PROCEEDINGS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION

Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 26 – 27 September 2017

European Union Programme for Central Asia

Central Asia Education Platform Phase II (CAEP 2)



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TABRIK SO'ZI (UZ)

“Марказий Осиё таълим платформаси” дастури - Ўзбекистон Республикасининг олий ва ўрта махсус таълими тизими ислоҳотларининг ҳамкори

Энг аввал, Европа Иттифоқи мамлакатлари билан ҳамкорликда бажарилаётган “Марказий Осиё таълим платформаси” дастури доирасида ташкил қилинган ушбу Халқаро анжуман иштирокчиларини Ўзбекистон Республикаси Олий ва ўрта махсус таълим вазирлиги номидан қутлаш биз учун қувончли ҳодиса.

Шубҳасиз, ушбу анжуман таълим тизими масалалари юзасидан фикр алмашиш, янги маълумотларга эга бўлиш, мунозаралар қилиш йўлида муҳим аҳамият касб этади ва бу борада таълим тизимини янада такомиллаштириш масалаларига ўзининг салмоқли ҳиссасини қўшади, деган умиддамиз.

Фурсатдан фойдаланиб, мамлакатимиз олий таълим тизими тўғрисида бироз тўхталиб ўтмоқчиман.

Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президенти Шавкат Миромонович Мирзиёев томонидан жорий йилнинг февраль ойида қабул қилинган “2017-2021 йилларга мўлжалланган Ўзбекистон Республикасининг ривожланиш Стратегияси” давлат ва жамиятнинг ижтимоий ва ҳуқуқий муносабатлари, бошқарув ҳамда иқтисодиётнинг барча сохаларини модернизация қилиш ва ривожлантиришнинг янги босқичи сифатида мамлакатимиз ҳаётида йирик сиёсий ҳодиса бўлди.

Ғурур билан таъкидламоқчиманки, мамлакатимизнинг Ривожланиш стратегияси доирасида жорий йилнинг апрель ойида Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 5 йилга мўлжалланган “Олий таълим тизимини янада ривожлантириш тўғрисида”ги қарори қабул қилинди.

Ушбу ҳужжат мамлакат олий таълим тизимининг янги концепциясини ва



истиқболли стратегиясини белгилаб берди. Янги концепциянинг моҳиятини бир сўз билан айтадиган бўлсак – буни “Таълим сифати концепцияси” деб атасак бўлади.

Хеч ким учун сир эмаски олий ва ўрта махсус, касб-ҳунар таълими тизимида ўтган давр мобайнида йирик ислоҳотлар амалга оширилгани билан бир қаторда талайгина муаммоли масалалр ҳам йиғилиб қолган эди. Ушбу муаммолар биринчи навбатда таълим сифатига, таълим муассасаларида тайёрланаётган кадрлар билими, кўникмалари ва малакасига салбий таъсир кўрсатар эди.

Шу сабабли ушбу қарорда мавжуд муаммо ва камчиликларни тизимли бартараф қилиш, босқичма босқич сифат кўрсаткичларини ошириб бориш ҳамда билим олишга, етук мутахассис бўлишга интилаётган ёшларимизга имкониятларни кенгайтириш - устувор вазифа қилиб белгиланди.

Бунга эришиш учун, биринчи навбатда мамлакат олий таълим муассасалрига қабул квоталарини босқичма-босқич ошириб бориш, жойларда қўшимча филиаллар ташкил қилиш орқали ОТМларнинг қамровини кенгайтириш режалаштирилди.

Шу йилнинг ўзида бакалавриат қабул квоталари олдинги ўқув йилига нисбатан

18% га оширилди, махсус сиртқи бўлимларнинг қамрови кенгайди.

Иккинчидан олий таълим тизимининг меъёрий-ҳуқуқий базасини қайта кўриб чиқиш, давлат таълим стандартлари, малака талаблари, ўқув режа ва фан дастурларини энг илғор ҳорижий тажрибалар асосида ҳамда бевосита кадрлар буюртмачилари ва иш берувчи ташкилот ва корхоналар эҳтиёжларидан келиб чиққан ҳолда янгидан ишлаб чиқиш ва тасдиқлаш белгиланди.

Янги 2017-2018 ўқув йили бошлангунига қадар бакалавриат таълим йўналишларининг 430 дан ортиқ ва магистратура мутахассисликларининг 530 дан ортиқ малака талаблари ва ўқув режалари ҳамда мувофиқ равишда 3 мингдан ортиқ фан дастурлари янги талаблар асосида ишлаб чиқилди ва тасдиқланди.

Шу билан бирга мамлакат ОТМлар томонидан ҳалқаро хамкорлигини тубдан ривожлантириш ва бунинг асосида илғор жахон услубиёти, педагогик технологияларини ўрганиш ва жорий этиш, илғор ҳорижий илмий ва ўқув адабиётларини ўрганган ҳолда янги авлод ўқув адабиётларни яратиш масалалри тизимли йўлга қўйилди.

“Истеъдод” жамғармаси орқали мамлакатнинг иқтидорли ёшларини хорижий мамлакатларнинг етакчи ОТМларида магистратура ва докторантурада (PhD) ўқитишнинг марказлашган тизимини шакллантиришга киришилди.

Таълим сифатида асосий рол ўйнайдиган педагогларни моддий рағбатлантириш, уларнинг илмий ва услубий ишлар билан кўпроқ шуғулланишига имкон берувчи ўқув юкламаларини оптималлаштириш, дунёнинг етакчи университет ва илмий-тадқиқот марказларида уларнинг малакасини ошириш масаласи ҳозирги шароитда ҳал қилувчи масала бўлиб қолмоқда.

Бу борада республика олий таълим муассасаларидан янги 2017-2018 ўқув йилида хорижий ҳамкор таълим ва илмий муассасаларга малака ошириш, стажировка ўташ, докторантура (PhD) ҳамда магистратура дастурлари бўйича ўқишга юборилаётган 631 нафар номзодлар, айниқса ёш педагоглар тайёрланди.

Шунингдек, таълим сифати устувор вазифага айланиши сабабли Ўзбекистон Республикаси Вазирлар Махкамаси ҳузурида таълим сифатини назорат қилиш бўйича Давлат инспекцияси ташкил қилинди.

Албатта, мамлакатимиз олий касбий таълим ислоҳотларининг бошқа йўналиш ва тарафлари бўйича янада кенгроқ гапириш мумкин. Лекин сўзимнинг якунида шуни таъкидламоқчиманки, мазкур чора–тадбирларнинг асосий мақсади – таълим сифатини ошириш орқали ёшларимизга меҳнат бозори талабларига мувофиқ малака бериш, уларни етук мутахассис, ўз касбини устаси бўлиб етишишига имкониятларни кенгайтириш ва фаровон хаёт кечиришларига замин яратишдир.

Анжуманда қатнашаётган Европалик ҳамкорларимизга ҳамда анжуман ташкилотчиларига чин юракдан миннатдорчилик билдираман!

Ўзбекистонга ҳуш келибсиз!

Анжуман ишига муваффақият тилайман!

профессор У.Ш.Бегимкулов

Ўзбекистон Республикаси Олий ва ўрта махсус таълим вазирининг ўринбосари, педагогика фанлари доктори

GREETING NOTE (EN)

The Programme "Central Asian Education Platform" is a Partner of the Reforms of the System of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

First of all, allow me, on behalf of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to greet the participants of such a representative international forum organised within the framework of the Central Asian Education Platform implemented jointly with the countries of the European Union and Central Asia.

No doubt, I want to express hope that this forum will serve as an important platform for exchanging views on the education system, obtaining new information, discussing and making a significant contribution to further improving the education system in our countries.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to dwell a little on the system of higher education in our country.

"The development strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021", adopted by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyov in February this year, has become a major political event in the life of our country as a new stage in its socio-economic development, improving the legislative foundations of the state and society, development of public administration, civil and legal relations, all sectors of the economy and social sphere.

I would like to note with great enthusiasm that within the framework of the Country Development Strategy, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution "On the Further Development of the Higher Education System," which approved a five-year programme for the further modernisation of higher professional education and formulated an updated concept of the quality of education and a long-term strategy for its development.

It's no secret that over the past years, in the system of higher and secondary specialised, vocational education, along with large-scale reforms and achievements, many unresolved problem issues have also accumulated. These problems, in the first place, have had a negative impact on the quality of education, on knowledge, skills and habits, studying in higher and secondary special, professional educational institutions.

Therefore, the task of systemically eliminating existing problems and shortcomings, the phased and targeted improvement of the quality and efficiency of the educational process and the expansion of opportunities for young people seeking to become successful specialists, was placed at the forefront of the new concept of the development of higher and secondary specialised and vocational education.

For these purposes, a gradual increase in the number of higher educational institutions, as well as in their admission quotas, and the involvement of foreign universities to create units in Uzbekistan are planned. Already this academic year the admission quotas for bachelor's programmes have increased by 18% compared to the previous year, and the network of special extramural departments in higher education institutions has been expanded.

It should be noted that it is planned to revise the normative base of the higher education system, to revise and approve state educational standards, qualification requirements and curricula, taking into account international best practices, as well as the needs of employers and personnel.

In this regard, before the start of the new 2017-2018 academic year, more than 430 bachelor's curricula and more than 530 postgraduate curricula, well as more than 3000 curriculum curricula were developed and approved in accordance with new

requirements. Also, new approaches are being formed in the development of international cooperation with universities, the study of advanced world experience, pedagogical technologies, and the involvement in the educational process of advanced foreign scientific and educational literature. With the help of the Istedod Foundation, a centralised system of training the talented youth of this country in postgraduate studies in leading foreign universities is starting to be formed.

One of the most important tasks of improving the quality of education is the issue of material incentives for teachers, who play a key role in ensuring the quality of the educational process, by optimising training loads that would allow them to engage more in scientific and methodological work and improve their qualifications in leading universities and research centres around the world.

In this regard, 631 candidates (mainly young teachers) have already been prepared this year for internships, further training and doctoral and master's studies in partner educational institutions of foreign countries in the 2017-2018 academic year.

At the same time, considering that the quality of education has become a priority, the State Inspectorate for Quality Control of Education under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been established.

Of course, we could talk for a long time about other aspects of reforms in the system of higher professional education in our country, but in conclusion I would like to emphasise that the main goal of these measures is to give young people the opportunity to acquire professional knowledge and skills through improving the quality of education in accordance with the requirements of the labour market, to become successful and in- demand specialists, and provide themselves with a worthy and bright future.

Allow me, on behalf of the Ministry, to sincerely thank our European colleagues participating in the conference, as well as its organisers, for the work done!

Welcome to Uzbekistan!

I wish you success in the work of the convention!

Professor U. Sh. Begimkulov

Deputy Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences



СЛОВО ПРИВЕТСТВИЯ (RU)

Программа “Центрально-Азиатская платформа образования” – партнер реформ системы высшего и среднего специального образования Республики Узбекистан

Прежде всего, позвольте мне от имени Министерства высшего и среднего специального образования Республики Узбекистан поприветствовать участников столь представительного международного форума, организованного в рамках программы “Центрально-Азиатская платформа образования”, реализуемой совместно со странами Европейского Союза и Центральной Азии.

Без сомнения, хочется выразить надежду, что данный форум послужит важной площадкой для обмена мнениями по системе образования, получения новой информации, обсуждения и внесения значительного вклада в дальнейшее совершенствование системы образования в наших странах.

Пользуясь случаем, я хотел бы немного остановиться на системе высшего образования нашей страны.

«Стратегия развития Республики Узбекистан на 2017-2021 годы», принятая Президентом Республики Узбекистан Шавкатом Мирзиёвым в феврале этого года, стала крупным политическим событием в жизни нашей страны как новый этап в ее социально-экономическом развитии, совершенствовании законодательных основ государства и общества, модернизации и развития государственного управления, гражданских и правовых отношений, всех секторов экономики и социальной сферы.

С большим воодушевлением хочу отметить, что в рамках Стратегии развития страны также принято постановление Президента Республики Узбекистан «О дальнейшем развитии системы высшего образования», которым утверждена пятилетняя программа дальнейшей модернизации высшего профессионального образования, сформулирована обновленная концепция и перспективная стратегия ее развития, которая по сути стала концепцией качества образования.

Не секрет, что за прошедшие годы в системе высшего и среднего специального, профессионального образования наряду с крупномасштабными реформами и достижениями также накопилось много нерешенных проблемных вопросов. Эти проблемы, в первую очередь, негативно сказывались на качестве образования, на знаниях, умениях и навыках, обучающихся в высших и средних специальных, профессиональных образовательных учреждениях.

Поэтому задача системного устранения существующих проблем и недостатков, поэтапного и целевого повышения качества и эффективности образовательного процесса, расширения возможностей для молодежи, стремящейся стать успешными специалистами было поставлено во главу приоритетных задач новой концепции развития высшего и среднего специального, профессионального образования.

В этих целях запланировано поэтапное увеличение количества высших образовательных учреждений, а также квот приема в них, привлечение зарубежных вузов для создания подразделений в Узбекистане. К слову сказать, уже в этом учебном году квоты приема в бакалавриат были увеличены на 18% по сравнению с предыдущим годом, а также расширилась сеть специальных заочных отделений в вузах.

Необходимо отметить, что планируется пересмотреть нормативную базу системы высшего образования, пересмотреть и утвердить государственные образовательные стандарты, квалификационные требования, учебные программы и учебные планы с учетом передового международного опыта, а также потребностей работодателей и заказчиков кадров.

В связи с этим до начала нового 2017-2018 учебного года было разработано и утверждено более 430 учебных планов бакалавриата и более 530 учебных планов специальностей магистратуры, а также более 3000 учебных программ дисциплин в соответствии с новыми требованиями. Также формируются новые принципы системного подхода по развитию международного сотрудничества вузов, изучения передового мирового опыта, педагогических технологий, привлечения в учебный процесс передовой зарубежной научной и учебной литературы. С помощью Фонда «Истеъдод» начала формироваться централизованная система подготовки талантливой молодежи страны в магистратуре и докторантуре ведущих зарубежных университетов.

Одной из важнейших задач повышения качества образования являются вопросы материального стимулирования педагогов, играющих ключевую роль в обеспечении качества образовательного процесса, оптимизации учебных нагрузок, которые позволяли бы им больше заниматься научной и методической работой, повышать квалификацию в ведущих университетах и исследовательских центрах мира.

В этой связи уже в текущем году подготовлен 631 кандидат, особенно из числа молодых преподавателей, для прохождения стажировки, повышения квалификации, обучения в докторантуре и магистратуре в партнерских образовательных учреждениях зарубежных стран в 2017-2018 учебном году. Вместе с тем, учитывая, что качество образования стало приоритетной задачей учреждена Государственная инспекция по контролю качества образования при Кабинете Министров Республики Узбекистан.

Безусловно, можно было бы еще долго говорить о других аспектах реформ в системе высшего профессионального образования нашей страны, но в заключении я хотел бы подчеркнуть, что главная цель этих мер состоит в том, чтобы через улучшение качества образования дать молодежи возможность овладеть профессиональными знаниями и квалификацией в соответствии с требованиями рынка труда, стать успешными, востребованными специалистами, обеспечивающими себе достойное и светлое будущее.

Позвольте от имени министерства искренне поблагодарить наших европейских коллег, участвующих в конференции, а также ее организаторов за проделанную работу!

Добро пожаловать в Узбекистан!

Желаю успехов в работе конвенции!



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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Dear colleagues,

The European Union, its Member States, Uzbekistan and the other Central Asia countries face a common challenge: how can we ensure that our companies get access to a well-qualified and skilled workforce able to cope with the challenges of the 21st century and at the same time offer, in particular the younger generation, an outlook of attractive jobs and a sufficient and reliable income?

This question lies at the centre of all the efforts to create a common framework of qualifications at national level, where the Lisbon Strategy, the Copenhagen process, the Bologna framework and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) have supported the further development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF), being part of a wider National Qualification System (NQS). At the same time, the requirements for the provision of high-quality education have increased. Companies require, to a larger extent than in the past, access to a more flexible system of qualifications, addressing their specific needs for specific staff skills. Also, the complexity of this overarching National System of Qualifications clearly demands a close process in which the interests of all involved stakeholders are aligned: learners, workers and trade unions, companies and state institutions.

