Analysis of National Qualification Framework

Report

Tbilisi

July, 2014

Introduction

The report represents National Qualifications Framework of Georgia, as the analysis of providing mechanisms for lifelong learning and proposals and recommendations on the basis of the analysis. The report was drafted by a working group initiated by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The document includes: short descriptions of European Qualifications Framework, Georgian Educational system, Georgian Qualifications framework and its compliance with the European qualifications framework as well as challenges and future steps revealed as a result of the analysys.

1. Introduction

2. The European Qualifications Framework

3. Educational System of Georgia and qualifications.

General Education

Vocational Education

Higher Education

Quality Assurance System

4. The History of development of Georgian National Qualifications framework

5. The compliance of Georgian National Qualifications Framework with European Qualifications Framework

6. Challenges and future steps

The European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) ensures the qualifcations to become easier for gasping and undertanding for different countries and systems across European space. It also gives the opportunity to compare national qualifications of one country with national qualifications of another country.

The main objectives of The European Qualifications Framework~~s~~ are promotion of students’ and workers’ mobility and forming of continuous education system.

The European Qualifications Framework consists of eight levels. The levels span full scale of qualifications (hierarchy), (level 1, for example: a certificate for basic general knowledge) the highest is level 8, for example: PhD). Each level is described on the base of study results, which are devided into components – knowledge, skills and competencies.

The designation of The European Qualifications Framework is to become a reference point for European countries on their own assessments. However, at the same time, it is not interested in any country’s education policy, priorities, organizational structure of institutions and do not require specific ways and measures from countries’ systems.

The European Qualifications Framework formally entered into force on April 23, 2008, after the approval of The European Parliament and The Council. It was preceded by the development and consultation process of The European Member States, social partner and other interested bodies in 2004.

To support the process of self-assessment, The European Commission created an advisory group for The European Qualifications Framework, which included experts from the participant countries. The objective of the group was an agreement on implementation of self-assessment process. For this purpose, the advisory group developed 10 criterias and procedures for the self – certification process of National Qualifications Frameworks.

It has been determined, that National Qualifications systems of the countries in 2010 shall be connected to The European Qualifications Framework. Also, 2012 was identified as a recommended date, when the countries should analyze their own national qualification frameworks with respect to the European Qualifications Framework.

Process analysis of the national qualifications framework development in 36 countries is included in 2012 annual report of The European Center for the Development of Vocational Education (Cedefop). According to the analysis, most countries are well aware of the main objective of The European Qualifications Framework and regard it to be supporting, easy perceivable tool for use of those interested in learning and employers. However, some countries understand the framework as the tool for reforming the system and use it for introduction of institutional and structural changes. All the countries use the approach based on study results for describing the levels of The National Qualifications framework.

CEDEFOP- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Analysis and overview of NQF level descriptors in European countries

For the reporting period, a total number of 40 national qualification frameworks were developed from 36 countries (territory arrangements for some countries envisaged existence of independent frameworks, for example: Great Britain). 29 countries among them have developed comprehensive frameworks that include all the types and level qualifications. 8 countries (Szechoslovakia, England, Nothern Ireland, Switzerland, Serbia, France, Italy, and Liechtenstein) have partially developed frameworks, with the description of limited range of qualifications or have current frameworks independent fromeach other. 27 countries have 8 level frameworks. The rest of the countries have national qualifications frameworks with 5, 7, 9, 10 or 12 levels; Frameworks for 24 countries are officially approved; 4 countries have fully functioning national qualifications framework and 10 countries are at the early stage of its enactment.

2. Georgian Educational system and qualifications

General components of Georgian Educational system are: General Education; vocational education and higher academic education. The system of education is regulated: by the Georgian constitution; Georgian law “about the general education”; Georgian law about the “vocational education”; Georgian law about the “higher education”; Georgian law about the “education quality development” and by the revelants sub acts of the law.

**Education system of Georgia**

**Column of academic education Vocational education column**

PhD

Medical education

Dental education

Master

Bachelors

Fifth level of vocational education

Short Cycle

Unified National Exams

Fourth level of vocational education

Third level of vocational education

Secondary Education

The Second level of vocational education

First level of vocational education

Basic Education

Elementary Education

Pre-School education

**Obligatory Education**

**Obligatory Education**

**General Education**

Vocational Education in Georgia is regulated by laws: “about the general education” and “about the Education quality development” (2010); National Training Plan 2011 – 2016 and by other subsidiary laws.

Main objectives of state policy in general education sphere are: creating necessary conditions for students’ national and common values and for establishing an independent person; development of students’ mental and physical skills, ensuring the necessary knowledge, inculcation of healthy life style, formation of civic awareness based on liberal – democratic values, students’ respect to cultural values, promoting awareness of rights and responsibilities towards family, society, state and environment.

Full general education includes 12 years and is being implemented on three levels (beginner, basis, secondary).

Begginer (elementary) education includes 6 years and is being implemented in classes (grades) I – VI; basic education includes 3 years, is provided in classes VII – IX and is followed by basic education document – a certificate; secondary education is provided in classes X – XII and is authorized by general education certificate. Begginer (elementary) and basic educations are compulsory. Basic School certificate is a prerequisite for advancement to secondary level of general education and initial stages of vocational education, while secondary school certificate is mandatory for higher education. School leaving exams are conducted by a legal entity established by The Ministry of Education and Science - the National Examinations Center.

At general education facilities education is carried out according to The National Curriculum, which is developed and elaborated by the National Curriculum Department of The Ministry of Education and Science. The National Curriculum is concept-based on national objectives of general education, oriented on results and education system of a pupil. Structurally, it includes distribution of hours for all the levels of general education, organizing conditions for learning environment and recommendations, necessary workload for pupils, the list of achievements (skills and knowledge), which should be reached by a pupil by the end of each level, description of these skills for knowledge adoption, subjective programs.

Based on The National Curriculum, a general education facility elaborates school curriculum, which specifies the workload given in national curriculum for a particular general education facility; defines additional educational service provided by The National Curriculum and additional educational and childcare service improvident by the National Curriculum, and also educational activities of the school.

General Education Facility is authorized to implement vocational education of I-II-III levels of vocational educational programs. According to the data for July, 2014, 10 private general education facilities implement vocational programs.

General education is available at public and private legal entities of general education facilities. According to the data for July, 2014, 2087 public and 285 private schools are functioning in Georgia.

**Alternative available ways for general education**

According to the Georgian law about the general education Externat is defined as “issuing general education state document for a person who has independently mastered general education programs”.

According to Georgian law “about general education” – general education is available for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, as well as pupils expelled from school, in the form of externat. This happens in case of overcoming the achievement level determined by the national curriculum and in case of successful passing of school-leave exams. Externat conditions are defined by the national curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs are entitled to be admitted at school or continue studying in the form of externat, without passing exams, based on multi-discipline group conclusion, at age-appropriate level, in appropriate class or a maximum two classes below.

