

## NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION (NQFHE)

- Development concept and methodology -

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# Contents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

### 1.2 ACPART's missions regarding qualifications in higher education

### 1.3 Principles of the NQFHE design and implementation

## 2. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION (NQFEH)

### 2.1. NQFEH structure

### 2.2. Conceptual basis

#### 2.2.1. Key concepts

#### 2.2.2. Categories of competences

#### 2.2.3. Categories, types and descriptors of competences

### 2.3. Conceptual-methodological model for describing higher education qualifications

#### 2.3.1. National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Matrix

#### 2.3.2. Grid 1: Description of study programme/field by identifying the professional and transversal competences

#### 2.3.3. Grid 2: Determining the correlations between professional and transversal competences, contents areas, study disciplines and credits allocated

## 3. DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### 3.1. Stage I. Description of qualifications acquired through the Bachelor, Master's and Doctorate cycles at the level of study programmes and/or fields

- 3.2. Stage II. Identification of the correlations between competences, contents areas, study disciplines and the credits allocated, for each study programme
- 3.3. Stage III. Development of the educational plan for the study programme according to the competences that define the respective qualification
- 3.4. Stage IV. Development of study discipline sheets according to the educational plan and the competences that define the respective qualification

#### 4. VALIDATION AND REGISTRATION OF A NEW UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER FOR QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN HIGHER EDUCATION (NRQHE)

#### 5. NATIONAL REGISTER FOR QUALIFICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (NRQHE)

#### 6. ANNEXES

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACPART</b>	National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Social and Economic Environment
<b>ARACIS</b>	Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>NQFHE</b>	National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualifications Framework
<b>MERY</b>	Ministry of Education, Research and Youth
<b>MLFEO</b>	Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities
<b>NQRHE</b>	National Qualifications Register for Higher Education

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

The objectives set by the European Union through the Lisbon Strategy and the Bologna Process aim at reforming the higher education systems with a view to turning them into more flexible and coherent systems, more open to the society needs, able to meet the globalisation challenges and the European workforce training and re-training needs.

Such a complex process entails the development of a European Qualifications meta-framework, an instrument able to facilitate and promote transparency, transfer and recognition of qualifications and competences at European level.

Under this context, Romania develops the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (NQFHE), as a *sole instrument to determine the qualifications structure and ensure national recognition as well as international comparability and compatibility of qualifications acquired within the higher education system. Through the NQFHE all learning outcomes acquired within the higher education system (Bachelor, Master's and Doctorate cycles) can be recognised, measured and related and coherence of certified qualifications and awards is ensured.* NQFHE is compatible with the general qualifications framework in the European Higher Education Area and takes into consideration the European Commission's documents on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. The recognised qualifications are included in the National Qualifications Register for Higher Education (NQRHE).

The development of the **National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education** meets a need identified at European level regarding access, progress in the university career and students' and graduates' mobility as well as needs identified at national level in order to create a coherent structure for the organisation and classification of qualifications, to stimulate the openness of the university training system to the social and economic environment and to ensure the match between education and training demand and supply. Thus, the autonomy and social responsibility of each university are increased.

NQRHE is the instrument for optimising the university curricula, for ensuring readability and convergence of learning outcomes for all levels and types of programmes within the national qualifications system. NQRHE is a catalyst for the implementation of the Bologna process and an essential stage for the European and international recognition of diplomas.

## **1.2. ACPART's missions regarding qualifications in higher education**

According to GD no 1375/2005, the National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment (ACPART) is the national authority for the establishment of the national qualifications framework in higher education and its regular updating. ACPART organizes the qualifications system in the Romanian higher education in partnership with education institutions at this level and with economic and social partners by:

- **elaborating, implementing, updating and monitoring the NQFHE that will allow for a wider recognition and certification of learning outcomes expressed in terms of competences (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes);**
- **analysing the compatibility between the curriculum of specialisations within the fundamental study fields of higher education and the national qualifications framework standards;**
- **ensuring transparency of NQFHE at national and international level.**

In order to accomplish these missions, ACPART sets up an **Advisory Board** made of university teaching staff, students and representatives of the economic environment and public administration (sectoral committees, employers' associations, employers).

ACPART's activities, as well as those of the Advisory Board, are supported by commissions organised according to specialised fields, made of experts selected as a result of an open call at national level.

The Advisory Board assists ACPART in the institutional strategic decisions and validates the proposals made by the experts' commissions. ACPART's director is the chairperson of the Advisory Board.

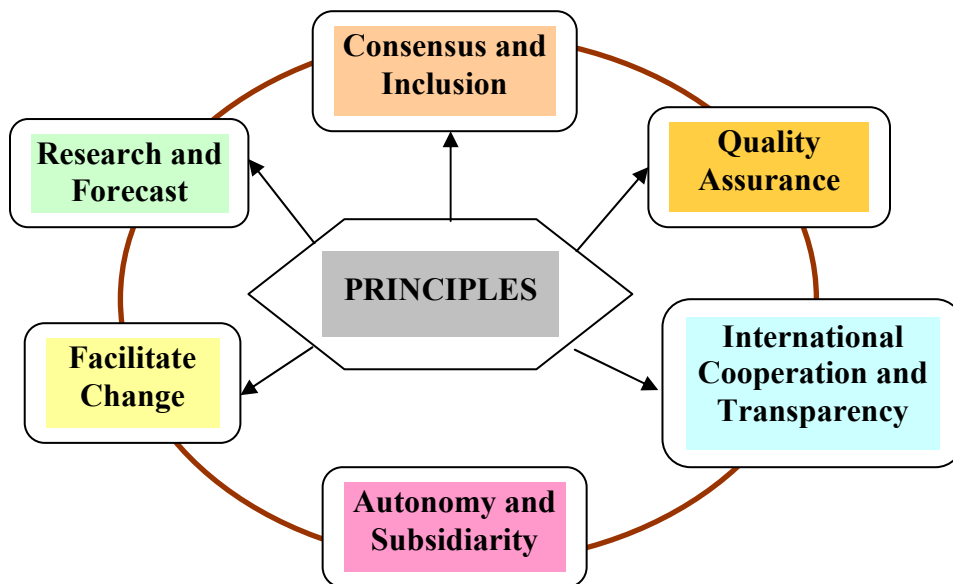


## 1.3. Principles for NQFHE development and implementation

### 1.3.1. Values and principles

ACPART *adopted* the following principles for NQFHE development and implementation: (fig. 1).