Therefore, the Central Asia Education Platform (CAEP) project, funded by the European Union, has very much welcomed the opportunity to address education practitioners and experts in Uzbekistan and other Central Asia countries with this collection of practice-oriented presentations on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) and Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training. These presentations were held during a two-day conference in Tashkent in September 2018, jointly organized with the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The main objective of CAEP, which started in 2012 and is now in its second project phase until March 2019, is to enhance co-operation between the European Union and Central Asia, as well as regional co-operation between the countries of Central Asia, in order to strengthen education reforms in the region. During the First Meeting of Ministers for Education of the EU and the Central Asia countries in Riga in June 2015, Minister noted that *"adapting educational systems to meet the demands of labour market and needs of individuals in the 21st century is an essential task for the EU and Central Asian countries"*. They also underlined the *"importance of modernising education as an imperative for sustainable socio-economic development and stability, contributing to mutual understanding, respect and intercultural dialogue and the preparation of future generations"*.

In recent years, remarkable progress has been made in the Central Asia countries, notably in Uzbekistan, in setting up frameworks for qualifications and enhancing the quality of education provided at all levels. This was stressed during the Second Meeting of Ministers for Education in Astana in June 2017, where ministers and delegates "*recognised that Central Asia countries put education as a corner-stone of their sustainable development strategies"* and *"acknowledged the progress made by Central Asia countries in modernising their education systems and carrying out further structural reforms to improve their quality of education and governance at different levels"*.

In recent months, Uzbekistan has continued to develop further state educational standards and qualification requirements and has begun a new stage of targeted reforms in the system of higher and secondary special, vocational education. The Deputy Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Professor

Begimkulov, highlighted the main stages of this impressive development and the reforms undertaken in Uzbekistan in his welcoming contribution.

In this context, the CAEP project has organized a series of Regional Conferences, National Meetings and Peer Learning events on NQF and QAA, to learn from “good practice” implemented both in the EU and Central Asia countries. It is evident from the presentations, which we have collected in this small publication, that sharing the experiences from EU Member States like Latvia, Poland and Romania has given a first-hand view of how time-consuming and problematic it has been to set-up a coherent system of legislation, regulation, institutional settings and capacity building at system and institutional level both in HE and VET. It is the privilege and task of CAEP to foster this mutual exchange at national and regional level among the Central Asia Countries to make a small, but relevant contribution to strengthen both the scope and quality of our education systems.

Christian Wagner

CAEP Team Leader

SECTION 1: SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION (TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN, SEPTEMBER 2017)

Results of the Regional Conference "National Qualifications Frameworks, Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training", 26-27 September, 2017, Tashkent

The conference was organised in the framework of the European Commission project "Central Asia Education Platform" (CAEP) in accordance with the Joint Communiqué and Roadmap of Activities for the CAEP Project adopted at the Meeting of Ministers for Education of the Member States of the Central Asian and of the European Union countries on 26 June 2015 in Riga.

1. The conference was held at the Hotel Wyndham in Tashkent (Amir Temur Street C 4, No 7/8) from 9:00 to 17:00 for two days, in accordance with the agenda prepared by the organisers (attached).

On the Republic of Uzbekistan´s part the conference was attended by the Deputy Minister of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan U. Begimkulov, executive officials of the Ministry (A. Khodjaev, M. Aripdzhanov), representatives of the State Testing Center (B. Nazarov, A. Sulaimanov), Center of Secondary-Specialised and Professional Education, Center for Development of Higher and Secondary Specialised, Professional Education; Head Scientific and Methodological Centre and higher educational institutions (list attached).

On the European part it was attended by Chargé d'Affaires and Head of Political, Press and Information Section of the European Union Delegation to Uzbekistan Mr. Radoslaw Darski, Team Leader of CAEP Christian Wagner, CAEP Experts Claudio Dondi and Anna Opitz, as well as education experts from Poland, Romania and Latvia (list attached).

2. In accordance with the agenda, the first day of the conference presented the current situation in the development of the **National Qualification Frameworks** (NQF) in Uzbekistan. The participants of the conference were told in detail (A. Khodjaev, Y. Imamov) how within the framework of the NURSLING project under the ERASMUS+ programme pilot versions of National Qualification Frameworks are being developed; what research is being carried out, how the descriptors are being generated, their comparison with European ones and an analysis of individual elements of the qualification systems. The initial pilot model of the NQF was also presented.

The following discussion was attended by a majority of the participants. The reports on the lessons learned from NQF implementation in Latvia (Baiba Ramiņa), Poland (Maciej Markowski) and Romania (Olivia-Maria Jidveian) were of particular interest to Uzbek specialists. It is noted that the materials provided by the European colleagues on the form and content of descriptors, taking into account the national characteristics of the education systems of these countries, the ranking of educational levels, the forms and content of the NQF, etc. will be used in the development of the NQF of Uzbekistan. The discussion of topical issues of the development and implementation of NQF continued in two separate seminars, where, based on concrete examples and taking into account SWOT analysis, debates on these topics were held.

Following the first day of the conference, devoted mainly to the creation, implementation and development of NQF,

the positive outcomes of the discussions and comprehensiveness and relevance of the provided material were noted, especially by the Uzbek specialists working on the development of the NQF.

3. On the second day of the conference the issues of **quality assurance and accreditation** were discussed.

The Key Note Speeches on "Linking Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance Setting and assuring standards in education" (Baiba Ramiņa) and "Achievements and Challenges in Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and VET in Uzbekistan" (M. Aripdzhanov, B. Nazarov) aroused great interest among Uzbek and European colleagues.

The European experts paid special attention to the information noted by the Uzbek speakers that, in accordance with the objectives of the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures for further development of Higher Education system" from April 20, 2017 №PP-2909, the issue of quality of education is considered a top priority of the modern education system of the Republic. In order to radically improve the quality control system of education, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a Resolution "On the organization of activities of the State inspectorate for supervision of quality of education under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" on July 18, 2017 №515.,

The following discussion was attended by a majority of the participants. The reports of the European colleagues on the legislation and practice of quality assurance and accreditation in Latvia (Andra Šenberga), Poland (Maciej Markowski) and Romania (Olivia-Maria Jidveian) were of particular interest to Uzbek specialists. It is noted that the materials provided by European colleagues on these issues and topics will be taken into account in practical activities to ensure the quality of education in Uzbekistan.

Further round table discussions on the issue of the necessary legal framework for quality assurance were moderated by Uzbek specialists (A. Khodjaev, B. Nazarov). A representative of the new state body for the inspection and supervision of the quality of education (B. Nazarov) compiled important proposals and recommendations from European and Uzbek colleagues on the main areas of activity, tasks, practical actions and efficiency of the newly created departments in the country's universities to monitor the quality of education. It was noted that, as a result of the present CAEP conference, this important and complex issue has largely found its practical solution.

During the conference, moderated by Claudio Dondi and Christian Wagner, many issues of the agenda, prospects for the development of the NQF, quality and accreditation were discussed and the results were summed up, final recommendations were given and plans for the near future were announced within the framework of the CAEP project.

The work of the conference was covered in the news on "Uzbekistan", "Uzbekistan 24" and "Yoshlar" channels of the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan, as well as on several websites and blogs.

A. A. Khodjaev

CAEP coordinator from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

SECTION 2: NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS IN EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES AND IN UZBEKISTAN

Peer Learning Group on National Qualifications Frameworks (Synthesis Report)

This report, that has been prepared in the framework of the Central Asia Education Platform - Phase II (CAEP 2), presents the objectives, the activities and the main results of the Peer Learning Group (PLG) on National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) activated in the period February-October 2017. The three scheduled Peer Learning Meetings (**Istanbul 20th and 21st February, Bishkek 24th and 25th April, Riga 18th and 19th September**) have already been conducted at the moment of writing this report, while several activities are going on at the national and transnational level as a result of the PLG activities.

1. Peer Learning in the context of CAEP 2

According to the Riga Ministerial Conference in June 2015, the role of Peer Learning, not necessarily confined to policy makers, appeared as central in the development of CAEP 2 (Riga Joint Communiqué, point 8: "basing cooperation in HE and VET on mutual or peer learning to the extent possible"), almost the core paradigm of action for the present phase. After the recognition of the respective developments, commonalities and differences, and the identification of respective priorities, the focus was put on **learning how to work together on common challenges**, at the regional and bi-regional level, and how to strengthen mutual trust through "working familiarity". Working together on common issues was expected, among other benefits, to gradually define - through increased mutual knowledge and policy dialogue - the desired degree of policy cooperation in education and the contribution at regional level to work on technical solutions. The NQF Peer Learning Activity was expected to produce:

- Learning and documentation exchange on current developments among policy makers and experts of the Central Asia and EU countries;
- Transfer of good practices and know-how on concrete implementation steps of NQFs;
- Policy advice for National Authorities, based on international state-of-the-art analysis;
- Development of a working method, including monitoring process and reporting procedures that will establish a cross-country professional community among the participating country teams.

All these expectations have been at least partially achieved, although the level of observable impact at the moment of writing varies considerably among the target Countries.

2. Structure and contents of the NQF Peer Learning Activity

The activity was organised in a sequence of 3 face-to-face seminars of two days each. The detailed working approach was to be decided during the kick-off meeting. "Project work" activities were envisaged to be conducted at national level by the participants organised in country Teams, each made up of three experts (one from HE, one from VET and one from the Body responsible for methodological/organisational aspects of the national work on Qualifications). EU

experts from CAEP Team, EU Member States completed the make-up of PL Group, thus reaching an average target of 20-22 participants per meeting.

In each of the three meetings, the overall available time of two working days was distributed as follows:

- The beginning and the end (about 20% of the total) was devoted to defining and monitoring the progress of the PL work programme, its relation to and possible impact on on-going national policy developments, the working mechanisms, the operational steps and the quality assurance procedures to guarantee coherence in the expected results;
- The **central part of the seminars analysed current and innovative practices in each participant country (and in the EU) according to the four themes identified as priorities for NQF** in the previous phases of activity of CAEP and during the National NQF meetings (adjustments and final confirmation took place during kick-off meeting and online coordination meetings):

1. Integration of NQFs into the existing systems of qualifications:	1.1 Common understanding of concepts and terminology 1.2 The "building blocks" of a NQF and possible sequences of steps 1.3 How to set up Sectoral Qualifications Bodies 1.4 Building coherence between General Education, HE and VET
2. Recognition and certification of Learning Outcomes from any form of learning (including work-based learning, dual learning, part-time, e-learning, etc.):	2.1 Formulating Study Programmes in terms of Learning Outcomes; 2.2 Credit systems in HE and VET 2.3 How to recognize learning outcomes from informal learning 2.3 National Register of Qualifications: how it works
3. Involving the world of work in defining, maintaining and assessing qualifications:	3.1 How to involve and motivate SMEs 3.2 Capacity Building for Enterprise staff and Education Staff to develop collaboration on Qualifications and Learning Outcomes 3.3 How to maintain and monitor the collaboration process 3.4 Medium-Term foresight of skills requirements
4. Alignment and self-certification of national qualifications to international Qualification Frameworks:	4.1 Transparency of Qualifications and international recognition 4.2 Student and workers international mobility: how NQF helps 4.3 The process of self-certification 4.4 Referencing qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The third and last meeting devoted a substantial time to formulating a set of policy recommendations to be shared with national Ministries and institutions linked to NQF, especially concerning potential follow-up activities.

Each country team has been encouraged to **work in the country between the three PL meetings** to accompany the PL regional exercise (inform, consult the competent qualification bodies, stimulate coordination of stakeholders at national level, share ownership of process and results, disseminate and follow-up) during and possibly after its cycle of meetings. Monitoring/Coordination Meetings using Skype were held on a monthly basis to

keep track of developments of project work in each country between meetings.

Coordination Meetings were also used to design and develop common activities of a trans-national nature: for example, a **pilot webinar** of 2 hours duration – intended as a formally organised session with defined speakers and discussion time - was organised on **"Formulating Study Programmes in Terms of Learning Outcomes"**. It took place on 4th July 2017 and was **attended by over 40 Kazakh participants in two different locations** and three EU experts in three different locations; comments collected from participants were very positive. Webinars are cost-effective instruments to present good practice examples in a dedicated way; in these cases, participation of stakeholders may be extended without too many additional costs. The creation of a Facebook Group to accompany the PLG activities and extend the outreach of potential users has been proposed and implemented by the Kazakhstan Team; most of the discussions and the exchange of materials is now taking place in Russian.

3. Recommendations for peer learning follow-up and sustainability of CAEP results in the field of National Qualifications Frameworks

Some recommendations can be formulated following the experience of the NQF Peer Learning exercise and, in particular, the debate that took place at the end of the third meeting in Riga:

1. A **Working Group (WG)** to compare in detail the existing qualification systems in Central Asia Countries should be established as a direct follow-up of the CAEP Peer Learning exercise;
2. The WG should **integrate the efforts, results and future developments of CAEP and the ETF NQFs platform** and support the creation of a CA network of experts on qualifications to 1. **map existing types of qualifications** and awarding procedures in CA Countries; 2. try to develop **new "pilot" professional standards and educational standards** (clarifying the relationship between the two kinds in a consensus-based way); 3. facilitate the **mutual recognition of qualifications** among the CA Countries; 4. support **self-assessment** of qualifications systems using the ETF Toolkit; 5. organise **national workshops with employers on validation of learning outcomes of informal learning** and 6. **harmonize key terms of the qualifications systems** of CA countries on the basis of European experience;
3. The WG should continue to receive support (webinars, benchmarking/peer review meetings, etc.) from CAEP, its Team and the EU experts, but would work with an **agenda consensually defined by CA Teams**; and would **stimulate progress at national level**, by feeding the national developments with its results.



Claudio Dondi

CAEP Expert

Overview of the preliminary results of the "NURSLING" project of the ERASMUS+ programme

Abstract

Analysis of the objectives defined in the NURSLING project - "National Qualification Frameworks: Guidelines for Development and Recognition of Qualifications" of the ERASMUS+ programme. Announcement of the preliminary results on the draft National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which are comparable with the European QF. Introduction of the Dublin Descriptors for NQF in higher education.

Key words: National Qualifications Framework, education standards, qualification levels, Dublin descriptors.

In accordance with the EU programme ERASMUS+ the project called "National Qualification Frameworks: Guidelines for Development and Recognition of Qualifications" declared by Uzbekistan will operate during the period from 15 October 2015 to 14 October 2018 (36 months). The project acronym is: NURSLING (registration number: 561742-EPP-1-2015-1-PT-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP).

The University of Algarve (Faro, Portugal) is considered as a grantee. Among the project consortium partners are the Universities of Koblenz-Landau, Germany, Trento, Italy, Bath Spa, Great Britain, as well as the World University Service, Austria. The Uzbek project partners are National University of Uzbekistan, Tashkent State Technical University, Tashkent University of Information Technologies, Samarkand State University, Centre for Development of Higher and Secondary Special and Vocational Education, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Educational Scientific Industrial Association "Business-Drilling."



The logo of the project

The aim of the NURSLING project:

Establishment of the national structure of Qualifications Framework (QF) of Uzbekistan, on the basis of the EQF – European Qualifications Framework

National QF are able to:

- ensure the accelerated integration of our system of continuing education in the world educational area (in particular, in the European one);

- facilitate mutual recognition of higher education systems, qualifications and documents;

- accelerate the improvement of the process of training of highly qualified personnel, taking into account the best world practices and trends in the development of the educational process.

As a result of the study of numerous materials on the development of European and National Qualifications Frameworks, as well as priorities for the modernisation of continuing education, the main provisions of the NURSLING project were identified from two blocks of priorities:

- preparation of an analytical review of the project;

- development of specific materials on the project.

The first block is of an overview nature and includes an analysis of the existing European higher education system:

- history of the European Higher Education Area;

- Bologna process;

- structure of Higher Education in Europe;

- system of the European Qualifications Framework;

- Dublin descriptors;

- examples of National Qualifications Frameworks in Europe;

- examples of National Qualifications Frameworks outside of Europe.

