits) and a maximum of 4 years.

The minimum graduation requirements to complete a course of an academic programme are set, but they can vary for specified field of studies. For example, a nursing degree (6 years), a Bachelor of Law (6 years) a Master's in Medicine (minimum 4 years after bachelor). This also occurs for other courses that require practical trainings as they need more time.

The LQF allows the possibility to change careers between universities in the same country if 50% of studies are completed, but the implementation of this kind of mobility is not easy and not yet implemented.

Lesotho has a credit system in place that is in its initial stage as it is established in the LQF. So, it is not yet mandatory for universities and other higher education institutions. The purpose of this system is transfer and mobility of students.

Academic credit is measured in student workload hours, and the system allows student mobility between different institutions within the country and abroad. It also allows for mutual recognition of qualifications.

There are no additional credit systems beside the national one in place in Lesotho's universities and other HEI.

In Lesotho, the credit system is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation requirements and classifications of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has 120 credits per year and a total of 360 credits. A master's degree has 240 credits, and a PhD or doctoral degree has 360 credits.

There is no framework to transform prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for purposes of progression and validation. However, this is prescribed in the LQF, so procedures are to be developed.

There is no information on the support to the universities and other HEIs for capacity building for implementation of the credit system.

## 2.6 Madagascar

In Madagascar there is a Ministry for Higher Education (*Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique*). In addition, a national law for higher education established by the Loi n 2022-018 *portant orientation générale du système éducatif à Madagascar*<sup>31</sup> exists. The law provides a general orientation for the system of education where higher education is a subsystem.

There are no other central actors for higher education responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

In total there are 290 universities and other HEIs operating in Madagascar, corresponding to 9 public universities, 247 private universities, 34 public other HEIs, and 3 other private HEIs.

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.che.ac.ls/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Procedures-Manual\\_LQF-Approved-1.pdf](https://www.che.ac.ls/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Procedures-Manual_LQF-Approved-1.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> <https://assemblee-nationale.mg/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/LOI-n%C2%B0-2022-018-Syst%C3%A8me-%C3%A9ducatif.pdf>



The total number of students in Madagascar's universities and other HEIs is 159,657. Out of those 115,466 are undergraduate students at public universities and 44,191 are undergraduate students at private universities.

There is a Qualification Framework in place. Additionally, the establishment of a legal instrument for curriculum design (*Politique de standardisation des offres de formation*) is in the planning phase. There are provisions allowing flexibility in the study programme.

There are legal standards on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions. For undergraduate degree (Bacc), the duration of studies is 3 to 4 years, a master's degree is Bacc + 3 years and doctoral studies are Bacc + 5. However, this range does not apply to studies in human medicine.

In Madagascar, the national system for credit accumulation and transfer is in the planification phase. The notion of credit is related to the student workload, and 1 credit is equal to 20 to 30 hours, corresponding to 7-10 hours of contact with the lecturer and the rest for independent studies.

By law it is possible to change careers between universities, as the law stipulates that acquired academic credits can be transferred from one university to another. The effectiveness of this policy is still a major project to be implemented.

## 2.7 Malawi

In Malawi there is a Ministry of Education responsible for the whole system of education, including higher education. In the Ministry there is a Directorate responsible for higher education.

Malawi has the National Education Policy adopted in 2016<sup>32</sup>. The policy outlines the education sector's priorities and defines the country's education policies which guide the development of the education sector in Malawi including higher education governance and management (i.e. tertiary institutions and universities).

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is another central actor in Malawian higher education, established by the Act of 2011. It is an agency responsible for regulating higher education including managing quality assurance, accreditation, setting minimum standards and frameworks for quality assurance and enhancement and enforcing compliance.

In Malawi there are in total 52 public and private universities and other HEIs, corresponding to 6 public universities, 21 private universities, 14 other public HEIs and 11 other private HEIs.

The total number of students in public and private universities is 119,389 students, corresponding to 45,198 students in public universities and 35,796 students in private universities.

The Malawi Qualifications Framework is in the drafting process this year. In the past used two disaggregated qualifications frameworks: a) The Higher Education Qualifications Framework of 2019; and b) The TVET Qualifications Framework of 2008.

Guidelines and frameworks on curriculum design are included in the following NCHE documents: Minimum Standards for Higher Education, Programme curriculum template and assessment tool for face to face and ODeL programmes and institutions<sup>33</sup>.

The provisions allow for curricular flexibility in Malawian higher education. Minimum standards for higher education require that optional courses are included in a curriculum and most institutions do comply.

<sup>32</sup>[https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/national\\_education\\_policy.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/national_education_policy.pdf)

<sup>33</sup><https://www.nche.ac.mw/resources/guidelines>

Most of the curricula in higher education institutions in Malawi are outcome-based. However, some have competency-based programmes. These are health professional programmes and technical and vocational programmes.

A higher education qualifications framework<sup>34</sup> exists, which has informed the draft of the overarching Malawi Qualifications Framework.

The standards for curriculum design include the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions. Minimum credits are provided in the higher education qualifications framework and these apply for all programmes irrespective of disciplines. However, discipline specific requirements are allowed within the framework. For instance, institutions offering engineering or medicine do require additional hours/credits for completing a course.

Currently, there are no national guidelines that allow to change career paths between universities. However, institutions have their own policies which guide transfer of students from one institution to another including change of career options. Some institutions have their own qualifications framework which guide such transfers.

Malawi does not have a national credit accumulation and transfer system established, but the Malawi Qualifications Framework which is currently draft form includes a credit system.

As stated, there has not yet been a national credit system. As of today, individual public and private universities have and use their own developed credit systems. Malawian universities and other HEIs have developed their own experiences on credit system. The current experiences have been guided by the higher education qualifications framework as an interim measure. Meanwhile, some universities have chosen to use the American credit system while others use the European credit systems.

Partial periods of study are recognized between universities using academic transcripts.

To allow students who have not completed a cycle of a programme to complete it in Malawi without having to start the study programme afresh, the higher education qualifications framework developed by the Ministry of Education, the TVET Qualifications Framework developed by the TVET Authority in the Ministry of Labour, universities' own qualifications frameworks do provide for credit accumulation. Furthermore, academic transcripts also play an important role in recognition of prior learning and students' placements and transfer. The National Council for Higher Education is in the process of developing guidelines for recognition of prior learning (RPL), which shall inform the development of institutional based policies and guidelines on RPL.

To implement a credit system in higher education, once the Malawi Qualifications Framework (MAQF) is enacted, all higher education institutions including universities will need to be capacitated to understand the MAQF and how to develop their own qualifications framework or policies that are consistent with the MAQF. Capacity must also be built around understanding the various credit systems and how to practically make use of them.

Malawi has been relying on the higher education qualifications framework and the TVET qualifications framework, and on the institutional qualifications framework to support student mobility from other countries. However, lack of a clear policy on RPL and absence of the MAQF have made student mobility unsystematic and problematic.

## 2.8 Mauritius

<sup>34</sup><https://www.bing.com/search?q=HEQF+Malawi&form=ANSPH1&refid=78f9dad77f9e418996d110f897d3973f&pc=U531>

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is a regulatory body for higher education in Mauritius under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology. The national law for higher education is established by the Higher Education Act 2017<sup>35</sup>.

The Quality Assurance Authority is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

In Mauritius there are in total 47 universities and other HEIs, corresponding to 5 public universities, 6 other public HEIs and 36 other private HEIs. In Mauritius there is no private full university.

The enrolment of students in Mauritian higher education is 24,122 students in other HEIs (total number of students in other public HEIs: 3,520). In addition, there are 19,391 undergraduate students and 4,731 postgraduate students in universities.

Mauritius has a unified National Qualification Framework<sup>36</sup>, established in 2021 but there is no policy or statutory instrument on curriculum design in universities and other HEI. However, the Guidelines for Accreditation of Programs<sup>37</sup> include criteria to assess curriculum design seeking for the observation of the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm, flexibility and recognition of prior learning.

To assess the alignment of Mauritius' higher education system with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm, the following will have to be considered:

- i. Curriculum Design: Evaluate whether the curriculum is designed to allow flexibility for students to pursue their interests, choose their learning pathways, and demonstrate mastery of competencies through various assessment methods.
- ii. Teaching and Learning Methods: Assess whether teaching methods encourage active engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration among students. Look for evidence of project-based learning, problem-solving activities, and opportunities for hands-on experience.
- iii. Assessment Practices: Examine whether assessment practices focus on measuring students' mastery of competencies rather than solely relying on traditional exams or memorization. Look for assessments that include performance tasks, portfolios, and real-world projects.
- iv. Support Services: Consider the availability of support services such as academic advising, counselling, and tutoring to assist students in setting and achieving their academic and career goals.
- v. Recognition of Prior Learning: Determine whether the system recognises and values prior learning experiences and allows students to receive credit for knowledge and skills gained through work experience, volunteering, or other non-formal learning activities.

In Mauritius, there are no fixed standards set by a higher education authority on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions.

Undergraduate degrees typically range from 3 to 4 academic years in duration for full-time students. This would equate to approximately 90 to 120 credit hours, assuming a standard course load of 30 credit hours per academic year. However, variations may exist depending on the specific programme and institution.

For postgraduate programmes, such as master's degrees, the duration can vary widely depending on the field of study and the specific requirements of the programme. Master's programmes in Mauritius often range from 1 to 2 academic years for full-time students. Doctoral programmes,

<sup>35</sup> [http://hecwebsite.tec.mu/pdf\\_downloads/our\\_act/bill2017\\_heact.pdf](http://hecwebsite.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/our_act/bill2017_heact.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> <https://mqa.govmu.org/mqa/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NQF.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> [http://hecwebsite.tec.mu/pdf\\_downloads/accreditation\\_renewal\\_accreditation/Guidelines%20Accreditation.pdf](http://hecwebsite.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/accreditation_renewal_accreditation/Guidelines%20Accreditation.pdf)

such as PhDs, typically require several years of full-time study beyond the master's level, with durations ranging from 3 to 6 years depending on factors such as the student's research progress and the requirements of the doctoral programme. Additionally, part-time study options may extend the duration of degree programmes beyond the typical ranges mentioned above.

The credit hour requirements can vary widely depending on the institution, the level of study (undergraduate, graduate), and the specific discipline or field of study. In general, undergraduate degree programmes typically require students to complete anywhere from 120 to 180 credit hours for graduation, spread across various courses and requirements. However, this can vary significantly depending on factors such as the structure of the curriculum, the number of required modules, and any additional programme-specific requirements. For postgraduate programmes, such as master's degrees or doctoral degrees, the credit hour requirements can vary even more based on the level of study and the specific expectations for advanced coursework, research, and/or thesis/dissertation work.

The minimum duration for undergraduate programmes in Mauritius is around 3 to 4 academic years for full-time students. However, this can vary depending on factors such as the specific requirements of the programme, the structure of the curriculum, and any professional requirements that may apply to certain fields of study. For example, programmes such as medicine, architecture and engineering often have longer minimum durations compared to programmes in other fields, due to the extensive coursework, clinical training, internships, or studio work required for these disciplines. These programmes may require four or more years of full-time study to complete. On the other hand, programmes in fields such as humanities, social sciences or business may have shorter minimum durations, typically ranging from 3 to 4 years for full-time study.

It is generally possible to change career paths or transfer between universities and other higher education institutions within Mauritius, although the specific procedures and requirements may vary depending on the higher education institutions involved and the programmes in question.

Mauritius does not have a national credit accumulation and transfer system in place. Currently, they are developing a national credit system. The qualifications framework has been finalised. Training and capacity building is scheduled for mid-2024. Piloting of the system will be done subsequently.

Although a national framework on credit accumulation and transfer is not available, 3 types of experiences can be found in Mauritius:

- a) Institutions that use credits from other countries in their programmes (for example: ECTS & CATS and for which the HEC has comparative tables);
- b) Institutions that use credits from other countries but for which HEC does not have comparative tables; and
- c) Institutions that have not yet used credits.

In the absence of a formal credit system like the one found in some other countries, recognition of partial periods of study between universities and higher education institutions in Mauritius, as well as between these institutions and others in other countries, may vary depending on individual circumstances and the policies of the higher education institutions involved. Here are some common practices and mechanisms that universities and higher education institutions use to recognise partial periods of study:

- Transcript evaluation;
- Articulation agreements;
- Credit transfer policies that individual institutions may have;
- Individualised evaluation.

Up taking of a credit system at national level requires careful planning, collaboration, and commitment from all stakeholders involved in the education sector in Mauritius. It may also necessitate phased approaches, pilot projects, and ongoing evaluation and adjustment to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the credit system implementation.

The main barriers for the uptake of a credit system at national level is the lack of capacity in the HEIs. There is a willingness to move forward with the Mauritian National Credit Value and Transfer System (NCVTS) but this will require capacity building at all levels (policy makers and HEIs) as follows:

- Accreditation and regulatory actions;
- Setting up NCVTS units at Higher Education Commission and at Mauritius Qualifications Authority;
- Establish guidelines;
- Develop and enforce regulations;
- Provide clear guidelines for articulation agreements, and transfer eligibility of procedures;
- Set up an independent appeal committee / mechanism.

Implementing a credit system in universities/higher education institutions in Mauritius would require a multi-faceted approach involving political decisions, regulatory changes, training initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. Here are three key actions for further implementation:

- a) Capacity Building and Training;
  - Provide training and professional development opportunities for university administrators, faculty members, and staff to familiarise them with the principles and practices of the credit system;
  - Develop resources, guidelines, and manuals to support institutions in implementing and managing the credit system effectively, including procedures for credit transfer, assessment of prior learning, and quality assurance processes;
  - Collaborate with international partners, experts, and organizations with experience in credit systems to provide technical assistance, guidance, and best practices to universities in Mauritius.
- b) Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration:
  - Engage key stakeholders, including university leaders, faculty members, students, employers, government agencies, and professional bodies, in the development and implementation of the credit system;
  - Foster collaboration and partnerships between universities, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to align the credit system with labour market needs, economic priorities, and national development goals;
  - Establish advisory committees or task forces comprising representatives from academia, industry, and government to provide input, guidance, and oversight on the implementation of the credit system.
- c) Communication and awareness building:
  - Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to raise awareness about the benefits, requirements, and implications of the credit system among stakeholders. This should include dissemination of information through various channels, such as workshops, seminars, newsletters, and online platforms;
  - Promote transparency and accountability in the implementation process by providing regular updates, progress reports, and opportunities for feedback and input from stakeholders;
  - Conduct public outreach and awareness campaigns to inform students, parents, and the general public about the opportunities and advantages of the credit system in terms of educational flexibility, mobility, and recognition of learning achievements.

## 2.9 Mozambique

In Mozambique, there is a ministry responsible for higher education, science and technology (*Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologiae Ensino Superior*). The Law No. 1/2023 of March 2017<sup>38</sup> establishes the legal regulation of the higher education subsystem. It applies to all public and private higher education institutions operating in Mozambique.

Within the Ministry there is a department responsible for higher education, the National Directorate for Higher Education. In addition, the National Council for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ) is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and compliance to the policy and standards.

There are in total 56 universities and other HEIs in Mozambique. From those institutions 12 are public universities, 14 are private universities, 10 are public other HEIs and 20 are private other HEIs.

The student enrolment in the Mozambican higher education is 375,199 students, distributed into 239,443 students in universities and 135,756 students in other HEIs. From those, 225,659 are undergraduate students in universities and 13,784 are postgraduate students in universities.

An integrated National Qualifications Framework (QNQ) was established in 2022 through decree no. 61/2022 of 23 November<sup>39</sup>, integrating the former National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (QUANQES) approved in 2010 through the decree no. 30 August.

The National System for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SNATCA – established by the decree<sup>40</sup> n° 32/2010, Of 30 August and revised by the decree n° 72/2023, of December 18th<sup>41</sup>) is the statutory instrument for curriculum design in Mozambican universities and other HEIs. Using this as the main reference, all institutions are required to design their own curricular frameworks for undergraduate or postgraduate programs, that also follow the QNQ. Those internal frameworks are also assessed during the program evaluation and accrediting.

The SNATCA refers to the flexibility of curricula by inclusion of optional courses as compulsory elements for all universities and other HEIs.

Mozambican higher education is aligned with the principles of student-centred or skills-based paradigm since, for example, the law establishes that one of its objectives is to ensure connection to work in all sectors and branches of economic and social activity, as a means of technical and professional training for the student. Furthermore, the existence of a National System for the Accumulation and Transfer of Academic Credits is a sign that higher education values students as actors in the construction of their knowledge and not a passive subject.

There are national standards on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions defined in the higher education law and developed in the SNATCA. In addition, the minimum range of duration for a degree in total hours and credits is defined.

The total annual workload of an average-income, full-time higher education student is fixed in a range that varies between 1,500 and 1,800 hours for graduate programmes.

The minimum duration in terms of years expected for a particular programme of study is fixed by the law, and well described in the QNQ and SNATCA. Undergraduate programmes have a minimum of duration of 3 to 4 years (qualifications framework level 7). However, some specific subject areas such as a degree in medicine or engineering last 5 to 6 years (qualifications framework level 8).

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.mctes.gov.mz/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Lei-n%C2%B01-2023-%E2%80%94Lei-que-estabelece-o-regime-juridico-do-Ensino-Superior-e-revoga-a-Lei-n%C2%B027-2009-de-29-de-Setembro.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.mctes.gov.mz/quadro-nacional-de-qualificacoes/>

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.iset-oneworld.ac.mz/images/phocadownload/Biblioteca/ES/3.Decreto\\_32\\_2010\\_SINATCA.pdf](https://www.iset-oneworld.ac.mz/images/phocadownload/Biblioteca/ES/3.Decreto_32_2010_SINATCA.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Not yet available online.



By law it is possible to change careers between universities and or other HEIs. However, it is still very difficult and the implementation in the institutions is rare. Basically, the change to public HEIs occurs in duly justified cases, upon request to the rector of the HEI. The receiving HEI then evaluates the candidate's academic transcript for the purposes of recognizing the modules or subjects attended at the HEI of origin. For private HEIs, the change is easier and simpler, even though the procedures are the same.

As reported above, Mozambique has a national credit system (SNATCA) in full implementation stage. The legal framework was put in place in 2010 through the decree n° 32/2010, of 30 August. In 2023 it was revised through decree n° 72/2023, of December 18th.

The SNATCA is mandatory for all public and private universities and other HEIs although not all institutions are implementing it due to the lack of capabilities to deal with the technical issues related to the implementation of credit system.

The purpose of SNATCA is to increase the transparency of programmes and courses, make students' choice of subjects or modules more flexible, allowing them to organize their study plans according to their needs and enable the competitiveness and mobility of students in the country, the region, and the world.

Academic credit is defined by the student workload that includes hours of direct contact and hours of independent work. 1 credit corresponds to 25 or 30 hours.

The SNATCA allows student mobility from one programme to another programme within the same institution as well as to different institutions within the country.

SNATCA is compatible with other countries in the region as the design was aligned with the SADC regional debate on students' mobility under the SADC protocol for education and training; the revision approved in 2023 is according to the SADC CATS.

SNATCA is also compatible with other credit systems at the continent and at the global level. Mozambique benefited from technical assistance for the design of the credit system with reference to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS - Twenty University) played the major role in this process.

SNATCA allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. There is no other credit system other than the national in place in the Mozambican universities and other HEIs.

In Mozambique, there is no framework for transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for purposes of progression and validation. On the other hand, there is a legal provision for a recognition of prior learning.

SNATCA is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation requirements and classifications of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has 60 credits per year. The minimum duration of academic qualifications in higher education is as following:

- Undergraduate degree – 180 to 240 credits,
- Master's degree – 75 to 120 credits and
- PhD – 180 credits.

For the implementation process of SNATCA a guideline was provided to the institutions and capacity building was conducted. Resources for capacity building were provided by the government through financial support from partners such as the World Bank, the government of The Netherlands (NUFFIC) and others.

## 2.10 Namibia

In Namibia, the Ministry of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation is responsible for the regulation of higher education. There is a law for higher education, established by the Act 26 of 2003<sup>42</sup> which applies to higher education in Namibia.

The Namibia Qualifications Authority is the central actor for higher education, responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

The Namibian higher education system has 2 public universities, 2 private universities, 1 other public HEIs and 16 other private HEIs.

Student enrolment in universities is as following: 46,617 students in public universities and 16.000 students in private universities, distributed into 50,668 undergraduate students and 5,381 postgraduate students.

Namibia has an integrated qualifications framework<sup>43</sup> since 1996. The minimum standards for higher education in Namibia, established in July 2023, are the statutory instrument for curriculum design in universities and other HEIs. These standards include orientations for flexibility of curricula. The alignment of the Namibian higher education with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm is planned.

The minimum standards for higher education include standards on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions establishing the range of the maximum and minimum duration for a degree. However, duration differs for programmes in certain subject areas, such as medicine and engineering.

Namibia has a credit system in place<sup>44</sup> since 1996 that is in full implementation stage. The above reported regulation for curriculum design also includes procedures on credit accumulation and transfer. The purpose of the credit system is mostly curricular innovation but it is also used in accumulation and transfer.