Fig. 1.1 – Principles for NQFHE development and implementation



#### a) *Consensus and inclusion*

ACPART consults all categories of stakeholders interested in the NQFHE and considers:

- Harmonisation of qualifications in higher education according to the labour market requirements;
- Articulation of qualifications in higher education to the other levels of qualification;
- Matching the quality of university study programmes to the professional qualifications requirements;
- University curriculum design starting from the professional competences demanded by the labour market.

Consultation with all categories of stakeholders and, at the same time, beneficiaries of NQFHE involves meetings of the Advisory Board and of the Specialised Commissions at ACPART level, as well as seminars, work meetings, conferences etc. ACPART also undertakes activities aiming at disseminating the methodology and procedures related to qualifications.

There is permanent dialogue between ACPART and the institutions involved in the national qualifications system: Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MERY), higher education institutions, agencies for quality assurance in education, students associations, Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Equal Opportunities (MLSSEO), social partners (sector committees, trade unions, professional associations) etc.

#### ***b) Research and Forecast***

ACPART's activities are based on theoretical and applicative research regarding both the national and international context in designing and creating the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education.

The research activity has an *anticipative-predictive* function regarding the evolution in the qualifications trends on the labour market. From this perspective, it guides and facilitates the educational programmes providers in the development and implementation of adequate study programmes.

#### ***c) Quality Assurance for NQFHE***

Quality Assurance involves mechanisms for assessing and regulating the NQFHE design, implementation, monitoring and updating processes.

ACPART sets procedures and instruments for the description of qualifications in higher education, for promoting these qualifications, as well as procedures and instruments for monitoring, periodic evaluation and updating of NQFHE. ACPART also provides consultancy and technical assistance in its field of activity.

#### ***d) Facilitate Change***

Society imposes significant changes in the demand/supply ratio on the labour market and in the structure of professional competences that are necessary for

undertaking a professional activity. NQFHE supports these changes through a permanent update of procedures and instruments for developing a competence-based higher education.

***e) International Cooperation and Transparency***

ACPART establishes bilateral cooperation relationships with similar institutions in other European states and is involved in the transnational work groups on higher education qualifications. ACPART also ensures harmonisation and correlation between NQFHE and the European Qualifications Framework levels<sup>1</sup>. The National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education – NRQHE (accessible electronically both in Romanian and English) will ensure transparency of the Romanian university qualifications on the labour market at European level.

***f) Autonomy and Subsidiarity***

ACPART, in its capacity of authority in the field, submits to the Government draft policies, methodologies and laws regarding the development and updating of the National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education and ensures the necessary conditions for their implementation.

ACPART observes the legally recognised autonomy of institutions providing university qualifications and delegates to these institutions functions, roles and responsibilities in the process of NQFHE development.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Commission documents use the **EQF** acronym (European Qualifications Framework)

## 2. National Qualifications Framework in Higher Education (NQFHE)

### 2.1. Structure

Qualifications have various levels of complexity. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) adopted 8 levels of qualifications. Levels 1-5 are attained by preuniversity studies and levels 6-8 by university studies, as follows:

- level 6 of qualification is ensured through bachelor university studies;
- level 7 of qualification is ensured through master university studies;
- level 8 of qualification is ensured through doctoral university studies.

**NQFHE describes only level 6, 7 and 8 qualifications** that can be correlated with the three cycles of university studies provided by Law 288/2004 on the organisation of university studies: bachelor, masters and doctorate. The correlation of qualifications acquired prior to the implementation of the Bologna process shall be made using distinct procedures which take into account the specificity and relationships of the Romanian higher education.

Each qualification shall be defined by means of **learning outcomes** expressed in terms of **professional and transversal competences** developed during the respective cycle of university studies.

In the qualifications description one important factor shall be taken into account: the professional activity involves several competences with varying complexity.

### 2.2. Conceptual Basis

#### 2.2.1. Key Concepts

The key concepts used in the NQFHE definition are **qualification, learning outcomes, skill and competence**.

**Qualification** is the formal acknowledgement of the value of the individual learning outcomes for the labour market, as well as for the continuing education and training, by means of a study document (diploma, certificate or attestation) awarding the legal right to practice a profession/trade.

**Learning outcomes** are the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and/or competences a person has acquired or is able to demonstrate after completion of the learning process.

**Skill**, notion used in the sense of the English term, is an articulated set of operations (from routine level to creative, innovative strategies) which, based on experience, govern the effectiveness of an action with respect to a task.

**Competence** is the capacity to **select, combine and use** adequately, as an integrated and dynamic unit, the **knowledge, skills** (cognitive, actional, relational) and **other attainments** (values and attitudes), in order to solve successfully a certain category of problem situations, in various contexts, effectively and efficiently.

### 2.2.2. Categories of Competences

Competences can be classified in two categories (fig. 2):

- a) professional competences;
- b) transversal competences.

a) By **professional competence** we understand the capacity to select, combine and use adequately the integrated, coherent, dynamic and open set of **knowledge, skills** (ex: cognitive, actional, relational skills) and **other attainments** (ex: values and attitudes) that are specific to a professional activity in order to solve successfully problem situations belonging to the respective profession, effectively and efficiently.

b) **Transversal competences** are those capacities that transcend a certain field or study programme, having a transdisciplinary nature: teamwork skills, oral and written communication in mother tongue/foreign language, IT skills, problem solving and decision making, recognition of and respect for diversity and multiculturalism, learning autonomy, initiative and entrepreneurship, openness to lifelong learning, respecting and improving professional values and ethics etc.

### 2.2.3. Categories, types and descriptors of competences

- a) There are two types of **professional competences**: cognitive competences and actional-functional competences:

**Cognitive competences** are expressed in terms of the following generic descriptors:

- (1) Knowledge, understanding and use of specific language;
- (2) Explanation and interpretation;

**Functional-actional competences** are expressed in terms of the following generic descriptors:

- (3) Application, transfer and problem solving;
- (4) Critical and constructive reflection;
- (5) Creative-innovative conduct;

b) There are two types of **transversal competences**: role competences and personal and professional development competences.