**Vocational Education**

Vocational education in Georgia is regulated by the following normative documents: the law on "Vocational Education"; "Development of Quality Education" (2010); Regulations - "National Professional Council" (2009); National Qualifications Framework (2010); Order - "the recognition of non-formal education and the on regulation of conditions" (2011); According to the decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (#121/ n (2010) – about the approval of a regulation for calculation of vocational education programs using credits”, According to the decree of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (# 152 / m (2013) “about approval of professional testing regulation”, according to the decree of the Georgian Prime Minister # 300 / 2013) – about the approval of a strategy for vocational education reform ( 2013 – 2020).

The Georgian Law about “vocational education” defines the following objectives of the vocational education: establishing the vocational – educational space for the opportunity of the person for lifelong learning, taking into account multi-levels and diversification of learning; support for individual’s vocational development., ensuring the training of labour market-oriented, competitive, qualified personnel; Employment of an individual, including his own business or self-promotion; Professional education in the field of academic-business partnership system, planning and implementation of educational programs to promote the participation of employers in the sector.

The types of vocational education are formal and non-formal vocational education. Vocational education is provided at five stages.

Formal vocational education in Georgia is implemented at vocational and public colleges.

Vocational College carries out first, second and third levels of vocational education programs while public colleges are authorized to implement vocational education at all five stages.

Recognition of non-formal vocational education is available only at first, ~~d~~second and third stages of vocational education. Recognition of non-formal education is carried out by the commission at vocational education facility.

During the recognition of non-formal vocational education, vocational education of the appropriate stage knowledge, skills and values are examined.

**Prerequisites for admission to vocational education**

Qualification of basic general education course gives an opportunity to students to continue studying at I-II-III stages of the vocational education programs. According to amendment applied to Georgian law in June 2013, applicants desiring to study at first stages (initial) of vocational education programs have to pass professional testing, which is administered by the National Assessment and Examination center. Professional testing is mandatory for state vocational institutions and is connected to tuition fee provided by the state. Before the above mentioned amendment to Georgian law on vocational education, applicants who desired to study at I-II-III stages of vocational education were admitted without any exams, however, for stages IV – V it was mandatory to overcome minimal limit of national exams’ general skills test.

On each next stage of vocational education prerequisite for tuition is to pass previuos programs and to have recognised skills, knowldeg and values determined by that program.

The problem in vocational education system still remains unsolved – a student of vocational education, who does not have complete general education, can not continue studying at academic faculty.

A Professional standard

Professional standard is the document, which defines professional education stages (levels), their minimal volume in credits and mandatory knowledge, skills and values for each stage. Additional requirements are also determined according to a profession. Legal entity established by the ministry of Education and Science – Education Quality Development National Center with the participation of vocational associations and other interested organizations elaborates and approves professional standard, which represents the base of establishing the professional educational program.

The volume of professional educational program is determined through ECTS – European Credit Transfer System. Credits are distributed between program educational courses / modules. Complete load provided by the Vocational education system includes theory, as well as practice component.

Currently, 89 vocational, 29 higher and 12 general education institutes implement vocational educational programs.

**Participatory governance in vocational education**

National Vocational Council was established to provide participatory government (2009). Tha aim of its establishment is “Coordination of Social partners – state, employer, vocational unions and non-governmental sector activity”. A large number of the Council members are representatives of government sector (11 members out of 24).

By initiative of National Professional (Vocational) Council 7 thematic groups of the following directions are established and operate:

1. Qualification system of Vocational education;
2. Quality Development in the field of Vocational Education;
3. Partnership in the field of vocational education and training;
4. Monitoring system in the field of vocational education and training;
5. Teachers’ vocational development;
6. Funding of vocational education and trainings;
7. Career planning and professional orientation.

Higher Education

Higher education in Georgia is regulated: by the Georgian Law “about the Higher Education”; “about Education Quality Development” (2010) and other subsidiary laws.

The main goals of the higher education are:

* + Supporting the establishment of Georgian and world cultural values, orientation on democracy and humanity ideals necessary for existence and development of civil society;
  + Compliance with personal interest and abilities proper for higher education, qualification development and retraining needs;
  + Realization of personal potential, development of creative skills, training of people having competence suitable for modern requirements, ensuring competitiveness of the persons having higher education for external and internal labor market, offering the high quality education for interested entities to meet the requirements of students and society.
  + State development and provision of higher education system, viability, training and retraining of new academic staff, creating conditions for development of academic research.
  + Encourage mobility of higher education institutions students and academic staff

The types of higher education institutions

Georgian educational system consists of three stages and implements higher education at bachelors, masters and PhD stages.

The types of higher education institutions in Georgia are as follows:

**University** – higher education institution implementing educational programmes of all three cycles of higher education and research.

**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.

**College** – higher education institution implementing the programmes of only the first cycle of higher academic education

The institutions of the higher education are authorized to provide all five stages of educational programs.

The stages of the higher education:

First stage of higher education is Bachelor’s Degree. The minimal volume of bachelor program is 240 credits and is carried out in appropriate direction and / or assigning bachelor’s acadmic degree in a field / specialty.

Within bachelors degree it is possible to implement short cycle programs (at least 120 credits), which is carried out in an appropriate direction and / or by assignation of intermediate qualifications of field / specialty.

Within Bachelor’s Degree or as an independent educational program teachers training is being implemented, which is tought during at least 1 academic year, includes 60 credits, the graduates are awarded a teacher Training Certificate.

The second stage of the higher education is a Master’s degree. Minimal volume for master’s program is 120 credits and is carried out through assignation of master’s academic degree in an appropriate direction field / specialty and / or sub –field / specialty.

Medical / Dental education program is one-stage higher education program, which is provided by assignation of Certified Doctor / Dental academic degree certificate. Granted Academic Degree after the graduation of Certified Doctor’s with 360 credit or Certified Dental specialist with 300 credit is equal to academic title of Master’s Degree.

Educational program for Georgian Language – 60 credits – is taught during the first academic year and a certificate is issued at completion. The program is compulsory for students, who want to continue education at Bachelor, Certified Doctor / Dental specialist educational program and who are enrolled based on results of Unified National Exams in general skills tests in Azerbaijanian, Armenian, Abkhaz and Ossetian Languages.

The third stage of higher education is Doctorate (PhD). Minimal volume for Doctoral programs is 180 credits that are carried out in direction and / or field / specialty of doctorate degree.

**Government regulated fields**

In higher education Government sets three directions of (law, medicine, teacher education) regulated professions.

For each direction a document for sectoral features is developed, which defines specific direction’s or field / specialty educational program study results according to the appropriate education stages. Sectoral document is one of the mechanisms of higher educational program degree.

Law, medicine, teacher education, training in Georgian language and doctoral educational programs can be implemented only in case of accreditation.

