



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

*Ensuring quality and relevant post-secondary
education*

THE GAMBIA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

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Glossary of Terms

Terminology used in the GNQF	Meaning
Access and Equity	Strategies used to open vocational training to all individuals in the community, particularly focusing on those groups that have been traditionally under represented e.g. access by women and the disabled.
Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning	Formal recognition through robust assessment that learning has occurred, either in formal, nonformal and or informal contexts, and that it was effective. Where accredited learning is used to grant entry into a programme or course it is often referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) .
Accreditation	The process of according formal recognition to an education and training provider by the Authority for meeting satisfactory standards in performance, integrity and quality in relation to the programmes offered by the institution.
Active learning	An educational approach in which individuals work in groups or individually to explore problems and acquire knowledge rather than passively receiving knowledge from an instructor.
Appeal	The ability of an individual or institution to challenge the Authority's assessment/evaluation decision in writing.
Assessment	Means the process used to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competences in a qualification, part-qualification, or professional designation in order to make a judgement about a learner's knowledge and skills. Assessment can be formal, non-formal or informal; assessment can be of learning already done (summative), or towards learning to inform and shape teaching and learning still to be done (formative).
Assessment criteria	Means the standards used to guide the recognition of learning and assess learner achievement and/or evaluate and certify competence.
Assessor	A trainer, employer or a person accredited by the Authority to gather and judge evidence of learners' competence and confirm their achievement.
Attitude	Performance of skills or use of knowledge within the value system of the organization and society.
Attribute	The quality belonging to or forming part of the nature of a person.

Quality Audit	A systematic evaluation/assessment of an organization, system, process, project, programme or product to verify whether minimum national standards are adhered to.
Award	Conferment of a qualification or unit standard. The award would follow formal assessment processes and report the attainment of a meaningful and coherent cluster of outcomes or results of learning or training.
Competence	Means the ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills and values successfully to perform a task against a required criterion.
Competence-Based Training	A system of training that focuses on the ability to demonstrate a set of skills, knowledge and understanding within a set of relevant values and ethics (standards). Can also be referred to as standards-based, skill-based, or outcomes-based .
Course/Module	A discrete component of a programme that equips an individual with the knowledge, understanding, and attitudes relevant to the requirements for the award of a unit standard or qualification.
Credit	Means the volume of learning required for a qualification or part-qualification (unit standard), quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification or part-qualification (unit standard). One credit is equated to fifteen 15 hours of guided learning. The self-learning is twice the guided learning. Three (3) hours of Practical is equivalent to one (1) hour of theory.
Criteria	Established rules, standards or principles, on which a judgement is based.
Curriculum	Is the expected totality of the experiences learners undergo as a result of the provisions made in terms of content, teaching and learning material development, pedagogical approach, assessment, institutional orientation and organization for a programme.
Entry requirements	The qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience required for entry to an education and or training programme.
Equal opportunity	The avoidance of any form of discrimination that favours the education and training of a particular group of people, including factors based on gender, age, disability, special educational needs, social status, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation and geographic location.
External Assessor	Someone from outside a training provider who is brought into confirm that the standards applied in the <i>assessment</i> of learners meet the requirements of the GNQF and that the <i>qualifications</i> awarded to learners are justified.

Formal learning	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured education and training environment, and that is explicitly designated as a recognized entity.
Formative assessment	Means a range of continuous assessment procedures used to recognise the competence of a learner towards learning and teaching still to be done. The results of formative assessments can prepare a candidate for a summative assessment.
Qualifications Framework	Systems for classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured qualifications
Gambia National Qualifications Framework (GNQF)	An integrated system of nationally recognised qualifications and nationally endorsed standards for the recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies.
Higher Education and Training Provider	A degree awarding post-secondary institution
Informal learning	Means learning that results from daily activities related to paid or unpaid work, family or community life, or leisure.
Labour Market Information (LMI)	Information from employment and demographic trends in The Gambia used to inform and prioritise the need for training and the development of qualifications and unit standards.
Quality Assurance Committee	Formal body having authority and reputation to make recommendations in the registration and accreditation of Institutions and their programmes. The NAQAA Act 2015 authorises the NAQAA to establish such bodies.
Learning outcomes	A <i>coherent</i> set of measurable results against which an individual's progress and achievement will be judged during or at the end of a process of learning, development or employment.
Learning pathway	Means the sequencing of qualifications that allows learners to move vertically, diagonally, and in some cases horizontally, through GNQF levels, giving learners recognition for full or partially completed qualifications or part-qualifications. Learning pathways can also lead to professional designations, when learning pathways include periods of structured work experience over and above qualifications.
Level	A measure of the degree of complexity, learner autonomy and required range of achievement of the qualification. GNQF has 10 levels.
Level Descriptor	Means the statement describing learning achievement at a particular level of the GNQF that provides a broad indication of the types of learning outcomes and assessment criteria that are appropriate for a qualification at that level.

Lifelong learning (LLL)	The principle that a person should have the opportunity, and be encouraged, to continue to develop their knowledge, skills and competence throughout their lifetime.
Learner-centred approach	A training/learning method that is shaped by the needs of the learner, and recognises and responds to learners as individuals. It is achieved when: • focus is on the learner's development, interests and needs; • learning builds on the learner's life experiences; • there is ongoing learning, in which the learner is an active participant; and • there are many opportunities for talking, sharing and collaborating.
Monitoring	The continuous or periodic review of programme implementation by the Authority's Management to assess delivery, identify difficulties, ascertain problem areas and recommend remedial action.
NAQAA	The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority, established by an Act of Parliament in 2015.
Non-formal learning	Means planned learning activities not explicitly designated as learning towards the achievement of a qualification or part-qualification; it is often associated with learning that results in improved workplace practice.
Occupation specification	A description of what the occupation demands of the employee and the human skills that are required. It is a profile of the human characteristics needed by the person performing the job. These requirements include experience, training, education, and physical and mental characteristics.
Occupational field	The entire set of work roles that require a similar combination of skills or competences if they are to be undertaken effectively
Occupational standards	Specifications of the <i>competences</i> and the level of performance associated with them, required for effective performance in a specific area of employment. These are known as the Unit Standards in the GSQF.
Occupational units	Descriptions of groups of <i>specialist competences</i> that an individual must be able to demonstrate as part of the requirements for gaining a <i>qualification</i> . Other requirements are key skill units.
Outcome	The element of a Unit Standard specifying the competence to be achieved for that component.
Performance criteria	Qualitative or quantitative descriptions of what the learner must be able to do that allow an objective judgement to be made about whether or not an individual has achieved a <i>learning outcome</i> .

Practicability	The quality or degree of a learning method or an assessment tool being applied within the existing resources, facilities and time.
Practical competence	The ability to perform manual tasks or physical actions in order to carry out work activities of the quality required in the workplace. The GNQF has a facility for individuals to obtain a Practical qualification – even if they do not understand theoretical aspects of the occupation. See also <i>competence</i> .
Programme	A plan of things to be done – a scheme of proceedings for a course of study. It is a structured pathway of learning or training leading to an award. Programmes can be of different duration and level.
Progression	Movement from a <i>qualification</i> at one <i>level</i> to one at a higher level or to another associated one at the same level. There should be clear routes providing opportunities for learners to continue to the highest level.
Qualification	An award given on successful completion of a course or programme. The award would follow formal assessment processes, and reports the attainment of a meaningful and coherent cluster of outcomes or results of learning or training.
Quality (in educational provision)	The delivery of a professional service in a consistent fashion to predefined standards and specifications that meets clients' wants and needs and provides value for money.
Quality assurance	A planned, systematic and continuous review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not set standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced.
Range or (scope) statement	Specifications of the environments, contexts or circumstances in which the learner must be able to demonstrate their achievement of the <i>performance criteria</i> .
Relevance	Being pertinent to the matter at hand or applicable to social issues.
Registered	The outcome of the process for a trainer / assessor, training provider and/or assessment administration centre to prove that he / she / it is sound robust and capable of doing what he / she / it set out to do, against set standards.
Reliability of assessment	The extent to which trainees with the same ability are given the same assessment result, or the degree to which a trainee receives the same results when assessed on different occasions, or by different assessors.
Resources	The human resources, financial resources or materials/equipment that will be required for successful training/learning.
Skill	The ability to do something, consistently, confidently and accurately.

