



**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND
QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTHORITY**

Ensuring Quality and Relevant Post-Secondary Education

THE GAMBIA SKILLS QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (GSQF) 2023

Policy Document
02nd Edition

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- Mr Abdoulie Sowe, Chairman - National Association of Vocational Training Institutions
- Dodou Drammeh, NAWEC
- Momodou Lamin Sambou, Insight Training Centre
- Daba Krubally, Personnel Management Office
- Baboucarr Suwareh, Public Service Commission
- Mohammed H. Loum, Euclid Online University
- Mr. Musa Jawara, NAQAA
- Mrs. Ya Awa Njie, NAQAA
- Mr. Lamin B. Manneh, NAQAA
- Mrs. Dado Kah, NAQAA
- Mr. Babou Ceesay, NAQAA
- Mass Faye, NAQAA
- Anthony G. Mendy, MoHERST
- Muhammed Barry, NAQAA

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Acronyms

- **AAC**– Assessment Accreditation Center
- **CDP** – Curriculum Delivery Plan
- **ESP** – Education Sector Policy
- **GBoS** – Gambia Bureau of Statistics
- **GNQF** – Gambia National Qualifications Framework
- **GSQF** – Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework
- **HDI** – Human Development Index
- **IGF** – Internally Generated Funds
- **ILO** – International Labour Organisation
- **ISCED** – International Standard Classification of Education
- **LWL** – Life-wide Learning
- **MoHERST** – Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology
- **NAQAA** – National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
- **NDP** – National Development Plan
- **NSP** – National Standards Panel
- **SDGs** – Sustainable Development Goals
- **TVET** – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

1.0 Introduction

This document sets out a national policy for the development of a system of national skills standards and qualifications for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) collectively known as the Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF) – which is a sub-framework within the National Qualifications Framework of The Gambia.

A Qualifications Framework can be regarded as a coherent structure of standards, qualifications, levels of qualifications and processes developed and maintained in a quality assured manner with the aim of improving, regularising, and localising the attainment of skills and competences. It is therefore an important instrument in the social and economic development of the nation.

The GSQF caters for a wide range of learners such as early school leavers, senior secondary school graduates, adult learners, and apprentices (formal/informal) among others. The GSQF is gender sensitive and caters for the needs of women and girls as well as learners with special needs (differently abled people).

This policy document reviews the 01st edition of the GSQF 2006 and takes into consideration current Labour Market needs, skills that are about to become obsolete, and future labour market and societal needs as expressed by employers, and other stakeholders as well as through research. The GSQF 2006 went up to level 5 and had a foundation level (with no occupational credit), which should be completed in 48 months. The current GSQF is aligned to the GNQF and goes up to level 7. The foundation level of the GSQF 2006 is eliminated, and now replaced with levels 1 foundation certificate 1, and level 1 foundation certificate 2. The development of this policy document was also benchmarked against international best practices.

1.1 Legal Context

The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) was established by an Act of parliament in 2015. This act that was revised in 2021, and mandates NAQAA to:

- monitor and oversee the quality assurance practices of tertiary and higher education institutions for continuous quality improvement;
- develop policy and criteria for assessment, recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer;
- develop criteria and standards for the establishment, registration and accreditation and regulation of tertiary and higher education institutions;
- promote the involvement of the community, employers, trade unions, private sector and international donors in tertiary and higher education; and
- harmonize and streamline all professional, tertiary and higher education programmes to reflect human resource development and needs of the country.

1.2 Socio-economic Context

According to the Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) the total population of the Gambia has grown from 1,857,181 in 2013 to 1,922,950 people in 2015-2016¹. Average illiteracy rate amongst the population aged 15 years and above is 44.9%². This suggest that a little below half of the workforce cannot read and/or write. According to the Human Development Report (2018), the country recorded a life expectancy at birth of 61.4 years, expected years of schooling of 9.2 years and a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.460³. The HDI score suggests there is huge need for the country to align its national development plans to strengthening human capital formation.

As The Gambia remains committed to developing its human resource base, with emphasis on the critical areas for the realization of the SDGs and Education Sector-Wide Policy⁴, the development of a National Skills Qualification Framework is critical towards poverty alleviation and the attainment of sustainable economic growth. In rural Gambia, where illiteracy levels are high, the delivery of functional skills to the informal and non-formal apprenticeship sector is a priority area for the GSQF.

The GSQF provides inclusive education and training which embraces the non-formal and informal sectors of society. The Gambia Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF) is based on needs and realities of The Gambia, by:

- reflecting the skills and competences needed to support human resource development across all economic sectors;
- harmonising local qualifications;

¹ Population Distribution - 5 Observations - GBoS (gbosdata.org)

² GBoS Census, 2013, pp ix

³ The HDI index (The Gambia ranked 174 out of 189 (United Nations Development Programme, 2018)

⁴ Education sector-wide Policy, 2016 – 2030, pp. 5

- providing standards and pathways that supports continuous and continual vocational lifelong learning; and
- catering for all learners' needs.

1.3 Alignment

The GSQF as a matter of priority is aligned to the GNQF. The GSQF is also aligned to the *National TVET Policy (2021 – 2030)*, the *Education Sector-wide Policy (2016-2030)*, *Tertiary & Higher Education Policy* of MoHERST (2014 - 2023). Reference was also made to the *NAQAA Apprenticeship and Industrial Attachment Policy*.

In the *Green-Focused Development NDP (2023 – 2027)*, the Government is committed to promoting TVET and other skills-enhancing initiatives to match the job market; and to enhance access to informal and non-formal education to build a more skilled and productive work force⁵. The GSQF is also benchmarked to other International Qualification Frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)⁶.

2.0 Objectives

The GSQF promotes TVET for all. It is an integrated framework that includes formal, non-formal and informal learning of skills at basic, secondary and post-secondary institutions and on-the-job full-time and part-time learning. The GSQF makes provision for learners in all languages and dialects, apprenticeship (school-based and workshop-based), mature adults as well as new entrants into the workforce.