The conditions of access to higher education

In Higher educational institutions access to the first stage (bachelor) or to short cycle program within the first stage is implemented on the base of complete general or its equal educational document and The Unified National Exams. For the second stage of the program it is implemented through the The Unified Master’s Exams. Exeptions are allowed only in cases established by the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Unified National Exams and The Unified Master’s Exams are held by the legal entity – the National Examination Center.

**Education Quality Assurance system**

Georgian law “about Education Quality Assurance system” is valid from September 1, 2010 and defines internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. External mechanisms are – authorization and program accreditation of educational institutions, and internal mechanism is – implementation of annual self-assessment by educational institutions.

The authorized body for implementation of quality assurance mechanisms is legal entity – The National Center for Education Quality Enhancement.

Authorization is the status obtaining procedure of the general, vocational and higher educational institutions through the compliance with authorization standards. Determination of comliance with authorization standards is implemented by experts selected by the center, but the decision about accreditation status of general, higher and vocational educational institutions are made by the Authorization Councils. Composition of these councils is approved by the Georgian Prime Minister for one year period. Authorization is valid for five years.

Accreditation – is the procedure of compliance of vocational and higher educational institutions’ educational programs’ determination with accreditation standards. Compliance with accreditation standards is determined by accreditation experts selected by the Center, but the decision about accreditation status is made by The Accreditation Council, which is approved for one year period by the Prime Minister of Georgia. Accreditation is valid for five years.

Annual self-esteem (assessment) – all state recognized educational institutions are obliged to submit completed annual self-esteem form to the Center. The Center is entitled, based on self-esteem; inspect higher educational institution, in the case if the institution violates authorization standard or Georgian legislation regulations in respect of educational institution’s student’s status of origin, suspension or termination, to arise an issue at the authorization council’s meeting about the revocation of authorization.

In 2013, higher education policy analysis document has been created within education policy, planning and management international institute program. The Document of analysis represents the current quality assurance system flows in detail and gives detailed recommendations for the formation of more effective, fair, transparent and efficient system. A strategic plan of The National Center for Education Quality Enhancement for 2013 – 2017 provides this presented recommendations and concrete steps toward this direction had been taken.

3. The history of the development of the National Qualifications Framework

In 2005, at Burgen Summit, Ministers of the Higher Education and international organizations from 40 countries recognized Georgia as a country belonging to Bologna process. Georgia undertook its own educational space arrangement and regulation obligation according to the Bologna Process principles.

Bologna process – is the approximation and harmonization process between Educational Systems of European countries, aimed at creation (establishment) of unified European space for higher education.Its goal is employment of European citizens, strengthening mobility and increase in international competitiveness for European higher education.

The Bologna Process is voluntary and currently, 46 countries in Europe are involved in it.

On November 30, 2002 a declaration “about the European cooperation deepening in vocational education and training field” (Copenhagen Declaration) was adopted by the ministers responsible for The European Commission and vocational education of 30 European countries. It makes a base for development of quality assurance framework for unified vocational education in Europe. EU countries participate in Copenhagen Process- 33 countries in Europe. Despite the fact that Georgia is not a participant of the process, this fact is not an obstacle for the reform implemented in Georgian educational sphere to ensure vocational education system approachment to European space.

In 2007, whithin applying the changes to three regulation laws of the Georgian Education Sphere (Georgian laws on general, vocational and higher education), development of the National Qualifications Framework became a norm.

In 2007 - 2009 in Georgia a project of independent frameworks for higher and vocational education qualification was prepared.

2Strategic development of higher education and science in Georgia

The analysis of higher education politics according to 5 strategic directions, IV quality provision, expert- Irine Darchia

Tbilisi 2013, The International Institute for EducationPolicy, Planning and Management HESP

In 2007 a project of independent frameworks for higher and vocational education qualification was prepared. It was based on qualifications structure for higher education for European space and described qualifications on the base of 5 criterias of the Dublin Descriptor: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge, communication skills, argumentative skills, learning ability. The elaboration of the framework was implemented with the participation of National center for Education Accreditation, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science and non-governmental organizations.

In 2007, within the project of ETF (Europe Training Fund), with coordination of Georgian branch of Association of German Public Universities project for vocational education qualifications framework was provided for initial stage. In order to modify the Vocational education framework project, a state body- National Professional Agency was established at the Ministry of Education and Science in 2008. It had to provide improvement, approval and its real development.Time-phased plan was created, which provided approval of vocational qualification framework by 2009. For that period it became impossible to implement it, as in December 2008, by the decision of the Ministry of Education and Science, National Professional Agency was abolished.

As documents of higher and vocational qualification framework developed in 2007 – 2008 had not obtained a status of the normative acts, they were not implemented.

In 2009 the work on preparation of The National Qualifications Framework had been resumed. Framework development was preceded by the workshops with the representatives of general, higher and vocational educational institutions, sectoral associations and professional unions; with experts and specialists of active fields in Georgia; with the representatives of local labor market. It was decided to develop unified framework, describing general, higher and vocational education qualifications in a lump. During the work, vocational and higher education qualification framework projects had been envisaged. Interested entities had the opportunity to submit opinions to The National Center for Education Quality Development. Hundreds of messages had been received at the Center on this issue. Each letter was discussed in detail, but the suggestions – summarized and envisaged.

National Qualification Framework was adopted as an official document on December 10, 2010 by the decree of the Minister of Education and Science. The Framework represents the union of three main sub-systems of the qualification frameworks in educational system.

National Qualifications Framework

National Qualifications Framework represents a unified system of recommendations, which connects different stages and types of qualifications hierarchically, from the lowest to the highest. The framework gives an opportunity to connect qualifications in Georgia to the qualifications of countries, were National Qualifications Framework operates.

The aim of The National Qualifications Framework is the establishment of education system oriented on pupils, vocational students and students. Approachment of the Georgian education system with international standards; Provide the support for the process of mobility for employees and people who want to study and ensure lifelong learning (LLL) provided by the European Qualifications Framework.

The National Qualifications Framework like the European Qualifications framework includes 8 stages (levels).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EQF**  European Qualification Framework | **NQF**  National Qualification Framework of Georgia |
| **1** | **1** |
| **2** | **2** |
| **3** | **3** |
| **4** | **4** |
| **5** | **5** |
| **6** | **6** |
| **7** | **7** |
| **8** | **8** |

Levels of The National Qualification Framework are described through the study results. Study results for each level are set out according to 6 components (“knowledge”, “applying knowledge in practice”, “making judgements”, “communication skills”, “learning skills” and “value”). During the setting out of the components the Dublin Descriptor were considered and the “value” component was added.

