

Higher Education Qualifications Framework

Article 1. Essence and Purpose of Elaboration

1. Higher Education Qualifications Framework is a part of the National Qualifications Framework, providing for systematised qualifications of higher (academic) education existing in Georgia.

2. Higher education qualification is the learning outcome, attainable through successful completion of an academic educational programme and is certified by a diploma, issued by a higher education institution. The higher education qualifications framework ensures the description of higher education qualifications through learning outcomes.

3. Higher qualifications framework aims at:

- a) Description of the interrelation between qualifications existing in the country;
- b) Making the existing qualifications easily understandable for students, employers, and an academic staff;
- c) Assisting higher education institutions in the improvement of existing educational programmes and planning new ones;
- d) Supporting quality assurance internal and external systems and enhancement of the quality of higher education;
- e) Creating the basis for a student-oriented education system;
- f) Ensuring the compatibility and comparability at the international level and promoting the process of recognition of qualifications;
- g) Promoting and supporting student mobility;
- h) Promoting lifelong learning

4. The learning outcomes for each field of study are further specified by a sectoral standard developed on the basis of this document, which describes the competences of a holder of the qualification of relevant cycle and specialty.

Article 2. System of Higher Education

1. The types of higher education institutions in Georgia are as follows:
 - a) College – higher education institution implementing the programmes of only the first cycle of higher academic education;
 - b) Teaching University – higher education institution implementing programme/ programmes of higher education (except for doctoral programmes). A teaching university is required to provide second cycle – Master’s educational programme/ programmes.
 - c) University – higher education institution implementing educational programmes of all three cycles of higher education and research.

2. The status of a higher education institution is acquired through authorisation. A higher education institution can be a legal entity of both public and private law. Accreditation of educational programmes is voluntary.

3. Regulated programmes, teacher training, Georgian language teaching and doctoral educational programmes can be implemented only when the institution concerned is accredited. The state study grants and state Master's study grants are allocated for funding only those educational programmes of a higher education institution, which are accredited. The higher education institutions are authorised and educational programmes are accredited by the Legal Entity of Public Law – National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement.

4. There are three cycles of higher education in Georgia. The educational programmes are described through the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

5. Any person with secondary education is entitled to enrol for the first cycle at a higher education institution. The precondition for the admission to Bachelor's educational programme is the Unified National Examinations. The credit value of a Bachelor's educational programme is at least 240 credits.

6. It is admissible to grant interim qualifications within the framework of the first cycle educational programmes in the case of attainment of learning outcomes set for the relevant part of an educational programme, which should not be less than half amount of credits, envisaged for the educational programme concerned.

7. Teacher training educational programme is a part of Bachelor educational programme or is implemented as an independent programme, being taught for at least one academic year. It covers 60 credits and a right to take this programme is enjoyed by a person having Bachelor's or equalised thereto an academic degree or a relevant arts/sport vocational higher education diploma. A graduate is awarded with a Teacher Training Certificate. An owner of the certificate is entitled to continue his/her studies with Master's 60-credit educational programme.

8. Medical, dentistry and veterinary education is acquired through one-cycle educational programmes, which is equalised to the second cycle according to its learning outcomes. The credit value of the educational programme of a Medical Doctor is 360 credits and that of the educational programme of a Doctor of Dental Medicine / Doctor of Veterinary Medicine – 300 credits.

9. Any person having Bachelor's or equalised thereto an academic degree is entitled to take up an educational programme of the second cycle. Additional admission criteria are set by the higher education institution concerned. Master's educational programme covers at least 120 credits.

10. Any person having Master's or equalised thereto an academic degree is entitled to take up an educational programme of the third cycle. Preconditions for the admission to the programme are set by the higher education institution concerned. A Doctoral educational programme covers at least 180 credits.

11. Holding the unified national and masters examinations are ensured by the Legal Entity of Public Law – National Examinations Centre. Exemptions from general admission rules are allowed only in cases, envisaged by law.

Article 3. Qualifications Descriptor

1. Higher education qualifications descriptor defines the scope of knowledge, skills and values to be attained at a relevant level according to the following six criteria:

- a) Knowledge and understanding
- b) Applying knowledge
- c) Making judgments
- d) Communications skills
- e) Learning skills
- f) Values

2. Based on the National Qualifications Framework and relevant sectoral standard and the mission of the higher educational institution concerning the learning outcomes of a specific educational programme are defined. The learning outcomes of an educational programme, or a study course or a module are described through field-specific and generic competences.

3. The cycles of higher education are described hierarchically according to learning outcomes. Each next cycle of higher education implies the attainment of additional learning outcomes based on those of the previous cycle.

4. The learning outcomes of the first cycle of higher education and a short cycle within the first cycle of higher education are based on the learning outcomes of general secondary education.