The main objectives of the GSQF are:

- I. To establish a harmonised national skills qualification system;
- II. To enhance the value of TVET qualifications in The Gambia;
- III. To create a coherent system of qualifications issued in The Gambian TVET system;
- IV. To shift from input-based, to an outcome-based skills training system;
- V. To facilitate a better understanding by the Labour Market of the National Skills Qualifications Framework;
- VI. To enhance the portability of Gambia TVET Qualifications;
- VII. To promote Life-Long and Life-Wide Learning;
- VIII. To promote social inclusion, access, and affordability of TVET programmes through alternative learning schemes (e.g., TVET-on-wheels, simulation software, ODeL etc.).
- IX. To promote job-creation by integrating entrepreneurship in TVET programs.

3.0 GSQF Skills

The Skills Framework of the GSQ entails both *functional* and *occupational skills* which represent transferable sets of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment and act as a foundation for lifelong

⁵ The Gambia National Development Plan, 2018 – 2021, abridged version, pp 15

⁶ Analysis and overview of NQF level descriptors in European countries (CEDEFOP, 2018) available at http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5566_en.pdf

learning. Functional skills are required in specific subject areas in order to complete a qualification level. In the GSQF, the identified functional skills are in the following subject areas: (i) Work, (ii) Life, (iii) Numeracy/Maths, (iv) Technical Drawing, (v) Literacy/English, (vi) ICT, and (vii) Entrepreneurship.

Occupational skills are required to accomplish a particular task in a specific field of work / occupation. Tasks to be accomplished in specific fields of work / occupation are predetermined and validated by the employment industry and other relevant stakeholders.

3.1 Skills Standards

Skills Standards have multiple uses. For Skills Standards to be credible and accepted, they must be carefully developed by experts with real practical knowledge of the field of work, to an agreed quality, and they must be maintained up to date. Some uses of Skills Standards may include but are not limited to:

- Development of Qualifications
- Providing a platform for benchmarking
- Deriving curricula for education and training
- Setting targets to guide delivery of curricula
- Preparing training materials
- Preparing assessment tasks and marking assessment evidence
- Identifying individual training needs
- Identifying career pathways

4.0 GSQF Qualification

In the GSQF, a qualification is awarded, after confirming through formal assessment that prescribed learning outcomes and required competences have been achieved. A qualification is the proven ability to perform defined functional and occupational skills tasks at a particular level. A qualification is a collection of occupational and functional skill standards known as ***unit standards***. Qualifications represent the results of learning, through non-formal, informal, or formal settings.

4.1 Unit Standards

Qualifications are made up of a group of unit standards. Unit Standards are developed to integrate education and training outputs with the requirements of the world of work. A Unit Standard, often known as a Unit, is the smallest portion that can be individually assessed. A Unit Standard is a statement in precise language, of the desirable skills and competencies considered necessary by employers for the performance of a particular occupation at a required level of quality. Unit Standards are divided into two main categories:- functional and occupational skills.

5.0 Access & Affordability

The GSQF promotes inclusivity, access and affordability. Access to GSQF qualifications should be open and inclusive. Barriers to enter training should be removed where possible

taking into consideration the following:

- Candidates seeking for the award of a qualification within the GSQF should not be discriminated based on gender, origin, special needs, location, etc.
- Access to a qualification level should be affordable, and need not be dependent upon achievement of a previous level of qualification, as this may lead to time served qualifications rather than performance based on learning outcomes awards; and
- Relevant skills, knowledge and competences acquired through non-formal, or informal settings, should be considered as entry requirements to a qualification.

5.1 Progression

Qualifications, once acquired can lead to:

- Further qualifications within the field or sub-field of study at a higher level
- Employment, self-employment opportunities

6.0 GSQF Levels

The GSQF is aligned to the GNQF and has qualifications at seven (7) levels. As the qualification level increases, the levels of competency, responsibility and autonomy also increase. In addition, tasks at higher levels become more complex and less routine.

For purposes of progression, Level 1 is divided into foundation level certificates 1 and 2, with minimum coverage period of 9 months and a total of 30 qualification credits for each level. It must be reemphasized that entry requirements into level 1, foundation certificate 2 are not necessarily dependent upon achievement of a qualification certificate from level 1, foundation 1. At level 1, emphasis is placed more on functional skills, and less on occupational skills. From levels 1 to 2, the use of English language as a functional skill may be substituted with other languages of instruction as part of literacy skills (e.g., Arabic). Similarly, the use of mathematics at these levels (1 to 2), may be substituted with the use of other acceptable numeracy skills (i.e., drawings, measuring, estimating, sorting, counting, noticing patterns etc.) commensurate to the field of study.

Levels 2 and 3 in the GSQF are divided into 2 levels, with one level dedicated for practical students. In line with Higher Education policy directives, the GSQF introduces *Entrepreneurship* at level 3 as a key functional skill.

Table 1.0 GSQF Qualification Levels & Unit Structures

Qualification Levels	Total No of Credits in Qualification	FUNCTIONAL SKILLS CREDITS							OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS CREDITS
		Work	Life	Numeracy / Maths	Technical Drawing	literacy/EENG	ICT	Entrepreneurship	<i>Minimum Number</i>
Level 7	60	4	0	2	4	2	2	6	40
Level 6	30	1	0	1	2	2	1	3	20

Level 5	30	1	0	2	2	1	1	3	<i>20</i>
Level 4	30	2	0	1	2	1	2	2	<i>20</i>
Level 3	30	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	<i>20</i>
Level 3: <i>Practical</i>	30	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	<i>20</i>
Level 2	30	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	<i>20</i>
Level 2: <i>Practical</i>	30	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	<i>20</i>
Level 1: <i>Foundation Certificate 2</i>	30	4	4	4	2	4	2	0	<i>10</i>
Level 1: <i>Foundation Certificate 1</i>	30	4	6	4	0	4	2	0	<i>10</i>

The GSQF at level 1 caters for adults and trainees from non-formal / informal backgrounds, as well as early school leavers. Levels 2 and 3 have “**Practical**” sub-grades which focus more on practical work and less on written assessments (i.e., English communication and numeracy). Practical level qualifications provide certification in specialized areas of work and can also facilitate progression to other higher-level qualifications. However, level 4 qualification upward in the GSQ framework reflects progression into higher, harder and more complex level qualifications which require key functional and occupational skills which cannot be negotiated.