The credit system is compulsory for all universities and HEIs. For a course to be registered on the Namibia Qualifications Framework, it must have credits.

The quantum of learning recognised through qualifications and unit standards registered on the NQF shall be measured in terms of credits where 1 credit equates to 10 hours of notional learning time which is inclusive of directed and self-directed learning and assessment.

The Namibian credit system allows for student mobility from one programme to another programme within the same institution and in different institutions within the country. No information was provided on the mobility based on the academic credit system to other countries neither on the compatibility of the national credit system within the region, continent and at global level.

The NQF credit system enable reciprocal recognition of qualifications among educational institutions in the country. However, the practical application of recognition depends on the regulations of the HEIs.

The minimum standards for higher education in Namibia indicate RPL requirements as an alternative pathway, however micro-credentials are new in Namibia and the country is at initial stages of development of the framework for micro-credentials.

All Namibian HEIs use the credit system. There is no other credit system other than the national in place.

<sup>42</sup> <https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2003/26/eng@2008-06-02/source.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.namqa.org/files/files/REGULATIONS NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.namqa.org/about-us/NQA-Credits/163/>



Credit is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation load and classification of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has 120 credits per year and to obtain a degree, the following minimum credits are considered:

- Undergraduate programme – 360 credits,
- Master's programme – 240 credits and
- PhD programme – 360 credits.

To support institutions for the implementation of the system capacity building workshops were held as well as guidance provided at institutional level on the credit system and allocation of credits to courses.

## 2.11 Seychelles

The ministry responsible for regulation of higher education in Seychelles is the Ministry of Education, which includes higher education. The national law for higher education was approved by the Tertiary Education Act (Amendment Act) 2022<sup>45</sup>, that incorporates the tertiary education and training system.

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority is another central actor for higher education, responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

There are in total 10 public institutions providing programmes in post-secondary education, namely 1 public university and 9 public tertiary non-university institutions, called professional centres. No private institution provides post-secondary education in Seychelles. Information on the number of students in universities was not provided.

A National Qualifications Framework is in place since 2008<sup>46</sup> and the standards and criteria for programme accreditation are the reference for curriculum design in the university and other HEIs. Curricula include elective courses in some programmes of the university. Competency-based education is implemented at the level of professional centres where programs from Certificate to Advanced Diploma level are offered.

The duration of programmes is guided by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. It provides the minimum notional hours for the duration of a degree programme as well as the credit for one to be judged to have completed a course. The university offers a limited range of programmes. Therefore, minimum duration is basically the same for all programmes at a particular NQF level.

It is not possible to change careers between universities as there is just one university. However, transfer between professional centers is done.

The National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System is in place since 1998, as part of the National Qualification Framework mentioned above. It is in the stage of full implementation and it is mandatory for the university and professional centres. The main purpose of the credit system is transfer-mobility and accumulation.

Credit is defined in terms of student workload that include contact and non-contact hours, and work-based experience. The credit system allows student mobility from one programme to another programme within the same institution.

Seychelles' credit system is compatible with most countries in the SADC Region, in the continent and at global level. It allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level and no other

<sup>45</sup> <https://seylli.org/akn/sc/act/2022/5/eng@2022-04-08/source.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> [www.sqa.sc](http://www.sqa.sc)

credit system different from the national one is in use in the country. In addition, there is a framework (Policy and Guidelines) of recognition of prior learning.

The credit system is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications. The average of credit per year is 120 credits.

To support implementation and institutional capacity building, training was provided for institutions on how to use the credit system in the development of programmes.

## 2.12 South Africa

In South Africa there is a Department of Higher Education and Training under the oversight of the Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation which is responsible to oversee the higher education system. The Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997)<sup>47</sup> as amended, is the law that covers both public and private higher education institutions.

Another central actor in higher education is the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The Mandate of the CHE, as provided for by the Higher Education Act is as follows: (i) Advice to the Minister on any aspect of higher Education; (ii) Arrange and co-ordinate conferences (iii) Promote quality assurance in higher Education (iv) Audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions and (v) Accredite programmes of higher education. The NQF Act also designates the CHE as the quality council for higher education.

In South Africa there are 26 public universities. Other public HEIs like nursing colleges, agricultural colleges, veterinary colleges, and emergency medical care colleges offer some higher education qualifications. In addition, there are 124 other private higher education institutions.

Figures for 2021 indicate that student enrolment in South African higher education is as follows: 1,068,046 students in public universities and 232,915 in private higher education institutions. From them, there are 906 680 undergraduate students in universities and 155,359 postgraduate students in universities.

There is a National Qualification Framework established by the Act 67 of 2008<sup>48</sup>. The curriculum design is regulated by three instruments: the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)<sup>49</sup>; the National Policy on Curriculum Development<sup>50</sup>; the CHE Criteria for Programme Accreditation<sup>51</sup>.

Following those regulations, institutions have the flexibility to design their own programmes. Qualification documents must stipulate compulsory modules and electives and they must clarify the rules of combination.

The higher education system in South Africa is aligned with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm as the current emphasis of the NQF Act is on exit level outcomes. On the other hand, the qualification standards developed by the CHE are competency-based (graduate attributes) and the CHE's new Quality Assurance Framework places the student at the centre of learning and teaching.

The HEQSF stipulates the volume of learning at 120 credits per year. Each qualification type is also assigned a specific volume of learning (minimum). In addition, the CHE is in the process of

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/a101-97.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/a101-97.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-qualifications-framework-act>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.gov.za/documents/notices/national-qualifications-framework-act-higher-education-qualifications-sub-0>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Community%20College/National%20policy%20on%20curriculum%20development.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> [https://nr-online-1.che.ac.za/html\\_documents/CHE\\_accreditation\\_criteria\\_Nov2004.pdf](https://nr-online-1.che.ac.za/html_documents/CHE_accreditation_criteria_Nov2004.pdf)

developing qualification standards for the range of qualifications, as described in the Framework for Qualification Standards in Higher Education (2013)<sup>52</sup>.

The HEQSF stipulates the minimum number of credits per qualification type (120 credits per year) and also caps the maximum to 10% above the minimum with the exception of professional programmes that are allowed higher volumes. The NQF stipulates that qualifications must be completed within N+2 Years where N is the normal completion time.

The minimum duration of a degree is guided by the minimum number of credits stipulated for the qualification type. There are some variations guided by the minimum requirements for that profession e.g. General Bachelor's degrees are pegged at NQF level 7 with a minimum of 360 credits. Professional Bachelor's are pegged at NQF level 8 with 480 credits. Bachelor of Education degrees are at NQF level 7 with 480 credits. Generally, 1 year of fulltime study is considered to comprise of 120 credits. On average, a degree programme has 120 credits per year. So, an undergraduate programme has minimum of 360 credits; a masters' programme has 180 credits; and a PhD programme has 360 credits.

It is possible to change careers between universities through recognition of completed qualifications from another institution, as well as through credit accumulation and transfer and through recognition of prior learning.

South Africa has a credit system in place since 2008: The National Qualifications Framework, and the HEQSF are credit-based. Additionally, there is a CHE's Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer<sup>53</sup>, which is combined with the SAQA Policy on CAT<sup>54</sup>. So that, the country is at implementation stage of the credit system.

Stakeholder engagement through workshops and other fora is part of the CHE's processes of policy development. This will also have contributed to support institutions and promote capacity building.

The national credit system is mandatory for all institutions. The purpose of the system is to facilitate transfer-mobility and curricula innovation. This is mainly to support access and progression of students.

Academic credit is defined in notional hours, corresponding to the student workload, where 10 Notional hours are equal to 1 credit.

In South Africa, the credit system allows for student mobility from one programme to another programme within the same institution and in different institutions within the country.

The South African credit system is compatible with other countries in the region, in the continent, and in the global level. This allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. There is no other credit system in use in universities or other HEIs.

The credit system is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications.

There is a system for recognition of prior learning. A project is underway that will lead to the development of a microcredentials' framework.

## 2.13 Zambia

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education is responsible to oversee higher education through the Department of University Education. Zambia has laws and policies governing higher education in

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/publications/frameworks/framework-qualification-standards-higher-education-6>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/RPL-CAT%20Assessment%20Policy%20Document.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.saqa.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Policy-and-Criteria-for-Credit-Accumulation-and-Transfer-within-NQF-2021.pdf>

place: ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011<sup>55</sup>; Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013<sup>56</sup>; Higher Education (Amendment) Act No. 23 of 2021<sup>57</sup>; National Policy on Higher Education (2019)<sup>58</sup>; and 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework<sup>59</sup>.

The Higher Education Authority is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards.

In Zambia there are in total 61 universities, 9 of which are public universities and 52 are private universities. The enrolment of students in universities is in total 156,044 students. From them 70,980 are students in public universities and 85,064 are students in private universities.

There is a National Qualification Framework in place. In addition there are policies, statutory instruments and laws that guide curriculum design in universities and other HEIs such as: (i) Statutory Instrument No. 4 of 2018<sup>60</sup>; (ii) Statutory Instrument No. 25 of 2016<sup>61</sup>; (iii) Guidelines for the Registration and Accreditation of Qualifications on the Zambia Qualifications Framework (2016)<sup>62</sup>; (iv) Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions and the Accreditation of Higher Education Learning Programmes<sup>63</sup>; (v) Recognition of Prior Learning Policy; (vi) Credit Accumulation and Transfer System Policy; (vii) Student Transfer Guidelines; and (viii) Open and Distance Learning Guidelines.

Flexibility in curricula is partially implemented in higher education. There are optional courses in some degree programme.

Zambia is implementing a competency-based education as can be seen from the qualification level descriptors which emphasize what the learner should be able to do after undergoing training.

The standards for the duration of study for higher education learning programmes is as outlined in the Zambia Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors and the Guidelines for Registration and Accreditation of Qualifications on the Zambia Qualifications Framework.

The standard duration of any programme is expressed as notional hours or credits, corresponding to the student workload. 10 notional hours are equivalent to 1 credit and the minimum duration for a one-year programme is 1,200 notional hours or 120 credits.

There is a range of maximum and minimum duration of a degree programme which is outlined in the Zambia Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors. The range in notional hours and credits is as outlined below:

- Diploma – there are 3 different minimum duration levels of Diploma, according to the entry profile: (a) 3 years (3,600 notional hours, 360 credits) after Level 2B (b) 2 years (2,400 notional hours, 240 credits) after Level 4 or (c) or 1½ year (1,800 notional hours, 180 credits) after Level 5;
- Bachelor's degree – 4 years (4,800 notional hours, 480 credits) to 7 years (8,400 notional hours, 840 credits);
- Post graduate diploma – 1 year (1,200 notional hours, 120 credits) after level 7;
- Master's degree - 1½ year (1,800 notional hours, 180 credits) to 2 years (2,400 notional hours, 240 credits) after Level 7 and
- Doctorate degree – Minimum of 3 years (3,600 notional hours, 360 credits) after Level 9.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/7919>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/3097>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/8992>

<sup>58</sup> [https://hea.org.zm/sdm\\_downloads/national-higher-education-policy/](https://hea.org.zm/sdm_downloads/national-higher-education-policy/)

<sup>59</sup> <https://lataz.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Curriculum-Framework-2013.pdf>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.zaqa.gov.zm/about/#downloads>

<sup>61</sup> [https://hea.org.zm/sdm\\_downloads/statutory-instrument-no-25-of-2016/](https://hea.org.zm/sdm_downloads/statutory-instrument-no-25-of-2016/)

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.zaqa.gov.zm/institutions/#services>

<sup>63</sup> <https://hea.org.zm/downloads/standards-and-guidelines/>

There exists a minimum graduation load which is aligned to the standards as set out in the Zambia Qualifications Framework depending on the discipline. For example, the range in duration for a bachelor's degree programme is between 4 to 7 years after completion of the senior secondary education, depending on the discipline. Under the Zambia Qualifications Framework, this range holds for only the bachelor's degree level. The duration for bachelor's degree in medicine is 7 years while bachelor's degree for social sciences and business programmes are 4 years. Bachelor's degrees in natural sciences and engineering programmes are between 4 and 5 years.

It is possible to change the careers between universities. A student wishing to change career paths will undergo a vigorous assessment of his credentials to establish which modules or courses can be transferred for purposes of being exempted. This is done through the implementation of the credit accumulation and transfer system.

Zambia has a credit accumulation and transfer system<sup>64</sup> that was officially put in place in 2023, according to the ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011. The credit system is in full implementation and it is mandatory for all universities and other HEIs. The purpose of the Zambian Credit Accumulation and Transfer is transfer-mobility.

A capacity building workshop was held with universities across Zambia on the newly developed Credit and Accumulation Transfer System (CATS) policy.

A credit is defined as a measurement of the quantity or volume of learning of a module, course or programme of study. The student workload considered to define the credit include contact and individual learning as well as practical activities and assessment.

The credit system allows for student mobility from one programme to another programme within the same institution and in different institutions within the country.

The Zambian credit system is compatible with other countries in the region. Zambia is one of the four countries in the SADC region that have formally aligned to the SADC QF. And it is also compatible with other countries on the continent and at a global level.

The credit system allows mutual recognition of qualifications at national level for as long as the institution issuing the qualification and the qualification itself is recognized.

The framework of transforming micro-credentials into credits is yet to be determined. Zambia currently does not implement micro-credentials. However, the country does implement recognition of prior learning for purposes of progression and validation of qualifications.

There are no other credit systems in place in Zambian universities or other HEIs.

Summarizing, the credit system is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation load and classification of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has the following volume in credits:

- Undergraduate programme: Between 480 – 840 credits;
- Master's programme: Between 180 – 240 credits; and
- PhD or Doctoral programme: minimum 360 credits.

## 2.14 Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe there is a Ministry for Higher Education, Science, Innovation and Technology Development. The law to regulate higher education was established in 1981 and covers higher education and the creation of vocational training programmes and centres.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.zaqa.gov.zm/about/#downloads>

Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and assuring compliance to the policy and standards.

In Zimbabwe there are 19 universities. Among them 12 are public universities and 7 private universities. No information on the student enrolment was provided.

There is an integrated Zimbabwe National Qualifications Framework<sup>65</sup> since 2018 and since 2020 there is a legal orientation for curriculum design in universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs), based on the Minimum Bodies of Knowledge and Skills.

There is flexibility in universities and other HEI curricula by the provision of optional courses in the degree programmes. The Zimbabwean higher education system is aligned with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm.

There are standards on the duration of study programmes at universities and other HEIs. Degrees are 4 years and Diplomas are 3 years.

There is a minimum graduation load in credits to complete an academic programme. 480 credits for an honours programme and 360 credits for a Master's programme. However, some variations can occur in accordance with the programme in some disciplines.

Changes of careers pathways between universities has never been done and is currently not possible.

In Zimbabwe there is a credit system in place since 2017 and guidelines for higher education institutions are available on the ZIMCHE website.<sup>66</sup> The Zimbabwe Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ZIMCATS) it is at full implementation stage. It is compulsory for all universities and other HEIs.

The purpose of the credit system is to ensure comparability of qualifications offered by universities and other HEIs in Zimbabwe and to facilitate student mobility. It allows for student mobility from one programme to another programme in different institutions within the country.

Academic credit is measured in terms of student workload and 1 credit is equal to 10 notional study hours.

The Zimbabwean credit system is compatible with other countries in the region as it was developed in line with the SADC CATS. It is also compatible with other countries on the continent and with other credit systems at the global level. However, it is not compatible with Arab speaking countries as they use a different system. It is also non compatible with those countries using the grade point average system.

The credit system allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level but qualification assessment is the preferred route used by the institutions.

They are no other credit systems in use in the universities and other HEIs in Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe there is no framework for transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for purposes of progression and validation.

Workshops and training to build capacity were conducted to support universities and other HEIs in the implementation process of the credit system.

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.zimche.ac.zw/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ZNQF.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.zimche.ac.zw/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ZIMCATS.pdf>



## **Chapter 3: Western Africa Regional report**

The West-African region is composed by Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leona and Togo. Unfortunately, data for Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leona is not available.

It should be noted that there is no single credit system for the region, but all countries use the *License-Master-Doctorat* (LMD) or Bachelor-Master-PhD system with different practices. The countries of the French-speaking area in the region adhere to the CAMES (African and Malgasy Council for Higher Education) and the Network for Higher Education Excellence in West Africa (REESAO<sup>67</sup>) organizations, which allows them to harmonize the definition of the LMD system into **(i)** an architecture of studies in three levels or grades (L, M and D), **(ii)** an organization of training semesters and teaching units (UT), **(iii)** content structured in multi- and transdisciplinary areas including diversified courses and **(iv)** the foundation of the two-axis LMD system that are semesterization and capitalization.

With the help of the REESAO the duration of the semester is fixed in hours. A teaching unit (TU) is evaluated in credits, one credit of which varies from 20 to 25 hours. Hence it is noted that:

- The License is equal to six semesters and corresponds to 180 credits,
- The Master is equal to four semesters and corresponds to 120 credits,
- The Doctorate is equal to six semesters and corresponds to 180 credits.

This situation is different in the English-speaking area made up of Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leona where the education system is based on the Bachelor-Master-PhD system but with notable differences in the duration and number of semesters of a diploma and on the credit value of the Training Unit.

On the other hand, under the leadership of the West African Health Organization (WAHO), a single credit system has been planned for the training programme for nurses and midwives in the ECOWAS region since 2010 following the resolution of the eleventh assembly of West African Ministers of Health.

### **3.1 Benin**

The management of the higher education is done by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research which has a technical arm in the General Directorate of Higher Education. The sector is mainly governed by Law No. 2003-17 of November 11, 2003 relating to the orientation of National Education. It was modified by laws n°2005-3 of October 6, 2005 and n°2022-01 of January 25, 2022.

The National Education Council and the General Delegation for Control and Ethics in Higher Education are two bodies created by decree and associated to the General Directorate of Higher Education. The decree of the first body is No. 2018-395 of August 29, 2018 relating to the responsibilities, organization and operation of the National Education Council and the second one has as references the No. 2023 of January 21, 25, 2023 relating to the responsibilities, organization and operation of the General Delegation for Control and Ethics in Higher Education. In Benin there are 9 public universities, 6 private universities, 2 other public HEIs and 93 other private HEIs.

<sup>67</sup> Réseau pour l'Excellence de l'Enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO)

In terms of student numbers Benin has 97,289 students in public universities and 32,000 in private universities.

A National Qualifications Framework exists and all procedures are defined by the decree No. 2023 of January 21, 25, 2023 relating to the responsibilities, organization and operation of the General Delegation for Control and Ethics in Higher Education.

With regards to curriculum design, the procedures of creation and designing are carried out according to REESAO standards. These standards are applied by the University Pedagogy and Quality Assurance Centers of each public university of Benin. Besides, these standards require both the presence of optional courses in the degree programme and the alignment of the higher education system to the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm. More specifically, the competency-based approach is applied in all professional programmes.

The standards are defined based on the LMD system which is implemented in Benin and the requirements of the REESAO and are set by the Ministry and controlled by the General Directorate of Higher Education as well as the University Pedagogy and Quality Assurance Centers of each public university. They restrict the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions and settle a range of maximum and minimum duration for a university or other HEI degree in total hours. The estimated hourly volume in credits and hours defined must be completely executed to validate a teaching unit. There is not a minimum duration in terms of years.

However, despite of the application of the LMD system in Benin, it is impossible to change career paths between universities.

The higher education system of Benin disposes a National credit system since 2012. The regulatory framework is supplemented by ministerial decrees for the Bachelor, Master and Doctorate programmes. Hence, order No.2012-713/MESRS/CAB/DC/SGM/DRFM/DGES/R6UAC/R6UO/SA of December 31, 2012 is related to the management of the typical course of learners in the LMD system of higher education in the Republic of Benin. The ministry order No.2012-710/MESRS/CAB/DC/SGM/DRFM/DGES/R6UAC/R6UO/SA of December 31, 2012 concerns the organization of the bachelor's degree in higher education in the Republic of Benin. The organization of the master's degree in higher education in the Republic of Benin is governed by order No.2012-711/MESRS/CAB/DC/SGM/DRFM/DGES/R6UAC/R6UO/SA of December 31, 2012. And finally, the organization of the doctoral degree in higher education in the Republic of Benin obeys to the provisions provided by the decree No.2012-12/MESRS/CAB/DC/SGM/DRFM/DGES/R6UAC/R6UO/SA of 31 December 2012.

For the implementation of the National credit system that is mandatory and oriented towards the innovation of study programmes. and the capitalization, the national budget is used to ensure training and equipment acquisition. The organization of the credit system, which is single and compatible to those of the REESAO countries, is such that 1 credit is equivalent to 25 hours divided into lectures, tutorials, practical work and personal work of the student. On average, the bachelor, the master and the doctorate correspond to 180 credits, 120 credits and 180 credits, respectively. It allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level and is used in determining the volume of learning graduation load and classification of qualifications. However, the credit system in Benin does not have a framework of transforming prior learning, micro-credentials into credits for purpose of progression and validation.

