

The Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

1. General provisions

- 1.1** The Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (hereinafter referred to as the AzQF) is a tool for systematizing national qualifications, making them more transparent and comparable. The framework is designed and implemented for all citizens (learners/students), education and training providers, social partners and employers.
- 1.2** The AzQF is consistent with the provisions of the two overarching European qualifications frameworks: the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF).
- 1.3** The development of AzQF is based on the following principles:
- Only qualifications (degrees, diplomas and certificates) described in the Law on Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan are included into the AzQF;
 - Qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes (LOs) described at threshold level;
 - Qualifications of higher education and secondary specialised education (sub-bachelor education) are linked to ECTS¹ compatible credits;
 - All qualifications are described in terms of knowledge, skills and autonomy/responsibility, and referenced to the AzQF levels;
 - All qualifications are quality assured, i.e. quality assurance encompasses all relevant processes: description of expected LOs, assessment and validation of an individual's learning achievement;
 - Qualifications and institutions that develop and award qualifications are subject to internal and external quality assurance in line with the Law on Education and the appropriate secondary legislation;
 - Qualifications, except higher education qualifications, are approved by the Ministry of Education as the competent body, before they become part of the AzQF;
 - Each qualification that is approved as part of the AzQF is registered in the National Qualifications Register (NQR) for a specific period of time denoted in the law and provides national and international recognition regarding rights to practice and employment according to the legislation in force;

¹ Internationally recognised acronyms are explained in Glossary.

- The NQR will be continuously updated and will be accessible through a national website.
- 1.4** The AzQF is designed for the recognition of lifelong learning and includes the following qualifications:
 - Qualifications for general education;
 - Qualifications for initial vocational education and training (VET);
 - Qualifications for secondary specialised education (sub-bachelor education);
 - Qualifications for higher education;
 - Qualifications for further education and training.
 - 1.5** These qualifications can be obtained through alternative pathways in accordance with the Law on Education. The validation of non-formal and informal learning and additional pathways to qualifications will be developed.
 - 1.6** National documents relevant to the development and implementation of the AzQF are presented in Annex.

2. The Objectives of the AzQF

- 2.1. Improve the quality and transparency of qualifications;
- 2.2. Provide points of reference for setting and assessing education and training standards associated with different types of qualifications;
- 2.3. Take into account the demands of the society and labour market when defining qualifications, and hence improve national economic performance and facilitate communication and movement between education and training sectors and the labour market;
- 2.4. Align national qualifications and qualifications levels with the QF-EHEA and the EQF;
- 2.5. Support lifelong learning of Azerbaijani citizens, and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- 2.6. Facilitate the national and international mobility of learners and workers through increased recognition of the quality and comparability of Azerbaijani qualifications abroad and increase of competitiveness and mobility of people;
- 2.7. Promote coherence of reforms in different sectors of education and training.

3. The AzQF Level Descriptors

3.1. The AzQF levels define the relative complexity of the learning achieved. The level descriptors are defined by criteria expressed in statements of knowledge and understanding, skills, and autonomy and responsibility. The level descriptors are used as benchmarks for classifying qualifications based on learning outcomes.

3.2. The AzQF has 8 levels, whereas level 1 is the lowest and level 8 is the highest. The descriptions of upper levels contain the descriptions of lower levels. The level descriptions are presented in Table 1.

3.3. The existing qualifications are indicatively placed as follows:

Level 1 – certificate of primary education;

Level 2 – certificate of general secondary education;

Level 3 – diploma of initial vocational education;

Level 4 – certificate of full secondary education;

Level 5 – sub-bachelor's diploma;

Level 6 – bachelor's diploma;

Level 7 – master's diploma;

Level 8 – doctoral diploma (PhD and D.Sc.).

3.4. Qualifications of further education and training are placed on levels 3-8. Further education and training ensures upgrading, improvement and diversification of competences obtained at the initial vocational, secondary specialised (sub-bachelor) and higher education levels. The documents certifying further education indicate the AzQF level and acquired competences.

3.5. Labour market relevant qualifications are qualifications at the levels 3-7 that bear a direct relevance to a specific occupation in the labour market and shall be based on occupational standards. These include initial VET qualifications, Sub-bachelor's qualifications, Bachelor's and Master's qualifications as well as relevant qualifications of further education. Bachelor's and Master's level curricula have to meet the requirements of relevant occupational standards whenever they are available. The relationship between the occupational standards and the qualification can vary from a qualification, based on specific occupational standards to a qualification that is based on part of occupational standard, or a qualification that is based on more than one occupational standard.

3.6. The AzQF level descriptions are compatible with the corresponding EQF level descriptions.

3.7. Generic descriptors of the Sub-bachelor's qualification shall be compatible with the QF-EHEA short-cycle descriptors. Generic descriptors of the Bachelor's qualification shall be compatible with the QF-EHEA first cycle descriptors. Generic descriptors of the Master's qualifications shall be compatible with the QF-EHEA

second cycle descriptors. Generic descriptors of the Doctoral qualifications shall be compatible with the QF-EHEA third cycle descriptors.