The second block defines the specific project activities of the partners:

- innovative transformations in the system of continuing education in Uzbekistan;

- the concept of the General regulation on the Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the system of continuing education of the country which is officially approved by the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- development of Regulation on the National Coordinating Council on the Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- establishment of the National Committee on the Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- draft of the Qualifications Framework of Uzbekistan (QF);

- comparative analysis of the draft of Qualifications Framework of Uzbekistan with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF);

- draft proposals to improve the General provisions on state educational standards, taking into account the developed Qualifications Framework of Uzbekistan;

- model of Sectoral Qualifications Framework of Uzbekistan in the educational areas of information technologies;

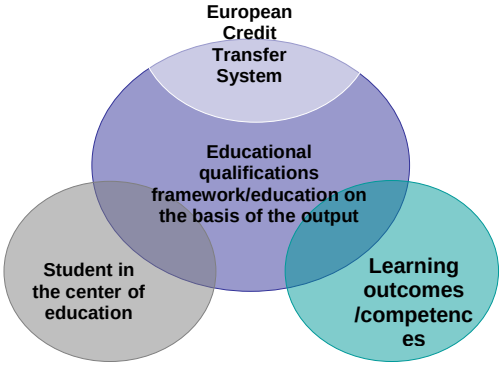
- draft proposals for updating the state educational standards in the educational areas of information technologies, taking into account the developed model of Sectoral (IT) Qualifications Framework of Uzbekistan.

The successful execution of assigned tasks in the NURSLING project will achieve two important goals:

- creation of a pilot mechanism of the Qualifications Framework on the basis of the existing qualification requirements in the country;

- formation of bases for processes of more profound integration of the system of continuous education of the country with the world educational area.

The European Qualifications Framework is a system of 8 levels (C) described in terms of **knowledge, skills and competence**. Each level is understood as the level of responsibility, complexity and autonomy. Naturally, one level qualitatively differs from another by its qualifications.



The Bologna Declaration also stimulated the creation in 2008 of a European Qualification Framework declaring common methodological approaches in evaluating individual qualifications and their compliance with the requirements of the Bologna process

Pic. 1 Focuses of European education: EQF, student, competence, ECTS

The skill level is determined by **descriptors**.

A descriptor is a generic description of requirements for competences, for the nature of the skills and knowledge of the employee, differentiated in terms of complexity and knowledge content of activities, responsibilities and range of authority required.

To establish the levels of qualification we analysed the existing education system in the country and identified the **indicators** of the allocation of levels. Indicators of the allocation of levels of education are defined as the following:

- the structure of education in the Republic of Uzbekistan,
- documents on education, and
- the labour input of each level in hours.

Based on the analysis of documents on education (for example, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On education", State educational standards, lists of areas of training for Bachelor's, Master's degree, etc.) and through of discussion among specialists in the field of education, 8 levels (+2 sub-levels) of qualification (Appendix 1) have been determined.

The comparison between NQF of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the EQF are drawn in Appendix 2.

Appendix 3 provides a description of the Dublin descriptors of some points of HE - Bachelor and Master degree levels.

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APPENDIX 1

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">SCHEME of LEVELS of QF Students' Scientific Circle
of the Republic of Uzbekistan</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">1 level qualifications - Early age education</td></tr>
<tr><td>2 cycle qualifications - Primary - mandatory - education</td><td rowspan="5">QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK Students' Scientific Circle of the Republic of Uzbekistan</td><td>8 cycle qualifications - Doctoral - postgraduate education</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 cycle qualifications - Lower secondary - compulsory - education</td><td>7 cycle qualifications - Basic doctoral - postgraduate education</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 cycle qualifications - Senior secondary, vocational - compulsory - education</td><td>6 cycle qualifications - Master degree HE</td></tr>
<tr><td>4A cycle qualifications - Pre-University training</td><td>5A cycle qualifications - Retraining and advanced vocational training</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">5 cycle qualifications - Bachelor degree HE</td></tr>
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EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION LEVELS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

1	Early age education
2	Elementary compulsory education
3	Lower secondary - compulsory - education
4	Senior secondary, vocational - compulsory - education
4A	Pre-University training
5	Bachelor degree HE
5A	Retraining and advanced vocational training
6	Master degree HE
7	Basic doctoral
8	Doctoral
Total: 8 levels (+2 sublevels)	

APPENDIX 2

The scheme of **"knowledge"** correspondence between the European and Uzbek Qualifications Frameworks			
№ of level	**According to the European Qualifications Framework**	№ of level	**According to the Uzbek Qualifications Framework**
I.	Basic general knowledge	I.	Aroused interest to universal values through fairy tales and stories
		II.	Learned basic knowledge of disciplines and facts of training in accordance with the State educational standard (SES) of the Industry standard samples (ISS) in terms of primary education. Need for continuous systematic learning through fairy tales and stories, fostered interest in the rich cultural and historical heritage of the people and universal values
II.	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	III.	***Knowledge of:*** facts, principles, processes and general concepts of the disciplines in accordance with the SES ISS; the fundamentals of science necessary to select and explore specific features of the possible professional activities;
III.	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts in a field of work or study	IV.	***Knowledge of:*** theoretical foundations of educational disciplines relevant to SES of the secondary special vocational education (SSVE); **knowledge** is broad enough, intelligent, developed, deep, relevant, differentiated, professionally oriented; **knowledge** of national and universal spiritual values; educational, scientific and cultural knowledge; sufficient and deep **knowledge** for the possible undertake of further study in Bachelor degree programme HE.
IV	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	IV-A	***Knowledge of:*** theoretical foundations of educational disciplines relevant to SES of the secondary special vocational education (SSVE); **knowledge** of national and universal spiritual values; educational, scientific and cultural knowledge; sufficient and deep **knowledge** for the possible undertake of further study in Bachelor degree programme HE. **knowledge**, deep professional skills, propensity and experiences to the voluntarily chosen additional specialty (vocation)
V.	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an	V-A	**Retraining** ***Knowledge of:*** theoretical bases of the educational disciplines corresponding to SES regarding special disciplines of the **new** Bachelor training areas HE;

	awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge		**knowledge** of the **new** Bachelor training areas HE in accordance with the level of requirements of the approved programmes of special disciplines and related textbooks. **Advanced vocational training** **knowledge** awareness and perception of the most advanced innovative ideas and challenges within a field of study. **knowledge** of the basic ideas, problems and ways of their possible solutions within a field of study.
VI.	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	V.	***Knowledge of:*** theoretical foundations of educational disciplines corresponding to the SES regarding Bachelor training areas HE; Solidified **knowledge** and understanding obtained in the ISS and SSVE and necessary in the field of study; **knowledge** corresponds to the level of requirements of the approved programs of academic disciplines and corresponding textbooks; **knowledge** awareness and perception of certain and the most advanced ideas and problems within a field of study; **knowledge** of the basic ideas, problems and ways of their possible solutions within a field of study
VII.	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; critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	VI.	***Knowledge and understanding*** make the Bachelor's knowledge and understanding more profound and beyond of it; allow to show originality in the development and application of research ideas; make them possible to solve new interdisciplinary problems related to its specialty.
VIII.	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields ***Doctor of science*** does not exist in EQF	VII.	***Demonstrates knowledge, understanding*** and ability to think, design, implement and adapt the current research process with academic integrity; - made a contribution through the original study to the expansion of the knowledge boundary, significantly developed the already obtained research results, some of which became the materials of peer-reviewed national and international publications
		VIII.	***Demonstrates knowledge, understanding*** and ability to independently apply their knowledge and systematically understand the problems of their own professional sphere; - demonstrated ability to perceive deeper knowledge, abilities and problems of their own professional sphere. Learned methods of integrating knowledge and methods of solving complex issues, based on limited information and formulation of judgments.

The scheme of **"skills"** correspondence between the European and Uzbek Qualifications Frameworks			
№ of level	**According to the European Qualifications Framework**	№ of level	**According to the Uzbek Qualifications Framework**
I.	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	I.	Learned the need for continuous systematic training, combined with family education, learned the elements of spiritual and moral development and behaviour.
		II.	Experience of performance of simple tasks and solution of the same type of tasks with use of simple rules, skill tools, demanding use of the corresponding information.
II.	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	III.	***Performance of:*** cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information in accordance with the SES ISS; high level of educational, scientific and general cultural knowledge, spiritual and moral qualities on the basis of national and universal spiritual values.
III.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	IV.	***Performance of:*** special professional experiences according to the voluntarily chosen training area (humanitarian, agricultural, technical, etc.), formed at a high level; ***performance of:*** a sufficiently high level of skills and experience for self-fulfilment in the workplace; performs the primary knowledge that ensures efficiency in elementary professional positions in the chosen specialty.
IV	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	IV-A	***Performance of:*** professional experiences according to the voluntarily chosen training area (humanitarian, agricultural, technical, etc.), formed at a high level; ***performance of:*** primary knowledge, ensuring efficiency in elementary professional positions for an additional specialty, at a sufficiently high level of skills and experiences; performance at a sufficiently high level of knowledge, skills and experiences ***performance of:*** primary work skills in a new vocation for self-fulfilment in the workplace
V.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	V-A	**Retraining able** in a new field of study to gather and interpret significant data and conduct social, scientific or ethical generalizations on their basis. **Advanced vocational training able** to discuss ideas, innovations, problems and solutions in the field of study, can discuss them with both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
VI.	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	V.	**able** to carry out social, scientific or ethical generalizations on their basis; **able** to develop the necessary knowledge to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy **able** to discuss ideas, problems and solutions in the field of study with both specialist and non-specialist audiences, can provide the information.

VII.	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	VI.	**able** to clearly and consistently communicate to both specialist and non-specialist audiences their findings, as well as knowledge and justification used for its formulation, **performs** more deep skills for their own specialty that allow to continue training to a considerable extent independently and autonomously **able** to collect and interpret relevant data from the field of study;
VIII.	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 ***Doctor of science*** does not exist in EQF	VII.	**Able and performs** methods of integrating knowledge and solving complex issues, formulation of judgments; **Able** to understand the problems within a professional sphere; has a **masterful command** of the methods and skills of research within a scientific sphere.
		VIII.	**Able** to understand the problems within a professional sphere; has a **masterful command** of the methods and skills of research within a scientific sphere. **Fluent** in the necessary methods and skills to organize and conduct research, the ability to solve new interdisciplinary problems, develop and apply original research ideas related to the professional field and significantly expand the scope of existing knowledge and understanding.

The scheme of **"competences"** correspondence between the European and Uzbek Qualifications Frameworks			
№ of level	**According to the European Qualifications Framework**	№ of level	**According to the Uzbek Qualifications Framework**
I.	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context	I.	Performs the skills necessary for successful undertaken in primary education: to hold a pen, to sit at the study table, to take the lesson as a mandatory event
		II.	Performs the work and training skills (with some degree of autonomy); Obtains the skills to perform simple tasks and solve the same-type of tasks to use simple rules and tools, to show basic cognitive and practical skills; to understand basic educational, scientific and cultural knowledge, spiritual and moral qualities on the basis of national and universal spiritual values.
II.	Work or study under guidance with some degree of autonomy	III.	Performs ***qualification*** corresponding to the level of requirements of SES SSVE.
III.	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in a field work or study. Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems.	IV.	Performs ***qualification*** corresponding to the level of requirements of SES SSVE: - **acquired** deep theoretical knowledge of the academic disciplines corresponding to the SES SSVE; - **developed** deep professional skills, propensity and experiences in one or more of voluntarily chosen specialties (vocations);

			- **developed** a sufficiently good command of professional skills, performance of appropriate technical base of their own vocation
IV	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.	IV-A	Performs additional ***qualifications*** corresponding to the level of requirements of the organization for employment and corresponding to the level of requirements imposed on the applicant; - in accordance with the requirements necessary for the possible undertake of further study in Bachelor degree programme HE **acquired** deep knowledge, understanding and understanding of knowledge - **obtained** knowledge that provides the basis for work in this area (or area of its vocation); - **demonstrated** the availability of primary knowledge to ensure the output of performance in elementary professional positions within the field of study, as well as further successful training in vocation or personal development
V.	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change. Review and develop performance of self and others.	V-A	**Retraining** Performs the ***qualification*** corresponding to the level of requirements of SES of the **new** Bachelor training area HE **acquired** the wide range of cognitive and practical abilities necessary for development of creative decisions of abstract problems in the **new** Bachelor training area HE **Advanced vocational training** **mastering** of the new innovative skills of applying knowledge and understanding, skills of forming and substantiating arguments and problem solving within the framework of study
VI.	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts. Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.	V.	Performs ***qualification*** corresponding to the level of requirements of SES regarding Bachelor training areas HE **acquired** the work standards and legal bases of employment **acquired** a wide range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems evidence of high professionalism and competence in the workplace is the **acquisition** of skills of knowledge application and understanding, skills of formation and sustaining of arguments and solutions to problems in the field of study
VII.	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams	VI.	Master degree focuses on the development of a new generation of personnel with high general and professional culture, skills, research, creative and social activity, ability to be guided independently in public and political life, capable to put and solve problems in the future. Upon completion of the Master programme, graduate is able to: - master the latest achievements of the theory, to study methods and ways of research and to interpret them independently;

			- conduct critical evaluation and interpretation of the theoretical and practical achievements; - apply methods of independent research and interpretation of their results; to demonstrate originality and creativity in the implementation of activities in a particular area; possess advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work; - take responsibility for managing the professional development of individuals and groups.
VIII.	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	VII.	Postgraduate education is aimed at ensuring the needs of society in scientific and pedagogical personnel of higher qualification, satisfaction of creative educational and professional interests of the individual. PhD-Doctor philosophy **is able to:** - communicate in their own professional field with experts, the large academic community and society in general; - promote in society within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural knowledge; - think critically about issues in the field of study and in related fields; - manage and modify the contexts of work, requiring new and uncertain strategic approaches
	Doctor of science does not exist in EQF	VIII.	Postgraduate education is aimed at ensuring the needs of society in scientific and pedagogical personnel of higher qualification, as well as aimed at the intellectual content and development of the research process. Doctor of science **is able to:** - promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, scientific, social or cultural development for the formation of a knowledge-based society; - communicate on the subject of their own field and competence with colleagues equal in status, as well as the wider scientific community and society; - educate a new generation of researchers capable of continuing to develop research; original and creative research, - show, where necessary, high credibility, autonomous and innovative thinking, scientific and professional qualities, as well as a strong commitment to the development of new ideas or processes in various advanced fields, including research.