### 3.2 Burkina Faso



In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation governs the higher education system on the basis of the rules set out in Law no. 013-2007/AN of 30 July 2007 on the orientation of education in Burkina Faso. This law is supplemented by implementing decree no. 2018-1271/PRES/PM/MESRSI/MINEFID of 31 December 2018, which organises higher education and specifies in article 9 that the system is structured according to the LMD system.

For the existence of other central actors, it is important to mention that the General Directorate of Higher Education of the Ministry is actually the management structure of education and is responsible for setting standards, accreditation and ensuring compliance with policy and standards. It is made up of three sub-units or 'directorates': the Directorate of Quality Assurance, the Directorate of Private Higher Education Institutions and the Directorate of Equivalence and Recognition of Higher Education Titles and Diplomas. There is also the annual Conference of Presidents, Rectors and Directors General, which is the central body for higher education institutions. Burkina Faso's higher education system comprises 8 public universities, 7 university centres attached to universities, 2 other public HEIs and 120 other private HEIs. There are around 228,287 students in public universities and over 47,477 in private universities.

There is a National Qualification Framework based on decree no. 2019-073/MESRSI/SG/DGESUP of 25 February 2019 setting the general regime for bachelor's studies in public and private higher education and research establishments and by decree no. 2019-074/MESRSI/SG/DGESUP of 25 February 2019 setting the general regime for master's studies in public and private higher education and research establishments.

The design of study programmes in universities or higher education establishments complies with RESESAO and CAMES standards. These standards authorise the existence of optional courses in study programmes, guarantee the alignment of the higher education system with the principles of a student-centred, competency-based paradigm and specify the length of study programmes. The bachelor's degree has a minimum duration of 3 years and a maximum duration of 5 years, the master's degree has a minimum duration of 2 years and a maximum duration of 3 years, the doctorate has a minimum duration of 3 years and a maximum duration of 5 years, the minimum duration of training to obtain a doctorate in medicine is 7 years, the minimum duration of training to obtain an engineering degree is 3 years, the minimum duration of training to obtain a design engineering degree is 5 years, the minimum duration of training to obtain a certificate of higher technician studies is 2 years. In the Bachelor's programme, the credit is equal to 12 hours of face-to-face time and in the Master's programme, the credit is equal to 8 hours of face-to-face time.

These regulations and frameworks ensure student mobility within the system on the basis of a transfer application prepared by the candidate and sent to the director of the university concerned.

Burkina Faso has been applying the LMD system to its higher education system since 2007. In addition to the Education Orientation Act, the Ministry uses two ministerial decrees corresponding to the bachelor's and master's degrees. These orders are respectively order no. 073/MERSI/SG/DGESUP of 25 February 2019 and order no. 074/MERSI/SG/DGESUP of 25 February 2019.

Several sources of funding have been identified for the implementation of the LMD system in Burkina Faso, including the State budget, as well as support from REESAO, UEMOA and ECOWAS, and through structuring projects such as the African Centres of Excellence (CEA) project.

On the operational side, application of the LMD system is compulsory for all higher education establishments in Burkina Faso. This is in accordance with Directive n°3/2007/CM/UEMOA of 4 July 2007 on the adoption of the LMD system in Burkina Faso.

The LMD system in Burkina Faso is a credit-based system that is used to determine the volume of learning, graduation requirements and qualification classifications. Under this system, the bachelor's degree programme consists of 180 credits and the master's and doctorate programmes correspond to 120 and 180 credits respectively. The advantages of this system lie mainly in the organisation of academic credits in the form of contact hours, as well as in its objectives, which are geared towards students, programme innovation, accumulation and transferability. The system is designed to enable mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. As Burkina Faso is a member of CAMES, its credit system is compatible with those of other countries in the region. On the continent and worldwide, partners use the equivalence of diplomas.

As for disadvantages, and following the example of other countries in the region, it should be noted that validation of prior learning is not currently practised in Burkina Faso's universities.

### 3.3 Côte d'Ivoire

The higher education system in Cote d'Ivoire is led by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The legal framework is based on the law No. 2023-429 of May 22, 2023 relating to Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The quality assurance policy for higher education is operationalized by the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Research (ANAQ-ESR<sup>68</sup>), in co-operation with the universities,

The higher education system in Côte d'Ivoire like all systems in the region is facing the development of an increasing number of students/massification. This is why besides the 9 public universities and 7 other public HEIs there is a notable boom in the private higher education sector whose count in terms of establishments results in 122 private universities and 577 other private HEIs. The distribution of students in universities is presented as follows: 107,420 students in public universities and 38,376 in the private universities.

Since 2020, the higher education system is included into the National Qualifications Framework and it is also noted that the curriculum design in universities is regulated by REESAO Directives and guidelines and the orders relating to the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate programmes. This allows for elements of flexibility and the existence of optional courses in the degree programmes. It also allows the Cote d'Ivoire system the possibility of adopting the competency-based approach as an element of the reform of Higher Technician Certificates (BTS<sup>69</sup>). The other training offers adopt more traditional but student-centered pedagogical approaches which are already implemented.

All degree-granting programmes have a fixed duration defined by given standards. These standards include the existence of minimum as well as maximum hourly volumes for the duration of the programme and a minimum graduation load set for completion of a course study. In other words, this hourly volume may vary from one discipline to another but must be the same per semester and per year for all courses in terms of total workload of the learner/student. The duration in terms of number of years are harmonized for programmes in the framework of the LMD system. For state diploma training, the durations vary depending on the profession prepared.

It is possible to change career paths between universities but under specific conditions such as recognition of the HEI's degree, particularly in the case of the private HE sector, or if there are agreements between the two HEIs concerned. In all cases, the student has to transmit the order or act of recognition of the degree or the agreement between the two HEIs at the time of registration.

<sup>68</sup> Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et la Recherche

<sup>69</sup> Brevet de Technicien supérieur

The LMD system is implemented in Cote d'Ivoire and based on a credit system which is defined and implemented according to REESAO standards. The credit system, which is mandatory for all diplomas giving access to LMD degrees, has been in place since 2011 with the adoption of the three orders governing the LMD system. The LMD systems in full implementation phase through the law No. 2023-429 of May 22, 2023. This implementation was financed and supported mainly by the higher education support project (PAES<sup>70</sup>) financed by UEMOA. The project made it possible to support higher education institutions in the implementation of the credit system.

The objective of the credit system is the establishment of capitalizable and transferable assessment credits (CECT<sup>71</sup>). These credits therefore facilitate mobility mainly within the same institution. The academic credit is defined by contact hours in addition to the student's personal workload. It is therefore evaluated as total workload.

The organization of the credit system in Cote d'Ivoire ensures mutual recognition of qualifications at national level, compatibility with the member countries of REESAO, the Continent and at a higher level because it has the same number of credits for the completion of degrees as the European system (ECTS). It is, however, different from those of English-speaking countries.

The credit system determines the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications. The prior learning validation system is currently under construction and the micro certifications are not measured in credits.

The Bachelor and the Master programmes have, each, 60 credits per year. For the PHD programmes, the number of credits differs from one year to another, with the year of thesis defense needing the majority of credits.

### 3.4 Cabo Verde

Cape Verde is a West African country whose higher education system is governed by a State Secretariat for Higher Education attached to the Ministry of National Education. To this end, the state established a legal framework for higher education institutions through Decree-Law 20/2012 of 19 July 2012, as amended by Decree-Law 12/2015 of 24 February 2015. This diploma defines and guarantees the design of study programmes. To ensure compliance with the rules, the Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES[1]) was created as a regulatory body in 2016 and began its work in December 2018.

The Secretary of State for Higher Education and the Higher Education Regulation Agency (in 2024) manage/supervise two public universities with 4,250 students and nine eight private universities with 4,279 students.

The general legal framework for the national qualifications system was created and regulated by Decree-Law 65/2010 of 27 December 2010. However, the national qualifications framework for higher education has not worked successfully.

Based on established standards and under the quality control of ARES, optional subjects are possible in programme delivery models and the higher education system is considered to be aligned with the principles of a student-centred, competence-based paradigm.

Since the higher education system is aligned with the Bologna process (LMD), study programmes have a clearly defined duration. Equivalences issued by the Scientific Council of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs[2]) allow students to change careers from one university

<sup>70</sup> Programme pour l'Amélioration de l'Enseignement supérieur

<sup>71</sup> Crédits d'évaluation capitalisables et transférables (CECT)

to another. The bachelor's degree is worth 180-240 credits, the master's degree is worth 90-120 credits and the integrated master's degree is worth 300-360 credits (10 to 12 semesters).

There is a minimum duration associated with the type or discipline of the degree. In general, the minimum duration for traditional degrees is at least 3.5-4 years, 5 years for architecture degrees and 6 years for medicine degrees.

Established in 2012, the credit system adheres to the legal regime for higher education degrees as stipulated by the decree-Law No. 22/2012 of 7 August 2012. The credit system which is mandatory for all actors was implemented by universities through training and development activities for teaching and administrative staff after publication of the legal regime. Aiming at student mobility, academic credit is defined by contact hours and independent work hours composing the overall student workload. This ensures the compatibility of the credit system with West African countries, despite language barriers, on the continent and outside the continent, at a global level.

Based on the philosophy of the Bologna process and taking into account the volume of learning, the graduation load and the classifications of qualifications, the License corresponds to 240 credits and the Master to 120 credits. The doctorate is normally taking between 6 and 10 semesters (3-5 years) and involves the preparation and public defense of a thesis. For a good organization of the higher education system, the credit system is unique and allows mutual recognition of qualifications at the national level. The validation of prior learning experiences is not yet applied in Cabo Verde.

### 3.5 Ghana

The higher education system is managed by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission that is a regulatory body under the Ministry of Education. This commission is responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards. A national Law of higher Education is set up and was revised in 2020.

In Ghana the number of public universities is 26, the number of private universities is estimated to be 94, other public and private HEIs are estimated at 145 and 16, respectively. Regarding statistics relating to students there are 562,561 students in public universities and 72,438 in private universities.

The higher education system in Ghana is characterized by the existence of a National Qualifications Framework since 2015. Also, policies at the regulatory bodies level as well as institutional level exist that regulate the sector. It should also be noted that institutions are allowed to include elective courses and mandatory courses in curricula.

In Ghana the policies and guidelines for external and internal quality assurance system reflect a student-centered approach and the competency-based paradigm is reflected in the design and delivery of both academic and TVET programmes. Standards exist for the duration of study programmes at the various levels – diploma, undergraduate degree and post-graduate degrees. The degrees have a range for duration expressed in the form of credit hours. A minimum graduation load set for graduation in a study/ academic programme exist but these are determined at institutional levels. Apart from the specialized professional subject areas (Medicine, Pharmacy, Optometry) there are specific minimum durations for degrees depending on the level of qualification and the entry pathway.

In Ghana there is currently not a unified credit system. In consequence, universities have different credit systems and student transfer is not based on credit accumulation and transfer. Hence, for the development of a National Credit System there are plans to develop the national and regional credit accumulation and transfer system. While waiting for the establishment of this credit system, the institutions work with credits for courses on terms of theory, practical

and field work as well as the total credits required for graduation. Since there is no credit system at national level, the partial periods of study between HIEs are recognized based on the fact that 1 credit is equivalent to 10 notional hours. For this purpose, in the design of academic programmes, HEIs generally adopt the TPC approach to assign credits to theory and practical or contact hours. The number of credits however differs across institutions, although the total number of credits for courses and programmes are within similar ranges. In order to allow the student, who has not completed a cycle of education or a programme, to complete it in Ghana without having to start the study programme afresh, some procedures are put in place. To do this the minimum entry qualification is evaluated and confirmed as eligible for entry into the intended level of the relevant programme in Ghana. For level placement, host institutions examine transcripts and place the student accordingly.

The authorities of Ghana know that there is a need for a national credit system. However, the main barriers are the diversities in the credit systems adopted by institutions in the country, the lack of trust among institutions, the inadequate knowledge and capacity for the development and implementation of a credit transfer and accumulation system and the lack of awareness of the nature and benefits of a national credit system.

For the implementation of a national credit system in universities, it is necessary to ensure (i) trainings on credit accumulation and transfer systems, (ii) the stakeholder commitment to the development of a national CATS and the strengthening of capacities of regulatory bodies and institutions, (iii) technical and financial support for the development and implementation of a national credit system and (iv) the involvement of stakeholders in the development and implementation of CATS.

Despite of the lack of a national credit system, the mobility of students is managed and ensured by institutions. Towards achieving this an effective credential evaluation system is set up to recognize and validate foreign qualifications and establish their equivalence.

### 3.6 The Gambia

The management and steering of the higher education system is done by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST). The ministry uses the national higher education law from 2016. The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) is the agency for regulating tertiary and higher education institutions and is responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards. It was created by the NAQAA Act 2015.

Gambia has 2 public universities and 5 private universities. 2554 students are enrolled in the public universities and 6381 students in the private universities. The undergraduates and postgraduate students are 8644 and 291, respectively. It also has a National Qualifications Framework named the Gambia National Qualifications Framework (GNQF) adopted in September 2022. The GNQF is a regulatory framework supported by policies, regulatory instruments and laws of the ministry and NAQAA on protocols, regulations and instructions on curriculum design. Regarding the degree of flexibility, optionality and elective courses in curricula, according the NAQAA, that a study content of 70% should be identical in all institutions whilst 30% of the content is flexible for HEIs to include their own initiatives. Gambia's higher education system is considered to be aligned with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm implemented from TVET level and gradually moving to include HEIs. Standards for diploma degrees, for example, were set in the past based on the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF 2006) and now in accordance with the Gambia National Qualifications Framework (GNQF 2022).

According to the NAQAA, the minimum duration for a university degree programme of 30 credits is 12 Months and 60 credits is 24 Months. In Gambia, the minimum credit hours are



practiced. There is a minimum graduation load evaluated in credits and hours set for completing a course of an academic programme. This varies greatly from one discipline to the other.

On the other hand, there is a minimum duration in terms of years expected for a particular programme of study depending on the field of study. It is possible to change career paths between universities at certain levels.

The higher education system in the Gambia is characterized by its credit system established at the University of the Gambia (UTG) in 1999 at the HEI level and in 2006 at the TVET level through the GSQF. The objective of the credit system is to facilitate a system of accumulation, equivalence, recognition and transfer of credits. It is mandatory and is currently being partially implemented. The operationalization is ensured through mentorships and capacity building.

The academic credit is measured using the credit hour. A degree programme has 120 credits for undergraduate programmes, 60 credits for Master programmes and 120 credits for PhD programmes. In this system one 1 credit hour is equal to 15 hours of guided learning and 30 hours of unguided learning. It allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level and for student mobility from one programme to another programme both within the same institution and in different institutions within the country. It is not compatible with systems of other countries in the region in particular with French-speaking countries but is compatible with some anglophone countries such as Ghana and Nigeria.

For the determination of the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications, the grade points earned by students that determine classification but the required credits must be met for completion of programmes.

Concerning the framework of transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for purposes of progression and validation, it is done through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mostly at the certificate and diploma level, but HEIs are encouraged to adopt it for the future.

### 3.7 Guinea

The Republic of Guinea relies on the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation (MESRSI) as the institutional and strategic body in charge of the higher education sector. The ministry's work is based on the higher education law which establishes the special status of institutions of higher education, scientific research and documentation and information centres. This law has the reference No. L/2023/0016/CNT of July 21, 2023 and is promulgated by decree. The decree establishes institutions of higher education, scientific research and documentation and information centres as public scientific establishments (PSE) with legal personality and administrative and financial autonomy. The PSE are created by legislation.

For the setting of standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards, there are four regulatory structures which are:

- the National Authority for Quality Assurance in teaching, training and research (ANAQ<sup>72</sup>). Created by Decree 007 of January 12, 2017, ANAQ is an administrative public establishment with financial and organizational autonomy and independent in its judgments and decisions. Its mission is to evaluate the quality of education and research offered by higher education and research institutions as well as vocational and technical education institutions (both public and private), and the accreditation of institutions and programmes;

<sup>72</sup> *Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité dans l'enseignement, la formation et la recherche*

- The Conference of Rectors and Directors General of Higher Education Institutions (CRDG) whose mission is to promote co-operation between public HEIs and to work to improve higher education with regards to access, quality and management;
- The Representative Chamber of Private Universities (CRESUP) of the association of promoters of private higher education;
- The Council of Directors of Research Institutions and Documentation Centres (CDIRS/CD).

In terms of number of universities, there are 6 Public universities, 25 private universities, 11 other public HEIs and 7 other private HEIs. The count of students enrolled in universities for the year 2020-2021 shows that there are 71,680 students in public universities and 10,049 students in private universities.

There is no national qualifications framework in Guinea but following the adoption of the LMD system in Guinea in 2007, the design of study programmes is regulated using 3 ministerial decrees amended in 2019. These are: a) the Decree No.2019/6854 of December 29, 2019 regulating the bachelor studies, b) the order No.2019/6855 of December 24, 2019 which regulates the Master's studies and c) the order No.2019/6854 of December 24, 2019 which is related to Doctorate degrees. In addition, there is the decree No. A/2019/4965/MESRS/CAB of July 29, 2019 establishing the procedures for creating and opening educational programmes in higher education institutions.

The study regulations for the bachelor's, master and doctorate programmes allow optional courses within the higher education system. The approach is student-centred (2/3 of teaching and learning activities are exclusively student work). According to the guidelines of the LMD standards, a study programme is foreseeing the acquisition of competencies rather than only the acquisition of knowledge. In order to do this, situations allowing the development of skills such as the ability to analyse, the ability to synthesize, the ability to learn by oneself, the ability to adapt, the ability to communicate, the ability to research and analyse information are added to disciplinary knowledge. A stronger focus on skills is planned in the reform of the programmes currently being finalized.

The standards set the duration of the programmes which is as follows: the basic license (bachelor) lasts 3 years, the professional license lasts 4 years, the master takes 2 years and the doctorate lasts 3 years.

However, there is a minimum and maximum duration for obtaining a university degree. Thus, the minimum duration in hours for the acquisition of degrees in universities and other higher education establishments is 4,500 hours for the basic license (i.e. bachelor degree), 6,000 hours for the professional license, 3,000 hours for the master and 4500 hours for the doctorate. The maximum duration is defined in years and is 4 years for the basic license, 4 years for the master and 5 years for the doctorate.

There is a minimum load to complete a course of study because in order to obtain the degree the student must acquire all of the programme credits. To do this, at least 5/10 or 50% of the requirements of the course have to be reached.

In Guinea, there is a minimum duration in terms of years expected for some disciplines. In basic license programmes such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Economics the minimum duration of studies is 3 years. This duration is 4 years in professional licenses like for example MAGE, Computer Engineering. In Architecture the minimum duration is 5 years while it is 7 years in Pharmacy and 8 years in Medicine.

A particularity of the HE system in Guinea lies in the fact that changes of courses between public and private higher education institutions are possible for students. However, there is a risk that courses will not be recognised.

The only national system of credits for all higher education institutions was created in 2007 and does not allow the validation of acquired experience like experiences gained in the countries of the sub-region. Hence its needs updating. In the implementation, taking into account the particularity of the system, the focal points of the Universities were trained in the design and development of curricula during the transition to the LMD system. Workshops were organized to ensure the implementation of reforms.

The national credit system in Guinea is no exception to the general logic of the LMD philosophy but there is no formalized national qualification framework in place. Inspired by the Bologna process, the credit system is oriented towards student mobility and the innovation of study programmes. In addition, the credit is a unit of value which represents the only measure of teaching and learning activities in HEIs in Guinea. The corresponding hourly volume is 25 hours of activities, or 75 hours for 3 credits and 150 hours for 6 credits. This hourly volume is divided between face-to-face sessions (meetings with the teacher) and student work, depending on the specialty of each programme.

Compared to other credit systems, it should be noted that Guinea's is close to the Senegalese system and the Canadian one, which inspired its creation. On average, the undergraduate, the master and the doctoral programmes each have 60 credits per year.

### 3.8 Mali

In Mali, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) governs the system. The main bodies responsible for setting standards, accreditation and monitoring compliance with policy and standards are the Malian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Scientific Research (AMAQ-SUP[1]) and the General Directorate for Higher Education and Scientific Research (DGESRS[2]) within the Ministry. They all work within a legal framework defined by Law No. 99-046 of 28 December 1999 (and amendments) on the Education Orientation Act, Law No. 2012-013 of 24 February 2012 on private educational establishments in the Republic of Mali and Decree No. 2012-588/P-RM of 8 October 2012 (and amendments) setting out the terms and conditions for applying the law on private educational establishments.

There are 6 public universities in operation, including 4 in Bamako, one in Ségou and one in Sikasso, 11 grandes écoles and public institutes and 179 private higher education establishments with authorisation to set up and open, including 28 universities and 151 schools and institutes. In public higher education establishments, there were 88,379 students for 2019-2020, 106,512 for 2020-2021 and 147,855 for 2021-2022, which represents a massive increase over a short period of time.