4. Roles and responsibilities of institutions

4.1. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for:

- a) development of educational standards, national curricula, assessment standards and accreditation standards;
- b) quality assurance of qualifications;
- c) administration of the national register of qualifications.

4.2. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) is responsible for:

- a) Development and assessment of occupational standards;
- b) Labour market analysis;
- c) Development of the National Classification of Occupations.

4.3. The Higher Attestation Committee is responsible for external assessment of PhD and D.Sc. dissertations. Individual awards are produced by the Higher Attestation Committee on the basis of external validation of the assessment results.

4.4. Public organisations, line ministries and for profit organisations can become competent bodies that can award national qualifications after accreditation by the Ministry of Education.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1. The AzQF is a quality assured qualifications framework.

5.2. The appropriate quality assurance arrangements, procedures and processes are the responsibility of the relevant authority for each sector of education (general education, VET, higher education, further education and training).

5.3. The principles for quality assurance in the AzQF are:

- The AzQF will be subject to periodic review;
- A provider (education and training institutions) has an internal quality assurance system;
- The internal quality assurance system of a provider is subject to regular external evaluation;
- Qualifications are based on relevant educational standards;
- Qualifications are awarded by accredited (state recognised) competent

institutions (universities, other education and training institutions, professional associations, etc.);

- Competent institutions need to have appropriate quality assurance processes in place;
- Competent institutions are subject to external quality assurance by accreditation department of the Ministry of Education and the Higher Attestation Committee;
- Qualifications are defined based on an analysis of the needs and expectations of the society, in particular of the labour market; these are expressed in competence-based standards (occupational and educational standards);
- LOs are at the basis of study programmes (curricula), and the assessment and certification processes;
- LOs are assessed and validated by the institution awarding the qualification;
- Qualifications are referenced to an AzQF level and LOs are described in the document supplements certifying qualifications;
- Qualifications in higher education are awarded in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG);
- Qualifications in initial VET are awarded in accordance with the European Quality Assurance Framework (EQAVET).

5.4. The NQR includes the following information on the AzQF:

- Accredited institutions awarding qualifications;
- Accredited study programmes;
- Awarded qualifications.

Table 1. Level descriptions of the Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

AzQF Level	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Autonomy and responsibility
Level 1	<p>Presents in a simple format initial knowledge on language, moral and spiritual values, national customs and traditions, history, culture and fine arts of Azerbaijan people</p> <p>Establishes communication, conducts cooperation and expresses his/her ideas clearly in a team</p>	<p>Demonstrates mastering of simple communication skills in one foreign language</p> <p>Uses elementary mathematical knowledge in practice, performs simple algorithms and uses computer equipment</p> <p>Performs simple routine tasks observing set procedures and detailed guidelines</p> <p>Demonstrates elementary working skills</p>	<p>Works and studies in a limited context under direct supervision using simple labour skills</p> <p>Is responsible for the performance of his/her basic duties</p> <p>Shows fair, careful and tolerant attitude to people, nature, labour, as well as personal and public property and learns to apprehend the reality as it is</p> <p>Respects his/her own and other people's rights</p>
Level 2	<p>Demonstrates basic knowledge of society and environment</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of the main concepts and principles of labour market</p> <p>Knows how to learn and find ways for further studies, using relevant advice, if necessary</p>	<p>Performs uncomplicated tasks observing set procedures and guidelines</p> <p>Selects and uses appropriate tools and equipment</p> <p>Is able to use given information materials to solve problems of work or studies</p> <p>Is able to communicate in speech and writing in accordance with the situation and partners</p> <p>Speaks at least one foreign language at a level that enables to communicate in everyday situations in written and oral form, and to read and understand foreign texts fit for his/her age</p> <p>Is able to solve problems arising in different spheres of everyday life or work that require the use of mathematical methods (equations, models, schemes, graphs)</p>	<p>Uses advice under supervision in the process of learning</p> <p>Is responsible for the performance of his/her duties</p> <p>Is able to adapt and manage in different social environments</p> <p>Is able to evaluate the outcomes of his/her work</p> <p>Is able to manage in the world of technology and to use technology purposefully and with as little risk as possible</p>
Level 3	<p>Is familiar with theoretical and practical knowledge of the vocation; Interprets and integrates extensive work-related knowledge and uses it in new situations</p> <p>Is able to evaluate the reliability and validity of the information used</p> <p>Is able to analyse and evaluate</p>	<p>Performs basic work tasks within set time limits</p> <p>Initiates, prepares and adjusts appropriate changes in the work context</p> <p>Organises work according to plans, in an efficient and effective manner</p> <p>Selects and uses tools and methods for performing common and novel work tasks</p>	<p>Is able to independently perform complex and diverse tasks of work that can be usually foreseen but can also require novel solutions</p> <p>Takes responsibility for his or her choices and obligations taken, respects other people's and one's own freedom, is a sovereign personality</p> <p>Uses modern technology</p>

