

# NATIONAL OUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

### NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The National Qualifications Framework has been revised and supplemented by:

- Lah Nitaj NQA
- Milot Hasangjekaj NQA
- Bleta Kadriu NQA
- Kaltrina Mulliqi NQA
- Donjeta Nimani Binçe NQA
- Anita Rukovci NQA
- Avni Gashi KAA

-Teuta Danuza External consultant

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### **List of Abbreviations**

ECDVT European Center for the Development of Vocational Training

CVET Council for Vocational Education and Training

EC European Commission

ECLO European Commission Liaison Office

ECVET European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training

EQF European Qualifications Framework
EFT European Training Foundation

EU European Union

IPMA Instrument for Pre-Membership Assistance (EU)
ISCED International Standard Classification of Education
KAA Kosovo Accreditation Agency for Higher Education

MR Manpower Research LLL Lifelong Learning

MEST Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

MLSW Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
NQA National Qualifications Authority
RPL Recognition of Prior Learning

QA Quality Assurance

SME Small and Medium Enterprises

TA Technical Assistance
TNA Training Needs Analysis
TR Terms of Reference

VET Vocational Education and Training

AVETA Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education

EARK Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo

### INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was drafted in 2011 by the National Qualifications Authority (NQA), with the support of the EU KOSVET -V- project and funded by the European Union (EU).

The NQF was drafted by the NQA staff, supported by various experts and consultants. The relevant stakeholders such as: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and line ministries: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Finance have contributed to this process. Also, NQF was assisted by Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education, Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, American Chamber of Commerce, HandiKos, Vocational Schools, Public Universities, Private Colleges, Vocational Training Centers and other social partners. Support has been provided by various European organizations and our development partners.

The NQF Review and Completion started in 2017. The NQF revised and supplemented document incorporates changes and developments in the national system of qualifications in line with labor market needs in Kosovo and in line with EU policies and developments.

Revision and completion of this document is supported by DVV International - Office in Kosovo.

The NQF has been approved by the Steering Council of the National Qualifications Authority in 2019.

The NQA will continuously take over of the implementation of the NQF in Kosovo and will address the requirements and needs of the national qualifications system in the future.

## NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



### 2. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The National Qualifications Framework is an important component of the qualifications system in Kosovo and assists the reform process in this area. It aims to ensure that qualifications are in line with employment requirements, but also meet the requirements of the economy and society in our country.

The NQF promotes quality improvement in education and training by developing qualifications that are based on comparable international standards. The NQF provides transparency of the national qualifications system, clarifying the types and models of qualifications and their coordination. The NQF supports the lifelong learning process by providing continuous access and advancement as well as promoting employment through assessment and certification also through recognition of prior learning.

The NQF serves as a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition between NQF qualifications in Kosovo and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

### 2.1 Overview of the National Qualifications Framework

The National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Authority have been established under the Law on National Qualifications (Law 03 / L-060). The National Qualifications Authority has a Steering Council (SC), consisting of 13 members representing relevant ministries, public universities, social partners, non-governmental organizations and private providers. The SC is responsible for the development of policies and decision-making regarding the NQF.

The NQF consists of eight levels of qualifications. Each level of the NQF is defined by level descriptors. Level descriptors are divided into three components: knowledge, skills and competencies.

The NQF encompasses all types of qualifications, with each level containing qualifications of different types and contents that are developed for different purposes and needs.

A qualification in the NQF is defined by the Law on Qualifications as: "Official recognition of achievements recognizing completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or exam". To qualify for the NQF, all qualifications must be based on learning outcomes and must be subject to quality assurance assessment.

Depending on the type of qualification, placement at a NQF level is done through the validation and accreditation process. Each qualification / module has a credit value based on the ECTS and ECVET credit system. NQF qualifications are offered only by accredited institutions, except qualifications that belong to the type of general education qualifications.

Learning that leads to these qualifications can be gained in formal and informal contexts. Whereas, qualifications are assessed and certified through institutions such as: lower secondary schools, gymnasiums and vocational schools, vocational training centers, enterprises, private education and training providers, post-secondary vocational institutions, universities and other higher education institutions.

Evaluation and certification of NQF qualifications / modules are subject to quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that the evaluation and certification process is fair and objective, flexible and reliable, transparent and practical.

The quality assurance consists of internal and external quality mechanisms. Internal mechanisms are developed and implemented by the institution itself that provides, evaluates and certifies qualifications, while external quality mechanisms, depending on the type of qualification, are developed and implemented by the NQA, KAA and MEST.

Each qualification at the NQF leads to a certificate or diploma. All certificates and diplomas contain certain data as well as additional documents such as additional certificates / diplomas which specify the content of a qualification.

The implementation of the NQF is accomplished through the following functions:

- Development and maintenance;
- Verification of occupational standards;
- Validation of qualifications for inclusion in the NQF;
- Accreditation of institutions;
- Accreditation of institutions to implement prior learning recognition (PLR);
- Monitoring of accredited institutions.

### 2.2 Role of National Qualifications Authority for NQF

The NQA is responsible for the strategic development of the NQF. The Law on National Qualifications gives the NQA the responsibility for regulating the NQF (Article 14). Article 3, paragraph 2 of this law, states that "The National Qualifications Authority, established by the provisions of this law, shall establish and maintain a comprehensive qualifications framework".

The NQA is responsible for:

- Determination of Framework levels, and types of qualifications approved in the NQF;
- Ensuring compliance with EQF;
- Defining the criteria and the process of verifying occupational standards;
- Defining the criteria and the process of validating the qualifications for inclusion in the NQF;
- Defining the criteria and accreditation process of institutions for the provision of qualifications in the NQF;
- Defining the criteria and accreditation process of the institutions for the implementation of PLR;
- Defining the criteria and monitoring process of accredited institutions;
- Verification and stamping of certificates and diplomas issued for qualifications / modules in NQF;
- Advising institutions responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications, for academic or employment purposes, on comparability and equivalence issues.

### 2.2.1. Institutional Responsibilities for the NQF

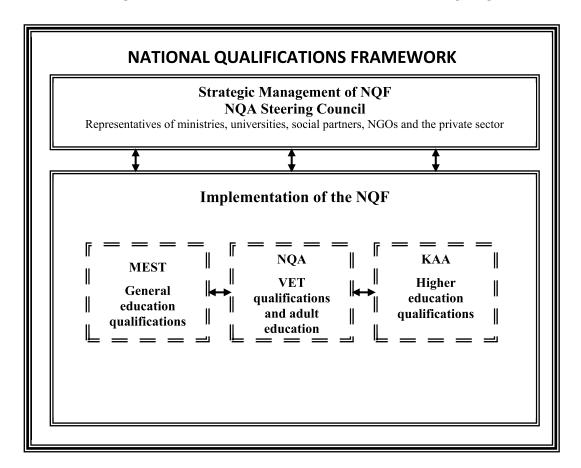
The Law on National Qualifications (Article 3, paragraph 3) defines that the responsibilities of the NQA with respect to the implementation of the NQF are shared with other institutions: "except for the qualifications which are regulated by the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and the qualifications which are precisely regulated by the provisions of other laws".

Implementing responsibilities for the NQF are shared by three institutions:

- NQA for vocational education and training qualifications;
- MEST for general education qualifications;
- KAA for higher education qualifications.

The respective NQA, KAA and MEST institutions have separate roles related to the development, validation and accreditation of particular types of qualifications. This is an important principle of NQF management because these roles and responsibilities are defined by type of qualification and level of qualification.

The management structure of the NQF is shown in the following diagram:



### 2.3. European Dimension of NQF

The NQF provides the basis for mutual cooperation and recognition between Kosovo and European countries by ensuring compliance with:

- Key competencies for lifelong learning;
- The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EQFHE);
- The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS);
- European Framework of Reference for Quality Assurance, Vocational Education and Training (EFRQAVET) and European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESGQAHE);
- International Classification of Occupational Standards (ICOS);
- Europass documents package for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences.

The NQA follows international developments regarding qualifications frameworks and ensures that the NQF adopts best practices in development, implementation and management.

### 2.3.1 European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The European Qualifications Framework was officially introduced in 2008 and has eight levels. EQF is a reference tool used to link the qualifications systems of different European countries and serves as a tool to make qualifications more comparable and understandable among different European countries and systems.

### EQF has two main goals:

- It promotes lifelong learning and creates equal opportunities in a knowledge-based society;
- It integrates the European labor market, while respecting the diversity of national education systems in different countries.

The European Commission (EC) has recommended that EU member states link national qualifications systems to EQF by developing national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practices.

At the end of 2016, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is officially referred to or linked to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This was done a year after Kosovo joined the EQF advisory group.

The official reference or linkage of the NQF to the EQF is the result of a four-year process of compiling a reference report under the guidance of the National Qualifications Authority. The report was drafted in accordance with EQF's rigorous methodology and criteria and is the result of a long consultation process with all stakeholders, including international experts.

Reference means that our education and training system is transparent, clear and reliable for EU member states and enables the qualifications of study and training programmes to be comparable through EQF to the qualifications of EU countries.

This process facilitates the recognition and access of our qualified young professionals to the regional and European labor market and offers opportunities for further education and training. Recognition and comparability of diplomas and certificates applies only to qualifications that are part of the NQF and offered by institutions accredited by the NQA and KAA.

### 2.3.2 European Credit System

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) has been developed by the EU Member States and the European Commission to facilitate the recognition of the learning outcomes achieved by individuals in different learning contexts or through vocational studying and training abroad.

ECVET is a voluntary and decentralized mechanism targeting a European area without lifelong learning boundaries, making it easier for individuals to recognize, transfer and accumulate qualifications. ECVET aims to recognize experiences and types of learning in different institutions and countries. ECVET describes the qualifications within the learning outcomes modules that will be assessed and validated.

The European System of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (ECTS) in higher education focuses on students for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency of learning, teaching and assessment processes.

The purpose of ECTS is to facilitate the planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmess and student mobility by recognizing learning achievements and qualifications as well as learning periods.

Europass is a set of five documents (CV, language passport, Europass mobility, supplementary certificate and supplementary diploma) aimed at making skills and qualifications clearer and understandable in Europe.

### 2.3.3 European Reference Framework for Quality Assurance for VET (EQAVET)

The European Reference Framework for Quality Assurance for Vocational Education and Training has been developed by Member States and the EU to serve as a reference instrument and to help achieve continuous improvement of VET. EQAVET aims to encourage mutual trust in VET within a space without borders.

EQAVET supports a lifelong learning strategy, integrating the European market and promoting a quality improvement culture at all levels, while respecting the diversity of national education systems.

EQAVET is designed to help member states promote and monitor quality improvement in VET and to provide a common basis for quality principles, benchmarks and performance indicators. This is considered as an instrument that can help policymakers gain a better insight into the functioning of current models of quality assurance, identification, improvement and decision making based on shared references.

EQAVET consists of a structure and methodology based on the self-evaluation process combined with external quality assessment.

### 2.3.4 Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)

The Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area has three cycles of higher education qualifications set out in the framework of the qualifications and the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS). One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits. One academic year mainly has 1500 - 1800 teaching/learning hours.

### Qualification cycles are:

- 3rd cycle: no ECTS defined Doctorate degree
- 2nd cycle: usually 60-120 ECTS credits Master degree
- 1st cycle: 180-240 ECTS credits Bachelor degree

Short cycle within 1st cycle: usually ends with 120 ECTS credits – a qualification which is lower than bachelor degree

According to the Bologna process, higher education systems in European countries should be organized in such a way as to facilitate easier movement of students from one country to another within the European Higher Education Area. Each country issues diplomas or other accompanying documents according to the National Qualifications Frameworks and the Bologna criteria.

The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has developed the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" supported by the European Commission. ENQA is an umbrella organization representing quality assurance organizations from the member countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). ENQA promotes European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and disseminates information and expertise among its members and stakeholders in order to develop and share good practices and promote the European dimension of quality assurance.

### 2.4 STRUCTURE OF THE QUALIFICATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

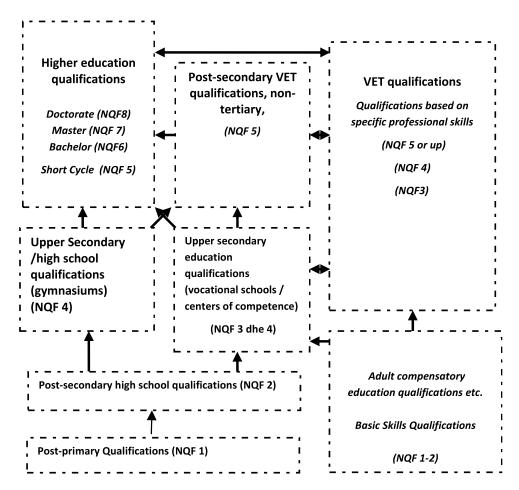
### 2.4.1 The main areas of education and training in Kosovo

The education and training system in Kosovo consists of:

- Kindergarden and preschool education: (0-6 years old);;
- Primary education (grades 1-5);
- Lower secondary education (grades 6-9);
- Higher secondary education (gymnasiums and vocational schools / centers of competence; grades 10-12);
- Post-secondary vocational education and training;
- Higher education (universities and colleges);
- Vocational training (competence centers, vocational schools, vocational training centers);
- Compulsory adult literacy education for those who have not completed primary education (grades 1-5), mainly provided by NGOs and schools in coordination with MEST-MED;

- Specific vocational training for persons with disabilities/special needs provided by resource centers or training centers;
- Professional training of teachers and school management staff for school work and adult programs provided by MEST-approved institutions;
- Other types of training, such as languages, crafts, arts, music, culture, etc. provided by different providers.

The diagram below shows the key areas of education and training, qualifications in each area, and opportunities for advancement.



### 2.4.2 What is "a qualification"?

The Law on National Qualifications defines qualification as: "Official recognition of achievements recognizing completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or exam".

NQF qualifications can have more than one purpose as:

- · Development of knowledge and skills in various professional fields and preparation for further education and training;
- · Personal development and interconnection with learning;
- · Preparation for employment;
- · Approval of professional competencies, etc.

### 2.4.3 Certificate of achievement, certificate and diploma

The modules / qualifications achieved in the NQF are: Certificate of Achievement, Certificate and Diploma. These categories of certification are official documents issued to pupils / candidates / students who have successfully undergone module / qualification learning outcomes. They can be achieved through formal, non-formal learning or prior knowledge recognition.

### Certificate of achievement

Achievement certificates fulfill two purposes:

- (i) candidates who are unable to complete all modules of a full qualification at a given time for various reasons;
- (ii) candidates who are fully qualified but who need or wish to receive modules to advance further their professional knowledge and skills.

Certificates of achievement are awarded for partial qualifications for candidates who have successfully completed the relevant learning outcomes in accordance with the NQF.

### Certificates

Generally the certificate can be awarded for any levels in the framework. Certificates for levels 5 and above may have credits of less than 120 ECTS / ECVET credits (less than two full years of theoretical and practical studies).

Certificates for levels 1-4 may have different credit value depending on the size of the qualification.

### **Diploma**

The level and value of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees are determined by the Law on Higher Education. The degree for level 5 must have an equivalent value of at least 120 ECTS / ECVET credits (at least two full years of theoretical and practical studies).

Degrees/Diplomas can only be awarded for level 4 or higher of the framework.

Degrees/Diplomas for combined qualifications at Level 4 must have a credit equivalent of at least 180 ECVET credits (three full years of theoretical and practical studies).

Degrees/Diplomas of general qualifications at level 4 require at least three full years of theoretical and practical studies.

### 2.4.4 Types of NQF qualifications

The types of qualifications are determined based on the results, target students / candidates, other characteristics and features, such as:

Results include; general education outcomes, knowledge or skills of a particular field, specific job or occupation, general skills, basic skills or key competencies;

- Goals include; preparation for further learning, entry into the labor market, occupational areas or specific job role, enhancement of professional experience (for greater responsibility or for adopting technological change), etc.;
- Target students / candidates are; young people in school, unemployed, adults seeking retraining, employees seeking new skills, etc.;
- Charateristics include; the size, level, duration and content of the qualification, or a combination of these factors.

There are 6 types of NQF qualifications:

- Higher Education Qualifications (A)
- General Education Qualifications (B)
- Combined National Qualifications (C)
- National Professional Qualifications (D)
- Qualifications Based on International Standards (E)
- Customized Qualifications (F)

### **Higher Education Qualifications**

The characteristics of higher education qualifications are as follows:

- These qualifications are developed in accordance with the rules of the Bologna Framework;
- The scope of qualifications varies. They enable students to pursue academic studies, gain a higher level of personal and professional knowledge and skills and competencies;
- The content of these qualifications is based on academic fields or professional profiles of the highest level;
- These qualifications may be set at levels 5 to 8 of the NQF, which are worth ECTS credits in accordance with the Law on Higher Education;

- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are also regulated by the Law on Higher Education;
- These qualifications are offered by institutions accredited by KAA.

The titles of higher education qualifications are:

- The short cycle of higher education;
- Bachelor;
- Master:
- -Doctorate/PhD.

### Description of titles in higher education

The short cycle of higher education Level - This cycle is at level 5

Content: Link to existing Bachelor level and provide progress in Bachelor degree programmes and above. Special knowledge and skills may be required in certain cases for admission to the Bachelor level or above.

Credit Value: Depending on the qualification (certificate or diploma) they are worth less or 120 ECTS credits.

### **Bachelor Level**

Level - These degrees are at level 6 of the NQF qualifications Credit Value-They credit value goes from 180 to 240 ECTS credits.

