



Accredited Africa Training Institute for Capacity Development

Unit FO409, Hatfield Plaza · 1122 Burnett St, Hatfield 0028 · Pretoria, Gauteng · South Africa

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COURSE BROCHURE

Critical Systems Thinking for Public Sector Policy

Business, Commerce and Management Studies / Public Administration

Unit Standard 242920 · NQF Level 7 · 8 Credits · 5 Days

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course equips public sector professionals with the ability to apply critical systems thinking to complex policy issues. Participants learn to analyze policy problems as interconnected systems, identify leverage points, and design holistic interventions that address root causes rather than symptoms. The course bridges theory and practice, enabling learners to improve policy outcomes in South Africa's unique socio-economic context.

Category	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
Subfield	Public Administration
Unit Standard	242920
Accreditation	SAQA Accredited · NQF Level 7 · 8 Credits
Duration	5 days
Training Method	Online, On-Campus, In-House
Certificate	Issued via AATICD LMS – verifiable online

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Apply critical systems thinking principles to analyze complex public policy issues.
- Evaluate the interrelationships and dynamics within policy systems using systems mapping tools.
- Design systemic intervention strategies that address root causes and unintended consequences.
- Implement a systems thinking approach to facilitate stakeholder engagement and collaborative policy design.
- Demonstrate the ability to reflect on personal assumptions and biases in policy analysis.
- Analyze case studies of South African public policy to identify systemic failures and opportunities.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- This course is designed for policy analysts, program managers, and senior officials in national, provincial, or local government who are involved in policy development, implementation, or evaluation.
- It is also suitable for consultants and researchers working with public sector clients.

COURSE OUTLINE

Day 1: Foundations of Systems Thinking

- What is systems thinking?
- Historical development and key thinkers
- Core concepts: systems, subsystems, boundaries, environment
- Emergence and unintended consequences
- Feedback loops: reinforcing and balancing
- Leverage points in systems
- Contrast with traditional linear policy analysis
- Introduction to critical systems thinking

Day 2: Critical Systems Thinking Frameworks

- Overview of critical systems thinking (CST)
- Boundary critique: who is included/excluded?
- The Four Waves: hard, soft, critical, and emancipatory
- Methodological pluralism
- Systems methodologies: System Dynamics, Soft Systems Methodology, Critical Systems Heuristics
- Choosing methodologies based on problem context
- Ethics and power in policy systems

Day 3: Applying Systems Tools to Policy Problems

- Causal loop diagramming: symbols and conventions
- Stock-and-flow diagramming basics
- Stakeholder analysis: identifying perspectives and boundaries
- Case study 1: Public health policy
- Case study 2: Environmental regulation
- Group exercise: mapping a policy issue
- Pitfalls and limitations of system mapping

Day 4: Critical Reflection and Power Analysis

- Power, knowledge, and systems
- Critical Systems Heuristics: 12 boundary questions
- Practical application of CSH to a South African policy
- Systemic evaluation of policy coherence
- Dealing with conflict and competing values
- Strategies for participatory policy design
- Case study: Land reform policy

Day 5: Integration and Action Planning

- Integrating CST into the policy cycle
- Designing a CST-informed policy analysis process
- Group project presentations
- Peer critique and feedback
- Overcoming barriers to CST adoption in government
- Personal action planning
- Course wrap-up and evaluation

ASSESSMENT & CERTIFICATION

Delegates are assessed through exercises and a final test. A mark of **50% or above** earns an **AATICD Certificate of Completion**, issued digitally with a unique verification code. This course carries **8 NQF credits** at **NQF Level 7**.

PRICING (PER DELEGATE, EX-VAT)

Delegates	Training Method	Price per Delegate	Total
1	Online	R 26,400.00	R 26,400.00
1	In-House	R 34,400.00	R 34,400.00
1	On-Campus (Pretoria)	R 39,700.00	R 39,700.00

UPCOMING SESSIONS

Start	End	Method	Venue
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Pretoria, South Africa
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Dubai, UAE
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Cape Town, South Africa
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Mauritius
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Johannesburg, South Africa
03 Aug 2026	07 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Lagos, Nigeria
10 Aug 2026	14 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Mauritius
10 Aug 2026	14 Aug 2026	On-Campus	Cape Town, South Africa

Contact us if no suitable date is listed – on-demand sessions can be arranged for groups.

HOW TO GET A QUOTE OR APPLY

- 1. Get an instant quotation online:** visit www.aaticd.co.za, open the page for this course (Unit Standard 242920) and click **Get A Quote / Apply**. Select your training method and number of delegates – your quotation is generated immediately and emailed to you with the course brochure attached.
- 2. Apply by email:** send the course title, your preferred training method (Online, In-House or On-Campus Pretoria), the number of delegates and your preferred dates to apply@aaticd.co.za – our team will reply with a formal quotation.
- 3. Apply by phone or WhatsApp:** call **+27 12 004 8389** or WhatsApp **+27 65 077 6310** and we will prepare your quotation and reserve your seats.
- 4. Confirm your booking:** accept the quotation and settle the invoice. As soon as payment is confirmed your delegates are enrolled and receive their AATICD LMS login details by email, along with joining instructions for their chosen training method.

Group discounts apply automatically – the more delegates you enrol, the lower the price per delegate. No payment is required to request a quotation.

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