7.0 GSQF Level Descriptors⁷

It is important that levels are clearly described in the National Skills Qualifications Framework so that all learners are assessed at same levels according to similar standards. Descriptors are indicative of achievements at a particular level, and do not distinguish between performance within a level. Level descriptors are designed to guide the development of unit standards within a qualification.

The Level Descriptors in the GSQF are therefore more focused on **learning outcomes**, rather than on the process of learning. For each level, clear description is provided vis-à-vis key requirements to ensure **knowledge and understanding** (i.e., key theoretical aspects of the field of study); **functional and occupational skills**; **key competencies** (i.e., ability to demonstrate application of knowledge and skills in context); and **level of autonomy / responsibility** whilst performing tasks.

8.0 GSQF Credits

A credit system has been built into the GSQF for many purposes and benefits including ease of comparability and transfer of accumulated credit from one academic system to another. The in-built credit system gives the GSQF an easily recognizable coherence and allows standard developers to weigh up and “value” each unit against other topics of learning within a qualification.

⁷ See Annex B

The definition of a credit in the GSQF is as per the definition of a credit in the GNQF. A credit is the volume of learning required, quantified as the number of notional study hours to achieve the learning outcomes specified for qualification or part-qualification (unit standard). In other words, credits allocated to a unit standard reflect the notional learning time it is expected to take learners to meet the outcome performance requirements in the unit standard. Notional learning time includes:

- time spent in structured tuition;
- self-directed learning and practice;
- time taken to gather and provide evidence for assessment purposes; and
- time taken for assessment in all the outcomes and contexts.

Credit points or credit values are allocated to functional and occupational skills for each qualification level in the GSQF. Total credit values per qualification level in the GSQF are aligned to those of the GNQF. The sum of functional and occupational skills credit values together constitutes total credit points / values which should be completed by a learner to acquire a qualification in the GSQF.

In the GSQF, one credit hour represents a ***notional 15 hours of guided learning, practice, and assessment time*** with respect to the outcomes and contexts of the unit standard. Self-learning is twice that of guided learning (i.e., **1 Credit Hour = 15 Hours Guided Learning and 30 Hours of Individual / Self Learning**).

9.0 Mapping GSQF Levels to the ILO Classification of Labour

The GSQF qualification levels are mapped to the ***International Labour of Organisation (ILO)*** classification of labour. According to the ILO, there are 4 categories of labour, namely:

(i) Unskilled:

An unskilled employee is one who does operations that involve the performance of simple duties, which require the experience of little or no independent judgment or previous experience although familiarity with the occupational environment is necessary. His work may thus require in addition to physical exertion familiarity with variety of articles or goods.

(ii) Semi-skilled:

A semiskilled worker is one who does work generally of defined routine nature wherein the major requirement is not so much of the judgment, skill and but for proper discharge of duties assigned to him or relatively narrow job and where important decisions made by others. His work is thus limited to the performance of routine operations of limited scope.

(iii) Skilled:

A skilled employee is one who is capable of working efficiently of exercising considerable independent judgement and of discharging his duties with responsibility. He must possess a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the trade, craft or industry in which he is employed.

(iv) **Highly Skilled:**

A highly skilled worker is one who is capable of working efficiently and supervises efficiently the work of skilled employees.

Table 2.0 **Mapping GSQF Levels to ILO Labour Classification**

GSQF Levels	Qualification	ILO Labour Classification
7	Bachelors	Highly Skilled
6	Higher National Diploma / Higher Diploma	Skilled
5	National Diploma / Diploma	Skilled
4	Certificate 3	Semi-Skilled
3	Certificate 2	Semi-Skilled
2	Certificate 1	Unskilled
1	Foundation Certificates (levels 1 & 2)	Unskilled

10.0 Mapping GSQF Levels to the ISCED

The International Standards Classification for Education (ISCED) is the reference international classification for organizing education programmes and related qualifications by levels and fields. It is an 8-level international framework that spans from pre-school to doctorate degree in education, which takes into consideration general education, TVET, informal and non-formal education. Table 3.0 shows how the GSQF is mapped to the ISCED. Annex D shows the ISCED framework.

Table 3.0 **Mapping GSQF Levels to ISCED Qualification Levels**

GSQF Level	ISCED Level	GSQF Qualification	ISCED Qualification
N/A	8	N/A	Doctorate Degree
N/A	7	N/A	Master's Degree
7	6	Bachelors	Bachelor's Degree
6	5	HND / HD	Associate Degree
5	4	ND / D	Higher Vocational Education
3 & 4	3	Certificate 2 & 3	Secondary Vocational Education
2	2	Certificate 1	Common Junior Middle School / Vocational Junior Middle School
1	1	Foundation Certificates 1 & 2	Primary
N/A	0	N/A	Pre-School

11.0 Development of Qualification Standards

NAQAA drives the process for the development of all standards for qualifications in higher education, including TVET. To ensure formulation of demand-driven standards that support Gambian social and economic development, a Standards Panel is established comprising of