**Role competences** are expressed in terms of the following generic descriptors:

- (6) Autonomy and responsibility;
- (7) Social interaction;

**Personal and professional development competences** are expressed in terms of the following generic descriptor:

- (8) Personal and professional development.

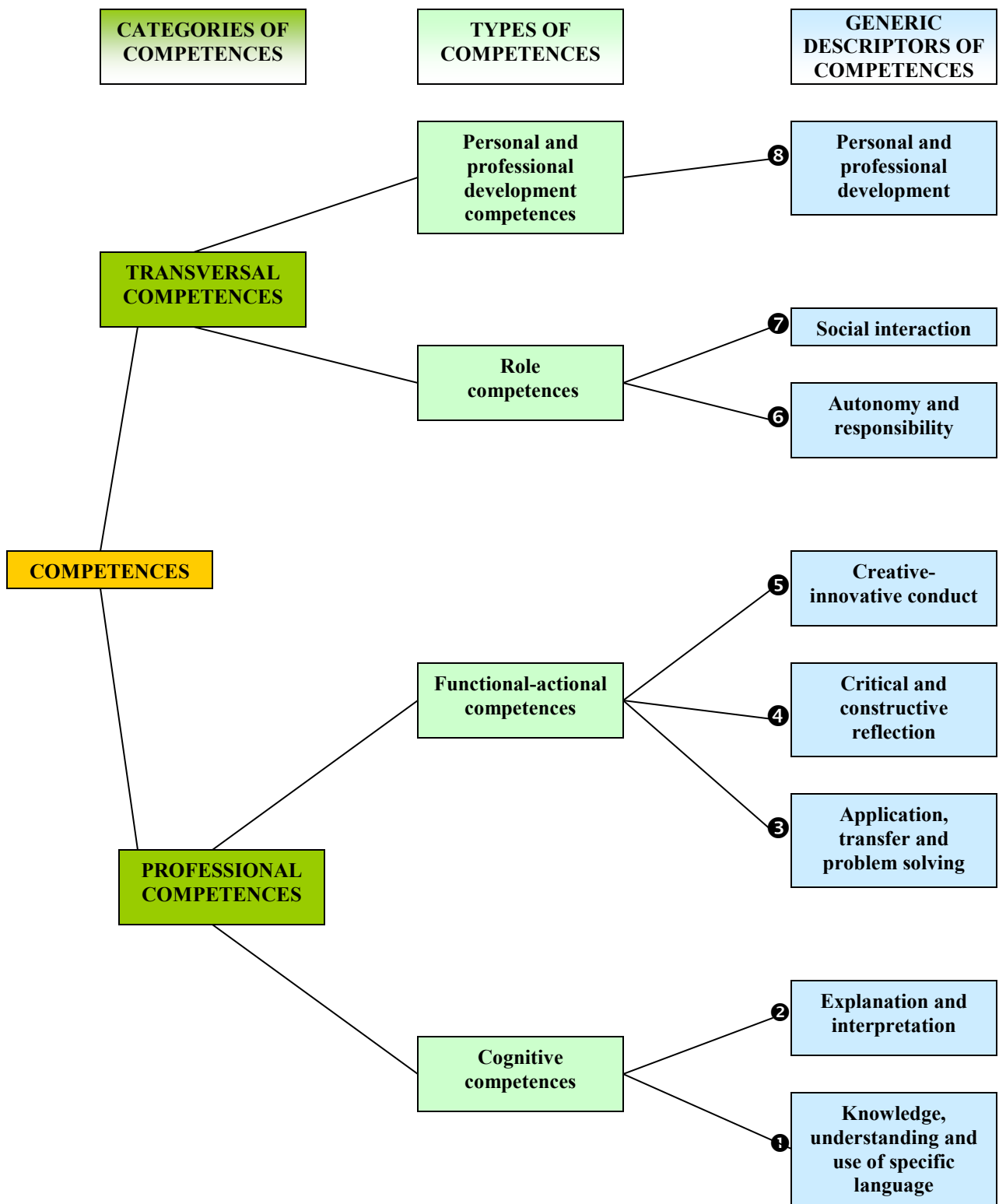


Fig. 2. Competence tree

#### **2.2.4. General and specific competences**

Each qualification correlated to a certain study cycle (Bachelor, Master's, and Doctorate) is defined based on the general description of the *learning outcomes* and is expressed in terms of:

a) **General competences**, which are developed in the wider context of the *study field*;

b) **Specific competences**, which are developed in the narrower context of the *study programme*.

### **2.3. Conceptual-methodological model for describing university professional qualifications**

The conceptual-methodological model is a reference framework developed for the analysis, description and interpretation of qualifications in higher education.

The NQFHE model is compatible with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) vision, especially with the learning outcomes specified by the EQF for qualification levels 6, 7 and 8.

The structure and contents of the model capitalize on the Dublin descriptors as well as on elements of models that enjoy a wider audience, such as: Irish, British, Dutch etc.

At the same time, this model has its own identity; it integrates categories and types of competences, qualification levels and specific descriptors while following consistently the conceptual basis presented at paragraph 2.2.

The essential elements of this model are the NQFHE Matrix (Fig. 3) and two complementary instruments, namely: Grid 1 (Annex 1) and Grid 2 (Annex 2).



### 2.3.1. National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Matrix

The NQFHE matrix includes: qualification levels, categories and types of competences, the generic descriptors of competences as well as the level descriptors for qualifications in higher education.

The level descriptors individualize the generic descriptors for each type of competence and for each qualification level: Bachelor, Master's, and Doctorate.

From a structural point of view, the NQFHE matrix integrates professional and transversal competences, each of the two categories of competences having its legitimacy and importance in practising a profession. They form a solidary couple that expresses the professional efficiency and effectiveness of a study programme graduate.

**Professional competences** are structured according to the two types: cognitive competences and functional-actional competences, which cover comprehensively the professional expertise for any qualification.

In the matrix the **transversal competences** are structured as: role competences and personal and professional development competences. These take into account the social and group context of practising the profession, as well as the awareness of the continuing training need.