	the level of his/her knowledge	<p>Can speak at least one foreign language at the level of an independent language user</p> <p>Uses mathematical knowledge and methods in different spheres of everyday life and work</p> <p>Participates in the work of different teams and is able to manage them, if necessary</p> <p>Is capable of independent and self-managed learning</p>	<p>purposefully and with a sense of responsibility, values the impact of technology on everyday life</p> <p>Supervises others work and takes some responsibility for the development of others</p>
Level 4	<p>Is familiar with the principles, technologies, processes, techniques, materials, tools and devices of their vocation, and knows how to use and implement them</p> <p>Understands basic facts and principles regarding work context</p> <p>Knows basic work methods</p>	<p>Performs basic work tasks</p> <p>Is able to solve problems of the vocation, using the common sources of information</p> <p>Selects and uses appropriate tools and work methods.</p> <p>Acts according to plan, in an efficient and effective manner</p> <p>Is able to express himself or herself and to justify his/her opinion in different situations in both oral and written form</p> <p>Participates in teamwork efficiently</p>	<p>Works and studies in a generally fixed context independently</p> <p>Is able to independently perform different tasks of work and takes responsibility for their performance</p> <p>Organises his or her actions and adjusts it according to the situation</p> <p>Learns and complements his/her knowledge independently</p>
Level 5	<p>Has overview of the basic concepts, theoretical principles and methods of the field of study or work</p> <p>Analyses information and approaches related to the field of study or work</p> <p>Uses knowledge for creative solving of abstract problems within limits of work context</p>	<p>Performs diverse tasks, plans appropriate changes and organises application thereof</p> <p>Selects and applies technologies, methods and tools for obtaining new solutions and adjusts his/her behaviour according to the situation</p>	<p>Works independently in unpredictable situations</p> <p>Takes responsibility for a small team</p>
Level 6	<p>Has a systematic overview of the basic concepts, theoretical principles and research methods of the field of study or work</p> <p>Analyses facts, theories, principles and methods of the work or study area</p> <p>Uses knowledge for creative solving of abstract tasks in interconnected areas</p>	<p>Performs complicated tasks assuming novel approach</p> <p>Is able to formulate problems relating to the field of work or study and analyse and evaluate different solutions</p> <p>Is able to select and use appropriate information, technologies and methods when solving problems of the field of work or study within given frameworks, and to model and/or assess the potential results on the basis of the information given</p> <p>Shows initiative, responsibility, leadership and teamwork skills in launching and implementation of projects</p> <p>Is able to explain orally or in</p>	<p>Works independently in complicated and unpredictable situations</p> <p>Is able to evaluate the role and consequences of his/her professional activities for the community, with consideration to social and ethical aspects</p> <p>Is able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in work as a specialist and undertake continuous independent professional development</p>

		written form in the Azerbaijan language and at least one foreign language problems relating to the field of work or study, and to participate in professional discussions	
Level 7	<p>Has a systematic overview and broad knowledge of the concepts, theories and research methods of the field of work or study</p> <p>Has in-depth knowledge in a narrower field of work or study</p>	<p>Solves unpredictable and complicated tasks in his/her professional area</p> <p>Initiates and plans activities and methods; analyses their short- and long-term consequences</p> <p>Is able to independently and creatively identify and formulate problems related to the field of work or study; is able to solve them within given timeframes and within limited information</p> <p>Is able to select and use appropriate technologies and methods when solving the problems of the field of work or study, and to model and/or assess the potential results</p> <p>Is able to critically evaluate his/her activities when solving problems of the field of work or study</p> <p>Is able to present and reason orally or in written form in Azerbaijan language and one foreign language the problems relating to the field of work or study, and to participate in relevant discussions of specialists and non-specialists</p>	<p>Works independently in complicated and unpredictable situations requiring innovative approach</p> <p>Is responsible for the strategic actions of organisations or teams</p> <p>Is able to hand down his/her knowledge by teaching, instruction, or in another manner</p> <p>Is able to act ethically in complex situations, be aware of the ethical aspects, possibilities, restrictions and social role of his/her activities and be able to provide reasoned assessment in issues concerning his/her field of work or study</p> <p>Is able to assess his/ her need, and the needs of others, of continuing training and professional development, and have command of the effective methods necessary for independent study</p>
Level 8	<p>Has broad knowledge and a systematic overview within his/her professional field, and in-depth and up-to-date knowledge within a narrower sphere of professional activities</p> <p>Understands the meaning and scope of the existing knowledge and methods of the professional field and between fields so as to extend, re-evaluate, and formulate them as necessary</p> <p>Contributes to the body of professional knowledge</p>	<p>Solves unique problems in professional areas creating new knowledge</p> <p>Is able to independently and critically analyse, synthesise, and evaluate new and complex ideas relating to the professional field</p> <p>Is able to conceive, design, implement, and critically evaluate research and development projects that lead to new knowledge and new procedural solutions</p> <p>Initiates, plans and implements strategic research and development activities that widen the realm of work or knowledge or that result in considerable changes</p> <p>Is able to act in work and study environment which requires leadership and team work skills, innovative thinking, and the ability to make strategic decisions</p> <p>Is able to participate orally or in</p>	<p>Works independently in complicated, undefined situations requiring excellence and new strategic approach</p> <p>Is responsible for the strategic action of organisations or large teams</p> <p>Is responsible for the planning and development of the profession</p> <p>Evaluates new and complicated professional ideas</p> <p>Is able to provide scientific ethical assessments, show insight into the possibilities and limitations with science, the social role of science, and the responsibility of people in the use of scientific achievements</p> <p>Is able to act independently in a complex project, including international work and study environment</p>