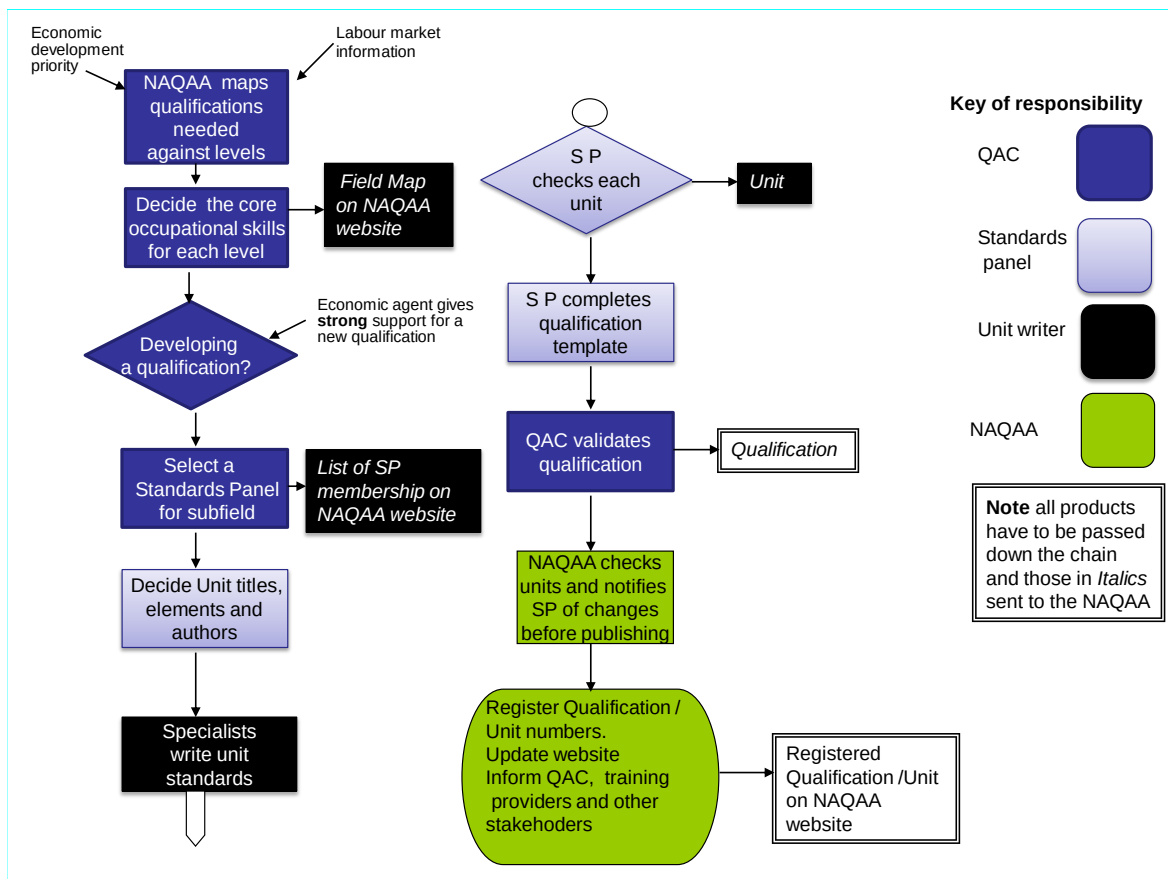
the following stakeholders (also including NAQAA):

- Employers from large and small enterprises
- Education and Training providers
- Sector bodies
- Government Ministries and Agencies
- Trade Unions
- Awarding body
- Other experts

The role of NAQAA in the development and validation of qualification standards:

- Constitute a National Standards Panel (NSP)
- Provide training for the NSP on development of qualifications and unit standards
- Act as a link between education and training providers and employers
- Publish the products on the NAQAA website
- Keep education and training providers, assessors and the awarding body informed.

Figure 1. Qualifications Standards Development Flowchart



12.0 Development of Curricula based on Unit Standards

Unit standards are not training/learning documents, but they document abilities that learners require, in order to demonstrate performance standards described in the relevant unit standards document. NAQAA will not develop curricula for unit standards. This task is the job of the education and training providers. The curriculum is owned by the education and training provider. NAQAA will develop guideline(s) to aid the development of curriculum based on unit standards. The guideline(s) will be made available to education and training providers to assist them to develop curricula from unit standards. Periodic trainings will be needed for the education and training providers in developing curricula from unit standards.

All Curricula developed nationally will be validated by NAQAA and relevant stakeholders. However, to ensure that trainers have given important thought to how they are going to deliver their programme to cover required knowledge and skill competencies within the standards, the education and training provider will develop Curriculum Delivery Plans (CDPs) and course files of their programme(s). The CDPs and course files must be submitted to NAQAA and will be required by NAQAA under GSQF quality systems.

13.0 Assessment

Assessment is a structured process for gathering evidence and making judgements about an individual's performance in relation to registered National Skills Standards. The GSQF reflects the skills acquired by attending a training course that includes a limited period of on-the-job training through an attachment, apprenticeship and or practical experience at the training institution, or working on the job for a period of time. Assessment in the GSQF, advocates for a strict system and practice where qualifications are only awarded to those who have completed the performance criteria set by the skill standards, so that the awards are valued and recognised.

The GSQF can assess and reflect a candidate's theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquisition through quality assured assessment measures and procedures. Assessment in performance-based training focuses on the learner's ability to demonstrate applied knowledge and competence of the learning outcome. Since many of the competences in the GSQF are practical in nature, it will be inappropriate to have traditional examinations to accredit skills training, except for levels 4 up to 7 in certain circumstances. There is need to have practical instruments of assessment to ensure that the trainee can perform at specified levels of the unit standards. Assessment is a light touch at the lower levels, and at the higher levels where trainees have to take more responsibility, the assessment regime becomes tighter and more intensive. Therefore, this GSQF based on experiences drawn from a decade of operationalization of the first edition, caters for the development of an assessment system that is credible and does not over assess.