### Master Level

Level - These degrees/diplomas are at level 7 of the NQF qualifications Credit Value - from 180 to 240 ECTS credits.

### Doctorate level

Level - These degrees are at level 8 of the NQF qualifications Credit Value - There is no defined credit worth for these qualifications.

Short cycle titles in higher education consist of the name and type of qualification, level and main field of study. Example: Certificate in Higher Education in Business Administration - level 5 or Diploma for the short cycle in Higher Education in Business Administration - level 5.

The title of all three levels shall contain the name and type of qualification, level and field of study (e.g. arts, sciences, engineering, law, research) and main areas of study.

Example: Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Economics, Bachelor of Applied Sciences in Agriculture, Master of Arts in Business Administration, Master of Research in Social Psychology, Doctor of Engineering, etc.

### **General education qualifications**

Characteristics of general education qualifications are as follows:

- These qualifications are developed in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework;
- Their aim is that students to pursue higher education and to acquire a higher level of personal and professional knowledge, skills, and competencies;
- The content of qualifications is based on school subjects and inter-curricular competencies; 1
- These qualifications may be set at levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the NQF and do not have credits;
- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are regulated by the Law on Pre-University Education and the Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam under the legislation in force;
- They are provided by public and private institutions and are supervised by MEST and MED.

The titles of general education qualifications are:

- Certificate of completion of primary education;;
- Certificate of lower secondary education;
- Upper secondary education (high school) diploma and Matura Certificate.

### **Description of titles**

Certificate of completion of primary education Level - This qualification is at level 1 in the NQF Content - Based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework Credit Value - No credit is currently granted for this qualification.

Certificate of completion of Lower Secondary Education These qualifications are at Level 2 of the NQF Content - Based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework

Credit Value - No credit is currently granted for this qualification.

Diploma of completion of Upper Seconadary Education These qualifications are at level 4 in the NQF Content - Based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework Credit Value - No credit is currently granted for this qualification.

Upon completion of upper secondary education, the student / candidate is awarded a diploma, while after passing the state matura obtaines a state matura certificate which enables him / her to continue studies in higher education.

### **National Combined Qualifications**

The characteristics of the combined national qualifications are as follows:

• These qualifications are developed to be offered in a formal setting, including real-world or simulated workplace practice.

Inter-curricular competencies are: Life skills and personal education; Education for democratic citizenship and human rights; Entrepreneurship education; Health education; Environmental education; ICT education; Media education.

All national combined qualifications include modules based on national occupational standards as well as outcomes related to the Kosovo Curriculum Framework;

- The main purpose of these qualifications is for students to acquire professional knowledge, skills and competencies based on national occupational standards. They will also gain general theoretical knowledge, skills and personal and social competence based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework;
- The content of these qualifications is based on national occupational standards, cross-curricular competencies and sectoral curricular framework;
- These qualifications are placed at level 3 and 4 of the NQF. They are worth ECVET credits in accordance with Vocational Education Law;
- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are regulated by the Law on VET, the Law on Pre-University Education, the Law on Adult Education, the Law on Final Exam and the Law on State Matura (State Mandatory Exam);
- They are provided by NQA accredited institutions and are licensed by MEST.

The titles of the combined national qualifications are:

- National Combined Certificate
- National Combined Diploma and
- Matura (Graduation) Certificate.

### Description of titles

National Combined Certificate

Level-These qualifications are at level 3 of the NQF

Content - Designed in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and National Occupational Standards (NOS)

Credit Value-They have the value of the credits based on the value of the modules achieved. National Combined Diploma

Level - These qualifications are at levels 4 and 5 of the NQF

Content - Designed in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework and the NOS Credit Value - After completing Level 3 of the NQF, the student / candidate earns 120 credits, while after completing Level 4 of the NQF earns a cumulative of 180 ECVET credits.

Upon completion of upper secondary education, the student / candidate is awarded a diploma, while after passing the state matura gains a state matura certificate which enables him / her to continue studies in higher education.

Combined national qualifications titles consist of the name and type of qualification, level and role of job or field of competence. Example: National Combined Certificate in Construction - level 3, National Combined Diploma in Finance - level 4, National Combined Diploma in Nursing - level 5.

### **National Professional Qualifications**

The characteristics of the national professional qualifications are as follows:

• These qualifications are developed in accordance with National Occupational Standards;

- The purpose of qualifications is for candidates to acquire the professional knowledge, skills and competencies related to a particular profession or job role;
- The contents of these qualifications are: knowledge, skills and competencies based on National Standards of Occupation;
- These qualifications can be set at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the NQF;
- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are regulated by the Law on VET and Adult Education;
- They are provided by institutions accredited by the NQA.

The titles of national professional qualifications are:

- National Professional Certificate
- National Professional Diploma
- Certificate of Achievement

### **Description of titles**

National Professional Certificate

Level-In principle these qualifications can be at any levels in the NQF Content - is based on National Standards of Occupation Credit Value - Have up to 120 ECVET credits.

National Professional Diploma

Level - These qualifications are at levels 4 or higher in the NQF Content – is based on National Standards of Occupation Credit Value – This diploma has equivalent value to 120 or more ECVET credits.

### Certificate of achievement

Level - Basically, these qualifications can be at any levels of the NQF

Content – is based on National Standards of Occupation

Credit Value-There are no restrictions on the value of credits for the achievement certificate, but it is determined in the process of developing and validating qualifications.

The titles of national professional qualifications consist of the name and type of qualification, level and role of job or field of competence. Example: National Professional Certificate in Decorative Horticulture - Level 2; Certificate of Achievement for Hairdressing - Coloring and Makeup - Level 3; National Professional Diploma in Forestry - level 4; National Professional Diploma in Financial Management - level 5.

### Qualifications based on International Standards

Characteristics of qualifications based on international standards are as follows:

- These qualifications are developed in accordance with internationally recognized standards and in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework in certain cases;
- The purpose of qualifications is that candidates to acquire general or professional knowledge, skills and competencies;

- The results of these qualifications are knowledge, skills and competencies based on the standards of other countries, or international standards which are accepted and used within a recognized profession or a field of competences; <sup>2</sup>
- Basically, these qualifications can be set from level 1-5 of the NQF; They are worth ECVET credits.
- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are also regulated by the NQA administrative instructions;
- Offered in institutions accredited by the NQA.

International qualifications titles are:

- -Certificate;
- -Diploma;
- Certificate of Achievement;

### **Description of titles**

### Certificate

Level - In principle these qualifications can be at any levels in the NQF. Content - Designed in accordance with internationally recognized standards Credit Value - Have equivalent value of up to 120 ECVET credits.

### **Diploma**

Level-These qualifications may be at level 4 or above in the NQF

Content - They are designed in accordance with internationally relevant standards and in accordance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework in certain cases.

Credit Value – This diploma has equivalent value to 120 or more ECVET credits.

### Certificate of achievement

Level - In principle these qualifications can be at any levels in the NQF.

Credit Vlaue - There are no limits to the value of credits of achievement certificates, but it is determined in the process of developing and validating qualifications.

Qualifications titles based on International Standards consist of the category of certification, job role or field of competence, NQF level and origin of the standards.

Example: Database Usage Certificate - Level 2 - ICDL Standards <sup>3</sup> ICDL, Accounting Diploma - Level 5 - ACCA Standards <sup>4</sup>, German Certificate of Achievement for Beginners - A1 CEFR standard <sup>5</sup>, etc.

The certification documentation will require a description of the origin of the standards used in the qualification.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Such as management, IT or languages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> International License for Computer Use

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Association of Graduate and Certified Accountants

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

### **Customized Qualifications**

The characteristics of the customized qualifications are as follows:

- These qualifications are developed in accordance with the operational needs of an organization, agency or enterprise;
- The purpose of qualifications is for candidates to acquire general or professional knowledge, skills and competencies;
- The content of these qualifications: knowledge, skills and competencies based on the standards set by the organization, agency or enterprise developing the qualification;
- In principle, these qualifications are set at levels 1-5 of the NQF. They are worth ECVET credits;
- In addition to the Law on National Qualifications, they are regulated by the relevant administrative instructions;
- They are offered by institutions which accredited by the NQA.

Customized qualification titles are:

- Certificate of achievement;
- Customized certificate;

### **Description of titles**

Description of Titles

Certificate of Achievement

Level - In principle these certificates can be at any levels in the NQF

Content -. Is designed in accordance with the standards set by the qualification developer and accepted by the NQA.

Credit Value - There are no restrictions to the value of credits of achievement certificates, but it is determined in the process of developing and validating qualifications.

**Customized Certificate** 

Level - In principle these certificates can be at any levels in the NQF

Content -. Is designed in accordance with the standards set by the qualification developer and accepted by the NQA.

Credit Value - There are no restrictions to the value of credits of achievement certificates, but it is determined in the process of developing and validating qualifications.

Customized qualification titles consist of the category of certification, job role or field of competence, NQF level and the name of the standard developer. Example: Kosovar Construction Company Ltd Certificate in Mechanical Mining Operations - level 3.

When issuing certification documentation for these qualifications, a note explaining the nature of the customized qualifications is required.

### Summary table of types and titles of qualifications in the NQF

Characteristics	Higher Education Qualifications	General Education Qualifications	National Combined Qualifications	National Vocational Qualifications	International Standards Qualifications	Customized Qualifications
Development	The Bologna Framework	Kosovo Curriculum Framework	National Occupational Standards Kosovo Curriculum Framework	National Occupational Standards	Internationally Recognized Standards	Operational needs of an agency, enterprise or organization
Objectives	Academic studies, higher level knowledge and skills, personal skills and competences, higher level of professional knowledge, skills and competences, or a combination of these.	Academic studies, interconnected knowledge and skills, personal and social skills and competencies	Professional knowledge, skills and competencies based on National Occupational Standards and personal development	Professional knowledge, skills and competences associated with a specific profession or job assignment	Professional or general knowledge, skills and competencies	Professional or general knowledge, skills and competencies
Content	Based on academic disciplines and / or professional profiles of higher education level	School subjects and inter- curricular competences	Knowledge, skills and competencies based on national standards of occupation, intercurricular competences, theoretical studies and school subjects up to level 4	Knowledge, skills and competencies based on National Occupational Standards	Knowledge, skills and competencies based on international standards	Knowledge, skills and competencies based on the standards identified by the organization, agency or enterprise rerquiring the qualification
Levels	Levels 5 to 8	Levels 2, 3 and 4	Levels 2 and higher	Levels 2 and higher	Any Levels	Any Levels

Credit Values  Legal Basis	A set of credit values in accordance with the Bologna Framework Law on	There are currently no credit values	A set of credit values according to qualifying components  Law on Pre-	A set of credit values by modules in qualification	A set of credit values according to qualifying components	A set of credit values according to qualifying components
	Higher Education	university Education and Law on Final Exam and State Matura Exam	University Education and Law on VET		Instructions issued by NQA	Instructions issued by NQA
Quality Assurance	Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)	MEST National Qualifications Authority (NQA)	(NQA)	(NQA)	(NQA)
Titles	Certificate of Higher Education Short Course/Cycle, Diploma of Higher Education Short Course/Cycle, Bachelor Degree, Master Degree, Doctorate Degree	Certificate of completion of lower secondary education, Certificate of completion of upper seconadary education and Diploma of State Matura (Graduation)	Combined National Certificate and National Combined Diploma	National Professional Certificate and National Professional Diploma	Certificate and Diploma	Customized Certificates

### 2.4.5. Modular structure of qualifications

VET qualifications have modular structure. The modular system assists and supports the provision of more flexible qualifications and the development of more pathways between qualifications in the context of different learning.

The module is the smallest part of the qualification that can be certified. The module consists of the interconnection of knowledge, skills and competencies expressed in the form of learning outcomes and linked to assessment criteria.

Modules may be specific to a single qualification or shared to a group of qualifications. Each module has a credit value, which forms the basis of the evidence of credit accumulation for the award of a full qualification or the transfer of credits between qualifications.

Modular qualifications structures make it possible to offer a part of the qualifications. Modules are an integral part of qualifications, while the specific certification of modules enables the recognition of certain parts of qualifications which, depending on the requirement, can lead to a full qualification.

Vocational qualifications may be based on a set of 'compulsory' and 'elective' modules, allowing for degree of selection with respect to the modules taken. If a module is shared for more qualifications, there should be the possibility of transferring credits between the qualifications in question. This requires different providers to recognize and accept credit transfer from other providers.

The flexibility offered by modular qualifications is also important for candidates with disabilities. Candidates with disabilities can select modules that enhance their qualities and minimize or eliminate their difficulties. In cases where candidates are not able to achieve the full qualification they will be certified for the achieved modules.

The advantage of modular qualifications is that it provides a mechanism for assessing prior learning, encourages lifelong learning and different ways of learning.

It is not always necessary to pursue a formal learning programme in order to acquire the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to confer a qualification. Modular qualifications for inclusion in the NQF must be developed in such a way that:

- can be assessed and certified;
- to express learning outcomes together with assessment requirements for learning outcomes achievement;
- to have credit value;
- to have rules of combination that lead to qualification;
- to enable module credit transfer.

### Module 1

Larning outcomes 1

- Performance criteria 1
- Performance criteria 2

Learning outcomes 2

- Performance citeria 1
- Performance criteria 2

### 2.4.6. Rules of combining modules within qualifications

The rules for combining modules within a qualification have two main purposes:

- to support credit accumulation and transfer;
- to ensure that qualification is also achieved within different combinations of modules.

The rules for achieving a qualification through credit accumulation are set during the qualification development. Flexibility for credit accumulation and transfer should be taken into account when setting rules.

The rules of combination define:

- What the candidate is required to do to achieve the qualification;
- Credits to be earned in order to qualify;
- Opportunities for credit transfer (including entry and transfer ways);
- Rejection of certain modules and credits when deemed ineligible for qualification.

The rules of combination include the following information:

- Number of credits required to achieve the NQF qualification;
- Number or percentage of credits that must be in line with the qualification level;
- Credits from compulsory modules eq. modules that must be taken to qualify;
- Credits from elective modules set the maximum or minimum credits to be achieved through elective modules. So the qualification lists all the modules from which the candidate can choose elective modules based on the rules for combinations;
- "Free choice" credits mean the opportunity to obtain credits that are not part of the qualification. The rules include the limitation that can be made on this "free choice", such as: level, number of credits or professional fields;
- Credit transfer options;
- Credits from same modules, eg. modules from other qualifications or other accredited institutions which are equivalent to this qualification;
- Limited time for credit accumulation or certain exemptions when needed;
- Credit limitations that can be reached through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) when needed;
- Entry requirements for qualification eg. if there are specific requirements or prerequisites for the relevant qualification;
- Specific information on how this qualification relates to other qualifications;
- Identification of modules which are common to other qualifications.

### 2.4.7. The value of credits in modules and qualifications

The value of credits for modules and qualifications is based on the content of the qualification or module. The Law on National Qualifications defines credit as "a numerical value given to the qualification or parts of the qualification and which represents the amount of learning necessary to attain the qualification or part of the qualification. Credits can be accumulated during a qualification or may be transferred between qualifications or qualification systems". So the value of the credit is determined based on the time needed to achieve the learning outcomes for the achievement of the qualification or module and the evaluation, which includes:

- $\cdot Theoretical \ part \ (including \ general \ and \ vocational \ education)$
- $\cdot Practical \, part$
- $\cdot \mathsf{Self}\text{-}\mathsf{study}$
- $\cdot Job\,training/internship$
- · Evaluation

## NQF STRUCTURE



### 3. NQF Structure

The NQF is a structured framework in vertical and horizontal alignment. The vertical alignment of the NQF provides the basis for the classification of qualifications according to the hierarchy of qualification levels, while the horizontal alignment provides the basis for classification by type of qualifications.

### 3.1. Levels of Qualification

The vertical structure of the NQF is based on eight qualification levels like the EQF. NQF levels are defined by the EQF level descriptors, tailored to the Kosovo context. The Law on National Qualifications stipulates that "progression from one level to another is determined by increasing the complexity and demands of learning outcomes, defined by broader knowledge, skills and competencies".

Each level is defined by a formulation of learning outcomes according to three components:

- ·Knowledge theoretical or practical;
- ·Skills cognitive, creative or practical;
- · Competencies autonomy and responsibility.

While the level descriptors determine the level of qualification, the level indicators determine the content and type of qualification at the level concerned.

The following table shows the links between the structure of the education and training system and professional requirements.

NOF levels regarding lifelong learning stages in the context of educational and legislative structure

National Qualifications Framework			
Level of NQF	Contains qualifications associated with		EQF reference level
	<b>Education Programmes</b>	Currently Avail able Qualifications (Type)	
8	Higher Education - Bologna 3rd cycle (Doctorate)	A	8
7	Higher Education - Bologna 2nd cycle (Master)	A	7
6	Higher Education - Bologna 1st cycle (Bachelor)	A	6
5	Bologna short c ycle and / or post - secondary VET	A, C, D, E	5
4	Preparation for advancement in higher education and / or entry into the labor market	B, C, D, E, F	4
3	Preparation for the labor market (young people and adults)	B, C, D, E, F	3
2	Advancement from lower secondary to upper seconadary education (yo ung people), preparation for the labor market (adults)	B, C, D, E, F	2
1	Elementary School	B, C, D, E, F	1

**Level 1** includes the qualifications gained after completing compensatory basic education courses, or short training courses, offered by training providers. These qualifications are equivalent to completing primary education.