Standards must be respected when developing study programmes. These are based on a number of decrees and orders, including decree no. 08-790/P-RM of 31 December 2008 instituting the LMD system in higher education in Mali and decrees no. 2012-1915, no. 2012-1916, no. 2012-1917/MESRS-SG of 11 July 2012 and no. 2013-3707/MESRS of 23 August 2013 on the creation and organisation of bachelor's and professional bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and doctorates. In addition, these decrees include the requirement for optional teaching units and ensure that the system is aligned with the principles of a student-centred, competency-based approach. They specify and fix the length of study programmes in higher education institutions. According to the legal texts and standards, one credit corresponds to 20 hours divided between lectures, practical work, tutorials and the student's personal work. The duration of the licence/licence professionnelle is six (6) semesters (three years, 180 credits), the master lasts four semesters/120 credits and the doctorate six semesters/180 credits. A procedure for the accumulation and transfer of credits between educational establishments is authorised in accordance with the texts in force. However, the



number of credits allocated to a teaching unit may vary from one discipline to another and depends on the faculty, which is autonomous.

The Malian higher education system has a unified, compulsory credit system based on student and teacher mobility. It is based on the LMD system introduced in 2008 by the decrees referred to above in the description of the legal context. The last institutions switched to the LMD system in 2014.

From the pilot phase through to full implementation, the universities have carried out training and awareness-raising activities for staff and students through AMAQ-SUP and the DGESRS. Funding was provided by the Malian government, WAEMU and ECOWAS, among others.

The credit system is implemented as part of the REESAO network. It enables mutual recognition of qualifications at national level and is compatible with those of other CAMES member countries in the sub-region and France. Despite the absence of a regulatory framework for the validation of prior learning at national level, some structures practice it.

### 3.9 Niger

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Technological Innovation (MESRIT) was created by decree no. 2013-456/PRN/MESR/I of 1 November 2013. It is responsible for leading national higher education and scientific research policies. The ministry uses Law No. 98-12 of 1 June 1998 on the orientation of the education system in Niger and subsequent texts to provide a framework for higher education. This law covers all levels of the education system in Niger, including higher education.

For aspects relating to quality assurance, standards and benchmarks, the government of Niger has created the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Scientific Research in Niger (ANAQ-Sup-Niger). It is placed under the supervision of the MES/R/IT. To ensure concerted management, Niger also has a Conference of Rectors of Public Universities (CRUPN), which is a consultative body for higher education.

Niger's higher education system comprises 9 public universities, 28 private higher education establishments with university status, 18 other public higher education establishments and 153 other private higher education establishments. According to statistics for 2023, 61,044 students are enrolled in public universities and 27,991 learners are studying in private higher education establishments, i.e. 29.06%.

The organisation of the higher education system in Niger is such that there is decree n°1984/107/PCMS/MES/R of 28 June 1984 establishing the equivalence of diplomas and professional qualifications in Niger. However, there is currently no national reference framework for the design of higher education curricula. Nevertheless, the Centre de Didactique et de Pédagogie Universitaire (CDPU) at Abdou Moumouni University has put together a methodological guide for this purpose. This guide is currently the most widely used tool for designing curricula and training programmes for higher education. There are currently no optional courses in the curricula of higher education establishments.

On the basis of the REESAO, CAMES and UNESCO guides and reference frameworks (structures of which Niger is an active member), the higher education system is aligned with the principles of the competency-based approach, as active pedagogy is adopted by higher education establishments. In this approach, the student is at the centre of the teaching and learning process.

Decree no. 2010-402/PRN/MESS/RS of 14 May 2010 instituting the LMD system in Niger is used to manage the duration of programmes. This decree and subsequent texts (orders)

define the standards and duration of training programmes (diplomas, certificates, attestations, etc.) in higher education institutions. The diploma stipulates that one credit is equivalent to 20 hours and that a student can only obtain the licence in 6 semesters if he or she has obtained 180 credits, i.e. 3 to 4 years after the baccalauréat (secondary school leaving certificate), and the master's degree in only 4 semesters if he or she has obtained 120 credits, i.e. 2 to 3 years after the licence. The doctorate is obtained after 6 semesters with validation of 180 credits, i.e. 3-4 years after the Master's degree.

The Nigerian system is characterised by the fact that the duration of the various degrees is harmonised in all cycles subject to the LMD system. In other words, there is no special treatment for subjects such as medicine, architecture or others. Another specific feature is the issue of student mobility. Student mobility between public and private HEIs is only possible in one direction (from public to private); the reverse is not yet possible. It is based on the validation of credits in similar or related courses. The transition is facilitated by the introduction of the LMD system.

The LMD system was introduced in Niger in 2010. Since 2012, this system has been standardised and applied to all higher education institutions in accordance with the guidelines defined by CAMES and REESAO under the supervision of the Direction Générale des Enseignements du Supérieur (DGE) and the Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité pour l'Enseignement Supérieur et la Recherche du Niger (ANAQ-Sup, Niger). According to these guidelines, the recognition of credits depends on the teaching units taken by students.

To enable students to continue their studies without having to repeat previous lessons, they are accompanied by transcripts and a note from the administration or a diploma supplement indicating the content, credits and results obtained by students in a cycle. In the case of foreign diplomas, the equivalence departments of public universities assess qualifications before authorising a student to continue his or her studies.

The main obstacles to the adoption of a national credit system are the diversity of training provision and the lack of harmonisation of training programmes in the various fields. To implement a national credit system in higher education, it is necessary to (i) train and support stakeholders, (ii) test the credit system through a pilot phase and (iii) drive forward new higher education regulations.

### 3.10 Nigeria

In Nigeria there is a Federal Ministry of Education and a Quality Assurance and Regulatory Agency for Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. A national regulatory framework on the basis of which the higher education system is managed exists. It comprises the National Universities Commission Act No. N81 Laws of Federation Nigeria (L.F.N.) 2011 (actually issued as a decree in 1974). This act set up the National Universities Commission as a corporate body charged with the responsibility of advising the federal and state governments on all aspects of university education and the general development of universities in Nigeria. Additionally, the national regulatory framework is based on the Education (National Minimum Standard and Establishment of Institutions) Act No. E3 L.F.N. 2004. The power to lay down minimum standards for all universities and other institutions of higher learning in the Federation and the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards is hereby vested by the President in the National Universities Commission in formal consultation with the universities for that purpose, after obtaining prior approval from the Minister.

Taking into account the diversity and complexity of the higher education system in Nigeria, other strategic structures are being put in place for regulation. Hence there are the National Universities Commission (NUC), the regulatory agency for universities "National Board for

Technical Education (NBTE)” and the regulatory agency for polytechnics “National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)”.

Nigeria's large population as well as its strong economy reflect on the number of tertiary institutions. The country has 124 public universities, 147 private universities, 88 public polytechnic schools, 64 private polytechnic schools and 85 private both public Polytechnics. The student population amounts to 1,823,396 students in public universities and 162,031 in private universities. The number of undergraduate students in universities is 1,780,808 and that of the postgraduates in the universities is 204,619. A National Qualification Framework exists in Nigeria since 2013 and is called National Skills and Qualification Framework (NSQF<sup>73</sup>). The policy/statutory instrument/law for university education curriculum design is derived from the Education (National Minimum Standard and Establishment of Institutions) Act No. E3 L.F.N. 2004. The first set of minimum academic standards document was developed for academic disciplines in the Nigerian University System in 1989. It was later reviewed with a new nomenclature of minimum academic standards in 2007. The latest review in 2022 culminated in the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) which provides the basis for the existence of optional courses in the programmes. The principles of student-centred and competency-based learning are to a very large extent enshrined in the CCMAS and the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) policy document. Moreover, the duration of study programmes is clearly and explicitly stated in the CCMAS document. There are also a minimum graduation hour's load set to complete a course of study and a minimum duration in terms of years expected for a particular programme of study. However, this differs from programme to programme.

It is possible to change career paths through inter-university transfers and direct entry from polytechnics to universities.

Since 1989, a credit system which is both unified and mandatory is put in place through the minimum academic standards document. The credit system allows for mutual recognition of qualifications at national levels, is oriented on accumulation, transfer-mobility and curricula innovation and is also used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications. In order to successfully implement, there is full government support through the National Universities Commission by way of capacity building for university officials through trainings.

There is a degree of flexibility/optionality/elective courses in curricula/programmes of study in public/private universities/other HEIs. In addition, the delivery of courses is student-centred and competency-based, the curriculum stipulates the minimum credit requirement for graduation and every course has its credits/hours. The credit system has a minimum of 120 credits in undergraduate programmes, at least 30 credits in the master programme and a minimum of 48 credits in a doctoral programme.

The Nigerian higher education system allows the recognition of acquired experience.

### 3.11 Senegal

In Senegal, it is the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation which manages the higher education sector which comprises both public and private institutions. It is supported in its work by the National Authority for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ANAQ-sup). The technical body of the ministry is the General Directorate of Higher Education which includes the Directorate of Public Higher Education and the Directorate of Private Higher Education. In their daily tasks, the Ministry, the Director General of Higher Education, the

<sup>73</sup> <http://web.nbte.gov.ng/nsqf>.

national quality assurance authority as well as higher education institutions, public or private, rely on several laws and decrees.

There is in particular law 91-22 of February 16, 1991 on the orientation of national education. It aims at:

- preparing the conditions for integral development, assumed by the entire nation;
- promoting the values in which the nation recognizes itself;
- raising the cultural level of the population. It contributes to acquiring the capacity to transform the environment and society and helps everyone to realize their potential.

More recently with the adoption of the LMD system in higher education, there was Law No. 2011-05 of March 30, 2011 relating to the organization of the LMD system in higher education establishments. This law is followed by the following implementing decrees:

- Decree No. 2012-1114 of October 12, 2012 relating to the bachelor degree, (as amended);
- Decree No. 2012-1115 of October 12, 2012 relating to the master degree, (as amended);
- Decree No. 2012-1116 of October 12, 2012 relating to the doctorate degree.

Senegal's higher education system is rapidly expanding. At present there are 8 public universities, 10 private universities, 3 polytechnic schools and 6 public vocational education institutes, as well as 230 private educational institutions.

In terms of enrolment there are 186,514 students of which 69% are in public higher education institutions compared to 73,685 in the private sector.

The national qualifications framework exists and has undergone several changes. Law No. 83-52 of February 18, 1983 established the National Professional Qualification Center (CNQP<sup>74</sup>) with the status of a Public Administrative Establishment (EPA<sup>75</sup>). The CNQP thus became a structure managed in a tripartite manner between government, business and workers. Its educational and financial autonomy has favoured the search for a permanent link between the center and the companies through broad consultations for the definition and execution of training and/or development activities. In 2000, the State decided to change its status again by declaring it a Public Establishment of an Industrial and Commercial Character (EPIC) by Law No. 2000-26 of September 1, 2000 and the organizational rules established by Decree 2000-865 of October 31, 2000. This modification of the status of the CNQP responds to the desire to strengthen its educational and financial autonomy and legally establish it as a private company for its management method and its relationships with third parties. More recently, this framework was extended to higher education with the promulgation of the decree on equivalence and classification of higher education diplomas which has the following references: decree no. 2015-582 of May 15, 2015 relating to recognition, to the classification and equivalence of higher education diplomas, (as amended).

Regarding the design of programmes and curricula, it is done according to the rules of the LMD system as defined by the standards of the National Authority for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, REESAO and CAMES. The Senegalese system admits the existence of optional courses. Training in general is increasingly professionalized and adopts a skills-based approach. The nursing and midwifery education (LSIO) curriculum, for example, is competency-based, community-centred and takes into consideration the current needs of both society and students.

The duration of studies in Senegal is fixed. Indeed, for the undergraduate, there is a maximum of 6 years and a maximum of 4 years for the master degree. The duration of doctoral studies is managed by the universities themselves. The minimum duration for the undergraduate is 3

<sup>74</sup> Centre National de Qualification Professionnelle

<sup>75</sup> Etablissement Public à Caractère Administratif

years equivalent to 3,600 hours, for the master degree it is 2 years corresponding to 2,400 hours and 3 years minimum, i.e. 3,600 hours, for the doctorate. This is based on the definition of a credit which is worth 20 hours of teaching in contact and in personal work of the student (TPE). Contact teaching can be done face-to-face or virtually and includes lectures (CM), tutorials (TD) and practical work (TP).

An exception, however, is observed in medical studies and in engineering schools which operate according to the LMD system but with study durations specific to them.

It is possible to change career paths but this happens between institutions whose diplomas are recognized by the ANAQ-SUP. It is often required that the student's starting institute is accredited and that the programme in question is accredited by the ANAQ.

In Senegal, the establishment of the national unified and compulsory credit system is based on the LMD dating back to 2011 through Law No. 2011-05 of March 30, 2011 relating to the organization of the LMD system. The Senegalese government, by transforming its higher education system towards the LMD model, wishes to facilitate student mobility, guarantee innovation within study programmes to meet market needs, allow learners to have the possibility of keeping the credits obtained (accumulation and transfer) and promote success and lifelong learning. During the establishment of the system, support measures were taken mainly by strengthening the capacities of the actors (teachers, educational managers, heads of establishments and students) through training and seminars with financial support by the World Bank, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the State of Senegal.

When comparing the national credit system of Senegal with those of other countries, it is compatible with the countries of the ECOWAS zone, those of most countries on the continent as well as in the world, notably France, Canada, USA, England, Germany, Spain, etc. Compatibility is based on the use of the credit system in determining hourly learning volumes and in classifying qualifications.

In practice, the license corresponds to 180 credits, the Master to 120 credits and the Doctorate to 180 credits. The weak point of this credit system lies in the absence of recognition of prior learning.

### 3.12 Togo

On the institutional level, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the General Directorate of Higher Education (DGES) govern the higher education system. Aspects related to quality assurance are for the moment left to the DGES, until the recently established quality assurance agency is operational. Institutional governance is based on a legal framework whose basis is the law governing higher education and research.

The Togolese higher education system comprises 2 public universities and 3 other public establishments and 1 private university and 87 other school or institute type institutions.

Regarding the student population in 2022 there were 96,000 students in public universities and 35,000 in private universities.

Regarding the existence of a policy or guidelines for the design of programmes and curricula, the ministry has a 2020-2025 roadmap concerning professional training which stipulates that the training offer must be oriented towards promising and priority professions.

Apart from the specialties, there are optional teaching units which allow the learner to build their professional career.

This LMD system is in force in Togo. The Togolese higher education system thus aligns itself with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based approach, sets minimum and maximum durations for each study programme (with the exception of medicine and

architecture), allows student to change programmes between institutions and estimates the credits in hourly volume. This estimate is the same for all disciplines.

A national credit system which is mandatory and oriented towards the mobility and accumulation of credits has been put in place since the adoption of the LMD system in 2008 through Decree No. 2008-066/PR of July 21, 2008 establishing the LMD system. In the implementation of this important reform, public universities were supported by the organization of training and awareness seminars. The private sector was supported by the establishment of specifications.

Academic credit is defined as 1 credit being equivalent to 20 hours as recommended by REESAO. These 20 hours are divided into 12 hours of face-to-face work and 8 of the student's personal work.

On the basis of Togo's membership in CAMES and REESAO areas, the credit system implemented is compatible with those of the francophone countries of the sub-region. Its compatibility with those of the other countries on the continent and the world depends on the higher education systems and the credit systems in place there.

There is no validation of acquired experiences and there is also no additional credit system. This allows the Togolese higher education system to use credit in determining hourly learning volumes for the validation of courses and the classification of qualifications. The annual workload is set at 60 credits. The license, the master and the doctorate are set at 180 credits, 120 credits and 180 credits, respectively.



## **Chapter 4: Eastern Africa Regional report**

The countries that make up the Eastern part of Africa have different education systems. While some have a structured National Qualifications Framework, others simply operate under a National Qualifications Systems with multi-layers of progressions pathways. The region is composed of the following countries: Comoros, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Djibouti. But data for Comoros, Eritrea and Somalia are not available.

It should be noted that there is no single credit system for all these countries. First, the countries have marked differences in language and systems that were in most cases adopted from the colonial legacy left behind with some countries anglophone and more inclined British system and the francophone which is more inclined to France as well as Ethiopia and Eritrea which belong to neither of these two groups. In addition, the countries that are French-speaking largely adhere to the CAMES and REESAO organizations, which allows them to harmonize the definition of the LMD system (*License – Master - Doctorate*) into **(i)** an architecture of studies in three (3) grades (L, M and D), **(ii)** an organization of training semesters and teaching units (UT), **(iii)** content structured in multi- and transdisciplinary areas including diversified courses and **(iv)** the foundation of the two-axis LMD system that are semestration and accumulation.

It is also worth noting that for countries in Eastern Africa that are members of the East African Community (EAC), the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), an institution of the East African Community responsible for harmonization of standards, research and quality assurance of higher education in the region developed a policy on credit accumulation and transfer and on staff and student mobility. These policies have been adopted by the member states whilst in some countries national policies have been developed on the same issues.

### **4.1 Kenya**

The higher education system in Kenya which made up of university education is regulated by the Commission for University Education under the Ministry of Education. This commission is responsible for setting standards, performing accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards. The non-university institutions are regulated by the Ministry under the Department of Higher Education. The Higher Education sub-sector in Kenya is governed and regulated by the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 (specifically for universities) & the TVET Act, 2013 (specifically for post-secondary education).

Kenya has a total of 79 universities of which 43 (54,4%) are public and 36 (45.6%) are private universities. There are 180 other public HEIs and 77 other private HEIs. In terms of enrolment, there are 562,300 students in university education in total out of which 489,300 (87%) are in public universities, 73,000 (13%) in private universities. 527,897 students (93.9%) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes of study while 34,403 (6.1%) are undertaking graduate programmes.

The entire education system in Kenya is guided by a National Qualifications Framework which was developed and implemented since 2014. The supervision of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework is done by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority, a statutory body that was established under the Ministry of Education for that purpose.

It should be noted that there are several policies and statutory instruments on curriculum development, standardization and other aspects of higher education management, governance, admission, infrastructure and quality assurance among others that have been

developed by the Commission for University Education and are adopted and used by the universities in Kenya. The guidelines and policies on curriculum development provide for multiple options of access and flexibility of the programmes in terms of modes of study.

In Kenya reforms in curriculum have taken place in the recent past with the introduction of competency-based education at basic education level now in the 7<sup>th</sup> year. The universities are yet to fully transition to competency-based education. However, some universities have adopted varied approaches in pedagogy including competency based pedagogical approaches.

The Commission for University Education has developed several policies that focus on admission criteria, graduation load and duration of study. The maximum duration of study is 6 years and minimum of 4 years for bachelor degree programmes.

There is no harmonized national credit system in place yet. This is currently being developed. However, every institution has its own institutionalized credit system that guides admission and it is based on a maximum amount of up to 49% of the graduation load of a programme that can be transferred to another institution. There are also provisions within the policies that allow for students to complete their education cycle at another university. This is under the Universities standards & guidelines for academic programmes.

The barrier to implementation of a credit system at national level is the challenge of recognition and equating of qualifications. In terms of what should be done to implement a credit system, a directive has been issued to finalize the development of a credit transfer system which is under way.

In terms of a framework to support mobility of students from other countries, it was reported that within the Universities Act, 2012, provisions are made for the recognition of foreign qualifications or qualifications of students from other countries. In addition, the student mobility policy as developed by Inter-University Council for East Africa provides guidance on the same and is also widely used.

## **4.2 Rwanda**

The higher education system in Rwanda is structured into university education and other higher education institutions and is regulated by the Higher Education Council (HEC). HEC is an agency under the Ministry of Education in Rwanda. The Presidential Order N° 081/01 of 28/08/2020 which also provides for the establishment of HEC provides a number of laws that govern Higher Education Institutions in Rwanda.

Rwanda has a total of 3 public universities and 33 private HEIs.

A National Qualifications Framework exists which includes aspects on higher education and the entire education system. The National Qualifications Framework implementation is supervised by the Ministry of Education.

It should be noted that while there are various policies and statutory instruments on infrastructure, enrolment etc. there is no specific policy in Rwanda for curriculum design and development of higher education.

In Rwanda, there is a deliberate effort to switch towards competency-based paradigms in approaches of teaching even though the implementation is not at full scale for all disciplines.

The Higher Education Council has developed several policies that focus on admission criteria, graduation load and duration of study. Graduation load is determined by minimum credits expected. However, there is no fixed duration in terms of years for a study programme.

Using the credit system, it is possible to change careers between universities. A national credit system is in place in Rwanda which is at full implementation level. The credit system is part of the Rwanda National Qualifications Framework introduced in 2013 and revised in 2020. To ensure ease in implementation, institutions were taken through pedagogical training. The credit system in Rwanda is mandatory and its purpose is to facilitate transfer, mobility and innovation.

One credit is equated to 10 hours of notional student learning. The minimum number of credits in one academic year of study leads is 120 and this amounts to 1200 notional learning hours. The system allows for compatibility between institutions in the country, as well as regionally and also at global level. The credit system also helps facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications. The credit system is also used to determine volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications.

In terms of credit load for graduation in Rwanda undergraduate is set at 480 credits and master's at 180 credits while PhD has 360 credits.

### 4.3 Uganda

The higher education system in Uganda which is basically made up of university and tertiary education is regulated by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). However, some of the tertiary institutions are regulated by the TVET department under the Ministry of Education and Sports. The National Council for Higher Education is responsible for setting standards, accreditation and checking compliance to the policy and standards. The Higher Education sub-sector in Uganda is governed and regulated by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 as amended 2006 and 2008.