		written form in professional discussions, as well as to publish original research results in internationally pre-reviewed academic publications or, in art specialities, present creative works for international audience	Has the ability to identify his/her need for new competences; supports the studies of others both in the context of education and training as well as on a wider social level
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GLOSSARY²

Ability – acquired or natural capacity, competence, proficiency or talent that enables an individual to perform a particular act, job or task successfully.

Accreditation – process by which a study programme or educational institution (training provider) is analysed and evaluated by an Accreditation organisation in order to establish whether it meets the requirements of the relevant quality standards and in order to provide them with the necessary credentials/approvals to carry out education and training activities.

Accreditation*³ – procedure to determine and approve the adherence of an educational institution's activities to the national education standards, and its status.

Accreditation organisation – a designated competent authority (institution, agency) which is legally entitled to accredit an institution, programme or module of study within the context of a national lifelong learning system. Organizations that issue credentials or certify third parties against official standards are themselves formally accredited by accreditation bodies; hence they are sometimes known as "accredited certification bodies". The accreditation process ensures that their certification practices are acceptable, meaning that they are competent to test and certify third parties, behave ethically and employ suitable quality assurance.

Assessment – a process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs. Assessment can focus on the individual learner, the learning community (class, workshop, or other organized group of learners), the institution, or the educational system as a whole. Assessment is often divided into formative and summative categories for the purpose of considering different objectives for assessment practices.

Assessment board - an *ad hoc* expert body of 5 – 9 persons performing external assessment of a study programme or educational institution.

Assessment criteria – dimensions with which an assessor will judge, how well a learner has achieved expected learning outcomes of a course or module.

Assessment methods – the total range of methods used to evaluate the learner's achievement in a course unit or module. Typically, these methods include written, oral, laboratory, practical tests/examinations, projects, performances and portfolios. The evaluations may be used to enable the learners to evaluate their own progress and improve on previous performance (see **formative assessment**) or by the institution to judge whether the learner has achieved the learning outcomes of the course unit or module (see **summative assessment**).

Assessor – an expert of the particular field of knowledge or activity entitled to assess the conformity of a person or institution with relevant standards.

Autonomy and responsibility - in the context of the EQF one of the descriptors of competence.

Award – something given to a person to recognize or a group of people to recognize his/her excellence in a certain field, e.g. learning; a certificate of excellence in a certain field.

Awarding institution – an institution which awards qualifications (degrees, diplomas, certificates) or credits.

Bachelor* – a higher vocational-professional degree conferred to the individuals who have completed Bachelor's Degree.

Bachelor's Degree* – the first level of higher vocational-professional education that trains a broad range of specialists in respective majors.

²This glossary includes terms to be used in the Cabinet of Ministers order, establishing Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework. It gives internationally accepted meaning of the terms. Relevant terms should be put into Azerbaijan context.

³ Asterisk denotes definitions given in the Law on Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Bologna process – the process aiming to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world. The envisaged EHEA will: facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff; prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development; offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

Certificate - a confirmation that a person has passed an assessment to prove competence. An academic certificate is a document that certifies that a person has received specific education or has passed a test or series of tests. Professional certification, trade certification, or professional designation, often called simply *certification* or *qualification*, is a designation earned by a person to assure qualification to perform a job or task. Many certifications are used as post-nominal letters indicating an earned privilege from an oversight professional body acting to safeguard the public interest.

Classification of professions (occupations) – national classification of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Competence - the ability of an individual to perform a job properly; the ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development; the ability to perform activities to the standards required in employment, using an appropriate mix of knowledge, skill and attitude.

Competences – represent a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, and ethical values. Fostering these competences is the object of all study programmes. Competences are developed in all course units and assessed at different stages of a programme. Some competences are subject-area related (specific to a field of study), others are generic (common to any course). Competence development proceeds in an integrated and cyclical manner throughout a programme.

Competence framework - a structure that sets out and defines each individual competence (such as problem-solving or people management) required by individuals working in an organisation on an agreed number of levels of complexity.

Competent authority - any person or organization that has the legally delegated or invested authority, capacity, or power to perform a designated function. Once an authority is delegated to perform a certain act, only the competent authority is entitled to take accounts therefrom and no one else.