Stakeholder	In the GNQF context means any entity involve in the implementation of the GNQF.
Standard	A statement by the Authority (NAQAA), of the accepted level or quality of service used as a basis for comparison or judgment.
Standards panel	Formal bodies recognised as representing the interests and views of key stakeholders in a specific occupational area or sub-field - responsible for developing qualifications. (lead bodies represent a field).
Summative assessment	The final assessment of knowledge, skills, and values, which is used to evaluate a candidate's competences against a set of assessment criteria.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training	Means training geared towards skills acquisition in specific occupations.
Training	The process of providing instructors, guidance and education by which an individual learns a new skill.
Education and Training provider	An individual or organisation supplying training; includes schools, brigades, technical colleges, colleges of education, private training establishments, government training establishments, work based and work place training
Transferability	That the <i>qualifications</i> or <i>competences</i> are appropriate to workers carrying out similar tasks in other contexts, e.g. other countries, and that they are formally recognised in these other contexts.
Transparency	The quality of the system being open so that everybody concerned is fully aware of all aspects of delivery and can understand its operation.
Unit standard	A registered statement at a particular level of the outcomes for a particular part of an occupation or key skill; the type and quality of evidence that represents performance and the contexts in which that evidence should be demonstrated. A unit standard contains several outcomes.
Validation	The process of checking that a proposed standard satisfies the criteria for a <i>qualification</i> , including quality of design and meeting the needs of all stakeholders.
Validity	The extent to which assessment results correlate with what they are supposed to be measuring. The time period for which a Unit Standard applies after which it must be reviewed.

Verification	The process of confirming that something is true; in an educational context this applies particularly to the <i>assessment</i> of trainees
Workplace (Formal)	Working in an organised company or formal institution

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The development of a National Qualifications Framework (**NQF**) for education system in The Gambia started in 2015 under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) and Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) by Education Consultant **Seonad Cook** through technical assistant to the Gambia education sector by World Bank - Project **ID: P133079**. However, the harmonization of the already existing Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework with the proposed NQF was not completed.

This resulted to the document being forwarded to the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority to complete the harmonization with relevant stakeholders. A week-long workshop was subsequently organized with key education stakeholders, the output of which is presented in subsequent pages.

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1.0. Introduction

The role and importance of education in the process of national development has been acknowledged and emphasized globally. Over the last decade, the Gambia has made significant strides to improve educational standards across basic and secondary, as well as tertiary and higher education subsectors. However, despite the collaboration that exists between the personnel of both these subsectors, the lack of a unified national framework across the entire education system has resulted in poor linkage between the two subsectors, preventing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates from pursuing higher education qualifications in higher education institutions, in particular, the University of the Gambia.

The GNQF articulates the linkages that should exist within the education system to ensure effective and efficient coordination and management of the sector. Tuck (2007) describes a National Qualifications Framework as *“an instrument for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies along a continuum of agreed levels.”* The framework is an important reference point for providers of education services by providing a unified and comprehensive organising structure for existing and new qualifications. The framework also helps in the harmonization and standardization of qualifications both at the national and international level.

Within the Gambia, the framework promotes life-long learning, access, mobility and progression into and between education and training sectors. This is achieved by integrating existing vocational education and training, general education as well as tertiary and higher education into a national framework with levels accommodating all categories and form of learners.

On an international scale, the framework will ensure recognition in other countries and comparability of qualification standards thereby facilitating international graduate mobility and competitiveness.

1.1. Background

The development of the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF) in 2007 and its subsequent implementation in 2008, provides a coherent structure of standards, levels and qualifications that should be developed and maintained in a quality assured manner with the aim of improving and regularising the attainment of occupational skills. While this qualifications framework has drawn heavily on other well-established frameworks and practices in the UK and EU and in part Botswana, Ghana, South Africa, and Namibia, it also gives due cognisance to the needs and realities of The Gambia. Furthermore, the GSQF is not a ‘full’ framework including both academic and vocational learning but rather a partial qualifications framework, concerned with technical, vocational and literacy skills which has been designed so that it may be extended into a full qualifications’ framework with a minimum of adaptations. Thus, the GSQF offers an integral sub-framework within the GNQF for tertiary and higher education in The Gambia.

During the period of the implementation of the GSQF, significant number of training standards for qualifications have been developed in diverse occupational areas that are relevant for the socio-

economic development of the Gambia. In addition, regulatory policies and procedures were developed and implemented.

Given the significant timeframe that has passed since the development of the GSQF in 2006, there is need to review and revise this framework in cognizance of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the GSQF over the past decade. This view was accepted and the revision was carried out accordingly.

As recommended by the earlier stated consultant, the GSQF should be reviewed and aligned to the GNQF and also, to embark on consultations with stakeholders for stakeholder 'buy in' which is crucial to the successful implementation of the GNQF. A five-day workshop was held for the review of the GSQF and its alignment to the GNQF in April 2018. The outcome of the meeting was a proposed NQF with ten (10) levels. In addition, between 10th to 31st of October 2019, stakeholder consultative meetings were conducted with 21 different institutions including public and private employers, tertiary and higher education institutions, professional bodies, industry associations etc, for sensitization and further discussions of the framework.

The GNQF is premised on principles and guidelines by which learner achievements are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills, knowledge, and competencies thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages life-long learning.

When learners know that there are clear learning pathways providing access, mobility and progression within education, training and career paths, they will often be more inclined to improve their skills and knowledge since such improvements will increase their employment opportunities. The increased skills base of the workforce implies the enhancement of the functional and intellectual capability of the nation. The GNQF is anchored on the need to standardize and harmonize the country's qualifications by putting in place a system for setting standards defining expected knowledge, skills and competence needed for labour market employment, self-employment or further education within Gambia's education and training system and beyond the country borders.

1.2. Structure of Tertiary and Higher Education in The Gambia

The number of public tertiary and higher education institutions in The Gambia that offer programmes at certificate, diploma and degree levels are not many. There are three main tertiary institutions that run certificate and diploma programmes, namely: The Gambia Technical Training Institute, the Management Development Institute and The Gambia College. Only one public higher education institution, The University of The Gambia (UTG) founded in 1999, offers programmes at mainly undergraduate degree level and few postgraduate programmes.

A National Training Authority (NTA) established in 2002 with the mandate to regulate national vocational Qualifications; coordinate the quality of delivery of technical and vocational education and training; make technical and vocational education and training relevant to all occupations, skilled artisans, semi-skilled workers and to occupations classified in the unskilled category; encourage and promote lifelong learning to all Gambians and the subsequent development of the GSQF in 2006, has significantly contributed to the regulation of TVET institutions to date.

However, this excludes the regulation of higher education institutions (universities).

