Autoriteti Kombëtar i Kualifikimeve
Nacionalni Autoritet za Kvalifikacije
National Qualification Authority

# Referencing report of Kosovo NQF for General Education, VET and Higher Education to EQF

Prishtina
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# Referencing report of Kosovo NQF for General Education, VET and Higher Education to EQF

This report establishes the referencing of the Kosovo National Qualifications Framework to the EQF and the QF/EHEA in accordance with the criteria and procedures agreed by the EQF Advisory Group and the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

A Report prepared by the National Qualifications Authority.

It is available on the National Qualifications Authority website: www. akk-ks.net

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Autoriteti Kombëtar i Kualifikimeve
Nacionalni Autoritet za Kvalifikacije
National Qualification Authority

BRITISH COUNCIL

## List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AI | Administrative Instruction |
| AVETAE | Agency of Vocational Education and Training and Adults Education |
| CVET | Council for Vocational Education and Training |
| ECVET | European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training |
| ENQA | European Association for Quality Assurance |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| KCC | Kosovo Chamber of Commerce |
| KEK | Kosovo Energy Corporation |
| MEST | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| MLSW | Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare |
| NARIC | National Academic Recognition Information Centre |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NQA | National Qualification Authority of Kosovo |
| NQC | National Quality Council |
| PTK | Post Telecommunication of Kosovo |
| KAA | Kosovo Accreditation Agency |
| KCF | Kosovo Curriculum Framework |
| SLCT | State Licensing Council for Teachers |

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## Introduction

*The government of Republic of Kosovo is aiming to create a knowledge-based society and establish an all-inclusive system of education that provides conditions for quality education and training of all individuals by actively involving and promoting lifelong learning and the values of democratic society.*

*In order to modernise the Education and Training governance model and make efforts to adopt the education system to emerging social and economic trends, a variety of initiatives have taken place which have increased the role of national authorities, social partners and civil society organisations.*

*The development of a National Qualification Framework (NQF) is one of the main reforming tools of our education system. It was established in 2011 and aims to improve access to work and further learning by making qualifications relevant to employment and learning, and meeting the needs of learners, the economy and education and training institutions. The NQF also aims to establish a basis for co-operation and mutual recognition with the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF).*

*While Kosovo is not formally part of the EQF process, this report, and the process which produced it, will show the alignment of the NQF to the EQF. This will support comparison of Kosovo's qualifications with those of EU Member States.*

*This report will be submitted by Mr Buja, Minister of Education, to the European Commission in Brussels. We will request that it be presented to an EQF Advisory Group meeting.*

*In 2013, the National Qualifications Authority (NQA), initiated the referencing process aiming to identify the links between the levels of the NQF with the EQF which has resulted in drafting of the referencing report.*

*This referencing report aims to show the links between the levels of the NQF and the EQF by describing clearly the existing qualification levels as they apply in the sectors of the education system in Kosovo. Furthermore, the report provides information on the 10 quality criteria which have been established for referencing NQFs to the EQF. The referencing process was conducted in close consultation with all the relevant stakeholder groups in each sector of education in Kosovo and the report was reviewed by international experts.*

# 1. GENERAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

## 1.1 OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) is responsible for promoting a non-discriminatory education system in which each person's right to education and/or training is respected and equal quality learning opportunities are available for all.

General education in Kosovo in total lasts twelve years consisting, nine years of compulsory education and three years upper-secondary education.

Compulsory education begins when a child attains the age of six, the minimum compulsory school age and ends upon the completion of lower secondary education at age fourteen. Pre-school education starts at the age five and it is not compulsory.

***General education in Kosovo is commprised of:***

Pre-primary and pre-school education: Age: 0-6

Pre-Primary-21.383 Students; Pre-School-5,389 Students

Primary education (Grade 1-5);: Age: 6-10 (288.378 Students)

Lower secondary education (Grade 6-9);: Age: 11-14 (Primary/ Lower Secondary -280,596 Students)

Upper secondary education (Gymnasium, Grade 10-12);: Age: 15-17- (102,213 students)

The Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) regulates ofpre-school and compulsory general educations and is designed in six key stages representing periods with common features in terms of children's development and curriculum requirements. The key stages end at grades 2, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 12. The KCF covers pre-school, primary and secondary education and requires relevant institutions to follow a number of underpinning principles in providing education. These are: quality education for all, inclusiveness, learner-centeredness, competency-based approaches, flexibility and mobility, transparency and accountability.

Compensatory education is offered to adults who receive exit qualifications on completion of the offered programmes. These include accelerated learning for those with uncompleted primary or secondary education or who otherwise lack qualifications of the formal education system. There are also programmes based on generic knowledge and skills (including basic literacy, numeracy personal and technological skills) that are intended to prepare individuals for entry to the labour market or return to education. At present these do not lead to qualifications.

Education for students with special needs is organised in special schools, attached classes and in regular classes. There are seven schools of special education and at least 2 attached classes per municipality in regular schools in Kosovo. Partially sighted and blind pupils have the right to instruction in the use of Braille and necessary technical aids. In addition Kosovo Sign Language is the official sign language for deaf people which is taught to deaf children in schools of special education.

The main language of instruction is Albanian, but education is also provided in other languages. The officially recongised languages are Bosnian; Turkish and Serbian because of minority communities living in Kosovo.

## 1.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for general education consists of laws, Administrative Instructions (AIs) and national strategies.

***Laws***

- Law No. 02/L-52-2006 on Pre-School Education-
- Law No. 04/L –032–2011 on Pre-University Education-
- Law No.03/L-068 –2008 on Education in the Municipalities of Kosovo
- Law No. 2004/37–2004 on Inspection of Education in Kosovo
- Law No. 03/L-018 –2008 on Final Examination and State Matura Examination
- Law No. 04/L-143–2012 on Adults Education and Training

***Administrative Instructions (AIs)***

- Administrative Instruction, 15/2013 on funding of Teacher Professional Development
- Administrative Instruction 17/2013 on Exams and Assessments
- Administrative Instruction 18/2013 on the use of Individual Education Plan
- Administrative Instruction 23/2013 on Resource Centres
- Administrative Instruction 27/2013 on Extracurricular Activities
- Administrative Instruction 20/2013 on Piloting of Curriculum Framework and core curriculum
- Administrative Instruction 07/2012 on Professional Assessment of children with special needs
- Administrative Instruction 11/2012 on Criteria for Licensing of Private Educational Institutions for primary level; low secondary and high secondary and vocational education
- Administrative Instruction 12/2012 on criteria for election of assistants and instructors for inclusive education and their obligation.
- Administrative Instruction 19/2012 on establishment and enforcement of teams for prevention and response toward abandonment and non-enrolment in compulsory education
- Administrative Instruction 26/2012 on personnel qualifications working with students of special education needs.
- Administrative Instruction 06/2011 on licensing and registration of private pre-school educational institutional
- Administrative Instruction 05/2010 on Licensing of teachers
- Administrative Instruction 04/2010 on Criteria and procedures for accreditation of programmes for professional teacher development.
- Administrative Instruction 06/2008 on Children's access to pre-school institutions
- Administrative Instruction 18/2004 on Licensing the teachers and education administrators

***National Strategies***

- Strategy for the development of Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007-2017
- Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016
- Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo 2007– 2017

- Strategic Plan for the Organization of Inclusive Education in Kosovo 2010 – 2015.
- National Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Drop-outs (2009 -2014).
- Adult Education Strategy (2005-2015)

### 1.3 QUALIFICATIONS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Although there are currently no school qualifications at Level 1, this level could relate to the recognition of the lowest levels of skill necessary for functioning in work or in society. It could include basic skills provision (e.g. literacy and numeracy skills) equivalent to the outcomes of primary education.

Lower leaving certificate or semi matura exam could be a benchmark of qualification at level 3 of the NQF while the Matura diploma could be a benchmark qualification at NQF Level 4.

### 1.4 TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher licensing, development of standards for professional development and performance evaluation is a responsibility of the MEST, acting on the advice and recommendations of the State Licensing Council for Teachers (SLCT).

All programmes leading towards a teaching qualification must be equivalent to a second higher education cycle programme of 300 ECTS points, and must consist of both academic studies and professional training and practice. The Ministry determines through secondary legislations, as advised by SLCT: requirements for teacher qualifications, including the specific qualification level for particular stages of pre-university education; procedures for bringing the qualifications of existing teachers in the system to the same standard required of new entrants, by August 2020; requirements for teacher professional development and performance associated with licensing requirements; standards and procedures for accreditation of programmes for teacher professional development; and standards on teacher professional practice.

### 1.5 PRIVATE AND PARTNERSHIP GENERAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Every private or public-private partnership educational institution providing general education must be licensed by MEST. The government licensing standard takes account of the variety of teaching and learning methods employed by these institutions, the avoidance of risk to children and staff, and provisions related to:

- the adequacy of buildings and equipment, which must comply with international standards on health and safety and accessible design for persons with disabilities, including teaching rooms, cabinets, workshops and laboratories, fields or sports halls;
- the provision of library and computer rooms;
- the number and qualifications of teaching staff;
- adherence to the KCF or to a foreign curriculum which is recognised by the Ministry for use in Kosovo

A private educational institution may commence operation only after obtaining an educational and/or training licence from the Ministry and a business licence from a municipality. Private educational and/or training institution are subject to inspection by the Ministry. A license gives a private or partnership school the right to offer study programmes at specific stages of general education.

### 1.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GENERAL EDUCATION

MEST is responsible for quality assurance in general education. MEST approves programmes and licenses institutions which contribute to national curricula and learning standards.

Based on the KCF, assessment at the classroom level includes formative assessment throughout the school year, final assessment (upon completion of a school year) and summative assessment (upon

completion of a curriculum key stage).Formative assessment, in addition to other non-formal methods of assessment during the entire learning process, consists of an assessment rating scale using the award of marks from 0 to 5. Final assessment occurs at the end of each school year and reflects the level of a student's performance during the whole year.

The Office for Standards and Evaluation in MEST is responsible for the preparation, administration and assessment of all standardised exams. Standardised state/national assessments are organised upon completion of grades 5, 9 and 12. State/national assessments are focused on measuring the level of achievement in mastering the key competences. State assessment at the end of grade 5 refers to the level of achievement in mastering the key competences expressed in the core curriculum through learning outcomes for the curriculum key stage. Standardised assessment at the end of grade 9 refers to the level of achievement in mastering the key competencies expressed in the core curriculum through the learning outcomes for the curriculum key stage. This assessment determines clear criteria for the required level of achievement in order to transit to the next educational level, specifically to upper-secondary schools. Standardised assessment at the end of grade 12, through the State Matura examination, aims to measure the level of achievement in mastering the key competences expressed through learning outcomes for the curriculum key stage.

The Education Management Information System (EMIS) is responsible for gathering, compiling and processing education statistics.

In addition, the municipalities are responsible for quality assurance by monitoring and reporting on educational management and operational in municipalities. They are also responsible for supervision and inspection of education process in accordance with guideline established by MEST.

External monitoring and evaluation of schools is conducted by the department of education inspectorate. The inspection process is conducted in order to ensure:

- compliance with the respective duties and functions of the institution according to the Law on Pre-University Education, the Law on Inspection of Education in Kosovo;, and Administrative Instruction 11/2005 on the Administrative Procedures for the inspection of educational institutions
- the satisfactory functioning of the governing board of the institution, the Parents' and Pupils' Councils, the financial operations, accuracy of records of numbers of pupils by level and grade, accuracy of pedagogical and school documents, organization of classes and external examinations;
- the numbers, qualifications and arrangements for professional development of staff;
- the working environment including compliance with standards of health and safety of pupils and staff, records kept of disciplinary action and its outcome;
- compliance with the KCF, including both the core and the school-based curriculum, assessment and internal examination procedures, and the use of approved textbooks, educational learning resources and learning materials.

# 2. VET AND ADULT TRAINING SYSTEM

## 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE KOSOVO VET AND ADULT TRAINING SYSTEM

The principles of the education system promote inclusiveness based on lifelong learning philosophy and quality education for all. The overall objectives for VET include: improving access to and the quality and relevance of, VET provision for all; improving coordination with and relevance to, the labour market and strengthening the institutional and management capacity of the VET system and establishing a sound financial basis for its long-term development and sustainability; increasing opportunities for training of early school leavers, upper secondary school students and school leavers and adults, in order to enhance employment, especially for women;, and enhancing prospects of self-employment.

The VET Law 2013 identified the main activity fields of vocational education and training as follows: development of competences and training for employment of individuals in accordance with occupations and their careers according to the labour market; creation of general and professional culture in accordance with principles of lifelong learning education and economical, scientific and technological developments; and recognition of the individuals competences based in occupational standards of the relevant level

There is a number of formal and non-formal VET providers nationwide, extending from the upper-secondary sector to adult VET providers, NGOs, private providers and public institutions.

The majority (around 60%) of the upper-secondary school students are enrolled in formal VET schools.

It is estimated that there are 17 vocational fields and 90 profiles, 60 modular qualifications and around 30 occupational standards developed so far. Most of the qualifications developed are not validated for inclusion in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and not all of the occupational standards have been verified for national use (ETF, 2012).