**Level 2** includes the qualifications gained after completing short training courses covering basic professional skills of low level (literacy, numeracy or ICT skills) offered by informal training providers. These qualifications are equivalent to completing lower secondary education.

**Level 3** includes qualifications obtained after completing two years of formal upper vocational education and certificates obtained after completing short training courses provided by VET providers.

**Level 4** includes the Matura qualification obtained after completing general and upper vocational secondary education, certificates obtained after completing formal upper vocational secondary education, and certificates obtained after completing the short training courses offered from VET informal providers.

**Level 5** foresees the academic and professional qualifications (formal and non-formal) that are between upper secondary education and higher education.

**Level 6** includes academic and professional higher education programmes, the completion of which leads to a qualification with a general Bachelor's degree. Qualifications gained after completing training that are not yet in the NQF are also foreseen.

**Level 7** includes academic and professional higher education programmes, the completion of which leads to a qualification with a general Master's degree. Qualifications gained after completing training that are not yet in the NQF are also foreseen.

**Level 8** includes academic and professional higher education programmes, the completion of which leads to a qualification with a general Doctorate/PhD degree.

### 3.2. Establishment of qualifications at NQF levels

Each qualification that is included into the framework is validated and accredited based on learning outcomes according to the NQF level descriptors and indicators.

### LEVEL 1

### **Descriptor:**

The student/cadidate achieving the qualifications at this NQF level demonstrates the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They must be able to acquire and use the knowledge necessary to learn, perform simple tasks, or participate in daily life. The knowledge is general, not specific to a field of study, a profession or a professional field.

### Skills

They will be able to perform simple tasks using basic skills eg. day-to-day tasks that require reading, writing, using numbers, performing basic computer processes, working in a supervised facility, or working with other people.

### Competencies

They will be able to undertake structured work or learning that is organized and controlled by other people. They will perform tasks under direct supervision and will not be fully responsible for deciding what should be done, when, how, or where to do or about the quality of the results of that task.

### **Level indicators:**

Formal qualifications at Level 1 provide general basic knowledge and are relevant to primary education. They can also be offered as basic compensatory adult education.

Formal qualifications last according to the school year, while informal qualifications generally last several weeks or months. Students in formal education complete this level upon receiving a report/certificate and this enables them to continue their education.

Whereas, students / candidates in non-formal education are certified for these qualifications and are largely unemployed or unskilled and all those who wish to develop specific skills. Qualifications for people with disabilities may also enter in this level.

Short courses may be offered by accredited adult education / training organizations / institutions, but may also be offered at accredited workplace training centers. Teachers and instructors should have specialized competences for teaching basic adult skills to this level. These qualifications enable individuals to enter or re-enter the labor market.

### LEVEL 2

### **Descriptor:**

The student achieving the qualifications at this level of the NQF demonstrates the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They will be able to learn and apply the basic knowledge of an educational subject, profession or professional field. Knowledge will mainly be factual eg. information about the core content, terminology, processes, tools or materials of an educational subject, profession or professional field.

### Skills

They will be able to combine basic practical skills and basic thinking skills through the use of information listed within the knowledge at this level. Skills will include reasoning, calculation and planning for tasks as well as problem solving that are common to the subject, profession or professional field. This will be achieved by following routine practices based on clear rules, using simple tools and materials.

### Competencies

They will be able to perform tasks under partial or full supervision. These tasks will be primarily organized and controlled by others, but individuals will be responsible for some aspects of the tasks, such as: deciding what needs to be done, when and where to do it, and the quality of some results..

### **Level indicators:**

Level 2 qualifications are of different types and contents, as follows:

- Qualifications in formal education deal with the completion of lower secondary school. These qualifications last according to the school year of instruction. Teachers need to be qualified / specialized in teaching. These qualifications prepare students to advance to upper secondary education or the labor market;
- Adult compensatory basic education qualifications are provided by lower secondary schools;
- Qualifications in non-formal education are provided by schools, training centers or companies, etc,;
- These qualifications at this level include the general knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to achieve employment, advance in the workplace or participate in daily life.

Targeted students and candidates are adults who are unemployed, unqualified, or who are willing to enhance their skills. These qualifications are offered by accredited vocational education and training institutions, VET institutions or training centers.

Teachers and trainers must have specialized competencies to teach basic adult skills. These qualifications should enable individuals to enter or re-enter the labor market.

### LEVEL 3

### **Descriptor:**

The student achieving qualifications in this level of the NQF demonstrates the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They must have a working knowledge of the main aspects of the educational subject, occupation, or occupational field and will be able to apply this knowledge to achieve structured or workplace learning outcomes. This will include the facts, principles, processes and ideas they need to deliver structured learning or work successfully in the subject, profession or professional field.

### Skills

They will be able to apply a number of practical and thinking skills to perform tasks and solve problems in an educational subject, occupation, or professional field. This will be achieved by using information (such as those listed at this level of knowledge) for selecting appropriate methods and applying them with appropriate materials and tools. Work will not yet be at the level required for a skilled worker or for entry into higher education studies.

### Competencies

Candidates will be able to take responsibility for accomplishing tasks, solving problems and achieving results at this level. They will perform unsupervised tasks, be able to solve problems that are routine in the educational, occupational, or professional field and make changes to their approach to the task when required.

### Level indicators:

Level 3 qualifications are of different types and contents, as follows:

• Certificate after two years of education and training in VET schools.

These vocational qualifications in formal education will prepare students for advancement to the next stage or the labor market. They will combine both general and professional learning which last two full school years. Teachers must have advanced qualifications in that field, profession or professional field and in teaching;

Certificates of professional qualifications.

These will be short courses leading to qualifications and upon completion of these qualifications candidates are awarded certificates. Trainers must be specialized in professional areas. There are no specific rules regarding the content and duration of these qualifications.

### LEVEL 4

### **Descriptor:**

The student/cadidate achieving the qualifications at this NQF level demonstrates the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

Cadidates/students will have good knowledge in and about an educational subject, occupation or professional field. They will be able to use this knowledge to perform structured learning or work in that field, occupation or professional field.

### Skills

They will be able to apply a number of practical and thinking skills to perform tasks and solve problems. Skills, tasks and problems will be specific to the educational subject, occupation or occupational field. They will be asked to perform tasks at the level of skilled employee or structured learning at the level required for entry into higher education studies.

### Competencies

Students will undertake structured work or learning within the boundaries and normal practices of educational subjects, occupations or occupational fields. They will be able to make changes to their planned approach while undertaking their activities. They will work independently and take full responsibility for the planning and completion of tasks or structured learning and for the quality of results. They will evaluate their performance and intend to improve it and may oversee others who are in charge of routine activities, evaluate their performance, and take steps to make improvements based on that assessment.

### Level indicator:

Qualifications leading to Level 4 can be achieved through the following pathways:

• Formal Vocational Education and Training (Diploma)

These formal vocational programmes prepare students / candidates for advancement to the next stage of formal VET, level 5 or for employment as skilled workers/employees. Teachers / trainers must have advanced qualifications in the subject, profession or professional field and in teaching. Learning at this level is combined with general and vocational learning with a duration of three years.

Vocational Education and Training (Certificate)

These are short courses / training leading to a qualification or part of the qualifications. They are designed to assist skilled workers, job seekers who need new skills. Candidates who are eligible for these qualifications usually need to have extensive knowledge, skills and competencies in Level 3 or 4 occupations or professional fields and may come from qualifications or experience.

These qualifications are offered by VET accredited institutions, training centers or companies. Trainers must have specialized professional knowledge as well as training in teaching to offer these qualifications. There is no specific rule regarding the content of these qualifications.

### LEVEL 5

### **Descriptor:**

Individuals who achieve qualifications at this level of the NQF demonstrate the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They must have extensive and specialized factual and theoretical knowledge in an educational subject, profession, or professional field. They will be able to use their knowledge to achieve results derived from structured learning or work. This may include:

- the use of extensive and specialized factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study demonstrating awareness and limitation of such knowledge;
- · applying broad knowledge of the scope, defining the main features and areas of the subject, professional field and detailed knowledge in several areas;
- · understanding and using a limited range of basic theories, principles, and concepts;
- · the use of knowledge and understanding of some of the most current topical issues, specializations and on the basis of emphasized knowledge to understand research or equivalent processes within the context of the work or study.

### Skills

They will be able to use the set of specialized skills needed to plan, implement, review and evaluate outcomes in an educational, vocational, or professional field. They will be able to apply comprehensive cognitive and practical skills, practices and techniques to develop creative solutions to practical problems and tasks. This may include:

- · applying research and analytical skills to solve concrete and abstract problems as well as issues requiring the exercise of prudence and judgment;
- · research, analysis and interpretation that requires the application of theories, principles and methods relevant to the field of work or study;
- $\cdot$  the use of digital, mathematical and communication skills related to a field of work or study, some of which are advanced or specialized.

### Competencies

They will be able to carry out independent work or structured learning of all kinds listed for this level, including adoptions to meet changing demands and circumstances or to deal with unforeseen factors or developments. This may include:

- exercising considerable personal autonomy and taking initiative in certain activities that require the exercise of prudence and judgment;
- exercising management and supervision in work or study contexts, which may include organizing and taking responsibility for the work of others and the resources and management of other people's activities;
- reviewing and evaluating personal performance and of others for whom responsibility has been taken as well as planning and improving performance on the basis of such evaluation.

### Level indicators:

Level 5 qualifications are of different types and contents eg:

- Qualifications in formal and non-formal post-secondary education
  These professional programmes prepare individuals for employment as: senior technician, specialist or new manager. These programmes can also lead to university programmes. These qualifications usually utilize advanced teaching materials, books and reference resources.

  Teachers / trainers must be qualified in this field, profession or professional field and teaching, and should have a high level of theory in addition to practical training. These qualifications can be offered in two ways:
- Qualifications lasting one or two full years of study or equivalent in part time studies. In line with the Bologna process and Dublin descriptors for higher education, these qualifications lie between upper secondary education and final Bachelor courses. They can be professional or academic in content and usually with a duration of one or two years of full-time study.

### Short Qualifications

These are short trainings that lead to qualifications for those who are employed and need new knowledge, or broader skills and competencies eg. the use of new technologies or working methods, the assumption of new responsibilities at the same level as their current occupations or for promotion to higher-level positions. Individuals who obtained this qualification usually need to have qualifications or experience in a level 4 or 5 occupation or occupational field. Qualifications may use national or international standards. They are provided by accredited institutions. Trainers must have specialized professional knowledge. There is no specific rule regarding the content and duration of these qualifications.

Individuals interested in the qualifications of Level 5 have broader knowledge, skills and competencies to pursue further studies with a degree of autonomy.

The individual at level 5 is a new technician, a specialist or manager. Working at this level usually requires the application of theory, principles and methods based on theoretical and practical knowledge and understanding of a field of work or study, consistent to judgment in research, analysis, interpretation and application of theories, principles and methods. It also requires skills to take on responsibilities and improve broader knowledge, skills and competencies towards further specialization.

Participation in Level 5 training requires at least the achievement of general or professional NQF level 4 education results or work experience that can demonstrate Level 4 outcomes.

Professional qualifications of Level 5 are usually specific to a profession and have specialized content. These qualifications require specialized field work experience, demonstrated in the workplace, and require technical and professional understanding based on practical and theoretical knowledge.

### Typical progress for level 5

Teaching at this level provides a basis for further study to complete the first cycle of higher education or to achieve higher levels of vocational training.

Vocational qualifications will prepare candidates for entry into various professions, including those regulated by law, either to pursue a Bachelor's degree or to obtain higher professional qualifications.

### LEVEL 6

### **Descriptor**

Individuals who attain qualifications at this level of the NQF demonstrate the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They must have advanced knowledge in and about the field of work or study, including a critical understanding of theories and principles. This may include:

- $\cdot$  the use of integrated knowledge of principles, characteristics, boundaries and terminology within a subject, discipline or field of work to reach or guide informed judgment about theories and practices;
- the use of in-depth knowledge and understanding in one or more specializations, which are the most advanced part of a subject, discipline or field of work;
- · Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ways of developing a subject, discipline or field of work, including a set of defined data collection techniques or research methodology.

### Skills

Advanced practical, cognitive, and creative skills.

They will be able to demonstrate mastery and innovation to solve complex and unforeseen problems in the specialized field of work or study. This may include:

- the application of specialized or advanced skills, practices and materials that are primary or in a subject, discipline or field of work;
- execution of defined research, development projects to identify and implement relevant results;
- Defining in a series of professional-level contexts, which include a degree of unpredictability and specialization, demonstration of authenticity and creativity, and judgment in situations where data/information is limited or derived from different sources.

### Competencies

At this level, students will carry out tasks or studies that include managing complex technical and professional activities or projects, which may include decision-making responsibility in unforeseen work or study contexts, or manage the professional development of individuals and groups. This may include:

- ·effective leadership work, in collaboration with other qualified colleagues;
- · exercising autonomy and initiative and taking primary responsibility for the work of others and for a range of resources;
- · working with others to bring out change, development and new ideas;
- · dealing with ethical and professional issues in accordance with existing professional codes and practices.

### Level descriptors

Level 6 qualifications are of different types and contents, as described below:

### Programmes in formal higher education

Level 6 programmes offer in-depth knowledge and skills that are consistent with first cycle study programmes. They can be professional or academic in content and have credit vlaue, and can last three or four years of full-time study.

These qualifications are in accordance with the first cycle of the Bologna process and relevant Dublin descriptors and lead to a Bachelor's degree. Based on the knowledge and skills necessary for professional practice and may be the basis of a license to practice the profession;

### Short Higher Education Programmes

These are short programmes that lead to qualifications for those who are employed and need to learn new knowledge, skills and broader competencies such as: using new technologies, working methods and taking on new responsibilities of the same level as the current workplace. Performs tasks related to technical and professional understanding based on practical and theoretical knowledge. Some of the knowledge offerd in this programme is part of the advanced level.

Individuals who receive these qualifications usually must have qualifications or experience in a profession or occupational field that is at least level 4 or 5. Qualifications are based on national, international or standards required by particular employers.

### Level indicators in the context of study and work

Level 6 results are demonstrated in a field of study that continues after general or vocational secondary education and is at a level that incorporates advanced aspects of their field of study knowledge. Individuals have limited control over the formal content and methods used, but are expected to exhibit independence in research and problem solving tasks. They must have the ability to collect and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to arrive at judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.

The 6th level individual is a specialist, professional or manager. Working at level 6 usually requires skills to take on responsibilities and improve knowledge, skills and broader competencies towards enhancing prior knowledge. Attendance at Level 6 training requires general and vocational education at Level 4 or 5.

The results at level 6 are demonstrated at work that is based on detailed theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competencies related to a field of learning or work, some of which is in the current course of development in this field.

### Progress to Level 6 qualifications

This level provides the basis for progression to further studies in the second cycle of higher education. Level 6 qualifications provide entry into professional employment and are often as career entry into professional and managerial jobs.

### LEVEL 7

### **Descriptors**

Individuals who achieve qualifications at this level of the NQF demonstrate the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They will have highly specialized, extensive and in-depth knowledge, some of which is fundamental in a field of work or study and which relate to different fields as a basis for authentic ideas and research.

### This includes:

- Critical understanding of key theories, principles and concepts related to practical and conceptual knowledge of the subject, discipline or field of work including relevant specializations;
- Knowledge that covers and integrates most of the key areas of subject, discipline or field of work, including specifics and terminology;
- Supporting critical awareness of current issues of a subject, discipline or field of work including relevant specializations.

### Skills

Cadidates will be able to apply specialized skills and techniques related to a subject or discipline, a professional field, including activities that require innovative ideas and research. They will have the attitude and know-how to evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a wide range of sources and should be able to use specialized problem-solving skills, the development of new knowledge, and procedures and integration in various fields such as:

- planning and carrying out an important research and development project;
- developing original and creative responses to problems and issues practiced in a wide variety of often unpredictable ways, in a variety of professional contexts;
- master thesis research.

### Competencies

They will be autonomous and take initiative in professional and similar activities, taking responsibility for their own work and the work of others. They undertake work or study initiatives that involve managing and transforming work or study contexts that are complex, unforeseen, and require new strategic approaches. This may include:

- managing professional teams, contributing to the development of knowledge and practice and reviewing their performance;
- addressing complex ethical and professional issues and making decisions on issues that are not addressed by current professional codes or practices.

### Level indicators:

Oualifications for this level are:

Programmes in formal higher education

Level 7 qualifications studies are conducted at specialized higher education institutions and include knowledge and understanding that is built on and linked to Level 6. Programmes are designed and delivered in accordance with the first cycle of the Bologna Process and relevant Dublin descriptors which lead to the Master's degree. Qualifications at this level are worth a full-time credit for one or two full years of study. These qualifications are academic and professional;

Short Higher Education Programmes

Specialized short programmes lead to certain qualifications and may be offered by higher education providers. Trainers must have specialized professional knowledge of this level. There are no specific rules regarding the content and duration of these qualifications.

Advancement for Level 7 qualifications

Level 7 qualifications provide access to employment and career advancement within the specialized field. Individuals also have access to further specialization in higher education. Academic learning will provide a basis for progress in doctoral studies.

### LEVEL8

### Descriptor:

Individuals who achieve qualifications at this level of the NQF demonstrate the following knowledge, skills and competencies:

### Knowledge

They will have and use highly advanced knowledge in a field of work, study or research field to link different fields, drawing conclusions through critical review of a subject or discipline, by including critical understanding of theories, principles and concepts.