Credit – the ‘currency’ used to measure learners workload in terms of the time required to achieve specified learning outcomes. It enables teachers and learners to assess the volume and level of learning, based on the achievement of learning outcomes and the associated workload measured in time. Credit can be awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated outcomes at a specific level through work based learning or prior learning as well as through coursework. Credit cannot normally be lost once achieved, although in particular circumstances an institution can lay down that credits must have been awarded within a certain timeframe to be recognized as part of the study programme. This will be the case in subject areas where knowledge and skills are subject to rapid change, e.g. Informatics, Medicine, etc.

Credit system - a system of measuring (academic) coursework.

Curriculum – a set of courses, and their content, offered at an education and training institution. A curriculum is prescriptive, and is based on a more general syllabus which specifies what topics must be understood and to what level to achieve a particular grade or standard.

Curriculum* – the national document which specifies learning outcomes and content standards, courses taught, number of weekly teaching and extracurricular activity hours, regulation of teaching process, assessment and monitoring of learning outcomes for each level of education.

Descriptor - generic statement of the outcomes of study for a qualification. They provide clear points of reference that describe the main learning outcomes of a qualification, as defined in the National Qualifications Frameworks, and make clear the nature of change between levels.

Diploma – a certificate issued by an educational institution, that testifies that the recipient has successfully completed a particular study programme,

Diploma Supplement – an annex to the official qualification designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the holder

of the degree/qualification. It is based on the model developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. It facilitates international transparency and the academic/professional recognition of qualifications.

Doctor's Degree* – the highest degree in higher education, a type of advanced scientific and pedagogic training that provides conferment of the doctorate degree.

Doctor of Philosophy* – a scientific degree conferred during the first phase of doctorate programs by the respective field of study.

Doctor of Science – the highest academic degree in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Dublin descriptors – provide very general statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of a Bologna cycle. General level descriptors have been developed for the 'short cycle within the first cycle' and the first, second and third cycle. The descriptors consist of a set of criteria, phrased in terms of competence levels, which enables to distinguish in a broad and general manner between the different cycles. The following five sets of criteria are distinguished:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding;
- Applying knowledge and understanding;
- Making informed judgments and choices;
- Communicating knowledge and understanding;
- Capacities to continue learning.

The Dublin descriptors have been developed by an international group of experts, which has named itself the Joint Quality Initiative (see www.jointquality.org).

Educational credit* – the unit of measurement allocated for the mastery of a certain course in accordance with its content and the scope.

Educational standard - a term used to describe standards applied to education content and expected learning outcomes.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) – a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union and other collaborating European countries. For successfully completed studies, ECTS credits are awarded. One academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS credits that are equivalent to 1500–1800 hours of study in all countries irrespective of standard or qualification type and is used to facilitate transfer and progression throughout the Union. The ECTS will be complemented by the European credit transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET). ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning as well as student mobility. ECTS is widely used in formal higher education and can be applied to other lifelong learning activities.

European System of Accumulation and Transfer of Credits for vocational education and training (ECVET) – a system for attesting and recording of the learning achievement/learning outcomes of an individual engaged in a learning pathway leading to a qualification, a vocational diploma or certificate. It enables the documentation, validation and recognition of achieved learning outcomes acquired abroad, in both formal VET or in non-formal contexts. It is centred on the individual, based on the validation and the accumulation of his/her learning outcomes, defined in terms of the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for achieving a qualification. ECVET is a system designed to operate at the European level, interfacing with national systems and arrangements for credit accumulation and transfer.

ENIC/NARIC – the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region/Network of Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union providing information on instruments for recognition of diplomas, Diploma Supplement, Credit transfer systems, ECTS, etc.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) - disseminates information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions.

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) – provides information on quality assurance agencies that have successfully applied for inclusion on EQAR. The listed agencies have

demonstrated in an external review by independent experts that they comply substantially with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

EQAVET - the European Quality Assurance Framework to promote and monitor continuous improvement of national systems of vocational education and training.

European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) - is a common European reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems together, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>). It has two principal aims: to promote citizens' mobility between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning. EQF is an overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between European national (and/or sectoral) educational frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks. At present two European Qualifications Frameworks exist. One focuses only on Higher Education and has been initiated as part of the Bologna Process, the other focuses on the whole span of education and has been initiated by the European Commission. The first framework is named a Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, abbreviated as QF – EHEA (see below). The second extends across all areas including that of higher education and is called EQF.

European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) – the standards are in three parts covering internal quality assurance of higher education institutions, external quality assurance of higher education, and quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies.

Formal learning* – learning, which concludes with the issuance of a state education document.

Formative assessment – a process carried out throughout a course or project. Formative assessment, also referred to as "educative assessment," is used to aid learning. In an educational setting, formative assessment might be a teacher (or a peer) or the learner, providing feedback on a student's work, and would not necessarily be used for grading purposes. Formative assessments are diagnostic.

Further education and training – covers the types of education and training which go beyond what has been achieved in general education, initial VET and higher education, but which are not at degree level (Higher Education). Typically, further education includes advanced levels in general subjects (e.g. foreign language, mathematics etc.) and vocational qualifications.

Further education* - an education based on supplementary education programs provided to meet the citizens' comprehensive educational needs.