The generic descriptors introduced in the matrix express the professional and transversal competences, indicate expected activities, outcomes and performances for each qualification level. They allow for the *description* of qualifications and, at the same time, formulate the necessary landmarks for the *assessment* of the competences level.

**The matrix is an integrative approach of higher education qualifications and it provides two perspectives for the analysis of these qualifications: vertical and horizontal.**

**The vertical analysis indicates the progress in professional competences from the level of knowledge and understanding (level 1), the primary level of a competence, to the creative and innovative level (level 5), the highest level of training.** Thus, a qualification is analysed and described in light of the 5 generic descriptors (from 1 to 5).

**The horizontal analysis presents a generic descriptor against the three university cycles: Bachelor, Master's and Doctorate.** In this case, the descriptors

highlight the increase in competences and professional qualification level. One can notice that the model targets another type of progress, suggesting an increase in the *added value* for each type of competence with the progress from one university qualification level to another.

The vertical perspective emphasizes that a certain level of competence can be reached only if the subordinated levels have been achieved and consolidated.

The horizontal perspective demonstrates that each level of competence related to the three study cycles must integrate the previous levels. As a result, each level of a given competence has a relative autonomy, being conditioned by the previous levels, both horizontally and vertically.

# National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Matrix

(types of competencies, qualification levels, generic and level descriptors)

		DOCTORATE	
		MASTER'S	
		BACHELOR	
Generic descriptors of competences		Awareness of the need for continuing training; effective use of learning resources and techniques for personal and professional development	Self-control of the learning process, diagnosis of training needs, reflective analysis on own professional activity
Personal and professional development	8. Personal and professional development		
	7. Social interaction	Getting familiar with roles and activities specific to team work and task allocation for subordinate levels	Assuming management roles/functions for the activities within professional groups or institutions
Role competences	6. Autonomy and responsibility	Undertake professional tasks with responsibility, under qualified assistance and limited autonomy conditions	Undertaking complex professional tasks under autonomy and professional independence conditions
	5. Creative-innovative conduct	Development of professional projects by using well-known principles and methods within the field	Development of professional and/or research projects using a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods in an innovative manner
Functional-actional dimension	4. Critical and constructive reflection	Appropriate use of standard criteria and methods of assessment in order to appraise the quality, merits and limitations of processes, programmes, projects, concepts, methods and theories	Pertinent and appropriate use of assessment criteria and methods to formulate judgements and fundamental constructive decisions
	3. Application, transfer and problem solving	Use of basic principles and methods for solving well defined problems/situations that are typical to the respective field, under qualified assistance	Integrated use of the conceptual and methodological apparatus with incomplete information in order to solve new theoretical and practical problems
Cognitive dimension	2. Explanation and interpretation	Use of basic knowledge to explain and interpret different types of concepts, situations, processes, projects etc. that are related to the respective field	Use of specialised knowledge in order to explain and interpret new situations, in wider contexts associated to the respective field
	1. Knowledge, understanding and use of specific language	Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, theories and methods within the field and the specialisation area; use them appropriately in professional communication	In-depth knowledge of a specialisation area and, within it, of the programme specific theoretical and practical developments; appropriate use of specific language in communication with different professional environments
		→ <b>Bachelor</b>	→ <b>Master's</b>
			→ <b>Doctorate</b>

Figure 3. Model for analysis and description of university professional qualifications

### **2.3.2. Grid 1: Description of the study field/programme by identifying the professional and transversal competences**

**Grid 1** (see Annex 1), fundamented on the NQFHE Matrix is *a tool for the analysis, description and evaluation of a qualification obtained through a Bachelor, Master's or Doctorate programme*. It includes: the name of the study field/programme, the qualification title and level, the level descriptors of professional and transversal competences, as well as the minimum performance standards.

Grid 1 is the support for identifying the possible *occupations* for the respective qualification, the main *professional competences that* can be general in case of the study field or specific, in case of the study programme. The grid also allows for the identification of *transversal competences*. The professional and transversal competences identified are individualized with respect to each level descriptor.

Evaluation of competence presupposes the description of the minimum performance standards.

**The evaluation of transversal competences** is mainly a **qualitative** one and it generally **involves** a holistic approach of the various social and group contexts for practising a profession as well as for the personal and professional development.

The necessary stages for a qualification analysis, description and evaluation by filling in Grid 1 are presented in Chapter 3.

### **2.3.3. Grid 2: Determining the correlations between the professional and transversal competences, contents areas, study disciplines and credits allocated**

**Grid 2** (see Annex 2) is fundamented on Grid 1 and it supports the identification of correlations between professional and transversal competences, contents areas, study disciplines and credits allocated.

The contents areas are the main curricular fields – descriptive, methodological, conditional and actional knowledge specific to each discipline or inter-disciplinary area in the study plan, with respect to the logic of the field and the set of competences to be

trained. The disciplines will be determined based on the analysis and selection of contents areas, complying with the specific psycho-pedagogic and scientific development principles.

The credit points associated must be the result of an analysis of the workload and of the weight of that discipline in training and/or developing the basic competences of the qualification.

The necessary stages for filling in Grid 2 are presented in Chapter 3.

**The conceptual-methodological model for describing the qualifications in higher education involves the unitary and complementary use of the NQFHE matrix and the two tools, grid 1 and grid 2.**

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The description of qualifications obtained through university studies involves the following four stages:

- **Stage I** – describe qualifications provided through the Bachelor, Master’s and Doctorate cycles at the level of study fields and/or programmes, in terms of occupations, competences and minimum performance standards (fill in Grid 1);
- **Stage II** – identify, for each study programme, the correlations between competences, content areas, study disciplines and their related credits (fill in Grid 2);
- **Stage III** – develop the educational plan for the study programme according to the competences that define the qualification;
- **Stage IV** – develop the discipline sheet according to the educational plan and the competences that define the qualification.

After completing these four stages, the documents resulted (Grid 1, Grid 2, educational plan and discipline sheets) are submitted to ACPART for validation and registration in NQRHE.