To address the above issue at the tertiary and higher education level and to further improve the standards, The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) was established by an Act of Parliament in 2015, to serve as the regulator of tertiary and higher education in the Gambia. NAQAA is responsible for the standard and quality assurance of all qualifications offered by TVET, tertiary and higher education institutions in The Gambia including accreditation services at both institutional and programme levels. Thus, by implication, NAQAA is the custodian of the National Qualifications Framework.

1.3. Entry requirements in Tertiary and Higher Education

The entry requirements for many tertiary and/or higher education programmes in The Gambia (including programmes offered by TVET institutions) is the West African Senior School Certificate (WASSC) with some (especially skills centers) targeting the Gambia Basic Education Certificate (GABEC) or lower graduates. For the main university, UTG, five academic credits at WASSCE level or equivalent are required – these must include English language and mathematics (in not more than two sittings). In non-science subject areas, the mathematics requirements could be at pass level.

Most TVET graduates currently cannot gain access to higher education programmes in The Gambia, mainly because of lack of harmonized programmes and credit transfer framework system.

1.4. Challenges in the Gambian Education System

With an increasing demographic in the post-secondary population and greater educational aspirations of young people in The Gambia, there has been a significant growth in the tertiary and higher education sector. While some young people experience a relatively straight-forward pathway into and through tertiary and higher education, many do not. A global economic downturn has meant that government budgetary allocations for this sector have not grown in line with enrolments.

An Employer's Skills Need Survey (NAQAA, 2018) and the Education Sector Wide Policy (2016 – 2030) identifies various challenges within this sector some of which are summarised further below. Challenges highlighted in *italics* may be addressed (to a large extent) by the implementation of the GNQF.

The rapid increase in enrolment levels combined with the increased number and variety of private education and training institutions, present challenges in terms of **access and equity** as follows:

- The concentrated locations of most tertiary and higher education institutions in the Greater Banjul Area have led to significant regional inequalities in access to education, especially at the post-secondary level.

- *Poor linkages between TVET institutions and higher education institutions limit students' ability to pursue not only occupational careers, but also advanced educational goals.*
- *Training at most TVET institutions does not adequately respond to labour market needs for the socio-economic development of the country and therefore vocational education is not considered a viable option by many students. Furthermore, the low number of TVET graduates is not adequate to meet the demands for skilled manpower.*
- *Inadequate educational resources, equipment and training facilities in the education and training providers results to ineffectual training.*
- *An absence of a standardised framework for qualifications has led to institutions offering programmes that are not credit-based.*
- *Lack of coordination among training institutions makes it difficult to transfer relevant academic or professional credits.*

1.5. Objectives of The GNQF

The objectives of the GNQF are:

- Creating an Integrated National Framework for Learning Achievements;
- Enhancing and coordinating the quality of education and training in the country by setting quality standards as well as harmonization across fields of learning and levels of qualifications;
- Contributing to the full personal development of each learner, and the socio- economic development of the country in particular;
- Supporting the alignment of qualification in The Gambia with international standards thus ensuring international competitiveness, and facilitating student and graduate mobility;
- Promoting competence-based education and training;

- Encouraging learners (workers and others) to continue learning, sharpening and modernizing their skills and knowledge to respond to the changing needs of education and the labour market;
- Promoting recognition of prior learning so as to adequately bring on board acquired experiential learning and work experience.
- Encourage potential routes for progression and credit transfer, particularly in the context of wider participation in lifelong learning; and
- improving communication between education, training and employment stakeholders by enabling schools, parents, prospective students, employers and others to understand the achievements and attributes represented by the main qualification titles, and how qualifications relate to one another.
- Supporting professional and sectoral skills qualifications.

2.0. GNQF Design Considerations

The GNQF is designed based on the following principles:

- to provide a framework for improved communication between education, training and employment stakeholders by enabling schools, parents, prospective/current learners, employers and others to understand the achievements and attributes represented by the main qualification titles, and how qualifications relate to one another.
- to create a nationally relevant, coherent and responsive qualification system defined in terms of competence descriptors to ensure comparability and benchmarking of qualifications.
- Provide potential routes for progression and credit transfer, particularly in the context of wider participation in lifelong learning as qualifications are designed using an agreed definition of credit value.
- to support the development of qualifications alignment in The Gambia with international standards thus ensuring standardization of terminologies to promote greater understanding and implementation of the framework.
- to provide a point of reference for a common quality assurance standard for assessing and monitoring TVET and other post-secondary education and training institutions.
- to facilitate a smooth transition into employment by aligning education with current and future labour market needs through the use of an 'outcome-based' metric for

knowledge, skills and competencies.

3.0. Scope of the GNQF

The GNQF covers all levels, forms and categories of education and training provision in The Gambia within the domain of both the Public and Private sectors.

It is anchored on the principle of inclusiveness, targeting all areas of general education, technical and vocation training, higher education, informal and non-formal learning and lifelong education. Consideration is also accorded to other forms of learning such as open and distance.

The **GNQF** is framed to offer clear and pragmatic articulation pathways between the different levels of education, occupational and or professional bodies' qualifications.

4.0. Functions of the GNQF

The functions of the GNQF include:

- Facilitate for smooth progression both vertical and horizontal to ensure standardization and harmonization of qualifications through a systematic framework of credit transfer. This will enhance the mobility of learners within education and training institutions, occupations and sectors;
- To recognize and assign credits to prior experiential learning in order to enhance certification of learners/trainees who acquired their training through informal and or non-formal means;
- Assess through different modes of learning irrespective of the form of education as far as they meet the defined minimum standards of the expected competencies;
- Facilitate the recognition and determination of equivalences of foreign qualifications to the National Qualifications Framework;
- Ensure the development of demand-driven national standards for qualifications which are relevant for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy to enhance employability of learners;
- Ensure the recognition and comparability of Gambian qualifications globally.

5.0. Gambia National Qualifications Framework Levels

The fundamental principle of the GNQF is based on 'learning-outcomes approach' where standards of knowledge, skills, and competencies including attitudes are assessed and measured. This metric of outcomes or attainment provides a means for aligning different

qualifications to a standard level thus allowing for progression along a clear pathway on a continuum of agreed levels.

Qualifications are grouped together at a particular level in the NQF according to their level of difficulty. Outcomes at each level are described by level descriptors. However, it is important to note that while qualifications at the same level are of similar demand or level of difficulty, the content, size and purpose of qualifications at the same level may be very different; some qualifications will prepare learners for study of an academic subject emphasising knowledge-orientated outcomes, while another qualification at the same level may emphasise occupational or skills-orientated outcomes. Nevertheless, in both situations the qualifications may be broadly considered equivalent in terms of progression, requiring a similar degree of capability for entry and advancement. Thus, progression within the GNQF may also occur in a horizontal way, where a learner may wish to proceed with a new qualification that is at the same level as their previous qualification in order to acquire a different type of learning.

This approach to qualification design is in stark contrast to traditional qualification systems where qualifications were linked to input or provisions usually measured in terms of programme duration or teaching input. As such, an ideological shift is required from 'institutional-based' models of qualifications, where the institution itself owned the qualification and the learning programme leading to it, to the 'outcome-based' model mentioned above, where qualifications are viewed as being independent of the institutions that offer programmes leading to the qualifications. This means that education and training providers are no longer seen as 'definers' of qualifications but rather 'sellers' of programmes that lead to qualifications.

The number of levels in a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) varies with many countries subscribing to eight levels such as that of the European Higher Education Area. However, some other countries use 10 levels such as some Southern African Countries, Kenya, Mauritius etc. A country adopts the number of levels that makes sense in relation to its own education and training system and policy goals. As long as the number and nature of levels bear a recognizable relationship to the eight levels, there will be little difficulty in establishing equivalencies with other NQFs.