APPENDIX 3

SHARED DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS OF UNIVERSITY LEVELS ***BACHELOR***				
Knowledge and understanding	**Applying knowledge and understanding**	**The ability to make judgments, learning skills**	**Communication skills and abilities**	**Ability to further training and professional communication skills**
include certain aspects related to the most advanced ideas of their field of education and supported by regularly approved textbooks; (whilst by advanced textbooks), theoretical provisions and principles in solving practical problems sufficient to perform professional functions independently or in a team, as well as for any possible undertake of further study to achieve the next level of qualification; skills and principles to solve practical problems, the most important promising problems and basic theoretical provisions of its field of study.	- achieved through devising and sustaining arguments, - achieved at the level of their knowledge and understanding and implemented on the basis of a professional approach to work or their occupation.	- **ability** to gather and interpret relevant data; - skills of independent study and acquisition of information, increasing the level of knowledge and skills within a professional sphere; - **performance** of the skills of independent learning and acquisition of information, raising the level of professional knowledge and skills.	- **to communicate** information, ideas, problems and solutions; - **to take** responsibility for the work results at the level of the department or organization; - **to carry out** independent professional activity assuming statement of the purposes, tasks of own work and work of subordinates	- **skills** that are necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy (based on self-education); - **ability** to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; - **ability** to accept criticism and arguments of colleagues, to explain clearly and unambiguously to colleagues and the management the sense of the solved problems and issues, own conclusions and arguments.
Learning outcome	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***
-**demonstration** of knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon the general secondary education; - **performance** of the skills and **understanding** of the principles of solving practical problems, - **knowledge** and **understanding** of the basic	- **apply** their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, - **have** competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments	- **able** to gather and interpret data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, ethical or scientific issues - **demonstrate** knowledge and understanding of a field of study that builds upon the	- **ability** to gather and interpret data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, ethical or scientific issues, - **demonstration** of knowledge and understanding of a field of study that builds upon the general secondary education,	- develop skills in the field of study that are necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy (based on self-education);

theoretical provisions of its field of study, - **know** and **understand** the most important, challenging and practical tasks of its field of education.	and solving problems within their field of study.	general secondary education, and include certain aspects related to the most advanced knowledge of their field of education.	and include certain aspects related to the most advanced knowledge of their field of education, - **ability to communicat** information, problems, ideas an solutions to both specialist and non specialist audiences.	
Competences	***Competences***	***Competences***	***Competences***	***Competences***
- achieved **expansion** and **deepening** of knowledge associated with Bachelor's level through skills and understanding of the principles of solving practical problems, as well as knowledge and understanding of the basic theoretical provisions of its field of education.	- acquired **instrumental** skills	- **developed** system and ***learning*** skills	- **developed** communication an system and ***learning*** skills.	- **developed** system skills

Learning outcome: ***Bachelor*** Qualifications are assigned to students who:

demonstrated knowledge and understanding in the field of education, that builds upon the general knowledge of pre-university training, and typical of this level, supported by advanced textbooks, including some aspects that reflect the basic knowledge of the selected field of education;

can apply their knowledge and understanding in ways that show a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have a typical competence demonstrated through the finding and constructing arguments in solving problems within their field of education;

have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;

able to communicate information, idea, problem and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;

have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

SHARED DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS OF UNIVERSITY LEVELS MASTER					
	Knowledge and understanding	**Applying knowledge and understanding**	**The ability to make judgments, learning skills**	**Communication skills and abilities**	**Ability to further training and professional communication skills**
Master degree programme	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***	***Learning outcome***
	Within the framework of the research thesis, as well as a block of special disciplines and a block of disciplines on the chosen specialty Master should be able to demonstrate: - advanced **knowledge** and **understanding** in the field of their specialty, necessary for innovative research, based on a critical understanding of theories and principles; - critical **understanding** of the **theory and principles** of their professional area; - **knowledge and understanding** of individual challenges and perspective directions of development of its specialty; - **understanding** of the innovative nature of their research on the basis of critical understanding of	Application of knowledge and understanding is achieved in the process of: - solutions to new and unfamiliar problems, both in the context of research in their field of study, and within broader multidisciplinary contexts; - independent analysis of tasks, methods and results of its solution; - solutions to critical issues in research and innovation, allowing to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice; - mastery of the most advanced and specialized skills and technologies; - evaluation of actual research problems, - preparation of plans for research activities; - conducting and carrying out researches according to academic criteria of methodological, research and project issues	- **ability** to gather and interpret relevant data; - in professional activities, the **ability** to self-study and assimilate information that increases the level of knowledge and skills, as well as the ability to integrate knowledge, dealing with the complex issues and definitions, and make judgments based on incomplete or limited information; - **developing** of a substantial body of work which merits national or international refereed publication; - **ability** to determine the management strategy of complex social, work and scientific processes. - **performance** of the learning skills • that are necessary to continue to undertake further study with a higher degree of autonomy in professional activity, as well as for independent professional career growth;	Based on a critical understanding of theories and principles **demonstrates** advanced knowledge in the field of research (or training), required for research (or innovation work). **Demonstrates** knowledge of theoretical foundations, principles, and methods of solving scientific and practical problems in the field of vocational training that create the basement for the manifestation of originality in solving complex problems and tasks, able to apply knowledge and to advance ideas.	Abilities and skills associated with the field, ability to make judgments is expressed in the **competence** to: • integrate knowledge, dealing with the complexities and **make** judgments based on incomplete or limited information; • provide information about the essence of the problem, the results of their work and conclusions to a wide audience in a concise and professional manner; • clearly convey their conclusions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; • communicate freely and openly with colleagues and the public, as well as to be open to criticism; • authoritatively state and naturally discuss the issues in its professional field with experts and the public, with a wide range of the academic community, including students;

	advanced knowledge, theories and principles of the specialty, as well as its problems; - **knowledge and understanding** of the skills to solve the basic theoretical provisions, individual challenging and practical tasks of its specialty.	connected with development and increase of efficiency of difficult social, work and scientific tasks.	• allowing them to continue their education in professional or related fields; • expanding the boundaries of knowledge through original research, contributing to the further development of the subject of research; • of critical analysis, development and synthesis of information in professional and related fields; • expanding the boundaries of knowledge through original research; of autonomous and independent research and innovation activities in professional and related fields.		• to convey in a simple and accessible form the essence of complex issues and problems to a wide audience, to present the original ways to solve them; • in an accessible and open form, introduce a free exchange of opinions in the professional and related fields of activity; briefly and accurately describe and demonstrate the issues, problems and original solutions in the professional and related fields.
	Competences	***Competences***	***Competences***	***Competences***	***Competences***
	- **have** the skills to solve practical problems, - **understand** the principles to solve practical problems, - **know and understand** the basic theoretical provisions of its field of study, - **know and understand** the most important, challenging and perspective tasks of itch specialty - **achieved** expansion and deepening of system and advanced	- to analyse independently the tasks, choose methods of their solution, analysis of the results of professional activity; - to apply their special professional knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader and multidisciplinary contexts; - to assess the relevance of the research problem, to make and ensure the plan of its implementation, to	- **ability** to gather and interpret data to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, ethical or scientific issues - **demonstration** of knowledge and understanding in a field of specialization that builds upon the Bachelor's higher education that includes specific aspects and the most advanced knowledge of their specialty. - **developed** system and research skills and the ability to independent professional activity	- **demonstration of:** • advanced knowledge in the field of research (or training), required for research (or innovation work); • (based on a critical understanding of theory and principles) advanced knowledge in the field of research (or training), required for research (or innovation work); knowledge and understanding of the theoretical foundations, principles and methods of solving scientific and practical problems in the	**Able** to integrate knowledge and handle complex scientific issues, professionally provide information, the essence of the problem to be solved, the result of their work and conclusions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. **Able** to briefly and accurately describe and demonstrate the issues, problems and original ways of their solution in their own specialty, professional activity and related fields.

	knowledge in the basic professional field of activity and research; **- achieved** understanding of the principles and methods of scientific and creative activity; - **acquired** knowledge and understanding of the theoretical foundations, principles and methods of solving practical and scientific problems in the field of training; - **provided** a basis of knowledge and understanding for originality in solving complex issues and problems, within a research context;	carry out the process of scientific research in accordance with the academic criteria; - to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice based on the most advanced and specialized skills and technologies; - to solve problems of methodological, project and research nature related to the development and improvement of the efficiency of complex social, industrial and scientific processes; - to identify and develop a management strategy of complex social, work and scientific processes; - acquired **research** skills and innovative approach.		field of training, creating the foundation for the manifestation of originality in solving complex problems, as well as for the application and promotion of ideas. - **developed** research ***abilities*** and analytical skills.	Professional communication skills, critical analysis skills, evaluation skills and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
Learning outcome: ***Master*** Qualifications are assigned to students who: have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the Bachelor's degree, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context; can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) context related to their field of study; have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments; able to communicate clearly and unambiguously their conclusions and support their knowledge and explanations to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.				

Report on the Survey Results regarding the System of Qualifications and Prospects of National Qualification Frameworks in the Educational System of Uzbekistan

Preface

This report includes an analysis of survey results, carried out among the heads, teachers, students (their parents) of the higher education institutions of Uzbekistan, the employer organisations, and staff of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education and the Centre of Development of Higher and Secondary Special Professional Education. The survey was carried out according to the action plan of the project "National Qualification Frameworks: Guidelines for Development and Recognition of Qualifications" (NURSLING) programme within Erasmus+.

The main aim of the survey was to study the opinions and awareness of participants in the educational process concerning: the current system of qualifications; the content and essence of National Qualification Frameworks; their acceptability in the educational system of Uzbekistan from the point of view of the current system of state educational standards and qualification requirements; and their conceptual bases and principles of development using analogies with the qualification frameworks of the European Union countries.

The survey was compiled by I. Khmelinskii, S. Chernyshenko, A. Khodjaev and includes 14 questions (see the application). The survey was carried out in May, 2016 with the approval of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The list of survey participants is given in Table 1. A total of 450 people participated in the survey and the volume of processed information was more than 4500 A4 format pages.

The organisation, carrying out and processing of the survey results was performed by A. Khodjaev, A. Ashurboyev, O. Madiyev, E. Kuvandikov and others (CDHSSPE), with the active assistance and support of Sh. Fvezov, A. Khoshimov (MHSSE), Z. Djabbarov (NUUz), B. Boymirzaev (TSTU), N. Abduvakhidova, H. Khushvaktov (SamSU), R. Yarkulova (TSPU), K. Rakhimova (TACI). We express sincere gratitude to the named assistants on behalf of the project.



Survey Participants in the framework of NURSLING project

№	Name of HEI	The total amount of participants in the survey									
		Vice-rectors on educational affairs	**Heads and workers of departments and administrations**	**Deans of Faculties**	**Chairmen of Departments**	**Teachers**	**Students of Master degree**	**Students of Bachelor degree**	**Parent of students**	**Represen-tatives of Employers**	**Total**
1	National University of Uzbekistan (NUUz)	1	3	3	3	6	10	40	10	10	**86**
2	Tashkent State Technical University (TSTU)	1	3	3	3	6	10	40	10	10	**86**
3	Samarkand State University (SamSU)	1	3	3	3	6	10	40	10	10	**86**
4	Tashkent Architectural and Construction Institute (TACI)	1	3	3	3	6	10	40	10	10	**86**
5	Tashkent State Pedagogical University (TSPU)	1	3	3	3	6	10	40	10	10	**86**
6	Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education (MHSSE)		10								**10**
7	Center for Development of Higher and Secondary Special Professional Education (CDHSSPE)		10								**10**
	Total:	**5**	**35**	**15**	**15**	**30**	**50**	**200**	**50**	**50**	**450**

1. Knowledge level of qualification framework

The questionnaire included multiple-choice (questions 1-4, 8, 9) and questions which required written statements of opinion. The multiple-choice questions had four possible answers and generally concern the awareness of participants of qualification framework system functioning in many countries nowadays, as well as the necessity of developing our own system of qualification framework (QF).

Analysis showed that the level of knowledge of staff and students of HEIs on qualification frameworks and the principles behind their development and use varies considerably. For instance, according to vice rectors, knowledge of QF within universities is rather high (the most prevalent answer was – "C", the letters in brackets in the remainder of this report show the most common answers). At the same time mid-level managers - heads of departments and deans of faculties - consider that university teaching staff know nothing about qualification frameworks or only a small percentage of employees and teachers know about them (answers A, B). At the same time teachers and heads of departments, on the contrary, pointed that they are generally familiar with QF (answers B, C).

The remarkable point is how the students of HEIs answered these questions. So, while the answers of bachelor degree students varied from complete ignorance on QF to awareness of the majority of them (A, B, C), the answers of master's degree students varied from a small number with some existing knowledge to a larger number who were relatively informed (B, C, D).

Such a wide distribution of opinions is quite explainable from the point of view that mid-level management in HEIs are more employed with administrative work and the organisation of educational processes on the basis of the existing state educational standards, qualification requirements and curricula. At the same time, the heads of departments and teachers are involved in analytical, research activities, as well as in various international projects which promote their knowledge of QF. This is also the case with master's degree students who are occupied mostly with research work in the departments.

We should note with optimism the high level of knowledge of QF among the representatives of employers (B, C, D). At the same time the wide distribution of opinions among parents of students seems quite natural in this case. Employees of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education (MHSSPE) and the Center of Development of Higher and Secondary Special, Professional Education (CD HSSPE) also showed a high degree of knowledge of QF (C).

The questions concerning the development and implementation of NQF also caused rather ambiguous answers. For instance, the vice rectors of HEIs, heads of departments, some teachers and master's degree students consider that the development and implementation of NQF is quite necessary (B, C). More restrained optimism in this question was shown by heads of departments, deans of faculties and students of bachelor degrees (A, B). Most of them consider that research should be conducted first, so to weigh up all the pros and cons, before developing and implementing NQF, but the remaining respondents do not consider this idea necessary at all. At the same time parents of students and employers in the majority accept the necessity of the development and implementation of NQF (B, partially - C). As for MHSSPE, here the opinion on the necessity of NQF development dominates, but with comprehensive preparatory work (B) as well. The representatives of CDSSPE also have a similar opinion.

The analysis of the survey results shows that the diversity of opinions concerning the development and implementation of NQF is definitely connected with the level of knowledge of participants of educational processes concerning QF. It is shown distinctly on Diagram 1, where the points on lines represent the average values of respondents' answers.

Thus, the vice rectors, heads of departments, master's degree students, employer representatives and the section

of teachers who showed good knowledge on QF issues were more inclined feel that the development and implementation of NQF was necessary, even if with reservation. At the same time heads of departments, deans of faculties and students of bachelor degrees who showed a lesser degree of QF knowledge, were less inclined to the development and implementation of NQF.

Here we can make a single conclusion that judgments on NQF of stakeholders in the system of higher education are based on their level of knowledge of them. The level of approval or rejection of NQF in this case is predetermined by the level of knowledge of them, i.e. the higher this level, the more positive the opinion of NQF. Therefore, it would be fair to note that in this case the reason for a negative view of the topic is insufficient awareness of respondents.

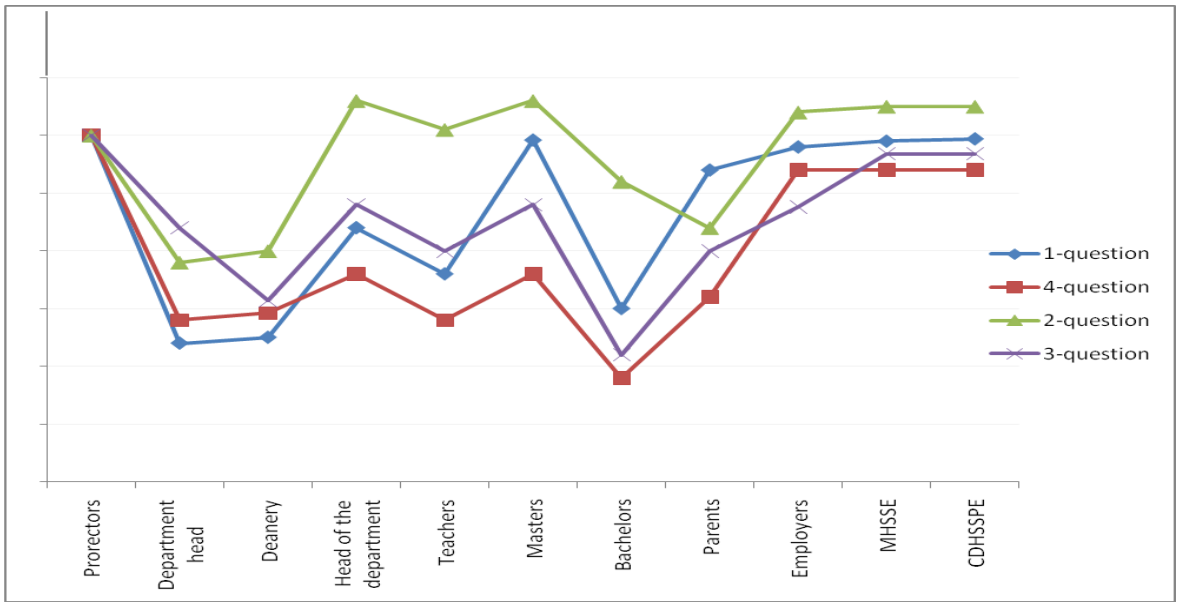


Diagram 1. Level of knowledge and opinion, concerning development and implementation of NQF.

Thus, in the question of development and implementation of NQF it is necessary to educate all HEI employee, students, employers, as well as the general public on the essence, principles of development and benefits of NQF.

2. Development of knowledge, skills and competences list.

The opinions of the questioned participants concerning the development of the list of required knowledge, skills and competences for the graduates of HEI of various levels (question 5), were related to their position within the educational system.