## 2.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR VET AND ADULT TRAINING SYSTEM

The legal framework for VET and Adult education and training is comprised of laws, administrative instructions and national strategies as follows:

***Laws***

- Law No.04/L –032 - 2011 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo
- Law No. 04/L-138 - 2013 for Vocational Education and Training
- Law No. 04-L-143, - 2013 on Adults Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo
- Law No. 03/L-060 - 2011 on National Qualifications
- Law No.2004/37 - 2004 on Inspection of Education in Kosovo
- Law No. 03/L-018 - 2008 on Final Exam and State Matura Exam
- Law No. 03/L-019 - 2008 on Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities
- Law No. 03/L-068 - 2008 on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo

***Administrative Instructions***

- Administrative Instruction No. 01/2009 on Establishment of the State Council for Teacher Licensing
- Administrative Instruction No. 01/ 2011 on Criteria and Procedures for the Validation and Approval of National Qualifications and Accreditations of Qualification Awarding Bodies in Kosovo
- Administrative Instruction No. 02/2014 on Number of students with modules and VET qualifications, resources, infrastructure, education, student safety
- Administrative Instruction No.04/2014 on Conditions and criteria for economic activity of vet institutions
- Administrative Instruction No. 05/2014 on Agency of vocational education and training and adults' education (AVETAE) in Kosovo
- Administrative Instruction No. 7/2014 on Advancement, autonomy and functioning of VET institutions
- Administrative Instruction No. 04/2013 on Verification of documents of all educational levels

- Administrative Instruction No.14/2013 on Teacher performance evaluation
- Administrative Instruction No. 15/2013 on Founding of teacher professional development
- Administrative Instruction No. 16/2013 on Implementation of teacher professional development
- Administrative Instruction No. 17/2013 on Exams and Assessments
- Administrative Instruction No. 34/2013 on Composition, function, duties, mandate of representation of the steering council at the institutions of vocational education and training (VET)
- Administrative Instruction No. 35/2013 on Organization of professional final exam
- Administrative Instruction No: 30/2013 on Piloting of Curriculum Framework – Core Curriculum
- Administrative Instruction No. 32/2013 on Organization of curricula with election at all levels of pre-university education
- Administrative Instruction No. 03/2012 – on Equivalency and recognition of documents of pre-university education issued the Republic of Kosovo
- Administrative Instruction No. 05/2012 on Standards of professional practice of school principals
- Administrative Instruction No. 07/2012 on Professional assessment of children with special instructive-educational needs
- Administrative Instruction No. 12/2011 on Organization of adults education and training Nr: Date:30.12.2011
- Administrative Instruction No. 15/2011 on Pre-university school documentation Nr:15/2011 Date:30.12.2011
- Administrative Instruction No. 16/2011- on The transition of student of higher secondary school from one educational profile to another or from a school in the other school
- Administrative Instruction No. 4/2009 on The execution of the revising curriculum with supplements for general courses of vocational education for 10, 11 and 12 grades
- Administrative Instruction No. 9/2009 Criteria for Matura Exam
- Administrative Instruction No. 5/2007 on Condition and criteria for establishment, licensing and the work of the institutions for vocational teaching and training
- Administrative Instruction No. 6/2007 Expanding the activities of the vocational schools
- Administrative Instruction No. 07/2009 on Organisation, Functioning and Scope of Work of Centres for Professional Education in Republic of Kosovo (this has been amended in 2009 with AI No. 18/2009)
- Administrative Instruction No. 03/2010 on Application Procedures for Recognition of Rights for Vocational Ability, Rehabilitation and Employment of of People with Disabilities
- Administrative Instruction No. 09/2011 on Procedures for Establishment and Financial Management of Professional Education Fund
- Administrative Instruction No.31/2014 for Recognition of Prior Learning
- Administrative Instruction No. 28/2014 on criteria and procedures for verification of the occupational standards
- Administrative Instruction No. 32/2014 on criteria and procedures for quality assurance in the vocational education and training institutions – Internal processes

***National Strategies***

- Kosovo Education Strategy Plan 2011-2016
- Strategy for Development for Pre-University Education in Kosovo 2007-2017
- Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo: Education Component 2007-2017
- Vocational Training Strategy 2012-2014
- Strategic Development Plan 2012-2014
- Sectoral Strategy 2014-2020 of MLSW (developed and expected to be approved soon)

## 2.3 STRUCTURE OF VET SYSTEM

The VET system consists of both formal and non-formal provision. Formal VET providers can offer qualification and modules on levels 3, 4 and 5 of the NQF, whereas non-formal VET providers can offer qualifications and modules on levels 2, 3, 4, 5 according to Law no. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications. Currently, there are qualifications validated and approved on levels 2,3 and 4 of the NQF, but there are no level 5 qualification validated and approved yet in NQF.

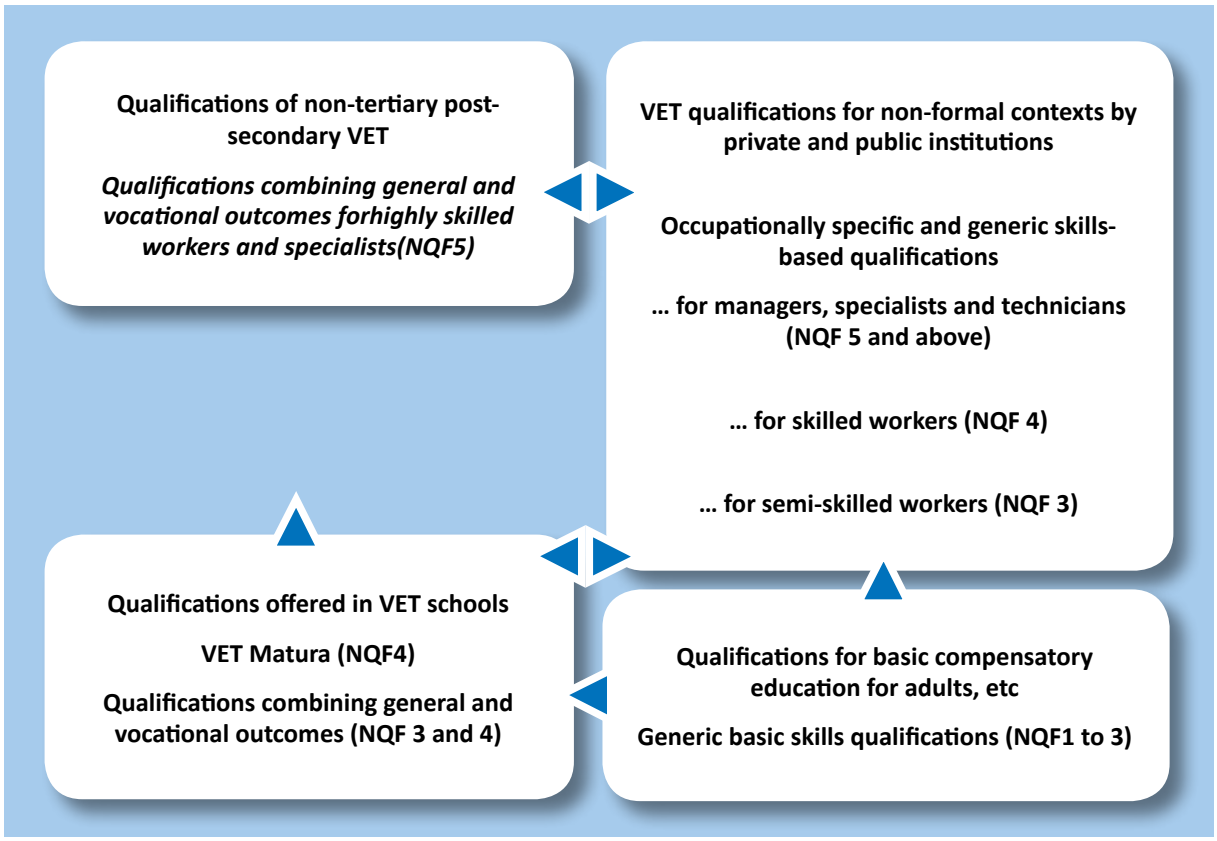
***Formal VET provision includes:***

- Upper secondary vocational education (vocational school grades 10-12);
- Post-secondary vocational education and training (college-based provision for those with completed upper secondary education).

***Non-formal VET provision includes:***

- Vocational training (employment or job-related), provided in both public and private vocational training centres, and in employment);
- Adult compensatory education courses for those with uncompleted primary or secondary education, based on formal education programmes and offered mainly by schools;
- Other diverse kinds of adult learning provision in areas such as foreign languages, ICT, handicrafts, arts, music and culture etc. offered by private providers, NGOs etc.

The following diagram shows the main education and training areas, exit qualifications in each area and the progression routes between the areas.




## 2.4 QUALIFICATIONS, CERTIFICATION AND PROGRESSION

In the Kosovo system, a qualification is defined as an official recognition of achievement that recognises completion of education or training or satisfactory performance in a test or examination, leads to certification, and provides basis for progression to work or further learning for individuals.

Qualifications are placed in the NQF is based on the Level Descriptors (which relate to the descriptors of the EQF) and indications of the level which describe the kind of formal and non-formal provision which typically leads to qualifications in NQF.

The exit qualifications from formal VET are as follows:

- The qualification at level 3 of the NQF is achieved over two years period that corresponds to school grades 10 and 11. It are assessed by internal examination and prepare learners for progression to the next stage of formal VET or to the labour market. The certification at this level enables students to be employed but not proceed to higher education.
- The qualification at Level 4 of the NQF is achieved when students complete the 12th grade by obtaining a certificate as part of internal examination. This entitles students to undertake a Matura exam which enables them to progress to higher education. Graduates are not obliged to take the Matura exam if they want to enter the labour market or to post-secondary VET.
- The proposed qualification at level 5 of the NQF is planned to be achieved over one or two years. It will include a post-secondary vocational course which will qualify individuals as senior technicians or specialists, a member of a team of associate professionals or a junior manager. Students of this level are assessed by internal examination which leads to diploma. These qualifications also lead to university programmes. However, no such qualifications are currently being provided in Kosovo.

Based on the *Law* on *Adult Education* of 2012, adult education and training encompasses the entire

public and private education and training offered for adults and for youth above 15 years old, who are eligible to attend education programmes developed for them. Based on this Law, adult education and training is an integral part of Kosovo's education system.

Also, according to the Law, formal learning for adults is based on education programmes approved and drafted by MEST and offered by licensed education and training providers. Such learning is structured and leads to certification. Adults apply to VET providers to continue their studies in chosen field. The content, learning outcomes, assessment and certificate obtained is the same as for regular VET students with the only difference being the duration of studies. Whereas VET students spend 3 years of 36 weeks each year, these studies for adults are last 1.5 years - that is 3 times 18 weeks. These studies for adults are self-financed.

Qualifications of non-formal VET for adults may use national standards, international standards, the standards required by particular employers, or a combination of these. They may be offered by accredited VET institutions or workplace training centres. They can range from level 2 to level 7 of the NQF and are as follows:

**Level 2**: These qualifications include the general knowledge, skills and competences needed to gain employment or take part in everyday life. The target learners are adults who are unemployed or unskilled and/or casual work. These qualifications are likely to be offered by accredited institutions of adult education and training, VET institutions, or workplace training centres. Currently there are a few qualifications at this level of NQF, validated and registered and providers accredited to offer these qualifications.

**Level 3**: These are non-formal skills-based short courses leading to qualifications for those who are employed to improve their skills. The qualifications may use national standards or the standards required by particular employers or a combination of these. There is no special rule about the sise of these qualifications. Currently there are many qualifications at this level of NQF, validated and registered and providers accredited to offer these qualifications.

**Level 4**: These are non-formal skills-based short courses leading to qualifications designed to help those who are employed to acquire new skills to adapt to new technologies and working methods, take on new responsibilities at the same level as their current jobs, or to progress to higher level jobs. Learners taking these qualifications will usually have to have knowledge, skills and wider competences in the occupation or occupational area at level 3 or 4. Currently there are some qualifications at this level of NQF, validated and registered and providers accredited to offer these qualifications.

**Level 5**: NQF policy is that non-formal courses/programmes at this level will lead to qualifications for those who are employed and need to learn new knowledge, skills and/or wider competences – for example, to use new technologies or working methods or to take on new responsibilities at the same level as their current jobs, or to progress to higher level jobs. Learners taking these qualifications will usually have to have qualifications or experience in the occupation or occupational area at 4 or 5: these may come from qualifications or experience.

Currently there are no qualifications at this level of the NQF.

**Level 6**: NQF policy is that non-formal courses leading to qualifications for specialists, professionals or managers will be placed at this level if they match the level descriptors. These will be specialised short courses leading to qualifications for those who are employed and need to learn new knowledge, skills and/or wider competences. These qualifications are likely to recognise the application of knowledge in devising and sustaining arguments, in solving problems and in making judgements that take into account social or ethical issues. Learners taking these qualifications will usually have to have qualifications or experience in the occupation or occupational area at least level 4 or level 5. Currently

there are no qualifications at this level of NQF.

**Level 7**: NQF policy is that non-formal courses leading to qualifications match the level 7 descriptors will be for for senior managers and professionals. These will be very highly specialised short courses leading to qualifications for employed persons who have the kind of personal responsibility and/or responsibility for the others outlined at this level. These qualifications also recognise an ability to integrate knowledge and make judgments taking account of social and ethical issues and responsibilities and/or experience of managing change in a complex environment. Sectoral and professional bodies offer recognition for learning gained at this level in a work setting by senior professionals and managers. Currently there are no qualifications at this level of the NQF.

## 2.5 VET PROVIDERS

There is a number of formal and non-formal VET providers nationwide, extending from the upper-secondary sector to adult VET providers, NGOs, private providers and public institutions.

- Vocational Education Schools, public and private which offer formal education and training
- Public Centres of Competence which provide initial and further VET to youth and adults.
- Post-secondary VET (private colleges)
- Training Centres under Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare which provide continues VET for unemployed job seekers
- Other public and private VET institutions (including workplaces) providing non-formal education and training

## 2.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VET AND ADULT EDUCATION

The NQA manages the NQF and plays a major role in the wider quality and quality assurance approaches in the country's VET system.

Other important components of the quality system include:

- External evaluation of vocational schools through administrative and professional inspections by the Department of Inspection of MEST;
- Quality Assurance of MLSW Vocational Training Centres and mobile centres by the VET Division at MLSW;
- Internal evaluation of schools through the recently introduced practice of self-assessment;
- External tests and examinations especially the Matura and the standardised tests after Year 9;
- Quality assurance role of the Office for Standards and Evaluation in MEST;
- The Municipalities' role according to the Law on VET in the 'supervision and inspection of the
- education process in accordance with guidelines established by the MEST;' and in other areas which impact on the quality of VET provision;
- Involvement of social partners and stakeholders via CVET for the development of occupational standards (CVET recommends approval of programmes and occupational standards))

The NQA is responsible for ensuring that Quality Assurance processes are in place to maintain the quality of qualifications that are registered on the framework and awarded to learners by:

- Quality assuring the delivery, assessment and awarding of the qualifications validated and

- approved within the framework;
- Quality assuring the institutions accredited to award them; and
- Verification of occupational standards

Several qualifications have already been incorporated in the framework and a number of providers have been accredited.

Moreover, NQA supports VET provider for preparing self-evaluation reports and publishes a range of guidance on topics such as carrying out self-evaluations, developing occupational standards and developing qualifications. will also ensure that the NQF is implemented to support quality improvement in VET. NQA is responsible for the accreditation of VET and adult education providers, for the validation of qualifications and the verification of occupational standards.

The main criteria applied for the accreditation of VET providers include having: an effective approach to certification; appropriate policies and practices for assessing learners with special needs; proper systems for recognising the credits achieved by candidates and enabling their transfer; the capacity to meet qualification-specific requirements; and documentation and record systems to ensure quality assurance.

The legal obligation on VET schools is to organize a self-evaluation process and publish annual self-evaluation reports as an important step in improving national standards of quality in VET. NQA provides feedback on these reports and also provides recommendations for improvements.

At school level the following quality assurance mechanisms are present: professional working groups; committees for each grade; teachers' committee; in all of the schools there is a quality assurance coordinator. The quality assurance coordinators are in charge of quality assurance within the centre and also act as the lead person to prepare and coordinate the preparation of the self-assessment report and to follow up on recommendations provided by NQA to the self-evaluation report.

According to the Administrative Instruction on education inspectors the main duties of education inspectors among others are to inspect: the conditions under on which the education process (inventory, education tools, environment, etc) which are determined with working programmes; realization of the annual programme of the institution's work; functioning of the governing and professional organs and education institutions; realization of curriculum and realizing conditions; monitoring of teaching hours; organizing non-formal education. However from discussions in the workshop it was highlighted that due to small number of inspectors few of these aims are achieved.

# 3. HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

## 3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KOSOVO

According to the Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education, higher education in Kosovo can be provided by public or private institutions. The denominations of higher education institutions are regulated by the Law on Higher Education and the AI no. 01/2013 on the Nomination of Higher Education Institutions, and they include: universities, universities of applied sciences, academies, university colleges, colleges, academies, higher professional schools and higher technical schools. Universities and university colleges[1] are institutions that provide both education and scientific research and they offer study programmes at all three cycles of higher education (Bachelor, Master and Doctorate). These two types of institution differ in terms of the diversity of their study programmes: universities provide programmes in at least five Erasmus subject areas, whereas university colleges provide programmes in at least three such areas. Colleges differ from universities and university colleges in that they do not provide higher education at the third (Doctorate) level and the nature of the research that they

1) *Universities provide studies in at least five academic areas, while university colleges provide studies at least three academic areas.*

conduct is applied in nature. Academies and professional higher schools provide professional studies and may offer applied research, the difference between the two being that the former are focused in a specific subject area (e.g. in specific areas of art, sports, public order, security and other professional).