13.1 Assessment Verification

Education and Training Providers must have adequate licensed trainers and at least one trained assessor-trainer for each accredited qualification. The assessor-trainer may be from a training provider or from industry. The trainer and assessor-trainer may be the same person, but the assessor-trainer cannot verify his/her own assessments.

If the assessor-verifier or NAQAA finds any irregularity with the assessment procedure, then the NAQAA will have the power to revoke the assessor-trainer's licence and the accreditation of the education and training provider and or assessment administration centre. NAQAA has a database of assessor-trainers and assessor-verifiers which is regularly updated.

13.2 Qualification Certification

Trainees upon completion of a training program, require recognition of their training. Certifications are official designated credentials earned by an individual to attest their legitimacy and competence to perform job tasks after having undergone training for a period of time. Certification in the GSQF is awarded as an official documentation confirming acquisition of a qualification level, however only after trainee has passed proper assessments processes and procedures validated by NAQAA.

14.0 Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

The GSQF recognises the right to assessment on demand, where assessment process is completed without individual requesting for assessment having undergone any prior training. Individuals who are likely to use prior learning are:

- individuals seeking recognition for past work experience or achievements, either for entry into training programs or for career development purposes;
- individuals seeking to "top up" an existing qualification (e.g., a previous certificate plus work experience may represent achievement of a GSQ);
- persons who left a programme before completion, wishing to count that learning experience towards another award; and
- those with overseas qualifications wanting credits towards a Gambian Skills Qualification and in some instances a complete qualification.

The GSQF also recognises the need for *Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning*. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is geared towards awarding qualifications on the basis of demonstrated learning that occurred at some time in the past. This learning may have come about as the result of a course, of self-directed study, or experience. The learning will still need to be holistically assessed against the wider purpose of the qualification and in accordance with the general level, breadth and depth of the learning expected for the particular Gambian Skills Qualification or Unit Standards and accredited accordingly.

14.1 Benefits of APEL

There are numerous benefits of APEL such as:

1. Presenting unique opportunities for personal development to many who up until now, have acquired no formal qualifications, but can perform job tasks to required standards.
2. Facilitating TVET accessibility and places a positive value on informal or non-formal education. APEL accelerates the pathway to a qualification and may prove less costly than fees for taught qualifications.

3. Serving as a vehicle for learners to integrate theory with practice and promotes reflective practice through identification of learning from experience, and application of learnt experience in practical settings.

15.0 Implementation of the GSQF

NAQAA in consultation and partnership with relevant stakeholders shall develop an *Implementation Strategy and Action Plan* for the execution of core activities of the GSQF. Core activities will include the establishment of Standards Panels to review, revise and align existing training programs based on the standards and level descriptors of the GNQF. Where applicable, new qualifications will be developed by the Standards Panels in more organised and targeted approaches, according to priority to areas where there is a skills gap / shortage, and which are responsive to national development needs.

Sensitization and capacity building trainings are key towards the successful implementation of the GSQF. Public sensitization programs shall be embarked upon to popularize, increase awareness and promote national ownership of the GSQF. Induction seminars shall be organized by NAQAA, where all private and public education and training providers shall be trained in the interpretation and use of the GSQF to ensure harmonisation through and application across the board, of basic minimum standards as encapsulated in the GNQF.

NAQAA shall lead the process for the development of a ***GSQF Operations Manual***. This operations manual shall in a systematic approach, define, explain, and elaborate all requisite processes and procedures for the development of qualifications standards, conducting assessments, and certification among other key considerations in the GSQF. The GSQF Operations Manual shall develop templates, where applicable, which could be used for the operationalization of processes and procedures towards the achievements of set objectives, outputs and outcomes described in the GSQF Policy. The GSQF Operations Manual must be read in parallel with the GSQF Policy Document to facilitate a holistic comprehension and support successful and sustainable implementation of the GSQF.

15.1 Financing Implementation of the GSQF

NAQAA in consultation with requisite authorities and in partnership with stakeholders shall seek to establish the ***Skills Development Fund***. The Skills Development Fund shall be managed by NAQAA. The Fund shall be financed through diverse resource mobilization strategies and upscaling of NAQAA Internally Generated Funds (IGF) activities.

16.0 Conclusion

MoHERST shall ensure that the GSQF policy document framework is gazetted, thereby becoming law for all TVET institutions to abide by. The GSQF shall be subject to review at least every 3 years. NAQAA will continue to work with development partners and relevant stakeholders for the sustainable achievement of higher education / TVET goals and objectives in The Gambia.

Annex A: Glossary of Terms

Terminology used in the GSQF	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 underrepresented 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 and/or informal contexts, and that it was effective. Where accredited learning is used to grant entry into a programme or course, 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 aggrieved by an assessment or other operational decision to appeal to NAQAA in writing
Apprenticeship	Traditional method of acquiring skills
Assessment	Identified methods that will be used to indicate whether or not a person has attained an outcome of learning. It is a process for collecting and interpreting evidence of ability or competence. It involves: - collecting evidence with regard to knowledge and skills of a person; - judging the usefulness of the evidence collected; - making decisions about what the evidence says about the knowledge and skills of a person. The assessor obtains from the unit standard a benchmark against which to make their decisions. Assessment may take place as and when the learner is ready. Where the interpretation of evidence is against transparent performance criteria, assessment can be referred to as standards based.
Assessment instrument	Any tool used to establish a student's progress/achievement – this includes observation checklists of practical activities, tests, exams, projects etc.