So, **the vice rectors, heads and the staff of the departments of HEI and CDHSSPE staff** consider that development of the level descriptors of knowledge, skills and competences of various levels should be carried out on the basis of the development of standard legal documents. The lists of knowledge, skills and competences should be based on the requirements of the main customers, i.e. consumers of the teaching staff. It is necessary to consider the specifics of the labour market and constantly hold survey employers. The specified lists should be based on their practical feasibility, as well as on the continuation to receive higher qualification in the profession or area of scientific activities. They should be based on the knowledge of disciplines that the graduate of this subject is required to possess. Criteria of professional knowledge and skills for the implementation of specific work, actions and production processes should be created on the basis of surveying of employers, heads of organisations, business, and HEIs and an analysis of the

activities within the businesses, the prospects of implementation of new technologies, etc.

Also, a complex examination of activities in compliance to the state educational standards should be carried out, and appropriate certification given, i.e. when state status is assigned to an HEI with the right to train specialists at various levels.

Deans of faculties and heads of departments in the majority consider that the development of knowledge, skills and competences lists for graduates of HEI should be based on the systematic study of scientific and technical information, domestic and foreign experience of the relevant area, skilful research and surveys among the students, employers and teachers of HEIs to identify the most important issues. At the same time, they consider that a purposeful system of entrance selection for HEIs should be created, so students are interested in obtaining these competences. The basic education should correspond to training at the appropriate level. The list of required knowledge, skills and competences should be created on the basis of employer requirements, taking into account market requirements, competition conditions and general economic tendencies.

Teachers of HEIs and bachelor degree students consider that when setting national and international standards, understanding the motivation of students selecting that specialism and their future ambitions is necessary. In their opinion, the system of knowledge, skills and competences for graduates is created through a combination of practice and theory. For example, university graduates are required to know a foreign language (this is a highly demanded skill within the labour market) and at the same time, students should have organisation, communication and documentation skills. The knowledge, skills and competences list should be formed on the base of key factors of knowledge in certain fields, by auditing the training programmes of an educational institution. The list of knowledge, skills and competences has to be based on its practical feasibility, and the reason for qualification in the profession or area of scientific activities. The list should consist of those disciplines which the graduate of this field is required to have. Professional knowledge and the skills to carry out specific work in the area of specialism are considered to be the results of surveying employers and heads of the organisations and businesses.

In the opinion of **master's degree** students, the knowledge, skills and competences list for graduates of HEIs should meet the requirements of society. They also consider that it is necessary to take into account the requirements of organisations where the graduate would work, and the market requirements for short-term and long-term prospects. At the same time its development should be carried out using analogies of the international requirements for education systems. They believe that for these tasks to be realised it is necessary to increase the study hours for special disciplines, provide more places of educational and work practice and regularly check the knowledge level of teachers. The knowledge and skills list for bachelor degrees should match the specialties of the master's list.

MHSSPE staff consider that the knowledge, skills and competences list should be compiled based on industry requirements, considering at the same time the development prospects of these industries, the implementation of new equipment and technologies, the geographical features of the industry, the agricultural industry and the social sphere. Besides, each level of graduation (bachelor, master, senior research associate) requires an accurate differentiation within the levels, with the prevalence of research and pedagogical competences for masters and senior research associates. An important factor to be considered is how the knowledge, skills and competences can be integrated into the world educational and economic space.

Representatives of employers, as expected, generally share the same opinion on the necessity of considering the requirements of leading organisations. With the participation of active and experienced

teachers, they consider it is necessary to annually update the list of knowledge, skills and competences taking into account proposals of personnel departments. When appraising students with a rating system, it is necessary to objectively consider their opportunities for compliance of the competences. At the same time, they believe that various skill levels need to be used in order clarify the qualification levels of specialists, and the teaching of the disciplines should be carried out on the basis of the required knowledge, skills and competences.

3. The existing methods of the development and control of knowledge, abilities and competences levels.

On existing methods of the development and control of knowledge, skills and competences levels for bachelors, masters and senior scientific employees-researchers (question 6) respondents answered the following.

Vice rectors, MHSSPE and CDHSSPE staff, mid-level managers of HEIs, and some **teachers and students** consider that the existing rating system provides the main functions of control: diagnostics, training and educational. Special attention is paid to gaining practical experience. A great number of students are involved in design and exploration work for this purpose. The mechanism of developing and controlling the levels of knowledge, skills and competences is carried out on the basis of the regulating documentation.

In addition, management staff within HEI departments, **teachers and bachelor degree students** note the fact that the control of knowledge is carried out with the involvement of foreign specialists who provide the necessary level of training. At the same time, they believe that it is necessary to increase the scope of practical training and to analyse the practice of oral interviews as part of entrance examinations.

Deans and heads of departments suggest improving the qualifications of teaching-professorial staff on the basis of employer requirements. Other suggestions include wider use of pedagogical SWOT analyses, summary technologies, etc., open lessons, information hours, educational days and providing information centres with Internet and Wi-Fi. **Master's degree students** also add that it is necessary to strengthen scientific preparation, to organise special courses, to equip laboratories with necessary equipment, and to assess the knowledge of foreign languages orally.

At the same time **employer representatives** note that the existing control mechanisms of knowledge and competences do not fully provide the necessary level of training, demanded in the labour market, and there are gaps between the educational systems and the work place. The the organisation of work experience for students also requires enhancement and improvement.

4. The current levels of qualifications in the education system of Uzbekistan.

On the current levels of qualifications in the education system of Uzbekistan from the point of view of the 8-level qualification framework of the European Union (question 7) the respondents answered the following.

Vice rectors, MHSSPE and CDHSSPE staff, mid-level managers of HEIs and deans consider that it is hypothetically possible to draw parallels between the 8-level qualification framework of the EU and the current levels of qualifications in the education system of Uzbekistan at certain levels, generally related to higher and postgraduate education. At the same time, it is necessary to constantly improve the system of training and the material and technical resources of HEIs and other educational institutions, as well as to constantly monitor specialist demand and their qualifications and competences.

Heads of departments and master's students note that our current system of

qualifications can be considered as quite successful, especially since reforms have positively influenced scientific potential as a whole. At the same time, in spite of the fact that recent work has been carried out on the adaptation to ECTS requirements and the enhancement of education quality, it will still be a challenge to achieve a framework comparable with the one in the European Area of Higher Education.

Teachers and bachelor degree students point out the necessity of a gradual transition to European standards, at the same time taking into account that our levels of qualifications are already rather competent. The current education system with three levels of qualifications allows the update of professional education to take into account the needs of the developing economy, society, science and technology, as well as allowing for training methods to be optimised and providing a choice of different types of training. **Parents** also hold the same opinion.

Employers consider that it is necessary to study the curricula of the EU and whenever possible to use their useful points, for example, to improve the situation with the duration of some special subjects, etc. They also still consider that the current levels of qualifications in the education system of Uzbekistan don't produce the same quality of training of specialists as the 8 -level system of qualification framework of the EU.

5. The role of state educational standards (SES) and their development in the educational system of Uzbekistan.

Answers to questions 8 and 9, in relation to state educational standards (SES), their role, the transparency of procedures and the qualification requirements (QR), showed the following results.

The majority of respondents in all categories agree that SES should be compulsory. At the same time while some respondents consider that they should contain detailed requirements for curricula (the number of hours or credits, compulsory subjects, types of reports, etc.), others believe that state standards could only set the required "results of training" (qualification requirements: knowledge, skills, competences). It should be noted that **department staff and deans of faculties** of HEIs are more likely to fall in the second category.

Despite the prevailing unanimity in the answers to this question, there are also more diverging opinions. So, some **heads of departments, parents and employers** consider that state standards should have only have an advisory role or aren't even necessary.

As to the opinion of participants in the educational process on the transparency of the procedures for setting and approving SES and qualification requirements, the majority of respondents in all categories believe these procedures are relatively transparent. However, a small number of heads of departments, teachers, bachelor degree and master degree students and employers consider that the procedures for setting and approving these documents are known only to the specialists involved in the process and are often not transparent.

6. Development and approval of curricula.

In answer to question 10, practically all respondents replied with the standard accepted procedures for the development and approval of curricula in Uzbekistan. In particular it is stated that working curricula are developed based on the approved standard curricula by the staff of the institution headed by the vice rector on academic issues. Educational department specialists, deans of faculties, chairmen of scientific and methodical faculty councils, heads and principal teaching staff of departments are involved in creative groups as part of curricula development. Developed curricula are then considered and approved at the HEI approval boards.

It is noted that standard curricula are developed by HEIs, then have to pass examination at CDHSSPE, are considered by the Coordination Board at MHSSPE and are finally approved by the Ministry.

In the question of recruiting stakeholders and organisations for consultation in the curricula design process (question 11), **most respondents** replied that they involve specialists from high-profile national HEIs, staff of secondary special, professional educational institutions, and leading experts of interested organisations. HEIs without fail also involve the relevant experts from the ministries under whose remit they fall.

At the same time, certain respondents, for example, some **heads of departments and parents**, expressed the opinion that although the development of curricula and other educational regulating documents should naturally involve relevant organisations, businesses and communities as a natural process, in practice there is often little interest from these organisations.

Answering the question about the use of foreign experience in the process of curricula development (question 12), practically **all respondents** answered that such experience has always been taken into account. Since 2016, the modernisation of standard curricula for bachelor degrees, master's degrees and professional development courses has been undertaken following analysis of the curricula of universities of economically developed countries of the world (generally Germany, Great Britain, the USA, Italy, France, Japan, Korea, China, etc.). At the same time the comparative analysis of curricula of HEIs in Uzbekistan with those of leading foreign universities has been undertaken in the areas of teaching, criteria, academic load, etc. Newly developed curricula are reviewed by foreign specialists and many foreign experts are involved in work at the training centres.

It should be noted that some **heads of departments** pointed out it was difficult to compare the basis of our SES, which have been developed over decades and are based on national educational traditions and roots, to new global requirements and content. In order to get closer to foreign content standards we need to first approve their fundamental, scientific basis.

7. International cooperation on the issues of qualification frameworks.

In answers to the question 13 practically **all respondents** spoke about international cooperation projects at their educational institutions. In particular we heard that international projects (grants) are being implemented, related to the modernisation of the educational process and its organisation based on the experience of the advanced countries. University teaching staff are attending training courses abroad. Joint training centres are being created. Seminars, workshops are being run and certificates being issued. As a result of the implementation of the joint international projects specialists are recognised as having the same level of qualification to that of similar specialists in the EU. The main partners are educational institutions from Germany, USA, France, Japan, South Korea, China and others.

In answer to question 14 about the importance of the participation in cooperation between the European Union and Uzbekistan, and about the mechanisms of such cooperation, **vice rectors and Ministry and CDHSSPE staff** emphasised that it is necessary to constantly improve the education level and training of specialists. Therefore, cooperation between the EU and Uzbekistan is very important when implementing best foreign practices into the educational process of our country. In spite of the fact that the HEIs of the country successfully work and cooperate with many foreign HEIs, it is necessary to significantly broaden the sphere of cooperation with EU universities. Cooperation within educational programmes can include training courses for master's degree students and research associates, advanced training of teachers at EU HEIs

and inviting specialists to hold master's classes in Uzbekistan.

Department staff, deans, heads and the majority of teachers noted that taking into account the continuing reforms in the national educational system, the participation of HEIs in the cooperation between the EU and Uzbekistan is very useful. However, at the same time it is necessary to consider the unique features of our educational process, the legislation in the educational sphere of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the great cultural and social differences and avoid partial or complete dependence of our system on EU policy in the sphere of education.

At the same time, for further integration, they suggest increasing quotas for teaching staff on both sides in the exchange of students and specialists, creating curricula, programmes and textbooks which meet the requirements of modern global science, and strengthening joint cooperation with European higher educational institutions. As well, the integration of educational processes between the CIS countries is suggested, to allocate more time to practice and subjects of specialisation, and to create conditions for developing the above-stated measures.

Master's degree students consider that integration is necessary if all the requirements of the national training programme are taken into account. Cooperation between the European Union and Uzbekistan will help to better understand global issues and current requirements. It is necessary to study in detail the experience of training specialists in the EU and put their achievements in practice.

The majority of **bachelor degree students, parents and employers** also emphasise the necessity of studying in detail the experience of the EU in training specialists so that their achievements can be put into practice in our country. Cooperation between Uzbekistan and the EU has been noted as an opportunity to increase the quality of specialist's training and their reputation globally. The question of mutual recognition of diplomas between the states is considered to be an important aspect of the integration process between the EU and Uzbekistan.

8. Conclusions.

a) The opinions on NQF of those connected to the education system depend on how much they know about them. The level of acceptance or rejection of NQF is predetermined by their level of knowledge about them, i.e. the higher the level is, the more positive their opinion of NQF, and the lower the level is, the more negative their opinion. Therefore, in the question of development and implementation of NQF it is necessary to try and improve the understanding of all employee categories of HEIs, students, employers, and the general public about the essence, principles of creation and benefits of NQF.

b) The majority of participants in the educational process consider that the list of knowledge, skills and competence should be created on the basis of the requirements of employers and the labour market, the competitive conditions, general economic tendencies and their practical feasibility, taking into account domestic and international experience.

c) Employer representatives believe that various qualifications levels need to be set since it will clarify the qualification levels of specialists, and the development of course content should be carried out on the basis of the required knowledge, skills and competences.

d) Among the interviewees there is a strong opinion that the current rating system provides the main functions of control: diagnostic, training and educational. However, some employer representatives note that the existing mechanisms of control of knowledge and competences do not fully provide the necessary level of training demanded in the labour market, and there are often gaps between educational systems and working practice.

e) The majority of participants in the educational process consider that it is

hypothetically possible to draw parallels between the 8-level system of qualification framework of the EU and the current levels of qualifications in Uzbekistan in relation to higher and postgraduate education. However, some respondents (heads of departments and master's degree students) note that it will still be a challenge to obtain the QF level of the European Area of Higher Education.

f) The majority of respondents in all categories agree in that state educational standards (SES) should be compulsory. However, although a number of respondents consider that SES should specify detailed requirements of curricula, others believe that SES should contain only the required "results of training" (qualification requirements: knowledge, skills, competences). Some heads of departments, parents and employers consider that state standards should have only an advisory role or aren't even necessary.

g) Most respondents consider the procedures of the development and approval of SES and qualification requirements quite transparent. However, some of the heads of departments, teachers, bachelor and master's degree students and employers consider that these procedures are not transparent enough.

h) Practically all the respondents are aware of the standard accepted procedures of curricula development and approval in Uzbekistan. They are also aware that since 2016 the modernisation of standard curricula has been made on the basis of the analysis of curricula of universities of economically developed countries of the world.

i) Some heads of departments and parents expressed the opinion that interest in the development of curricula and other educational regulating documents should come from related organisations, businesses and communities as a natural process, however in practice such interest is often lacking.

j) Some of the heads of departments and teachers noted that in the question of application of foreign experience it is difficult to relate the basis of our SES to new global requirements and content. In order to reach foreign standards on content, their approval and scientific explanation is required.

k) Practically all respondents agreed that cooperation between the EU and Uzbekistan is necessary and useful. However, at the same time some HEI employees and teachers consider that it is necessary to take into account the unique features of our educational process, legislation, and the great cultural differences, not allowing partial or complete dependence of our system on EU policy in the sphere of education.

l) The majority of bachelor degree students, parents and employers also emphasise the necessity of cooperation and the detailed study of the experience of the EU in the training of specialists; and the question of mutual recognition of diplomas between the states is considered to be an important aspect of the cooperation process between the EU and Uzbekistan.

m) The survey results should be taken into account in the process of developing regulation documents and guidelines for a National Qualification Framework.

A. A. Khodjaev

CAEP coordinator from the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

on qualification system and prospects of NQF

in the educational system of Uzbekistan

NAME OF INSTITUTION: _____

STATUS OF INSTITUTION:_____

EXECUTIVE PERSON:_____

1.How far the administration board and the staff of HEIS are informed about the qualification frameworks, its formation principles and use?

a) The staff and the administration board of HEIs are not informed about qualification frameworks;

b) Only few teachers and officials, who passed training courses in Europe, are informed on qualification frameworks;

c) Majority of heads and teachers of HEIs know about qualification frameworks;

d) The whole staff and students of HEIs are informed about qualification frameworks.