General education* - provides the learners with general basics of sciences, promoting the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, and preparing them for life and professional activity. The general education enables the learners to develop physically and intellectually, to provide them with the necessary knowledge, to develop the civic-oriented thinking based on a healthy lifestyle and values, to respect national and secular values, and understand his/her rights and duties in the family, society, state, and the environment.

Gymnasium* – a general education institution that offers educational services on various subjects for students who are primarily recognized for their talent and capacity in humanities.

Higher education institution* – either independent or a structural unit of the universities, which carries out the training of specialists with higher education on specific specialties, as well as provides in-service training programs.

High-quality assessments – those with a high level of reliability and validity. A reliable assessment is one which consistently achieves the same results with the same (or similar) cohort of students. A valid assessment is one which measures what it is intended to measure.

Informal learning* – a type of acquiring knowledge through self-directed learning.

Initial VET* - education carried out in order to train professional labor force in various vocations and popular professions based on the basis of general secondary education, in compliance with the labor market demands.

International recognition – methodologies and procedures to understand foreign qualifications and establish their comparability in view of further studies or employment. A formal acknowledgement by a

competent authority of the standing of a foreign qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011) – presents a classification of education and training systems with a standard set of concepts and definitions. It is designed to serve as a framework to classify study programmes in internationally agreed categories. It can be used for assembling, compiling and presenting cross-nationally comparable statistics and indicators of education. ISCED classifies educational programmes by their content using two main classification variables: levels of education and fields of education. This version of ISCED presents a revision of the levels of ISCED1997, while the ISCED1997 fields of education have been retained. The study programme continues to be the unit of classification in ISCED. The content of the programme should be the basis of the classification. Qualification becomes important in ISCED 2011, as well as the study programme, as the revision includes definitions of qualifications.

International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) – an International Labour Organisation (ILO) classification structure for organising information on labour and jobs. It is part of the international family of economic and social classifications of the United Nations. The current version, known as ISCO-08, was published in 2008 and is the fourth iteration, following ISCO-58, ISCO-68 and ISCO-88. The ILO describes the purpose of the ISCO classification as tool for organizing jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job. It is intended for use in statistical applications and in a variety of client oriented applications. Client oriented applications include the matching of job seekers with job vacancies, the management of short or long term migration of workers between countries and the development of vocational training programmes and guidance. The ISCO-08 revision is expected to be the standard for labour information worldwide in the coming decade.

Key competences for lifelong learning – represent a transferable, multifunctional system of knowledge, skills, and values, attitudes, beliefs, attributes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory school or training, by means of all subjects student learn, seen in their natural correlation and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning. More generally, the most important competences that a graduate will have obtained as a result of completing a specific study programme. Can be transferred from one learning context to another.

Knowledge - the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

Learner – anyone who acquires new knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, or understanding, which may involve synthesizing different types of information.

Learning outcomes - statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes are expressed in terms of the level of competence to be obtained by the learner. They relate to level descriptors in national and European qualifications frameworks. In the EQF learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence (autonomy and responsibility). See also: Programme learning outcomes

Level (cycle) descriptors – generic statements describing the characteristics and context of learning expected at each level against which learning outcomes and assessment criteria can be reviewed.

Levels – Levels are understood to be a series of sequential steps to be taken by the learner (within a development continuum) expressed in terms of a range of generic outcomes, within a given programme. They can also reflect the expected outcomes of degree programme in terms of cycle level descriptors.

License* – a special permit issued by the state for providing educational operations.

Lisbon Recognition Convention – a convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region. The Convention has been jointly drafted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO; adopted in Lisbon on 11 April 1997; entry into force: 1 February 1999.

Lyceum* – a general education institution at the basic and secondary education levels which provides for educational services for talented students under the respective fields of study.

Master* – a higher academic professional degree conferred to the individuals who have completed the Master's Program.

Module - a self-contained, formally structured learning experience. It should have a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes, expressed in terms of competences to be obtained, and appropriate assessment criteria. Course units can have different numbers of credits. Modules can be used to construct a more complex structure, e.g. a study programme.

National qualifications framework (NQF) - an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. A national framework of qualifications is a single description, which is internationally understood. The framework describes all qualifications awarded in the system considered and relates them to each other in a coherent way. See also: Qualifications Descriptors.

National qualifications system – all aspects of a state's activity related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. This includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and processes relating to quality assurance, assessment and the award of qualifications. A national qualifications system may be composed of several subsystems and may include a national qualifications framework.

National register of qualifications – official national listing of state recognized study programmes/institutions/ qualifications/ professions.

National standards of education* – a set of comprehensive norms developed in accordance with the scientific and pedagogic principles, meeting the demands of the individual, society, and the state. They contain common state requirements for a certain period of time (not less than 5 years).

Non-formal learning* – a type of education received as a result of various courses, clubs and individual courses, wherein no state education document is issued upon completion.

Occupational standard – document identifying and grouping tasks associated with a particular occupation and describing the knowledge and skills that a worker must demonstrate.