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
Assessment Administration Centre (AAC)	A regional centre to manage assessment procedures within a district. An assessment Administration Centre will link training providers, employers and individual candidates with registered assessor-trainers and assessor-verifiers and pass assessment results onto the awarding body.
Assessment Centres (AC)	Assessment Centres across the country to be formally accredited by NAQAA to manage assessment procedures upon the recommendation of the AAC.
Assessor	A trainer, employer or a person accredited by the NAQAA to gather and judge evidence of learners' competence and confirm their achievement.
Attitudes	Performance of skills or use of knowledge within the value system of the company and society.
Attribute	The quality belonging to or forming part of the nature of a person.
Audit	An audit is an evaluation of an organization, system, process, project or product to ensure it is financially sound and the management is effective.
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	A precise measure of the skill required to perform a task to the required quality.
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, outcomes-based/expressed training .
Course	A discrete component of learning or training pathway that equips an individual with the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and habits relevant to the requirements for the award of a unit standard or qualification.
Credit	Value assigned to a unit standard or qualification that represents the notional learning time required to meet the performance requirements and standards of the unit standard or qualification. One credit equates to 10 hours of notional

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
	learning time.
Criteria	Established rules, standards or principles, on which a judgement is based.
Curriculum	Course of study offered by an education and/or training provider. Curriculum documents tend to be quite broad and general in what they say.
Entry requirements	The qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience required for entry to a 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 verifier	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 GSQF and that the <i>qualifications</i> awarded to learners are justified.
Field Map	A chart indicating the qualifications needed to be developed at the different levels for a particular occupational area or field.
Formal learning/Education	Learning that is largely directed by professional educators and trainers within dedicated learning organisations.
Framework	Collectively, refers to all nationally registered qualifications and their associated unit standards, the defined and logical relationships between them, and the integrated quality assurance processes that provide the basis for the accreditation of learning and the determination of equivalences of vocational qualifications.
Gambian Skills Qualifications Framework (GSQF)	An integrated system of nationally recognised qualifications and nationally endorsed standards for the recognition of technical and vocational skills, knowledge and competencies.
Internal verifier	Any person within a training provider given responsibility for ensuring that all internal <i>assessments</i> are <i>valid, reliable, practicable</i> and <i>cost-effective</i>
Informal Learning /Education	In terms of the learning context, learning resources, learning time, and learning objectives, informal learning is defined as having "a low degree of planning and organizing. It is distinct from formal, non-formal, and self-regulated learning since it has

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
	no predetermined goal in terms of learning outcomes but instead focuses on the learner's intention to act.
Functional Skills	These represent a transferable, package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning: Literacy in their mother tongue, English communication, work skills (health and safety, customer care, HIV / AIDS, team work, planning, sustainability and self-development) life skills, business / entrepreneurial, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology. <i>See generic skills.</i>
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 rights, authority and reputation to represent the interests and views of key stakeholders 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.
Level	A measure of the degree of complexity, learner autonomy and required range of achievement of the qualification. GSQF has a Foundation Level plus four main levels.
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

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
	there are many opportunities for talking, sharing and collaborating.
Mentoring	The continuous or periodic review of programme implementation by 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/Education	Non-formal learning refers to a variety of structured learning situations that typically occur naturally and voluntarily as a part of other activities and do not have the same level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation, or certification as "formal learning," but have more structure than informal learning.
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.

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
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 GSQF 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 lengths – i.e. there is no fixed time duration. One component of a curriculum that addresses an instructional (learning) area or course – e.g. welding, child care, electronics. ((ILO International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training (1987)).
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.
Project work	A substantial piece of work in which learners are required to carry out research, planning, problem solving and evaluation over a period of time. This can be used for teaching and learning, for <i>assessment</i> or as a combination of the two.
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	The process of ensuring that established <i>quality</i> standards 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>.
Rationale	The justification and purpose of modules/programme. It normally indicates that a need has been identified and addressed by the curriculum.
Relevance	Being pertinent to the matter at hand or applicable to social

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
	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.
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).
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.

Terminology used in the GSQF	Meaning
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
Workplace (non-formal or informal)	Working in a place where there are no systems eg a roadside garage

Annex B: GSOF Level Descriptors

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
Level 7	Learner should be able to: 1. Understand knowledge in a field of study that builds on technical education supported by adequate and relevant learning resources. 2. Develop strategic responses to research and find practical and workable solutions. 3. critically discuss theoretical or technical aspects based on relevant social and ethical issues.	Learner at this level should be able to: 1. Identify learning needs necessary to undertake further education. 2. Identify and use data to formulate well-defined responses to address concrete and abstract problems. 3. Convey ideas in a well-structured and coherent manner to peers, supervisors and clients using qualitative and quantitative information. 4. Identify societal problems and job-market needs geared towards employment creation. 5. Ability to tell the	Learner at this level should be able to 1. Demonstrate practical, job-related skills to develop sustainable solutions towards addressing problems.	Graduate at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills to: 1. Manage projects with a degree of independence that require problem-solving techniques where there are multiple factors, some of which may interact and lead to unpredictable outcomes. 2. Creatively manage projects, people and resources, and reviews performance of self and others. 3. Trains others and develops team performance. 4. Expresses a comprehensive internalized personal world view, reflecting engagement and solidarity with others; and	Learner is responsible for the effective and efficient management of projects and people within agreed timeframes.

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
Level 6	Learner should be able to: - Understand broad theoretical aspects and analyses of information related to a field of work or study; - Know facts, and establish principles in broad contexts within a field of work or study; - Select and compare theoretical information in broad contexts within a specific field of work or study	Learner should be able to demonstrate: - Ability to apply a range of academic skills; - Ability to communicate theoretical or technical information in a work or learning environment; - Ability to apply solutions to solve specific problems in a field of study; - Use of facts and procedures in broad contexts within a defined field of work or study. - Ability to judge if an idea, product or process is innovative is just new to self	Learner should demonstrate: - Capability to apply a range of technical skills to carry out multiple complex tasks; - Competence to apply solutions to specific problems in a specific field of work;	Graduate at this level should be able to demonstrate application of knowledge and skills to: - Perform qualitative and or quantitative tasks that require technical capacity. - Supervise work of self and others, under quality assured structures; - Acquire advanced level of key competences as a basis for higher education and training.	Learner should be able to: - Exercises autonomy and takes responsibility for defined qualitative and quantitative tasks of self and others. - Complete complex tasks under minimal supervision in a broad context under quality assured mechanisms
Level 5	Learner should be able to: know and understand the relevance of theoretical aspects and information related to the field of study;	Learner should be able to demonstrate: Ability to communicate complex information	Learner should be able to: Demonstrate skills to carry out more complex	Graduate at this level should be able to apply knowledge and skills to: Do tasks systematically;	Use own initiative with established responsibility and autonomy, but under supervised learning environments;