2. How far the administration board and the staff of HEIS are informed about the qualification frameworks, adopted in other countries?

a) The staff and the administration board of HEIs are not informed about qualification frameworks;

b) Only few teachers and officials, who passed training courses in Europe, are informed on qualification frameworks;

c) Majority of heads and teachers of HEIs know about qualification frameworks;

d) The whole staff and students of HEIs are informed about qualification frameworks.

3.In your opinion, how far the implementation, working out and approval of national qualification frameworks into the system of state education is necessary?

a) There is no need in this matter;

b) There is need for implementation, but first it is necessary to carry out explanatory works, and the representatives of state bodies and social public should know the aims and tasks of NQF and what can they do for economics and the educational system of our state;

c) National qualification frameworks have to be implemented, as it will allow to increase transparency of training system in our country, as well as it will improve the mobility of students and graduates, and besides, will clear up qualification levels of experts at cooperation with other countries;

d) It is difficult to answer.

4. How do you think, how far it is important to implement and use of NQF in the educational system of our country?

a) There is no need in this matter, as the presence of SES and qualification requirements is quite enough;

b) Before implementation, a special research work should be carried out on useful points of this innovation:

C) NQF have to be implemented, as new conditions of current educational system of Uzbekistan need this process (globalization, market requirements and etc.)

d) It is difficult to answer.

5. In your opinion, how the knowledge, abilities and competences list should be formed for the graduates of HEIs of various levels (bachelors, masters, senior scientific research workers)?

(give your answer on the separate page)

6. What are the methods, mechanism and instruments of formation of knowledge level, skills and competences for bachelors, masters and senior scientific researchers at your University, and to your opinion, do they really provide the necessary level of training of demanded experts?

(give your answer on the separate page)

7. How would you characterize the current levels of qualifications in the persistent educational system of Uzbekistan (a specialist, bachelor, master) from the point of view of 8-level system of QF of the EU?

(give your answer on the separate page)

8. Your attitude to SES and its role in the educational system of the country?

a) SES should be obligatory to its implementation and contain detailed requirements to curricula (the number of hours or credits, obligatory disciplines, types of reports):

b) SES should be obligatory to implementation, but contain only required “results of education” (qualification requirements: knowledge, abilities and competences);

c) SES can be worked out detailed, but have only advisory manner;

d) SES is not necessary.

9. In your opinion, how far the procedures of working out and approval of SES and qualification requirements are transparent?

a) At HEIs nobody knows about the working out and approval of these documents;

b) The procedures of working out and approval of these documents are known only to the specialists, who participated in the process of their development and often are not transparent;

c) The procedures of working out and approval of these documents are known to the teachers, chiefs of departments, deans, teaching and methodical departments and other bodies of HEIs, and are transparent enough;

d) Transparency and availability of development and approval procedures for all participants of the educational process is the general principle of their formation and implementation, and this principle is being kept.

10. Please, describe the process the working out and approval of curricula at your HEI. What kind of departments and officials take part in the process of its working out? Who approves them and checks conformity to SESs and qualification requirements?

(give your answer on the separate page)

11. What kind of stakeholders and organizations are attracted for consulting at compiling of curricula?

(give your answer on the separate page)

12 ***Is experience of foreign countries used (or whether foreign experts are involved and foreign expertise is carried out) at developing of SES, qualification requirements and curricula? In what degree and form it is used?***

. ***(give your answer on the separate page)***

13. ***Have your HEI joint international programs (grants) on modernization of higher education, which regard to qualification frameworks, issues of unification of education results, mutual acceptability of curricula and diplomas, training programs, etc.? What is the positive experience here and are there any difficulties and problems in this process?***

(give your answer on the separate page)

14. In your opinion, is it important for your HEI the participation in integration processes between the EU and Uzbekistan? What kinds of mechanisms of educational programs integration of Uzbekistan and the EU would you offer?

(give your answer on the separate page)

Lessons Learnt from the Introduction of National Qualifications Framework in Latvia

Qualifications frameworks arrange qualifications in a meaningful frame, contributing to the transparency, visibility and hierarchy of the qualifications.

The design of qualification frameworks was first initiated within the Bologna process. The Berlin Communique (2003) and Bergen Communique (2005) encouraged countries to develop national qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes compatible with the overarching qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area.

Discussions on the development of a national qualification framework for higher education in Latvia were proposed by the Rectors Council in 2004. A working group involving representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Rectors Council, the Higher Education Council and the Academic Information Centre developed and presented the level descriptors to a wider audience, but unfortunately the concept of a qualification framework was not well accepted.

The other driver for a qualification framework was the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2008) on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. The recommendation invites countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010, and, where appropriate, to develop national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice.

Four years later the Latvian education audience had a better understanding of qualifications frameworks as regular promotional and discussion events had been organised. In 2009, the Ministry of Education and Science established the working group for the supervision of the qualification framework development process involving all relevant stakeholders' e.g. social partners, students, quality assurance agencies, and education sector representatives. The steering group reviewed and approved the level descriptors developed by experts prior to their integration in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations and the Self-Assessment Report.

The coordinating role of the development of qualification framework was assigned to the Academic Information Centre. In 2011, when the level descriptors were designed and the self-assessment report was elaborated, a countrywide consultation process was organised, involving all relevant stakeholders. As a result of the consultation process, the self-assessment report was adopted and necessary legislative amendments were introduced.

There were several lessons learnt from Latvia's experience of introducing a National Qualifications Framework. The first important issue is to define the responsible implementing/coordinating body in the country. In Latvia it is the Academic Information Centre, which deals also with the recognition of foreign qualifications, quality assurance of higher education, and the transparency tool Europass. Currently the Academic Information Centre serves also as the National Coordination Point for the European Qualification Framework and National Qualification Framework.

Of great importance is to involve all relevant stakeholders covering all areas of the qualification framework. When starting the development of a qualification framework, the first task was to identify all the appropriate and concerned stakeholders and to define methods of communicating with them. The most important stakeholders became a part of the steering group established by the Ministry of Education and Science: Higher Education Council, Academic Information Centre (NCP, ENIC/NARIC), Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre, Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, Employers' Confederation of Latvia , College Association, Education Quality State Administration, Latvian Association of

Local and Regional Governments, Latvian Rectors' Council, Latvian Students' Union, State Education Content Centre, Latvian Chamber of Crafts.

The following methods of wide communication were used to disseminate information to stakeholders and receive feedback from them: 1) regular seminars and conferences on important development areas of qualifications frameworks, therefore showing society the added value of qualification frameworks, 2) the translation into Latvian language of important publications on the topic, therefore, information becomes accessible to a wider audience 3) and last but not least is the website www.nki-latvija.lv, where broad and diverse information about qualification frameworks is available.

It was clearly stated during the development process of the Latvian qualifications framework that the development of a qualifications framework in the country is a joint activity and though real implementation and use of the qualifications framework it will benefit all stakeholders.

Baiba Ramina

Director or Academic Information Centre, Riga, Latvia



Lessons Learnt from the Introduction of NQF in Poland

The main aim of the presentation was to share the experience of the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework in Poland[1]. It focused on the impact of the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework on the higher education institutions and the external evaluation procedures of the Polish Accreditation Committee. Successful accomplishment of this process is perceived as one of the key milestones in the formal adjustment of the Polish higher education system to the European Higher Education Area principles and requirements.

Development of the National Qualifications Framework in Poland was a long and extensive process started in the early 2000s. It reached it first important milestone in 2006 with the adoption of the qualifications framework for higher education. Currently, Poland is in the process of synchronising the qualifications frameworks for different levels of education, sectors and appropriate information systems. This overarching system is called Polish Integrated Qualifications System.

Before implementation of the qualifications framework, the Polish higher education system was heavy regulated by the state. Its main manifestation was the so called "education standards" for 117 pre-defined study programmes. That meant that the higher education institutions had a very limited autonomy in designing their own programme goals and curriculum. Consequently, there was very limited room for diversity of higher education institutions' missions and roles in society, as the "standards" were unified for highly research-oriented universities and labour-market oriented universities of applied sciences.

Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) granted greater programmatic autonomy to the higher education institutions but also shifted responsibility for the quality of education entirely to them. Higher education institutions are fully autonomous in designing new study programmes, as long as they are clearly linked with the NQF. This also brought significant changes to the internal management processes within higher education institutions, as they are nowadays fully responsible for the identification of stakeholders' expectations and translating them into study programmes or other education services. Consequently, higher education institutions can now pursue their diverse missions and thus be more closely related with the regional economy and communities.

Before the introduction of the NQF, accreditation procedures performed by the Polish Accreditation Committee were, by necessity and legal requirements, input and content-oriented. That means that the evaluation procedures focused extensively on the formal and quantitative aspects of the study programmes and resources rather than quality outcomes. Due to very strict regulations concerning the content of the study programmes, there was very little room for exceptions and innovation, as well as quality fit for local or regional purposes.

External evaluations based on the National Qualifications Framework provide PKA with a wider spectrum of outcome-based evaluations. Therefore, the procedure can be more focused on the quality of the outcomes, instead of the input and content. Thus, the procedures can be more context-relevant and include more stakeholder-oriented approaches. As a result, the external evaluation procedure is more relevant and meaningful for the higher education institutions with diverse missions, which is in line with the principle of standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

[1] The theoretical background of the presentation was largely based on the published materials of the Education Research Institute. More extensive materials are available on the Institute's webpage: http://www.ibe.edu.pl/en/

The Polish Qualifications Framework contains two level of descriptors. It covers the full spectrum of formal education offered by any Polish education provider at any level. First degree descriptors provide a general definition of each one out of eight education levels, linked directly with the European Qualifications Framework. It contains a very generic set of competencies required within each level of education. It is supplemented by the second-degree descriptors, which provide more subject specific definitions. Some specific fields of knowledge also require a sector-specific qualifications framework. Some of these have already been developed (i.e. for sports, tourism) others are still under development in Poland.

Currently Poland is finalising the development and implementation of the Polish Integrated Qualifications System. It is composed of the Polish Qualifications Framework, the Integrated Qualifications Register and a system of quality assurance and validation of the learning outcomes. The Integrated Qualifications Register is an IT tool containing all recognised education providers, their programmes and indications of the level of qualifications awarded according to the NQF. The tool is meant to be a platform of communication between education providers, employers and the labour market. It should facilitate easy recognition of the qualifications held by an individual, which might be important i.e. in the recruitment process. Furthermore, it will also support the process of recognition of prior learning performed by the Polish education providers, including higher education institutions.

The formal accreditation system is divided according to the scope of qualifications. Full qualifications (i.e. academic degrees) are accredited by the national accreditation institutions, specific for a given level of education. For example, the Polish Accreditation Committee is dedicated to the accreditation of the study programmes of level 6 and 7 of EQF (bachelor and master).

The Integrated Qualification System created room for formal accreditation of partial qualifications (i.e. courses specific for limited-access profession, open market certificates, etc.). The process of accreditation of such qualifications is conducted by the entities active in the given field (i.e. banking, tourism) and supervised by the minister – coordinator of the Integrated System of Qualifications. The accreditation bodies are selected in an open call for the 3-year period.

The introduction of the National Qualifications Framework has also brought a number of challenges, which have had to be faced by the actors of the system. Learning outcomes-based programme design is a major shift of perspective for higher education institutions and some of them are still struggling with it. The NQF also explicitly identified new categories of competencies, like soft skills and social competencies, which were not purposely embedded in the knowledge-oriented system of education. New requirements concerning the accountability of the higher education institutions also required putting a much stronger focus on internal quality assurance systems, which is still a major challenge for most of the higher education institutions.

Countries willing to introduce their own national qualifications framework can make use of some of the Polish experience and lessons learnt. First of all, it is important to emphasise the role and supportive function of the EU assistance programmes, which enable the sharing of good practices and facilitate mutual learning. It is also critical to prepare the academic community for the NQF, as usually it is very significant change, which usually leads to resistance. Therefore, it might be beneficial to plan pilot implementations, which might give more hands-on examples in the given national context. It is also very important to give the education community enough time to make themselves familiar with the new system and understands its benefits. The whole process should be heavily supported by the communication of the added value of the transformation towards national qualifications framework.

Maciej Markowski

Int. Policy Advisor, Polish Accreditation Committee, Poland

Lessons learnt from the Introduction of NQF in Romania

The reform of the Romanian education system is underpinned by legislation, mainly the National Education Law, with subsequent amendments. Promoting a broad lifelong learning perspective, the law also emphasises the importance of validation and the implementation of learning outcomes.

In 2013, Romania adopted a learning outcomes-based national qualification framework (NQF) for lifelong learning – the Romanian national qualifications framework (ROQF) – by Government Decision No 918/2013 (2). This aims to bring together nationally recognised qualifications from initial and continuing vocational education and training (CVET), apprenticeship, general and higher education, and to help integrate the validation of non-formal learning into the national qualifications system. The framework builds on reforms in vocational education and training (VET) and the development of competence-based qualifications since the 1990s.

Parallel work was carried out in higher education, steered by the National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment (NAQHEPESE). A national qualifications framework for higher education (QFHE) has been implemented, in line with the Bologna process and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Self-certification was completed in 2011.

One of the main challenges of recent years has been to link the development processes, structures and stakeholders from VET and higher education, and to improve links with the labour market. An important step was taken in June 2011 when the National Council for Adults' Vocational Training and the National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment were merged into one single body -The National Qualifications Authority (NQA) which is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive NQF.

The development of a comprehensive NQF addresses the following strategic objectives:

- integration and coordination of national qualification subsystems;
- improving transparency;
- making access to lifelong learning easier for all;
- ensuring progress;
- improving qualification quality in line with the needs of the labour market and broader society;
- developing recognition of the vocational qualifications system;
- increasing awareness of the importance of indicating the EQF qualification level on all certificates, diplomas and Europass supplements.

Apart from its transparency function, the NQF is seen as a tool to support national reforms and for the modernisation of education and training.

The NQF comprises of eight qualification levels that can be acquired in education and training, and by validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning arenas. National level descriptors are identical to EQF level descriptors. They are described in terms of learning outcomes and defined in three categories:

- knowledge (theoretical and/or factual);
- skills, split into cognitive skills (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical skills (manual dexterity and use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- competence (scope of responsibility and autonomy).

An amendment to the 2013 government decision for the approval of the NQF was published in July 2015 (Government Decision No 567/2015 amending

Government Decision No 918/2013 regarding the approval of the NQF). Its aim is to clarify the correspondence between the NQF/EQF levels, the issued qualifications and the type of education and training programmes that lead to qualifications at each level, as well as the access requirements for each NQF level.