The GNQF has defined 10 unique levels of competence. For some levels a national award has been assigned. For each level, there are descriptors that stated in broad terms competences expected of a learner that has completed a given level of qualification. These competence descriptors are not specific to any field of specialization (they are generic and cross-field statements).

The approach used in developing the respective competence descriptors entailed adoption and strategic modification of the levels and competence descriptors used by Malta which is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework and that of other prominent regulatory bodies—especially South African Qualifications Authority, Mauritius Qualifications Authority, and Kenya Qualifications Authority rather than starting afresh.

The GNQF consist of the following components:

- Basic and Secondary School qualifications,
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training qualifications;
- Higher Education (Academic) qualifications; and
- Occupational qualifications.

Any qualification registered as part of the GNQF has a purpose and are interrelated to each other, providing for articulation from one qualification to the other by means of recognition of prior learning.

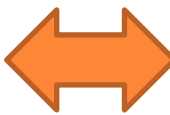
In the quest to avoid rigidity of the framework, the GNQF has been designed to build flexibility into the framework in order to accommodate the vast variety of programmes and qualifications offered across the TVET and higher education (academic) bands. Horizontal and diagonal articulation is proposed as a mechanism to facilitate meaningful articulation between qualifications in the two different tracks/strands, i.e., academic on the one hand and professional or technical related, on the other as shown in table 1.

The main aim for catering for the horizontal articulation is to facilitate learner mobility and progression along the framework as efficiently as possible. It can also be used to admit into the system those learners who do not meet the full entry requirements for their target programmes. It is likely to be the 'space' in the system where the recognition of prior learning (RPL) can most easily be implemented.

The horizontal and diagonal articulation mechanism is designed within the framework to cater for the learning needs of those whose past learning experiences have not adequately prepared them for a chosen programme, without forcing them to go and start programmes afresh. For example, a craft person may move horizontally to level 4 in a formal programme or move diagonally to a level 5 programme subject to successful completion of bridging courses/modules required for entry in that programme.

Worthy of mentioning is that basic school certificate do not impart ready skills for the labour market; hence meaningful credits are not assigned.

Table 1: Gambia National Qualifications Framework with Pathways

Levels	Gambia National Qualifications Framework				Occupational Qualifications
Level 10	Doctorate Degree	Doctorate Technical/Technology Degree (DTec)			
Level 9	Master's Degree	Masters Technical/Technology Degree (MTec)			Occupational Certificate 8
Level 8	Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate	Technical/ Postgraduate Diploma/Certificates			Occupational Certificate 7
Level 7	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelors Technical/Technology Degree (BTec)			Occupational Certificate 6
Level 6	Higher Diploma/Higher National Diploma		TVET Higher Diploma /TVET Higher National Diploma		Occupational Certificate 5
Level 5	Diploma/National Diploma		TVET Diploma /TVET National Diploma		Occupational Certificate 4
Level 4	Certificate		TVET Certificate 4		Occupational Certificate 3
Level 3	Grade 12 (WASSCE or Equivalent)		TVET certificate 3		Occupational Certificate 2
Level 2	Grade 9 (GABECE)		TVET Certificate 2		Occupational Certificate 1
Level 1	Grade 6 (Primary School)		TVET Certificate 1 (Foundation)		Foundation (Basic Life Skills)

6.0. System of Credits

Promoting access to learning and procedures for progression and mobility within the education system, are essential for encouraging lifelong learning. NQFs should enable learners to easily access learning and carry forward some credit for their achievements when progressing to new jobs and studies. Credits not only provide an indication of the amount of study already completed, but often reflect a learning path and thus, are a useful tool to provide recognition for prior learning.

It is important to note that in determining the credit value of a unit of learning and/or qualification most international NQF systems include not only formal and non-formal learning, they also include all forms of assessment as well as practical work undertaken for example, practical work in the workplace, workshops, revision etc. Formal learning relates to learning which takes place in formal taught classes, tutorials, seminars etc while non-formal learning is learning which would take place out of the formal setting or workplace.

The typical number of credits required to complete higher education qualifications at the various levels in different countries are outlined in **Table 2** below:

The GNQF adopted a system of credits, and embraced this concept as a means of measuring and recognising the size/weight of learning as this may vary greatly between qualifications at the same level. Credit systems allow for credit values associated with a learning-outcome for a particular programme to be accumulated and/or transferred. In the case of credit accumulation, this means that credits may be collected, so that upon successful accumulation of a specified amount of credits in required subjects, the learner may complete a semester, academic year or full study programme. A credit transfer refers to the collection of credits in one credit system which may then be transferred and accepted in another credit system or institution that has the same goal of achieving a given amount of credits for a specific qualification. Agreement between different awarding bodies and/or education providers facilitates successful credit transfer across education systems. Credit accumulation and transfer systems not only allow for recognition of a student's prior learning but also encourage lifelong learning and student mobility within and between institutions without interruption of their studies or the need to repeat examinations.

Diagonal articulation requirements mean that the learner may proceed to the next level, but will be required to undertake additional enrichment learning in the target area prior to being admitted to a new programme. In some cases, where a learner is better prepared than others, s/he may be required to attain only a certain number of credits in the target area (i.e. register for one or two modules rather than a whole qualification in the articulation column) prior to being admitted to the target programme. In such cases, if the learning load is not too onerous, s/he may be allowed to register simultaneously for the enrichment learning in the articulation column and for the target programme.

Whilst the framework provides general guidelines and parameters, specific articulation requirements will always be determined by the receiving institution on the basis of publicly declared entry requirements for particular programmes and qualifications. This shall be a

requirement for the registration of qualifications on the GNQF. A key to ensuring the articulation of qualifications in the general and technical bands and to exploiting the flexibility of this framework, will be the clear and public statement of entry and exit requirements for programmes, both in terms of credits at particular levels and in terms of statements of learning outcomes, against which learning (both formal and experiential or non-formal) can be assessed and weighted.

As stated in the example above, the articulation column can be used as a space where learners achieve 'articulation credits' in transit between two programmes, or it can be used to attain whole qualifications.

In this framework, GNQF uses a credit system based on the idea that one credit equals fifteen (15) hours of guided learning and thirty (30) hours of individual learning, motivated in context in each case. Therefore, one credit equals forty-five (45) hours of notional hours of learning i.e. refers to the learning time that it would take an average learner to meet the outcomes defined (SAQA, 2000). It includes concepts such as:

- contact time
- time spent in structured learning in the workplace
- individual learning
- assessment

Levels	School System	TVET	Higher Education	Occupational Qualifications (Non-formal and Informal Sectors)	Minimum Credits Required (1 Credit Hour=15 Hours Guided Learning and 30 Hours of Individual Learning)
Level 10		Doctorate Technical/Technology Degree (DTec)	Doctorate Degree/Post Doctorate		120 credits after Level 9 (Minimum 48 Months after level 9)
Level 9		Master Technical/Technology Degree (MTec)	Master's Degree/Master of Philosophy (M. Phil).	Occupational Certificate 8	30 credits after level 7 (Minimum of 12 Months) or 60 credits after level 7 (Minimum of 24 Months).
Level 8		Technical/Technology Postgraduate Diploma/Certificates.	Postgraduate Diploma/Certificates	Occupational Certificate 7	30 credits after level 7 (i.e. Minimum 12 Months after level 7).
Level 7		Bachelors Technical/Technology Degree (BTec)	Bachelor's degree	Occupational Certificate 6	60 credits after level 6 (Minimum of 24 Months) or 120 credits level 3 (Minimum of 48 Months).
Level 6		TVET Higher Diploma /TVET Higher National Diploma	Higher Diploma/Higher National Diploma	Occupational Certificate 5	30 credits after Level 5 (Minimum of 12 months) or 90 credits after level 3 (Minimum 36 Months).
Level 5		TVET Diploma/TVET National Diploma	Diploma/National Diploma	Occupational Certificate 4	30 credits after level 4 (Minimum of 12 Months) or 60 credits after level 3 (Minimum 24 Months after level 3)
Level 4		TVET Certificate 4	Certificate	Occupational Certificate 3	30 credits after level 3 (Minimum 12 Months)
Level 3	Grade 12 (WASSCE)	TVET Certificate 3		Occupational Certificate 2	30 credits after level 2 (Minimum 12 Months)