The system of higher education in Kosovo comprises both academic higher education and professional higher education, even though there is no clear distinction between these in current legislation. There are Bachelor's and Master's degrees in both academic and professional higher education. In accordance with the Bologna framework and the Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education, higher education is typically organised in three main levels leading to qualifications at bachelor, master and doctoral levels and it includes any other post-secondary education at levels 5-8 of the NQF for which ECTS credits may be granted. Higher education qualifications can be issued by higher education institutions which are accredited by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) and licensed by MEST to offer higher education programmes.

## 3.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for Higher Education is comprised of laws, administrative instructions and national strategies as follows:

***Laws***

- Law No. 04/L-037 - 2011 on Higher Education in Kosovo

***Administrative Instructions***

- Administrative Instruction No. 14/2003 on the Licensing of Private Bearers of Higher Education in Kosovo
- Administrative Instruction No. 11/2004 on the Establishment of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency
- Administrative Instruction No. 14/2008 on the Implementation of ECTS in Higher Education in Kosovo
- Administrative Instruction No. 2/2009, AI No. 25/2012 and AI No. 02/2013 on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions
- Administrative Instruction No. 12/2009 on the Criteria and Procedures for the Accreditation of Higher Professional and Technical Schools
- Administrative Instruction No. 02/2012 on the Form and Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements of Higher Education Providers.
- Administrative Instruction No. 23/2012 on Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education.
- Administrative Instruction No. 01/2013 on the Nomination of Higher Education Institutions.

***National strategies***

- Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Kosovo (2005-2015)
- Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2001-2016)

## 3.3 STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

As noted above, higher education institutions in Kosovo organise studies according to the Bologna three cycle structure and use ECTS credits, in accordance with the Law No. 04/L037 on Higher Education of the Republic of Kosovo and the AI No. 14/2008 on the Implementation of ECTS in Higher Education in Kosovo. According to this law higher education is organised as follows:

- First cycle: Bachelor programmes.
- Second cycle: Master programmes.

- Third cycle: programme of doctorate studies with academic and independent scientific research character.

Although the proportion of credits obtained through mandatory and elective modules within a study is not strictly defined, the mandatory part tends to account for 70 percent of the ECTS credits whilst the electives account for the remaining 30 percent.

A thesis is mandatory in both Bachelor and Master programmes. The number of ECTS credits assigned to the Bachelor thesis is set by the higher education institutions, whereas the number of ECTS credit points of a Master thesis is 30.

Doctoral studies are typically organised through a combination of exams and a thesis which is publicly presented and defended. They last at least three years and are currently offered only in academic higher education.

The education system of Kosovo is dominated by academic higher education institutions and academic study programmes. Currently, academic programmes are delivered at NQF Levels 6-8, whilst professional programmes are delivered at Levels 6-7. The NQF foresees the provision of professional higher education at NQF Levels 5-7, however, NQF Level 5 provision is at a relatively early stage of development. Although Bologna short cycle education programmes are foreseen in the NQF at Level 5, no such programmes are currently provided and the title for these qualifications is not known yet.

Professional higher education can be provided by public and private providers accredited by the KAA. It can be provided by higher education institutions that provide academic higher education, or institutions specifically focused on professional education academies, higher professional schools or higher technical schools.

### 3.4 QUALIFICATIONS, CERTIFICATION AND PROGRESSION

Students enrolled in the formal education system tend to follow a linear progression from one education level (or qualification) to another. The completion of each qualification at a given level allows admission to programmes that lead to qualifications at the next level.

In order to be admitted to a higher education programme, the student needs to possess the top secondary education level qualification, the State Matura Diploma, and this applies to all higher education institutions and both academic and professional programmes. The Law No. 04/L-018 on Final Examinations and State Matura Examination obliges all higher education institutions to accept the results that students have achieved both during and secondary school in internal evaluations and in the external standardised State Matura exam[2]. However, public higher education institutions with an approval from MEST can administer additional admission tests as per their entry requirements prescribed in their statutes.

Progression from study programmes that lead from NQF Level 5 qualifications to NQF Level 6 programmes is foreseen by the NQF. At present, however, there is no primary or secondary legislation that regulates this kind of progression.

At NQF Levels 6, 7 and 8, higher education exit qualifications are defined by the Bologna framework and they have the generic titles: Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate[3]. According to the AI No. 23/2012 on Degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education, the following documents of higher education attest the completion of higher education study programmes:

- A Bachelor Diploma is issued by any accredited and licensed higher education provider which provides first cycle study programme with a duration of 3 to 4 years and 180-240 ECTS credit points.

2) *The State Matura diploma is attained following examinations at the end of three years' gymnasium education or four years of vocational education. Students of vocational secondary education programmes may choose not to take the State Matura, but they do need to have attained this qualification if order to pursue any higher education programme.*

3) *The rules for titling Bologna short cycle courses are not set to date.*

- A Master Diploma is issued by any accredited and licensed higher education provider which provides second cycle study programme with a duration of 1 to 2 years and 60-120 ECTS credit points, under the condition that the total amount of credit points for both levels of study (Bachelor and Master) is 300 ECTS credit points.
- A Doctoral Diploma is issued by any accredited and licensed higher education provider which provides third cycle study programmes, which are of an academic research and scientific nature and last at least 3 years.

The diplomas above are currently generic for all programmes at these levels, both academic and professional programmes, whilst the specific title of the Bachelor, Master and Doctoral diplomas are specified in accordance with the higher education institutions' own Regulation on Awards and Diplomas.

Upon the successful completion of a study programme, all higher education institutions in Kosovo are obliged by the Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education to provide the student with a diploma and a sealed diploma supplement, the format and content of which is set by AI No. 02/2012on the Form and Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements of Higher Education providers. Apart from the information on the student and the study programme which has been completed, the diplomas must specify the number of ECTS credit points acquired and the level of the qualification in the NQF. The administrative instruction also specifies the model of the diploma supplement in accordance with the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Convention 1997). A sample of the diploma supplement is provided in Appendix 2.

### 3.5 PROVIDERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The following providers offer academic and professional higher education in Kosovo:

- Seven (7) public universities:
  - University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"
  - University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti"
  - University of Peja "Haxhi Zeka"
  - University of Gjilan "Kadri Zeka"
  - Univerisity of Gjakova "Fehmi Agani"
  - University of Mitrovica (Isa Boletini) and
  - University of Mitrovica (North)
- Twenty four (24) private higher education institutions, of which:
  - Twenty one (21) colleges
  - Two (2) higher professional schools
  - One (1) academy

Cycle two and three higher education programmes are also provided by branches of foreign universities or by local institutions under a license, franchise or service agreement with foreign universities, the programmes of which are validated by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency:

- Faculty of Economy - University of Ljubljana (MBA)
- Staffordshire University programmes at Riinvest College (BA and MBA)
- EADA Business School (MBA)

### 3.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE

MEST is responsible for planning the development of higher education in Kosovo. MEST is also

responsible for licensing higher education institutions[4], whereas the KAA is the institution that conducts the external evaluation of quality. The NQA is responsible for the strategic development and maintenance of the NQF including all types of qualifications, including Levels 6, 7 and 8. MEST, through its National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC), established in 2008, is responsible for the development of policies and practices for the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad and providing advice and information concerning the academic recognition of diplomas undertaken in other countries. The decisions for the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad are made by the National Council for Recognition which comprises seven members: a leader/representative from the NARIC office and six internal (i.e. MEST) and external experts with relevant experience on international higher education and the Process of Bologna. In 2008 MEST has also established the State Council of Higher Education, a council of experts with an advisory role which provides advice on educational reforms in higher education.

According to the Law for Higher Education, the responsibilities of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency include: (a) advising the Ministry on applications for licenses offer courses or programmes forming part of or leading to higher education qualifications; (b) inspecting licensed higher education providers and advising the Ministry on the modification or revocation of licences; (c) undertaking periodic quality audit of licensed higher education providers and issuing decisions on accreditation or re-accreditation including the power to award degrees and diplomas; (d) undertaking periodic quality assessment of courses and programmes offered by accredited higher education providers; (e) advising with the Ministry on the results of quality assessment and its consequences for the funding of public providers of higher education, allocations to private providers of higher education and for discretionary support for students attending courses or programmes at private providers of higher education; and (f) carrying out on behalf of the Ministry functions as may be delegated to it relating to recognition of academic and professional qualifications. According to this law, the KAA is obliged to publish its conclusions, recommendations and advice.

The KAA is comprised of a professional body and an administrative body. The National Quality Council (NQC) is the governing body, which has the overall responsibility for the functioning of the KAA. Among the key responsibilities of the NQC are to: (a) define the objectives of the higher education institutions' evaluation process, (b) approve the procedures and the external evaluation criteria which are compiled by the KAA, (c) create professional evaluation groups of Higher Education Instituions (HEIs), (d) make decisions for the accreditation based of the reports of the professional evaluation teams. The functions of the administrative body, the KAA, on the other hand, are to: (a) define the standards and accreditation procedures, (b) issues recommendations for HEIs which apply for institutional or programme accreditation and (c) makes recommendations to MEST for the licensing of HEIs[5]. The KAA has also become a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance for Higher Education ENQA.

# 4. THE KOSOVO NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)

## 4.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NQF

The Kosovo National Qualifications Framework has been established by NQA with the assistance of the EU KOSVET III and V Projects. After field testing, the NQF was revised and the last version was completed in 2011. The Framework has been approved by the Governing Board of the NQA.

The NQF has been developed with the engagement of a range of stakeholders including MEST, MLSW, other ministries with a direct interest in qualifications (especially health, trade and industry, youth culture and sport), the KAA, the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce (KCC), trade unions, vocational schools,

4) *The licensing of private higher education institutions is regulated by the AI No. 14/2003 on the Licensing of Private Bearers of Higher Education in Kosovo*

5) *The conditions and procedures for accreditation are published on the website of the KAA (www.akreditimi-ks.org). The full conditions for accreditation are presented in Appendix 4.*

training centres, various non-formal VET providers.

The work was supported by international experts, a number of whom were from the UK and brought experience of both developing and implementing NQFs.

The process went through following stages:

- In 2004 the first seminar was held in Kosovo where participants were from the Western Balkan countries. The seminar was organised and supported by the European Training Foundation (ETF) and participants were informed that European Commission was in a process of developing the EQF. In this seminar Kosovo authorities and relevant stakeholders expressed their commitment to become part of the process with intention to developing an NQF in line with EQF.
- In 2005 working group from Kosovo undertook a study visit to Ireland. This country was chosen given the fact that it has a well-developed NQF. The working group, called the Dublin group, consisted of representatives from MEST, MLSW, KCC; the Union of Independent Trade Unions of *Kosovo*, two members of the education committee from the Kosovo Assembly and a representative from civil society.
- Taking into account that Irish NQF had a legal basis, upon return from Ireland the Dublin group initiated discussions on the need to develop the NQF law which also would foresee establishment of the NQA. In 2005 the first draft of NQF was developed.
- In 2006 during a 5 day workshop a bigger working group started developing the Law on NQF. The process lasted for 2 years which engaged about 15 members and experts. In 2008 the Law was sent to the Parliament for approval.
- A workshop was held in October 2007 to consider the proposals and it was agreed that there was a need to set up an NQA Task Force which could act as a shadow NQA, and an NQF Working Group which could design the NQF. These bodies were established in April 2008 and met monthly to take forward the work.
- An NQF Working Group was established by MEST in 2008 to take responsibility for the design of the NQF. It comprised representatives from MEST, MLSW, VET schools, universities, non-formal training providers, training centres of public institutions and civil society. It worked on: the number of levels in the NQF and what they signify; a system of occupational sectors for use in the NQF; levelling process; and the definition of a credit system.
- At the same time, an NQA Task Force was set up to elaborate the duties of the NQA. It worked on: how to decide which qualifications should be entered in the NQF; how to decide which institutions should be allowed to assess learners and issue certificates what quality assurance should be applied to assessment and certification processes.
- A dissemination workshop held in December 2008. This conveyed the achievements of the NQA Task Force and the NQF Working Group to a wide group of stakeholders. After the workshop, the draft NQA policies, procedures and criteria developed by the NQA Task Force and the NQF Working Group were finalised and a draft NQA operational plan containing a draft NQF implementation plan was developed.
- The draft Law on Qualifications was finalised in July 2008 and passed by the Kosovo Assembly in November 2008.
- A national conference to launch the approved NQF was organised in 2011.

One role of the NQF is to support the inclusion of persons with special needs through set of measures which are explained in the document 'Guidance on the modifications and accommodations necessary for developing access to vocational education and training programmes and qualifications for learners with disabilities or other special needs' (NQA, 2011]. This document includes also a tool kit for modifications in teaching, learning and assessment to accommodate learners with disabilities or other special.

## 4.2 NATIONAL QUALIFICATION AUTHORITY (NQA)

The NQA was established in 2008 based on the Law on National Qualifications. According to the Law, the NQA is an independent public organ set up with the support of MEST acting with the agreement of the Office of the Prime Minister and other relevant ministries and social partners. The NQA has a Governing Board of 13 members representing: MEST; MLSW; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Economy and Finance; other relevant ministries; universities; Social Partner organizations; education and training NGOs; private sector education and training providers; learners with special needs. Additionally the NQA establishes committees and working groups as necessary to advise and carry out expert activities to support the exercise of its functions. Functions of the NQA include policy and strategy development for the establishment and implementation of the National Qualifications System.