5. Learning outcomes relevant to the short cycle within the first cycle of higher education are as follows:

a) Knowledge and understanding – comprehensive and/or specialized theoretical and practical knowledge of the field of study; understanding of the possibilities (scope) of professional activities;

b) Applying Knowledge – ability to use a wide range of cognitive and practical skills for creative solution of abstract problems;

c) Making judgments – Ability to identify clearly defined problems; ability to identify and analyse relevant data for their solution using standard methods, also the ability to make sound judgements;

d) Communication skills – ability to communicate ideas and information structurally and coherently to specialists and non-specialists using qualitative and quantitative data; ability to comprehensively use modern information and communication technologies; ability to communicate field related information and make presentations in a foreign language.

e) Learning skills – ability to define own learning needs in different and unpredictable situations;

f) Values – Ability to evaluate and share own and others' attitude towards values, characteristic for professional activity.

6. Learning outcomes relevant to the first cycle of higher education are as follows:

a) Knowledge and understanding – Advanced knowledge of the field of study, including critical analysis of theories and principles; understanding of complex matters of the field of study;

b) Applying knowledge – Ability to use field specific methods and also certain selected methods for the solution of problems; ability to carry out research and practical projects under predetermined directions;

c) Making judgments – Ability to select and interpret field specific data, also to analyse abstract data and/or situations using standards and certain selected methods, ability to make sound judgement;

d) Communication skills – Ability to prepare a detailed written report on ideas, current problems and solutions to them and to communicate information orally to specialists and non-specialists in the Georgian and foreign languages; ability to creatively use modern information and communication technologies;

e) Learning skills – Ability to evaluate own learning process in a coherent and comprehensive manner; ability to identify further learning needs;

f) Values – Ability to participate in the formation of values and strive for their establishment.

7. Learning outcomes relevant to the second cycle of higher education are as follows:

a) Knowledge and understanding – Advanced and systemic knowledge of the field of study, which allows for the generation of new, original ideas, understanding solutions to certain problems;

b) Applying knowledge– Ability to act in a new, unpredictable and multidisciplinary environment; ability to search for new, original methods of solution for complex problems, amongst them, using the most recent methods and approaches;

c) Making judgments – Ability to make judgements on the basis of critical analysis of complex and incomplete information (including recent researches); ability to synthesise innovatively based on recent data;

d) Communication skills – Ability to communicate own judgements, arguments and research methods to academic and professional community in the Georgian and foreign languages, with due consideration of the academic integrity standards and recent developments in the field of information and communication technologies;

e) Learning skills – Ability to independently manage the learning process, to understand the specificities of the learning process and make strategic plans a high level;

f) Values – Ability to evaluate own and others' attitude towards values and contribute to the establishment of new ones;

8. Learning outcomes relevant to the third cycle of higher education are as follows:

a) Knowledge and understanding – Knowledge based on the most recent developments of a field/sub-field of study or an interdisciplinary field, what allows for further expansion of the existing knowledge and use of innovative methods (at the level of standards required for referable publications); understanding of the renewed scope of knowledge through re-analysis and partial re-evaluation of the existing knowledge;

b) Applying Knowledge – Ability to independently plan, carry out and supervise innovative research; ability to develop new research and analytical methods and approaches, which are oriented on the creation of new knowledge and are reflected in international reference publications;

c) Making judgments – Ability to critically analyse new, complex and controversial ideas and approaches, what promotes the development/enhancement of new methods; ability to independently make correct and efficient decisions for the solution of problems;

d) Communication skills – Ability to clearly and soundly demonstrate new knowledge in conjunction with the new one; also the ability to engage in thematic debates with international scientific community in a foreign language;

e) Learning skills – Readiness to further develop new ideas or processes stemming from knowledge, that is based on recent developments in the course of learning and professional activity, amongst them, in the course of research;

f) Values – Ability to research the ways of establishing values and develop innovative methods for their establishment.

9. Qualifications descriptor may be further specified or detailed through a respective sectoral document.

Article 4. Awarded Qualifications

1. The title of a qualification of the short cycle within the first cycle educational programme includes the term “Interim Qualification” together with the specification of the direction or/and field/specialty.

2. The title of a qualification of the first cycle educational programme includes the term “Bachelor” together with the specification of the direction or/and field/specialty. A student is entitled to combine major (at least 120 credits) and minor (60 credits desirable) specialties in the following manner:

- Major and free components;
- Major, minor and free components;
- Major and two minors.

3. The title of a qualification of the second cycle educational programme includes the term “Master” together with the specification of the direction, field/specialty or/and sub-field/sub-specialty. A Master’s programme includes a teaching component and qualification thesis prepared on the basis of independent research. It is desirable for a master’s programme to include practical components as well.

4. The title of a qualification of the third cycle educational programme includes the term “Doctor” together with the specification of the direction or/and field/specialty. A doctoral educational programme includes learning and practical components. It is completed by the development and public defence of a qualification thesis prepared on the basis of independent research.

5. A regulated educational programme is oriented on training a student for relevant regulated profession. At least 75% of an educational programme is allocated for the development of competences that are necessary for a regulated profession.