



United Arab Emirates

NQA | الهيئة الوطنية للمؤهلات
National Qualifications Authority

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR A WORLD CLASS, PROGRESSIVE,
EDUCATION AND SKILLS SYSTEM**

- National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF): purpose, best practice and lessons from other countries.
- Key drivers for the UAE – why the UAE needs a NQF.
- Key design features of the Qualifications Framework for the Emirates (*QFEmirates*).
- The *QFEmirates* and higher education.

- Purpose at a strategic level is to provide practical solutions to real political, economic and educational concerns such as:
 - changing economic goals and the need for labour market reform;
 - changing social needs within a global economic, knowledge-based environment;
 - expansion or diversification of post-compulsory education;
 - improvements in the quality of education or training.
- At the learner level, purpose includes:
 - within- and cross-nation learner mobility;
 - homogenisation of international standards for recognition and equivalency, supported by robust quality assurance.

- Clear vision, purpose and objectives related to education and training;
- Consultation and involvement across the public and private sectors;
- Industry sets skills standards for vocational education and training;
- Alignment with existing systems;
- Transition time to allow implementation;
- Policy-learning' rather than 'policy borrowing'.

- Framework type must be fit for purpose:
 - 'outcome-led' versus 'communication-led';
 - 'meta-frameworks';
- Balance between being too generic and highly content-prescriptive.

The UAE has identified that it faces significant challenges to remain competitive in an increasingly globally competitive and changing environment, which includes:

- the need for a flexible world-class workforce;
- recognition of increasing global economic integration, technological innovation and advance to ensure continuing productivity growth;
- access to a pool of highly skilled, educated and qualified workers through development of the nation's citizens (Emiratisation);
- perception of VET as a second class learning pathway – compared to the general education system.

To meet its future development and prosperity ambitions, the UAE needs:

- a central education and training coordination authority to oversee the development of national strategic policy on skills and quality assurance of education and training outcomes;
- a singular, coherent and integrated framework of qualifications bringing together general education, higher education and VET to allow comparisons with and alignment to existing UAE and international qualifications, facilitating learner progression;
- an enabling mechanism for all national qualifications that can be used by the nation's decision makers to coordinate, monitor and quality assure providers, especially in VET and, in particular, to avoid the perception that VET is a second class learning pathway.

In late 2010, President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Sayed Al Nahyan issued a Federal Degree to establish the UAE National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

Its vision is to:

'develop and maintain a qualifications system that values every individual's learning and optimises access, transfer, progression and recognition of qualifications, leading to a skilled and knowledgeable workforce for a globally competitive environment.'

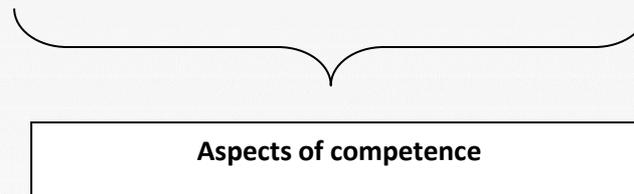
- General education, vocation, technical and professional education and training and higher education in a single, integrated system;
- Based on unit standards contextualised to specific sectors and learning requirements;
- Common language for qualifications and learning outcomes;
- Multi-dimensional - relative standards of every qualification determined through level and credit;
- VET qualification design based on occupational skills standards;
- Involves stakeholders at every stage of design and implementation;
- Flexible - to respond to changing national and international needs demands;
- Incorporates recognition of prior learning;
- Phased implementation to reflect and support existing systems.

AN TRULY INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Level	Generic Nomenclature	Principal Qualification titles (each with its own profile) used in the QF Emirates		
		Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Higher Education (HE)	General Education (G 12 – GE)
10	Doctoral Degree	—	Doctoral	—
9	Master Degree	Applied Master	Master	—
8	Graduate Diploma	Applied Graduate Diploma	Postgraduate Diploma	—
7	Bachelor Degree	Applied Bachelor	Bachelor	—
6	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Higher Diploma	—
5	Diploma/ Associate Degree	Diploma	Associate Degree	—
4	Certificate	Certificate 4	—	Secondary School Certificate (G 12)
3	Certificate	Certificate 3	—	TBA
2	Certificate	Certificate 2	—	—
1	Certificate	Certificate 1	—	—

FIVE STRANDS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Strand 1	Strand 2	Strand 3	Strand 4	Strand 5
Level X	Knowledge	Skill	Autonomy and responsibility	Role in context	Self-development



- **Principal Qualifications:** the major type of qualification associated with formal recognition at each level. They include the five strands of learning outcomes and capture a typical range of achievements for that level.
- In addition there are:
 - **Composite Awards :** provide formal recognition for learners who achieve a set of learning outcomes covering all five strands *of learning outcomes but not the full combination of learning outcomes* required for a Principal Qualification at a given level;
 - **Component Awards:** provide the smallest parcel of formally recognised learning outcomes that can be achieved by learners within the Framework. It may *relate to all or only some of the strands of learning outcomes*, at a given level.
- When the QFEmirates is fully operational, it is anticipated that each type of qualification will be available at each of the ten levels, based on the demand of users.
- The QFEmirates is dynamic, responding to user needs, so will be under constant review.

- Universities and other higher education providers will be able to use the QF*Emirates* to help to drive national education and training policy within a coherent and integrated framework;
- Status and credibility of the UAE raised as higher education and its graduates are recognised as ‘world class’ through clear alignment with international systems;
- Vital role of higher education in:
 - engaging with the development and implementation of UAE recognition and equivalence policies;
 - developing new opportunities to influence and provide expertise not only in the region but internationally;
 - providing culturally astute graduates to lead the future economic productivity and social development of the UAE.



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