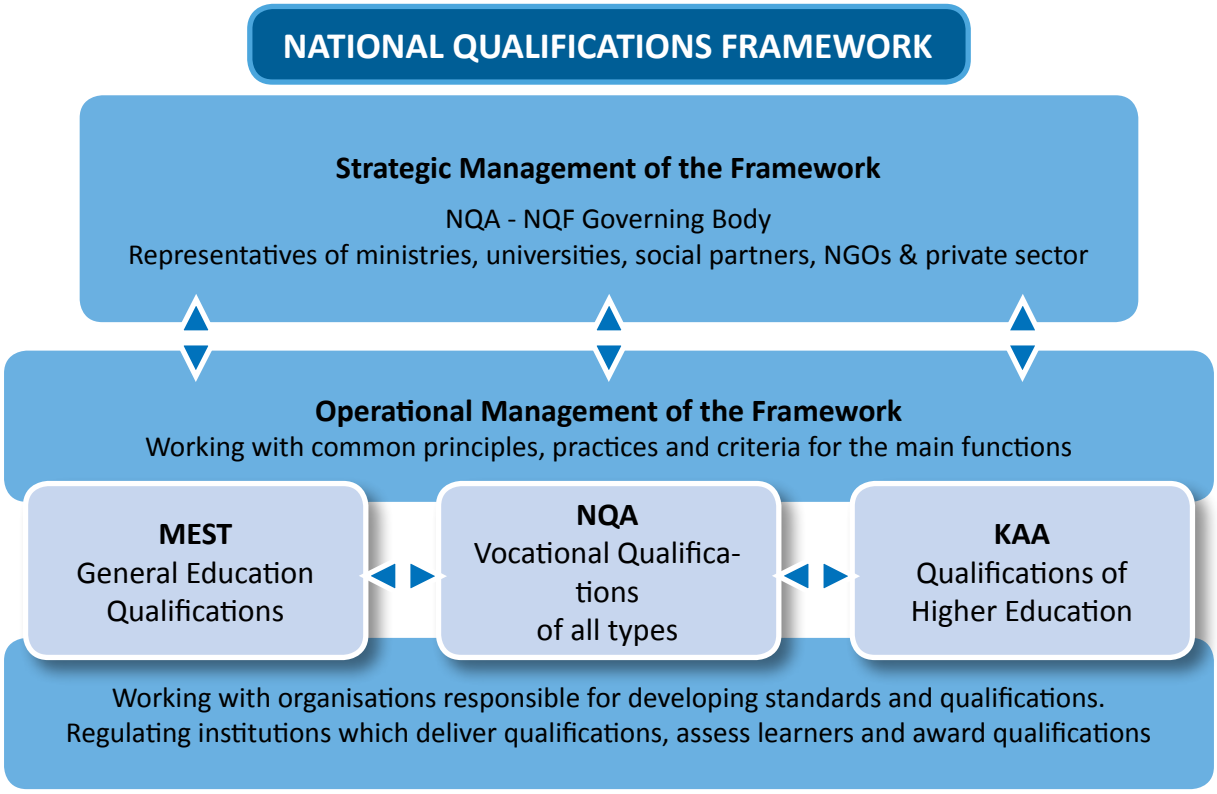
The Law on National Qualifications makes clear that aspects of the NQA's responsibilities will be shared with other institutions.

Operational responsibility for the NQF is shared between three authorised bodies:

- NQA for vocational education and training qualifications;
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) for general education qualifications;
- The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) for the qualifications of higher education.

In the NQF, these three bodies works to common principles, practices and criteria for the main NQF functions: validating qualifications; accrediting institutions to offer these qualifications; and quality assuring assessment and certification. The NQA, KAA and MEST each have lead responsibilities for particular types of qualification. It is an important principle of NQF management that these responsibilities are determined by the type of qualification rather than the level of the qualification. The operational responsibilities in relation to the regulation of qualifications in the NQF are divided into those concerned with quality assurance and those which are more administrative in nature.

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



The NQA's functions in relation to the NQF are to: design the NQF, by defining the levels of the Framework and the types and levels of, certificates and diplomas to be included, with the aims of facilitating progression and transfer between different learning pathways, and ensuring compatibility with the EQF; establish criteria and processes for the approval of qualifications proposed for inclusion in the NQF; approve qualifications for inclusion at defined levels of the framework and re-approve them as necessary.

The NQA carries out functions in relation to the awarding of qualifications. These include: approving (and, as necessary, re-approving) standards, assessment and certification arrangements for each qualification in the NQF; accrediting, regulating and monitoring assessment bodies, and bodies which carry out other functions on behalf of the NQA to ensure compliance with the requirements for each approved qualification; carrying out external quality assurance of assessments leading to the award of qualifications in the NQF; maintaining databases and verifiable documentary records of qualifications, in the NQF and of certificates or diplomas awarded; considering appeals from candidates in respect of disputed assessment decisions by and assessment bodies and bodies which carry out other functions on behalf of the NQA; carrying out periodic evaluative reviews and international comparisons of qualifications provision; advising institutions responsible for recognising foreign qualifications either for academic or for employment purposes on issues of comparability and/or equivalence.

### 4.3 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

As set by the Law on Qualifications the aims of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are to:

- improve access to work and further learning by ensuing that qualifications are relevant to employment and learning, and meet the needs of learners, the economy and education and training institutions;
- support improvements in quality and relevance of education and training by stimulating the development of qualifications that are based on internationally comparable standards of knowledge, skills and competences and supported by rigorous quality assurance;
- provide greater transparency within the national qualifications system, make clear the nature of qualifications and the relationship between qualifications, and provide a basis for comparison of achievements across all parts of the education and training system;
- support greater progression and mobility for lifelong learning through education and training pathways;
- enable flexible and individualised learning and employability through increased access to assessment and certification, and greater recognition and certification of learning and achievements;
- provide a basis for co-operation and mutual recognition between the NQF and the EQF.

Qualifications in the NQF can only be offered by accredited institutions. Learning leading to these qualifications can take place in formal, non-formal and informal contexts and in different institutions such as general and vocational schools, vocational training centres, enterprises, private education and training providers, postsecondary vocational institutions and higher education institutions.

Each qualification in the NQF will lead to a certificate or diploma.

The framework consists of eight levels at which qualifications, and modules or other components of qualifications, can be placed. Each of the levels of the NQF is defined by a statement of typical outcomes of learning based on the approach adopted by the EQF. The descriptors in the frameworks are defined by typical outcomes as follows: **Knowledge** including theoretical and/or practical; **Skills** which may be cognitive, creative or practical; and **Wider competences**, specifically, autonomy and responsibility.

The Kosovo NQF level descriptors are based on the EQF level descriptors. Levels 1-8 in the NQF correspond to levels 1-8 of the EQF.

At present there are 5 specified types of qualification recognised in the NQF:

A. HE
B. general
C. combined VET/general
D. skills-based qualifications based on nationally approved standards
E. skills-based qualifications which are not based on national standards.

The NQA plans to review and update these definitions in the second half of 2014.

***Table: The levels of the NQF related to selected stages of lifelong learning in the context of the education structure and legislation***

| National Qualifications Framework | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **NQF Level** | **Contains qualifications associated with** | | | **EQF ref. level** |
| | **Education/training programmes** | **Currently available qualifications (Type)** | **Potential work roles/ occupational requirements** | |
| 8 | Higher education - Bologna 3rd cycle (Doctorate) | Doctorate (A) | Entry to, or continuing professional development within, senior levels of management or higher level professional occupations | 8 |
| 7 | Higher education - Bologna 2nd cycle (Master) | Master degree (A) | | 7 |
| 6 | Higher education - Bologna 1st cycle (Bachelor) | Bachelor degree (A) | | 6 |
| 5 | Bologna short cycle and /or post-secondary VET | Title of qualifications still unknown (A), (C)<br>Certificates of non-formal providers (D or E) | Specialist/Trainer/Manager | 5 |
| 4 | Preparation for progression into higher education and/or labour market entry | Matura diploma in general or vocational subjects (B), (C), Vocational education diploma (C) | Qualified Worker/Supervisor | 4 |
| 3 | Preparation for labour market entry (young people and adults) | Vocational education certificate (C)<br>Certificates of non-formal VET providers (D or E) | Semi-skilled Worker | 3 |
| 2 | Progression from lower to upper secondary education (young people), preparation for labour market (adults) | No existing qualifications of formal education system identified<br>Certificates of non-formal providers (D or E) | Low-skilled Worker | 2 |
| 1 | Basic education | No existing qualifications of formal education system identified<br>Certificates of non-formal providers (E) | Minimum level of basic skills, inc. literacy/numeracy, required for entry to lowest level of employment | 1 |

**Level 1** foresees qualifications obtained upon completion of compensatory basic education or short training courses provided by training providers. However, no such qualifications are currently provided. These qualifications are equivalent to the completion of primary education.

**Level 2** includes qualifications obtained upon completion of short training courses covering low level vocational/job-related skills or basic skills (literacy, numeracy or ICT skills) provided by non-formal training providers. These qualifications are equivalent to the completion of lower secondary education.

**Level 3** includes qualifications that are currently obtained upon completion of two years of formal upper-secondary vocational education and certificates obtained upon completion of short training courses provided by non-formal VET providers.

**Level 4** includes the Matura qualification obtained upon completion of formal general and vocational upper secondary education, certificates obtained upon completion of formal vocational upper secondary education, and certificates obtained upon completion of short training courses provided by non-formal VET providers.

**Level 5** foresees both academic and vocational qualifications (formal and non-formal) that fall between upper secondary and higher education. However, no such qualifications are currently provided.

**Level 6** includes academic and professional higher education programmes, the completion of such programmes leads to a qualification with a generic title Bachelor. Qualifications obtained upon completion of training courses provided by non-formal VET providers are also foreseen, but not currently provided, at this level.

**Level 7** includes academic and professional higher education programmes, the completion of such programmes leads to a qualification with a generic title Master. Qualifications obtained upon completion of training courses provided by non-formal VET providers are also foreseen, but not currently provided, at this level.

**Level 8** includes academic higher education programmes, the completion of which leads to a qualification with a generic title Doctorate.

# 5. REFERENCING THE KOSOVO NQF TO THE EQF

## 5.1 THE REFERENCING PROCESS:

The process of referencing the Kosovo NQF to the EQF has guided the national authorities responsible for the qualifications system to define the relationship between the NQF and the levels of the EQF. Appendix 1 contains a list of participants/institutions that were involved in the referencing process.

The European Qualifications Framework acts as a reference framework to make qualifications in different education and training systems in Europe more comprehensible and comparable with one another. It aims at improving citisens' mobility between countries and sectors, and facilitating their lifelong learning.

The Kosovo NQF aims to improve the quality and relevance of education and training and access to work and further learning by ensuing that qualifications are relevant to employment and learning, and meet the needs of learners, the economy and education and training institutions.

The referencing process adopted for this report is based on the **best fit principle** and it relates to:

- the best overall fit with the EQF level for the NQF level or qualification;
- the best fit with the type of the given level descriptors (knowledge, skills, and personal responsibility).

The EQF is a voluntary initiative and is based on mutual trust between the member states. The EQF Advisory Group has proposed **10 quality criteria and procedures** for referencing NQF to the EQF These criteria and procedures serve as guidelines for the member states that wish to participate in the process of the EQF implementation and using them helps to do it in transparent and coherent manner. The Kosovo response to each criterion follows:

## 5.2 THE REFERENCING CRITERIA

**Criterion 1:** The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities

As explained in Section 3, according to the Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications, the NQA is the authority responsible for developing and maintaining the NQF. According to this law, one of the key objectives of the NQF is to provide a basis for cooperation and mutual recognition between the NQF and the EQF. As such, the NQA is the National Coordination Point responsible for overseeing the referencing of the NQF to the EQF. Accordingly, the Governing Board of the NQA has made the decision to embark on the process of referencing the NQF to the EQF.

Following this decision, the NQA has established three working groups (for general education, VET and higher education) consisting of representatives of relevant stakeholders, acting as sectoral experts and advisors to the NQF in the referencing process. The stakeholders involved in the working groups included: representatives of NQA, MEST, KAA, public and private education and training providers, social partners, NGOs and donors and donors' projects (see Appendix 1 for a full list of participants).

According to the Law No. 03/L-060 on National Qualifications, leading operational responsibility for the NQF is shared between three authorised bodies, according to the type of qualification. Namely, NQA is responsible for vocational education and training qualifications; MEST for general education qualifications; and KAA for qualifications of higher education.

In order to ensure the coherence of the overall framework, the entire education legislation (the law on general education, the law on VET, the law on adult education and the law on higher education) has been harmonised with the law on national qualifications. In addition, representatives of MEST and KAA are members of the Governing Board of the NQA.

Therefore, in order to provide inputs and advice to the process through participation in the respective working groups, representatives of these three institutions have been continuously involved in the reviewing of this referencing report.

**Criterion 2**: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications Framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

The EQF is a common European reference framework which acts as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. It has two principal aims: to promote citisens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.

The NQF is a tool that is intended to govern the system of qualifications provided in Kosovo, based on a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. As explained in Section 3, the aims of the Kosovo NQF are: to ensure that qualifications provided by the education and training system are relevant to employment and learning; to increase transparency with regard to the nature, relationship and comparability between different qualifications offered; to enhance quality and relevance of education and training by promoting the development of qualifications that are based on internationally comparable standards of knowledge, skills and competences and supported by rigorous quality assurance.

Indeed Kosovo's NQF was intentionally designed from its beginnings to provide a basis for co-operation with the EQF. Accordingly, the Kosovo NQF was developed in accordance with the:

Principles and definitions of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)

- EQF level descriptors
- Quality principles for VET and higher education attached to the EQF attached to the EQF

and relevant criteria for referencing NQFs to the EQF;

- Higher education Dublin Descriptors;
- Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA);
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET);
- "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA);
- European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF);
- The EUROPASS suite of tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences.

Accordingly, similarities between the NQF and the EQF were built in with regard to:

– the structure of the frameworks, as they are both based on an 8 level structure where 1 is the lowest level and 8 is the highest; and they encompasses all levels and kinds of qualifications, acquired in general, adult, initial and continuing vocational as well as academic education and training,

– the basic underlying concepts, as they are both based on learning outcomes described in terms of knowledge (practical and theoretical), skills (practical and cognitive) and competences (domain of autonomy and personal responsibility).

These similarities in terms of design criteria and understanding of underlying learning outcomes on which the two frameworks are based enable a meaningful comparison between them. Therefore, a linguistic analysis comparing the individual level descriptors of the two frameworks has been carried out and is detailed below.

There is a close correspondence between the language and the underlying concepts used to define the descriptors. Generally, the terminology used, i.e. the explanations of the complexity of knowledge, skills and competences, for is similar for each level, although the NQF descriptors tend to be more detailed and use more statements to describe the learning outcomes. For instance, descriptors of the NQF level 3 are as follows:

***Knowledge - practical and theoretical***

They will have a working knowledge of the main aspects of an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area and will be able to use this knowledge to achieve outcomes in structured learning or work. This will include the facts, principles, processes and ideas which they need to undertake structured learning or WWwork successfully in the subject, occupation, or occupational area.

***Skills - practical and cognitive***

They will be able to apply a number of practical and thinking skills to complete tasks and solve problems in an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. This will be done by using information (such as that listed under Knowledge at this level) to choose appropriate methods and carry them out with suitable tools and materials. The work will not yet be at the level required for a fully qualified worker or for entry to studies in higher education.

***Personal responsibility***

They will be able to take responsibility for carrying out tasks, solving

problems, and achieving outcomes appropriate to this level. They will carry out tasks without supervision. They will be able to solve problems which are routine in the educational subject, occupation, or occupational area and to make changes to the approach they are taking to the task when this is required.

Learning outcomes for the EQF level 3 are described through knowledge, skills and competences in the following way:

**Knowledge:** knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work of study

**Skills**: a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information

**Competence**: take responsibility for completion of tasks in work of study/adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems

A cross comparison of each level was conducted, which is illustrated in Table 3 with the following code:

- similarities in learning outcomes across the levels of the frameworks are marked in bold text and linked by dashed arrows
- differences noted are explained in a footnote and summarised below.

With regards to the descriptors of level 1 to 8, there are no substantial differences noted between the EQF and NQF learning outcomes statements.

The NQF learning outcomes are more broadly elaborated than those of the EQF, but demonstrate the same meaning and significance. The minor differences appear to be in the descriptors for levels 4, 5, 7 and 8. In Level 4 in the Knowledge descriptor, the EQF states “factual and theoretical knowledge” whereas NQF refers to “good knowledge”. In Level 5 in the Skills descriptor, the EQF states “abstract problems” whereas NQF refers to “practical problems”. In Level 7 in the Skills descriptor, the preparation of a master thesis appears as a learning outcome in the NQF, but not in the EQF. Finally, in Level 8 the preparation of a doctoral thesis appears as a learning outcome in the NQF, but not in the EQF.