#### **3.1. Stage I: Description of qualifications provided through the Bachelor, Master’s and Doctorate cycles at the level of study programmes and/or fields**

During stage I Grid 1 “Description of study field/programme by identifying the professional and transversal competences” (Annex 1) is used. The grid should be filled in for each qualification level according to the study fields and programmes, as appropriate, as follows:

- For the Bachelor level: for study fields and programmes;
- For the master’s level: for study programmes;
- For the Doctorate level: for study fields.

As a result, grid 1 has three versions: G1B, G1M and G1D according to the study cycles: Bachelor, Master's, Doctorate (see annexes 1.a, 1.b, 1.c).

For filling in Grid 1, the following stages must be accomplished:

- a. Determine the name of the study field, study programme and the qualification level (Bachelor, Master's, Doctorate);
- b. Select and analyze the qualification **definition sources**.

The qualification definition sources can be: the occupational classification, professional roles, professional standards (if any), marketing surveys, forecasted developments on the labour market, analyses regarding the development level of disciplines that fundament theoretically, methodologically and practically the professional developments in the respective field etc.

Generally this analysis will lead to two results:

- i) a list of possible occupations
  - ii) identification of core competences necessary for practising the respective occupations.
- c. Select possible occupations for the graduates of the respective study programme, insert them in the grids.
  - d. Define the minimum common competences that, for a given period of time, ensure successful practice of the respective occupations. The minimum common competences are considered compulsory core competences for a qualification (A, B,...).
  - e. Detail each professional competence according to the 5 level descriptors (1-5) as concisely as possible.
  - f. Mention the transversal competences trained and/or developed within the study field/programme (qualification) using the level descriptors 7-8.
  - g. Determine the minimum performance standards.

The minimum standards will refer to two plans: the descriptors plan, indicating the minimum level of development of the respective competence from the point of view of each descriptor and the achieved outcome, namely the effects or consequences of applying/demonstrating the respective competence.

The table will mention the minimum synthetic performance standards for the entire competence.

In case of already existing qualifications\* in the higher education institutions provision grid 1 will be filled in by a working group (made of 2-3 people) set up by ACPART through consultation with higher education institutions. For the proper implementation of these actions, ACPART will ensure technical assistance, through its experts.

At national level, the grids will be validated by ACPART after consultation with representatives of the higher education institutions that provide the respective study programme, as well as with representatives of students, sectoral committees, employers, professional associations, trade unions, employers' associations and ACPART's experts.

In case of newly proposed qualifications, grid 1 will be filled in by the training provider who proposes the qualification and it will be submitted to ACPART together with the qualification validation dossier presented in Chapter 4.

After stage 1 has been finalised, the qualification description is registered in the general section of NQRHE.

### **3.2. Stage II: Identification of the correlations between competences, contents areas, study disciplines and the credits allocated, for each study programme**

In stage II, competences identified during stage I (grid 1) are correlated with the contents areas and with the study disciplines that lead to the development of the respective competences by using grid 2 „Determining the correlations between professional and transversal competences, contents areas, study disciplines and credits allocated” (see Annex 2).

The contents areas are the main curriculum fields or inter-disciplinary areas in the study plan, in relation with the field logic and the set of competences to be trained.

Note: The contents areas have the role of guiding the further development of the study disciplines.

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\* Those already approved through Government Decision or Ministerial Order;



Grid 2 is filled in by the provider (department, faculty) for each study programme and the higher education institution is accountable for compliance with it.

The following stages should be completed for filling in this grid:

- a. In the first column insert the professional competences from grid 1, maintaining their order. Each line of the grid is allocated to only one of the competences (A, B...) mentioned in grid 1 filled in for a study programme. 1-2 complementary professional competences that are specific to the provider may be added.
- b. In the second column insert the competences defined through the level descriptors in Grid 1. Similarly, detail the professional competences added by the provider.
- c. Determine the contents areas leading to the development of the respective competences. There are two possible situations:
  - i) a contents area contributes to the development of one competence;
  - ii) a contents area contributes to the development of several competences.

The contents areas will be inserted in the third column of the grid.

- d. Determine the study disciplines that contribute to training the competences associated to each contents area and mention them in the fourth column of the table. For each discipline mentioned in the fourth column specify in the column the related credit points.

The credit points associated must be the result of an analysis of the workload and of the weight of that discipline in training and/or developing the basic competences of the qualification.

The same procedure will be applied for the transversal competences, without mentioning the contents areas.

### **3.3. Stage III: developing the educational plan for the study programme according to the competences that define the qualification**

In the third stage the educational plans are developed by analysing the correlations in grid 2 regarding: competences – contents areas – study disciplines – credit points.

The educational plan of the university study programme is developed in compliance with national legal regulations and with the higher education institution rules. The educational plan must include as minimum information: study disciplines, number of lecture hours, seminar, applications, project hours, examination type as well as the number of credits.

Note: For existing qualifications, this stage will be undertaken if the results of stages II and III indicate important changes in the educational plans structure are necessary.

Stage III is mandatory for the new qualifications.

#### **3.4. Stage IV: develop the discipline sheet according to the educational plan and the competences that define the qualification**

The discipline sheet is developed according to the regulations in force of each study programme provider. The discipline sheet must include as minimum information the information in the model proposed in Annex 3.

ACPART can provide consultancy or specialised assistance on demand for the description of qualifications offered by training providers.

## **4. VALIDATION AND REGISTRATION OF A NEW UNIVERSITY QUALIFICATION IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER FOR QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Validation of a new qualification and its registration in NQRHE involve the following stages:

### **Stage 1**

#### **Preparation and submission of the application dossier for validating a qualification**

The applicant submits to ACPART a **validation dossier** for the university or post university qualification attested by a diploma or certificate that is recognised on the labour market and within the academic division of knowledge and qualifications. This dossier will be filled in distinctly for each type of qualification and will include the following elements:

- The application form for the new qualification (Annex 4);
- Annexes:
  - Copies of the documents that, according to the Romanian legislation in force, grant the applicant the legal right to issue diplomas and/or certificates recognised on the labour market, attesting a higher education qualification based on the learning outcomes;
  - grid 1 (Annex 1);
  - grid 2 (Annex 2);
  - educational plan;
  - discipline sheets (Annex 3);
- Summary of the qualification description to be introduced in NQRHE after validation (Annex 5);
- Evidence of paying the evaluation fee.