Professional association - (also called a professional body, professional organization, or professional society) is usually a non-profit organisation seeking to further a particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest.

Professional standard - formal statements that describe the expected competences and performance indicators related to a specific qualification in terms of knowledge, skills and professional attitudes.

Programme learning outcomes – a coherent set of 15 to 20 statements expressing what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a degree programme.

Provider – legally established and functioning organisation (public, non-profit or private) that fulfils the criteria established for accrediting its study programmes.

Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) – an overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between European national higher education frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks. The QF – EHEA, adopted by the 47 countries participating in the Bologna Process, is a system that aims to:

- Enable learners (citizens, employers, etc.) across Europe to understand the full range and relationship between the various national, local and regional European higher education qualifications;
- Promote access, flexibility, mobility, collaboration, transparency, recognition and integration (links) within, and between, European higher education systems;
- Defend diversity, in the content and delivery of educational programmes and therefore national, local, regional and institutional academic autonomy;
- Improve the competitiveness and efficiency of European higher education.

The QF-EHEA provides descriptors for cycles of higher education. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle (<http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=65>).

Qualification - a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a recognized programme of study.

Qualification descriptors (generic type of qualification) – generic statements of the expected (intended) learning outcomes of study providing clear points of reference that describe the main outcomes of a qualification with reference to national levels.

Quality - the totality of features and characteristics of an entity (product or service) that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Quality is "meeting or exceeding customer expectations."

Quality assurance - the process or set of processes adopted nationally and institutionally to ensure the quality of educational programmes and qualifications awarded. Quality assurance cannot absolutely guarantee the production of *quality* output.

Recognition networks – ENIC: European Network of Information Centres in the European Region. NARIC: National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union. Networks of national centres providing information, advice and assessment of foreign qualifications, created to help improve the academic recognition of international awards and facilitating the integration of national education systems.

Register of accredited qualifications – a public database of qualifications recognised by the state, i.e. meeting all the relevant quality requirements.

Sector - a grouping of professional activities on the basis of their main economic function, product, service or technology.

Sectoral organisation - national, European or international **organisation** representing enterprises in a specific economic **sector**.

Skills - the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments). A skill is the learned capacity to achieve pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. Skills are often divided into general/generic and subject specific skills.

Social partner – the trade unions and the employers (or their representative organisations) engaged in social dialogue.

Specialised secondary education* - provides for the training of secondary education specialists in various fields of production in accordance with the demands of the society and labor market, on the basis of general and full secondary education. Education is mainly implemented at colleges and corresponding units established within the higher educational institutions.

Standard – a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

Standard for assessment – document describing assessment criteria and assessment methods for a particular qualification.

Study programme – a set of coherent educational components, based on learning outcomes, that are recognized for the award of a specific qualification through the accumulation of a specified number of credits and the development of specified competences.

Sub-bachelor's degree* – a professional-vocational degree conferred to the graduates of the secondary professional-vocational education.

Summative assessment – generally carried out at the end of a course or project. In an educational setting, summative assessments are typically used to assign students a course grade. Summative assessments are evaluative.

Validation - the act of validating something; something, such as a certificate, that validates something; attestation, authentication, confirmation, proof or verification; to declare or make legally valid; to mark with an indication of official sanction; to establish the soundness of something.

University* – a leading multi-profile higher educational institution, which carries out a broad range of specialist training at all levels of higher education, in-service training programs, and conducts fundamental and applied scientific research.

Documents Describing the Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework

General regulations:

- 1) **Education Act of the Republic of Azerbaijan** (adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan, stepped into force 19.06.2009);
- 2) **Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic on approval of the Republic of Azerbaijan Qualifications Framework**; the draft of this decree has been prepared within the framework of credit agreement signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan, International Development Association (World Bank) and Education Sector Reform Program.
- 3) **Specialised laws for general education, vocational education and training (VET), higher education and further education** – to be developed during the forthcoming years.

National educational standards:

- 1) **National standard for primary, general secondary and full secondary education** (*Milli kurikulum*), which includes national curricula for primary, general secondary and full secondary education (approved by decree #233 of the CoM in 2006, reviewed on June 3, 2010);
- 2) **National standard for initial vocational education and training (IVET)** – the Standard of initial VET (approved by decree #77 of the CoM on 23.04.2010) regulates *Diploma on initial vocational qualification* type of qualifications. The standard does not define generalised learning outcomes (LOs) for IVET. The standard has to be revised by the MoE; the standard has to include description of generalised LOs compatible with level 3 descriptions of AZQF;
- 3) **National standard for secondary specialised education studies** – the standard (approved by Decree 76, April 23, 2010 approved by decree #76 of the CoM on 23.04.2010) regulates *Sub-bachelor's degree* type of qualifications. The standard has to be revised by the MoE; the standard has to include generalised LOs compatible with level 5 descriptions of AZQF and Dublin descriptors of the short cycle;
- 4) **National standard of Higher Education** – the standard (approved by decree #75 of the CoM on 23.04.2010) gives general regulations for higher education qualifications. The standard has to be revised by the MoE to include generalised LOs for Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and Doctoral degree, compatible with level 6, 7 and 8 descriptions of the AZQF respectively, and compatible with Dublin descriptors for the first, second and third cycle;
- 5) **National standard for bachelor level studies** – the **Regulations on the content and organization of the Bachelor's degree studies** (approved by decree #117 of the CoM on 24.06.2010) regulates *Bachelor degree* type of qualifications. The regulations have to be revised by the MoE to include generalised LOs compatible with level 6 descriptions of the AZQF and Dublin descriptors of the first cycle;
- 6) **National standard for master level studies** – the standard (approved by decree #88 of the CoM on 12.05.2010) regulates *Master degree* type of qualifications. The standard has to be revised by the MoE to include generalised LOs compatible with level 7 descriptions of the AZQF and Dublin descriptors of the second cycle;
- 7) **National standard for doctoral level studies** – has to be developed by the MoE; the standard has to include generalised LOs compatible with level 8 descriptions of AZQF and Dublin descriptors of the third cycle.