Therefore, based on comparative analysis of the indicators and descriptors for Levels in the NFQ and the EQF, it can be stated that the NQF descriptors correspond to the EQF descriptors.

TABLE 3

| | EQF Descriptors | NQF Descriptors | EQF/NQFLevel |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | Basic General Knowledge | They will be able to obtain and use the knowledge necessary to learn, carry out unskilled work, or take part in everyday life. This knowledge is general - ie it is not specific to an educational subject, or to an occupation, or to an occupational area. | 1 |
| S | Basic skill required to carry out simple tasks | They will be able to carry out simple tasks using basic skills – eg everyday tasks which require reading, writing, using numbers, carrying out basic processes with computers, working within a supervised structure or working with other people. | |
| C | Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context | They will be able to undertake work or structured learning which is organised and controlled by other people. They will carry out tasks under direct or frequent supervision and will not be fully responsible for deciding what has to be done, how, when or where it is to be done, or the quality of the outcomes of the task. | |
| K | Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study | They will be able to learn and use basic knowledge about an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. The knowledge will mainly be factual – e.g. information about the usual content, terminology, processes, tools or materials of an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. | 2 |
| S | Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools | They will be able to combine basic practical skills and thinking skills, using the kind of information listed under Knowledge at this level. The skills will include reasoning, calculating and planning to carry out tasks and solve problems which are usual for the subject, occupation or occupational area. This will be done by following routine practices based on clear rules, using simple tools and materials. | |
| C | Work or study under supervision with some autonomy | They will be able to carry out tasks under general or overall supervision. These tasks will mainly be organized and controlled by other people, but the individuals will take responsibility for some aspects of the tasks (such as deciding what has to be done, how, when or where it is to be done) and the quality of some of the outcomes. | |

| | EQF level descriptors | Kosovo NQF level descriptors | EQF/NQF level |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | **Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts** in a field of work or study | They will have a **working knowledge** of the main aspects of an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area and will be able to use this knowledge to achieve outcomes in structured learning or work. This will include the **facts, principles, processes and ideas** which they need to undertake structured learning or work successfully in the subject, occupation, or occupational area. | 3 |
| S | A range of **cognitive and practical skills** required to accomplish tasks and solve problems **by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, material and information** | They will be able to apply a number of **practical and thinking skills** to complete tasks and solve problems in an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. This will be done by **using information** (such as that listed under Knowledge at this level) to choose **appropriate methods** and carry them out with **suitable tools and materials**. The work **will not yet be at the level required for a fully qualified worker** or for entry to studies in higher education. | |
| C | **Take responsibility** for completion of tasks in work or study<br><br>**Adapt own behaviour** to circumstances in **solving problems** | They will be able **to take responsibility for carrying out tasks**, solving problems, and achieving outcomes appropriate to this level. They will carry out tasks without supervision. **They will be able to solve problems** which are routine in the educational subject, occupation, or occupational area and **to make changes to the approach they are taking to the task when this is required**. | |
| K | **Factual and theoretical knowledge** in broad context within a field of work or study | They will have a **good knowledge**[6] **in and about** an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. They will be able to use this knowledge to carry out structured learning or work in the subject, occupation, or occupational area. | 4 |
| S | A range of **cognitive and practical skills** required to generate solutions to **specific problems** in a field of **work** or study | They will be able to apply a number of **practical and thinking skills** to complete tasks and **solve problems**. The skills, tasks and problems will be **specific** to an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. They will carry out work at the level of a qualified worker or structured learning at the level required for entry to studies in higher education. | |
| C | Exercise **self-management** within the guidelines of work or study context that are usually predictable but are **subject to change**.<br><br>**Supervise routine work of others** taking some responsibility for the **evaluation** and **improvement** of work or study activities. | They will carry out work or structured learning within the boundaries and normal practices of an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area.<br><br>They will **be able to make changes to their planned approach while carrying out activities**. They will **work independently and take full responsibility** for **planning and completing** the work or structured learning and for the quality of the outcomes.<br><br>They will **evaluate their own performance** and try to improve it. They may **supervise others who are carrying out routine activities, evaluate their performance** and take steps to **create improvements** on the basis of this evaluation. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | **Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work** or study and an **awareness of boundaries of that knowledge**. | They will have broad or specialised factual and theoretical knowledge in and about an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. They will be able to use the knowledge to achieve outcomes which result from structured learning or work. This may involve:<br>• using **comprehensive specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge** within a field of work or study and showing **awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge**;<br>• employing a broad knowledge of the scope, defining features, and main areas of a subject, discipline area of work and detailed knowledge in some areas;<br>• understanding and use of a limited range of core theories, principles and concepts;<br>• using knowledge and understanding of some major current issues and specialisms, and drawing on an outline knowledge and understanding of research or equivalent processes within the context of work or study. | |
| S | **A comprehensive** range of **cognitive and practical skills** required to develop creative solutions to **abstract** problems. | They will be able to apply a full range of the specialised skills needed for planning, implementation, review and evaluation of results in an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area. They will be able to apply a **comprehensive** range of **cognitive and practical skills**, practices and techniques to develop **creative solutions to practical**[7] **problems** and accomplishing tasks. This may involve:<br>• applying investigative and analytical skills to the solving of both concrete and **abstract** problems and issues requiring the exercise of discretion and judgment;<br>• following a line of investigation, analysis and interpretation that requires application of theories, principles, and methods relevant to a field of work or study;<br>• using a range of communication, mathematical, and digital skills associated with a field of work or study, some of which are specialised. | |
| C | Exercise **management and supervision** in contexts of work or study activities where there is **unpredictable change**<br>**Review and develop performance of self and others** | They will undertake independent work or structured learning of all types within the abilities for this level including adaptation to meet **changing requirements, circumstances or unforeseen factors or developments**. This may include:<br>• Exercising significant personal autonomy and taking initiative in some activities which require the exercise of discretion and judgement;<br>• Exercising **management or supervision** in contexts of work or study, which may include organizing and taking responsibility for the work of others and for resources and/or managing the activities of other people;<br>• **Reviewing and evaluating the performance of self and of others** for whom responsibility is taken, and planning improvements in performance on the basis of such evaluation. | |

| | EQF level descriptors | NQF Descriptors | Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | • advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principle | Knowledge – advanced<br><br>They will have an advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles. This may include:<br><br>• using an integrated view of the principal areas, features, boundaries, terminology and conventions of the field of work or study to reach informed judgements about the theories and principles which underpin or govern it;<br><br>• drawing on detailed knowledge and understanding in one or more specialisms, including some that is informed by or at the forefront of a subject, discipline or area of work;<br><br>• demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the subject, discipline or area of work is developed, including a range of established techniques of enquiry or research methodologies. | 6 |
| S | • advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study | Skills – advanced practical, cognitive and creative<br><br>They will be able to demonstrate mastery and innovation in using advanced skills to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study. This may include:<br><br>• using a few skills, practices and/or materials which are specialised, advanced, or at the forefront of a subject, discipline or area of work; executing a defined project of research, development or investigation to identify and implement relevant outcomes;<br><br>• practising in a range of professional level contexts which include a degree of unpredictability and/ or specialism and demonstrating some originality and creativity and making judgements where data/ information is limited or comes from a range of different sources | |
| C | • manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts<br><br>• take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups | They will undertake work or study which involves managing complex technical or professional activities or projects, which may include responsibility for decision- making in unpredictable work or study contexts and/or for managing the professional development of individuals and groups. It may include:<br><br>• working effectively under guidance in a peer relationship with experienced qualified practitioners;<br><br>• the exercise of autonomy and initiative and significant responsibility for the work of others and a range of resources;<br><br>• working with others to bring about change, development and/or new ideas ;<br><br>• dealing with ethical and professional issues in accordance with current professional and/or ethical codes or practices | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | • **highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/ or research**<br><br>• **critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field** and at the interface between different fields | Knowledge – highly specialised<br><br>They will have highly **specialised, extensive and detailed knowledge and understanding, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study and at the interface between different fields, as the basis for original thinking and/or research**. This will include:<br><br>• **a critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts relating to practical and conceptual knowledge in the subject**, discipline or area of work including relevant specialisms;<br><br>• working with knowledge that covers and integrates most of the main areas of a subject, discipline or area of work – including their features, boundaries, terminology and conventions;<br><br>• **drawing on a critical awareness of current issues in a subject, discipline or area of work including relevant specialisms**. | 7 |
| S | • **specialised problem-solving skills required in** research and/or innovation in order **to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields** | Skills – highly specialised practical, cognitive and creative<br><br>They will be able to use highly **specialised skills and techniques associated with a subject/discipline** or occupational area, including some which may be at the forefront of developments, to carry out activities requiring significant innovative thinking and/ or original research. They will have the ability and attitude to appreciate and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a wide range of resources and should be able to use **specialised problem-solving skills to develop new knowledge and procedures and integrate knowledge from different fields**. This may, for example, involve:<br><br>• planning and carrying out a significant project of research, investigation or development;<br><br>• developing original and creative responses to problems and issues practising in a wide and often unpredictable variety of professional contexts;<br><br>• **Drafting a master thesis**[8] | |
| C | • **manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches**<br><br>• **take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/ or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams** | They will exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities, taking responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others, and undertaking work or study which involves **managing and transforming work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches**. This may involve:<br><br>• **Managing teams of professionals, contributing to the development of their professional knowledge and practice and/or reviewing their performance;**<br><br>• dealing with complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgments on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| K | • knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between field | Knowledge – highly advanced<br><br>They will have and use **knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work, study or area of research and at the interface between different fields**, drawing on a critical overview of a subject/discipline, including critical understanding of the principal theories, principles and concepts. The knowledge and understanding is generated through personal research or equivalent work which makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/ discipline and offers original and creative insights into new, complex and/or abstract ideas, information and issues and developing creative and original responses to problems. This will include:<br><br>• dealing with very complex and/or new issues and make informed judgments in the absence of complete or consistent data/information;<br><br>• **extending or redefining of professional knowledge and practices within a given field or the interface between fields**. | |
| S | • the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice | Skills – highly advanced practical, cognitive and creative<br><br>They will be able to use a **range of advanced and specialised skills, techniques, practices and materials at the forefront of a subject**, discipline or area of work in order to achieve insights into new, complex and/or abstract ideas, information and issues and develop creative and original responses to problems. This will involve applying a range of standard and **specialised research and enquiry methods (e.g. synthesis and evaluation)** to design and carry out research, investigative or development projects **in order to solve critical problems and/or extend or redefine existing knowledge or professional practice**, resulting in significant contributions to knowledge and understanding and/or the application of knowledge within a discipline or educational area. This is likely to involve:<br><br>• Review of literature, experimentation and other systematic approaches on a range of knowledge;<br><br>• Writing of critical reviews in one or more specialism or research areas;<br><br>• **Preparation of a doctoral thesis**[9]. | 8 |
| C | • demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research | They will exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities, **demonstrating substantial authority, innovation and autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work, study or research** in the relevant area or discipline. They will also take full responsibility for own work and/or significant responsibility for the work of others, demonstrating leadership and/or originality in tackling and solving problems. They should be able to deal with complex ethical and professional issues, making informed judgments on new and emerging issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices. | |

**Criterion 3**: The national framework or qualifications system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems

There is a consistent approach across all the sectors of education in using the learning outcome providing that the aim of the NQF is lower barriers between different education and training sectors.

6) *The preparation of a master tzhesis appears as a learning outcome in the NQF, but not in the EQF.*
7) *The preparation of a doctoral thesis appears as a learning outcome in the NQF, but not in the EQF.*
8) *The EQF states "factual and theoretical knowledge … within a field of work or study" whereas NQF states as "good knowledge in and about an educational subject, occupation, or occupational area". Although the precise terms are different, there seems to be a degree of comparability here.*
9) *EQF states abstract problems whereas NQF includes practical problems*

## General Education System

General education qualifications are based on learning outcomes defined for each level of education as set out in the KCF. The key competences envisaged in the KCF derive from the general aims of pre-university education in Kosovo and define the main learning outcomes that learners need to achieve in a progressive and consistent way throughout the pre-university educational system.

The KCF specifies six key competences to be mastered during compulsory education:

- Communication and expression competence
- Thinking competence
- Learning competence
- Life, work and environment-related competence
- Personal competence
- Civic competence

However it should be noted that these are intended to be applied across the entire school curriculum including general education programmes, and they provide the full range of "soft skills" needed to support occupational competence.

General education is entirely based on learning outcomes according to the KCF but there are no leaving qualifications for preschool education. There is a qualification awarded as leaving certificate to those leaving primary and lower secondary education.

The Matura is to be the exit qualification for students from general education schools (Gymnasia) and for those wishing to progress to higher education from vocational schools.

There are no arrangements for validation non-formal and informal learning and there is no credit system in general education

## VET and adult education system

It is set out in law, in the 2008 Law on national qualifications and in secondary legislation, including the updated Administrative Instruction on criteria for validation of qualifications), that new VET qualifications must be based on learning outcomes. The NQF has influenced curricula and other educational change. The terms "module" and "unit" were widely understood in our VET system prior to the introduction of the NQF, although the modular system has only recently been introduced into vocational education in Kosovo. Traditionally curricula were subject-based, with a distinction between theoretical and practical in each subject. Modular curricula were introduced and piloted by various donors from about 2002 onwards. Until recently only the donor-supported curricula were modular. However the most recent curriculum reform by MEST and NQA has introduced modularization throughout the system.

## Use of occupational standards

Occupational standards are the starting point for outcomes-based curricula and outcomes-based VET qualifications. VET qualification can be placed in NQF if they are based on occupational standards. Occupational standards are developed in cooperation with: MEST, MLSW, other relevant ministries and social partners. Furthermore, they are verified by NQA and approved by the CVET.

Figure 1 outlines an example of the stages of development of occupational standards which must be followed and evidenced by applicants.

