The Georgian National Qualifications Framework

Technical Note
Working document

For the Workshop of 28-29th March 2019

"Rethinking the Georgian NQF: achievements, priorities and way forward. Strengthening exchanges with international partners"
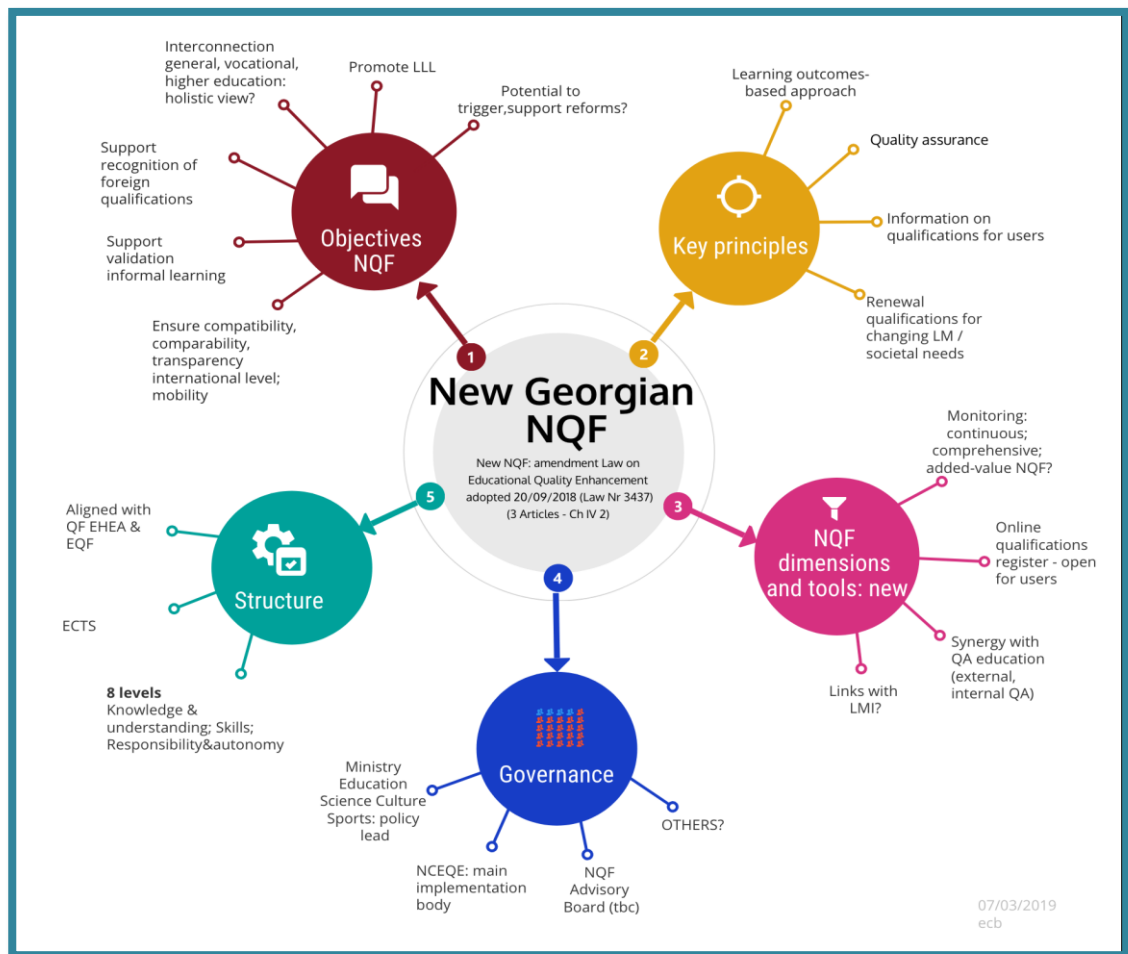
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Table of contents

1 NEW GEORGIAN NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK: OVERVIEW

2 SNAPSHOT

<table>
<tr><td>

1 Legal status of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

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The first Georgian NQF was adopted by ministerial decree in 2010 and has impacted through its level structure and descriptors the panorama of qualifications in Georgia. This was a sub-divided NQF, based on three sub-frameworks (general, vocational and higher education).

The National Centre for Education Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) is in charge of managing NQF implementation, reviewing and updating the legal basis and monitoring its impact. In Georgia the NQF is closely linked with the quality assurance framework of education and training.

In 2015 the Georgian stakeholders started a review of the NQF and in 2017-2018 drafted a new NQF legal base. The aim of this reform is to improve coherence and linkages between the sub-systems (general education, VET and higher education) and compatibility with EQF. As a result, on 20/09/2018 the Parliament of Georgia adopted amendments to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Educational quality*, setting the main objectives and principles of the new NQF. This amendment is formulated in three new articles (Chapter IV[2]) defining the NQF goals, levels, roles in development and approval of NQF legislation and role of the new classifier of fields of study. https://eqe.ge/eng/static/121/legal-acts/laws

In parallel the Laws on Higher Education, on General Education have been amended to ensure harmonisation with the new NQF level structure and concepts.
The new Law of Georgia on Vocational Education adopted by Parliament in September 2018, is aligned with the new NQF level structure and provides important definitions of terms and concepts related with the NQF:
http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/files/VET-Law-Engl.-Sep2018.pdf