The VET sector is at the forefront in the use of the learning outcomes approach, responding directly to social and economic needs. Initial VET qualifications (levels 3 - 5) are described in terms of training standards, which are based on occupational analysis and standards and which specify the units of learning outcomes. Vocational training standards for level 3-5 have been developed by the National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development - National Center for TVET (CNDIPT) in collaboration with the social partners and approved by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

The structure of a training standard for IVET (levels 3-5) is:

1. Brief description of qualification (in this description the NQF and EQF levels are mentioned);

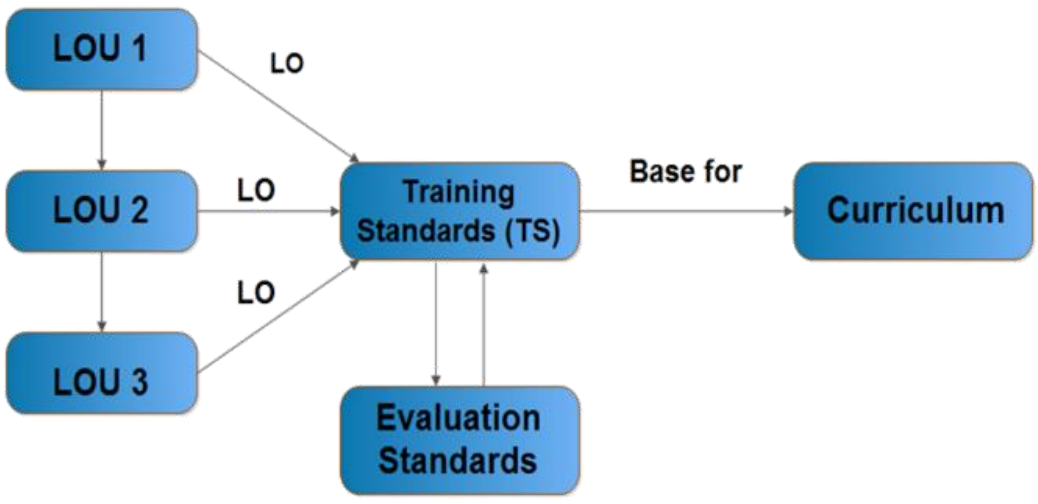
2. Occupations that can be practised;

3. Units of learning outcomes for qualification:

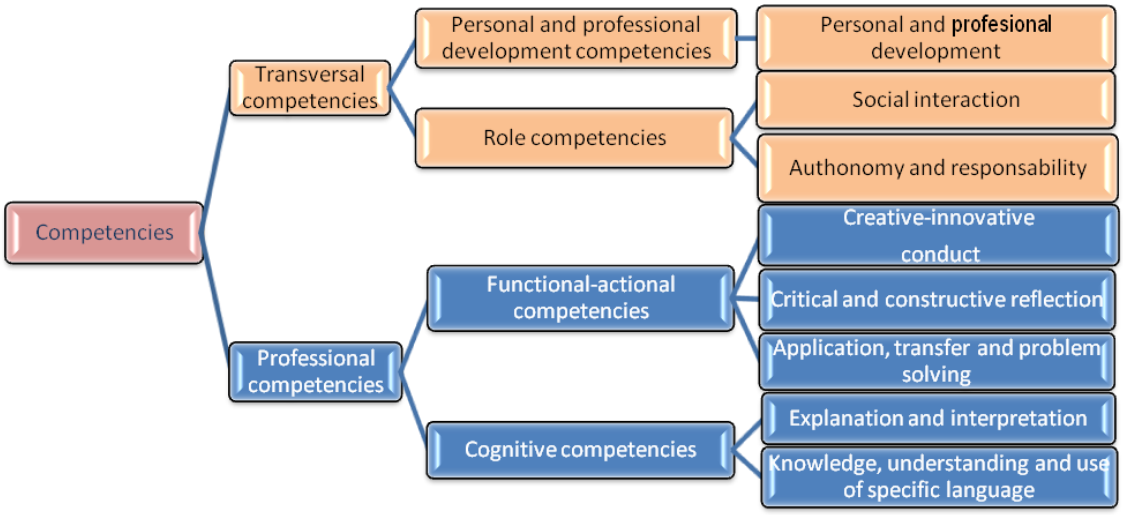
- general technical learning outcomes units;
- specialised technical learning outcomes units
    - Learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies in terms of autonomy, responsibility, creativity):
    - Key competency areas developed under unit specialised technical learning outcomes
    - Minimum equipment list for quality training (required for the school or the economic operator)
    - Assessment standard of learning outcomes unit
    - Materials and equipment needed
    - Criteria and performance indicators and their weight

4. Table of correlation of learning outcomes units with competence units of the occupations that can be practised.

New curricula have been designed. The relation between training standards and curriculum is presented in the following image:



The structure of a training standard for levels 6-8 (HE) is:



In 2014 a ministerial order (Order of the Ministry of Education No 3973/2014) entered into force regulating the equivalence between the five qualification levels available prior to 2013 and the eight levels of the NQF.

The NQF is made visible to potential stakeholders through meetings and workshops organised by the National Qualifications Authority, as well as promotional materials and social media. In 2015, NQF implementation activities were undertaken in the project *Financial support for the EQF in Romania* funded by the European Commission. One of the main outcomes of the project was the draft of a comprehensive national qualification register, building on the national register of higher education qualifications and the national register of vocational qualifications. The National Qualifications Register is under development.

The methodology currently allows for the obtaining of qualifications through validation of non-formal and informal learning up to level 3. In the NQF, validation is still linked only with occupational standards that relate to CVET qualifications. The current non-formal system in Romania operates parallel to the formal system, and the bridge between the two is still under development. It is not possible to obtain formal qualifications (full or partial) through validation of non-formal and informal learning. The validation system is mainly for adults and people who do not tend to go back to the formal system, though this is still an open discussion. The National Law of Education No 1/2011 (the chapter on lifelong learning) creates the legal framework for developing community lifelong learning centres. These centres have a specific role in increasing access to non-formal and informal learning and to the validation of learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning, through second chance programmes and certification of skills and competences. The creation of these centres, however, is still under discussion. The methodology for their establishment has been proposed for public debate but has not yet been approved.

The main steps for the future are:

- To finalise the National Register of Qualification;
- To present the final referencing report to the EQF advisory group;
- To increase participation in adult learning;
- Permanent community lifelong learning centres to be established by local authorities, in partnership with education providers;
- To ensure a better definition of certain competences for the study

programmes in HE to aid differentiation between bachelor and master degrees;

- To implement the learning outcomes approach in adult learning-training;
- To improve links between the education and training system and the labour market.

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SECTION 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES

Linking Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance – the Case of Latvia

The development of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance are interdependent processes. Self-assessment is a mandatory part of the overall process of quality assurance of qualifications frameworks. It is a mandatory part within two processes – the European Area of Higher Education (EHEA) or Bologna process and the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (2008) on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning.

Quality assurance agencies have a certain role in the referencing process of qualifications frameworks to the overarching frameworks. The recommendation on the establishment of the EQF for lifelong learning encouraged countries to promote and apply the principles of quality assurance in education and training when relating higher education and vocational education and training qualifications within national qualifications systems to the EQF. Quality assurance is necessary to ensure accountability and the improvement of higher education and vocational education and training and should be carried out in accordance with the following principles: quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of a qualifications framework; quality assurance should be an integral part of the internal management of education and training institutions; quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies; quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes. Quality assurance systems should include the following elements: clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, stakeholder involvement, appropriate resources, consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review, feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement and widely accessible evaluation results.

In Latvia a quality assurance agency was established in 1994. In 2012 the responsibility for quality assurance in higher education was taken over by the Ministry of Education and Science. In order to implement the European standards and guidelines for quality assurance, the Government has approved the new concept of quality assurance of higher education, and since 2015 quality assurance is one of the tasks of the Academic Information Centre. The main tasks of the quality assurance agency of Latvia are to organise the accreditation of study fields and to organise the accreditation of higher education institutions.

The Latvian qualification framework is based on EHEA and EQF criteria. The Latvian qualification framework consists of 8 levels from which levels 5-8 are devoted to higher education and are comparable to Bologna cycles.

5	Short cycle	2-3 years	120-180 ECTS
6	Bachelor	3-4 years	180-240 ECTS
7	Master	1-2 years	60-120 ECTS
8	Doctor	3-4 years	180-240 ECTS

The qualification framework in Latvia is fully based on learning outcomes. Developed level descriptors for higher education are elaborated using State education standards, occupational standards, EQF level descriptors, Dublin descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy. The use of learning outcomes in the design of the study programme is evaluated during the accreditation process.

One of the prerequisites for the development and implementation of qualification frameworks is the use of the learning outcomes approach. At the same time, quality assurance is more and more linked to learning outcomes. Where discussions rise is on the role of quality assurance within the different stages of the learning process and about the assessment of learning outcomes.

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Quality Assurance of Education in Latvia

Quality assurance of education includes:

- **Registration** of educational institutions.
- **Licensing** of educational programmes.
- **Implementation** of licensed educational programmes.
- **Accreditation** of educational institutions and educational programmes.

Registration gives the right to start an activity[2], a licence gives the right to begin the implementation of the educational programme[3] and at the same time is the initial stage of evaluating the quality of education. The implementation of the educational programme must begin within one year from the date of receipt of the licence.

Accreditation[4] is a mandatory and regular procedure used to assess the activities of the educational institution and the quality of implementation of the educational programme. The main purpose of accreditation is to confirm that the quality of the educational process in a certain educational institution fully complies with the requirements of normative acts and quality standards. In accordance with the Education Law and Vocational Training Law, the accreditation must be conducted at least once every six years, starting within five years of the start of activity of the educational institution. The educational programme must be accredited within two years of its implementation and at least once every six years. Accreditation of educational programmes entitles the educational institution to issue a state recognised document of education.

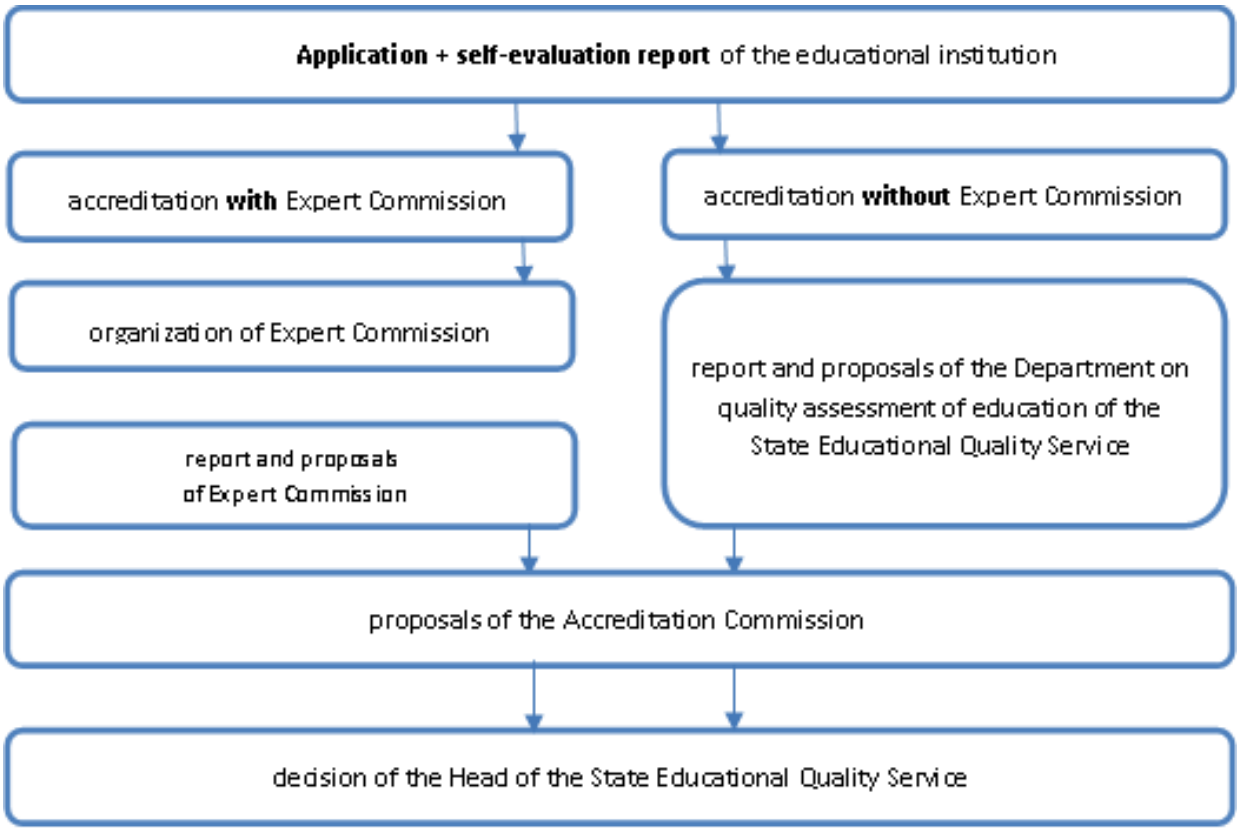
The quality assurance and evaluation of the quality of education is closely linked to the process of accreditation of schools, educational institutions and educational programmes. During the accreditation, the quality of implementation of the relevant education programmes is assessed. Since the beginning of 2000s, a separate system of quality evaluation of education for general secondary schools has been implemented, originally developed by the World Bank project based on the methods applied in Scotland. The methodology of the quality evaluation of vocational education was developed by local resources in the administration of vocational education. In the second part of September 2010, a **unified methodology** for quality assessment and evaluation of **general education and vocational education** was introduced.

During this period, the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 831 from December 20, 2016 on "Procedure for accreditation of educational institutions, examination centres and other institutions, programmes of general and vocational education established in the Education Law as well as evaluation of the professional performance of heads of secondary educational institutions, state universities, state and municipal educational institutions" (hereinafter - CMR 831) determines the quality assessment and evaluation of education, the accreditation process[5].

The accreditation process is based on self-evaluation by the institution and external evaluation. Self-evaluation is a method of quality assurance. External evaluation is composed of three stages: the establishment and work of the Expert Commission; a meeting of the Interdepartmental Accreditation Commission (composed of delegated representatives of social partners) for examining the proposals of the Expert Commission; the decision of the Head of

[2] Education Law. https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759 (*eng.),* section 22-24.22-24.
[3] Education Law. https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759 (*eng.),* section 25.
[4] Education Law. https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759 (*eng.),* section 1, point 10.
[5] Ref.: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/287602-kartiba-kada-akredite-izglitibas-iestades-eksaminacijas-centrus-un-citas-izglitibas-likuma-noteiktas-institucijas (*latv.)*

the State Educational Quality Service (administrative act).



Accreditation process

The Panel of the Expert Commission is defined by the State Quality Service and consists of at least three education specialists who have completed a course on the evaluation of the activities of educational institutions, examination centres and the quality of implementation of the educational programmes. The courses are run by the State Educational Quality Service.

The Accreditation Expert Commission evaluates the performance of the educational institution and the quality of implementation of the educational programme at one of **four quality levels:**

Level I - insufficient. This level characterises insufficient indicators in some aspects of a certain criterion: most often there are significant disadvantages that negatively affect the quality of the education process. Immediate improvements are needed.

Level II - adequate. This level characterises insufficient indicators in some aspects of a certain criteria, but they do not significantly affect the quality of the education process. A longer-term process is necessary to eliminate the shortcomings.

Level III - good. This level characterises clearly positive indicators in a certain criterion, there are no significant shortcomings and, in most cases, a positive trend is observed.

Level IV - very good. This level characterises positive indicators in a certain criterion. This level is characterised by special achievements in a certain criterion; there is innovation in the activity of the educational institution.

The following sectors and criteria are assessed in the process of accreditation:

1. Training content and educational programmes implemented*
2. Teaching and training
   2.1. Quality of teaching*
   2.2. Quality of training

2.3. Assessment as an integral part of the educational process

3. Performance of students

   3.1. Achievements of students in their daily work

   3.2. Achievements of students in national tests

4. Support to students

   4.1. Psychological, social and pedagogical support

   4.2. Security guarantee for students (security and labour safety)*

   4.3. Support to personal development

   4.4. Support of career development

   4.5. Support in differentiation of educational work

   4.6. Support to students with special needs

   4.7. Cooperation with student´s family

5. Educational environment in the institution

   5.1. Microclimate

   5.2. Physical environment and accessibility

6. Resources of the educational institution

   6.1. Equipment, material and technical resources

   6.2. Human resources*

7. Organization of work of the educational institution, its management and quality assurance

   7.1. Self-evaluation and planning of the development of educational institution

   7.2. Institutional management arrangements and human resources management*

   7.3. Cooperation of the educational institution with other institutions.

If at least one of the marked (*) criteria is assessed as of an insufficient level, the Expert Commission will put forward a proposal to deny the accreditation.

Developing **quality assurance and the evaluation of vocational education** since 2010, Latvia participates in the European Union Working Group on the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) proposed by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance System, criteria and indicators. Since 2013 the State Education Quality Service of Latvia has been the national liaison for EQAVET, ensuring compliance with the common indicators of quality evaluation of vocational education and training for the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.[6]

Common indicators of the characteristics of the quality of vocational education and training for use at the national level and at the level of educational institution:

1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for educational institutions
2. Investment in training of teachers and instructors
3. Level of participation in vocational education and training programmes
4. Number of graduates from vocational education and training programmes
5. Employment rate of graduates from vocational education and training programmes
6. Use of acquired skills in the workplace
7. Unemployment rate
8. Vulnerable groups
9. Mechanisms to identify labour market needs in training

[6] Ref.: http://www.eqavet.eu/gns/library/policy-documents/policy-documents-2009.aspx.