Applications can be submitted all year at ACPART headquarters. The documentation shall be presented both in paper and electronic format.

## **Stage 2.**

### **Qualification Evaluation and Validation**

#### ***2.1. Checking the dossier elements***

ACPART analyses and evaluates the dossier against four criteria:

a. **Provider's eligibility to be granted the right to issue diplomas and/or certificates attesting university and/or post-university qualifications**

b. *Novelty* as well as the *academic and professional relevance of the qualification proposed* from the perspective of the academic division of knowledge and the labour market needs.

c. *Consistency of the qualification proposed* with regards to necessary competences (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) after the completion of the programme.

d. *The proposal for registering the qualification* in the NRQHE is correct, considering the level and field of study, according to the competences (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) obtained after successfully graduating the study programme.

The applicant eligibility according to criterion a) shall be determined by ACPART as follows:

- In case of accredited higher education institutions the eligibility is implicit, as they are entitled to issue a university qualification attested by a university and/or post-university diploma or certificate.

- Other entities must present the document attesting their legal right to undertake university or post-university initial or continuing training activities in Romania (status, trade registration certificate etc.).

#### ***2.2. Analysis and evaluation of dossiers***

If the applicant entity is eligible, the next step is analysing and evaluating the proposed qualification against criteria b), c) and d). The result of the evaluation performed by the commission of experts is communicated to the Advisory Board as a **proposal for approval/rejection of the qualification validation application**. The Board

verifies whether the commission of experts applied correctly and thoroughly the evaluation procedure and criteria and **validates or invalidates the commission's proposal.**

The result is communicated to the applicant as a notification of acceptance, delay or refusal to validate the university or post-university qualification proposed.

In case of **acceptance**, ACPART shall also mention the qualification code/identification position in NQRHE.

If the validation **delay** is due to the fact that the new qualification does not have enough elements to distinguish it from another qualification provided within the same study field by the same provider or by other provider of study programmes of the same level, ACPART shall propose the applicant to redefine and re-register the qualification so that it is compatible with NQRHE.

If the delay is due to a lack of relevant information, the Evaluation Commissions may request the applicant institutions for any necessary additional information or may issue recommendations for improvement in order to continue the validation process.

**The refusal** to validate a qualification can be determined by the programme inconsistency, lack of supporting documents or insufficiently detailed documents, incorrect statements, non-compliance with the recommendations made by the evaluation commissions etc.

### **Stage 3.**

#### **Recommendation to submit the application for temporary functioning authorisation (for bachelor programmes) or for accreditation (for masters and doctorate programmes)**

Based on the validation decision, ACPART recommends the study programme provider to submit an application for temporary functioning authorization to ARACIS. ACPART inform the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth on the decisions made and proposes the initiation of a government decision regarding the registration of the new qualification in the General Section of NQRHE. After obtaining the **temporary functioning authorisation the study programmes provider presents** ACPART a copy of the authorisation document for registration in the Specific Section of NQRHE.

#### **Stage 4**

##### **Registration with the National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education and information dissemination**

After the government decision has been published in the Official Journal, ACPART registers the qualification in the **National Register of Qualifications in Higher Education (NRQHE)** within the field and level of study for which it was validated, mentioning the identification code/position in the Register.

## 5. NATIONAL REGISTER FOR QUALIFICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (NRQHE)

The development of the NQRHE is closely related to that of the NQFHE and it is a tool for identification, registration, permanent consultation and updating of qualifications, namely degrees and awards issued by higher education institutions. NQRHE is a joint effort involving ACPART, higher education institutions, employers, professional associations etc.

ACPART is responsible for the design, implementation and permanent updating of NQRHE.

a) In order to **design the NQRHE** ACPART undertakes the following actions:

- Designs its structure;
- Designs and develops the data base with information on qualifications in higher education;
- Develops strategies for efficient communication with key institutions and the public;
- Develops the IT network for the register, including the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, ACPART, higher education institutions and the other university and post-university study programmes providers.

### **NRQHE Structure**

NRQHE includes two sections for each qualification description: a general and a specific section. The first refers to general information on a qualification while the latter includes data on the institutions that provide training for the respective qualification and information on the specific competences they ensure.

*The general section*, common to a qualification, includes information on:

- **The qualifications nomenclature:**
  - The title awarded to the graduate;
  - The qualification title;
  - The study field;

- The specialisation;
- The qualification code;
- **The competences related to the qualifications:**
  - Minimum competences;
  - Sectors in which the graduate can work;
  - Possible occupations;
  - Compatibility with Classification of Occupations in Romania;
  - Links with other qualifications.

*The specific section* includes the following information:

- Name of the higher education institution with identification data;
- Name of the faculty;
- Name of the study programme that leads to the respective qualification;
- Educational plan of the study programme.

Each university will have access to its own data in section II in order to be able to update and add data to NQRHE, within limits, and with prior notice to ACPART.

NQRHE will ensure NQFHE transparency and it will allow for simple or advanced search based on multiple criteria, as well as for obtaining reports on aspects related to the Romanian qualifications in higher education.

**b) NRQHE implementation** contributes to ensuring the higher education transparency and readability in its relationships with the labour market regarding the recognition of learning outcomes and comparability of qualifications acquired after graduating various study programmes provided by higher education institutions. For the implementation ACPART determines the technical procedures for piloting as well as the means for regular, consistent use of this system by all institutions involved.

After each stage of NQFHE development has been finalized, the results obtained shall be introduced in the NQRHE. After going through all the four qualification description stages (Chapter 3), the final versions will be introduced in the NQRHE.

**c) The NQRHE updating** involves:

- Defining the procedures and tools for the qualifications updating;
- Monitoring the training programmes and the procedures in place for the evaluation and certification of qualifications;



- Establishing the mechanisms for correlation with other national frameworks;
- Development of a methodology for inserting a new qualification in the NQRHE.

ACPART makes available the updated version of NQRHE on its website.

Every six months ACPART notifies MERY and MLFEO on NQRHE updating.