Uganda has a total of 57 Universities of which 10 (17.5%) are public and 47 (82.5%) are private universities. There are 53 (28.9%) other public tertiary institutions and 133 (72.3%) other private tertiary institutions. No information on the student enrolment was provided.

Uganda does not have a unified National Qualifications Framework, but disaggregated qualifications frameworks exist for Higher Education and TVET. Currently, the Ministry of Education is in the process of developing a unified National Qualifications Framework.

The NCHE has developed several policies and statutory instruments on admissions, curriculum development, standardization and other aspects of higher education management, governance, infrastructure and quality assurance among others which are adopted and used by the universities and tertiary institutions in Uganda. The guidelines and policies on curriculum development provides for multiple options of access and flexibility of the programmes in terms of modes of study.

In Uganda, reforms in curriculum have taken place in the recent past with the introduction of competency-based education at secondary education level. Some institutions (universities and tertiary education institutions) have shifted towards competency-based education approaches. However, the majority has remained with the traditional approaches.

NCHE has developed statutory instruments that focus on the duration of study. It also stipulates the minimum graduation load for a particular level of education. The minimum duration is 3 to 5 years for bachelor's programmes.

A credit system for higher education is in place with 40% maximum credits that can be transferred from another institution. The credit system allows for change of career paths between institutions. The credit system is part of the Uganda Higher Education Qualification Framework which was developed and approved in 2016. Currently the credit system is in full implementation.

Universities were supported through several workshops and capacity building initiatives for assistance in the implementation of the credit system. It should be noted that the credit system is not compulsory. The objective of the credits system is to facilitate student mobility.

The academic unit is defined by a credit in Uganda which is further defined by notional hours. One credit is equivalent to 10 notional hours. The credit system allows for transfer among different institutions and also within the same institution. It also facilitates transfer within the region.

The credit system facilitates mutual recognition of qualifications within the region as it readily provides clarity and understanding in recognition of qualifications.

The credit system is used to determine the volume of learning and graduation load. RPL exists in some programmes but not for micro-credentials.

The minimum graduation load is as follows: undergraduate 360 credits, master 240 credits and PhD 540 credits.

#### **4.4 Ethiopia**

The higher education system in Ethiopia comprises TVET and University education and is regulated by the Education and Training Authority under the Ministry of Education. There exists a National Law on Higher Education which is the Higher Education Proclamation NO. 1152/2021.

Ethiopia has a total of 47 Public universities and 317 private. There is no unified National Qualifications Framework that guides the education system in Ethiopia. Regulations and laws are in place that guide in curriculum design in universities. The laws allow for flexibility/optionality in curriculum design. On the extent of alignment to student-centred approaches, it was noted that alignment was at early stages and not clearly structured or implemented. There is a lack of real graduate competences that are aligned to labour market. Standards for duration of study exist but are not fully implemented. There is minimum graduation load for the different programmes of study.

There is a credit system in place in Ethiopia at partial stage of implementation. The credit system was put in place about 7 years ago. Universities were supported in the implementation through capacity building trainings that were undertaken. The credit system is mandatory, and the purpose is for transfer, mobility and innovation.

The Ethiopian Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (EtCTS) was introduced by the Ministry of Education to facilitate the implementation of modular competency-based curricula, enhancing the transparency and comparability of study programmes, study periods and qualifications, and facilitate student mobility within and across universities.

Theoretically speaking, the principles and purpose of the new credit system in Ethiopia are based on and are similar to the credit system in Europe, but implementation varies both at system and institutional level.

In Ethiopia, the academic credit is defined by time taken to complete a course which is described in terms of hours. One credit is equivalent to 27 hours, and a year of full-time study amounts to a minimum of 1600 hours which is equivalent to 60 EtCTS. It was also established that the credit system allows for student mobility within the same institution and the system is compatible to other countries. However, the credit system does not allow for mutual recognition of qualifications. The credit system is used in determining the volume of learning and graduation load. At present, no framework for transferring prior learning, micro-credentials and credits for purposes of progression and validation exists in Ethiopia. On average, the credits for undergraduate programmes in Ethiopia is 60 ECTS per year. The harmonised

academic policy sets the minimum credits required for undergraduate programmes based on years of study - 240 ECTS, 300 ECTS and 360 ECTS for four-, five- and six-year degree programmes, respectively.

#### 4.5 Tanzania

In Tanzania, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for the governance of the higher education system and the law on higher education is the Universities Act, 2005<sup>76</sup>.

The Tanzania Commission for Universities is the central actor responsible for setting standards, accreditation and assuring compliance to the policy and standards.

There are in total 54 universities and other HEIs in Tanzania. From them 12 public universities, 21 private universities, 9 others public HEIs and 12 others private HEIs. There are 162,553 students enrolled in public universities and 77,970 students in private universities. Those students are distributed into 184,899 undergraduate students and 15,488 postgraduate students.

The National Qualifications Framework was established by the Standards and Guidelines for University Education in Tanzania, 2019<sup>77</sup>, that include the University Qualifications Framework (UQF).

Tanzania has statutory instruments on curriculum design in universities that are to a great extent at certificate, diploma and bachelor's degree levels. This is provided in the Universities Qualifications Framework that include a degree of flexibility of curricula.

As prescribed in the Universities Qualifications Framework, the higher education system in Tanzania is aligned with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm.

There are standards set by a higher education authority on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions, including a range of maximum and minimum duration for a degree. The minimum graduation load to complete a course of studies is provided in the Universities Qualifications Framework. This includes some variations for specific disciplines that need more time/student workload. In the Universities Qualifications Framework a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 are stipulated for bachelor programmes.

It is possible to change careers between universities or other HEIs through procedures provided in the Universities Qualifications Framework.

Tanzania has a national credit system in place<sup>78</sup> since 2012, and it is currently at the full implementation stage. This is a mandatory system whose purpose is to facilitate mobility of students.

For the implementation of academic credits in Tanzania, workshops were conducted for institutional capacity building.

Academic credit is defined in contact hours, where 1 credit is equal to 10 notional hours. It allows student mobility from one programme to other programme within the same institution and in different institutions within the country. Programmes are benchmarked during the development process to allow mobility of students to other countries in the region, on the continent and at the global level.

Tanzanian credit system allows mutual recognition of qualifications at national level. No other additional credit systems are in use in the universities or other HEIs.

<sup>76</sup> <https://tanzlii.org/akn/tz/act/2005/7/eng@2005-12-31/source.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> <https://tcu.go.tz/publications/standard-and-guidelines>

<sup>78</sup> Not available online.

The credit system is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications. On average, a degree programme has 120 credits per year, both for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

Tanzania does not have framework for transforming prior learning or micro-credentials into credits for purposes of progression and validation in higher education.

#### 4.6 South Sudan

The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for the higher education sub-sector. The regulation of the higher education sub-sector is guided by the Higher Education Act, 2012 and the National Council for Higher Education, a body under the Ministry of Higher Education.

South Sudan has a total of 5 public universities, 11 private and 4 other public technical universities. The number of students at public universities are 39,362 as compared to 2,585 in private universities.

South Sudan does not have a National Qualifications Framework. However, standards on programme flexibility and design of programmes exist. Standards for duration of study exist and are as follows: 3 years Diploma, 4-6 years Bachelor, 2-3 years Master and 3-5 years for PhD.

South Sudan does not have a credit system at present but there are plans to develop it. The closest approach to a recognition of partial study programmes is that a student should pass the module or course in order to graduate. There is no provision in place for students who have not finished an education cycle of studies. The main barrier to the adoption of a credit system is the lack of regulations. It is important to get political support and policy support if a credit system is to be implemented. South Sudan uses the framework for EAC Common Higher Education 2011 for mobility of students.

#### 4.7 Djibouti

The higher education system in Djibouti is made up of universities and other HEIs. It is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Specifically, the Scientific and Administrative Council is responsible for defining norms, standards, institutional accreditation and checking compliance to the quality assurance policy and standards.

Djibouti has 1 public university. The country has a total of 11,000 students enrolled in that university, where of 8,000-10,000 are undergraduates while 500 are postgraduate students.

Djibouti does not have a National Qualifications Framework. The development and approval of curricula is done by the Scientific and Administrative Council. The curriculum provides for flexibility. On the extent to which the curriculum is aligned to principles of student-centred approaches or competency-based pedagogies, the following has been done: (a) enriching university teaching to promote quality learning; (b) accompanying teachers and supporting education projects; (c) Establish training needs in collaboration with teams, (d) training planning and organization; (e) university pedagogy watch; and (f) regular and sustained development of training programme.

There is a standard duration of study programmes with a maximum and a minimum. Each programme of study has its duration with Medicine taking 7 years, Civil Engineering 5 years, etc. The curriculum is flexible and allows for students to switch from one career to another. However, Djibouti does not have a credit system that is recognized and being implemented. The university is running its own system. Partial programmes are recognized, and credits are compared using a course equivalency evaluation. In this procedure students are requested to



submit their transcript and course descriptions to the host institution. Secondly, it would be done through individual skills assessment done by a competent panel. The individual assessment of skills is also used to help students who have not completed a full cycle of education.

The barriers to uptake of a credit system in Djibouti include the following: bureaucratic complications, resistance to change, diversity of players, coordination and financing and resources.

## **Chapter 5: Central Africa Regional report**

The region is composed of Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo and São Tomé and Príncipe. Unfortunately, data for Equatorial Guinea is not available.

Six of the eight countries which compose the region (Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, and Equatorial Guinea) are integrated in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) which has embraced higher education and economic reforms geared at accelerating regional integration, promoting economic growth and fighting poverty.

In CEMAC, the organisation of higher education is subject to both a national and a regional approach. At national level, higher education is governed by national policy laws (or comparable regulatory instruments) which are slowly but progressively being replaced by regional legislation. At regional level, the organization of higher education until 2005 was the responsibility of the Conference of Rectors of Universities and Heads of Research Organisations in Central Africa (CRUROR-AC). The Libreville Declaration of 11 February 2005 established the construction of the CEMAC higher education, research and vocational training area handled to the organization of university studies in the CEMAC area within the framework of the LMD system.

Higher education and scientific research ministers of the CEMAC sub-region agreed in 2021 to implement the Course Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (CCTAS) in CEMAC universities. The plan is to operationalize the components of the LMD system, notably the course credit transfer and accumulation part, to improve student and lecturer mobility. No implementation date was set, but it is clear that CCTAS system is an integral part of the major CEMAC integration projects.

In general terms, there are three approaches in the Central African region: the predominant French, the Spanish in Equatorial Guinea, and the anglophone subsystem in Cameroon.

In general, all countries use the LMD system with different practices.

- *Licence* (Bachelor) corresponds to 180 credits (in some cases 240 credits);
- Master corresponds to 120 credits;
- Doctorate corresponds to 180 credits.

### **5.1 Burundi**

The higher education system in Burundi is structured into university education and other HEIs and is regulated by the National Commission for Higher Education - CNES (*Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur*). CNES is an agency under the Ministry of Higher Education in Burundi. The Law that governs higher education is decree No.1/07 of October 29,2020 revising Law N0. 1/22 of December 30,2011 on the Reorganization of Higher Education in Burundi. The central bodies responsible for regulation of higher education include *Director General de l'Education Nationale* and the Quality Assurance Directors at the Universities.

Burundi has a total of 1 public university, 22 private universities, 16 other public HEIs and 24 private ones. In terms of enrolment, 19,267 students were enrolled in public universities as compared to 48,132 in private.

A National Qualifications Framework exists which includes aspects on higher education and the entire education system. The National Qualifications Framework implementation is supervised by the Ministry of Education.

There are several policies and statutory instruments on curriculum design and implementation. These include: Law No.1/07 of October 29,2020 revising Law No.1/22 of December 30, 2011 on the reorganization of higher education in Burundi, Decree No 100/05 of 12 January 2015 on organization of studies of first and second cycle, Decree N0. 100/140 of June 06, 2013 on the organization of high professional, medical and paramedical education in Burundi, Decree No. 100/205 of 17<sup>th</sup> September and revised as decree No.100/06 of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 on organization of Doctorate in Burundi.

As part of the implementation of the LMD system introduced in 2011, the teaching approach is effectively student-centred. Indeed, the LMD system emphasizes learner autonomy, active engagement in the learning process and the personalization of the educational experience. A few points to illustrate this are the following: (a) Programme flexibility; the LMD system offers a range of courses and modules from which students can choose according to their interests, career goals and abilities. This flexibility allows students to tailor their academic pathway to their individual needs. (b) Participatory approach: Teaching and learning methods encourage the active participation of students. Courses are often designed to promote debate, class discussion, group projects and presentations, enabling students to become fully involved in the learning process. (c) Individual supervision and monitoring: Teachers and academic advisers play an essential role in supporting students. They offer individualized guidance by providing academic advice, helping students to overcome learning difficulties and guiding them in their career choices. (d) Continuous assessment: Rather than focusing solely on final exams, the LMD system favours continuous assessment throughout the semester. This enables students to receive regular feedback on their progress and to adapt accordingly. (e) Practical learning opportunities: The LMD system encourages the acquisition of practical skills through placements, research projects, fieldwork and other forms of experiential learning. By incorporating these elements, higher education in Burundi adopts a student-centred approach within the LMD system, aimed at fostering students' holistic development and preparing them effectively to meet the challenges of the professional world.

The credit system was put in place in 2012, with Law No 1/22 of 30/12/2011 on the reorganization of higher education in Burundi (all higher education institutions were obliged to join the new LMD system within 3 years). The LMD system works in terms of credits and allows for the transfer of Teaching Units and credits, i.e. the possibility of having periods of study undertaken in another Burundian institution or abroad, as well as the credits attached to them, validated by the higher education institution that is to award the diploma/degree. The teaching units and the corresponding credits are said to be transferable and it is possible to accumulate them.

With the adoption of the new system and the new Higher Education Law, a Quality Assurance Department was made compulsory in all HEIs. The National Commission for Higher Education (CNES) was also set up in 2012 as a national and governmental body to support HEIs and ensure compliance with Quality Assurance. Together with its partners, the CNES provides capacity-building for those responsible for Quality Assurance in each HEI.

On durations of study, Law No. 1/07 of October 29,2020 provides for the typical 3 cycles, 3 years for Bachelor (180 credits), 2 years for Master (120 credits) and 3 years for Doctorate (180 credits). For special cycles, the duration of Bachelor is 4 years (240 credits) and at least 6 years for Medicine (360 credits).

The credit system is mandatory (but there are three universities with an English-speaking tradition that use another but very similar). In Burundi 1 credit is worth 25 hours of work (15 hours of work

by the teacher and 10 hours of personal work by the student). Each semester counts 30 credits, giving a total annual workload of 750 hours.

## 5.2 Cameroon

In Cameroon, the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP - *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur*) governs the Higher education system on the basis of the rules provided for by the Higher Education Guidance Law (2023/007 of 25 July 2023<sup>79</sup>). The law covers the entire higher education system. With regards to other central actors, it is important to mention the University Accreditation and Quality Department and the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission.

The higher education system in Cameroon includes 11 public universities, 7 other public HEIs, 2 private universities and 411 other private HEIs. It counts more than 290,300 students in public universities, more than 119,600 in private universities.

Since the early 2000s, the Cameroonian education system has undergone significant transformations, resulting in a change in pedagogical approach. The objective-based teaching approach is gradually being replaced by the competency-based approach.

Higher education in Cameroon is organized in 3 levels or cycles: the first, second, and third. As a signatory state to the CEMAC Convention, Cameroon has been compelled to implement the LMD in its HE system. A major reform of higher education qualifications was developed in 2007 in order to harmonize the 3 cycles of university education in the francophone system with that of the anglophone system.

Until 2007, the first cycle of university study in the francophone system lasted 2 years and led to the award of: Diploma of General University Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales* - DEUG), Diploma of General Literary Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Littéraires Générales* - DELG), or Diploma of General Scientific Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Scientifiques Générales* - DESG). The second cycle lasted 1 to 2 years following the first cycle and led to either a Licentiate Diploma (*Diplôme de Licence*) or a Diploma of 'Master' (*Diplôme de Maîtrise*). The Licentiate Diploma was awarded after one year of study following the DEUG while the Diploma of 'Master' was awarded following 1 to 2 years after the Licentiate Diploma. In the third cycle, the Diploma of Advanced Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies* - DEA) was awarded 1 year after the Diploma of 'Master'. The Doctorate (*Doctorat*) was awarded 3 to 5 years following a DEA. In 2007 university education in the francophone system was restructured into a 3-year first cycle (*Licence*), 2-year second cycle (*Master*), and 3-year third cycle doctoral programme (*Doctorat*). These cycles are also expressed in terms of the years of study required after the Baccalaureate (*Baccalauréat*) and referred to as Bac+3, Bac+5, and Bac+8 credentials respectively.

The LMD structure corresponds to the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate (BMD) in the anglophone system. Licence/Bachelor programmes involve 3 years of full-time study. In both systems, programmes in specialized and professional fields such as engineering, medicine, and pharmacy require 5 or more years of undergraduate study. Master degree programmes require 2 years of full-time study. Doctorate programmes involve at least 3 years of research with a thesis.

The LMD was introduced in Cameroonian HE to provide solutions to challenges surrounding credit values/transferability and degree recognition, as well as graduate unemployment and student mobility. The LMD in Cameroonian HE has three broad objectives and nine specific

[https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/cameroon\\_loi\\_2023\\_007\\_portant\\_orientatio\\_n\\_de\\_lenseignement\\_superieur\\_fre.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/cameroon_loi_2023_007_portant_orientatio_n_de_lenseignement_superieur_fre.pdf)

objectives. The broad objectives are to promote socio-cultural and human development through citizenship training to enable individuals to face challenges of the Millennium at the national and Central African sub-regional levels; to enhance national economic development and employment of graduates and to encourage research geared at promoting outreach through partnership with the private sector. Summarily, the specific objectives address professionalisation and graduate employment, reinforcement of flexible and comparable training, student mobility and certificate equivalences among others.

The LMD system in Cameroon includes a credit system which is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications. For this purpose, the Bachelor programme has 180 – 240 credits, the Master and the PhD programmes correspond to 120 and 180 credits, respectively.

The definition provided in the current legislation (2023) describes the credit in Cameroon as a unit in which the entire completion of courses or modules of a training programme is acquired and documented during training and at the end of training. Credits express the level of study and the volume of learning on the basis of the workload typically required to achieve the expected learning objectives.

### 5.3 Congo

The higher education system in Congo is led by the Ministry of Higher Education and there are no other central actors responsible for setting standards, accreditation and compliance to the policy and standards (Accreditation Agency, Rectors' Councils). Furthermore, there is no national higher education law nor a national qualifications framework defined or under discussion. Congo has demonstrated its will to develop and modernize its higher education system, in particular through the development of a general higher education policy project in 2014, including major structural reforms. The draft policy aims to increase access, especially for the most disadvantaged, to improve quality and to strengthen the system's governance in order to improve its relevance and effectiveness. The policy prioritizes improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching. HEIs will have greater autonomy and stronger incentives to develop private higher education is envisaged.

The system is composed by 2 public universities and 2 other public HEIs, 49 private universities and 5 other private HEIs. The distribution of the students in universities is presented as follows: 48,812 students in public universities and 15,073 in the private universities.

Congo is in the process of implementing a competency-based approach, since the programmes are developed and delivered in the framework of student-centred paradigm. The duration of programmes is defined by the institutions and approved by a Ministry body: *Commission d'Agrément des Etablissements Privés de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (CAEPrES).

There is no credit system established in the country and there was no experience with a credit system in the past. There are some intentions to develop a policy in the future.

At the level of the universities there are no experiences in working with credit systems either. Since there is no credit system in the country, the recognition of partial periods of study between universities is done by institutions' equivalence committees which look at the content of the teaching units acquired in a semester in order to validate it or not (these equivalence committees exist only in public institutions).

### 5.4 Central African Republic (RCA)

The Ministry of Higher Education is a government ministry responsible for overseeing and regulating the country's public and private higher education institutions, as well as developing policies and strategies to improve the quality of education. Its role is crucial in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the country's higher education system. It is responsible for ensuring that higher education institutions provide quality education to students and meet the needs of the country's workforce. The ministry works closely with the country's only university (Université de Bangui) and other higher education institutions to develop programmes and curricula tailored to the country's needs.

A 1997 law defines the broad outlines of the CAR's education system, including the mission of higher education. This law has become obsolete. A new law is currently being drafted to adapt it to the regional and international context.

There is a University Council, the highest regulatory body in the system. It is responsible for dealing with issues such as the recruitment and promotion of teaching staff, the validation of study programmes, disciplinary measures to be taken, the adoption of inter-university agreements, and so on. However, all these issues are dealt with upstream by the following bodies: Departmental Councils, School Councils, Recruitment and Promotion Committee.

In addition, a National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANAQAES) was created by the law of 23 April 2022. An implementing decree is awaiting adoption. Pending the establishment of the said Agency, a ministerial order dated 19 September 2019 sets out the conditions for the creation/opening of private higher education establishments, thereby ensuring proper regulation of the sector.