Occupational standards:

Existing occupational standards have to be revised by the MoLSP and replaced by competence based standards suitable as an input to prepare new national curricula for IVET and secondary specialised education. The necessity for bachelor level and master level occupational standards has to be considered.

National curricula:

- 1) **National curricula for primary, general secondary and full secondary education** are described in the *Milli kurikulum* (approved by decree #233 of the CoM in 2006, reviewed on June 3, 2010); according to the decree LOs for the levels of general education have to be revised once in five years;
- 2) **National curricula for IVET** (*subject benchmark statements*) – the existing classifier of occupations contains 218 specialties of IVET level; national curricula for these occupations have been developed by the Azerbaijan Scientific Research Institute of Education and approved by the Minister of Education; these national curricula are not LOs based, therefore they have to be revised after adoption of the new Standard for IVET;
- 3) **National curricula for secondary specialised education** (*subject benchmark statements*) – the existing classifier of occupations contains ... specialties of secondary specialised education level; national curricula for these occupations have been developed by the working groups and approved by the Minister of Education; the national curricula are LOs based but seemingly need revision after adoption of the new Standard for secondary specialised education;
- 4) **National curricula for bachelor's level studies** (*subject benchmark statements*) – the existing classifier of occupations (specialities) contains ... specialties of bachelor's level; national curricula for these occupations have been developed by the working groups and approved by the Minister of Education; the national curricula are not LOs based need revision after adoption of the new regulations for bachelor's level studies;
- 5) **National curricula for master's level studies** (*subject benchmark statements*) – the existing classifier of occupations (specialities) contains ... specialties of master's level; national curricula for these occupations have been developed by the working groups and approved by the Minister of Education; the national curricula are not LOs based need revision after adoption of the new regulations for master's level studies.

Assessment standards:

At the moment there are no assessment standards for any type of qualification.

- 1) **Assessment standards for primary education graduates, general secondary education graduates and full secondary education graduates** – Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic on approval of the Assessment Concepts in the General Education System of the Azerbaijan Republic from January 13, 2009. This document describes the main school, national and international assessment principles and their scope. The Concept also envisages development of a number of complementary documents (rules and regulations) which will ensure the reliability and effectiveness of each of the assessment type.
- 2) **Assessment standards for IVET graduates** – general principles of assessment are defined in the National Standard for IVET; assessment criteria and methods have to be defined in the national curricula for IVET;
- 3) **Assessment standards for secondary specialised education graduates** – general principles of assessment are defined in the National Standards and Programme for Secondary Specialised Education; assessment criteria and methods have to be defined in the national curricula for secondary specialised education;
- 4) **Assessment standards for bachelor's level graduates** – general principles of assessment are defined in the Regulations for Bachelor Level Studies; assessment criteria and methods have to be defined in the national curricula for bachelor level studies;
- 5) **Assessment standards for master's level graduates** – general principles of assessment are defined in the **Regulations on the content and organization of the Master's degree education and awarding the Master's degree**; assessment criteria and methods have to be defined in the national curricula for master level studies;
- 6) **Assessment standards for doctoral level graduates** – general principles, criteria and methods of assessment are defined in the National Standard for Doctoral Level Studies.

Accreditation standards:

- 1) **Accreditation standard for schools** (primary, comprehensive, secondary, ...) – has to be developed by the MoE;
- 2) **Accreditation standard for IVET institutions and their study programmes** – has to be developed by the MoE; the standard has to be compatible with the European Quality Assurance Framework for VET;

- 3) **Accreditation standard for colleges and their study programmes** – has to be developed by the MoE;
- 4) **Accreditation standard for universities and their study programmes** – has to be revised by the MoE based on the experience of the first round of accreditation; has to include explicit accreditation of study programmes or groups of study programmes;
- 5) **Accreditation standard for further education institutions and their study programmes** – has to be developed by the MoE.

Regulations of the National Qualifications Register:

Document regulating administration and use of the National Qualifications Register has to be developed by the MoE.