10. Schemes to promote larger accessibility of vocational education and training programmes.

In accordance with CMR 831, 8 of these indicators are being implemented in Latvia[7]. The educational institutions develop the information on their progress in the process of self-evaluation according to a common methodology and include it in the report[8]. Indicators 1 and 7 are defined at the national level. Recommendations[9] for the introduction of the EQAVET system approach to quality assurance of vocational education, which includes methods for close cooperation with social partners - representatives of the industry, employers and workers (trade unions) - have been developed.

Annually schools and educational institutions of vocational education provide an electronic submission of their progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the external quality evaluation. It is published annually on the website of the State Education Quality Service *www.ikvd.gov.lv* - an informative report on the results of the evaluation of the quality of schools and educational institutions, and the implementation of educational programmes.

Data on schools and educational institutions is collected in the **State Educational Information System** and the information is partially available to any interested party. The system administrator is the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia. Integral parts of the system are: Register of educational institutions; Register of Teachers; Register of licensed and accredited educational programmes; Register of academic staff; State database of children who have reached compulsory school age, and it also contains information about students (including information on disability, functional disorders, prolonged absence, family members, issued certificated of education), statistical reports, etc.[10].

In 2015, the management of the educational system, then the Cabinet of Ministers and the Seimas of Latvia, decided to introduce the evaluation of professional activities of the heads of general education schools and educational institutions of vocational education, and through CMR 831 the evaluation of the professional performance of heads of educational institutions is being implemented and processes and methods are being developed. The founder of the educational institution evaluates the manager at least once every 2 years. The State Educational Quality Service organises the professional evaluation of the manager every six years during the current accreditation. Professional evaluation of a new manager taking office for the first time must be arranged within 2 years, but not earlier than 6 months, of his entry into the position (CMR 831, chapter VI, point 41-59).

For self-evaluation and regular evaluation by the founder of a school or educational institution, the head and the founder use the State "Information system of electronic assessment forms" as a tool of evaluation, completing and approving the form of self-evaluation of the head of the educational institution before the work of the Commission of Experts in the educational institution starts.

Latvia has been implementing common European instruments for transparency, recognition and mobility since 2008 as part of the development of the quality policy of vocational education[11]. Among others, there are the Qualifications Framework *EQF*, Certificate supplement *EUROPASS*, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training *ECVET* to highlight specific learning outcomes for industry

[7] Ref.: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/287602-kartiba-kada-akredite-izglitibas-iestades-eksaminacijas-centrus-un-citas-izglitibas-likuma-noteiktas-institucijas (*latv.)*, Article 25.

[8] Ref.: https://ikvd.gov.lv/akreditacija-vaditaja-novertesana/pieteiksanas-akreditacijai/ Metodiskie ieteikumi profesionālās izglītības un vispārējās izglītības iestāžu pašvērtēšanai, (*latv.)*.

[9] https://ikvd.gov.lv/akreditacija-vaditaja-novertesana/kvalitates-novertesana-eqavet/ (*eng.)*.

[10] Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation: https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=215853 (*latv.)*.

[11] Gramlinger Franz. *Instruments to connect VET systems within the European Union.* 2013. *http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A60130.*

qualifications, the System of validation of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal education and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training – *EQAVET*.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that an important factor in the development of quality vocational education is capacity-building and the development of a positive attitude to the introduction of new processes in schools and educational institutions - as Henry Ford said *"Quality" means doing it right when no one is looking.*

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Internal Quality Assurance and Accreditation in HE – The case of Poland

The presentation focused on the issue of internal quality assurance systems in higher education and their relation to qualifications frameworks and accreditation. The introduction of internal quality assurance systems is the result of a paradigm shift of the traditional role of higher education institutions in society. Across time, universities have been treated as “ivory towers”, where knowledge was produced, stored and shared with those who could afford it. Traditionally universities have been rather closed communities of scholars with little influence from the outside world. However, due to changes in the funding of higher education systems and the introduction of public funding mechanisms, the role of the university has changed. Due to the growing expectations of society and demands for greater accountability of universities, the need for transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of the functioning of higher education institutions has also arisen.

Following the above-mentioned paradigm shift, the concept of quality has also been modified. Traditionally, quality was perceived as a “level of excellence”. It was mostly related to the elite character of the university. However, due to macro-trends, like a growing demand for higher education and technological development or globalisation, the traditional purpose of higher education has also evolved. Nowadays, besides a traditional understanding of quality as a “level of excellence” there are new concepts, fit for other purposes. In some areas, i.e. regulated professions, quality can be understood as compliance with certain standards. In others, like labour market-oriented higher education institutions or specific programmes, quality is perceived as accordance with the stakeholders’ expectations. Different concepts and perceptions of quality do not automatically mean that one definition is better than other. Modern higher education respects and embraces diversity, as long as there is clearly defined purpose.

This definition of the purpose behind higher education also defines responsibility for the quality of the outcomes. One of the main principles behind “Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Quality Assurance Area” says that “higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance”. This means that higher education institutions are given autonomy in defining their own purpose but are also accountable for its realisation. The latter is expressed in a two-layered, interconnected system of quality assurance – internal and external.

The introduction of the qualifications framework and the methodology for the definition of learning outcomes has given higher education institutions a universal language for defining their purpose and the level of study programmes. Traditional input and content-oriented education has been replaced by outcome-oriented. The higher education institution can define the quality of a programme by describing it using an easily understandable form of intended learning outcomes. The programmatic intended learning outcomes are rooted in the institutional mission, its autonomously defined purpose of existence and its role in society. Once defined, intended learning outcomes are operationalised into the teaching and learning process, using an accordingly adjusted form of well-known concepts of curricula and syllabi. Properly defined teaching and learning process should result in achieved learning outcomes, which will match the intended ones. The achieved learning outcomes are the point of reference in the modern internal quality assurance systems.

An internal quality assurance system is a set of policies, processes and procedures, primarily aimed at identifying the consistency between achieved and intended learning outcomes. When significant deviance is identified, the system should enable higher education

institution to identify the causes. This becomes part of the education process: definition of programme goals, intended learning outcomes, proper teaching and learning methods, appropriateness of the students' assessment methods. It also can be a combination or interrelation between two or more of them. For example, even the best evaluation methods need to be suitable for given intended learning outcomes, otherwise they will not provide information concerning the level of achievement by a student.

The most common function of internal quality assurance systems is therefore to help the institution master its processes and maintain the benefit of its improvement actions. As a result, it should improve stakeholders' confidence that the higher education institution is delivering the quality it promises, fulfilling expectations or reaching threshold minimum requirements of the education or other area of its activity.

A fully functional internal quality assurance system should be rooted in institutional strategy and be a combination of structures, policies, processes and procedures, engaging as many members of the academic community and its external stakeholders in identifying and analysing shortcomings, assuring and enhancing the quality of the higher education institution's services. In order to be fully effective, it should be tailored to each specific institution's purposes, contexts and requirements. The higher education institution should also provide the resources necessary for the effective functioning of the internal quality assurance system. As one of the key success factors, the system should also facilitate internal and external communication and therefore build mutual trust among the members of the academic community. It should also allow institutions to eliminate inefficient internal processes and procedures, leading to better efficiency.

There are different methodologies for the evaluation of an internal quality assurance system in external evaluation or accreditation procedures. However, there are certain elements common to all of them. Usually, external evaluation of an internal quality assurance system begins with the identification of its goals and the structures in place to support them. Based on this it is possible to evaluate if all the crucial factors influencing the quality of education are being taken into account. Finally, it should be established if the information provided by the system is being taken into account in the institutional decision-making process. It is also possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the system, based on the evidence of the quality issues identified and improved. Eventually, evaluation should lead to a conclusion, if the system is based on the PDCA cycle (plan-do-check-act), which means that it is leading an institution to a continuous improvement of its services.

The most popular ways of including an internal quality assurance system in external evaluation / accreditation procedures are the following:

a. Programme accreditation – the evaluation of the system in a limited scope, focused mainly on teaching and learning within a given programme

b. Internal quality assurance systems audit - procedure focused only on the complex internal quality assurance system evaluation, leading to an explicit assessment of its efficiency and effectiveness. It is usually used in developmental oriented procedures

c. Institutional evaluation – focused on the system and its impact on quality of education within a given academic institution or its unit. It is very strongly linked with the strategy of the higher education institution as a point of reference for the system.

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Good Practice and Lessons Learnt: Legislation and Practical Implementation of QA and Accreditation in Romania

The totality of characteristics belonging to a study programme and to its provider, by which all the beneficiaries' expectations as well as the quality standards are fulfilled.[12]

"Positive aspects in Romania are the clear governance structure for the development of the NQF and the strong role of NQA as initiator of legislation, and good human resource capacity."[13]

The policies for quality management and assurance in the Romanian education system are:

- A specific Law on Quality of education;
- National, autonomous, responsible institutions;
- Accreditation as part of the quality management systems and procedures;
- National standards;
- National specialised institutions for quality evaluation;
- Involving school administration (i.e. School Inspectorates and Ministry) in quality control –for pre-university education

Quality assurance in Romanian education and training is coordinated through:

- **The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education (ARACIP)** – A public institution of national interest, under the Ministry of National Education, with legal personality, established by Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/2005 regarding the quality assurance of education. The mission of ARACIP consists of: the external evaluation of the quality of education offered by accredited educational organisations and the external evaluation for authorisation and accreditation of all educational organisations at pre-university level.
- **The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)** - ARACIS was established in 2005 and is an autonomous public institution, of national interest, whose main mission is the external evaluation of the quality of Romanian higher education, at the level of study programmes, as well as from the institutional point of view. Since September 2009, ARACIS has been a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – ENQA and is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - EQAR. The agency's strategy reflects the mission assumed by ARACIS to constantly assure and improve quality in Romanian higher education, as well as its own activity, and may be described by the following major objectives:
  - improving the external evaluation methodology, in full compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - ESG;
  - increasing the role of students and employers, as final beneficiaries, within the process of evaluation and assurance of education quality;
  - creating a quality culture in the Romanian higher education;
  - establishing a permanent partnership with all institutions in the national higher education system as well as with the economic-social

[12] The quality of education – the "legal" Romanian definition

[13] Publication Analysis and overview of national qualifications framework developments in European countries. Annual report 2016 © Cedefop, 2017

environment, in order to correlate higher education with the labour market.

The National Group for Quality Assurance is an additional informal structure that ensures the coordination of quality assurance in all education and training subsystems and functions as a national reference point for quality assurance in education and training (GNAC).

GNAC was set up in 2006 based on an inter-institutional Agreement between the: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education, National Authority for Qualifications, National Centre for TVET Development, and with the participation of social partners.

There are three kinds of national standards used in evaluation:

- *For provisional authorisation;*
- *For accreditation;*
- *Quality standards (reference standards).*

The general principles of quality education are that it:

- Is focused on its clients and beneficiaries;
- Is offered by accountable educational organisations;
- Is focused on results;
- Observes individual autonomy and is based on institutional autonomy;
- Is promoted by powerful educational leaders;
- Ensures the participation of all relevant stakeholders;
- Is realised by dialogue and partnership;
- Relies on innovation and diversification;
- Is based on a holistic and systemic approach;
- Has as its main purpose continuous performance improvement;
- Understands the mutual beneficial relationship between the educational providers and beneficiaries.

All education providers have to establish an internal Quality Assurance and Evaluation Commission, which:

- coordinates the institutional self-assessment;
- elaborates an annual self - assessment report, which must be submitted to all beneficiaries: students, parents, employers, local community;
- formulates quality improvement - legal proposals to be approved by the school's management team.

According to the law of quality assurance in education and training, there are three areas of quality assurance:

- Institutional capacity (the administrative and managerial structures, the logistics, the human resources);
- Educational effectiveness (the content of the study programmes, the learning outcomes, the scientific or pedagogical activity of teachers, the financial activity);
- Quality management (the strategies and procedures for quality assurance, the procedures concerning the design, the monitoring and review of study programmes and activities, objective and transparent procedures for the evaluation of learning outcomes, the procedures for teaching staff evaluation, the accessibility of learning resources, the systematic updating of databases concerning internal quality assurance, the transparency of public information concerning study programmes and the diplomas and certificates offered, the functioning of quality assurance structures established by the law).

Evaluation of the quality of education is carried out through:

- Internal Evaluation – The Quality Commission in each school unit/university.
- External Evaluation – ARACIP/ARACIS by external evaluators (selected and trained).
- Monitoring and control – ARACIP/ARACIS + (Ministry of Education + School Inspectorates- for pre-university institutions).

ARACIS and ARACIP have created a "minimal toolbox" for internal and external evaluation:

- Planning and forecasting instruments - policies, strategies, plans;
- Database (for pre-university education, including VET schools) – with national, regional, local and school levels – including context data, in order to measure the added value – ITC enhanced;
- Quality standards.
- Procedures for external evaluation.
- Professional evaluators - nationally regulated criteria for their selection, training, use and evaluation.
- Information and promotion materials
- Studies and reports.
- Guides and manuals for internal and external evaluation.
- "Best Practice" collections.
- Quality management at school/university level – structures and instruments.
- Systematic communication with and involvement of all major stakeholders.
- Networking – internally and externally (SICI, EQAVET, EEA, ENQA, EQAR) - and projects.

Specific requirements for IVET are established in the *National Quality Assurance Framework in IVET (NQAF in IVET)*, which:

- comprises of a QA cycle including planning, implementation, evaluation and review
- defines 7 quality areas (each area including a set of performance descriptors) to assess performance at IVET provider's level:
  1. Quality Management
  2. Management Responsibilities
  3. Resources Management
  4. Design, Development and Revision of VET programmes
  5. Teaching, Training and Learning
  6. Assessment and Certification of Learning
  7. Analysis and Improvement
- has as a pillar IVET providers' self-assessment
- includes external monitoring and validation of self-assessment reports

The elements of conformity in IVET are:

- Curricular standards:
  - National Curriculum based on Training Standards which are based on Occupational Standards validated by Sectoral Committees;
  - Local Developed Curriculum: allows adaptation and adjustment to the local labour market needs and employer demand;
- Accreditation of a school's study programmes;
- Semi-external national exams: participation of employers in the certification exams.

The quality of certification in VET was inspired by EQAVER. For example:

- **General principles:**
  - qualifications are based on training/occupational standards, validated by the Sectoral Committees;

- qualifications are competence based;
- assessment criteria are part of the qualification description;
- certification methodology is centrally defined.

- **Certification in IVET:**
  - mixed certification bodies, with the participation of employers;
  - quality monitoring of the certification exams.
- **Validation of non-formal and informal learning in centres for the assessment and certification of non-formal and informal learning:**
  - authorised and periodically evaluated by the National Qualifications Authority;
  - quality monitored by the National Qualifications Authority.

The IVET self-assessment tool has a set of four level descriptors:

- **Acceptance** –implies unconditional execution, obedient application and hierarchic compliance;
- **Participation** – stakeholders are actively integrated, knowledgeable of the subsequent policies, measures and regulations, make use of their own competences within the IVET policies and the institutions implementing these policies;
- **Ownership** –stakeholders take ownership of IVET policies and assume responsibility for their implementation;
- **Enhancement** – stakeholders try to improve and adapt it to local conditions; they take initiative and show concern for improving the initial options

Lessons learnt and challenges in the implementation of Quality management and assurance in education

- Quality assurance and improvement is a transversal process and should be holistically approached;
- Coherency of quality assurance approaches for the whole education and training system (including general pre-university education, IVET, CVET, HE) is important;
- A legal framework and instruments are needed but not enough for securing success;
- Empowerment of main actors is crucial;
- Quality improvement is a long-term construction and gives a long-term return;
- Allocation of clear responsibilities and involvement of all parties (national authorities, local communities, school inspectorates, VET providers) is necessary;
- Ownership among all relevant actors is of crucial importance;
- Moving from quality assurance to quality improvement and to quality culture is a long-term process; there are incentives but it cannot be imposed or set up only by law;
- Quality assurance and improvement should be primarily secured in the teaching, learning and training process; commitment of teachers and trainers to quality is a pre-requisite of every successful approach;
- European developments serve as particular inspiration, but sustainability is achievable through national solutions.

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