The CAR's higher education system manages only one public university (University of Bangui), which educates 12,688 students, and 29 private establishments (attached to the University of Bangui, which has a monopoly on awarding degrees) in which 4,253 students are enrolled.

A ministerial decree lays down the conditions for the development of programmes and the creation/opening of public and private higher education establishments. All programmes are subject to validation by the university council before an accreditation order is issued.

The higher education system has been aligned with the principles of the competency-based approach since January 2000, on the one hand through the training of trainers (teachers) and on the other hand through training in fields where the programmes are designed to give students the opportunity to take charge of themselves once they have completed their studies. This is part of the implementation of the policy of employability of executives so that they are not dependent on the State.

The Central African Republic has aligned itself with the directives of the CEMAC (Central African Economic and Monetary Community), which set out international transfer credits (ITCs) and enable the Community's higher education system to be harmonised. As part of the implementation of the LMD system, the duration of training is set in terms of cumulative transferable credits and hourly volumes allocated in accordance with international standards.

The credit system was introduced in 2005 by the Conference of CEMAC Heads of State. The guidelines were revised in 2010. Despite a number of difficulties linked to the lack of technical means and financial resources, the country has gradually succeeded in joining the system.

The credit system is compulsory in all institutions and is designed to increase student mobility and, above all, to innovate programmes so that they are adapted to today's fast-changing environment. Academic credits are defined in terms of teaching hours and student workload. For example, for an allotted 30 hours, the teacher has 20 hours and the student has an additional 10 hours of personal work.



A Bachelor's degree is worth 180 credits and takes a minimum of 3 years to complete; a Master's degree is worth 120 credits and takes at least 2 years to complete; and a Doctorate, which is worth 180 credits, takes at least 3 years to complete.

## 5.5 TChad

TChad has a Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Vocational Training. Since 2006, there has been Law No. 16 on the orientation of the education system, part of which is devoted to higher education, scientific research and vocational training. TChad does not yet have a national quality assurance agency or a national qualifications framework.

The system is made up of 10 universities, 6 specialised university institutes and 4 higher teacher training colleges in the public sector, 8 private universities and 50 other private HEIs. As far as student statistics are concerned, it should be noted that there are 75,000 students in public universities and 25,000 in private higher education establishments.

The higher education system is still in the planning stage, and a draft regulation on the design of study programmes in universities and higher education institutes is currently under discussion.

There is a credit system which is in a partial implementation phase. It was included in decree no. 1630/PR/PM/MESRFSFP/09 of 4 December 2009, establishing the bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree system in higher education in TChad.

## 5.6 São Tomé and Príncipe

São Tomé and Príncipe is a country of Central Africa whose higher education system is ruled by the Directorate of Higher Education and Science attached to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. To do this, the State established a legal regime for higher education institutions through the Law no. 4/2017, of 24 March as the legal framework for higher education institutions. There is 1 public university with 2,002 students and 2 private universities with 653 students.

In official documents it is possible to see some of the Ministry's main concerns surrounding the provision of higher education in the country. Among these are the recognition of a lack of strategic planning of the sector, the need to guarantee the quality of the training provided as well as its international recognition, and the need to invest in human resources development both at the level of the institutions and supervising authorities.

Higher education is organized in 3 levels: Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD. The accreditation process for study programmes asks for a description of the learning objectives and competences to be developed, along with teaching and assessment methodologies, and the demonstration of coherence between objectives, content, teaching and assessment methodologies and competences to be developed is assessed. In this case, the competences to be developed are described in a legal document.

The credit system was introduced in the country through the Decree-Law no. 25/2020, of 11 December 2020 and has the aims of a. promoting quality assurance in higher education; b. international recognition of degrees and diplomas awarded by HEIs in São Tomé and Príncipe; c. student and teacher mobility; d. internationalisation of higher education; and e. consolidation and development of higher education institutions. The definition of the credit was based on student workload (including contact hours and independent work).

The credit system has 240-300 credits in undergraduate programme, 90-120 credits in the Master programme and a minimum of 180 credits in a Doctoral programme.

## 5.7 Gabon

The higher education system in Gabon is run by the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Innovation. The higher education system is governed by a regulatory framework defined by, among others, the following laws and decrees:

- Law N°21/84 of 29/12/1984 laying down the rules applicable to private education
- Law N°21/2000 of 10/01/2001 determining the fundamental principles of higher education in the Gabonese Republic, as amended;
- Decree N° 0340/PR/MENESTFPCJS of 28 February 2013 on the application of the Licence-Master-Doctorat system in universities and higher education establishments in the Gabonese Republic)
- Decree N° 0292/PR/MESRS of 04/06/2015 on the reorganisation of the Directorate General of Higher Education
- Decree No. 0043 Bis/PR/MESRSIT of 02/11/2023 setting out the organisational and operational procedures of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Scientific Committee.
- These texts make it possible
- define the fundamental principles, missions and academic organisation of education, training and research;
- set the terms and conditions for the exercise of the profession of teacher, trainer and researcher in the Gabonese Republic, as well as for other staff in the Education, Training and Research sectors;
- setting the general framework for curricula, training provision, school and academic calendars and rhythms, guidance and social support for learners;
- establishing the general framework for quality assurance guarantees in education, training and research, as well as public/private partnerships);

Other key players in higher education include the Comité Scientifique de l'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur, the Conférences des Recteurs et Directeurs Généraux des Grandes Ecoles et des Instituts and the Direction Générale de l'Enseignement Supérieur.

The higher education system in Gabon is made up of 5 public universities and 19 private universities, as well as 06 other public HEIs and 45 other private HEIs. The distribution of students in the universities is as follows: 65,000 in public universities and 15,000 in private universities. For the start of the 2024-2025 academic year, the public universities, under the coordination of the Ministry, have proposed a map of new training opportunities. As a result, 16,000 / 22,000 new baccalaureate holders have been directed to public higher education institutions.

The competency-based approach has not yet been implemented in public universities. In universities, the learning and application phase is being planned with the support of a Chinese fund managed by UNESCO through the CFITIII project. The Université Omar BONGO (UOB) in Libreville and the Université des Sciences et Techniques de MASUKU (USTM) in Franceville have been selected for this programme. Seminars were held to train teachers from the two universities in APC.

There are several standards for the length of programmes. These are in line with the CEMAC and CAMES community provisions and are defined by ministerial decree n°0340/PR/MENESTFPRSCJS of 28 February 2013 on the application of the Licence-Master-Doctorat system in universities and educational establishments in the Gabonese Republic. These standards include the existence of optional courses.

Gabon has an estimate of the maximum and minimum number of hours required to acquire degrees in universities and other higher education establishments. In particular, the DUT or BTS must be obtained in 1,200 hours, the Licence in 1,800 hours, the Master in 3,000 hours, and the Doctorate between 1,800 and 3,000 hours after the Master. In addition, there is an estimated number of contact hours expressed in course credits. One credit represents a total hourly volume of 10 to 15 course hours. This volume is fairly homogeneous within the same university. However, variations were observed between public universities and between public and private universities.

In terms of length of study, the DUT or BTS takes 2 years, the Licence 3 years, the Master 5 years and the Doctorate between 3 and 5 years. The duration is harmonised for certain scientific, literary and technical courses. On the other hand, the duration is different for medical courses.

It is not easy to change courses between institutions, as there is no system for transferring credits between higher education establishments. Students wishing to change their course of study and enter another university must submit their request to the host university's equivalence committee, which may or may not grant equivalence, taking into account the programmes taken and the course of study requested.

The country does not have a national credit system. It will be set up through the creation and operation of the national authority for quality assurance in higher education. It will focus on student mobility and accumulation/capitalisation. Gabon plans to develop a national credit system and set up the national quality assurance agency with the support of the HAQQA3 project. A draft decree on the scientific committee for quality assurance in higher education is in the process of being adopted.

Credits are managed autonomously by each public or private university. This management system does not allow credits to be capitalised or transferred from one institution to another.

Given the absence of a national credit system, there is no recognition of partial periods of study between universities/other higher education institutions in Gabon and those in other countries, either in public or private universities.

Some public universities have equivalence committees that examine requests from students changing university or course of study. These committees can grant full equivalence for entry to a Master's degree, or partial equivalence by requiring additional courses, or simply refuse to grant equivalence and allow the student to register for the desired level or course.

One of the main obstacles to the adoption of a national credit system is the lack of common standards for the application of the LMD and quality assurance.

A national credit system is not considered feasible at this stage. The first step is to strengthen the credit system in public and private higher education institutions.

In addition, it should be noted that validation of prior learning is provided for by law, but is not regulated.

It should also be noted that this credit system is comparable with those of the CEMAC and CAMES countries, with which Gabon shares certain good practices.

## **Chapter 6: Northern Africa Regional report**

The countries that make up the northern part of Africa are Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania.<sup>80</sup> The most significant factor that distinguishes the Northern African region is that all the countries are part of the Arab World and share the same language (Arabic) and religion (Islam), and history (a colonial legacy). Although the Western Part (the Maghreb- Tunisia Algeria and Morocco) are francophone countries, Arabic is the mother tongue and official language. These countries have a similar higher education system. They are all members of the Arab League and the Association of Arab Universities (AARU). One of the main objectives of the AARU is to create mutual recognition and trust between its members, rather than creating a single credit transfer system between them.

There is no single credit system for all these countries. Although all countries in the region have a credit system, still each country is in a different state of implementation: Egypt partial implementation, Morocco initial stage while the rest are at full implementation stage. There are no significant differences between the higher education systems in all the region despite the differences in the origins of higher education between the francophone countries and the rest. The francophone countries adhere to the LMD system of education.

It should be noted that the countries are at different levels of implementing a National Qualification Framework (NQF). Libya, Mauritania and Algeria do not have a qualifications framework, while Egypt's NQF mandate has only been in effect since 2022, Morocco in 2019 and Tunisia has a skills qualifications framework since 2009. Most of the HEIs in the region are part of a system where the ministries control the education system. The duration of study varies across the region.

The numbers of the HE students' population vary significantly from one country to the other with Egypt showing the largest student population of 3,521,000 students in public universities and Mauritania with the lowest number of students 35,946. All countries of the Northern region show large number of private universities with smaller enrolment than the public system.

All countries in the region (even Egypt and Morocco) consider the credit system as means to facilitate transfer (credit) and mobility between the Universities and academic programmes. In Libya it is viewed also as a tool to determine graduation requirements, help in governance, academic planning and student advising and orientation. Tunisia sees this more as a facilitator of inter- and intra-mobility for students, and qualifications equivalences – Algeria for transfer and mobility, Egypt, Mauritania transfer and mobility – Morocco credit transfer and mobility. Most of the respondents view their systems to be compatible with other countries in the region, continent and globally, although each country defines this compatibility differently.

### **6.1 Egypt**

The higher education system in Egypt is made up of public universities, private universities and other higher education institutes. This higher education system is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Recently, the government started instituting non-governmental universities, non-profit universities (Ahleyah). All these are also regulated by the Supreme Council of Universities and the Council for Private and Non-Profit

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<sup>80</sup> Due to the political conditions, Sudan was not included in the study (rather South Sudan has been). Although Mauritania is considered in some references as Western Africa, yet it has been considered as part of North Africa in the study)

Universities. The Ministry regulates this with the National Law for Higher Education Law No.49 from 1972. Several amendments have been introduced over the years.

Egypt has a total of 93 Universities of which 27 (29%) are public and 66 (71%) are private and (non-profit Ahleya) universities. There are 28 other public HEIs and 218 other private HEIs. In terms of enrolment, there is a total of 3,770,000 students in university education of which 3,521,000 (93.4%) are in public universities and 249,000 (6.6%) in private universities. Of these, 3,049,000 (80.9%) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes of study while 721,000 (19.1%) are undertaking graduate programmes.

It should be noted that although public universities amount only to 29% of institutions, they are home to more than 90% of the student body. The enrolment in the public sector (both Universities and other HEIs) is higher than in the private sector. On average there are 130,000 students enrolled in each public university with this number increasing in Cairo and Ain Shams universities to reach more than double.

The entire education system in Egypt is regulated by the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) which sets the rules for the scientific sectors for all types of HEIs. It is supported in its work by the Sectors and the councils for private and non-profit universities. The SCU defines the minimum and maximum duration of the graduation and the hours that are required to be fulfilled. It also sets the tentative rules for transfer between universities and exchange students.

Quality assurance is administered by the National Authority for Quality assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE). The legislation for the National Qualifications Framework of Egypt was passed in October 2022<sup>81</sup>. There is no evidence of the impact it has on the whole education system so far. The NQF is administered by NAQAAE. In addition, competency-based education is largely the norm as it is part of National Academic Reference Standards for programme accreditation that are also set by NAQAAE.

It should be noted that there are several policies and legislations that have been set in place to ensure flexibility in terms of tracks and electives both in public and private universities. Yet this flexibility is controlled by the defined limits for the minimum and maximum years (also credit hours) for each degree that are set by the SCU, and they differ by subject areas. Moreover, students can change paths between universities and the receiving institution evaluates the transfer of credit based on the student transcript and course syllabi.

There is a credit system that is implemented in Egypt. This has started with the private universities since 1996. Yet the large implementation of the credit system within the public universities has started only recently. This started *de facto* in 2011 but the legislation was enacted in 2021. Hence the level of implementation of the credit system in Egypt is considered in the partial implementation stage. There is no document to describe the national credit system.

Universities were supported in the process by capacity building workshops, but the system was already widely known. It should be noted that the application of the credit hour system in Egypt is optional.

The credit system is widely used for transfer and mobility. Each credit hour is equal to 25 contact hours of lecture and 50 hours of lab work. The credit system allows for student mobility from one programme to another between the different institutions in Egypt. It is also compatible with the Arab countries in the region, through ACTS within the continent and through ECTS globally. It allows for mutual recognition of the qualifications at the national

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/egypt\\_1\\_0.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/egypt_1_0.pdf)

level. Yet there is no framework of transforming prior learning or micro-credentials as credits for the purposes of progression and validation.

There is a unified credit system in all Universities in Egypt. On average yearly credits for undergraduate programmes range from (30-36 credit hours), and 24 credits for the Postgraduate programmes (Master's and PhD).

## 6.2 Libya

The higher education system in Libya is made up of public universities, private universities and other higher education institutions. This higher education system is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education that has objectives and regulations for Higher Education. The Ministry regulates this with the National Law for Higher Education Law No.18 from 2010, and the law No. 4 from 2020.

Due to the political conflict and divide since 2014, there are two quality assurance agencies: the National Center for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Educational and Training Institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education in the western region and an authority for quality assurance in the eastern region.

Libya has a total of 88 Universities of which 27 (30.7%) are public and 61 (69.3%) are private colleges and universities. There are 16 other public Higher Technical Education Institutions and no other private HEIs. In terms of enrolment, there is a total of 496,978 students in university education out of which 464,288 (93.5%) are in public universities and 32,690 (6.5%) in private universities. Of these, 25,262 (80.9%) are enrolled graduate programmes.

It should be noted that although public universities amount only to 30.7% of the institutions they are home to more than 93% of the student body. The enrolment in the public sector (both universities and other HEIs) is higher than in the private sector.

There is no National Qualifications Framework in Libya. The Libyan Association for Quality and Excellence in Education conducted a workshop about the NQF in 2023 with the intention of highlighting the importance of establishing an NQF.

There is a level of flexibility in the planning of programmes and the selection of courses. This gives student the opportunity to tailor their educational paths according to their personal interest and goals. This level of flexibility differs from one programme to the other where in some programmes there is a large number of electives while other programmes will offer a limited number of electives.

Currently there is no competency based (student centred) learning adopted in Libya, due to the political situation. This does not imply that it is not an important issue but rather this needs to be supported by a strong political will and good planning in addition to training and providing the necessary resources and curriculum development.

Duration of the study programmes is controlled by rules that control the total number of hours for each programme. This is subject to the regulations of each university and differs from one discipline to another. On average there is a minimum of 120 credit hours for graduation. Yet in cases of engineering or medicine this may require more hours and training. Students are allowed to transfer and change paths according to the regulations.

There is a fully implemented mandatory credit system in Libya that has been used for several decades. It is used to set and document students' progression in HEIs. It is also known as "academic units" or "credit hours". It is a well-established system in universities that is supported by regulations and policies.

The credit system is widely used to facilitate transfer and mobility. It is used to define the graduation requirements and progression (number of credit hours that a student must study to



acquire a qualification). In addition, it allows students to plan their academic paths and study plans. The credit system is determined according to the academic hour which is a time unit that is equivalent to the number of teaching hours per week or semester and it usually ranges between 45-60 minutes.

This system is compatible within the nation as it allows student mobility from one programme to the other between the different institutions in the region. It is also compatible in the continent by the existing educational frameworks and mutual recognition agreements, and through ECTS, which is also acknowledged globally. It also allows for mutual recognition of the qualifications at the national level.

There is one unified credit system in all universities in Libya which is used to define and set the ranges and duration of the programmes and the workload of the different programmes.

### 6.3 Tunisia

The higher education system in Tunisia is made up of public universities, private universities and HEIs. This higher education system is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The Ministry regulates this with the National Higher Education Law No.19 from 2008, and the articles that amend it.

Tunisia has a total of 96 Universities of which 13 (13.5%) are public and 84 (87.5%) are private institutions. There are 206 other public HEIs. In terms of enrolment, there is a total of 305,635 students in university education out of which 260,647 (85.2%) are in public universities and 44,988 (14.8 %) in private universities. Of these, 197,803 (64.7%) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes of study while 62,844 are undertaking graduate programmes.

It should be noted that although public universities amount only to 13.5 % of the institutions, they are home to more than 85% of the student body. The enrolment in the public sector is higher than in the private sector.

The Tunisian agency for assessment and accreditation in higher education and scientific research is the sole agency responsible for quality standards and accreditation in higher education and scientific research. Tunisia developed a National Skills Framework in 2009 with the decree No. 2139 issued on 8 July 2009 that regulated the work of the sectorial committees of higher education.

There are policies and instruments for curriculum design that are available according to each sector council for higher education. In addition, there is a level of flexibility in the design of programmes in alignment with policies and strategies of the HEI. In addition, students can change their paths from one discipline, or university to another. Student-centred learning that is based on competency-based education has become integral part of the accreditation process which stipulates addressing students' needs in the design of the programmes and engaging students in the governance.

There are articles in the HE law that regulate the minimum and maximum number of years and graduation requirements particularly what is stated in the decree 3123 for year 2008 that regulated the framework for LMD. The number of hours varies in the different disciplines (engineering – medicine – pharmacy – architecture). In addition, the conditions for attaining the bachelor's degree in business administration, awarded by the Higher Institute for Business is controlled by the Governmental Decree 162 for Year 2009 (18 February 2009). The duration for completion of degrees is as follows:

- 3 years for bachelor's degree (L)
- 2 years for master's degree (M)
- 3 years for PhD (D)

There is a mandatory unified credit system that is fully implemented in Tunisia. This was implemented with the issuing decree 3123 from 2008 that regulated the framework for the LMD system. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research supported the HEIs for implementation by issuing laws, regulations and publications. The Ministry prepared a manual for the unified credit hour regulations for the development of the national qualifications in the different disciplines and modules and courses.

The credit system is widely used for inter- and intra-mobility of students and facilitating equivalence of certificates and recognition of qualifications nationwide. Furthermore, the credit system is used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classification of qualifications. The duration of the study is 3 years consisting of 180 credits divided on 6 semesters for 3 years. Each credit unit is equivalent to 10-15 hours of actual attendance and between 25-30 hours of student workload. The duration of the study for the masters' level is 2 years, whereas the PhD is 3 years. It allows for student mobility from one programme to the other between the different institutions in Tunisia.

The credit system is compatible within the region in Algeria and Morocco and most North African countries since the credit system in Tunisia is close to many of the other systems worldwide and close to the ECTS in several of the European countries.

## 6.4 Algeria

The higher education system in Algeria is made up of public and private universities. The higher education system is regulated by the Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research. The Ministry regulates this with the National Law for Higher Education Law No.08-06 on February 23 2008.

Algeria has a total of 128 Universities of which 111 (86.7%) are public and 17 (13.3%) are private universities. In terms of enrolment, there are a total of 1,604,000 students in university education out of which 1,600,000 (99.75%) are in public universities and 4,000 (0.25%) in private universities. Of these, 1,200,000 (75%) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes of study while 400,000 (25%) are undertaking graduate programmes.

It should be noted the number of universities and number of students in public universities is by far higher than in the private sector. There are no records of other HEIs in Algeria whether in the public or the private sectors.

Algeria started reforming its higher education system and implementing the Bologna Process in 2006, which led to the adoption of a new Law on Higher Education in 2008. This reform was gradually implemented with the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the three-cycle system of study. The higher education system in Algeria is based on the LMD model. There is no real evidence that there is a student-centred competency-based system, yet there are pedagogical training programmes for teachers.

There are minimum and maximum durations for university degrees, with an average of 420-260 hours of teaching per semester. In terms of credit hours in the average 120 credits (each credit is equivalent to 20 hours) and can be up to 180 credits in the undergraduate programmes and 120 credits for the master's degree.