Knowledge and understanding is generated through personal research or related work that contributes to the development of a subject or discipline and provides original and creative knowledge as well as ideas and information on innovations, complex and abstract issues, developing creative and original approaches to problems.

This includes:

- work on very complex innovations and issues as well judging in the absence of complete or consistent data or information:
- the discussion, enhancement or contradiction of professional knowledge and practice within a particular field or the inter-domain connections.

### Skills

They will be able to use a range of skills, techniques, practices and materials in the subject, discipline or field of work in order to acquire knowledge, ideas, information and innovations on complex and abstract issues as well as developing creative attitudes and skills. original to problems.

This involves applying a set of standard and specialized research and research methods (eg synthesis and evaluation) to design and carry out research or development projects, with the aim of solving critical problems and laying down, advancing or challenging professional knowledge or practice. , contributing to new knowledge within an educational discipline or field. This may include:

- reviewing the literature, experimenting and developing other approaches to a range of issues;
- research papers, critical writing and insights, innovative developments in one or more areas of specialization or research areas;
- Conducting of a doctoral thesis.

### Competencies

They will be autonomous and take initiatives for professional and related activities, demonstrating authority, innovative approaches and educational and professional integrity that encompass the highest levels in the context of work, study or research in the relevant field or discipline.

They are responsible for their own work and the work of others, demonstrating leadership and originality in dealing with and solving problems. They are able to deal with complex ethical and professional issues, adjudicating new issues unaddressed by current professional and ethical codes or practices.

### **Level indicators**

Level 8 qualifications include doctoral studies developed and offered in accordance with the Bologna process and relevant Dublin descriptors. Level 8 qualifications contain systematic expertise in the field of high knowledge specialization and a capacity for critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.

These qualifications create the ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adapt substantive research processes. These qualifications also recognize leadership experience in developing new creative approaches that broaden or redefine existing professional knowledge or practice. The study of these qualifications is carried out in higher education institutions.

### Level indicators in the context of study and work

Level 8 qualifications are accompanied by authentic research that expands the boundaries of knowledge by developing a substantive product, part of which can be referenced in national and international publications. Candidates are capable of analyzing, evaluating and critically synthesizing new and complex ideas and are expected to be able to promote the technological, social and cultural developments of society within academic and professional contexts.

Teaching for Level 8 qualifications takes place in highly specialized professional areas, is independent of formal learning programs and is carried out on its own initiative, led by high level experts. Individuals working at this level can empower others.

### Advancement to qualifications of level 8

Level 8 qualifications provide access to and employment opportunities in specialized fields and career advancement in workplaces where research skills, research work and leadership skills are required.

### 3.3. Advancement and Transfer to NQF

### 3.3.1 Scope of NQF

The NQF is a policy reform mechanism of the education and training system. The EU regards EQF as a "catalyst for reform" and in the context of lifelong learning stimulation objectives. The NQF creates greater opportunities for qualifications as well as inclusion of all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal) within the framework.

### NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

### **Article 4: The scope and structure of the NQF**

- 1. The NQF, established under the provisions of this Law, shall include all types and levels of qualifications and certifications within a level structure;
- 2. Level-by-level advancement must be determined on the basis of demanding and increasingly complex learning outcomes, defined within extensive knowledge, skills and competencies;

The qualifications approved for inclusion in the framework must have credit values and be designed to allow credit transfer;

- 4. The NQF shall include:
- 4.1Qualifications awarded at all levels of the education and training system, ricluding pre-university, university and training programs, adult education and training and lifelong learning;
- 4.2 Certification of formal and informal learning outcomes, including recognition of prior learning and achievements of candidates.

From the Law on National Qualifications (No. 03 / L-060, November 7th, 2008)

The NQF includes all types of qualifications and certifications offered in Kosovo. The framework includes and classifies qualifications as well as regulates the forms of qualification delivery and certification.

The objectives of the framework are not only to ensure inclusion and understanding, but also to provide a progressive and flexible system that supports and encourages the development of lifelong learning for all.

Based on the Law on National Qualifications with objectives such as: promoting the development of lifelong learning, enhancing the assessment and certification approach, and establishing a system for credit accumulation and transfer, the accomplishment of these objectives implies continuous access to education and training. candidates, progress from level to level and enable transfer through various forms of education.

Access to qualifications and progression between levels of qualifications or forms of instruction should be non-discriminatory.

### 3.3.2 Concepts of Access, Progress and Transfer to the NQF

Within the context of lifelong learning, the NQF provides the opportunity for candidates to continue developing and improving their lifelong knowledge, skills and competencies.

The NQF enables candidates to access and re-enter the education and training system at different times in their lifetimes. This increases the opportunities for candidates to update their knowledge through continuing qualifications. Employment will depend on their qualifications. Overcoming barriers to access, progress and transfer is a priority in Kosovo's national qualification system.

### 3.3.3 Ways of Progress

Qualification in the education and training system must contain the entry and re-entry criteria. The qualification results of one level serve as the entry requirement for qualification to the next level. In addition, the qualification entry criteria can be set depending on the type and content of the qualification.

### 3.3.4 Access to education and training for candidates with special needs/disabilities

The NQF supports the implementation of policies and strategies for the inclusion of disabled candidates through:

- Criteria and procedures for continuous improvement and adaptation of education and training qualifications for candidates/students with special needs;
- Implementation of a strategy for inclusion in institutions through the self-evaluation and accreditation processes;
- Developing qualifications at all levels of the framework and enabling candidates to access specific qualifications at basic levels;
- Implementation of the modular system of qualifications enabling the transfer of credits and the possibility of selecting certain modules.

## DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS UNDER NQF



### 4. DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS UNDER NQF

NQF objectives are met through the process of developing qualifications. The development of qualifications in the NQF depends on the types of qualifications.

### 4.1. Development of general education qualifications

General education qualifications are developed by MEST. General education qualifications are based on the Kosovo Curriculum Framework.

General education curricula are based on the learning outcomes defined for each level of education. The key competencies foreseen in the new curriculum derive from the overall goals of pre-university education in Kosovo and determine the key learning outcomes that students must achieve in a progressive and consistent manner throughout the pre-university education system.

Qualifications in general education are given at the end of the formal level of education by the schools in accordance with the legislation laid down by the MEST. The quality of general education qualifications is provided by the MEST Department of Pre-University Education Development, based on learning outcomes for the curricular competencies and areas. As such, they are automatically part of the National Qualifications Framework.

### 4.2. Development of vocational education and training qualifications

Vocational education and training qualifications are developed by developers who in this case are MEST, MLSW, VET providers, business associations, etc. always in collaboration with social partners.

Qualifications developed to be included in the NQF are submitted to the NQA to undergo the validation and approval process.

The development of these qualifications, according to the NQF, relies on: links between programmes and qualifications, the link between different qualifications within the framework, access to qualifications, assessment and certification, the creation of pathways leading to qualification, progress at different levels and types qualification, modular approach, credit system for recognition, accumulation and transfer of credits between qualifications, etc.

The following criteria are applied to the development of these qualifications:

- Eliminating barriers and discrimination to access, advance and transfer to qualifications and flexibility to enter qualifications;
- Qualifications must be developed in order to meet clear goals and objectives;
- Evaluation methods should be purpose-appropriate and should not cause barriers to cadidates with disabilities;
- Qualifications must be specified in order to:
  - a) provide open evaluation for all candidates who are considered capable and meet the qualification requirements;
  - b) encourage the provision of qualifications in a variety of ways in accordance with the needs of individuals;

- The structure of qualifications should be modular in order to provide the basis for the development of the credit system and to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of credits;
- The modules should be such as to enable candidates to be certified for partial qualifications and not only for full qualifications;
- Qualification developers must recognize and accept credits from other qualifications.

More detailed practical guidance can be found in the NQA Guidelines Package "Developing Professional Standards for VET and Qualifications".

When submitting a validation and approval qualification for inclusion in the NQF, the following specifics shall be described:

- •Title of qualification / module;
- The rationale for the qualification / module and the evidence that it needs this qualification / module;
- Purpose of the qualification / module, target group;
- NQF qualification / module level and credit value;
- Requirements for access to qualification / module and other enrollment requirements;
- Opportunity to progress after completing the qualification / module;
- Qualification structure;
- Evaluation forms for qualification / module achievement;
- Specific requirements for quality assurance of the qualification / module;
- Other detailed specifications (eg modules, programmes, etc.).

The specification of VET qualifications also includes the description and how the qualification relates to the labor market.

### 4.2.1 NQA criteria for the validation of professional qualifications for inclusion in the NQF

The criteria for the validation of qualifications are described in the Administrative Instruction on Criteria and Procedures for the Validation and Approval of Qualifications and Accreditation of Institutions providing qualifications in Kosovo.

### Rationale

Qualifications or modules proposed for validation should:

- Have a clear rationale, transparent goals, clear objectives, provide opportunities for progress and have stakeholder support;
- Professional qualifications should have support within the relevant sector;
- Associate with a full qualification or other education and training needs.

### Credit value and duration

This qualification specification includes the number of credits and the number of programme hours required to achieve the qualification.

### **Enrollment requirements and access**

- Prior knowledge, achievement or experience of achieving a qualification / module should be clear;
- The qualification / module should not be subject to direct or indirect discrimination or barriers to access.

### Content, results and standards

- The professional content of the qualification / module should be based on the occupational standards;
- The qualification structure should be modular. Which modules are compulsory or which are elective:
- Modules should be clearly stated in learning outcomes and be assessable;
- Learning outcomes should reflect professional standards and should include assessment objectives.

### **Evaluation**

- Specification of qualifications or modules should include an evaluation strategy that is: fair and objective, reliable, sustainable, cost effective and transparent;
- Qualification includes specifications for the types of evidence required to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competencies.

### **Quality assurance**

• The provision, evaluation and certification of qualifications are supported by quality assurance mechanisms, including external and internal quality assurance.

### **Progress**

- Qualifications should be designed to enable students / candidates to advance directly into employment or further learning for the purpose of employment;
- Qualifications are also designed to enable advancement of other qualifications in the relevant field or related fields.

### 4.3. Development of higher education qualifications

Higher education qualifications are developed by higher education institutions. Qualifications developed for inclusion in the NQF are submitted to the KAA to undergo the accreditation process. When submitting a higher education qualification for accreditation, the following specifics must be described for inclusion in the NQF:

- Justification of the labor market programme (which will provide facts for labor market research);
- International comparison of the programme;
- •The target group of the programme;
- Orientation of the study programme according to the guiding principles of the institution (mission statement);
- Purpose and profile of the study programme (short description of the programme 7-10 sentences);
- Expected learning outcomes (counting at least 7-10 competencies and qualifications, knowledge and skills) for the proposed NQF level;
- •The relationship between theory and practice and the experimental part of the study;
- ECTS value;

- Practical work internship (demonstrated through valid agreements with business partners);
- Research plan for the study programme being evaluated;
- Student enrollment and admission criteria.

Furthermore, all higher education institutions (HEIs) should provide a full programme description for each course / module:

- Description (name);
- Content description;
- Goals and expected learning outcomes (5-7), (knowledge, skills and competencies);
- Teaching and learning methods:
- Evaluation methods and passing criteria as well as concretization tools / ICTs;
- Relationship between practical and theoretical part of teaching;
- Basic literature to be used for each course (module one and two supplementary titles, not older than 10 years).

The criteria for the accreditation process are set out in the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo and the Administrative Instruction on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kosovo.

### CREDIT SYSTEM



### **5. CREDIT SYSTEM**

One of the main goals of the NQF is to "establish the credit accumulation and transfer system" (Law 03 / L060 Art. 5, 1.6).

All NQF qualifications have attached the credit system, except for general education qualifications.

Higher education qualifications have a credit system that is in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). 1 ECTS credit equals 25-30 hours. The calculated time for a full academic year is 60 credits. All VET qualifications have a credit system that is in line with the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

### 5.1 Development of VET Credit System in Kosovo

The credit system for VET in Kosovo is ECVET compliant. As noted earlier, ECVET is a voluntary and decentralized mechanism aimed at facilitating individuals to transfer between education and vocational training providers in Europe, to recognize their learning/qualification in Europe and to strengthen institutional partnerships in VET. Credit system development in Kosovo is in line with ECVET developments.

### 5.2 The purpose of the credit system

The purpose of the credit system is to enable individuals to accumulate and transfer learning outcomes across different learning contexts or systems, including formal, informal and non-nformal education and training. It also provides a mechanism by which formal and informal learning will be formally recognized.

Credit accumulation refers to the process by which learning acquired in different contexts can be enhanced towards a particular qualification.

Credit transfer enables learning acquired in a particular institution, sector or field to be transferred to a qualification, institution, sector or other field.

However, the purpose of the credit system in Kosovo is to:

- Enable learning outcomes acquired in formal, informal and non-nformal contexts to be accumulated and quantified towards qualifications;
- Facilitate the transfer of learning from one context to another for validation and recognition;
- Increase opportunities for students to access education and training programmes;
- Increase opportunities for learner mobility among different contexts;
- Make progress within the curriculum and facilitate pathways to it;
- Avoid unnecessary repetitions of learning that have already been acquired and provide mechanisms for recognition of prior learning.

### 5.2.1 Integrating the credit system into the NQF

The credit system for VET in Kosovo is based on the following characteristics of the NQF:

- Qualifications based on learning outcomes and placed at an NQF level;
- Modules as part of qualifications placed at a NQF level;
- Credit points;

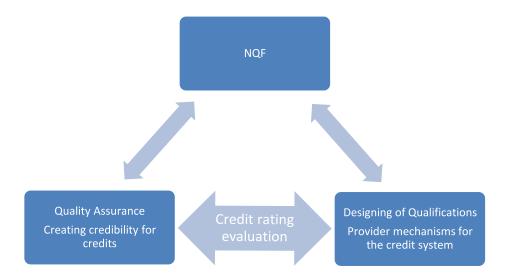
- Design of qualification;
- Designated institutions responsible for evaluating and ensuring the quality of evaluation.

### **Connection to ECVET**

ECVET is based on:

- Qualifications expressed as learning outcomes;
- Learning outcomes assigned to EQF levels;
- Qualification modules;
- ECVET credit points;
- Competent institutions for quality assurance and evaluation.

The integration of the NQF credit system is presented in the following diagram:



### 5.2.2 What is "a credit"?

Credit is given for recognizing the learning outcomes achieved.

In Kosovo credit may be granted for the achievement of learning outcomes in qualifications or a part of qualification (Law 03 / L-060, Art. 2).

### **ECVET** defines the credit as:

A set of learning outcomes that are assessed and which can be accumulated or transferred towards a qualification.

In Kosovo, qualifications consist of modules. A module is an integral part of a qualification, which represents the smallest part of the qualification to which certification is allowed. A module consists of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competencies expressed in the form of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Each module has credit value.

In Kosovo, the Law on National Qualifications defines credit as: a numerical value given to qualifications, or a part of qualifications, which represents the volume of instruction required to attain a qualification or part of qualification. Credit can be accumulated towards a qualification or transferred between qualifications or qualification systems (Law 03 / L-060, Art. 2).

The value of the credits depends on the "learning volume" required to achieve the results. Using credit as a measure of learning volume, the NQF may recognize any size of qualification or module offered that meets the minimum credit value requirements.

Credits are assigned to qualifications and modules by different VET developers as long as they meet the credit requirements which are:

- The qualification or module must be validated by the NQA;
- Any modules that have been assigned a credit is required to have the learning volume at least the value of a credit;
- Learning outcomes should be subject to valid and reliable assessment methods;
- •The outcome of the evaluation of the results should be documented;
- Evaluation should be subject to external quality assurance by the NQA.

### 5.2.3. Applying the credit value agreement to divide the credit value into qualifications and modules

The credit allocation methods for qualifications and modules are ECVET compliant. This enables Kosovo to participate in regional and European cooperation of VET programmes and to support the movement of individuals between VET providers.

Since the publication of the NQF document, the credit system agreement has been 1 to 10 hours. In order to enhance the quality and meet the demands of the labor market and competitiveness, the NQA with other relevant institutions and parties have agreed on the time needed to achieve learning outcomes in a module, therefore, the value of a credit equal to 20 hours, which enables:

- the inclusion of short courses for adults including modules offered through non-formal and informal learning;
- enhancing quality by increasing the time needed to achieve results;
- facilitating communication and understanding by users;
- Easier conversion of points/credits from ECVET to ECTS.

### What is "one hour"

In Kosovo, "one hour" has different meanings in different VET settings. Within a formal VET a teaching time is 45 minutes. However, in an informal approach an hour usually lasts 60 minutes. The concept of credit hour is used to develop common sense. Credit hour includes all learning activities that are involved in achieving specific outcomes, including homework and evaluation.

### Allocation for VET credit system

- Eligibility for all VET institutions;
- Inclusion for all forms of VET: formal, informal and informal;
- Support for the mobility of students / candidates for transfer to the VET system;
- Support for VET flexibility;
- Enable progress and assist students in measuring their progress in the system;
- Support for partnerships between VET institutions;
- Support for recording of achievements;
- Eligibility for certification;
- Easier transfer and recognition in HE;
- Comparison with ECVET.

### 5.2.4 Credit value as an integer

The value of the credit equals 20 hours of learning. If the estimated learning time cannot be exactly divided by an integer, then it should be rounded up (eg up to 4.4 is 4 credits, and from 4.5 onwards 5 credits). This calculation is done because the credits must be an integer, e.g. learning time means the time spent by an average student / candidate to achieve learning outcomes. The minimum credit value for a module in the NQF is 1, while the maximum value is not limited.