\* \* \*

The Register is a multi-actor construct and an information tool of national and international interest:

- NQRHE is the result of the collaboration between several categories of institutions/bodies, both as stakeholders directly involved in its development and implementation and as beneficiaries: MERY, ACPART, higher education institutions, but also actors/bodies representing the social and economic environment;
- NQRHE is available on-line both in Romanian and in English, ensuring transparency and readability of the Romanian higher education for employers, professional associations, trade unions, employers associations, professors, students etc. The register is public and it can be accessed at national, European and international level.

## **6. ANNEXES**

**ANNEX 1** – Grid 1

**ANNEX 2** – Grid 2

**ANNEX 3** – Discipline sheet

**ANNEX 4** – APPLICATION FORM FOR THE UNIVERSITY  
QUALIFICATION VALIDATION

**ANNEX 5** – BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALIFICATION IN THE  
NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Annex 1**

**Grid 1 – Description of study programme/field by identifying the professional and transversal competences**

Fundamental field ..... ; Study field ..... ; Study programme.....

Qualification title ..... Qualification level <b>BACHELOR</b>		Occupations				
<b>Professional competences*</b>		A.	B.	C.	D.	E.
<b>Level descriptors of professional competences</b>		A1	B1	C1	D1	E1
1. Knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, theories and methods in the field and the specialization area; their adequate use in professional communication		A2	B2	C2	D2	E2
2. Use of basic knowledge to explain and interpret various types of concepts, situations, processes, projects etc. related to the field		A3	B3	C3	D3	E3
3. Use of basic principles and methods to solve well defined problems/situations that are typical for the field, with qualified assistance		A4	B4	C4	D4	E4
4. Adequate use of standard assessment criteria and methods to appraise the quality, merits and limitations of processes, programmes, projects, concepts, methods and theories		A5	B5	C5	D5	E5
5. Development of professional and/or research projects using well known principles and methods in the field						
<b>Competence assessment: minimum performance standards</b>						

<b>Transversal competences descriptors</b>		<b>Minimum performance standards</b>				
6. Responsible performance of professional tasks in an autonomous manner, with qualified assistance						
7. Familiarisation with the teamwork-specific roles and activities and with task allocation for subordinated levels						
8. Awareness of the continuing training need; effective use of learning techniques and resources for personal and professional development						

\* 4 – 6 professional competences will be identified.

**Annex 2**

**Grid 2. Determining the correlations between professional and transversal competences, contents areas, study disciplines and credits allocated**

Professional competences	Competences detailed by level descriptors	Contents areas	Study disciplines	Credits
A.	A1			
	A2			
	....			
B.	B1			
	B2			
	....			
C.	C1			
	C2			
	...			
D.	D1			
	D2			
	...			
E.	E1			
	E2			
	...			

Transversal competences	Study disciplines	Credits

UNIVERSITY .....

FACULTY .....

DEPARTMENT.....

SECTION .....

FIELD OF STUDY.....

STUDY PROGRAMME .....

.....

### DISCIPLINE SHEET

“DISCIPLINE NAME”

Discipline status:  compulsory  optional  facultative

Study cycle:  Bachelor  Master's  Doctorate

Study year: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester:

Professor: <i>(Position and name)</i>					
Hours/Week/Assessment/Credits					
Lecture	Seminar	Laboratory	Project	Examination	Credits

#### A. OBJECTIVES OF THE DISCIPLINE

*Objectives are expressed in terms of professional competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes-values).*

#### B. ENTRY PREREQUISITES (mention the disciplines that must have been studied previously)

#### C. DISCIPLINE CONTENTS

*C1. Lecture – Present the discipline contents structured according to themes. Indicate the number of hours allocated for each theme.*

**C2. Applications (seminar, laboratory, project, practical training)**

*Mention: the list of laboratory assignments (indicate the number of hours allocated for each assignment), the seminar themes (indicate the number of hours allocated for each theme), and/or the project themes.*

**D. ASSESSMENT**

*Indicate the assessment methods and types, as well as their weight in determining the final grade. Indicate the minimum performance standards with regards to the competences defined (see point A. Discipline Objectives).*

**E. BIBLIOGRAPHY** *Indicate a compulsory minimum bibliography.*

Date of discussion and analysis in the department:

**DIRECTOR/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/SECTION,**

**PROFESSOR,**

**ANNEX 4 - APPLICATION FORM FOR THE UNIVERSITY  
QUALIFICATION VALIDATION**

# Sheet 1: Presentation of validation application

## A. Requested qualification

Awarded title:

Level:

Fundamental field:

Study field:

**Qualification title:**

## B. Provider of the qualification certified by a diploma certificate

Provider name:

Represented by (Name, position):

Signature of legal representative:

Stamp:

*Space reserved for ACPART*

### DOSSIER No.

Responsible expert:

Registered with ACPART on (date):

Reference regulations:

Sent to MERY on (date):

Sent to the OJ (date):

### Information to be published in the Official

#### Journal:

Award:

Becomes valid on (date):

Level:

Qualification title:

Qualification code:



<b>Sheet 2: Identification data of the institution applying for the qualification validation</b>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**1) Full name of legal entity:**

- Address:

- Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

- Web page:

**2) Legal status**

**3) Identification references (Governmental Decision, law) and attestation dates:**

-  
-  
-

**4) *Relevant activities for the proposed qualification undertaken by the institution:***

Indicate activities related to training courses, research or other activities relevant in the field undertaken until present.

**5) Other qualifications provided by the institution, in the same university field of study or in related fields.**

Indicate here: award, qualification title, year of first graduating class.

**6) Institution or study programme accreditation situation**

Specify if the institution which proposes the qualification was or is evaluated by a recognized quality assurance agency for the field of the new qualification.

**6.1 Mention the related or similar study programmes which are:**

- authorized, name, date;
- accredited, name, date;
- in the process of evaluation, name, date of submitting documentation.

**6.2 Institutional audit:**

- Performed: date.....**
- Under the audit process; date of submitting documentation;**
- Not performed;**

**6.3 The organisation has procedures in place to promote a new qualification?**

Yes       No

If existing, attach them.

## Sheet 3: The necessity and opportunity for creating a new qualification

### Steps leading to proposing a new qualification

---

#### **1) Elements on which the qualification is based**

- The relevance of the qualification to labour market and to academic development;
  
- The relevance to students' demands.
  