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
	- Know, evaluate and interpret facts; - Understand procedures in the application of more complex tasks and instructions; and	related to specific areas of study; - Critical thinking ability to solve functional skills problems by applying proven methods; - Ability to apply acquired relevant knowledge to accomplish specific actions for self and others. - Ability to describe how innovations diffuse in society, culture and the market	tasks, effectively in unfamiliar and unpredictable contexts; Exhibit problem solving skills by applying appropriate tools and materials in a restricted environment;	- Adapt own behavior to circumstances in solving problems by participating proactively in structured learning environments; - Demonstrate key competences as a basis for lifelong learning	
Level 4	A learner should be able to: - possess good knowledge of a field of work or study; - interpret and be aware of types of information and ideas; - understand facts and procedures in the application of non-routine tasks and instructions;	A learner at this level should be able to demonstrate: - A set of skills by carrying out complex tasks within a specified field of study; - communicate comprehensive	Learner should be able to demonstrate: - A range of skills to carry out complex tasks within a specified field of work; - Perform tasks with basic hand tools	Graduates at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: - to perform evidence-based structured tasks - to identify consequences for work processes within a team;	Learner takes responsibility and exercises some autonomy in well-defined tasks under supervision.

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
	4. Select and use relevant knowledge to accomplish specific actions for self and others.	information and facts; and 3. Ensure tasks are carried out effectively according to Instructions 4. Ability to describe how some innovations have transformed society	2. Ability to solve basic problems in a given environment using the right tools 2. Ability to use basic communication technologies	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	
Level 3	A learner should be 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. 3. Identify simple problems and their preferred solutions. 4. Identify the appropriate tools to perform tasks	Learner should be able to: 1. Follow basic health and safety instructions. 2. Use basic information and communication technologies 3. Demonstrate ability to develop basic drawing concepts required to perform a particular task 4. Ability to perform basic calculations to determine measurements, quantity of materials, estimate	Learner should be able to demonstrate: 1. Perform tasks with basic hand tools 2. Ability to solve basic problems in a given environment using the right tools 2. Ability to use basic communication technologies 3. Basic repetitive communication skills to perform and	Graduates at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: 1. To do simple repetitive and familiar tasks within instructions and guidelines; 2. To carry out activities under supervision and within defined time frames 3. Basic key competences at this level	1. Learner takes some responsibility for completing tasks and exercises with limited autonomy. 2. The learner should take responsibility to consult supervisor whenever necessary to carry out assigned tasks 3. The learner should be able to follow basic instructions and guidelines to carry out a particular task

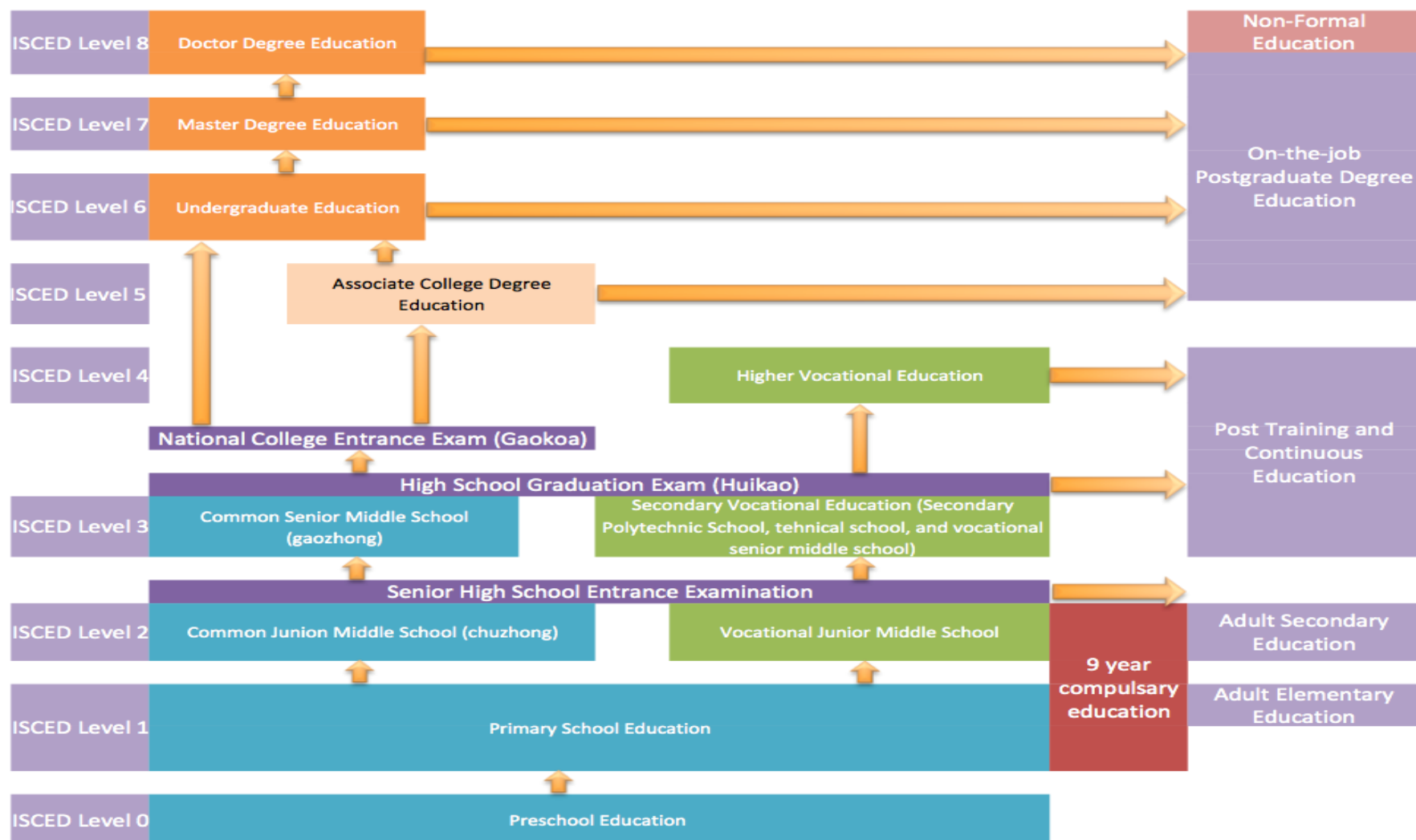
Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
	5. Read and or interpret instructional manuals (including diagrams) 6. understand the basic concepts in technical drawings 7. Understand the basic concepts and principles of entrepreneurship.	costs, etc. 5. Demonstrate understanding of basic communication languages 6. Ability to find examples of innovative ideas, services, and solutions	complete well-defined routine tasks. 4. Ability to identify components of a diagram in an instruction manual		
Level 3: Practical	A learner should be able to: 8. 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; 9. know and understand the steps needed to complete simple tasks and activities in familiar environments; 10. identify simple problems and their preferred solutions. 11. Identify the appropriate tools to perform tasks	Learner should be able to: 1. Follow basic health and safety instructions. 2. Use basic information and communication technologies Demonstrate ability to develop basic sketch of steps, concepts required to perform a particular task 3. Ability to conduct basic measurements, quantify materials, estimate costs, etc.	Learner should be able to demonstrate: 1. Perform tasks with basic hand tools 2. Ability to solve basic problems in a given environment using the right tools 2. Ability to use basic communication technologies 3. Basic repetitive communication skills to perform and complete well-defined routine tasks;	Graduates at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: 4. To do simple repetitive and familiar tasks; 5. To carry out activities under guidance and within simple defined timeframes; and 6. Basic key competences at this level	Autonomy and responsibility: 1. Learner takes some responsibility for completing tasks and exercises with limited autonomy. 2. The learner should take responsibility to consult supervisor whenever faced with difficulties in carrying out the assigned task.