Quality assurance is administered by Quality Assurance in Higher Education Implementation Commission (CIAQES). There is no national qualifications framework in Algeria yet.

There is a mandatory unified credit system that is in full implementation in Algeria in alignment with the LMD system since 2004.

The credit system is widely used for transfer mobility and credit accumulation. Credit hours are calculated both in contact hours and student workload. The duration for completion of degrees is as follows:

- Undergraduate programme: 180 credits
- Master programme: 120 credits
- PhD: none

The credit system in Algeria is compatible with France. There is no framework for transferring prior learning or micro-credentials.

## 6.5 Morocco

The higher education system in Morocco is made up of public universities, private universities and other HEIs. This higher education system is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Innovation. The Ministry regulates this with the National Law for Higher Education Law No.01-00 for the organization of higher education and the implementing decrees and orders.

The two other regulatory bodies that regulate Higher education in Morocco are the National Agency for the evaluation and quality assurance of higher education and scientific research and innovation (ANEAQ) and the Conference of University Presidents (CPU).

Morocco has 12 public universities and 2 with a special character, with a total of 162 faculties schools and institutions. There are 10 private universities of which 5 universities are in partnership with the state. There are 78 other public higher education training establishments for senior executives, of which 33 are not related to universities. In addition, there are 140 private HEIs.

There is a total of 1,218,000 students enrolled in HEIs. Out of these 1,151,183 (94.5%) students are enrolled in public universities, while 66,817 (5.5%) students are in private universities. There is an average of 123,000 students /year in undergraduate programmes, and 18,000 students /year in postgraduate programmes.

There is a National Qualifications Framework that was finalized via a project for the development of the NQF with the support of ETF (with 8 levels and 6 descriptors). An independent establishment of an independent body for the CNC provided for by the law of education and training of 2019.

The procedure for the design of the curricula for the different programmes follows the following procedure:

- Designed by the teaching staff within the departments in the institution
- Approved and validated by the school/ faculty council
- Approved and validated by the university council
- Sent to the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation which in turn relates it to ANEAQ for assessment.
- The final results of the evaluation are submitted to the National Commission for the coordination of Higher Education (CNCES) of the Ministry that will announce the accreditation of the programmes.

There is a level of flexibility provided in the design of programmes which provide common core courses on the level of the first four semesters and allow different options and electives in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters.

There is no definite adoption of a competency-based education nationwide in Morocco but there are elements that are taken into account by different national pedagogical standards, which are provided for by the NQF (CNC) at the level of the different descriptors.

The higher education law has specified the maximum and minimum years and duration of study for each academic degree. The CNPN has defined these hours as follows: Bachelor 1710 hours – Master 1200 hours – engineering diploma 6 semesters 2304 hours. In 2023/2024 the credits for the PhD have been defined to correspond to the Bologna Process (30 credits per semester, 60 credits per year and 180 credits for the Bachelor and the Doctorate)

There is a credit system in its initial stage of implementation. This has just started recently with the implementation of the LMD system in 2023/2024 for the Bachelor (L) and PhD (D) and will be implemented in 2024/2025 for the Master degree.

The system is mandatory from this year onwards for the Bachelor and the Doctorate level. The credit system is widely used for transfer and mobility and credit accumulation. Credit hours are calculated both in contact hours and student workload. The duration for completion of degrees is as follows:

- Undergraduate programme 180 credits
- Master programme 240 credits
- PhD 180 credits

On the regional level the system is compatible with the Algerian and Tunisian, with the Senegalese on the continental level and globally with European Higher Education Area.

## 6.6 Mauritania

The higher education system in Mauritania is regulated by the Ministry of Higher Education, with the National Law for Higher Education Law 2016-028 (29 July 2016) modifying some provisions in the law 2010-43 (21 July 2010) on higher education and scientific research, and the Decree 2916-44 relating to the general regime of study.

Quality Assurance is regulated by the Mauritanian Authority for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AMAGES). There is no National Qualifications Framework.

There are 2 public universities, 3 private universities, 9 public HEIs and 4 private HEIs. These HEIs serve a total number 3,946 students in the public sector and 900 students in the private sector.

Currently the higher education sector is in the process of planning to adopt the student-based competency based approach.

There is a level of flexibility in the programmes of study of the public and private universities. Duration of study of programmes is regulated by the Decree 2016-44 relating to the general regime of studies implementing the LMD system. The latter sets the number of years as 3 years for License (Bachelor) – 5 years for Masters and 7 years for Doctorate. In theory students can change paths between universities but there are no standard practices for that.

There is a credit system in Mauritania that has been fully implemented since 2008. Universities were supported by training sessions for implementation. This system is mandatory for all universities in the country. It is used to facilitate mobility, transfer and accumulation of credits.

There is a unified credit system in all Universities in Mauritania which is measured both in terms of contact hours and student workload hours. This credit system is compatible with credit systems in the region, continent and globally. Thus, it allows for mutual recognition of

qualifications in the nation, although there is no framework for the transforming prior learning or micro credentials<sup>82</sup>.

On the average undergraduate programmes have 180 credits and a master programmes have 120 credits.

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<sup>82</sup> [https://amages.mr/sites/default/files/Deret%202016-044%fixant%20le%20cadre%20g%C3%A9ral%20du%20r%C3%A9gime%20des%C3%A9tudes%20LMD%20\(reduit\).pdf](https://amages.mr/sites/default/files/Deret%202016-044%fixant%20le%20cadre%20g%C3%A9ral%20du%20r%C3%A9gime%20des%C3%A9tudes%20LMD%20(reduit).pdf)

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions and some recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The comparative analysis of academic credit systems in Africa, based on the state of the art report, reveals a great diversity of approaches, levels of institutional development, and regulatory frameworks. The experiences of Southern, Western, Eastern, Central, and Northern Africa show both significant progress and persistent challenges in terms of harmonization, technical implementation, and academic mobility.

In Southern Africa, the harmonization process is relatively advanced. The SADC Qualifications Framework (SADC QF) and its associated tool, the SADC Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (SADC CATS), define a system based on learning outcomes and workload. A common standard of 1 credit = 10 hours is adopted, with 120 credits per academic year. Countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, and Angola have developed their own national systems aligned with this framework. However, conceptual differences still exist (as in Mozambique, where 1 credit equals 25–30 hours), and SADC CATS remains in a pilot phase. The progress is significant in terms of regional comparability and political support, although it requires broader efforts in training and participation by universities.

In Western Africa, the LMD model prevails in francophone countries (180 credits for undergraduate, 120 for master's), thanks to the actions of CAMES and REESAO. The credit value ranges between 20 and 25 hours. Anglophone countries in the region (such as Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia) use models inherited from the British system, with less standardization. There is no unified regional framework, except for sectoral efforts such as the single system promoted by WAHO for health training. The main challenge is regulatory fragmentation and lack of institutional convergence.

Eastern Africa shows a coexistence of models, with some member countries of the East African Community (EAC) adopting common policies through the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). Ethiopia stands out for its structured, learning-outcome-oriented system, while countries like Somalia or South Sudan lack formal frameworks. Linguistic and colonial differences are reflected in curricular structures. Although there are mobility and credit accumulation policies, effective implementation varies considerably, and there is no regionally accepted credit equivalence.

In Central Africa, the six CEMAC member countries have adopted the LMD system as a foundation and have initiated the development of the CCTAS (Course Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), still without a defined implementation date. Universities in the region operate under a hybrid logic between national regulations and regional principles. CCTAS seeks to standardize credit recognition in the subregion, although it faces structural, technical, and budgetary limitations. The coexistence of francophone, hispanophone, and anglophone subsystems represents an additional challenge for convergence.

In Northern Africa, all countries have academic credit systems, although at different levels of implementation. Egypt and Morocco are in initial or partial phases, while Tunisia and Algeria present more consolidated models, aligned with the European ECTS system. The countries share a common language (Arabic) and a diverse colonial history (French and British), which explains certain differences in the adoption of regulatory frameworks. Regional mobility and compatibility are recognized as key goals, although a more articulated approach between countries is still lacking. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria adopt very similar curricular structures and are actively involved in international academic networks.

As a whole, the African landscape reflects a gradual transition toward the harmonization of credit systems, with notable progress points but also structural gaps in implementation, interoperability, and formal recognition. Initiatives such as ACTS, ACQF, and PAQAF emerge as key tools for



consolidating a continental architecture of mobility, quality assurance, and academic portability. The ongoing challenge is how to align national realities with a shared, equitable, and technically robust continental vision.

The comparative analysis reveals that while Southern Africa and parts of North Africa show a higher degree of technical and political consolidation, other regions face major challenges related to harmonization, integration, and institutional validation. The diversity of systems reflects both opportunities for mutual learning and the urgent need to establish minimum consensuses on the definition of credit, student workload, learning portability, and system interoperability.

This regional analysis allows us to observe not only specific advances and limitations, but also how national frameworks interact with regional and continental policies. The need for technical convergence, political harmonization, and institutional consolidation emerges as a cross-cutting theme in each geographic bloc.

The regional studies allow for the identification of several dimensions that crosscut credit systems across the continent:

- Regulatory frameworks: while some regions have consolidated legal systems, others operate with fragmented or absent norms.
- Credit value: varies between 10, 15, 20, 25, or 30 hours depending on the region, without technical consensus in many areas.
- Learning outcomes: are not always the central axis of curriculum design, which limits credit flexibility.
- Formal recognition: the validation of prior learning and micro-credentials is absent in most national frameworks.

The harmonization of academic credit systems in Africa is a strategic challenge and a fundamental opportunity to advance continental integration in higher education. The report shows heterogeneous progress in the adoption and implementation of national systems of cumulative and transferable credits, with marked differences between regions, influenced by colonial legacies, institutional capacities, and differing legal frameworks.

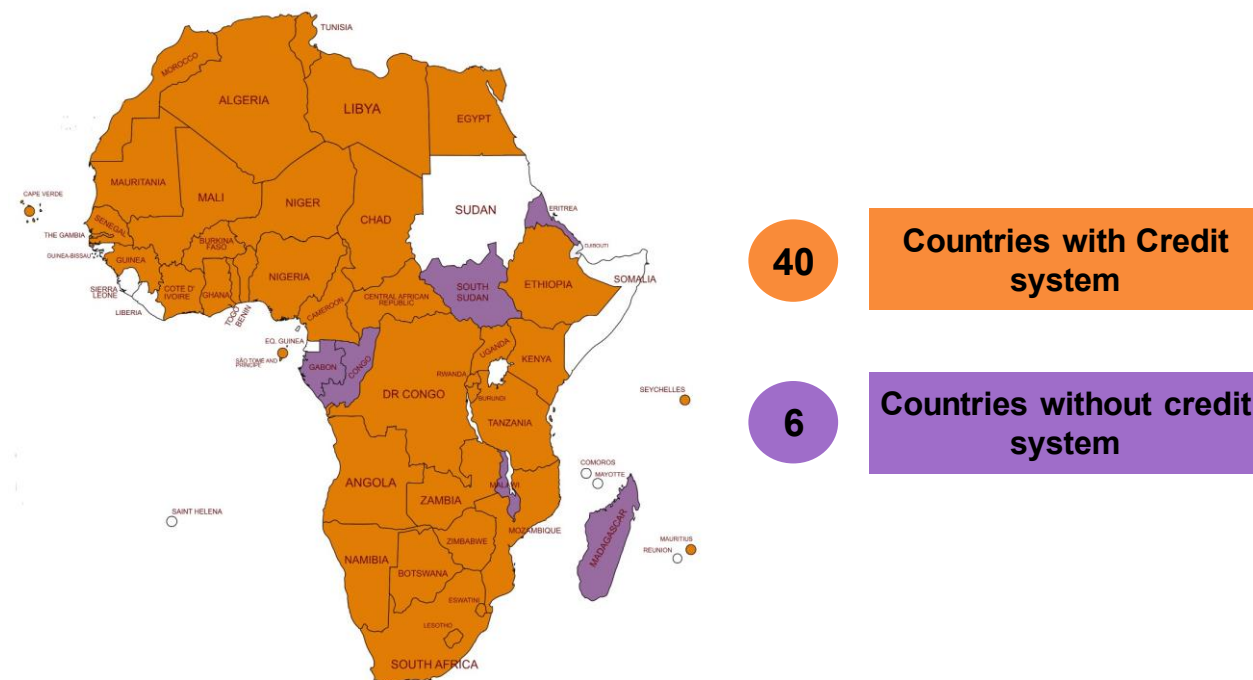
One of the central findings is the existence of multiple national credit systems, some in advanced stages of implementation and others still in pilot phases. This disparity hinders student mobility, learning recognition, and transparency in program accreditation. In this context, ACTS represents a strategic tool for learning comparability.

Despite its technical progress, ACTS requires greater institutional visibility and pilot implementation to validate its functionality. The report highlights the importance of frameworks such as SADC-CATS and the need to establish continental consensus on credit value, workload, recognition of prior learning, and articulation with frameworks like ACQF and PAQAF.

### **Analytical Insights on Credit Systems in Africa**

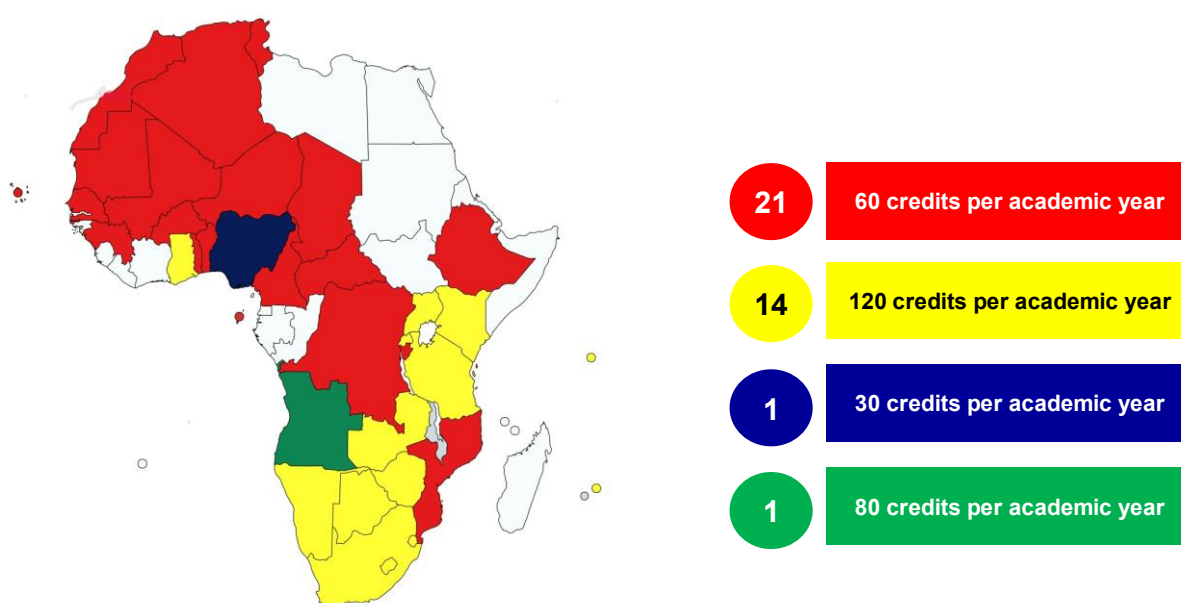
As part of the state of the art study on academic credit systems in Africa, a series of infographics has been developed to visualise and communicate key findings in a comparative format. These visuals are not only a synthesis of quantitative data but also serve as analytical tools to explore the structural diversity of national credit systems across the continent. Their inclusion in this report aims to support an informed, evidence-based dialogue on the opportunities and challenges involved in harmonising academic recognition mechanisms.

#### **Graphic 1: Countries with and without Credit system in Africa**



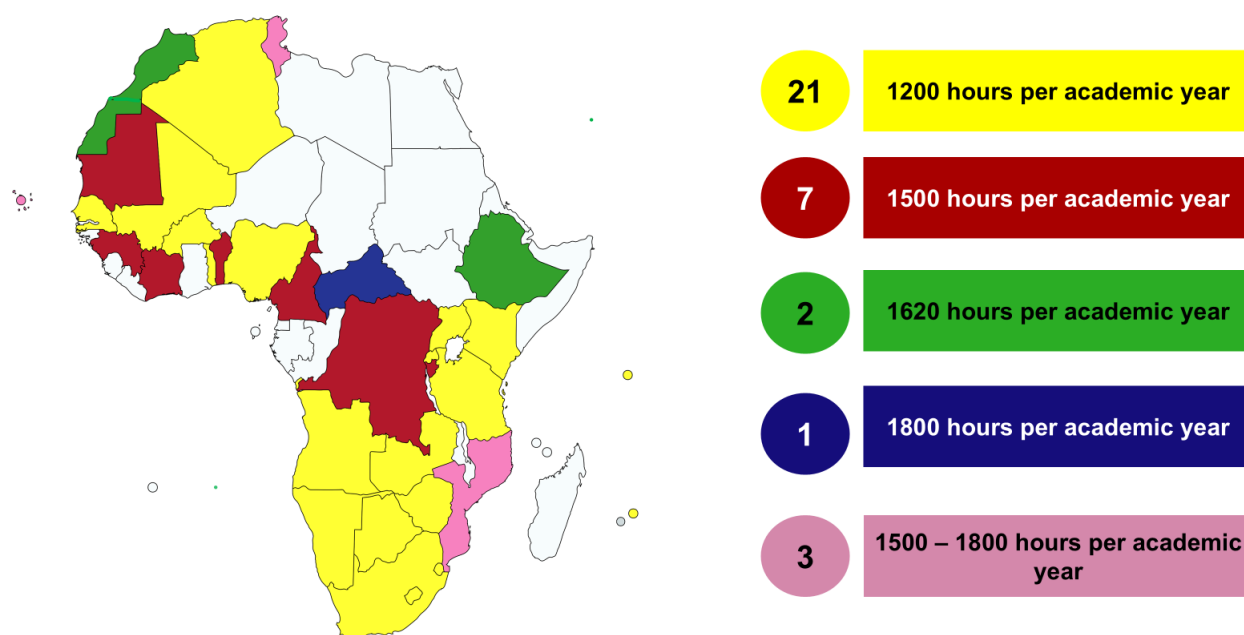
The first graphic offers an overarching view of the presence or absence of credit systems in the 47 countries covered by the study. It reveals that 40 countries have a national credit system that is either implemented, in development, or partially regulated. In contrast, 6 countries do not yet have a defined credit system in place. This disparity reflects the evolving nature of higher education governance in Africa and the varying levels of institutional maturity and regulatory development. The widespread presence of credit systems, however, suggests a fertile ground for continental convergence and capacity-building.

**Graphic 2: Number of credits allocated per academic year in each country in Africa**



The second graphic focus on a critical dimension of credit systems: the number of credits allocated per academic year. Here, the heterogeneity is evident. While some countries align with the 60 credits/year model, often inspired by the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), others follow a 120 credits/year structure, commonly found in Anglophone systems. There are also cases of alternative scales (e.g., 30 or 80 credits/year) and some countries that do not clearly specify an annual credit volume. In total, 37 countries provided concrete information on credit volume, while 3 did not. This variation in scale is not merely technical—it has implications for mobility, curriculum design, and the recognition of learning across borders.

**Graphic 3: Number of student workload in hours per academic year in each country in Africa**



Complementing the analysis of credits, the study also gathered data on the total notional workload per academic year, measured in hours. This component is essential to understand the pedagogical and operational logic underpinning national credit systems. According to the data, 21 countries estimate an academic year at 1,200 hours, which appears to be the most commonly used benchmark across the continent. However, other countries report figures such as 1,500, 1,620, or 1,800 hours, depending on national definitions of contact hours, self-directed learning, and practical work. The diversity in workload estimation reinforces the importance of adopting a flexible, yet comparable, credit framework that is sensitive to institutional contexts.

Together, these visualisations do more than illustrate diversity—they provide an empirical foundation for ACTS development, pointing to areas where technical alignment is possible, and where contextual differences must be respected. The data show that African countries are not starting from zero: most already operate with defined credit systems and workload models, even if these vary significantly. The next step is to build bridges among them, using a workload-based, learning outcome-oriented credit framework that enables mobility without imposing uniformity.

A table summarising the information on the status of credits, their values per unit and per academic year can be found in Annex 1.

## Recommendations

The harmonisation of academic credit systems in Africa is a cornerstone of the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) and a key instrument for advancing regional integration in higher education. As such, the definitions that underpin the ACTS framework must be both technically sound and politically viable. Based on the extensive data gathered from 47 African countries, supported by 16 national visits and 3 regional hybrid events, **it is proposed that ACTS consolidate its annual structure around 60 academic credits per year, with each credit corresponding to between 20 and 25 hours of total student workload, amounting to an annual volume of 1,200 to 1,500 hours.** This proposal responds to the reality of existing national systems, enhances comparability, and supports feasible implementation across the continent.