During the work on presented document an important question for working group members was the issue of component “value” as the value is difficult to measure. The majority of the group members took the view – to provide framework study results through 5 components of The Dublin Descriptors. Three components from The European Frameworks were also proposed (knowledge, skills, competency). In this case “making judgements skills”, “communication skills”, “learning skills” and “values” would be combined into “competency” component. For comparison purposes, qualification descriptions of different countries are given below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Description of qualification/ Descriptors** |
| Germany | Knowledge; skills; social competencies; autonomy. |
| Malta | Knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge in practice; communicational skills; authonomy and responsibility |
| Latvia | Knowldege and understanding; Skills which include knowledge assimilation, communcation and general skills; competency, that includes analysis, synthesis and assessment. . |
| Estonia | Knowledge; cognitive and practical skills; responsibility and autonomy |
| Lithuania | Level charachteristics are defined through two parameters: 1. Activity charachteristics (difficulty of activity, the quality of activity independency, variability of activity) 2. Competency types (functinal, cognitive and general competencies) |
| Bulgaria | Knowledge (theoretical and / or actual); Skills (cognitive and practical); Competence (autonomy and responsibility, learning competence, communication and social competence, professional competence) |
| Croatia | Knowledge (factual, theoretical); Skills (cognitive, practical and social); Autonomy and responsibility. |
| Austia | Knowledge (actual and / or theoretical); Skills (cognitive and practical); Competence (autonomy and responsibility) |
| Nothern Ireland | Knowledge and understanding; Knowledge in practice; Autonomy and accountability. |
| Scotland | Knowledge and understanding; Knowledge in practice; Basic cognitive skills. |
| Wells | Knowledge and understanding; Knowledge in practice; Autonomy and responsibility |
| Luxemburg | Knowledge; Ability of putting knowledge into practice; Autonomy and responsibility. |
| Cypros | Knowledge; Skills; Competence |
| Denmark | Knowledge; Skills; Competence |
| Finland | Knowledge; The work method and the use of (skills); Responsibility, management; assessment; Basic skills of life-long learning. |
| Greece | Knowledge (factual and / or theoretical); Skills (cognitive and practical); Competence (autonomy and responsibility) |
| Hungary | Knowledge; Skill and ability; Attitude; Autonomy and responsibility |
| Iceland | Knowledge; Skills; Competence |
| Ireland | Knowledge; Experience and Skills; Competence (context, role, learning to learn, question clarify) |
| Luxemburg | Knowledge and performance Skills; Attitudes |
| England | Knowledge and understanding (awareness); Use and action Independence and responsibility |
| Scotland | Knowledge and understanding; the use of knowledge and understanding in practice; Basic cognitive skills; Communication, information technology ???? And quantitative thinking skills; Independence, responsibility and working with others. |
| Netherlands | Knowledge; Skills (knowledge, problem solving skills, learning and development skills); Information Skills (information receive, collecting, processing, connect, analysis and evaluation); Communication skills; Responsibility and independence. |
| Norway | Knowledge (theoretical and practical, knowledge contextualization); Skills (cognitive, practical, creative, problem-solving, communication); General competences (acting in pre-determined and changing situations, cooperation and responsibility, developing self-learning competences). |
| Poland | Knowledge; Skills; Social competence. |
| Portugal | Knowledge (facts, principles, theory, practice); Skills (cognitive, practical); Attitude (independence, responsibility); |
| Romania | Knowledge; Opportunity; competencies. |
| Slovakia | Knowledge; Skills; Competence. |
| Slovenia | Knowledge; Skills; Competence. |
| Spain | Knowledge (theoretical and / or practical); Skill and ability (cognitive and practical); Competence (independence and responsibility). |
| Switzerland | Knowledge (theoretical and practical); Skills (tasks performing, problem solving); Competence (responsibility, independence). |
| Turkey | Knowledge, Skills, competence. |

**National Qualification document consists of 5 appendixes**:

Appendix №1- General Education Qualification Framework;

Appendix №2 – Vocational Education Qualification framework;

Appendix №3- Higher Education Qualifications Framework;

Appendix №4 – the list of directions, field / specialty, sub-fields / specializations and vocational specializations;

Appendix №5 –The rule of qualification formation.

In General Education Qualifications Framework (Annex 1) qualifications of basic level of general education and complete general education are systematized.

The framework describes the aims of general education framework, short description of general education system and qualification descriptor, which describes basic and secondary education learning outcomes according to 6 components (knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge; making judgements; communication skills; learning skills; values).

Qualifications of general education according to the framework:

* Basic level qualification, proving the learning outcomes by passing the general education initial and basic levels. It is confirmed by the state-recognized document.
* Complete general education qualification, which means the results of all three levels of general education and is confirmed a state-recognized document.

**In the framework of vocational education qualification (annex 2)** vocational education qualifications existing in Georgia are systematized.

The framework describes the aims of vocational education framework, short description of vocational education system and qualification descriptor, which describes learning outcomes of the fifth level of vocational education according to 6 components (knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge; skill of making judgements; communication skills, learning skills; values).

Qualifications of vocational education according to the framework:

* The first level of vocational education qualification is described on the first level of The National Qualification Framework. It presents learning outcomes achieved through successful completion of an appropriate vocational educational program and is confirmed by a vocational diploma;
* The second level of vocational education qualification is described on the second level of The National Qualification Framework. It presents learning outcomes achieved through successful completion of an appropriate vocational educational program and is confirmed by a vocational diploma;
* The third level of vocational education qualification is described on the third level of The National Qualification Framework. It presents learning outcomes achieved through successful completion of an appropriate vocational educational program and is confirmed by a vocational diploma;
* The fourth level of vocational education qualification is described on the fourth level of The National Qualification Framework. It presents learning outcomes achieved through successful completion of an appropriate vocational educational program and is confirmed by a vocational diploma;
* The fifth level of vocational education qualification is described on the fifth level of The National Qualification Framework. It presents learning outcomes achieved through successful completion of an appropriate vocational educational program and is confirmed by a vocational diploma;

**In The National Qualifications Framework of higher education (annex 3**) qualifications of higher education (academic) existing Georgia are systematized.

The Framework describes the aims of higher education framework, short description of higher education system and qualification descriptor, with a short description of learning outcomes of the first (bachelor), the second (master) and the third (doctorate) levels of higher education according to 6 components (knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge; skill of making judgements; communication skills; learning skills; values).

The qualifications of higher education according to the framework:

* A short cycle of intermediate qualification within the first level of higher education is described at the fifth level of The National Qualifications Framework;
* A bachelor’s qualification of complete first level of higher education is described at the sixth level of The National Qualifications Framework;
* A Masters’s qualification of the second level of higher education is described at the seventh level of The National Qualifications Framework;
* A PhD qualification of the third level of higher education is described at the eighth level of The National Qualifications Framework;

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Levels of The National Qualification Framework** | **Education Levels** | **Qualifications to be awarded** |
| 1 | Basic level of general education | A state document confirming the basic level of general education |
| Vocational education level One | Professional diploma |
| 2 | Second level of vocational education | Professional diploma |
| 3 | Interim level of general education | A state document confirming the interim level of general education? |
| 3rd level of vocational education | Professional diploma |
| 4 | 4th level of vocational education | Professional diploma |
| 5 | Short cycle | Intermidiate quliafication |
| 5th level of vocational education | Professional diploma |
| 6 | Bachelor | Bachelor’s diploma |
| 7 | Master | Master’s diploma |
| 8 | Doctorate | Doctorate diploma |

Level study results are placed hierarchically; each next level means development of additional competence on the base of previous level field and general competence.