### 5.2.5 Design of qualifications for credit accumulation and transfer

To allow credit accumulation and transfer, qualifications must be designed according to:

- modular system;
- criteria on how credits can be combined to achieve a qualification;
- criteria on how the module and the full qualification can be assessed.

### 5.2.6 Who can draft qualifications and assign credits?

The credit system sets limits on who is eligible to develop credit-based qualifications and the criteria that must be met by that institution.

VET qualifications are developed by a significant number of institutions, including ministries, agencies, public and private training providers, companies, employers, etc..

For the drafting of qualifications and assigning of credits, the institution must meet the following criteria:

- Keeping records of the design and delivery of the qualification / module;
- Quality assurance system for programme design, approval, evaluation process, including internal and external review processes;

- Implementation of credit assignment guidelines;
- Human capacities for the development of qualifications in the field of qualification.

Individuals involved in the credit allocation must be experts in the field and meet the following requirements:

- · Knowledge of NQF criteria;
- · Experience in determining the level and value of the credits;
- · Experience in quality assurance in teaching / training and subject assessment or in the relevant sector.

These processes are valuable in order to ensure that the credit allocation process is appropriate and that users can trust the credit rating given. Evidence of credit allocation procedures must be submitted to the NQA when applying for a qualification validation.

### **ECVET**

Rules and procedures for defining the characteristics of learning outcomes of modules and for combining and accumu lating modules for a given qualification have been defined by the competent institutions and partners involved in the training process, in accordance with national and regional rules.

The NQA is responsible for ensuring the quality of the credit system at VET. As part of the qualification validation process, the NQA will ensure that:

- The qualification / module is properly defined to meet its needs;
- The level of credit value of the qualification / module is accurately identified;
- Evaluation requirements are clearly defined including the processes of how the results can be evaluated and their quality assured;
- Quality assurance requirements include discussions on scheduling student achievement records and archiving official assessment data.

### 5.2.7 How is the credit calculated/divided?

The credit is given to an individual. It is shared when learning outcomes are assessed and documented. Credits are earned after evaluating learning outcomes should:

- Conducted by an accredited institution;
- To meet the quality criteria of that institution;
- Meet the evaluation criteria set out in the qualification / module;
- Be officially documented in accordance with the certification procedures required by the qualifying institution.

### ECVET: Assigning of points for modules according to ECVET

The value credit of the module is calculated according to the relative weight of the module within the qualification. This may include the time it takes the module to be completed, but other factors may also be considered, such as the importance of the module in the labor market, the complexity of learning, including the efforts of the learner.

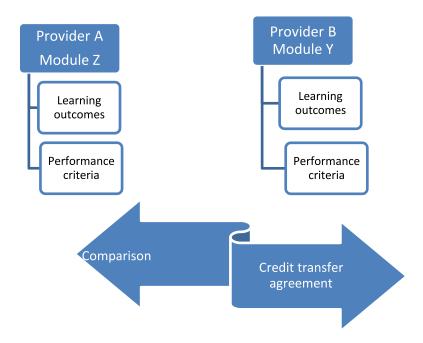
### 5.2.8 Credit registration

Institutions should keep records on allocating credits to candidates. Institutions / providers must register:

- Individual data:
- Credits given under modules and qualifications;
- Date of granting each credit.

### 5.2.9 How are the credits transferred?

Accredited institutions are responsible for the transfer and recognition of credits obtained by candidates (Law 03 / L-060, Art. 17 (1.3).



Transparency for credit transfer and recognition is a criterion for student / candidate support, as well as ensuring credibility in the credit system. The evaluating institution shall decide on the acceptance of transfer credits based on:

- Credit transfer arrangements to qualification specifics;
- Comparison of the learning outcomes of the qualification with the new qualification requirements.

In order to admit the credit transfer, institutions must have:

- Principles and procedures for credit transfer;
- Quality assurance mechanisms, including credit monitoring and transfer mechanisms;

- Clear and accessible information for staff;
- Personnel / staff responsible for making credit transfer decisions with knowledge of the NQF, as well as the relevant field and level;
- A support system that provides candidates with information and advice;
- Possibility of timely credit transfer that comply with the qualification approach.

All qualifications set out in the Framework with the NQF Credit Agreement published in 2011, after the approval of this NQF document, will be validated under the new guidelines in force.

# RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING



### **6. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

Recognition of prior learning is regulated by Law no. 03 / L-060 on National Qualifications in the Republic of Kosovo. One of the main objectives of the law is to improve the assessment of qualifications, including preparations for recognition of prior learning.

Basic Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning at work or through other activities that are acceptable through the process of identifying, evaluating and formally recognizing the skills acquired.

Formal learning is included in this definition in order to cover persons who are not able, through certificates or other documents, to prove their formal learning, or those who have certificates from non-accredited formal learning programmes.

Based on this law secondary legislation has been developed regarding the criteria and procedures for the validation and approval of national qualifications and the accreditation of institutions providing qualifications in Kosovo. Recognition of Prior Learning legislation incorporates general principles, responsibilities and procedures for the implementation of nonformal and informal learning recognition at all levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), including not only VET but also higher education, with the exception of general education. This constitutes the key regulatory framework for RPL in the country.

The higher education sector has not continued to develop policies and mechanisms to ensure the quality of higher education qualifications. On the other hand, the NQA has developed, with the support of the European Training Foundation (ETF), the national policy for the recognition of prior learning in VET.

The policy document was developed as a result of extensive consultations with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare, the Employment Agency and accredited public and private providers.

The document provides guidelines to be followed and requirements to be met in order to build and maintain a RPL quality assurance system. The document will support providers and other organizations involved in implementing the RPL, helping them develop or update their valid policies and guidelines to meet the requirements of the NQA specified in the document. This applies to providers that are accredited for RPL implementation and those who intend to apply to implement it.

### 6.1 Objectives of RPL

Targets of RPL include:

- · Providing access to relevant education and training;
- · Adapting training to the specific needs of students;
- · Decreasing the time spent in training;
- · Access to the labor market through certification;
- · Converting less credentialed certificates to recognized certificates;
- · Putting candidates at a proper level in the training programme.

### 6.2 RPL Process

The process of RPL in VET is defined in four main stages as follows:

### 1. Awareness, information and guidance for candidates

At this stage interested RPL candidates should be informed by the RPL Coordinator of the whole process. This includes: the possibility of obtaining a full or partial qualification through RPL, the criteria and standards, the necessity to submit a file of evidence, the sources of support and guidance available to the candidate, the time limits/periods, complaining procedures and financial implications.

### 2. Documentation of evidence

If the candidate decides to undergo the RPL process, he / she must collect sufficient evidence to obtain the module / qualification through the RPL. The evidence is structured in the form of a portfolio containing:

- · CV;
- · A description of the candidate's experience with module / qualification learning outcomes for which he / she applies for certification;
- · Proof (diplomas, certificates, grades report, transcript of records etc.) of completion of educational programmes and training;
- · Evidence of experiences in non-formal education and training (certificates of attendance, reports, teamwork, etc.);
- · Proof of work experience gained in the relevant field or on certain topics related to the chosen qualification;
- $\cdot Other \, relevant \, evidence \, supporting \, the \, candidate's \, work \, and \, life \, experience; \,$
- · A statement of the file / documents submitted, etc.

To ensure the validity of the evidence in the file, all pieces of evidence provided should relate to the relevant module / qualification learning outcomes. example; when using photographs, the process of working on photographs should be elaborated and linked to the relevant module / qualification.

### 3. Evluation

At this stage, after compiling the file, the candidate is subject to the evaluation of the evidence presented, to obtain the module / qualification through PLR from the evaluation panel. The Panel shall consist of at least three evaluators, one of whom shall be an external evaluator. The composition and number of evaluators in the evaluation panel is determined during the NQA accreditation process, depending on the type and size of the qualification. The candidate must have valid registration at least 20 business days in advance (time required for the candidate to compile a sufficient and authentic evidence file) for evaluation.

In addition to submitting evidence through the file, the candidate is subject to a final assessment that will assess the skills and competencies required by the learning outcomes gained from prior learning. In other words, submission of the file is a prerequisite for the candidate to be able to undergo the final evaluation. The final assessment should be designed to evaluate all module learning outcomes, knowledge, skills and competencies. Therefore, if a candidate intends to obtain the full qualification, the final task must be designed to evaluate the learning outcomes of all modules in the qualification.

The length of the final evaluation varies depending on the type and size of the module / qualification (eg the construction sector may have some modules that require a lot of preparation and time to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and competencies, while hairdressers may be able to demonstrate many modules in one day). The instruments are the same as for candidates who follow the formal learning path for assessment, such as demonstrating practical skills, observation, simulation, etc.

The evaluation should be valid and reliable to ensure the integrity of the qualification and the PLR system.

The evaluation decision for the final task performed by the candidate may be:

- "passes" when the candidate is assessed to have met the sufficient evaluation criteria;
- "passes partially", when the candidate is assessed to have met the assessment criteria for a part of the learning outcomes within the chosen module or qualification;
- "does not pass" when the candidate is judged to have failed to meet the required evaluation criteria.

The evaluation panel informs the responsible persons of the provider of the evaluation decision. The candidate will be informed of the decision no later than 5 working days from the date of evaluation.

### 4. The certification procedure and appeal

After assessing that a candidate has provided sufficient and appropriate evidence, according to the standards and learning outcomes, to obtain a full or partial qualification, the accredited provider will issue a certificate / diploma in accordance with the achievement of candidate.

Where a candidate has been granted partial certification and wants to obtain full qualification, this must be done within a period of not more than three years from the first evaluation date. The mentor will advise the candidate of further training needed and training opportunities to obtain full certification.

The certificates / diplomas obtained through RPL are the same as those obtained through a formal or informal certification.

If a candidate appeals against his or her evaluation, he or she must follow the standard provider complain procedures. The complaint will be reviewed by independent internal and external evaluators. If the complaint remains unsolved then the candidate will be referred to NQA for consideration.

This process will be supported by a team of RPL professionals within the institution implementing the RPL as follows:

### RPL Coordinator

It is responsible for coordinating PLR quality assurance mechanisms, communicating with staff involved in any aspect of PLR, providing information on candidate documentation, evidence and file descriptions, and supporting candidates throughout all stages of the PLR process., providing them with the necessary information, advice and guidance.

### Mentor of RPL

It is responsible for advising and supporting candidates on the preparation of the necessary evidence file related to the expected outcomes (learning outcomes of the module/qualification chosen).

### Internal evaluator of RPL

It is responsible for supporting the file compilation process by validating the evidence gathered towards the relevant module / qualification learning outcomes.

### External evaluator of RPL

It is responsible for evaluating the submitted file and evaluating the candidate's final assignment towards module / qualification learning outcomes.

### 6.3 Quality assurance of RPL

RPL can only be applied by institutions accredited by regulatory bodies, such as the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) or the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). There is a clear legal framework for accrediting institutions for the implementation of RPL in VET, which defines internal and external quality assurance (QA) mechanisms. To be accredited for the implementation of RPL, institutions must meet specific criteria such as internal quality assurance mechanisms, specific equipment, etc.

The accreditation criteria to be met by the provider applying to the RPL in VET are as follows:

- ·The provider must have drafted a written RPL policy in accordance with the national policy document adopted by the NQA. The policy must consider the following requirements:
- Potential candidates;
- Qualifications offered;
- Financing and funders;

- Provider resources and growth targets;
- Equal treatment;
- Data protection;
- Quality assurance and monitoring.
- · The provider should have developed a system to support and record the RPL assessment for each candidate (relevant regulations, guidelines, manuals, etc.);
- The provider should have developed an internal system to ensure the quality of RPL evaluation and certification for each candidate (relevant regulations, guidelines, manuals, etc.);
- · Personnel assigned with appropriate qualifications to support and ensure the RPL process (RPL coordinators, RPL mentors, internal evaluators and external evaluators);
- · In addition to the designated personnel, the provider should have a training scheme for all staff involved with any aspect of the RPL;
- The provider should have a complaining process along with details of how the provider ensures that candidates know how to approach the complaining process;
- The provider should have an institutional and financial stability, detailing how the RPL process is sustainable.

Accreditation is done for each VET qualification for a specific period of time. Providers should apply for re-accreditation.

Post-accreditation monitoring procedures are an integral part of external quality assurance for RPL implementation.

### 6.4 Cost of the RPL process

When it comes to the costs of the evaluation process, fees will be calculated by accredited providers based on the type and size of the module / qualification, which will be assessed in accordance with the principles of European guidelines and internal procedures.<sup>6</sup>

European guidelines provide three options for calculating the cost of the RPL process:

- Fees based on time spent completing the evaluation;
- Ordinary fees, regardless of time spent or number of certificates;
- Fees based on the volume and level of certificates.

### 7

## STANDARDS, EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION



### 7. STANDARDS, EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION

### 7.1 Standards for VET qualifications

Vocational Qualification is the official recognition of a candidate's achievement after satisfactory performance in a test or exam, leading to a degree or certificate in vocational education and training. In a broader sense, it testifies to the candidate's achievement within a particular profession. It also sets out the candidate's requirements for entering or making progress within a profession. Vocational qualifications are designed to meet the requirements of the workplace or occupation, ie they are directly related to the requirements of the relevant sector and labor market.

There are three components to consider when designing vocational qualifications to meet employment needs:

- **Employability,** eg. what knowledge, skills and competencies a candidate must possess to be able to perform the function or occupation;
- **Learning,** eg. what a candidate needs to acquire or achieve to perform a function or occupation;
- **Evaluation,** e.g. how the achievement of the candidates will be evaluated in order to prove that the candidate is able to exercise the function or profession.

By professional competence it is meant, what the individual is able to do effectively in the particular profession, meeting the demands of the labor market.

Indicators that such requirements have been met are recognized as standards. The notion of standards places particular emphasis on results and implies that they must be measurable, based on the objective criterion by which their achievements can be evaluated.

The VET system incorporates employment characteristics, learning and assessment requirements based on standards as the basis for specifying qualification requirements.

The notion of "standards" is closely linked to the concept of professional qualifications. However, the term "standards" can be used in a number of different disputes, each of which has a particular meaning.

### For instance:

- · the qualification standard refers to the quality of the qualification in general or the criteria for providing a qualification;
- measures when the candidate meets the requirements for the exam or assessment refer to the assessment and testing standards;
- · quality measures can also be referred to as quality standards.

In summary, there are different concepts of standards, but:

- ·Standards are results-based;
- ·Standards should always be measurable;
- · Standards should include objective criteria to assess whether they have been met.

### 7.2 Occupational standards

### 7.2.1 Definition of occupational standards

The Law on Vocational Education defines occupational standards as: "Occupational standards" are units to measure the extent to which an individual can meet the performance requirements of a particular profession or group of occupations in order to enter or advance within a profession or related professional field.

They are nationally assigned to employed individuals working within a particular occupation or professional field, and provide the basis for professional curriculum development and assessment.

Developing occupational standards in a given format enables national consistency, helping to ensure that these standards are easily understood by different users, ie employers, human resource managers, teachers, trainers, other individuals and bodies, etc.

The occupational standard is the starting point for the development of the qualification, curriculum, programme, evaluation criteria, learning outcomes, etc.



Standards of Curriculum **Learning Dimension** 

Standards of Qualification (programme) **Evaluation Dimension** 

The profession standard is developed in collaboration with: MEST, MLSW, other relevant ministries, social partners and craftsmen's associations. The occupation's standard is developed based on the methods for their development as well as on the criteria set by the NQA. The occupational standard is verified by the NQA. Moreover, the occupational standard that goes through the verification process and is approved by the CVETA is called the national occupational standard.

When defining the occupational standard for qualification it is necessary to analyze the occupation in order to identify its purpose, content and performance requirements.

Occupational standards are developed taking into account the following criteria:

- · The key purpose of the profession and its place in the overall structure of occupations and the Occupational Classification Bookin Kosovo;
- ·The main functions exercised within the profession;
- · Key activities involved in peerforming functions;
- · Performance requirements for each activity;
- $\cdot$  A range of disputes and conditions within which activities are fulfilled, including equipment, tools, supplies, etc. used when performing a job in a profession.

These elements are essential in determining the required performance and also help determine the required behaviors, attitudes, skills and knowledge.

The development of occupational standards requires the active involvement of institutions, the labor market, social partners and civil society.

In Kosovo the Council for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (CVETAEd) has a key role to play in proposing occupational standards. It is the responsibility of the council to ensure that the proposed standards meet labor market needs and have stakeholder support. Developing a profession standard requires general and accurate data about the skills, knowledge and competencies needed to perform well.

Initially, the development of the occupational standard is preceded by an occupational analysis through which the necessary data and information is collected. However, this analysis of the profession is accomplished through two methods:

- Functional analysis method;
- DACUM method

### 7.3 Functional Analysis Method

Functional analysis was developed in the UK in the 1980s and is now promoted by the ETF (European Training Foundation) and incorporates a research-based "bottom-up" approach.

This method is best suited for new occupations required by the labor market and for which there is no prior practice.

The purposes of this analysis are:

- Identification of key goals achieved by profession;
- Definition of functions that contribute to the achievement of the goal;
- Breakdown of functions into components until the list of individual work activities is identified;
- Definition of performance criteria for each activity;
- Identification of performance parameters in different contexts and circumstances.

The functional analysis method is also described in practical examples, in two guides to the use of professional standards, during module development as well as the development and verification of professional standards.