Level 2	Grade 9 (GABECE)	TVET Certificate 2		Occupational Certificate 1	30 credits after level 1 (Minimum 12 Months after level 1)
Level 1	Grade 6 (Primary School)	TVET Certificate 1 (Foundation)			Minimum of 12 Months

Table 2: The GNQF levels and its associated credits

7.0. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

In addition to the transfer of credits mentioned above, accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) also opens up access to tertiary and higher education to those who otherwise, through normal admissions procedures in the various institutions would not normally be in a position to access tertiary and higher education. APEL is a procedure whereby previous relevant high-quality professional learning or non-standard qualifications which are below normal qualification admission requirements may be taken into account for admission to some courses of study in some education institutions. In some international education institutions candidates wishing to avail of APEL must sit an examination at the relevant institution prior to being considered for admission.

Having the opportunity to avail of a transfer of credits and APEL, helps to promote lifelong learning for Gambians wishing to progress their careers and/or expand their knowledge of a particular specialist area.

Prior learning can be recognised through appropriate forms of assessment which may include:

- Challenge examinations; and/or
- Assignments or projects; and/or
- Demonstrations of skills; and/or
- Validation of previous qualifications; and/or
- A combination of the above.

The **RPL** process will usually entail, among other things, the following:

- Identifying the qualifications, unit standards or learning outcomes for which a candidate believes they will meet the requirements;
- Matching a candidate's skills, knowledge and experience with the specific requirements; and
- Assessing a candidate using appropriate forms of assessment; and crediting a candidate for skills, knowledge and experience attained.

8.0. Assessment

The form taken by any given assessment is related to its purpose and to the qualification of which it is part. Assessment is also integral to the curriculum of which it is associated with.

The assumptions underlying any assessment, how assessment is going to be used as part of learning, and assessment criteria are established and documented before learning starts.

Adherence to the following assessment principles is key:

- a) **Validity**, where assessment measures what it sets out to measure; where procedures, methods, instruments and materials are appropriate, useful and meaningful; and where there is validation – activities to ensure validity. There must be a match between content to be assessed, learning outcomes, and purpose of assessment, where the assessment relates to its stated purpose, learning outcomes, and assessment criteria (content and construct validity);
- b) **Reliability**, where measures produce similar results under consistent conditions; where to a great extent, similar assessment-related judgements are made across similar contexts in consistent ways;
- c) **Integrity**, where there is honesty in every part of the assessment process;
- d) **Transparency**, where learners and educators have clear understanding of the relevant processes;
- e) **Accountability**, where all role-players in assessment processes acknowledge and account for their areas of responsibility;
- f) **Fairness**, where learners are assessed on what they know and have been taught, and the purpose of assessment is to enhance learning;
- g) **Absence of bias**, where assessment practices do not in any way advantage or disadvantage particular learners or groups of learners;
- h) **Sensitivity to language**, where care is taken to ensure that language does not become a barrier to learning;
- i) **Credibility in the form of supportive administration procedures**, where physical and other conditions under which assessment is conducted do not unfairly prejudice assessment activities and outcomes; and
- j) **Assessment range**, where the full range of relevant competencies needed for a qualification, part-qualification or professional designation is assessed.

8.1. Content of Assessment

The content of assessment is informed by its purpose, as a systematic method of gathering information regarding the desired knowledge, skills, and values. When deciding the content of assessment, the following aspects need to be taken into account:

- a) in **deciding the scope** of any assessment, the following aspects *have been covered in the curriculum*: relevant knowledge, skills and values; relevant levels of cognitive challenge and complexity – and the curriculum has been benchmarked in appropriate ways;

- b) distinctions are made between **quantity (volume of learning) and quality (type of learning)** achieved – and the goal of assessment is to focus on both how much learning has taken place, and what kind of learning has occurred – and the extent to which all of this learning is successful;
- c) assessment requires a **range of competencies** such as the following, all of which are considered over time:
 - the reproduction of knowledge, skills and values;
 - application of knowledge, skill and values in known settings;
 - application of knowledge, skills and values in new contexts; and
 - view ways of doing based on application and development of knowledge and skills, and evidence of deep analysis, synthesis and understanding that enables making new connections;
- d) distinctions are made between **capabilities that learners actually demonstrate in relation to curriculum, and the potential that learners have, to develop latent (hidden) capabilities in relation to curriculum** – should suitable opportunities exist. Where possible and appropriate, efforts are made to assess learners' latent abilities;
- e) assessment takes into account learners' **prior learning and experience**; and
- f) assessment is used to **facilitate learning**. This kind of assessment – assessment with instruction, engagement and feedback – is adopted wherever feasible and appropriate.

8.2. General Implementation Criteria of Assessment

Implementation of this Assessment guideline for Designing and Implementing assessment includes:

- a) adopting and facilitating the principles, content, and implementation criteria in this Policy document;
- b) where articulation has been agreed within and between the different streams of the GNQF, and where agreement is being sought towards articulation, actively seeking to use assessment to enable articulation; and
- c) an orientation to assessing demonstrated learning outcomes and where appropriate, learners' potential; and wherever appropriate, assessment with learner engagement and feedback, Recognition of Prior Learning (**RPL**) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (**CAT**).

8.3. Criteria and Guidelines for Assessment Relating to Formal, Non-formal and Informal Learning, and the Implementation of RPL

As part of a fair and accountable system for teaching and learning, assessment in respect of formal, informal and non-formal learning is transparent and includes RPL where feasible.

Formal learning is learning that occurs in an organised and structured education or training environment and is described as such. What is to be assessed and assessment criteria in relation to this formal learning is made clear to learners in applicable ways - through discussion, visual [seen] ways, aural [heard] ways, or enacted demonstration, or other appropriate means.

In order to be registered on the **GNQF**, the design of qualifications and part-qualifications includes consideration of CAT possibilities. Assessment for CAT usually takes place once comparability has been established at curriculum level. Assessment that is part of CAT takes the following into account:

a) Credit accumulation

Each qualification and part-qualification registered on the **GNQF** is based on learning outcomes and is assigned a credit value. Each credit represents 10 notional hours of learning and is allocated at a specific level of the NQF. Credits can be accumulated over time and counted towards a qualification or part-qualification if the learning is current.

b) Credit transfer

Credits can be relocated upwards, downwards, or sideways in the NQF, towards another qualification or part-qualification registered on the same or different streams of the **GNQF**. Steps are taken to support individuals starting on new or more advanced courses by identifying gaps in knowledge and/or skills, and taking steps to address these gaps.

c) Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

The diverse features of credit accumulation and credit transfer are combined to facilitate lifelong learning and access to the workplace. Evidence of articulation possibilities, including within and between the different streams of the GNQF and the world of work, will be included in the design of new qualifications and part-qualifications in order to promote CAT. In promoting CAT, qualifications are compared using credible methods that determine the comparability of the curricula concerned. Where there are gaps, supplementary work may be required. All rules governing CAT decisions will be valid, fair, reliable, and transparent.