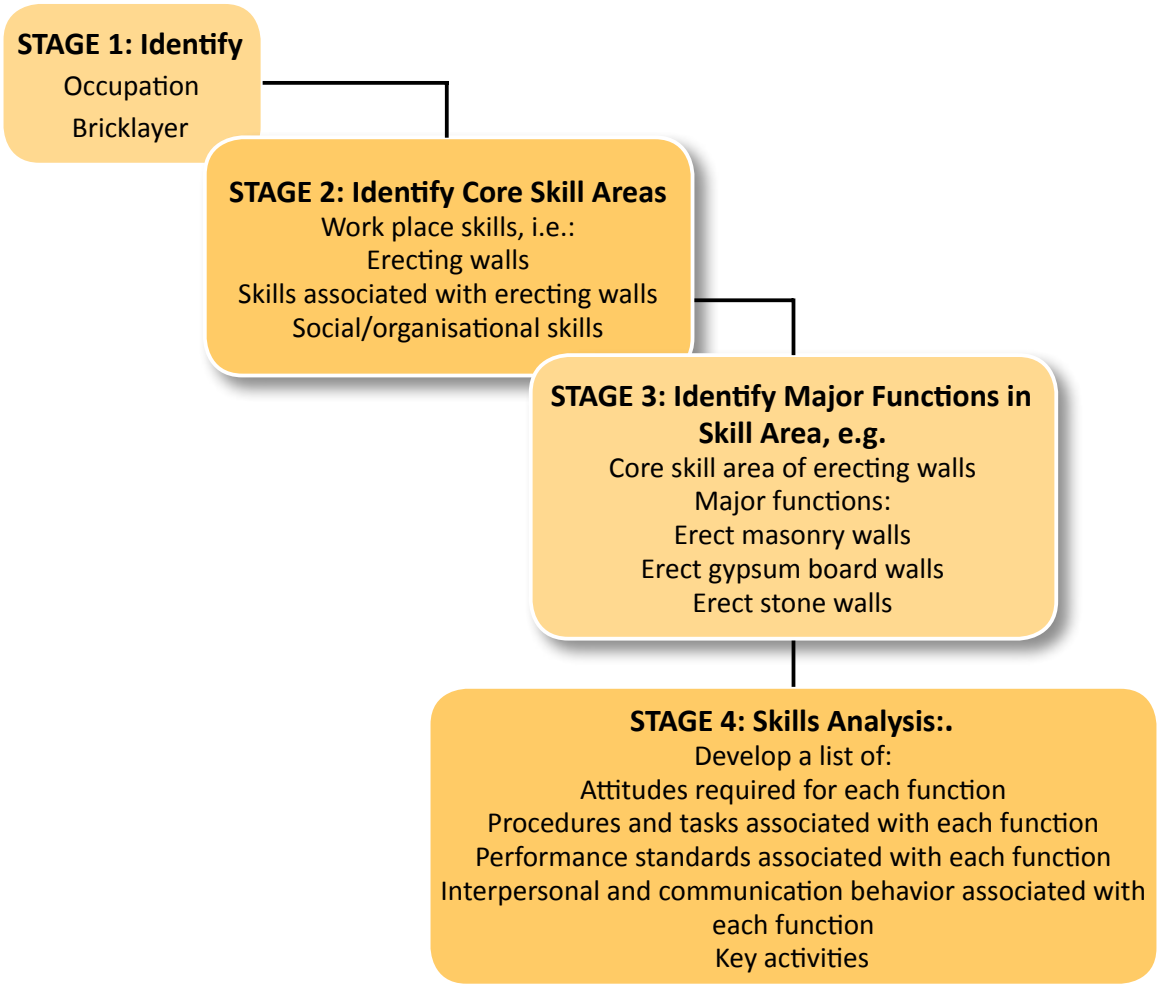



***Figure 1: Stages of development of occupational standards (An example for bricklayer presented)***

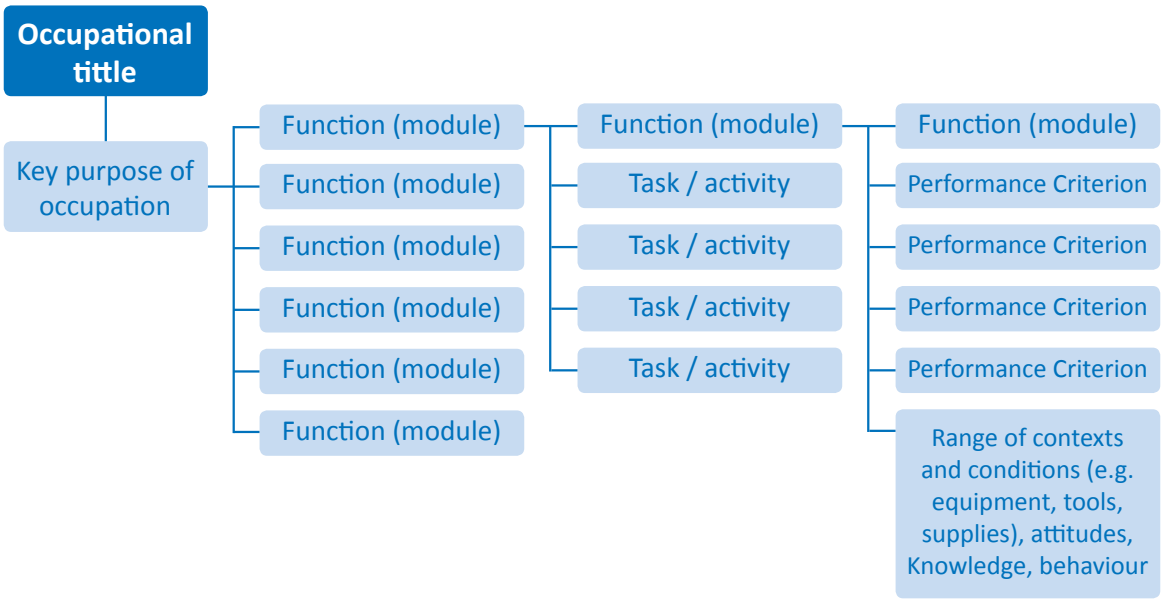
Vocational/occupational standards which are submitted for verification at NQA shall meet the following criteria: vocational standards must

- be drafted in the format set by NQA, based on functions, key activities, performance criteria, necessary knowledge to perform the function, skills and key competences associated to the main function;
- be based on the labour market demands;
- be developed in cooperation with all stakeholders;
- have a specified period of validity; and
- be titled and coded according to the Book on Classification of Vocations in Kosovo, ISCO 88, ILO and other international standards.

There is standard format for occupational standards developed by NQA (one example provided in Appendix 5), which has to be applied by all institutions applying for verification of standards but is also being applied by MEST and MLSW for development of occupational standards in cases when they are not yet submitted to NQA for verification. The format of occupational standards includes broad functions; each broad function is broken down into key activities, which then describe requirements of the broad function. For each key activity a number of performance statements are identified, which describe the outcomes of performance that have to be achieved if the competences and broad functions are successfully performed. Figure 2 outlines the structure of occupational standards and a sample of one occupational standard is provided in Appendix 5.

*Figure 2: The structure of occupational standards*

## A typical example of the structure of occupational standards:




Currently there are 25 occupational standards, developed, verified and approved on a national level.

The occupational standards are used to provide a reference point for identifying the modules that should be included in each qualification, together with the learning outcomes to be achieved for the candidate to be credited with having achieved each module.

In general, the main functions identified in the occupational standards will lead to the definition of modules for learning and assessment. Modules provide building blocks for qualifications, enabling systems of credit accumulation and credit transfer to be developed. Modules may be given credit values based on the sise of the module.

They can be offered in prescribed combinations to meet the requirements of particular programmes, as elective options or individually. Normally vocational qualifications are based on a “core” and “options” structure, allowing some degree of choice with regard to the modules taken. Qualifications may specify the assessment strategy that must be met for the award of the full qualification, and that this should allow learners to accumulate credits for modules. There is a common format or template used to set out standards for qualifications, namely within modules.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Qualification Title:** ..... | **Credit value of module:** ..... |
| **Module Title:** ..... | **NQF level of Module:** ..... |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Learning outcomes 1:** | **Learning outcomes 2:** |
| • Performance (assessment) criterion ... | • Performance (assessment) criterion ... |
| • Performance (assessment) criterion ... | • Performance (assessment) criterion ... |
| • Performance (assessment) criterion ... | • Performance (assessment) criterion ... |
| Range (of conditions, equipment, tools etc.), knowledge, skills, attitudes | Range (of conditions, equipment, tools etc.), knowledge, skills, attitudes |
| Assessment strategy | Assessment strategy |
| • Evidence requirements (forms of evidence, quantity of evidence) | • Evidence requirements (forms of evidence, quantity of evidence) |
| • Methods of assessment | • Methods of assessment |

***Format for qualification modules***

The formal and non-formal VET qualifications are prepared within a defined framework which includes the aim of the qualification; target group; general and professional competences to be achieved upon completion; content of the qualification per modules; assigned credit point and number of hours per module; exit options to further education levels and employment; diploma and certificate acquired at the end of the study.

The implementation of formal VET qualifications is regulated by secondary legislations and it defines the following : VET education structure ; target group and competences in accordance with NQF levels.

One of the objectives of the NQF is to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes between different learning contexts or systems – this includes learning in the formal and non-formal and training sectors. The NQA has developed a VET credit system based on ECVET recommendations. This aims to support learners' geographical and occupational mobility by enabling them to accumulate and combine learning outcomes from different settings and use them in different educational pathways.

The NQA's credit system uses learning outcomes, categorises qualifications, by measuring the volume of learning, and identifies providers that have a role and responsibility in allocating credit.

In Kosovo 1 credit is awarded for 10 notional learning hours (This convention was selected because it allows credit to be awarded for learning outcomes gained in very short periods of time (for example one or two day training programmes). It also offered relatively easy conversion to ECTS points (2.5 ECVET points = 1ECTS point).

The NQA regulates the credit system by accredit ting providers and setting criteria to determine which providers can submit qualifications for inclusion in the NQF. These criteria include strict procedures for allocating credits, which ensures that providers have the necessary capacity and expertise. The NQF also provides the basis for cooperation and mutual recognition of VET qualifications with other countries.

**Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is defined by the Law on National Qualifications as the process of evaluation of the knowledge and skills which an individual has previously acquired through different learning contexts. The NQA has developed a policy paper and guidelines for the validation

of non formal and informal learning. NQA has also developed the Administrative Instruction for Recognition of Prior Learning; this legislation sets general principles, responsibilities and procedures for validation of non-formal and informal learning, within the NQF. NQA will accredit providers for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

**Higher education system**

The application of learning outcomes in higher education is ensured by the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes (see Section 2.3 and 2.5). ECTS credits are used in higher education. The amount envisaged for one academic year of full time studies is 60 credits. The amount of the workload for one academic year for a full time studies is calculated at 1500 notional hours per student, whilst 1 ECTS credit point represents 25 notional hours.

An AI is currently being drafted which lays out the foundation for validation based on the principles of the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning and for the accreditation of the institution that will carry out this process by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

**Criterion 4**: The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.

**General Education**

Qualifications in general education are awarded at the end of a learning programme by MEST. These qualifications are developed and quality assured by the pre-university education department of MEST based on national standards for the qualifications and their curriculum areas. As such they are automatically part of the NQF.

The formal education structure is based on education programme, most of which leads to tangible outcomes, defined in terms of nationally recognised standards.

**Level 1:** Primary education is part of compulsory education and lasts five years (grades 1-5). At the end of grade five (5) students undergo a national achievement exam and are awarded a leaving certificate.

**Level 2**: Lower secondary education is also part of compulsory education and lasts four years( grades 6-9). In order to graduate from lower-secondary education (grade 6-9), students need to pass the national exam or semi-matura and are awarded a leaving certificate. Based on achieved results students may continue their further education either in VET or general education and training. The lower secondary leaving certificate is at level 3 of the NQF.

**Level 3**: Upper secondary education is composed of different types of gymnasia (grades 10-12) which ends with national Matura exam. Students after completion of grade twelve(12) could continue to post-secondary education. Students who pass national Matura exam are awarded a school leaving diploma and may continue to higher education. The Matura diploma is at level 4 of rhte NQF.

**VET and adult education and training system**

VET qualifications are placed in the NQF though a mechanism developed and managed by NQA.

It consists of procedures for validating and approving qualifications for inclusion at defined levels of the framework and criteria and processes for the accreditation of providers to offer these qualifications.

The validation process which is specified in law, is transparent and consists of four stages: in stage one the institution seeking validation of a qualification/module makes an application which clearly states the rationale for the qualification/module; in stage two, a panel of experts appointed and supported by NQA evaluates the application; in the third stage the experts' report and recommendations are presented to the Governing Board of NQA for the final decision; and in stage four, the approved qualification/modules are placed in the NQF and made public.

Qualifications or modules which are proposed for validation must state the following:

1. Rationale/justification. Under this criteria vocational qualifications or modules proposed for validation should meet the following criteria: have a clear rationale which makes the aims; objectives; progression routes into employment or further education and training and support from key stakeholders transparent; meet the needs of a relevant sector and be supported by the sector; relate either to a full occupational profile or to education, training or development need;
2. Credit value and duration;
3. Entry requirements and access;
4. Proposed level of the qualification/module at the NQF
5. Content, outcomes and standards. Within there are specific sub-criteria for vocational education which include: the vocational content of the qualification or module should be derived from an occupational analysis; the structure of the qualification has to modular and be based on one or more modules; modules have to be expressed in terms of clearly identified and assessable learning outcomes; learning outcomes should normally reflect occupational standards and must include relevant and objective criteria for assessment;
6. Assessment. A qualification or a module should include assessment strategy to assess knowledge, skills and competences;
7. Quality assurance arrangements. This includes institutional self-assessment and monitoring including candidate records to meet requirements for internal and external quality assurance of the assessment and certification processes and to provide verifiable evidence on candidates achievements;
8. Progression. Qualifications should enable learners to progress directly into employment or to further learning opportunities within employment.

Decisions on the level at which each qualification are placed in the framework are made on the basis of their match against Level Descriptors which relate to the descriptors of the NQF and Indications of Level which describe the kind of formal and nonformal provision which will lead to qualifications in the NQF. Once qualifications are validated and placed in the NQF the decision is made public on the NQA website.

**Higher education**

The institution responsible for the implementation of the NQF descriptors in higher education in Kosovo is the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. The implementation of the NQF at this level is ensured through the process of accreditation, the process and criteria for which are regulated by a well-established legal framework and are published in the Agency's website.

The process of accreditation is carried out at the level of the higher education institution and at the level of programmes offered by the institutions. The criteria for the evaluation and the procedures for accreditation of higher education institutions are as follows:

1. Scope and number of programmes that different types of institutions need to offer in order to be eligible to apply for accreditation as a specific type of higher education institution.
2. For academic degrees as other institutions in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), comparability of studies and overall educational outcomes with those of similar institutions in the EHEA.

3. Availability, demonstrated through legally binding contracts, of adequately qualified staff to meet international scientific, artistic and professional standards.
4. Facilities, including adequate space and equipment (e.g. computers, library, etc.).
5. Academic freedom in research and teaching.
6. Research taken at the institution and its contribution to teaching.
7. Internal policies and procedures for quality assurance of their study programmes and awards.
8. Admission criteria and study plans (detailed curricula) and examination regulations.
9. Once programmes and institutions are accredited the decision is made public on the KAA website.

**Criterion 5**: The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines

**General Education**

MEST is responsible for the quality assurance in general education. MEST approves programmes and licences schools which deliver national curriculum and learning standards.

The KCF is aligned with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals and the UNESCO Education for All initiative. It aims to provide equal access to quality education for all learners, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, social and economic background, skin colour, culture, language and beliefs. The KCF has been developed in compliance with quality standards (in terms of both content and student achievements). It complies with quality criteria such as relevance, connectivity, balance, coherence and meaningful progression of learning in compliance with European Reference Framework - Key Competences for Lifelong learning . It should be noted that these are applied across the entire school curriculum including general education programmes. Learning outcomes of KCF for general education levels are integrated in to level descriptors of NQF and fits within the EQF paradigm in relation to the acquisition of the key competences.

Based on the KCF, assessment at the classroom level includes formative assessment throughout the school year, final assessment (upon completion of a school year) and summative assessment (upon completion of a curriculum key stage).