The hindering factor of integration of Georgia into the European educational space is the barrier between vocational and general educations, so called “educational dead end”, because from vocational education level mobility upward is limited for the next academic level. Vocation education students, who do not have general education, can not continue studying at the next, higher level and credits of vocational education are not recognized at academic level.

The list of directions, fields / specialties, sub-fields / specializations and vocational specializations (annex 4) is provided in the form of a table, in which Georgian active vocational and high-school education programs qualifications are systematized.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Direction** | **Field / specialty** | **Sub-field / specialization** | **Vocational specialization** |

Phd Degree Qualifications are presented in the **Directions** column

Bachelor’s Degree qualifications are presented in **Field / Specialty** column

Master’s Degree qualifications are presented in **Sub –field / specialization** column

Vocational education qualifications are presented in **Vocational specialization** column

10 educational directions and inter-direction fields are defined by the framework.

**Procedure of formation of qualifications (annex 5)** Introduction of Amendments or additions to the list of Directions, Fields/Specialties, Subfields/Specializations or Professional Specialization in the National Qualifications Framework

Before January 2014, formation of qualifications in the framework was related to authorization, program accreditation and annual self-esteem procedures of educational institutions. The application of authorisation or accreditations of educational programs were accompanied by a request of adding a qualification or making amendments. Implementation of these two procedures simultaniously was connected to a risk of contradictory decisions. In addition, a plan for detailed procedure was added to the agenda, concerning the determination of specific time frames for additions, ammendments and removals in qualifications.

In January 2014, an amendment was made to the rule of formation of qualifications. According to this amendment, addition, changes or removal of qualifications can only be implemented on the base of submitting an application to the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement by the interested party. The detailed procedure and terms for submission of application are determined by the decree of the Center Director.

**The compliance of levels of the National Qualification Framework to EQF**

At the first level, the National Qualifications Framework describes learning outcomes of basic level of secondary education and the first level vocational education

**The first level of the European Qualifications Framework:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **EQF descriptors** |
| **Knowledge** | Basic general knowledge. |
| **Skills** | **Basic skills needed for implementation of simple tasks** |
| **Competence** | Work or study under direct supervision in structured context |

**The first level of National Qualifications Framework:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Learning outcomes of the basic education** | **The learning outcomes relevant to the first level of vocational education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | Has the **basic knowledge** of the fundamentals of general sciences  Understanding of the steps necessary for carrying out routine simple task | General knowledge of the principles of the field of study and understanding of the steps necessary for carrying out simple task. |
| Applying knowledge | Ability to apply cognitive and practical skills for carrying out routine simple tasks | Ability to perform simple and homogeneous tasks in a structured environment under direct supervision using basic materials and tools. |
| **Making judgements** | Ability to understand routine simple problems with the help of practical and cognitive skills and establish links between them | Ability to identify simple tasks revealed during the working process with due consideration of superior’s directions |
| **Communication skills** | Ability to communicate both orally and in writing on routine simple matters, search for necessary information using information technologies, also the ability to understand and communicate some ideas in a foreign language | Ability to communicate both orally and in writing about the professionrelated simple matters, basic knowledge of information and communications technologies, and also of a foreign language |
| **Learning skills** | Ability to understand the importance of lifelong learning and make choice on further studies | Ability to learn under supervision |
| **Values** | Ability to respect national and common values; ability to understand personal rights and obligations to family and society. | knowledge of values, characteristic for professional activity |

Overally, the basic principle for the first level of National and European qualifications is that a person, who has the first level education, is expected to have basic learning outcomes. The term “basic” is defined as “simple”, which represents the initial starting point. A person holds basic knowledge at this moment and uses it for solving routine simple tasks in given (familiar) situation under the orders and directives of the supervisor. At this level a person does not take complete responsibility but shares responsibility with leaders (supervisors).

The first level of the National Qualifications Framework describes basic level of the general education.

The main objectives of the basic level according to the national curriculum are: helping students to achieve national objectives of general education; create conditions for students to develop the skills, which have special meaning through lifetime; create pre-conditions for pupils to continue their studies or to make a right choice at the labor market.

To fulfill these objectives, the results provided in first level of the National Qualification Framework, which require the pupils to solve only simple routine tasks, is much more lower than the tasks set by the national curriculum. Considering the existing reality, the issue of connection of basic education results to the first level of National Qualification Framework shall be reviewed.

The first level of the National Qualifications Framework also describes the outcomes of the first level of vocational education. Upon its completion, a graduate receives a first level diploma of vocational education, which should ensure his employment at an appropriate position in labor market.

During the examination of the situation at vocational education institutions it was revealed, that specialists who hold the first level diploma continue studying at the second level of the vocational education, since their employment in the labor market is not possible due to their low competencies. Considering the existing reality, the issue of granting a vocational education diploma at given cycle shall be reviewed.

For this purpose, the ministry of Education and Science implemented the modification of professional standards that held the first level and their outcomes were integrated into the next levels.

**The second level of National Qualifications Framework describes the learning outcomes relevant to the second level of vocational education.**

**The second level of the European Qualifications Framework:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | European Qualification Framework |
| **Knowledge** | **Basic factual knowledge** of a field of worl and study |
| **Skills** | **Basic cognitive and practical skills** required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools. |
| **Competence** | work or study under **supervision with some autonomy** |

**National Qualification Framework second level**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **The second level of vocational education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | General knowledge of the field of study based on **factual circumstances** and understanding of steps necessary for carrying out basic tasks |
| **Applying Knowledge** | **Ability to perform pre-determined tasks in a stable/structured environment** with **certain level of independence** using of basic methods, materials and tools |
| **Making judgements** | Ability to **use provided information** for the solution of a problem and make conclusions for the performance of relevant work with **a certain level of independence** |
| **Communication skills** | Ability to communicate in detail both orally and in writing on profession-related **simple matters**, use information and communications technologies in a professional context; ability to communicate in a foreign language on profession related matters at an elementary level |
| **Learning skills** | Ability to learn **under supervision** with **a certain level of independence**. |
| **Values** | Ability to understand values, characteristic for a professional activity and act in compliance with them |

Gradually increased difficulty compared to previuos levels is shown in both the European and the National Qualifications Framework outcomes. At this level an individual shall have an actual knowledge, instead of basic knowledge. He should be able to evaluate, select and convert recieved information. Applying this information, while demonstating the skills. Unlike the first level, an individual is competent in unfamiliar environment and the problems to be solved are not routine and simple. During the whole process, an individual is under the supervision and monitoring, but unlike the first level, he does not follow the instructions and directions of a supervisor. At the second level a person perform pre-determined tasks with certain level of independence. At this level, he is not responsible for quality of performed task; this responsibility is taken by the supervisor who has greater competence.