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
	12. Read and or interpret instructional manuals (including diagrams)		4. Ability to identify components of a diagram in an instruction manual		
Level 2	Learner should be able to: • know and understand the steps needed to perform routine tasks under supervision. • Understand the use of basic learning textbooks and other materials.	Learner should be able to: 1. Follow basic health and safety instructions. 2. Use basic information and communication technologies 3. Demonstrate ability to develop a basic sketch of steps, concepts required to perform a particular task 3. Ability to conduct basic measurements, quantify materials, estimate costs, etc.	Learner should be able to demonstrate: 1. Perform tasks with basic hand tools 2. Ability to carry out limited range of simple routine tasks; 3. Vocational education skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies 4. Basic repetitive communication skills to perform and complete well-defined routine tasks;	Graduates at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: 1. To do simple repetitive and familiar tasks; 2. To carry out activities under guidance and within simple defined timeframes; and 3. Basic key competences at this level	Learner takes limited responsibility and work under strict and detailed supervision for completing simple and structured tasks.

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
Level 2: Practical	Learner should be able to: 1. know and understand the steps required to perform routine tasks under supervision. 2. Read and or interpret instructional manuals (including diagrams)	Learner should be able to: 1. Follow basic health and safety instructions. 2. Use basic information and communication technologies Demonstrate ability to develop a basic sketch of steps, concepts required to perform a particular task 3. Ability to conduct basic measurements, quantify materials, estimate costs, etc.	Learner should be able to demonstrate: 1. Perform tasks with basic hand tools 2. Ability to carry out limited range of simple routine tasks; 3. Vocational education skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies 4. Basic repetitive communication skills to perform and complete well-defined routine tasks;	Graduates at this level should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: To do simple repetitive and familiar tasks; 1. To carry out activities under guidance and within simple defined timeframes; and 2. Basic key competences at this level	Learner takes limited responsibility and work under strict and detailed supervision for completing simple and structured tasks.
Level 1: (Foundational Certificate 2)	A learner should be able to: 1. acquire basic fundamental knowledge and understanding in an area of work and learning;	A learner at this level should be able to demonstrate: 1. Basic skills to participate in everyday life and further learning;	A learner at this level should be able to demonstrate: 1. Pre-vocational education skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity / task	Graduate should be able to demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: 1. Under some level of supervision in defined contexts and within established	Learner takes no responsibility and requires 100% supervision for completing simple routine tasks and exercises.

Levels	Knowledge and understanding (theory)	Skills (functional)	Skills (Occupational)	Competencies	Level of Autonomy/Responsibility
		2. Cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a field of study; and 3. Use of communication technologies	2. Technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use of basic communication technologies	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.	
Level 1: (Foundati on Certificate 1)	A learner should be able to: 1. acquire basic knowledge and understanding to progress to level 1 foundation certificate 2	A learner at this level should be able to demonstrate: 1. Basic skills in life and learning. 2. Communication skills in a field of study, and use of basic communication technologies 3. Responsibility to abide by prescribed rules, proper handling of tools, equipment, and environment.	A learner at this level should be able to demonstrate: 1. Pre-vocational education skills to know how to use certain work tools.	Graduate should be able to demonstrate application of 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.	Learner takes no responsibility and requires 100% supervision for completing simple routine tasks and exercises.

Annex C: ISCED Framework



Annex D: Bibliography

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