The mapping study demonstrates a remarkable level of convergence around the 60-credit model, which appears in the national credit systems of the majority of African countries with formally defined structures. This includes countries from both Anglophone and Francophone traditions, indicating its acceptance across linguistic, legal and pedagogical lines. In many cases, the adoption of 60 credits per year has been informed by or aligned with international frameworks such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). By adopting this standard, ACTS benefits from systemic compatibility, ensuring that institutions across Africa can engage with the framework without the need for major structural changes to their existing academic calendars or programme designs. Moreover, the 60-credit model facilitates the design of semesters with 30 credits and modules of 5 or 10 credits, which are already widespread across African institutions.

While the original ACTS proposal set the student workload for an academic year between 1,350 and 1,850 hours, field data show that such a range is not representative of the majority of national practices. In fact, 21 out of 47 countries use 1,200 hours as the official reference for a full academic year, and many others define national standards within a 1,200 to 1,500-hour range. Very few countries exceed 1,620 hours, and even fewer implement 1,800 hours in practice. Setting the workload range at 1,200 to 1,500 hours provides a balanced and inclusive reference that accommodates the majority while also reducing institutional pressure. It reflects a workload that is ambitious but attainable, supporting quality assurance while allowing for diverse modes of delivery (in-person, blended, online) and pedagogical approaches. This range also facilitates the adoption of ACTS in countries with shorter academic calendars, and ensures coherence between the workload, the number of contact hours, and the capacity of both faculty and students.

The true value of a credit lies in its ability to represent the time and effort required by a student to achieve specific learning outcomes. When the hours attributed to each credit are inflated or inconsistent with educational practices, credits lose their usefulness as reliable tools for curriculum design, mobility, and recognition. By defining ACTS credits as representing 20 to 25 hours, the system becomes more honest and transparent, allowing credits to reflect not just formal class time, but also self-directed learning, group work, assignments, and other educational activities. This makes the ACTS credit a more pedagogically meaningful and manageable unit, adaptable to various modes of delivery and institutional contexts.

African higher education systems are increasingly engaging with curriculum reform processes that emphasise learning outcomes, flexibility, and responsiveness to societal needs. Adopting a structure that links 60 credits to 1,200–1,500 hours fosters a shift toward modular and stackable qualifications, which are essential for lifelong learning, micro-credentialing, and cross-border joint programmes. Programmes designed with this model can more easily incorporate electives, transversal skills, and work-based learning without overburdening the academic calendar. Moreover, this structure facilitates recognition of prior learning and the integration of informal or non-formal learning experiences into accredited qualifications, contributing to greater equity and access in African higher education.

Aligning ACTS with a 60-credit/year and 1,200–1,500 hour workload model creates greater interoperability with global systems, most notably ECTS, which uses a similar credit volume but a slightly higher workload estimate (1,500–1,800 hours). While ACTS remains context-specific and tailored to African realities, interoperability with ECTS and other frameworks is essential for enabling student mobility, co-badging of qualifications, and the development of joint degrees. A well-calibrated ACTS model makes it easier to establish conversion tools and equivalence grids, reducing the transaction costs associated with mobility and facilitating trust between African and international institutions.

Throughout the ACTS process, including during national visits, workshops, and expert consultations, there has been a clear and recurring demand for a more realistic and harmonised approach to workload calculation. Many countries expressed concern about the feasibility of implementing ACTS if it retained a workload of up to 1,800 hours, particularly in public universities with resource constraints. By adopting the 1,200–1,500 hour range, ACTS demonstrates responsiveness to the lived realities of higher education in Africa, while still maintaining the rigour and ambition necessary for regional integration. This alignment between data, practice, and policy dialogue will also help build political consensus for the adoption of ACTS at national and institutional levels.

Adopting a model that defines 60 credits per academic year and 1,200 to 1,500 hours of student workload represents a strategic convergence between empirical evidence, stakeholder perspectives, and international alignment. It ensures that ACTS is not only technically robust, but also feasible, inclusive, and future-oriented. This recalibration allows ACTS to become a trusted instrument for academic recognition and mobility in Africa, while positioning the continent as a serious and autonomous actor in global higher education spaces.

## ANNEX I: Description of Credit System in 47 countries

REGION	COUNTRY	DOCUMENT ESTABLISHING CREDITS	YEAR	CREDIT VALUE& IMPLEMENTATION	Nr OF CREDITS PER YEAR & Total duration of Programs	Value of one academic year
SOUTH AFRICAN REGION	ANGOLA	General Curriculum Standards for Undergraduate Courses (Decree no. 193/18, of 10 August 2018) & General Curriculum Standards for Postgraduate Courses (Decree. No. 450/22, of 30 September 2022)	2018 & 2022	1 credit = 15 hours Initial stage	80 credits per year Total Duration Bachelor – 320 or 480 Master's – 160 PhD – 240	1200
SOUTH AFRICAN REGION	BOTSWANA	National Credit and Qualifications Frameworks	2016	1 credit = 10 hours Partial Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 a 480 Master's – 240 PhD – 360	1200
SOUTH AFRICAN REGION	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	Normative Framework for the Contextualized LMD System (Ministerial Order N° 093/MINESU/CAB, MIN/MNB/RRM/2023 of 10/02/2023)	2023	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500
SOUTH AFRICAN REGION	ESWATINI	Eswatini Qualification Framework & CATS Guidelines	2020	1 credit = 10 hours	120 credits per year Total Duration Bachelor – 360 Master's – 180 PhD – 360	1200
SOUTH AFRICAN REGION	LESOTHO	Lesotho Qualification Framework	2019	1 credit = 10 hours Initial stage	120 credits per year Total Duration Bachelor – 360 Master's – 240 PhD – 360	1200



<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>MADAGASCAR</b>	Despite having a National Qualifications Framework, the National Credit System is still being planned	<b>In planning</b>	1 credit = 20 to 30 hours, corresponding to 7-10 contact hours	----- <b>Total Duration</b> <b>Bachelor – 3 to 4 years</b> <b>Master's – Bacc +3 years</b> <b>PhD – Bacc + 5 years</b>	
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>MALAWI</b>	Malawi Qualifications Framework in process to include credit system. There has been a National Higher Education Qualifications Framework since 2019	<b>In planning</b>			
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>MAURITIUS</b>	It has had a National Qualifications Framework since 2021, but Does not have an established credit system - HEC uses reference frameworks such as ECTS and those of some countries	<b>In planning</b>	1 credit = 10 hours	120 credits per year Total Duration Bachelor – 360 Master – 120 PhD – 360	1200
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>MOZAMBIQUE</b>	Sistema Nacional de Acumulação e Transferência de Créditos – SNATCA (Decree no. 32/2010, of 30 August, revised by Decree no. 72/2023)	<b>2010</b>	1 credit = 25 to 30 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 to 240 Master's – 75 to 120 PhD – 180	1500 - 1800
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>NAMIBIA</b>	National Qualifications Framework&National Credit System	<b>1996</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 Master – 240 PhD – 360	1200
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>SEYCHELLES</b>	National Credit Accumulation and Transfer System National Qualifications Framework (Seychelles Qualifications Act, since 2008)	<b>1998</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – Master – PhD –	1200

<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	National Qualifications Framework Higher Education Qualifications Subframework National CATS	<b>2008</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation And transcends HE	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 to 480 Master – 180 PhD – 360	1200
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>ZAMBIA</b>	National Qualifications Framework Credit Accumulation and Transfer Policy	<b>2023</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 480 to 840 Master's – 180 to 240 PhD – 360	1200
<b>SOUTH AFRICAN REGION</b>	<b>ZIMBABWE</b>	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Policy National Qualifications Framework (since 2018)	<b>2017</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 480 Master – 360 PhD –	1200
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>KENYA</b>	Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) since 2014, developed a Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS) Every institution has its own institutionalized credit system	<b>2021</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 480 to 700 Master – 240 PhD – 360	1200
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>RWANDA</b>	Rwandan National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education The core of the system is a Credit Accumulation and Modular Scheme (CAMS)	<b>2007</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 to 480 Master – 180 PhD – 360	1200
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>UGANDA</b>	Uganda Higher Education Qualifications Framework (UHEQF)	<b>2016</b>	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 Master – 240 PhD – 540	1200

<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>ETHIOPIA</b>	Ethiopian National Qualification Framework (ENQF)	<b>2006</b>	1 credit = 27 hours Partial Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 240 to 360 Master – 120 PhD – 360	1620
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>TANZANIA</b>	University Qualifications Framework (UQF) UQF Credit System	2012	1 credit = 10 hours Full Implementation	120 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 360 Master – 180 PhD – 540	1200
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>SOUTH SUDAN</b>	No Qualification Framework	<b>In planning</b>			
<b>EASTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>DJIBOUTI</b>	No Qualification Framework	Djibouti does not have a credit system that is recognized and being implemented. The university is running its own system			
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>BENIN</b>	National Qualifications Framework (since 2023) National Credit System (compatible to those of the REESAO countries)	<b>2012</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500

<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>BURKINA FASO</b>	National Qualification Framework (since 2019) The LMD system adopted in 2007 in Burkina Faso is a credit-based system Law 013-2007/AN of 30 July 2007 on the orientation of education in Burkina Faso	<b>2007</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>CÔTE D'IVOIRE</b>	Since 2020, the higher education system is included into the National Qualifications Framework. The LMD system is implemented in Cote d'Ivoire in 2011 and based on a credit system which is defined and implemented according to REESAO standards. Full implementation through Law No. 2023-429 of May 22, 2023	<b>2023</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 to 300 Master's – 120 PhD – 180 to 300	1500
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>CABO VERDE</b>	Decree-Law No. 22/2012 of 7 August 2012 established a credit system		1 credit = 25 - 30 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 - 240 Master's – 90 - 120 PhD – 180	1500 - 1800
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>GHANA</b>	National Qualifications Framework since 2015 Not unified credit system. Universities have different credit systems and student transfer is not based on credit accumulation and transfer	<b>In planning</b>	1 credit = 10 hours	120 credits per year	
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>THE GAMBIA</b>	Gambia National Qualifications Framework (GNQF) since 2023 A credit system was established at the University of the Gambia (UTG) in 1999 at the HEI level in 2006	<b>2006</b>	1 credit = 45 hours (15 hours of guided learning and 30 hours of unguided learning) Full Implementation	Varies Total duration Bachelor – 120 Master's – 60 PhD – 120	

<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>GUINEA</b>	No National Qualifications Framework Adoption of the LMD system in 2007 National Credit system	<b>2007</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 240 to 300 Master's – 120 PhD – 240	1500
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>MALI</b>	Law n°99-046 of 28 December 1999, as amended, containing the Education Orientation Law; - the national policy document on higher education and scientific research National Credit System LMD system established in 2008 (decree No.08-790/P-RM of December 31, 2008) No National Qualifications Framework	<b>2008</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>NIGER</b>	No National Credit system Decree No. 2010-402/PRN/MESS/RS of May 14, 2010 established the LMD system . Each institution applies it according to the guidelines defined by CAMES and REESAO under the control of the Ministry and the QA agency. Completely implemented in all higher education institutions National framework of diploma qualifications: decree n°1984/107/PCMS/MES/R of 28 June 1984 Supplemented by the results of the work of the interministerial commissions, the CAMES reference frameworks and the UNESCO Convention.	<b>2010</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full implementation in all higher education institutions	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200

<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>NIGERIA</b>	National Skills and Qualification Framework (NSQF) since 2013 National Credit System	<b>1989</b>	1 credit = 40 hours Full Implementation	30 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 120 Master's – 30 PhD – 48	1200
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>SENEGAL</b>	National Qualification Framework for Higher Education since 2015 National unified and compulsory credit system is based on the LMD dating back to 2011 through Law No. 2011-05 of March 30, 2011 relating to the organization of the LMD system.	<b>2011</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200
<b>WESTERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>TOGO</b>	A National Credit System has been put in place since the adoption of the LMD system in 2008 through Decree No. 2008-066/PR of July 21, 2008	<b>2008</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>BURUNDI</b>	National Qualifications Framework National Credit system (Law No 1/22 of 30/12/2011)	<b>2012</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 to 360 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>CAMEROON</b>	Adoption of the LMD system in 2007 National Credit system	<b>2007</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 to 240 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>CONGO</b>	No National Qualification Framework No credit system	<b>In planning</b>			



<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC</b>	The credit system was set up in 2005 by the Conference of CEMAC Heads of State. The guidelines were revised in 2010	<b>2005 &amp; 2010</b>	1 credit = 30 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1800
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>TCHAD</b>	National Credit system established by Decree No. 1630/PR/PM/MESRFSFP/09 of 4 December 2009 No National Qualifications Framework	<b>2009</b>	1 credit = 15 hours Partial Implementation	60 credits per year	
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>GABON</b>	No National Credit system	Année d'introduction du LMD au Gabon, 2007 pour les différents systèmes de crédits	<b>Dans la planification La mise en place du système national de crédits est en cours</b>		
<b>CENTRAL AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE</b>	The credit system was introduced through the Decree-Law no. 25/2020, of 11 December 2020	<b>2020</b>	Initial stage of Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 240 to 300 Master's – 90 to 120 PhD – 180	
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>EGYPT</b>	A National Qualification Framework since 2022 There is no document to describe the national credit system.	<b>2021</b>	1 credit = 25 contact hours of lecture and 50 hours of lab work Partial Implementation	On average yearly credits for undergraduate programmes range from (30-36 credit hours), and 24 credits for the Postgraduate programmes (Master's and PhD)	

<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>LYBIA</b>	No National Qualification Framework A credit system based on contact hours		Full Implementation		
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>TUNISIA</b>	A National Qualification Framework since 2009 A National Credit system implemented with the issuing decree 3123 from 2008 that regulated the framework for the LMD system	<b>2008</b>	1 credit = 25 to 30 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500 - 1800
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>ALGERIA</b>	No National Qualification Framework National credit system in alignment with the LMD system	<b>2004</b>	1 credit = 20 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1200
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>MOROCCO</b>	A National Qualification Framework since 2019 There is a credit system in its initial stage of implementation. This has just started recently with the implementation of the LMD system in 2023/2024 for the Bachelor (L) and PhD (D) and will be implemented in 2024/2025 for the Master degree.	<b>2024</b>	1 credit = 27 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 240 PhD – 180	1620
<b>NORTHERN AFRICA REGION</b>	<b>MAURITANIA</b>	No National Qualification Framework National Credit system	<b>2008</b>	1 credit = 25 hours Full Implementation	60 credits per year Total duration Bachelor – 180 Master's – 120 PhD – 180	1500

## ANNEX II

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTING DATA

General description of Higher Education Systems

Name:

Institution:

1. Country:

2. Existence of a Ministry/Secretariat for Higher Education:

- a. Yes (please specify) .....
- b. No (please describe how higher education is regulated in the country) .....

3. Existence of a National Law for Higher Education (year and scope).

- a. Yes (please identify year and scope) .....
- b. No (please explain if it is planned in the future to have one and/or how higher education is regulated without a law - full autonomy of universities?) .....

4. Existence of other central actors/body/Agency for Higher Education responsible for setting standards, accreditation and compliance to the policy and standards (Accreditation Agency, Rectors' Councils, etc.) please identify: .....

5. Number of public universities/other HEIs and private universities/other HEIs in the system

- a. Public universities .....
- b. Private universities .....
- c. Other public HEIs .....
- d. Other private HEIs .....

6. Number of students in universities

- a. Total number of students in public universities .....
- b. Total number of students in private universities .....
- c. Number of undergraduates students in universities.....
- d. Number of postgraduates students in the universities.....

7. Existence of a National Qualification Framework (whether unified or disaggregated)

- a. Yes (since when, please give the link to the main document, if it is available)
- b. No

8. Existence of policy(ies)/ statutory instruments/laws by the highest authority in higher education on curricula design in universities/ institutes of higher education (protocols/regulations/instructions on how a curriculum should be designed)

9. Existence of degree of flexibility/optionality/elective/courses in curricula/programmes of study in public/private universities/other HEIs? (Existence of optional courses in the degree programme)

10. To what extent can the country's higher education system be considered to be aligned with the principles of a student-centred and competency-based paradigm? (are you implementing competency-based education? at what level? or is it still being planned)
11. Are there standards set by a higher education authority in your country on the duration of study programmes at higher education institutions (diploma, degrees etc.)?
12. Is there a range of maximum and minimum duration for a universities/other HEIs degree in hours IN TOTAL?
13. Is there a minimum graduation load (credits/hours) set for one to be judged to have completed a course of study/academic programme? This will vary greatly from one discipline to the other
14. Is there a minimum duration in terms of years expected for a particular programme of study? If so, does this range apply to all degree courses or is it according to the subject areas? (for example, some year duration for Medicine different from Architecture)
15. Is it possible to change career path between universities/ institutes of higher education in the same country? How is this procedure carried out?
16. Do you have a credit system in place in the country?
  - a. Yes (please continue in Section A) Please provide a link to the document which describe the national credit system
  - b.No (please continue in Section B)

**A) Countries that already have a credit system at national level:**

17. At what level of development is the Credit system in your country? (initial stage, pilot stage, partial implementation, full implementation stage)
18. When was the credit system put in place?(please give the reference of the regulation which introduced the credit system at country level)
19. How were universities supported in the implementation process, and was capacity building conducted.
20. Is the credit system mandatory? (all HEIs must implement the credit system or It is optional to adopt it)
21. What is the purpose/objective of your credit system? (for transfer-mobility; for curricula innovation and accumulation)
22. How is academic credit defined/measured? (in contact hours? In student workload hours?)
23. Does your credit system allow for student mobility from one programme to another programme
  - a. within the same institution
  - b. in different institutions within the same country
24. To the best of your knowledge, is this credit system compatible with other countries
  - a. in your region?
  - b. on the continent?
  - c. with other credit systems at the global level?
 (Please specify in each case how? and why?)

25. Does your credit system allow for mutual recognition of qualifications at national level?
26. Do additional credit systems different to the national one exist in universities/HEIs?
27. Is credit system used in determining the volume of learning, graduation load and classifications of qualifications/
28. Do you have a framework of transforming prior learning, micro-credentials as credits for purposes of progression and validation?
29. On average, how many credits per year does a degree programme have?
  - a. Undergraduate programme .....
  - b. Master programme .....
  - c. Phd/Doctoral programme .....

**B) Countries that do not have a credit system:**

16. Was there ever a credit system (credit accumulation and transfer) in your country? If so, how was it? (describe it briefly) and say why it is no longer being used?
17. Do you know if there are any plans for developing a National Credit System?
18. Are there already experiences in working with credit systems in the universities/HEIs in your country? If so, how are these experiences?
19. Since there is no credit system in the country, how are the partial periods of study recognized both between universities/ institutes of higher education in your country and between these universities /institutes of higher education and others in other countries? If there are many variations, briefly describe the most commonly used.
20. What provisions do you have in place to allow students who have not completed a cycle of education/programme to complete it in your country without having to start the study programme afresh
21. What are the main barriers for the uptake of a credit system at national level?
22. What should be done to implement a credit system in the universities (political decisions, new regulations, training, etc.)? Please outline three key actions for further implementation.
23. What framework do you have in place as a country to support mobility of students from other countries?

### ANNEX III

#### NATIONAL AUTHORITIES CONTACTED

Country	Institution consulted
Algeria	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Angola	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação e Reconhecimento de Estudos do Ensino Superior (INAAREES)
Benin	General Directorate of Higher Education
Botswana	Botswana Qualifications Authority
Burkina Faso	General Directorate of Higher Education
	Ministry of Education
Burundi	CNES - Higher National Commission for Higher Education
Cameroon	Direction of University Accreditations and Quality
	General Directorate of Higher Education
Cape Verde	Higher Education Regulatory Agency (ARES)
Central African Republic	Directeur Général de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche Scientifique, Technologique et de l'Innovation.
Chad	General Directorate of Higher Education
Cote d'Ivoire	General Directorate of Higher Education
Djibouti	Ministry of Education Djibouti
DRC	National Commission for Higher and University Education
Egypt	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
	Council of Private University
	National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education
Eswatini	Eswatini Qualifications Authority
Ethiopia	The Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA)
Gambia	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
Ghana	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
Guinea	National Council for Quality Assurance
Kenya	Commission for University Education
	Kenya National Qualification Authority
Lesotho	Council for Higher Education
Libya	Bani GHazi University
	Lybian Association for Quality and excellence in Education
Madagascar	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Malawi	National Council for Higher Education



Mali	Malian Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency
Mauritania	Agence Mauritanienne d'Assurance Qualité
Mauritius	Higer Education Commission
Mozambique	National Concil for Quatity Assurance in Higer Education (CNAQ
Namibia	Namibia Qualifications Authority
Niger	General Directorate of Higher Education
Nigeria	National Universities Commission
Republic of the Congo	Ministry of Education
Rwanda	Higher Education Council (HEC)
Senegal	National Quality Assurance Authority
	General Directorate of Higher Education
Seychelles	Seychelles Qualification Authority
South Africa	South African Qualifications Authority
South Sudan	National Council for Higher Education
Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for University
	The National Council for Technical & Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET)
Togo	General Directorate of Higher Education
Tunisia	Tunisian Agency of Evaluation and Accreditation
Uganda	Uganda National Examinations Board
	National Council for Higher Education
Zambia	Zambia Qualifications Authority
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwean Council for Higher Education