The second level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the outcomes of the second level of vocational education. Upon its completion, a graduate receives a second level diploma of vocational education, which should ensure his employment at an appropriate position in labor market.

During the examination of the situation at vocational education institution is was revealed, that like in case with the first level, modern labor market can not ensure employment of the second level certified specialists. As a result, a specialist faces the only choice - to continue studying at the third level of vocational education. Considering the existing reality, the issue of granting a vocational education diploma at this level shall be reviewed.

The ministry of Education and Science implemented the modification of professional standards that held the second level education and their outcomes were integrated into the thirdlevels.

**The third level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the outcomes of the intermediate (secondary) level of general education and the third level of vocational education.**

**The third level of the European Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | Knowledge of **facts, principles, processes and general concepts**, in a field of work or study |
| **Skills** | A range of **cognitive and practical skills** required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information |
| **Competency** | **Take responsibility** for completion of tasks in work or study  **Adapt own behaviour to circumstances** in solving problems |

**The third level of National Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Secondary education** | **The third level of vocational education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | **Knowledge of general facts, principles, processes and concepts**, characteristic for key disciplines; understanding steps necessary for carrying out complicated tasks. | **knowledge of the basic facts, principles, processes and general concepts** of the field of study; understanding of steps, necessary for the accomplishments of complicated tasks |
| **Applying knowledge** | Ability to apply **a wide range of cognitive and practical skills**, evaluate different approaches for carrying out tasks, **select adequate methods, tools and materials** | Ability to apply a wide range of field specific skills; ability to evaluate various approaches for the performance of tasks; ability to select and adapt adequate methods, tools and materials |
| Making Judgements | **Ability to use, evaluate and analyse known sources of information** for the solution of problems, arising in different environment | **Ability to use, evaluate and analyse known sources of information** for the solution of problems arisen in different situations |
| **Communication skills** | **Ability to communicate both orally and in writing in different environment** on general matters, to use efficiently information and communication technologies, use a foreign language in practice | **Ability to communicate both orally and in writing** on profession- related matters **in different situations**; ability to efficiently use information and communications technologies; ability to use foreign language in practice |
| **Learning skills** | **Ability to assume responsibility over own learning** within the context of predetermined tasks | **Ability to take responsibility over own learning** within the context of predetermined tasks |
| **Values** | Ability to act in accordance with common values in **different environment** | Ability to act in line with values, characteristic for professional activity in **different situations** |

The first and the second levels of the qualifications framework are connected to completion of mandatory education. The third level gives acces to the next higher level of education. Therefore, general skills are of much higher level comparing to requirements at previous levels of education. A person is able to use a wide range of creative and practical skills, is able to understand complex instructions, select different approaches and means for fulfillment of tasks and reveal skills for problem solving. At this leve, a person can communicate more complex and difficult information. At the previous level, if an individual acted with certain level of independence, at this level he/she reveals own initiatives for problems to be solved quickly. Also a person is able to take responsibility for own actions within the context of predetermined tasks.

The third level of National Qualifications Framework describes learning outcomes of complete general education.

According to the national curriculum, average basic tasks of the level are: creating conditions for getting the modern education requirements; to help student in making further choice (to continue studying / participation in work); to give a student general education of high quality. Within the present formulation, basic tasks of complete general education can not reflect the requirements, mentioned in the national curriculum with subjective competencies of the secondary level. According to these requirements a student has deep knowledge of actual and theoretical aspects, good skills of research and analysis. The aims of national curriculum itself are very high – almost doctoral level. This is to be reviewed. The analysis shall include that, when the national curriculum was being drawned up, the framework did not exist and therefore, alignment to the framework was not possible. Now, the aims shall be defined more rationally according to the fourth level of the framework).

The learning outcomes of Secondary level defined according to national curriculum are equal to the higher level of the national qualifications framework and its placement at the framework’s next, fourth level is desirable.

The third level of the vocational education is placed at the third level of the national qualifications framework. Graduates of the third level of the vocational education unlike the previous level, performs the duties independently, has a wide range of skills and uses appropriate methods, tools and materials while acting.

During the examination of the situation at vocational education institution is has been revealed, that qualification of a certified specialist of the third level is in demand in the labor market.

**The fourth level of the national qualifications framework describes the learning outcomes of the fourth level of vocational education.**

**The fourth level of the European Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study |
| **Skills** | A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study, though exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change. |
| **Competency** | Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities |

**The fourth level of Georgian National Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **The fourth level of vocational education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | **knowledge based on factual circumstances and theoretical principles of the field of study**, understanding of general options for the solution of tasks |
| **Applying knowledge** | **Ability to apply reliable sources of information in the course of planning and performance of work**, ability **to develop strategy** for the solution of a specific arisen problem and evaluation of results for further perfection of work done |
| Making judgments | Ability to **develop relevant approaches for the solution of specific problems, to discuss alternative solutions and analyse the results** |
| **Communication skills** | Ability to communicate both orally and in writing on profession related matters **in different situations**; ability to master new information and communications technologies independently; ability to **process profession related information** acquired in a foreign language |
| **Learning skills** | Ability to independently identify learning needs, in predictable, but **partially different environments** |
| **values** | Ability to respect values, characteristic for professional activity and act in accordance with them in **different situations** |

At the European Qualifications Framework theoretical knowledge of the individual is widen at the fourth level and he/she is able to analyze knowledge, set principles and use procedures in broad context. The progress at this level is distinguished with knowledge and experience, with the use of a range of technical or academical skills, qualitative and quantative concepts of work and changing the role of the learner with the role of observer. If an individual was independent and responsible for own limited number of activities at the previous level, this level brings own responsibility, a wide range of other competences and provision of solutions. An individual is responsible for efficient implementation of own tasks, performing monitoring of other people’s work and implements the mechanisms of quality ensurement.

At fourth level of the National Qualifications Framework descriptor it can not be observed that at this level an individual has the skills of an observer or the skill of routine supervising over other people’s work.

The fourth level of vocational education is placed at the fourth level of the National Qualifications Framework.