### 7.4 DACUM Method

The DACUM method (acronym for "Curriculum Development") has been developed in the USA as a means of defining competencies for enterprise management and staff development programmes. This method has been mainly used for developing World Bank programmes and international agencies and involves a "bottom-up" approach.

According to this method, the profession is described in terms of the tasks performed by successful performance workers. This is directly related to the knowledge, skills, tools and attitudes that workers must have to perform their tasks.

The success of using this method depends on the active participation of experienced parties (employers) in order to identify the list of key tasks and determine them in key functions of the profession. The tools, equipment, resources used, skills and knowledge required are also identified.

The DACUM method is described in practical examples in two guides to the use of professional standards in module development as well as in the development and verification of professional standards. Both methods include research on the sector concerned, including site visits as well as the identification of the general "map" of the profession and the organizational structure within the profession for which the standard is developed.

Both methods depend on the active involvement of experienced people in the sector, albeit in different ways. DACUM requires active participation in workshops, while functional analysis involves a more flexible approach to consultation.

If there are no conditions for applying the DACUM method, then functional analysis provides a more appropriate alternative.

The development of occupational standards is set out in the Administrative Instruction on the criteria and procedures for verifying occupational standards.

The occupational standard is developed by professionals in the field and organized in the form of workshops, where the facilitator has to take care of initial preparations, including visits to the enterprise to gather relevant information about the organizational structure and sector.

Workshops usually involve 8-10 participants, with the focus being on the following issues:

- 1. Orientation;
- 2. Review of position or description of professional work;
- 3. Identify general areas of responsibility;
- 4. Identify specific tasks performed in each general area of responsibility;
- 5. Review and improve job descriptions;
- 6. Order and description of tasks;
- 7. Identify the general knowledge and skills required of the profession, tools, equipment, supplies, materials, employee traits and attitudes.
- 8. Other options as needed (egidentifying acceptance levels).

In either case, the final results, in the context of data collection and development of draft standards, should be the same.

Prior to finalization, the occupational standards draft must be verified by a wider group of employers. Upon finalization, the occupational standards are submitted to the CVETA, then forwarded to the NQA for verification. Qualifications will be developed after finalization of occupational standards.

Also, standards can be verified using other countries' standards as a source of comparison - in a growing globalized world economy, there is a reason why there should be major differences between occupational standards in different countries. Indeed, international companies tend to expect the same level of performance from their employees, wherever they work.

### 7.5 Principles for the development of occupational standards

The development of occupational standards should follow some of the following principles:

- Naming and codification should be done according to the Book on the Classification of Occupations in Kosovo, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Standards on the Classification of Occupations (ISCO 08);
- Selection of the professional standard development method;
- Accurate description of purpose, functions, key activities, performance criteria etc. within the given profession;
- The selection of verbs used in the standard to determine the performance needed should be clear and understandable. In any descriptive activities, active verbs should be used. The use of verbs should be based on Bloom's Taxonomy;
- Overcontextualization of activities may limit the transfer process (especially activities common to more than one occupation);
- Avoiding activities related to certain labor processes or devices, which may vary with labor market developments and requirements. The same result can be achieved in different ways.

The structure of the occupational standard should contain the following divisions:

### Functions

Before defining the functions, the skill areas within the profession must be identified. Skills are the key skills areas within a profession that are both technical and professional and are compatible with the profession.

Function implies a component of working in a profession that integrates knowledge and skills. A function should include the following features: be relevant to the profession and known to the people working in the profession, whose accomplishment integrates knowledge and skills, and its implementation is transferable from one country to another;

### Key activities

Activities support the occupational standard. They should be broader than specific tasks or procedures and functions, and should integrate knowledge and skills;

### Performance criteria

Performance criteria relate to key function activities. They are a set of statements, which identify the quality characteristics that have been achieved if the job described in the function and the related activities are to be performed successfully;

### • The knowledge needed to perform the function

Here, the knowledge required to perform the function must be presented and enable the application of knowledge to perform the function;

### Skills

The skills required for practical application and thinking to solve problems should be presented;

### • Conditions for accomplishing the function

Conditions of performance are mechanisms designed to provide information on the context of the implementation of activities described for the unit of competence.

Also, these conditions relate to the context within which performance should be achieved (spaces, types of tools, materials, customers, etc.);

### • Statement of evidence

Evidence statements allow for the conclusion of the final evaluation of the standard. Evidence is used to indicate the type required when evaluating performance in a particular function. Likewise, statements of evidence indicate that the individual is competent.

The standard occupational format is illustrated in the following diagram.

### Function 1:

Key activities	Performance criteria	Knowledge required to perform the function	Skills	Key skills and skills associated with key functions

More information on the profession standards development process can be found in the guides that support the implementation of the NQF, such as: Guidance on the development and verification of occupational standards, Guidelines for occupational standards developers, Guidelines for employer survey implementation, and the Guide to the Transformation of the Occupational Standard into the Oualification Standard.

Occupational standards are a reference for the development of professional qualifications in the NQF. They are used to determine the modules and learning outcomes that are included in each qualification. In general, the key functions in occupational standards specifically define their modules and content.

Modules are the structure of qualifications, including the credit accumulation system and the possibility of transferring them. Vocational qualifications are based on compulsory and elective modules and allow for degree selection in order to achieve the qualification.

Learning outcomes are a descriptive form of the skills, knowledge and competences a candidate must acquire through a qualification. These formulations are based on occupational standards.

For more information on the process of adjusting vocational qualifications to occupational standards, you can find guides supporting the implementation of the NQF such as: A Guide to the Use of Professional Standards in the Development of Teaching Modules as well as a Guide to Determining Qualification Levels, Modules and Learning outcomes.

### 7.6 Format of professional qualifications

Professional qualifications have a standard format of qualifications, in which qualifications / modules are described.

The VET qualifications format is illustrated below:

	Title of qualification:
	Title of module:
	Credit value:
	Module level in NQF
	Learning outcomes:
1.	
2.	
	Learning outcome 1:
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	List of knowledge, skills, attitudes (conditions, equipment, tools, etc.)  Evaluation strategy
	• Required evidence (format and number of evidence)
	• Evaluation methods
	Learning outcome 2:
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	• Performance (evaluation) criterion
	List of knowledge, skills, attitudes (conditions, equipment, tools, etc.)
	Evaluation strategy

• Evaluation methods, etc,.

• Required evidence (format and number of evidence)

## EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION IN NQF



### 8. EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION IN NQF

### 8.1 Evaluation of general education qualifications

Based on the NQF, classroom-level assessment includes formative assessment throughout the school year, final assessment (after the end of the school year), and summative assessment (after the completion of one of the major curriculum stages/grades). Formative assessment, in addition to other informal assessment methods, throughout the learning process, consists of a rating scale that uses a grading system from 1 to 5. The final assessment occurs at the end of each school year and reflects the level of student performance all year long.

The student assessment presented above is entirely managed by teachers in schools, while schools and municipalities have a monitoring role for these assessment processes.

The MEST Standards and Evaluation Division is responsible for the preparation, administration and evaluation of all standardized external tests. State / national standardized assessments are organized after the completion of grades 5, 9 and 12. State / national assessments focus on measuring the level of achievement in mastering key competencies.

State-grade assessment at the end of Grade 5 refers to the level of achievement in mastering the key competencies expressed in the Core Curriculum through learning outcomes for the core curriculum level. Standardized assessment at the end of grade 9 refers to the level of achievement for mastering the core competencies expressed in the core curriculum. This assessment is used as an instrument to determine the orientation of students at upper secondary level.

The standardized assessment at the end of Grade 12, also known as the State Matura Exam, is intended to measure the level of achievement for mastery of key competencies, expressed through core curriculum learning outcomes. The Matura Exam evaluates whether students have reached the level of upper secondary education and determines whether students are ready to move on to higher education. As for admission to higher education, 50% of university entrance exams are awarded for the Matura Exam.

### 8.2 Evaluation of professional qualifications

In the Law on Qualifications (Law 03-L-060) evaluation is defined as: evaluation means the processes, including exams and tests, that are used to collect, interpret and evaluate an individual's achievement. Evaluation for qualifications may only be carried out by institutions or organizations approved by the NQA for this purpose and recognized as evaluation institutions.

Evaluation is the process of evaluating evidence of candidate / student achievements (knowledge, skills and competencies) to qualification requirements.

Evaluation of candidates / students is done for different purposes, such as: assessment for determination of level of qualification, progress of candidates, etc.

There are two forms of assessment: formative and summative assessment.

Formative or partial assessment is essential for effective learning and enables students / candidates and evaluators to measure progress towards achieving results.

The summative or final assessment leads to the final qualification result. The purpose of this assessment is to provide evidence of the candidate's achievements leading to a qualification.

To ensure the credibility of the evaluation under the NQF, the assessment should be:

- Fair and objective;
- Flexible;
- •Valid:
- Reliable:
- Sufficient;
- Practice;
- Cost effective;
- •Transparent.

Fair and objective evaluation must ensure that:

- The evaluation process is completely free from bias and discrimination;
- Students / candidates, regardless of their level and background, have unobstructed assessment approaches, e.g. evaluation instruments should not represent conditions or requirements that are irrelevant or inconsistent with what is valued.

To be flexible, evaluation practices must:

- Reflect an approach that places the student / candidate at the center of learning, the assessment processes are tailored to the individual needs of the candidate wherever possible;
- Make use of all available opportunities for students / candidates to demonstrate the required achievements, enabling assessment during practical activities, learning process or workplace.

Evaluation instrument must be:

- Relevant to the purpose (eg practical assessment is used to assess specific practical skills);
- Cover all defined learning outcomes;
- Ensure that candidates have all the knowledge and skills required to qualify;
- Ensure inclusiveness.

To be reliable the evaluation must be:

• Evidence-based, which are authentic work of students / candidates being evaluated;i, të cilat janë punë autentike e nxënësve/kandidatëve që janë duke u vlerësuar;

- Based on evidence derived from valid evaluation instruments and judged in accordance with established criteria;
- Be consistent with the evaluation criteria, regardless of where the evaluation is done;
- Be sufficient (evaluation practices should provide a number of relevant evidence to enable evaluators to make valid and credible decisions).

To be practical the evaluation must:

- Adapt to the time, resources available and support equipment;
- Avoid bureaucratic requirements regarding the provision of documentation, which should be adequate and in purpose.

To be cost effective, must:

• Avoid unnecessary burdens for the institution and the student / candidate (eg avoiding situations that require equipment costs or additional time to accomplish).

To be transparent, the evaluation must:

• The student / candidate achievement data should be accessible so that the assessment decision is clear and understandable to the relevant stakeholders.

### 8.2.1 The Function of Evaluators

The VET providers evaluators are responsible for assessing students / candidates in accordance with the qualification requirements and submitting the results for certification.

Accredited assessment institutions are responsible for ensuring that all persons involved in the evaluation of candidates for qualifications are competent as: teachers, trainers, instructors or persons engaged as external evaluators (e.g. representatives of social partners involved in the evaluation process).

To be an evaluator is required:

- Knowledge of qualification, evaluation criteria and requirements;
- Identification, selection and use of evaluation methods and instruments;
- Adaptation of assessment of students / candidates with disabilities;
- Planning the assessment process in collaboration with students / candidates;
- Collection and evaluation of student / candidate data and results:
- Processing and publication of evaluation results;
- Internal quality assurance that supports external quality assurance.

### 8.2.2 The Evaluation Process

Accredited evaluation institutions are responsible for providing the evaluation system, applying evaluation instruments and reporting the evaluation results.

Qualifications include specifics of learning outcomes, achievement / performance criteria and other evidence.

The achievement / performance criteria include the descriptive form of the products, outcomes, tasks and activities described to be fulfilled.

In order to assess the achievement of learning outcomes, students / candidates must provide sufficient evidence that the performance criteria associated with learning outcomes have been met. This means that the requirements have been met and the student / candidate has passed the evaluation stage. Whereas, when evidence is insufficient, students / candidates are provided with feedback and given the opportunity to gather new evidence and reassessment.

### The evaluation process is divided into the following stages:

### **Evaluation Planning Phase:**

- The evaluation process requires careful planning and preparation;
- Identify and implement assessment policies in accordance with standards and qualification requirements, including students / candidates in planning the assessment process.

### Collection of evidence:

• Application of appropriate methods, ie instruments for collecting the required evidence.

### Reasoning evidence of evaluation results:

- Verification that the evidence collected meets the evidence requirements in both quantitative and qualitative terms;
- Deciding whether or not the criteria have been met;
- Providing feedback to students / candidates.

### **Evidencing/recording of evaluation results:**

- Ensuring that evaluation results are collected as required;
- Provision of verifiable records for quality assurance purposes.

### 8.2.3 Evaluation Methods

It is important that the assessment methods, ie the instruments selected, provide the most appropriate way of gathering the evidence required for the qualification.

The evaluation includes:

- Supervision; which means observing students / candidates while they are conducting a practical, real or simulated activity;
- Product testing; which means verifying the product that the student / candidate has created or produced during or after the product has been completed;
- •The question; which means the questioning of students / candidates in written or oral form.

The questions can relate to the activities described in the learning outcomes, they can test skills of the students / candidates. The questioning method is an important tool for proving and verifying knowledge and understanding.

Evidence requirements for each learning outcome should always make the evaluation criteria clear. There are different types of assessment instruments such as:

- Questions
- Tasks/assignment
- Listening test
- Practical case study
- Questions on results
- Understanding/Comprehension check
- Design activity
- Participation in discussions
- Extended Answer Questions
- Table questions
- Research
- Diary
- Questions for comparison
- Questions with alternatives
- Multiple answers questions
- Oral interview
- Presentation
- Realization
- Practical exercise
- Project
- Questionnaire
- List of auestions
- Ouestions with limited answers
- Role playing
- Short answer questions
- Checklists, etc.

The person responsible for evaluating specific parts of the qualification within the institution uses assessment instruments, which must be defined before qualification is offered.

Assessment tools are designed to ensure optimal utilization of available resources, support effective learning, facilitate access and progress, and encourage credibility. The choice of appropriate evaluation instruments depends on a number of factors:

- $\cdot$  The purpose of the qualification requirements should be carefully checked to see what assessment instruments are required or expected for each learning outcome (eg when assessing practical skills, practical tasks are preferably applied before theoretical test);
- · Possibilities for using integrated assessment by combining assessment with different learning outcomes;
- · The need to provide a reliable basis for evaluating results, including measurable evidence of qualification accomplishment;
- · Maximize teamwork opportunities for all involved in the evaluation process.

Any gender, cultural, racial or religious prejudice should be avoided when compiling assessment methods. The difficulties of specific questions and tasks may be affected by certain features:

- Thinking: Questions / tasks become more complex when interpreting, judging, analyzing, ideas and concepts.
- Language / abstract topic: Questions / expressions become more complex depending on the level of use of concrete or abstract terms.
- Specific subject terminology: It should only be used if it is familiar and understandable to students/candidates.

Question / task focus: A focused clear question can be easier than one that has a wider focus.

• Simplicity of language: The formulation of questions / tasks should be simple, clear and accessible at all levels and avoid ambiguity.

### 8.2.4 Providing assessment conditions for candidates with disabilities/special needs

The criteria for assessing knowledge, skills and competencies should be the same for students / candidates with disabilities. However, assessment instruments and other supplementary elements need to be adapted. Conditions to consider are:

- Duration of the evaluation:
- The environment where the assessment is done;
- Approach to evaluation;
- Presentation of how a candidate is assessed.

Additional information is provided in the "Guidelines for Modifications and Adjustments Necessary for the Development of Access to Vocational Education and Training Programmes and Qualifications for Students with Disabilities or Other Special Needs".

### 8.2.5 Collection of evidence

Collecting evidence is an ongoing process where evidence is identified, collected and placed in the student / candidate portfolio. Evidence can be varied and is provided from a variety of sources. Evidence of practice evaluation is always the best measurement indicating that the student/candidate can attest the required performance. All evidence must be authentic.

Evidence is divided into evidence of accomplishment and knowledge: Evidence of accomplishment:

- student / candidate work products (are products that demonstrate student / candidate work done during different activities: evidence can be the end product itself, photographs, etc.);
- supervising the work of students / candidates (is observation of students / candidates during different activities: different reports, audio / video recordings, checklists), etc. For the evidence to be valid, they must have the date and signature of the evaluator and the student / candidate. Evidence should also be clear and specific to the activity required.

### Evidence for knowledge includes:

- Knowledge of procedures and facts;
- Understanding principles, theories, etc.;
- Applying knowledge to assess competence;
- Resolving emergency situations;
- Transfer and application of learning in different contexts.

Evidence of knowledge is provided directly by observations or products/results during practical work (within projects or asssignments).

For systematic testing of knowledge, written and oral tests and exams provide suitable tools for controlling the breadth and depth of students' knowledge and understanding. Also, asking informal questions is an effective way of assessing knowledge.

### Conditions for evaluation

When applying evaluation instruments, evaluators need to know that certain conditions exist so that the evaluation can be valid and reliable. There are different types of assessment conditions and they all need to be effectively implemented for all students / candidates.

Students / candidates should be provided with:

- noiseless environment where the assessment is held;
- time required for testing (unless there are special requirements for evaluation);
- opportunities for consulting literature, notes, materials or calculators, etc.