- Market surveys, analyses, reports, forecasts which support the proposal for a new qualification (1 page presentation at the most, with explicit indication of annexes).

#### **2) Organizations consulted in order to identify and design the respective qualification (employers, professional associations, Sector Committees, trade unions, employers' associations etc.)**

- a) Characteristics of the organization (name, object of activity);
  
- b) Contact person (identification data);
  
- c) Method of consultation or collaboration between the university and the mentioned organization.

#### **3) Other relevant information to support the proposal (1 page at the most)**

(If relevant, attach the documents you consider of interest for supporting your proposal)

## Sheet 4: Qualification Description

### A. Occupations envisaged

---

**1) List of possible occupations to be practiced after acquiring the proposed qualification**

**2) Compatibility with the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR):**

Yes, by extension

Yes, by insertion

(In the second situation, please come with proposals)

**3) The most frequent conditions for practising the qualification**

a) The dimension and the activity sector of possible employers

b) Fundamental professional roles associated to the qualification (see paragraph .....)

### B. References regarding the activity and the competences

---

- Describe the qualification using Grid 1 (Annex 1) and Grid 2 (Annex 2).

## Sheet 5: Links with other qualifications

### **A. Identified links with other qualifications**

---

1) Indicate what qualifications or competences are needed or accepted as entry requirements to the qualification presented (for formulating these presentation conditions it is recommended that you take into account the requirements of professional associations, if it is the case):

- Requirements;
  
- Partial recognition and the supporting documents.

2) Is the proposed qualification an explicit requirement for acquiring other qualifications?

3) Admission to studies leading to the proposed qualification .

### **B. Identifying qualifications in the same field currently existing in Romania**

---

1) Other similar qualifications currently existing in the same field, on the same level, on a lower or higher level (indicate the universities, the faculties having the same or a similar qualification, as well as their level).

2) Overlappings, inclusions and differences in comparison to other similar qualifications provided by other universities.

### **C. The correspondence with qualifications awarded abroad, especially in EU member states**

---

1) Identifying comparable qualifications:

- Title of qualification; level;
- Resemblances;
- Differences;
- Targeted market segment;
- Awarding institutions (indicate the institution and the web page with references).

- Agreements for the recognition of the respective qualification or of competences within that qualification;

2) Institutional agreements and conventions with foreign institutions in order to award Joint Diplomas/ Certificates (indicate the agreement or convention, the programme, date of signature and validity period):

- For the proposed qualification;
- For qualifications in the same field;
- For other qualifications.

## Sheet 6: Type of training for acquiring the qualification

### 1. Course type

- |                     |                                          |                                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| - full-time         | <input type="checkbox"/> in the locality | <input type="checkbox"/> in other localities |
| - part-time         | <input type="checkbox"/> in the locality | <input type="checkbox"/> in other localities |
| - distance learning | <input type="checkbox"/>                 |                                              |

### 2. Type of training for acquiring the qualification

- |                                       |     |    |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| - After an initial training course:   | yes | no |
| - After a continuing training course: | yes | no |

### 3. Teaching language

### 4. Studies organised in cooperation with a company (mention the name of the company – companies – and the venue of the training courses)

- Company name;
- Entry level;
- Duration;
- Credits;

## **Sheet 7: Reference system for the qualification**

**1) Educational plan for the qualification (qualification curricula) and syllabi.**

Attach the educational plans and the syllabi.

**2) Methodology for assessing competences and knowledge after the completion of the course.**

**3) Attach a copy of a standard diploma filled in for the proposed qualification.**

**4) Website hosting information on the qualifications provided by the promoting institution.**



## Sheet 8: Highlighting the Diploma holders' career path \*

### A. Structures highlighting graduates' career path used in the university

If the university has such structures in place, please indicate them and mention the contact data.

### B. Use of such structures

#### 1) Tracer study on the last 3 series of graduates

Diploma issuance year	Total number of Diploma holders	Number of holders practicing activities within the field of study		Number of holders practicing activities in related fields		Number of holders practicing activities in other fields	
		According to their training level	Below their training level	According to their training level	Below their training level	According to their training level	Below their training level

#### 2) Comments

### C. Distribution of Diploma and Certificate holders in the qualification field, according to the type of education

Diploma issuance year	Initial training	Continuing training	Total number of graduates

\* Optional. It is an additional argument which supports the proposed qualification

**ANNEX 5 - SUMMARY OF THE QUALIFICATION  
DESCRIPTION WITHIN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS  
REGISTER IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

## Summary of the qualification description within the National Qualifications Register in Higher Education

<b>Title</b>
Qualification title

<b>Authority responsible for certification</b>	<b>Qualification (diploma) signer</b>
Square 2	Square 3

<b>Study cycle (level) and study field</b>	
Field:	Cycle (level):
Qualification code:	
Total number of credits:	Square 4

<b>Summary of the qualification reference system</b>
<p>Fundamental professional roles *</p> <p>Relevant competences acquired (indicate 10 competences) *</p> <p>Educational plan (curricula) (<i>to be attached</i>)</p>
Square 5

<b>Activity sectors or types of occupations accessible for the Diploma/Certificate holder</b>
<p>Codes of most closely related qualifications:</p>
Square 6

<b>Access to qualification</b>		
The benefits of achieved competences can be kept for ..... years.		
Square 7		
Entry requirements	Yes	No

\* *Fundamental professional roles* – identify 7-10 fundamental professional roles (see 2.4)

\* *Applied units of competence* – structural-functional elements of any type of competence

After a training path as a student		
After a continuing training path		

Links with other qualifications	European and international agreements
Square 8	Square 9

Legal basis
<p><u>Law regarding the setting up of the institution and the GD regarding the structure of the institution:</u></p> <p><u>Other references:</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Square 10</p>

Other information
<p><u>Statistics regarding the evolution in the number of students within the qualification field, in the last 3 years:</u></p> <p><u>Other information sources:</u></p> <p><u>Places for acquiring the qualification:</u></p> <p><u>History of qualification*:</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Square 11</p>

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\* Mention, if it is the case, the correspondent qualifications provided before 2008.