**The fifth level of National Qualifications describes the learning outcomes of the fifth level of vocational education**

**The fifth level of the European Qualification Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | **Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge** within a field of work or study **and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge** |
| **Skills** | **A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills** **required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems** |
| **Competency** | **Exercise management and supervision** in contexts of work or study activities where there is **unpredictable change** ; **review and develop performance of self and others** |

**The fifth level of the National Qualification Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **The fifth level of vocational education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | **Comprehensive and/or specialised theoretical and practical knowledge** related to a professional activity; understanding of the potential **(scope)** of professional activity |
| **Applying knowledge** | **Ability to use a wide range of cognitive and practical skills** for creative solution of abstract problems |
| **Making judgements** | Ability to isolate clearly defined **problems**, to identify **relevant data for their solution and analyse** them by standards’ methods; also the ability to make sound judgements |
| **Communication skills** | Structured and coherent communication of ideas and information to specialists and non-specialists using quantitative and qualitative data; ability to use modern information and communication technologies; ability to communicate profession related information and **make presentations** in a foreign language. |
| **Learning skills** | Ability to independently identify own learning needs **in different and unpredicted environment.** |
| **Values** | Ability to evaluate and **share with others** own and others’ attitude towards values, characteristic for professional activity |

At first gдance, is seems that the transition from the fourth to the fifth level is sudden and quite difficult, but the learning outcomes of the fifth level are based on the results of fourth level. Sharp transition may be caused by connection of the fifth level to the **Framework** for **Qualifications** of the **European Higher Education** (QF / EHEA).

The fifth level of the European, as well as the National Qualifications Framework descriptors underline the demonstration of technical and practical knowledge, even when the communication is implemented with people having different knowledge and experience; Using a wide range of cognitive and practical skills to solve abstract problems creatively; define the study direction in unpredictable situations. At this level independence and responsibility are of high quality.

In order to comply with the descriptors of the European Framework, an individual’s management and supervision skills of working or studying activities should be outlined in the descriptors of national Qualifications Framework.

The fifth level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the learning outcomes of the fifth level of vocational education.

**The sixth level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the learning outcomes of the first step (bachelor) of academic education**

**The sixth level of the European Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles |
| **Skills** | Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study |
| **Competence** | Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups |

**National Qualification Framework 6th level**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Short cycle – interim qualification** | **First step of academic education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | Comprehensive and / or specialized theoretical and practical knowledge of the field. Understanding of the possibilities (scope) of professional activities | Advanced knowledge of the field of study , including critical analysis of theories and principles; understanding of complex matters of the field of study |
| **Applying knowledge** | Ability to use a wide range of cognitive and practical skills for creative solution of abstract problems | 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 |
| **Making judgements** | Ability to use a wide range of cognitive and practical skills for creative solution of abstract problems | 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 |
| **Communication skills** | Ability to communicate ideas and information in structural and coherent manner to specialists and non-specialists using qualitative and quantative information. Versatile use of modern informative and communicational technologies. Provision of information and submission of report related to profession in a foreign language | Ability to prepare a detailed written report on ideas, current problems and solutions to them and to communicate information orally to specialists and nonspecialists in the Georgian and foreign languages; ability to creatively use modern information and communication technologies; |
| **Learning skills** | Definition of own study direction in changing and unpredictable situations | Ability to evaluate own learning process in a coherent and comprehensive manner; ability to identify further learning needs |
| **Values** | Ability to evaluate and share own and others’ attitude towards values, characteristic for professional activity | Ability to participate in the formation of values and strive for their establishment |

According to study results, the short cycle of interim qualification within the firt step (bachelor) of academic Education is equal to the fifth level of the National Qualifications Framework and accordingly its description shall be provided at this step.

According to National Qualifications Framework the sixth step means completion of first cycle of the Bologna process – the first academic step. After the completion of the first step of Academic Education a bachelor’s diploma is issued.

Unlike all previuos steps, the sixth step is characterized by specialization in specific study field. An individual has a high-level knowledge and understands complex issues of the field. At this level, scientific research basics are added, which give an opportunity to an individual to implement research projects according to predetermined directions for problem solution.

Communication at this level obtains the meaning of sharing the knowledge and experience with specialists and non-specialists. Even private social responsibility is directed towards specialization field. If learning is implemented with certain independence at the fifth step, learning skills at this level are shaped in a way that learning and work may be implemented with high level of independence and responsibility. The demonstration of independence and responsibility in working context is implemented through decision making, administration of resources and coordination of multiple complex factors as well as through creativity and innovation. Students evaluate the situation and act in a responsible manner towards themselves, others and organizations.

**The seventh level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the learning outcomes of the second step (Master) of academic education**

**The seventh level of the European Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and /or research  Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields |
| **Skills** | Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and /or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields |
| **Competency** | Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams |

**The seventh step of the National Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **The second step of the Academic Education** |
| **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 |
| **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. |
| **Making judgement** | 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; |
| **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; |
| **Learning skills** | Ability to independently manage the learning process, to understand the specificities of the learning process and make strategic plans a high level. |
| **Values** | Ability to evaluate own and others’ attitude towards values and contribute to the establishment of new ones. |

The seventh step of the National Qualifications Framework is associated with the second cycle of the Bologna. After the completion of the second step a Master’s diploma is issued certifying completion of the second step in academic Education.

This level is characterized by original research, which is associated to the knowledge and skills and requires searching of the original ways for solution of problems in a new multi-discilined environment. An individual has developed knowledge and skills, which gives an opportunity to use new technological, economical and social achievements. If an individual specialises in one or more fields at the sixths level, the learning outcomes of the seventh level provide specialisation in only one field.

Unlike the previous level, the responsibility of the individual is much higher and requires personal contribution to study or working context.

**The eighth level of the National Qualifications Framework describes the learning outcomes of the third step (PhD) of academic education**

**The eighth level of the European Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Knowledge** | Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields |
| **Skills** | The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice |
| **Competency** | Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research |

**The eighth level of the National Qualifications Framework**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **The third step of the Academic Education** |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | 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; |
| **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 |
| **Making judgements** | 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 |
| **Communicaions skills** | Ability to clearly and soundly demonstrate new knowledge in conjunction with the existing one; also the ability to engage in thematic debates with international scientific community in a foreign language |
| **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 |
| **Values** | Ability to research the ways of establishing values and develop innovative methods for their establishment |

The eighth stage of the National Qualifications Framework is associated with the third cycle of the Bologna process. It is completed by the development and public defence of a qualification thesis prepared on the basis of independent research and awarded the PhD degree. The eighth stage is on the high level of knowledge and experience in specialization field. The knowledge is focused on specialization area and does not include multidisciplinaty knowledge. An individual implements research independently using recent methods and approaches at 7th stage in unforeseen environment, while at 8th stage an individual has an ability to supervise research process and develop new research and analytical methods and approaches. Thus, 8th stage is marked with much deeper knowledge and experience and authority in specialized field, which also brings a responsibility related to the field. At this stage an individual has a social responsibility to follow technological, social and cultural challenges, forecast further development and put forward innovative ideas.

Challenges and further steps

1. Despite the fact, that National Qualifications Framework level learning outcomes involve the learning outcomes of the European Qualifications Framework and is presented in principle of progression of knowledge and skills in separate cases, it needs to be adjusted in some cases.