Assessment is integral to RPL processes where informal and non-formal learning are recognised. The following forms and features of RPL are key.

- a) **RPL** is multi-contextual, and how it takes place differs between contexts. There are two main forms of RPL which reflect differing RPL purposes and practices:
 - **RPL for access** which provides alternative access routes into programmes of learning; and

- **RPL for credit** which involves obtaining credit towards a qualification, part-qualification or professional designation, for learning/ experience obtained informally or non-formally.

b) Assessment in RPL occurs not in isolation but as part of the RPL process which includes:

- preparation for an RPL process or sub-process;
- mediation of knowledge obtained informally or non-formally, and that required formally;
- assessment of competence; and
- certification.

RPL can be carried out at any GNQF level.

8.4. Criteria and Guidelines for Implementing the Principles of Assessment

Enhancing the quality of assessment in line with best practice nationally is based on understanding the principles of assessment, for which guidelines are given here. It is expected that implementation of the principles of assessment will take different forms in each of the specific contexts of the streams in the GNQF.

Checking for validity/validation includes:

- a) validation of assessment tools, which involves ensuring the match between what is to be assessed and the suitability of the tools chosen to measure this aspect;
- b) validation of assessment tasks, which involves ensuring the match between what is to be assessed and the suitability of the tasks to make this aspect visible/audible;
- c) validation of assessment processes including developing assessment tools and tasks, marking, moderation, and providing feedback on assessment conducted – ensuring a match between the processes and goals of assessment; and
- d) enhancing credibility or validation through a peer-review process where all aspects of the assessment process are documented and available for scrutiny.

Enhancing the reliability of assessment includes ensuring that similar judgements are made across similar contexts about:

- assessment tools and tasks;
- marking;
- moderation;
- recording and dissemination of results;
- certification; and
- record keeping.

Building integrity into assessment processes and tools includes:

- a) assessment questions based on work actually covered, or to enhance learning in a genuine way;

- b) learners being honest about what they offer to be assessed;
- c) markers striving to understand what is being offered by learners for assessment, and grading it fairly at all times;
- d) moderators moderating a fair sample of cases; and
- e) feedback being given to learners and educators after moderation.

Increasing transparency and accountability in assessment includes:

- a) making assessment purposes, processes, criteria and consequences known and visible to all relevant stakeholders; and
- b) providing evidence of the development and moderation of assessment tasks and instruments where appropriate.

Ensuring fairness in assessment involves:

- a) an appropriate assessment range, where the full range of relevant competencies and levels of cognitive demand needed for a qualification, part-qualification or professional designation is assessed. This range includes types and levels of competence required at each GNQF level (see *Level Descriptors in Annex 2*);
- b) equal assessment opportunities for all learners regardless of their ethnicity, age, gender, culture, disability, social class, language and other contextual features;
- c) equitable costs where:
 - I. the calculation of fees takes into consideration the actual costs involved as well as the affordability of the fees in the target markets in each instance;
 - II. there is a correct and proper evidence trail for invoicing and receipting;
 - III. there is fair and transparent affordability means testing; and
 - IV. there is access to a competent ombudsman in the event of confusion or dispute;
- d) transparent communications around fees where the following kind of information is shared:
 - I. what fees are chargeable;
 - II. the basis on which fees are calculated; and
 - III. the type and level of services to be rendered;
- e) sensitivity to language, where:
 - i. an accessible language of learning and teaching is used, which is mediated for those learners for whom it is not their mother tongue;
 - ii. care is taken to use appropriate language that is free of ambiguity and technical jargon; and

- iii. in cases of translation into different national languages, the assessment is consistent and the alternate forms comparable;
- f) moderation to enhance consistency and reduce bias, which includes:
 - I. documentation of internal moderation procedures and outcomes;
 - II. in the case of statistical moderation, procedures that at minimum present and explain the distribution of learner performance and the techniques used to moderate this performance;
 - III. documentation of processes for the appointment of external moderators with expertise and experience;
 - IV. documentation of external moderation procedures and outcomes; and
 - V. documentation of processes by which internal or external grading irregularities or sources of error are or will be corrected;
- g) supportive administrative procedures, which include:
 - I. clear and accessible information;
 - II. standardized conditions under which assessment is conducted; and
 - III. standardized appeals processes which are the same for all similar instances within an institution;
- h) in the case of RPL, mediation between knowledge and skill gained in informal and nonformal ways, and the formal knowledge and skill required;
 - I. in the case of CAT and learners transferring between institutions or departments, recognition that CAT is carried out on the basis of the qualification or part-qualification concerned, and that there is no discrimination on the basis of whether or not an institution is public or private, or on the basis of where qualifications, part-qualifications or credits were obtained, or any other aspect unrelated to the knowledge and skills concerned; and
 - II. the purpose of assessment being to evaluate and enhance learning.

A range of modes of teaching and learning, including assessment, such as face-to-face, distance, e-learning, full-time, part-time, portfolio, block release, mixed-mode and multi-modal approaches is attempted to facilitate lifelong learning and to maximize inclusivity.

9.0. Quality Assurance

All education and training providers shall be subject to national institutional registration and programme accreditation standards. Upon successfully meeting the minimum prescribed national standards, then institutional programmes and or qualifications shall be registered in the GNQF. This is imperative for stakeholders within the country and the international community to have confidence in the qualifications registered in the GNQF.

The institutional registration and programme accreditation standards are set by the Authority (NAQAA) in consultation with stakeholders.

10.0. Strategy for implementing of the GNQF across Tertiary and Higher Education Institutions in The Gambia

NAQAA, as the regulator of tertiary and higher education institutions in The Gambia, is the custodian of the GNQF and is responsible for its successful implementation.

Therefore, the recommended next step for NAQAA and stakeholders in relation to implementation of the GNQF for tertiary and higher education involves the following approaches:

10.1. Continuation of Consultation Process

As stated earlier in this document, stakeholder 'buy in' is crucial to the successful implementation of the GNQF, therefore it is essential to organize periodic national awareness workshops with stakeholders – education and training providers, employers, industry associations, professional councils, awarding bodies – to raise awareness on the GNQF, its key features and why it is necessary for the Gambia.

These sessions should include information on the following:

- The purpose and benefits of introducing a GNQF for tertiary and higher education in The Gambia
- Structure and key features of the NQF
- Importance of standards (Learning Outcomes) in relation to qualifications
- Units of Learning
- Levels
- Credit values
- Credit transfer
- Entry requirements for tertiary and higher education courses of study

10.2. Testing of the Framework cum Level Descriptors

The Framework should be tested and open for public comments or suggestions. Selected qualifications currently on offer at the tertiary and higher education institutions should be tested whether the learning outcomes conforms to the level descriptors.

Similarly, graduates or current trainees in the selected programmes should be tested against the appropriate level descriptors to assess the effectiveness of the descriptors.

10.3. Standardising Qualification Levels and Finalising Credit Values

The following steps are to be undertaken by the Authority:

1. Identify and map the level of difficulty for each qualification currently on offer at each of the tertiary and higher education institutions against NQF Level Descriptors

2. Standardise qualification type (and possibly title) (i.e., Certificate (for e.g., WASSCE and GABECE), Advanced Certificate, Advanced Diploma, Degree, etc.) for each Qualification accredited in the tertiary and higher education institutions.
3. Determine duration of programmes of study to achieve each of the qualifications.
4. Determine the stand-alone 'units of learning' (learning outcomes) which make up each qualification.
5. Allocate credit points to the 'units of learning' (based on duration i.e., 1 credit point is equivalent to approximately 15 hours of learning).
6. Allocate a credit value to each qualification.