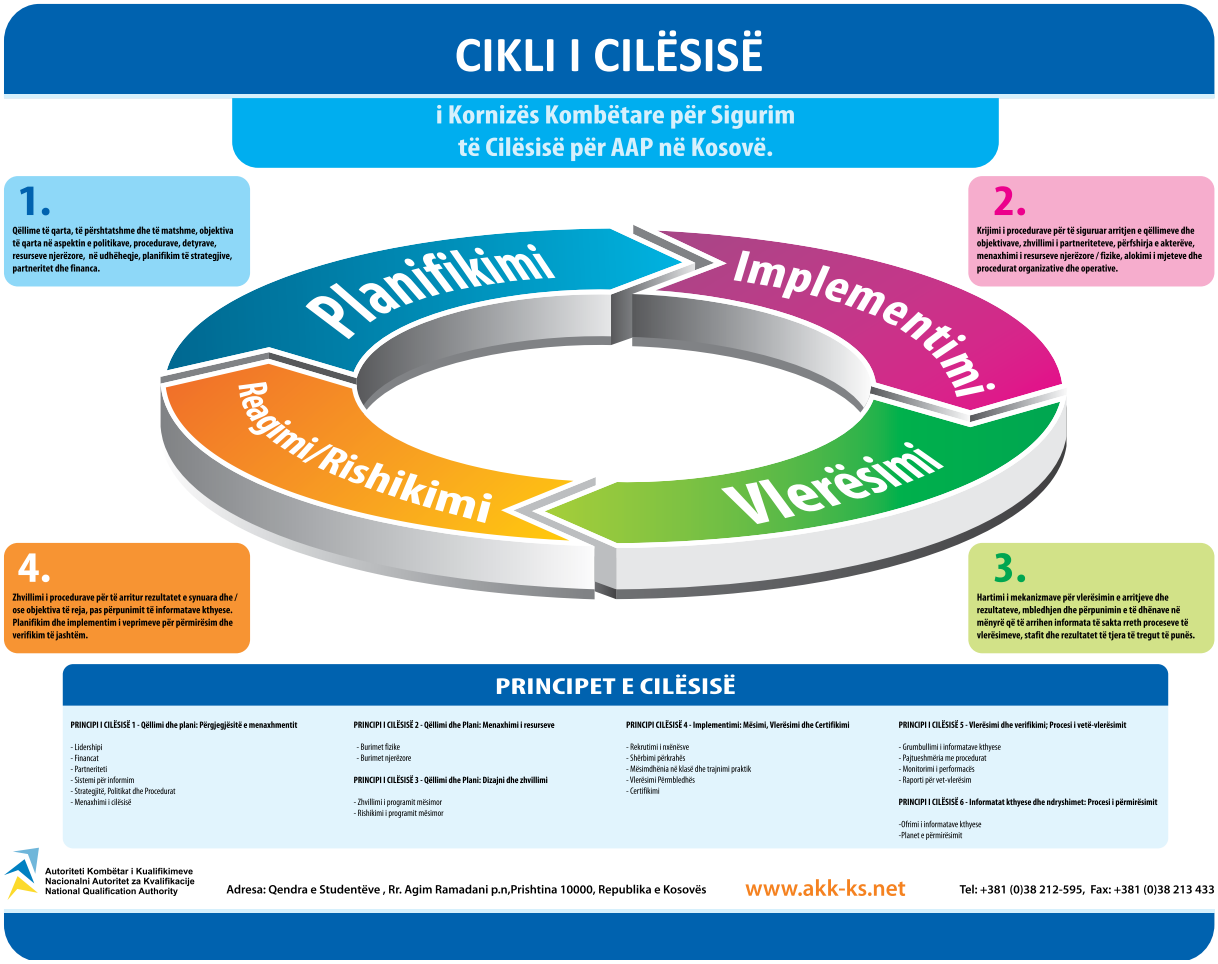
The Office for Standards and Evaluation in MEST is responsible for the evaluation of quality of the Matura exam and other standardised exams.

**VET and the adult education and training system**

The Kosovo NQF provides a basis for co-operation and mutual recognition of VET qualifications between Kosovo and other countries. Initially this is being achieved by ensuring compatibility with:

- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)
- EQF level descriptors
- Quality Principles for VET attached to the EQF and relevant criteria for referencing NQFs to the EQF
- European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)
- EUROPASS suite of tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences

Kosovo has adopted a National Quality Assurance Framework in VET in line with European Quality Assurance Reference Framework, for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) to build a functional system of quality assurance for VET qualifications meeting the needs of Kosovo society and European standards.




Kosovo additionally has observer status in EQAVET, the community of practice which supports implementation of the EU Recommendation on Quality Assurance in VET ("EQAVET").

### Higher education

The Kosovo NQF provides a basis for co-operation and mutual recognition of Higher qualifications between Kosovo and other countries. Initially this is being achieved by ensuring compatibility with:

- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQEHEA)
- EQF level descriptors and the higher education Dublin Descriptors
- Quality Principles for higher education attached to the EQF and relevant criteria for referencing NQFs to the EQF
- The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- EUROPASS suite of tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences

The internal and external evaluation of higher education institutions is carried out in compliance with

the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area by ENQA.

When evaluation education programmes for the purpose of accreditation, the panel of experts appointed by the KAA evaluate the correspondence of the content and learning outcomes of the programme to NQF level descriptors. The relevance of content of the syllabi and the learning and teaching methods to the aims and objectives of the programmes is also evaluated, as are the resources for delivering the programmes. Thus, the evaluation will ensure that the content and delivery of the education programmes will allow students to require the knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the relevant qualification level.

The KAA is full member in ENQA. The KAA is a full member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

**Criterion 6**: The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies

All relevant quality assurance institutions were engaged actively in the working group for referencing the NQF to the EQF as well as in the consultation process:

- The Kosovo Accreditation Agency – the institution responsible for quality assurance in the higher education system – and its governing board, the National Quality Council.
- The NQA – an institution monitoring quality of the VET system
- Inspectorate of Education - a quality assurance body at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for pre-university education
- Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Vocational Training Division - in charge of quality assurance for MLSW training centres
- Quality assurance coordinators in centres of competence and in some VET schools

**Criterion 7**: The referencing process shall involve international experts

In the referencing process the international experts were involved in reviewing the draft report prepared by three local experts. Comments raised by international experts were addressed by local experts and there was a continuous communication between experts for the completion of the report.

Experts engaged in the referencing report are

1. **John Hart, Scotland**

   John Hart has been working as an education and training consultant since 2003. His main work has been in Turkey, Romania, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, but he has also contributed to developments in Botswana, Egypt, Poland and Kazakhstan.

   He is currently working on the development of qualification types in Kosovo and on the implementation of the National Skills and Qualifications Framework in India. He is also currently assisting UNESCO in investigating the possibility of developing world reference levels. The main focus of his work has been on the development and establishment of qualification systems, quality assurance systems and National Qualifications and Credit Frameworks. He has contributed to the EQF referencing of the Scottish, Welsh, Dutch and Maltese Qualifications Frameworks.

   He is the author of *Developing a National System of Vocational Qualification*, in the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Handbook of Education for the world of work and *NQFs as credit systems*, published by SAQA and he has written a number of policy and research papers, including *Recognising Achievement: Literature review and model for managing recognition processes* (published by the Scottish Government), *Unitisation – benefits*

*and issues* (published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority) and *Cross-referencing qualifications frameworks* (published by Edinburgh University).

2. **Michael Graham, UK**

   Michael Graham is a qualifications expert with the European Training Foundation, an EU agency which supports the EU's neighboring countries in developing their VET systems.

   He is chair of the qualifications team in the ETF. He joined the Foundation in 2010, and has worked on qualifications issues with ETF Partner Countries in the Balkans and Southern Mediterranean regions. He has also authored or contributed to a number of the Foundation's publications.

   Before joining the ETF, Michael was in the UK Civil Service, where he worked in various education departments on qualifications and curricula. He was also seconded from the UK for 3 years to DG EAC, European Commission, where he was a member of the team which developed the EQF.

When selecting the international experts, the following criteria were considered:

- Expert's experience in developing and introducing NQF;
- Experience in developing referencing reports and reviewing referencing report;
- Expert's knowledge in education field;
- Expert's knowledge concerning the Kosovo education system.

**Criterion 8**: The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national Framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.

This Referencing Report has been prepared with all relevant stakeholders including in social partners. It will be published and its electronic copy is available on the website of NQA (www.akk-ks.net), on the website of the MEST (www.masht-gov.net) and AKA (www.akreditimi-ks.org).

**Criterion 9**: The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.

The report about the Kosovo NQF referencing process will be forwarded to the Ministry of Education, who will inform the European Commission that the referencing process has been completed and looking forward to be presented at EQF Advisory Group.

The report will be published on the on the official EQF platform and the NQA's official website www.akk-ks.net .

**Criterion 10**: Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.

According to the Law on National qualifications certificates and diplomas of qualifications in the NQF should ensure compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework.

All diplomas and certificates in Kosovo in VET and HE, mention the NQF level of qualification or degree obtained. In HE, the Diploma Supplement is always issued. For all qualifications in VET, Certificate Supplements are available. It is planned to draft secondary legislations for diploma supplement in general education, following the EQF referencing report.

## References


ETF, 2012, Torino Process: Kosovo

EU, European Qualification Framework;

KAA, 2009, Administrative Instruction No. 2/2009, AI No. 25/2012 and AI No. 02/2013 on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institution, Pristine;

KAA, 2012, Annual Reports, Pristine;

KAA, 2013, Annual Reports, Pristine;

MEST,2011 Kosovo Curriculum Framework, Pristine;

MEST, 2011, Law on National Qualifications, Pristine;

MEST, 2011 Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, Pristine;

MEST, 2011 Law for Vocational Education and Training, Pristine;

MEST, 2004, Law on Inspection of Education in Kosovo, Pristine;

MEST 2001, 2013Law on Adults Education and Training, Pristine;

MEST, 2011, Law on Higher Education in Kosovo, Pristine;

MEST, 2011, Kosovo Education Strategy Plan 2011-2016, Pristine;

MEST,2011 Annual Reports, Pristine;

MEST,2012 Annual Reports, Pristine;

MEST,2013 Annual Reports, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, National Qualification Framework Pristine;

NQA, 2011, Administrative Instruction No. 01/ 2011 on Criteria and Procedures for the Validation and Approval of National Qualifications and Accreditations of Qualification Awarding Bodies in Kosovo, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, NQA Annual Report, Pristine;

NQA, 2012, NQA Annual Report, Pristine;

NQA, 2013, NQA Annual Report, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, Guide for Development of modular qualifications, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, Guide for Assessment and certification in the NQF, practical guide “Tool Package”, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, Guide for Guidance for modifications and necessary adaptations for the development of access to education and training programs and qualifications for students with disabilities or other special needs, Pristine;

NQA, 2011, Guide for Quality assurance in VET institutions, practical guide for implementation;

NQA, 2011, Guidance on the Modifications and Accommodations Necessary for Developing Access to Vocational Education and Training Programmes and Qualifications For Learners with Disabilities or other Special Needs, Pristine.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Engagement of stakeholders in developing the referencing report

For General Education

| No. | Name and surname | Position | Institution | Area: General Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Elizabeta Haziri | Project Manager | European Centre for Minority Issues | RAE Education |
| 2. | Radica Berishaj | Officer | MEST | Lifelong Learning |
| 3. | Agron Hajdari | Teacher | APPK | Private Education Institution |
| 4. | Florie Rrecaj | Teacher | Primary School "Faik Konica" | Primary Education |
| 5. | Aferdita Jaha | | MEST | |
| 6. | Lulavere Behluli | Officer | MEST | Education of Special Needs Students |
| 7. | Driton Bajraktari | Project Manager | "Down Syndrome Kosovo" | Education of Special Needs Students |
| 8. | Hajdar Shyti | School Director | | |
| 9. | Rexhep Kastrati | Officer | MEST | Curriculum Framework |
| 10. | Miranda Kasneci | Officer | MEST | General Education |

**For VET and adult training**

**a) Participants in the workshop**

| No. | Name and surname | Position | Institution | Area: VET and adult training |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ragip Gjoshi | Advisor to the Minister | MEST | Education |
| 2 | Radica Berisha | Adult education and training officer | MEST | VET and adult training |
| 3 | Sophie Beaumont | Representative and in charge of education component in EU Office | EU Office in Kosovo | Education |
| 4 | Isuf Calaj | | VET school Ferizaj | VET and adult training |
| 5 | Fatmire Salihu | | MLSW Training Centre: Ferizaj | VET and adult training |
| 6 | Burhan Selmani | | MLSW Training Centre: Gjilan | VET and adult training |
| 7 | Sinan Gashi | | MLSW Training Centre: Prizren | VET and adult training |
| 8 | Zenjullah Rrustemi | | MLSW Training Centre: Prishtina | VET and adult training |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Hajrije Shaipi | Director | VET School: Prishtina | VET and adult training |
| 10 | Majlinda Bajraktari | | EYE Project financed by Swiss Cooperation Agency | VET and adult training |
| 11 | Xhelal Susuri | Director | VET School: Gjakova | VET and adult training |
| 12 | Tom Frrokaj | | VET School: Gjakova | VET and adult training |
| 13 | Binak Morina | | GIZ VET project | VET and adult training |
| 14 | Avni Gashi | Expert for Quality Assurance | NQA | VET and adult training |
| 15 | Milot Hasangjekaj | Expert for Qualifications | NQA | VET and adult training |
| 16 | Ahmet Mustafa | | MLSW Training Centre: Mitrovica | VET and adult training |
| 17 | Rexhe Gashi | | MLSW Training Centre: Peja | VET and adult training |
| 18 | Anton Gojani | | Private VET School: Prishtina | VET and adult training |
| 19 | Rame Likaj | | Consultant in KOSVET projects | VET and adult training |
| 20 | Ejup Zariqi | | MDE Ferizaj | VET and adult training |
| 21 | Bleta Kadriu | | NQA | VET and adult training |
| 22 | Donjeta Nimani | | NQA | VET and adult training |
| 23 | Kaltrina Mulliqi | | NQA | VET and adult training |
| 24 | Ardiana Gashi | National Consultant | | VET and adult training |
| 25 | Blerim Haliti | | LuxDevelopment | VET and adult training |
| 26 | Besim Mustafa | Head of VET Department | Kosovo Chamber of Commerce | VET and adult training |

**b) List of interviews**

| No. | Name | Position | Institution |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Avni Gashi | Expert for QA | National Qualification Authority |
| 2 | Aferdita Jaha | Officer for Non-formal Education | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| 3 | Avni Rexha | Head of Office for Equivalence and Recognition of VET education | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| 4 | Ryve Prekorogja | Head of VET Division | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| 5 | Jehona Namani | Head of Vocational Training Division | Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Gani Ismajli | Senior Officer for Quality Assurance and Certification | Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare |
| 7 | Liridona Ajeti | Senior Officer for Projects and Programmes | Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare |
| 8 | Blerim Haliti | | LuxDevelopment |