### Use of portfolio for evaluation

To meet the assessment requirements, after qualification, the following information must be recorded and archived:

- identification document:
- student / candidate registration form (may be different forms of documents such as contract, agreement, etc.);

- various tests (from formative and summative assessment);
- checklists;
- works, assignments, presentations, end products, etc.;
- final evaluation results;
- certificates / diplomas.

There is no unique form of student evidence file provided by the institution. The contents of the file are different and may include: examples, photos, videos, etc. The evidence in the file is stored in both physical and electronic form.

### 8.2.6 Analysing and recording evaluation results

Through the evaluation of students / candidates in VET they are assessed whether they are trained to practice the profession or not. They are capable of demonstrating sufficient performance about knowledge, skills and competencies. At the end of the formative assessment, it is essential to provide feedback to students / candidates on their performance, especially where improvements are needed.

In cases where students have not been successful in demonstrating achievement, they may be reassessed. This implies that the IAAP must implement the assessment instruments and the reassessment deadlines. Reassessment is planned between IAAP and students / candidates prior to each reassessment. IAAP assesses whether students / candidates should be reassessed in whole or only for certain parts.

The IAAP should maintain an assessment log for each student / candidate that records what has been assessed, when and by whom. The assessment must be signed by the student / candidate and the assessment panel. All evaluations should provide the opportunity for a complete audit.

Formative and summative assessment should be regularly and consistently recorded. Formative assessment logging and feedback help students progress. The key factors that contribute to the successful recording of the evaluation are:

- Verification: Internal and external evaluator decisions and registrations must be transparent, accessible and readable to all;
- Eligibility: The registration process is acceptable and coherent to all parties;
- Flexibility: Registration results should be flexible and useful to everyone;
- Simplicity: Enrollment results should be as practical as possible for students / candidates and evaluators.

### 8.2.7 Complaints

During the assessment process students / candidates may disagree with the assessment decisions. In such cases, the IAAP should have complaint procedures which should be clear and public.

The essential principle behind any complaint procedure is that they must be independent and must be examined under the legislation in force.

All those involved in the evaluation process should be informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to complaints. IAAP should record and file each complaint along with their results.

### 8.2.8 Certification

The Law on National Qualifications defines the process of certification of qualifications as:

Certification" is the process of recognizing the achievements of candidates for qualification through the award of a certificate or diploma;

Certificate" is an official do cument that certifies the completion of a course, education or training programme or the fulfillment of an individual's qualification requirements and identifies the partial completion of a qualification.

"Diploma" m eans the document which is awarded after the successful completion of a long educational programme.

It also makes it clear that certification is the responsibility of the evaluating institution, but the certificates and diplomas awarded for qualifications at the NQF must be approved by the NQA seal. The approval and stamp certifies that the qualification in question is in the NQF and that this qualification has been issued by an accredited institution.

All certificates / diplomas approved by the NQF must include:

- · Candidate details;
- Type of qualification in the NQF;
- Title of qualification / module;
- Date and place of issue;
- Level of qualification / module;
- · The value of the credits;
- · The issuing institution of qualification.

Certificates / diplomas should be accompanied by the certificate / diploma supplement explaining in greater detail the content of the qualification achieved.

Certificates / diplomas should be stored for a longer period of time and in the event of a duplicate issue this procedure is regulated by the applicable legislation.

Related to the evaluation process, VET providers should develop policies and procedures for:

- organization of internal evaluation (assessment methods and instruments including grading criteria, etc.);
- implementation and monitoring of the evaluation;
- registration and achievement statistics (a record of candidate achievements, including formative and summative assessment);
- confidentiality of the candidate, etc.

### 8.3 Assessment of higher education qualifications

Higher education institutions, which offer study programs level 6, 7 and 8, of the NQF, according to the Law on Higher Education and AI for Accreditation, have a academic freedom in the form of providing programs. Syllabuses, forms of assessment, and other issues related to the form of discourse are the full independence of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and their academic staff.

Kosovo Accreditation Agency ensures that, through the evaluation process, HEIs and their study programs have created mechanisms that guarantee this academic freedom and there is a well-known procedure within the institution, through which these syllabuses are to standardized and approved.

Regarding the evaluation process, HEIs should develop policies and procedures for:

- organization of internal evaluation (assessment methods and instruments including grading criteria, etc.);

Kosovo Accreditation Agency, as the implementer of the Bologna Declaration and a member of the European mechanisms for quality assurance, implements the practices defined in the space European higher education, including ECTS hours and the load limit for an ECTS, assessment standards, etc.

Certificates / diplomas must be kept for a longer period of time and in case of need for duplicate issuance abd this procedure is regulated according to the legislation in force.

Through the standards and internal guidelines with which the KAA evaluates programs, it is ensured that syllabuses contain, at least; objectives, content, learning outcomes, lesson delivery, student assessment system and literature.

# REGULATION OF QUALIFICATION AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE NQF



### 9. REGULATION OF QUALICATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE NQF

### 9.1 Establishment of general education qualifications in the NQF

General education qualifications are awarded at the end of the study programmes/curriculum by MEST. The development of qualifications and quality assurance is done by the MEST Department of Pre-University Education, based on national standards for their qualifications and curricular areas. As such, they are automatically part of the NQF.

VET qualifications are placed in the NQF through mechanisms developed and implemented by the NQA. These mechanisms are implemented through the processes for validation and approval of qualifications as well as for the accreditation of providers that provide these qualifications.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency is the institution responsible for higher education in Kosovo. The placement of higher education qualifications in the NQF is done through the accreditation process.

### 9.2 Rating of VET qualifications in the NQF

The qualification validation process is related to the quality control of the qualifications proposed for inclusion in the NQF, e.g. to ensure that qualifications are compiled to the criteria required. On the other hand, the accreditation process ensures that the capacities of the institutions providing qualifications meet the quality standards.

The validation and accreditation process usually takes place in parallel, but can also be as two separate processes.

The validation process is based on the following principles:

- 1. Qualifications or modules of any area of education and training must be validated to be included in the framework;
- 2. Any institution that intends to develop a qualification or module and include it in the NQF must request the validation of the qualification or module by the NQA;
- 3. Validation of qualifications may take place at the same time as the accreditation of the provider or assessment institution or as a separate process;
- 4. Validation leads to the approval or disapproval of the qualification. Approval shall be granted for a specified period after which they may be submitted for re-approval;
- 5. The validation process should be transparent and based on criteria which should normally include standards enabling national and international comparability;
- 6. All criteria, processes and reports must be public.

For the types of VET qualifications special validation criteria are applied which are set forth according to legislation into force.

Validation of qualifications is carried out in four stages.

- 1. **Stage 1:** The application must be submitted by the applicant institution. The application must include a detailed justification for the qualification / module and other data required by the NQA for inclusion in the NQF;
- 2. **Stage 2:** The evaluation of the application is done by the expert team selected by the NQA. The team work is supported by the NQA. The draft report with recommendations through the NQA is forwarded to the applicant institution, which may provide additional clarification or comment on facts presented within a time limit set by the NQA;
- 3. **Stage 3:** The external evaluation report is forwarded to the NQA Steering Council which makes a decision on majority validation;
- 4. **Phase 4:** Qualifications / modules after approval are included in the NQF and made public by the NOA.

The procedure for the validation of the qualification shall not exceed 6 months from the date of approval of the application.

Qualifications / modules are submitted for validation and approval according to the application format and procedures set by the NQA.

The expert team evaluates the necessary qualification / module documentation and other documents supporting the qualification as per the NQA guidelines.

The validation process is based on the documentation verification. The team of experts for validation may meet with the qualification developers or, as appropriate, consult with experts in the relevant sector or field.

The validation team can make the following recommendations:

- 1. Qualification is approved for a fixed period of time up to five years (this period may vary depending on development trends and needs);
- 2. If the qualification needs certain improvements, it shall be approved after their completion within a specified period of time;
- 3. Qualification is not approved.

The expert team drafts the report along with the relevant recommendations, which is forwarded to the qualification developer according to the procedures, while the final decision on the approval of qualifications / modules is made by the NQA Steering Council (SC).

The accreditation process ensures that institutions meet quality criteria and standards for the delivery and evaluation of qualifications / modules in the National Qualifications Framework.

The accreditation process is based on the following principles:

- 1. Accreditation will be for specific qualifications;
- 2. Any institution intending to be accredited to offer NQF qualifications must apply for NQA accreditation;
- 3. Accreditation shall be granted for a specified period of time after which the institution may request re-accreditation;
- 4. Accredited institutions must meet the accreditation criteria. Failure to meet these obligations will result in refusal of accreditation;
- 5. The accreditation process shall be fair, transparent and conducive to fair judgment by competent personnel;
- 6. Applicant institutions must demonstrate compliance with the criteria set by the NQA through the self-assessment process and other relevant documents;
- 7. The proposal for accreditation is taken after evaluation of the information and evidence provided by the applicant institution;
- 8. The accreditation institution's evaluation process involves a site visit in order to verify the evidence provided;
- 9. Accredited institutions have the right to accept VET candidates for NQF qualifications;
- 10. Qualifications issued by non-accredited institutions are not recognized by the NQA.

To be accredited, institutions must prove that they meet the following criteria:

- 1. An appropriate institutional structure that operates on a sustainable financial basis;
- 2. Effective approach to evaluation and quality management of evaluation;
- 3. Documentation and database that effectively supports quality assurance and verification of candidate achievements:
- 4. Effective access to certification / certificate / diploma quality management;
- 5. Appropriate staff development policies and procedures related to requirements for evaluation, internal verification and certification;
- 6. Appropriate policies and procedures for the evaluation of candidates with disabilities;
- 7. Access to assessment and certification for all, including candidates who follow specific learning programmes, including recognition of achievements in non-formal and informal learning;
- 8. Credit recognition and transfer systems for candidates;
- 9. Evidence that the assessment will be carried out in safe conditions and in a healthy environment;
- 10. Capacity to meet specific qualification requirements such as:
  - 10.1. Necessary space for the delivery or evaluation of qualifications and modules;
  - 10.2. Material resources necessary for the delivery or evaluation of qualifications / modules;
  - 10.3. Or any other specific requirements for specific qualifications.
- 11. Staff and their qualifications related to the provision, assessment and certification of qualifications/modules shall be adequate for the relevant qualification;
- 12. The applicant institution must offer a legal contract with the staff for a specified period.

Accreditation of institutions is implemented in four stages:

**Phase 1:** Institutions receive information and guidance from the NQA and develop a self-evaluation based on the NQA criteria. The institution submits the application, self-evaluation report and other additional documentation based on the criteria set by the NQA.

**Phase 2:** The NQA selects the expert team for the evaluation of the institution applying for accreditation. The expert team will:

- Evaluate the application, the self-evaluation report and other additional documentation provided by the applicant institution;
- -Visits the applicant institution;
- Drafts the draft report with recommendations;
- Submits draft report to NQA.

**Phase 3:** The draft report with recommendations through the NQA is forwarded to the applicant institution, which may provide additional clarification or comment on the facts presented within a time limit set by the NQA. The external evaluation report is forwarded to the SC of the NQA which makes the decision.

**Phase 4:** The NQA publishes the final decision and issues the necessary documentation confirming the status of the institution.

The right of appeal of the applicant institution for the accreditation and accreditation process is exercised within the time limits/deadlines and legal procedures in force.

### 9.3 Establishment of higher education qualifications in the NQF

KAA is responsible for the implementation of quality assurance in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Kosovo. The placement of higher education qualifications in the NQF is done through the accreditation process. The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is the state authority responsible for the accreditation of higher education institutions.

The Agency is responsible for the accreditation and re-accreditation of public and private higher education institutions and their academic programmes, as well as the continuous quality control of accredited institutions and their study programmes. The accreditation process and criteria are regulated by the KAA with relevant legislation. The accreditation process takes place at the institution and programme level.

The evaluation criteria and procedures for accreditation of HEIs are:

- 1. Scope and number of programmes;
- 2. Comparability of study programmes and overall educational outcomes with similar institutions in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- 3. Proof of legal contracts for qualified staff to meet international scientific, artistic and professional standards;

- 4. The facility, including adequate space and equipment (e.g. computers, library, etc.);
- 5. Academic freedom in research and teaching;
- 6. Research and its contribution to teaching;
- 7. Internal policies and procedures for quality assurance of study programmes and titles;
- 8. Admission criteria and study plans (detailed curricula) and exam regulations.

After accreditation of programmes and institutions, the decision is published by the KAA. Upon approval of KAA accreditation, private HEIs are subject to a MEST licensing process.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE NQF



### 10. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE NQF

The credibility of the NQF and the reforms to the qualifications system are based on quality assurance mechanisms. Quality assurance is one of the objectives that the NQF supports. Quality assurance in the NQF is supported by other plans, strategies and documents. The institutions responsible for quality assurance are: NQA, KAA and MEST.

Within the system it is important to distinguish between 'quality control', 'quality assurance' and 'quality improvement'.

Quality control (QC) is a process of maintaining standards rather than improving them. Control refers to the day-to-day operational techniques and activities used to meet quality requirements by improving performance.

Quality Assurance (QA) means all planned and systematic actions needed to ensure that the product or service meets the specified quality requirements. QA activities do not directly control quality, but they determine the degree to which quality will be controlled.

Quality Improvement (QI) encompasses all activities that bring about beneficial changes in quality performance. It is a process of changing procedures, processes or performance through monitoring, evaluating, analysing and correcting actions.

Within the NQF, quality assurance focuses mainly on:

- Providing quality assurance, evaluation and award of validated and approved qualifications within the NQF; and
- Quality assurance in accredited institutions.

More detailed information on QA is provided in the relevant QA guidelines.

## 10.1 Internal Quality Assurance

## 10.1.1 Internal quality assurance in general education

The MEST and municipalities are responsible for quality assurance under applicable legislation. The MEST is responsible for ensuring quality in general education, as provided by the Law on Pre-University Education. However, the law on municipal education has divided responsibilities at the municipal level in terms of the need to monitor the quality of school education.

With the adoption of the Strategy for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education, internal quality assurance (the self-evaluation process) has been introduced in general education (primary schools, lower secondary schools and gymnasiums). The necessary legal documents, legislation and guidelines to support the implementation of the quality assurance strategy have been developed (AI for professional departments, AI for quality coordinators at school level, AI for school development plan, and AI for performance evaluation procedures of the school). All of these documents are based on the quality assurance cycle of involving stakeholders in the quality assurance process, including planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review.

## 10.1.2 Internal quality assurance in vocational education and training

Internal quality assurance includes self-evaluation by institutions / providers and demonstrates their commitment to continuous quality improvement. The self-evaluation report is compiled on an annual basis and reflects the completion of the annual self-evaluation process.

The report reflects the performance of the institution / provider; what is done well, what is satisfactory and what are the disadvantages. The self-evaluation report is a mechanism for the implementation of the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF). The NQAF has six quality principles and each of them contains a certain number of quality criteria, on the basis of which the performance of the institution is assessed through the self-evaluation process.

The NQAF document is a separate NQF document that has been approved by the NQF Steering Council.

The NQAF is based on the VET Common European Quality Assurance Framework (CEQAF) and has the following principles:

- 1. Purpose and plan responsibilities of management
- 2. Purpose and plan resource management
- 3. Purpose and plan design and development
- 4. Implementation learning, assessment and certification
- 5. Evaluation and verification the process of self-evaluation
- 6. Feedback and changes the process of improvement

Self-evaluation is the first step towards developing genuine quality within the institution and involves long-term planning during implementation.

During self-evaluation it is necessary to answer the following questions:

- How good are we?
- How good can we be?
- How can we get better?
- How can we learn from others?

When implementing the activities required by the quality criteria, the institution must self-assess each quality principle, for this purpose the following grading system is used:

- 4 → advantage: very good performance, which is above the optimal requirements and above the expected level of performance / accomplishment;
- 3→ good: satisfactory accomplishment, meeting optimal requirements and being able to develop into an advantage;
- 2→ sufficient: partially satisfactory, meets minimum requirements, needs improvement and adaptation;
- 1 → insufficient: insufficient performance that does not meet the requirements, there are serious gaps that need to be considered for improvement.

Any evaluation and grading should be supported by evidence. For example, if the teaching processes or in-service / in-training are considered to be positive, then this should be substantiated by facts about what exactly is taking place in that institution.

One of the most effective ways of developing a self-evaluation report is to involve staff and other stakeholders (management, teachers / coaches, QA coordinator, students / candidates, etc.) who provide information on the issues they consider as advantages or disadvantages.

The QA Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the self-evaluation process. To ensure that there is continuity in the self-evaluation process, it is necessary to identify the information of the self-evaluation reports and improvement plan over the years. This enables the measurement of performance and continuity of results year by year.

Quality improvement depends on the improvement plan. The improvement plan addresses the weaknesses that need to be addressed according to priorities and deadlines.

The improvement plan should be monitored and reviewed regularly through self-evaluation reports. The progress made should be reflected in the continuous improvement plan.

The responsibilities of the QA Coordinator, the criteria and procedures for QA in VET institutions, internal processes, are regulated by secondary legislation and a set of guidelines for QA implementation.