10.4. Gazetting of the Framework

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) should ensure that the framework is gazetted and thereby becoming law for all education and training providers, professional bodies and sector qualifications to follow.

Annex 1: GNQF Level Descriptors

Levels	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 1	A learner is able to: 1. acquires basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in an area of work and learning	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. Basic skills to participate in everyday life and further learning; 2. Cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a limited field of study; and 3. Technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies	Graduates at this level will apply knowledge and skills: 1. Under strict supervision in defined contexts and within established parameters in a given area(s); 2. for further learning opportunities in the area of study, life activities and/or a variety of initial routine and predictable work-related activities.	• Knowledge and understanding: has knowledge and understanding of basic concepts and simple tasks in given area. • Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and completes routine simple tasks under strict supervision. • Communication skills: Communicates basic information within familiar environment. • Judgmental skills: ensures that simplified assigned tasks have been completed effectively. • Learning Skills Acquires and applies basic competencies to well-defined actions. Acquires learning skills for further learning activities • Autonomy and Responsibility Takes some responsibility for completing simple routine tasks and exercises

	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 2	A learner is able to: 1. acquire basic concepts related to the immediate environment and expressed through a variety of simple tools as an entry point to lifelong learning; 2. know and understand the steps needed to perform routine task under continuous supervision; and 3. Understand the use basic learning textbooks and other materials	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. Ability to carry out a limited range of simple routine tasks; 2. Basic repetitive communication skills to perform and complete well-defined routine tasks; and 3. Follow basic health and safety instructions.	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. To do simple repetitive and familiar tasks; 2. To carries out activities under guidance and within simple defined timeframes; and 3. To observe basic occupational ethics.	• Knowledge and understanding: has basic knowledge and understanding of concepts and simple tasks while relating to the immediate environment • Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and completes repetitive simple tasks under a controlled system. • Communication skills: communicates basic information in familiar repetitive contexts. • Judgmental skills: assesses and ensures that assigned tasks have been completed effectively • Learning Skills Acquires and applies basic competencies to defined actions • Autonomy and Responsibility Takes some responsibility for completing simple tasks and exercises

	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 3	A learner is able to: 1. acquire basic general knowledge related to the immediate environment and expressed through a variety of simple tools and contexts as an entry point to lifelong learning; 2. know and understand the steps needed to complete simple tasks and activities in familiar environments; and 3. be aware and understand basic tasks and instructions.	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. basic knowledge and carry out a limited range of simple tasks; 2. basic repetitive communication skills to complete well-defined routine tasks and identifies whether actions have been accomplished; and 3. follow instructions and is aware of consequences of basic actions for self and others.	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. to perform simple repetitive and familiar tasks; 2. to take responsibility for the action of simple tasks performed; 3. to carry out activities under guidance and within simple defined timeframes; and 4. obtain basic key competences at this level.	Knowledge and understanding: has basic knowledge and understanding of textbooks and simple tasks while relating to the immediate environment Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and completes repetitive simple tasks in familiar contexts and under a quality- controlled system Communication skills: Communicates basic information in familiar repetitive contexts. Judgmental skills: assesses and ensures that assigned tasks have been completed effectively Learning skills: acquires and applies key competences to defined actions Autonomy and responsibility: takes some responsibility for completing simple tasks and exercises limited autonomy

	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 4	A learner is able to: 1. possess good knowledge of a field of work or study; 2. be aware of and interprets types of information and ideas; 3. understand facts and procedures in the application of non-routine tasks and instructions; and 4. Select and use relevant knowledge to accomplish specific actions for self and others	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. the ability to demonstrate a range of skills by carrying out a range of complex tasks within a specified field of work or study; 2. communicate comprehensive information and facts; and 3. ensure tasks are carried out effectively according to Instructions	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. to perform evidence-based structured tasks 2. to identify consequences for work processes within a team; 3. to carry out activities under limited supervision and with limited responsibility in a controlled context; and 4. obtain key competences at this level i.e., justify processes and results	Knowledge and understanding: understands and uses sound knowledge for tasks, procedures or a field of work or study Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and completes a range of well-defined tasks Communication skills: communicates information clearly in unfamiliar contexts Judgment skills: selects and uses information for specified tasks and is proactive Learning skills: acquires and applies key competences to a range of actions Autonomy and responsibility: takes responsibility and exercises autonomy in well-defined tasks under a controlled system

	Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 5	A learner is able to: 1. know and understand the relevance of theoretical aspect and information related to a field of work or study; 2. establish principles and concepts in a particular field of work or study; 3. evaluate and interpret facts. 4. know facts and understand procedures in the application of more complex tasks and instructions; and 5. select and use relevant knowledge acquired on one's own initiative to accomplish specific actions for self and others.	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. a range of developed skills to carry out more than one complex task effectively and in unfamiliar and unpredictable contexts; 2. communication of more complex information; 3. problem solving skills by applying basic methods, tools, materials and information given in a restricted learning environment; and	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. to do tasks systematically; 2. to adapt own behavior to circumstances in solving problems by participating proactively in structured learning environments; 3. to use own initiative with established responsibility and autonomy, but under supervised learning environments normally in a trade environment; and 4. to acquire key competences at this level as a basis for lifelong learning	Knowledge and understanding: understands theoretical knowledge and information related to complex procedures in a field of work or study Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and carries out complex tasks systematically and in unfamiliar and unpredictable contexts. Communication skills: communicates complex information in unfamiliar and unpredictable contexts. Judgment skills: assesses, evaluates and interprets facts related to a field of work or study and applies problem solving techniques Learning skills: acquires and applies key competences as a basis for lifelong learning Autonomy and responsibility: takes agreed responsibility for completing complex tasks, and interacts with the immediate environment and in defined actions at one's own initiative

	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 6	A learner is able to: 1. understand broad theoretical aspect and analyses of information related to a field of work or study; 2. know facts and establish principles in broad contexts within a field of work or study; 3. selects and compare theoretical information in broad contexts within a specific field of work or study	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. the ability to apply a range of technical or academic skills to carry out multiple complex tasks; 2. communication of theoretical or technical information in a work or learning environment; 3. solutions to specific problems within a field of work or study; and 4. use of facts and procedures in broad contexts within a defined field of work or study; and	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. To perform qualitative and quantitative tasks that require technical capacity. 2. To supervise the quality and quantity of work of self and others under quality assured structures, with responsibility and autonomy; and 3. To acquire advanced level of key competences as a basis for higher education and training	Knowledge and understanding: understands and analyses broad theoretical, practical and technical knowledge related to a field of work or study Applying knowledge and understanding: follows instructions and carries out defined theoretical, complex and technical tasks Communication skills: communicates theoretical and technical information in a work or learning context Judgmental skills: interacts with and generates solutions to problems within the immediate environment of a given field of work or study Learning skills: applies key competences to defined actions and to a technical or academic field of work or learning context Autonomy and responsibility: exercises autonomy and takes responsibility for defined qualitative and quantitative tasks of self and others by completing complex tasks in a broad context under quality assured mechanisms