**For higher education**

**a) Participants in the workshop**

| No. | Name and surname | Position | Institution | Area: Higher education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bujar Gallopeni | Head of the Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and Technology | MEST | Higher education |
| 2 | Bardha Qirezi | Adult education and training officer | Riinvest College | Higher education |
| 3 | Blerina Gjinolli | | University of Prishtina | Higher education |
| 4 | Dugagjin Sokoli | | Universi | Higher education |
| 5 | Valbona Uka | | Tempulli | Higher education |
| 6 | Bekim Marmullaku | | Fama | Higher education |
| 7 | Shpresa Mehmeti | | MEST | Higher education |
| 8 | Kimete Canaj | | TEMPUS | Higher education |
| 9 | Luljeta Aliu | | WUS Kosovo | Higher education |
| 10 | Etleva Blakaj | | WUS Austria | Higher education |
| 11 | Xhavit Rexhaj | Director | WUS Austria and AAB | Higher education |
| 12 | Kumrije Gagica | | MEST | Higher education |
| 13 | Vlera Limani | | Pjeter Budi | Higher education |
| 14 | Donika Berisha | | British Council | |
| 15 | Milot Hasangjekaj | | NQA | |
| 16 | Teuta Danuza | | NQA | |
| 17 | Donjeta Nimani | | NQA | |
| 18 | Bleta Kadriu | | NQA | |
| 19 | Kaltrina Mulliqi | | NQA | |
| 20 | Merita Fehmiu | | WUS Austria | |
| 21 | Artane Rizvanolli | | Riinvest | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Furtuna Memhedi | | KAA | |

**b) List of interviews**

| No. | Name | Position | Institution |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ferdije Zhushi | Head | National Quality Council |
| 2 | Bujar Gallopeni | Head | Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education and Technology (<br>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) |

## Appendix 2: Sample higher education diploma supplement

# UNIVERSITY OF PRISTINA

# DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT

This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and Unesco/CEPES. The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data to improve the international 'transparency' and fair academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which this supplement is appended. It should be free from any value judgments, equivalence statements or suggestions about recognition. Information in all eight sections should be provided. Where information is not provided, an explanation should give the reason why.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. **INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE HOLDER OF THE QUALIFICATION** | |
| 1.1 Family name(s): | |
| 1.2 Given name(s): | |
| 1.3 Date of birth *(day/month/year)*: | |
| 1.4 Student identification number or code *(if available* | |
| **2. INFORMATION IDENTIFYING THE QUALIFICATION** | |
| 2.1 Name of qualification and *(if applicable)* title conferred *(in original language* | |
| 2.2. Main field(s) of study for the qualification | |
| 2.3 Name and status of awarding institution *(in original language)* | |
| 2.4 Name and status of institution *(if different from 2.3)* administering studies *(in original language)*: | |
| 2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination | |
| 3. **INFORMATION ON THE LEVEL OF THE QUALIFICATION** | |
| 3.1 Level of qualification | |
| 3.2 Official length of programme | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.3 Access requirements(s) | |
| **4. INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS AND RESULTS GAINED** | |
| 4.1 Mode of study | |
| 4.2 Programme requirements | |
| 4.3 Programme details: (e.g. modules or units studied), and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained:<br>*(if this information is available on an official transcript this should be used here)*<br><br>**See attached transcript of records** | |

4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance

| Grade | Description | Percentage of knowledge | Grade e equivalent in ECTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Excellent | 90-100 | A |
| 9 | Very good | 80-89 | B |
| 8 | Good | 70-79 | C |
| 7 | Sufficient | 60-69 | D |
| 6 | Pass | 50-59 | E |
| 5 | Fail | 0-49 | FX/F |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.5. Overall classification of the qualification *(in original language)*: | The system of evaluation is based on the national evaluation system and ECTS system |
| **5. INFORMATION ON THE FUNCTION OF THE QUALIFICATION** | |
| 5.1. Access to further study | The qualification allows continuation of further master studies |
| 5.2 Professional status *(if applicable)*: | |
| **6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** | |
| 6.1 Additional information | |
| 6.2 Further information sources: | |
| **7. CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT** | |
| 7.1 Date: | |
| 7.2 Signature | |
| 7.3 Capacity: | |
| b.4 Official stamp or seal: | |

**8. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO**

**8.1 According to the Law (No.04/L-037) on Higher Education, higher education in the Republic of Kosovo is considered any post – upper secondary education (Law No.04/L-032 on pre – university education), at level 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning for which ECTS credits may be granted. In line with the Bologna Process, higher education in the Republic of Kosovo is organised in three cycles: Bachelor, Master and PhD.**

**8.2 Higher education qualifications in the Republic of Kosovo may be either academic or vocational and can be issued by institutions (holders) of higher education such as "Universities", "University Colleges", "Colleges", "Institutes", "Schools", or "Academies". Based on the Law on Higher Education and the Law on the National Qualification the accreditation of programmes and Institutions offering qualification in higher education is done by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency-KAA.**

**8.3 Both public and private institutions of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo use the ECTS system (European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System). In Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo the annual full-time students workload is estimated at 1500 hours, making one ECTS credit equal to 25 hours of planed classes.**

**For more information visit:**

**www.masht-gov.net; www.akreditimi-ks.org; www.akk-ks.net**

## Appendix 3: Conditions for accreditation in higher education

### 1. LEGAL FORM AND LOCATION

The applicant Institution must be legal person located in Kosovo.

### 2. STUDY OFFERS

A schedule of study programmes should be delivered alongside the application:

- A University should offer accredited courses or programmes for a minimum of at least four years in at least five different subject areas who have issued at least one graduate with an accredited doctorate in each of these programmes.
- A University College should offer accredited courses or programmes in at least three different subject areas with at least an accredited study programme in doctorate level in each of these subject areas.
- A College should offer accredited courses or programmes in at least one subject area for at least one cycle.
- these study programmes should end with an academic degree, which meets international standards and is awarded for full-time studies,
- these study programmes should be offered in one or several scientific, academic or professional disciplines
- Or there should be studies that will be expanded after other academic studies have been completed (specializations).

### 3. COMPARABILITY OF STUDIES

If the applicant Higher Education Institution wishes to award the same academic degrees as other institutions in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), then istudies and overall educational outcomes at the applicant institution should be comparable with those of similar institutions in the EHEA.

### 4. TEACHING STAFF

The qualifications of teaching staff in Higher Education Institutions must meet international scientific, artistic and professional standards. Legally binding contracts with these staff must be submitted with the application. These contracts should demonstrate the staff's suitability for the institution's planned studies.

### 5. FACILITIES

The applicant institution should have at its disposal sufficient staff, space and equipment (e.g. computers, library, etc.) for effective studies. These should be provided in accord with the type of educational institution.

Evidence about teaching and support staff, space and equipment should accompany the application.

### 6. PRINCIPLES

A Higher Education Institution should orientate its own activities in accordance with the following

principles:

- Freedom of science and teaching;
- Freedom of artistic activities, of artistic expression and its teaching;
- Linkages between research and teaching;
- Diversity of artistic theories, methods and teaching ideas;

## 7. INSTITUTION DENOMINATIONS

The LHE specifies when an education institution has the right to call itself a "University". The word "University", as separate words or in combination with other descriptions, may not be adopted or used in any form in the denomination of any provider without the permission of the Ministry after the approval in principle by the KAA.

Academic degrees of accredited private institutions of higher education have the same legal value as those of public institutions.

## 8. BASIC CRITERIA

### 8.1 Academic Freedom

Higher Education Institutions should be autonomous and should guarantee the academic freedom. Their statutes and organizational structures should provide freedom in research (both in respect of submitting questions, theories and methods and also in disseminating research outcomes and its assessment) and freedom of teaching (in respect of diversity of content, methods of course delivery and freedom to express scientific and artistic opinions).

### 8.2 Scope and Diversity

The institution should have a broad and diverse range of studies within one or more disciplines, which accord with the European concept for higher education. Disciplines can include traditional fields e.g. medicine, music, law or theology, and also other new combined courses with comparable breadth.

### 8.3 Research at the Institution

The research should be undertaken at the institution. This determines the presence of a critical mass to the institutionalised production of knowledge and its contribution to teaching.

### 8.4 Teaching Staff

The institution should have at its disposal sufficient permanent academic, scientific and artistic staff, on full-time employment contracts which are valid for at least three years. This permanent teaching staff should be qualified or distinguished in arts and must cover at least 50% of the entire teaching load of a course of study and be qualified (via Ph.D. or artistic achievements). To provide the connection between research and teaching this permanent teaching staff should have at least three persons for each study programme, and at least one of them should have the status of professor. This person should hold a higher scientific or artistic qualification.

### 8.5 Procedures for selecting the teaching staff

The institution's procedure for selecting all its academic staff must be transparent, competitive and determined by quality.

### 8.6 Quality Assurance

Institutions must have in place internal policies and procedures for quality assurance of their study programmes and awards.

### 8.7 Study plans

Study plans (detailed curricula) and examination regulations should meet all material, professional and formal requirements, and accord with international standards. Admission to studies must correspond with Kosovo's rules and overall conditions for admission to higher education.

### 8.8 Facilities and equipment

Facilities and equipment must provide adequate tools for studies in accordance with international standards.

### 8.9 Financing

Support for the mid-term financing of the institution should be demonstrated through a detailed Business-Plan.

### 8.10 Development plan

The institution must demonstrate how it will fulfil all of the above requirements in a development plan covering a period of three years.

## Appendix 4: List of accredited institutions, approved qualifications and validated/verified occupational standards

**List of accredited institutions and approved qualifications**

Educational Social Center "Don Bosko"

- Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (4)
- Welding; NQF level: (3)
- Plumbing Installation; NQF level: (3)
- Electrical installations; NQF level: (3)
- Heating Installer; NQF level (3)
- Information Technology, NQF level (4-for school)
- Information Technology, NQF level (2- for QT)

Regional Vocational Training Center-Gjakovë

- Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (3)
- Welding; NQF level: (3)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Mitrovica

- Welding; NQF level: (3)
- Information Technology, NQF level (2)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Peja

- Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (3)
- Welding; NQF level: (3)
- Plumbing Installation; NQF level: (3)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Pristine

- - Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (3)
- - Plumbing Installation; NQF level: (3)
- - Heating Installer; NQF level: (3)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (2)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Ferizaj

- - Welding; NQF level: (3)
- - Plumbing Installation; NQF level: (3)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (2)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Prizren

- - Welding; NQF level: (3)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (2)

Regional Vocational Training Centre - Gjilan

- - Welding; NQF level: (3)

Training Center “KEK”

- - Welding; NQF level: (4);
- - Turning; NQF level: (3);
- - Frezim; NQF level: (3);
- - Drilling; NQF level: (3);
- - Cutting; NQF level: (3)
- - Electric installations; NQF level: (4)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (2)

Center for Education and Professional Advice “Gjon Nikoll Kazazi” Gjakovë

- - Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (4)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (4)
- Center for Training and Development “PTK”, Pristina
- - Administrative Assistant; NQF level: (3)
- - Information Technology, NQF level (3)

**List of verified occupational standards**

Machinery: Auto-mechanic; Metal Worker

Food technology: Baker; Butcher; Dairy

Construction: Heating Installer; Electrical Installer; Plumber

Agriculture: Vendor (Salesman); Agribusiness technician; Supplier

Economy: Bank service employee; Financial employee; Marketing employee; Human Resources employee; Office administration and management employee; Export and import employee; Industrial employee

Trade: Retail seller; Wholesaler; Sales and customer service

Tourism: Event planning and management; Officer in tourism management; lanning travel and tourist information services

Health: Optical Technician; Ortho prosthetics technician; Dental Technician; Pharmacy technician; Audiometric; Orthopaedic assistant; Health and social care assistant; Nutrition and food safety assistant; Emergency; Extinguisher;

Social Sciences: Leadership and work with youth in the community

## Appendix 5: Example of one occupational standard

### PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

# AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN

### DOMAIN: ENGINEERING

**Occupation**: Automotive Technician

**Occupation description:**

An automotive technician repairs, maintains, checks, diagnoses light vehicles. Finds the defects, repairs them and provides other services of the mechanic, electric, electronic and hydraulic systems.

They are employed within vehicle companies, vehicle service workshops, transport and trades companies who provide services on repairing the vehicles, within technical control centers of the vehicles or be self employed.

| Nr. | Function (Task) | Function (task) description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Organises the workplace** | Organise the workplace, admission of the vehicles, handling the clients, maintaining the work place including tools and equipments, filing. |
| 2 | **Employs the safety and security rules including environment protection** | Identify the hazards at the workplace, solving the hazards in order to protect the health of the employees, employing the safety and security rules including the environment protection at the workplace. |
| 3 | **Diagnoses and repairs parts/ engine systems that run on fuel** | Diagnose, locate, isolate and repair the defects using computer systems, tools and other equipments; identifying the cause of the defect or malfunction of the parts/engines |
| 4 | **Diagnoses and repairs parts / circulation systems of the vehicle** | Diagnose, locate, isolate, repair and or replace the parts/systems using computer diagnostic systems, tools and other equipments. Identify the cause of the defect or malfunction of the parts / systems. |
| 5 | **Diagnoses and repairs parts / electrical systems** | Diagnose, repair, and replace parts / systems using hand tools and other needed equipments including computer systems. |
| 6 | **Diagnoses and repairs parts / electronic systems** | Diagnose, repair, and replace parts / electronic systems using hand tools and other needed equipments, including computer systems. |
| 7 | **Diagnoses and repairs parts / hydraulic systems** | Diagnose, repair, and replace parts / hydraulic systems using hand tools and other needed equipments, including computer systems. |
| 8 | **Provides tyre services** | Tyre services such as: replacing tires and balancing wheels using hand tools and other equipments needed. |
| 9 | **Diagnoses and repairs auxiliary equipments** | Check, diagnose and repair cooling/heating systems; wipers, comfort parts, etc., using hand tools and other equipments needed. |
| 10 | **Professional development** | This function is about identifying the possibilities for increasing the professional and intellectual level within the automotive technician occupation. |

**Function: Organises the workplace**

This function is about organizing the workplace, admission of the vehicles, talking and handling the clients; the concerns of the clients about the present condition of the vehicle, providing the documents (evidence) on previous work (services) on the vehicle, financial receipts for the performed work, and warranties for the services provided and organizing the database.

| Key activities (+ work outcomes/ results) | Performance criteria | Needed knowledge to perform the function | Skills | Key skills related to the main function |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preparing workplace | Maintaining the tools and work equipments<br>Maintaining the tools and diagnostic equipments<br>Maintaining the tools and equipments for safety and protection | Knowledge on maintenance of the tools and work equipments<br>Knowledge on maintenance of the equipments for check up and diagnosis<br>Knowledge on maintenance of the safety and protection equipments<br>Being clear when talking to the clients<br>Knows how to organise the workplace and filing data.<br>Knowledge on calculating the costs, profits, prices, handling and filling the documents. | Implements maintenance of the tools and work equipments<br>Implements maintenance of the tools and equipments for check up and diagnosis<br>Implements maintenance of the tools and equipments for safety and protection<br>Leads the conversation with the clients on their concerns about the defects of their vehicles<br>Organises the workplace and filing the data.<br>Calculates the work costs and time needed to perform the work<br>Provide evidences and warranties for the completed work and admits the complaints. | Open to team work Communicative<br>Flexible<br>Tolerant<br>Reasonable<br>Competent on the work performed<br>Speaks foreign languages |



Referencing report of Kosovo NQF for General Education, VET and Higher Education to EQF