It is desirable to analyze the compliance of learning outcomes by levels provided in the National Qualifications Farmework with the learning outcomes of the European Qualifications Framework. Learning outcomes of higher education shall be described according to the Dublin descriptor.

2. Despite the fact, that National Qualifications Framework describes the qualifications existing in Georgian Educational System, it is difficult to notice progression in horizontal and vertical terms;

Reflecting on all three educational stages as unified structure in one document is desirable.

3. Main terms used in National Qualifications Framework are not explained, which makes the framework difficult as the supporting tool for understanding and proper use of the stakeholders;

For recommentaion it is available to use the definition of terms in document (The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)) developed by the Directorate General Education and Culture, which is presented in the European Qualifications Framework.

National Qualifications Framework is a tool, which gives an opportunity for classification of qualifications according to ctireria developed for the learning outcomes of each particular level. The aim of the Framework is to integrate and coordinate National Qualifications sub-systems, transparency of qualifications, access, progress and quality improvement according to requirements of labor market and civil society.

Qualification means evaluation and validation (checking) of the learning outcomes of the process, which is established by the competent body by a separate individual, by the achieved standard learning outcomes.

The descriptor of National Qualifications Framework defines the learning outcomes to be achieved at an appropriate stage, clearly distinguishes qualifications from each other at different stages and ensures logical link between them.

It is desirable to describe and explain the terms presented in the document of the National Qualifications Framework: “Direction”; “field / specialty”; sub-field / specialization”; “professional specialization”; “interdisciplinary fields and specialties”; “main specialty”; additional specialty”; “free components”; practical component”; research component” and “training component”.

4. Descriptor of the learning outcomes in National Qualifications Framework includes six components (knowledge, applying knowledge, making judgements, communication skills, learning skills, values).

Three alternative recommendations to be amended in the descriptor are proposed:

* Maintain all five components in existing form and only “value” component to be formed as “value and attitude”.
* Formulate learning outcomes according to five components of the Dublin descriptor (knowledge, applying knowledge, making judgements applying knowledge, making judgements, communication skills, learning skills);
* Descriptor of the qualifications to be specified in three components – knowledge, skills and competencies – like with the European Qualifications Framework.

5. Removal of annex 4 from the Qualifications Framework – the list of directions, fields / specialities, sub-fields / specializations and professional specializations.

6. Results of basic and secondary stages of general education in National curriculum provide higher demands, than the descriptor of qualifications of first and third stages in National Qualifications Framework.

Detailed description of objectives for each stage in the national curriculum is desirable. Basic education shall be described at the third stage of National Qualifications Framework, but complete general education shall be described at the fifth stage of the Framework.

7. National Qualifications Framework do not / can not reflect all the qualifications required by law;

According to Georgian law “about vocational education” associated degree is a qualification, which is granted to the person in parallel with professional education, after the overcoming liberal education training program.

Training program of liberal education is explaind through the same law – training program directed towards development of different field knowledge, relevand skills and values and which is implemented based on Memorandum agreed with higher education facility and finilises with the provision of associate degree.

The position for associate degree in National Qualifications Framework defined by the Georgian legislation shall be determined.

In order to introduce international experience according to studied documents Associated Degree is a short cycle qualification and its learning outcomes are equal to descriptors of the fifth stage of the Framework and presents a particular bridge between vocational and higher education. Qualification of Associated Degree is granted in Great Britain, Netherlands, Canada, Australia and the USA.

8. National Qualifications Framework does not include the qualifications, which provide~~s~~ availability of general and vocational education for people with special educational needs and limited groups, as well as other vulnerable groups;

Description of general and vocational qualifications at the first and the second stages of National Qualifications Framework is desirable. It can provide formal recognition of knowledge and skills of people with special ecucational needs and other vulnerable groups.

9. General descriptor of the qualifications (profile) does not include comprehensive features;

In 2014, at ETF conference with the topic “better qualifications for ETF partner countries”, the participants of the workshop agreed, that general descriptor of qualifications in vocational education shall include the following features:

• Qualification name;

• Qualification type and level;

• Justifying necessity of a qualification, demand analysis;

• Learning outcomes;

• Validation, including evaluation and certificate;

• Description of quality assurance;

• The competent awarding authority or authorities;

• The volume of credits;

• Admission;

• Opportunities for further development;

• Alternative ways and means of acquaring qualifications.

Short‐Cycle Higher Education An International Review.pd;

Qualifications at level 5: progressing in a career or to higher education.

The presented features shall be considered during profile descriptions of vocational, as well as academic qualifications.

10. Qualifications, which are granted no more at present, are not reflected in the National Qualifications Framework: pre-reform; higher vocational; handcraft; primary and secondary qualifications and academic qualifications that had existed before 2010.

11. Inpending factor for education continuity in the National Qualifications Framework is the barrier between vocational and higher education, so called “educational dead end”. Students of vocational education, without complete general education, can not continue their studies at the next, higher level of education and credits of vocational education are not recognized at academic level.

It is desirable to create legal grounds, which could provide the removal of existing barrier, the opportunity of recognition of credits of vocational education in higher education and reflection of recognition rules and terms in normative document.

12. Recognition of non-formal education is available only at stages I-II-III of vocational education.

Recognition of non-formal education shall be available at all levels and shall include all qualifications. Flexible and transparent mechanism of non-formal education recognition shall be established and developed.

13. The necessity for vocational education diploma supplement is does not defined by the legislation.

The form and content of vocational diploma supplement shall be determined. Educational institutions, which issue vocational diploma, shall normatively define diploma issuance obligation.

14. Interested bodies (students, representatives of educational sphere, employers) are not sufficiently informed about documents of National Qualifications Framework.

Interactive web portal of National Qualifications Framework shall be created.

15. The paragraph of “qualifications too be awarded” in higher education of National Qualifications Framework (120/n order annex 3, paragraph 4), which establishes the rules of formulating for qualifications to be awarded, needs additional explanation, in particular:

1. Formulation rules of qualifications of inter-directions fields / specializations (indet-disciplinary fields) shall be added.

As a result of consultations two options were developed for recommendation:

a) The so called rule for formulation the qualification “cross”, when formulation of qualifications is provided through combination of specialities or sub-fields / specializations qualifications presented in column inter-directions fields / specializations, of 10 directions with appropriate directions or fields / specialities qualifications.

b) When qualification formulation is implemented from the column of inter-directions fields / specializations

• 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

• 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 subfield/sub-specialty.

• 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.

16. The list of directions, fields / specialities, sub-fields / specializations and vocational specialization (annex 4) do not reflect the demand of labor market.

It is necessary to plan and implement a wide range of meetings and consultations of specialists according to the framework (experts, employers, industry associations, representatives of educational sphere), who will analyze the qualifications in appropriate directions and fields in the framework and will set their formulation according to demand of the labor market.