	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 7	A learner is able to: 1. understand knowledge in a field of study that builds on technical or higher education and is typically at a level supported by adequate and relevant learning resources (textbooks, journals, research reports, labs etc); 2. develop strategic and creative responses in researching solutions to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; and 3. critically discuss theoretical or technical aspects based on relevant social and ethical issues	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. transfer of theoretical and practical knowledge, in creating solutions to problems; 2. convey of ideas in a well-structured and coherent way to peers, supervisors and clients using qualitative and quantitative information; 3. the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems; and 4. evaluation of own learning and identifies learning needs necessary to undertake further education and training	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. in managing projects with degree of independence that require problem-solving techniques where there are many factors, some of which interact and lead to unpredictable outcomes; 2. in managing people and reviews performance of self and others; trains others and develops team performance; 3. to express comprehensive internalized personal world view reflecting engagement and solidarity with others; and 4. to undertake further studies with a degree of autonomy	Knowledge and understanding: understands advanced educational resources which may lead to further academic or vocational learning and researches solutions to abstract problems Applying knowledge and understanding demonstrates operational capacity and management skills using creativity Communication skills interacts with others to convey abstract and concrete solutions to problems in a field of work or study Judgmental skills: Formulates practical and theoretical responses to abstract and concrete problems and makes judgments on social and ethical issues. Learning skills: evaluates own learning and can improve key competences for further learning, and promotes team training Autonomy and responsibility: is responsible for the effective and efficient management of projects and people within agreed timeframes

	Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 8	A learner is able to: 1. understands knowledge that builds on technical or higher education and typically includes some aspects that will be informed by the field of study; 2. use detailed theoretical and practical knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of study and involves critical understanding of theories and principles; 3. understand methods and tools in a complex and specialized field of work or study and innovation in terms of methods used; and 4. critically discuss theoretical or	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. application of knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to work or study; 2. communicates ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences using a range of techniques involving qualitative and quantitative information; 3. the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within the field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues; 4. devises and sustains arguments to solve problems; and 5. consistently evaluates own learning and identifies learning needs.	Graduates at this level should be able to apply of knowledge and skills: 1. on administrative design, resource and team management skills; 2. to be responsible for work or study contexts that are unpredictable and require that complex problems are solved; 3. to show creativity and initiative in developing projects in management processes, manages and trains people to develop team performance; and 4. to develop learning skills necessary to continue to undertake further studies with a high degree of autonomy	Knowledge and understanding: understands professional theoretical and practical knowledge in a specialized field of work or study Applying knowledge and understanding: demonstrates innovative theoretical and practical responses to work or study contexts Communication skills: communicates ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences using a range of techniques involving qualitative and quantitative information to sustain arguments Judgment skills: makes professional judgments on social and ethical issues within the area of specialization, develop higher level problem-solving skills, and evaluates the management of projects and people Learning skills: assesses own learning and can specialize in one or more key competences for further learning Autonomy and responsibility:

	technical aspects based on relevant social and ethical issues that arise in a field of work or study			is responsible for the management of creative and innovative projects and the team's performance
	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 9	A learner is able to: 1. have comprehensive knowledge and understanding that is founded on and extends and/or enhances that knowledge typically associated with bachelors' level; 2. use specialized or multidisciplinary contemporary theoretical and practical knowledge of a field of study. This knowledge forms the basis of originality in developing and, or applying ideas	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: 1. specialized or multidisciplinary knowledge that includes reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of one's knowledge and judgements; 2. ability to communicate to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly work or study related conclusions and knowledge, which may be the outcome of research, self-study or experience; 3. critical evaluations and analysis with incomplete or limited information to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments,	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: 1. to conduct research-based diagnosis of problems by integrating knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields and makes judgments with incomplete or limited information; 2. to manage people and projects and demonstrates the ability to respond to the fast-changing business environment; 3. to demonstrate autonomy in the direction of learning and a high level of understanding of learning processes; and	Knowledge and understanding: has comprehensive specialized or multidisciplinary theoretical and practical knowledge which forms the basis of original research, which may contribute to social and ethical issues Applying knowledge and understanding: demonstrates capability in using knowledge and skills, to adapt to the fast-changing business environment and to manage people and projects efficiently Communication skills: communicates with specialist and non-specialist audiences, clearly and conclusions of which may be the outcome of original research, self-study or experience Judgment skills: performs critical evaluations and analysis with incomplete or limited information to solve problems in new or unfamiliar contexts, and to produce original research

		and to produce original research; - new skills in response to emerging knowledge and techniques; and - leadership skills and innovation in complex and unpredictable work and study contexts	to allow continuation to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous	Learning skills: makes assessments of personal continuous professional development, takes initiative to undertake self-directed study and may proceed to further specialization Autonomy and responsibility: is accountable and responsible for the original research within a personal social responsibility and/or business context, for one's operations and for adapting the management of people and projects reflecting the dynamic nature of the environment in which one operates.
	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competencies	Learning Outcomes
Level 10	A learner is able to: - have a systematic understanding of a highly specialized field of study which builds on a specialized or multidisciplinary contemporary knowledge and understanding; and - extends or redefines existing knowledge	A learner at this level is able to demonstrate: - mastery of skills in the selection and analysis of research, writing, design, development and sustainability of the argument manifested in innovative scholarly research; - adaptation to technological, social and cultural issues, and	Graduates at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills: - to demonstrate authority in a specialized field of work or study and makes judgments involving a multitude of interacting factors; - to promote social, scientific and ethical advancement through actions; and	Knowledge and understanding: has theoretical and practical expertise in a specialized field of knowledge that has potential to contribute to social and ethical issues in a national and international dimension. Applying knowledge and understanding: demonstrates leadership and innovation in mastering research in work and study contexts Communication skills: communicates expertise to a wide audience including peers and the

	and, or professional practice	addresses the needs of a knowledge-based society; 3. the ability to communicate expertise to a wide audience including peers and the general public using different methods including national and international publications, and participates in specialist fora; and 4. expertise in critical evaluations and analysis with incomplete or limited information to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments, and to produce original research.	3. sustained commitment to the development of new ideas	general public using different methods including national and international publications, and participates in specialist fora; Judgment skills: demonstrates expertise in critical evaluations and analysis with incomplete or limited information to solve problems in new or unfamiliar environments, and to produce original research Learning skills: has a sustained commitment to generating new ideas and innovative projects related to technological, cultural and social development. Autonomy and responsibility: is responsible for the leadership of a number of specialized projects and an authority in a specialized field of work or study
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Reference Systems: South African National Qualifications Framework; Kenya Qualifications Framework; NQF level descriptors in European countries European Union, 2018

ANNEX 2: MAIN FIELDS OF STUDY

Main field of Study	Sub-fields	Programmes
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	ECD Learning	
	Basic and Secondary Education	
	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	
	Non-TVET Higher Education	
	Adult and Non-formal Learning	
HUMANITY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE	Religion and Theology	
	Language studies	
	Social and Behavioral Science	
	Community Development Studies	
	Journalism and information	
AGRICULTURE AND NATURE CONSERVATION	Primary Agriculture	
	Secondary Agriculture	
	Nature and Wildlife	
	Forestry	
ART, CULTURE AND CRAFT	Design Studies	
	Sports	
	Visual Arts	
	Film, Television and Video	
	Performing Art and Cultural show	
BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	Economics, Finance and Accounting	
	Administration and Management	
	Marketing	
	Procurement and Purchasing	
	Insurance and Banking	
ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING	Engineering	
	Manufacturing and Processing/Assembly	
	Mining and Extraction	
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	Medical and Allied Health Sciences	
	Social care services	
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	Mathematics and Statistics	
	Computing and Information Technology	
	Physical Science	
	Life Science	
	Earth and Space Science	
	Environmental Science	
	Building Trades	

ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING	Building Construction and Civil Engineering	
	Physical Planning	
LAW AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Law	
	Security Services	
SERVICES	Transport, Logistics and Operations	
	Wholesale and Retail	
	Customer Services	
	Personal Care	
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY	Travel and Tourism Management	
	Recreation and Leisure	
	Gaming	
	Food and Beverage operations	
	Professional Cookery	
	Room Divisions Operations	