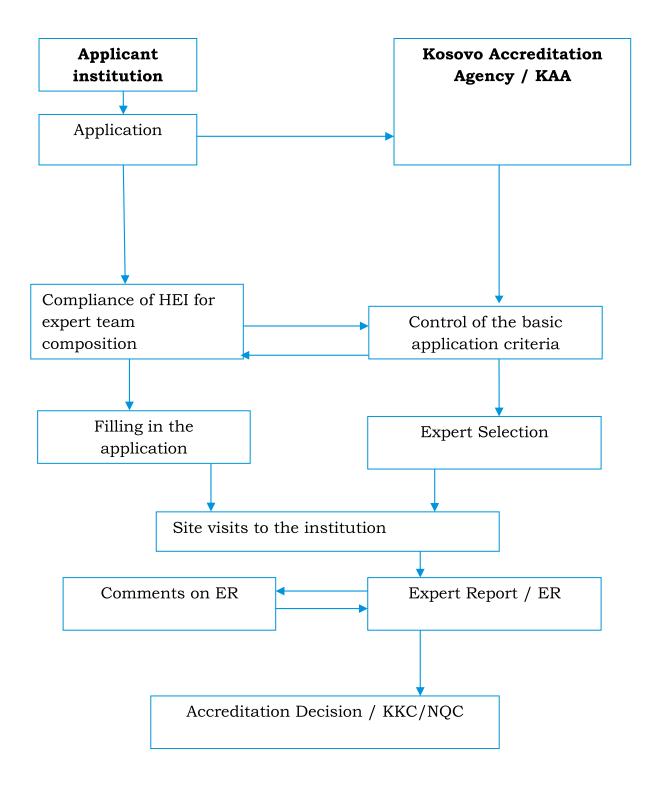
## 10.1.3 Internal quality assurance in higher education

Higher education institutions are subject to regular self-evaluation and have separate bodies that carry out these processes. It is mandatory for all accredited HEIs to establish and operate quality assurance units or offices that are responsible for conducting on a regular basis the student evaluation of courses, surveys, analyzes and self-evaluation preparation.

Private HEIs usually have quality assurance offices, which are coordinated by the coordinators, while public HEIs have deputy/vice rectors for quality assurance. Internal quality assurance is mainly regulated by HEI statutes, special regulations or in some cases by quality assurance strategies.

Regarding the internal quality assurance of HEIs through the accreditation process, KAA ensures that all HEIs and their study programmes have a quality assurance system for teaching, research and services.

The following diagram presents the KAA Quality Model. This cycle is based on four steps.



The following diagram presents the NQAF Quality Model. This cycle is based on four steps:



# MONITORING



### 11. MONITORING OF INSTITUTIONS

# 11.1 Monitoring in general education

The Education Information Management System (EIMS) is responsible for the collection, compilation and processing of education statistics. Furthermore, municipalities are responsible for quality assurance through monitoring and reporting on the management and functioning of education in municipalities. They are also responsible for overseeing and inspecting the education process in accordance with the guidance issued by the MEST.

External evaluation and monitoring of schools is performed by the Department of Education Inspectorate.

The inspection process is carried out in order to ensure:

- Compliance with the relevant duties and functions of institutions in accordance with the Law on Pre-University Education, the Law on the Inspectorate of Education in Kosovo and other applicable legislation;
- Satisfactory functioning of the institution's governing body, parent and student councils, financial operations, accuracy of student number records by level and degree, accuracy of pedagogical and school documents, organization of classes and external examinations;
- Number, qualification and commitment for professional development of staff;
- Work environment, including compliance with the health and safety standards of students and staff, keeping records of disciplinary actions and their outcomes;
- Compliance with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, including the core curriculum and school-based curriculum, assessment and internal examination procedures as well as the use of approved textbooks, educational learning resources and learning materials.

## 11.2 Monitoring in VET

The implementation of the IAAP monitoring process by the NQA is defined by the Law on National Qualifications. The monitoring process is implemented in accordance with the applicable bylaws, which clearly outline the IAAP compliance requirements that must be monitored by the NQA.

Monitoring is a process of quality control and is periodically implemented and systematically summarizes quantitative and qualitative information. The monitoring process involves reviewing and reporting on the findings for the implementation of the QA.

In addition to ongoing monitoring there is also (ad hoc) monitoring as needed and with or without informing. Monitoring is carried out by quality assurance experts and qualification experts. This enables the NQA to have a clear overview of IAAP performance evaluation. The NQA shall rank IAAP on this basis, and, in the case of failure to meet the criteria set out in the case of accreditation, the accreditation may be revoked from that institution.

The monitoring process provides supportive and advisory approaches to IAAP for effective actions to be taken to ensure quality. To this end, a guide has been developed for monitoring the institutions of education and vocational training (IAAP), which aims at defining IAAP monitoring procedures accredited by the NQA.

# 11.3 Monitoring in HE

KAA monitors quality in HEIs through periodic control, which consists of two visits per year. This process is performed by international experts who are engaged by KAA. Through this process the KAA State Quality Council (SQC) makes a decision based on the findings in the reports.

KAA will delegate monitoring responsibilities to its professional officers through monitoring guidelines and standards. In addition to the KAA, the Education Inspectorate also performs monitoring and inspection procedures.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS



#### 12. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

#### General definitions:

ACCREDITATION - means the process by which the responsible authority recognizes and authorizes the institutions / providers that offer, evaluate and certify validated qualifications in the NQF. Accredited institutions must be subject to monitoring and auditing by the relevant authorities.

APPROVAL - means the process by which the relevant authority recognizes qualifications. Approval is granted for a specified period and at the end of that period, the qualification must be subject to re-approval.

VALIDATION - includes the process by which qualifications are subject to evaluation if they meet the criteria for inclusion in the NQF.

COMPLAINT - means the formal request made by an institution / provider or individual about an evaluation or decision or other formal act.

EVALUATION - refers to processes, including exams and tests, that are used to collect, interpret and evaluate the teaching /learning of an individual. Evaluation of qualifications can only be carried out by accredited institutions.

CANDIDATE (for qualification) - is any person seeking to be certified for learning achievement, whether through formal or informal learning.

STUDENT - means any individual enrolled in any elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary education programmes.

INSTRUCTOR - is a person engaged in the implementation of practical training in an accredited institution of professional or technical education and training.

DIPLOMA - is a document issued by an educational institution to prove that the individual has earned a degree, or a full cycle, or has successfully completed a particular programme of study.

CERTIFICATE - means any document given after successful completion of a course, programme of education or training or after passing examinations at the institution of education and training.

CERTIFICATION - is the process of recognizing the achievements of candidates for qualification through the award of a certificate or diploma.

DIPLOMA AND DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT - is a document that describes the knowledge and skills acquired by individuals and provides additional information on what is included in the degree / diploma and / or transcript, making it easier to understand, especially by employers or institutions abroad.

COMPETENCE - is the ability to perform activities towards required standards, using appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge, creative and practical skills.

CREDIT - is a numerical value given to the qualification or parts of the qualification and represents the volume of learning needed to attain the qualification or part of the qualification. Credits may be accumulated during qualification or may be transferred between qualifications or qualification systems.

CREDIT ACCUMULATION - refers to the fact that they can be accumulated over a period of time until sufficient credit is available to provide a full qualification.

CREDIT TRANSFER - refers to the process of recognizing an individual's credits earned by one institution to another.

CREDIT VALUE - is the numerical value given to the qualification or part of the qualification within the credit system.

CREDIT SYSTEM - is a general system in which credits can be accumulated or transferred to qualifications.

PRELIMINARY LEARNING/KNOWLEDGE RECOGNITION - means the process of evaluating the broader knowledge, skills, or competencies that an individual has achieved earlier through formal or informal learning.

ECTS - EUROPEAN CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SYSTEM - is a benchmark for comparing the achievements and performance of higher education students in the European Union and other European countries. For successfully completed studies, ECTS credits are awarded. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits, equivalent to 1500 - 1800 teaching hours, in all countries regardless of standard or type of qualification and is used to facilitate transfer and advancement across the European Union.

ECVET - EUROPEAN CREDIT SYSTEM FOR EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING - aims to facilitate the validation, recognition and accumulation of work-related skills and knowledge, creating a technical framework for describing within-unit qualifications, learning outcomes, including procedures of evaluation, transfer, accumulation and recognition. Each unit is associated with a set number of ECVET credits, developed on the basis of general standards: 60 ECVET credits are set for learning outcomes achieved in one year of full-time VET.

CURRICULUM - the inclusive learning experience planned based on goals, values, initiatives, resources and activities in formal and informal settings.

STATE MATURA - is a standardized final exam, monitored and evaluated in order to prove the completion of upper secondary school level, which proves the level of candidate's knowledge of work and continuing in tertiary education in accordance with the relevant registration procedures.

LIFELONG LEARNING - is the continuous development of an individual's life-long skills and knowledge, including all life-long learning activities undertaken to develop competencies and qualifications, whether in formal or informal settings.

FORMAL LEARNING - learning that takes place in an organized and structured environment (such as in an educational, training or workplace institution) and is explicitly defined as a learning process (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the point of view of the individual. This usually leads to certification.

NON-FORMAL LEARNING - is included in planned activities that are not explicitly defined as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) but that contain an important learning element. Informal learning is intentional from the individual's point of view. This usually does not lead to certification.

INFORMAL LEARNING - learning that results from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organized or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases not a primary goal from an individual's perspective.

LEVELS - are levels defined within the hierarchy of the National Qualifications Framework - levels are modified by increasing the complexity, intensity and independence of learning.

LEVEL DESCRIPTORS - are clarification of the criteria that describe the learning outcomes for determining the level of qualification.

LEVEL INDICATORS - are explanations of the qualifications and specifications by levels about content, type, duration, etc.

MODULE - is an integral part of the qualification, which represents the smallest part of the qualification that can be certified. The module consists of a set of understandable knowledge, skills and competences, expressed in the form of learning outcomes and related assessment criteria.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF) - is a national mechanism for the classification of qualifications offered within the national qualifications system, according to a set of criteria that determine the levels and types of learning outcomes.

EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK EQF - is a mechanism aimed at making national qualifications more readable throughout Europe, promoting the movement of labor and students / candidates between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.

QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM - refers to the whole system within which qualifications are awarded and certified, which includes the National Qualifications Framework and arrangements for regulating the award of qualifications.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY (NQA) - is an agency created by law, which has drafted the National Qualifications Framework and regulates the National Qualifications System (Law on National Qualifications no. 03 / L-060, November 2008).

PROVIDER - means any other authorized institution or structure that provides higher education services (Regulation No. 2003/14, pursuant to the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo).

QUALIFICATION - is the official recognition of achievements, which recognizes completion of education or training, or satisfactory performance in a test or exam "(Law on National Qualifications no. 03 / L-060, November 2008).

QUALIFICATION TITLE - Indicates the name of the qualification and its field of coverage (professional field or study profile), its type and level at the NQF.

QUALITY - refers to the nature or character of a thing, to which a particular value is given. This represents the measurement of excellence or the state of being free from defects, inadequacies or significant variations and, in the context of education and training, may be measured by factors such as; efficiency and effectiveness of education delivery and the degree of adequacy on the part of students and stakeholders.

MONITORING - is the process of checking everything for a period in order to see how it has evolved so that any necessary changes can be made. Monitoring thus constitutes a continuous process of collecting quantitative and qualitative information systematically. Monitoring involves reviewing and reporting on the quality assurance of the provider and the issuing institution by a national agency or legal body.

NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR VET - the structure used by ministries, national institutions, authorities and agencies to determine and ensure the quality level of professional qualifications is based on a number of quality principles. A set of quality criteria where each quality principle determines the expected level of fulfillment. The framework consists of various components, which together cover all aspects of professional qualifications: accreditation of qualifications, provider approval, staff licensing, student certification, providers inspection and providers self-evaluation.

NQAFE for VET - is the National VET Quality Assurance Framework in Europe, adopted by the European Commission in May 2004.

QUALITY ASSURANCE - means the process by which the quality and compliance of qualification, assessment and certification standards are maintained (Law on National Qualifications No. 03 / L-060, November 2008).

SELF-EVALUATION - is a process in which a person or institution reflects on its performance and evaluates evidence prior to their presentation for external evaluation. "Self-evaluation" is usually used in the quality assurance framework to refer to the process by which providers evaluate their performance comapred to standard requirements or other performance indicators as the basis for identifying and developing improvement strategies.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - is the information package designed to define expected results or to indicate actions. Key performance indicators are the level of national quantitative comparability against which providers can measure their performance.

SOCIAL PARTNERS - are organizations that collectively represent employers and employees (National Qualifications Law No. 03 / L-060, November 2008).

LEARNING OUTCOMES - each unit or module of qualification consists of learning outcomes. The results are the tasks or functions they describe; what and how students should perform to demonstrate that they are competent in that unit or module.

STANDARDS - are measurable indicators of achievement, which are set according to qualitative or quantitative criteria and must be achieved by candidates who intend to qualify (National Qualifications Law No. 03 / L-060, November 2008).

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS - are units to measure the extent to which an individual can meet the requirements for performance in a particular profession or group of occupations in order to enter or advance within a particular occupation or area of occupation. They are assigned nationally to employed individuals working within a particular occupation or professional field and provide the basis for the development of professional curricula and assessment. Each set of standards is linked to a professional profile on which the curriculum is based "(Law on Vocational Education and Training, No. 02 / L-42, February 2006).

TEACHER - is a qualified person with pedagogical and professional experience, who teaches students in the vocational education institution for general or vocational subjects (Law on Vocational Education and Training, No. 02 / L-42, February 2006).

INTERNAL VERIFIER - is responsible for provider-level evaluation verification and for drafting internal verification reports.

EXTERNAL VERIFIER - is responsible for monitoring the evaluation and internal verification procedures of the provider. The External Verifier compiles External Verification Reports for the institution responsible for providing qualifications and providing feedback to the provider.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING - includes all activities intended to provide practical knowledge and skills for the efficient completion of activities within a profession or group of occupations (Law on Vocational Education and Training No.02 / L-42, February 2006).

#### 13. Conclusion

The NQA believes that the work done to supplement and amend this document provides opportunities for all stakeholders, and for all those who will be included in the qualification system in Kosovo for the medium term. This document reflects developments in the national qualifications system and is in line with labor market requirements and European trends.

Considering that the qualifications system is dynamic and changing, in addition to economic and social developments, the National Qualifications Authority will commit itself to addressing the requirements and needs of the national qualifications system to the way forward.

# Core Group for review and supplement of NQF

- Lah Nitaj	NQA
- Milot Hasangjekaj	NQA
- Bleta Kadriu	NQA
- Kaltrina Mulliqi	NQA
- Donjeta Nimani Binçe	NQA
- Anita Rukovci	NQA
- Avni Gashi	KAA

-Teuta Danuza External consultant

Other Contributors - During the review and completion of the National Qualifications Framework, meetings, workshops, consultations with many institutions and other stakeholders in the field of education and training in the Republic of Kosovo who have made valuable contributions. Their ideas, proposals and supplements have enriched the content of this document.

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Blerina Vula
 Drita Rezniqi
 Sauda Pantinaj
 Bastri Maloku
 Rrahman Sefedini
 Mërgim Mestani
 Zejnullah Rrustemi
 Aferdita Jaha

Arta Kollqaku
 Elmi Kelmendi
 Fisnik A. Gashi
 Majlida Rizvanolli

- Hajrije Shaipi - Vehbi Neziri - Ejup Zariqi - Petrit Olluri - Agim Mjaku - Sylë Kasumaj

- Besim Ilazi - Mehreme Llumnica

Ramush Kurti Ilmi Sijarina Bejtë Çela Dardan Shala Valbonë Beka Alba Besimi Likana Celina Anyla Zajmi Aurora Zuna Krasnigi Safet Emini Nita Selimi Hajriz Neziri Donikë Maxharaj Ahmet Gashi Blerim Haliti Luljeta Kabashi Agron Hajdari Jetmir Berisha

- Abdurahman Simnica - Ferdeze Agaj Mehmeti

Ryve Prekorogja

Darsej Rizaj

Binak Gërguri - Gëzim Berisha
Skender Berisha - Valbona Kadrijaj
Burim Ahmeti - Gani Ismajli
Muhamer Ibriqi - Agon Jusufi
Radica Berishaj - Entela Ademi
Ajvaz Rama - Genta Xheladini
Petrir Hasanaj - Besnik Skenderi

Zenel Bunjaku
 Mimoza Jashari
 Sami Rama
 Jashari
 Besart Kostanica

Vildane Kelmendi - Ramë Likaj

Majlinda Qato - Valbona Fetiu Mjeku
Neserete Juniku - Shaban Tërstena
Fatmire Salihu - Agim Krasniqi
Ahmet Mustafa - Bleta Zeqiri

Burhan Selmani - Shkëlzen Gërxhaliu
Sinan Gashi - Shkëndije Thaqi
Dëshira Mustafaj - Arta Sylejmani
Almira Selmani - Hajdar Shyti

- Blerim Jahiu
- Imrane Ramadani
- Qemajl Ahmeti
- Rrustem Gashi
- Faruk Kukaj
- Edlira Hetemaj
- Hazir Gashi
- Fetije Huruglica
- Georg Brugger
- Binak Morina
- Lulzim Krasniqi
- Sanije Bajrami
- Rexhë Gashi
- Florim Metaj
- Diedon Ahmetaj
- Anton Gojani
- Luan Sopi
- Tomë Frrokaj
- Gëzim Isufi
- Donika Berisha
- Afrim Tejeci
- Agim Tahiri
- Fadil Avdyli
- Besim Mustafa
- Alma Murati
- Vahdet Kollari



Autoriteti Kombëtar i Kualifikimeve Nacionalni Autoritet za Kvalifikacije National Qualification Authority

Address: Students' Center St. Agim Ramadani n. n. Prishtine, 10000, Kosova Tel: +383 (0) 38 212-595 Fax: +383 (0) 38 213 433 www.akkks.rks-gov.net