Simultaneously, in 2017-2018 a package of new legal acts supporting implementation of the new NQF have been drafted and consulted with the stakeholders. The main draft subordinate acts in form of orders of the Ministry of Education Science Culture and Sport of Georgia (MESCC, see: http://mes.gov.ge/index.php?lang=eng), and rules and methodologies to be approved by the Director of NCEQE, which have developed in 2018 and 2019 are:
In 2018 – for approval:
- Ministerial Order on the 8-level structure of the NQF, level descriptors and list of typical qualifications
- Ministerial Order on the Classifier of Fields of Study, based on ISCED-F 2013
- Ministerial Order on Governance and Monitoring of the NQF
In 2019 the following acts are planned for finalisation and approval:
- Ministerial Order on rules for development of education programmes aligned with the NQF levels
- Rules for recognition of non-formal education, and related regulations on quality assurance of the education and training institutions delivering such

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programmes and credentials
- − Methodology for levelling educational programmes' learning outcomes
- − Concept and technical specifications for the new online register of qualifications
- − Rules for educational standards of vocational education and training (VET) - (to be developed)

The NQF Handbook, currently in form of partial draft, is the first NQF information package for users in the history of the Georgian NQF. The Handbook will be finalized and evolve to include information modules customized for different users' groups.

The new package of NQF legal acts and methodology tools is being conceived taking account of the EQF Council Recommendation of 22/05/2017[1] and its annexes.

The ongoing reform of the NQF is expected to improve coherence with the 2017-2018 reforms of the education quality assurance system, enhance transparency and evidence based decision-making on the NQF implementation, and support inclusion of quality-assured qualifications for lifelong learning awarded outside of the formal education sector.

Renewed attention to communicating the NQF, making it more visible for end-users and sharing data on skills and qualifications, will require further improvement of the coherence and interoperability between existing and planned digital platforms and databases of different parts of the education and training system.

2. NQF structure

The revised NQF has 8 levels, with categories of level descriptors compatible with the EQF:

- Knowledge and Understanding;
- Skills;
- Responsibility and autonomy

3. Lead NQF institution

NCEQE is the lead legal entity of public law in charge of coordinating and implementing the NQF, and the quality assurance framework of education. NCEQE is also in charge of recognition of qualifications and hosts the ENIC centre.

According to draft ministerial order on NQF governance and monitoring, a new consultative stakeholders body will be established in 2019: NQF Advisory Board.

Ministry of Education Science Culture and Sports (MESCS) is the leading policy institution, approves all subordinate legal acts related with the NQF (as ministerial

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[1] Council Recommendation of 22/May/2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/en.pdf

orders).

4. Relation to regional qualifications frameworks

The structure and level descriptors of the new NQF have been aligned with the EQF and those of the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Georgia has participated since 2005 in the Bologna process. Plans to draft the self-certification have been in discussion.

5. Quality Assurance (QA) of the NQF

The *Law of Georgia on Development of Educational Quality* defines that education quality enhancement shall be based on external and internal quality assurance mechanisms.

- External mechanisms: authorisation and accreditation.
- Internal mechanisms: applied by all educational institutions to support continuous quality improvement and monitoring.

NCEQE is the public body in charge of implementation and coordination of the country's QA policy and procedures.

NCEQE applied to full membership to ENQA in February 2018 and submitted the Self-Assessment Report for review on August 2018. https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NCEQE-SAR-2018.pdf

6. Qualifications databases / register

All VET qualifications together with occupational standards and Educational standards in formal education are placed on www.vet.ge and www.eqe.ge. These registers are open for public use. As of December 2018 the total number of approved quality assured modular VET programmes (qualifications) included in the register is 97, at NQF levels 3, 4 and 5.

As of March 2019 the total number of accredited higher education programmes (qualifications) included in the NCEQE register is 1,640, distributed in 11 areas. The majority of higher education programmes are of level Bachelor (754) and Master (579). This register is not open for public use.

Development of a new digital qualifications register is planned for the period 2019-2020.

7. Providers of formal education and training

As of March 2019, Georgia had:

1. VET providers: a total of 92 authorised - public and private, of three types (colleges, Higher education institutions and schools).
2. Higher education institutions: a total of 54 – public and private, of three types

(universities, teaching universities and colleges)
    3. General education institutions: a total of 1,313 authorised – public and
        private.

8. Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)

A decree by the Minister of Education and Science #8/n of 3 February 2011 on "Approving the Conditions and procedures for Recognizing Non-formal and Informal vocational Education" sets out framework regulations with regards to VNFIL in Georgia. The Concept paper on VNFIL developed in 2013, and revised in 2016, a draft guide to recognition and amendments to the Decree prepared and two pilots (in IT and Agriculture) were launched.

In practical terms: the validation (recognition) of non-formal education in Georgia is currently possible and carried out in respect to General and Vocational education.

9. Recognition of foreign qualifications

Georgia ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999. NCEQE represents Georgia in the ENIC-NARIC Network. The Department of International Education of the NCEQE is responsible for providing the ENIC-NARIC Network with relevant and reliable information about the Georgian education system as well as Georgian educational institutions and credentials. NCEQE closely cooperates with the ENICs and NARICs in the process of recognition of foreign education in Georgia.

NCEQE's International Education Department is responsible for all activities related with recognition of education received abroad, for communication and coordination with European Information Centres and National Academic Recognition Network (ENIC-NARIC Network). Recognition decisions of the department are binding. This a department handles a substantial workload, expressed by approx. 10,000 of applications annually. This department has the highest number of staff among all NCEQE departments (23 in total).

For the recognition of foreign education, NCEQE i) verifies the authenticity of educational document, issued by a foreign institution; ii) establishes the compatibility of the qualification or the learning outcomes, attained during the period of study - with the qualifications, existing in Georgia. The procedures and documentation required for applications for recognition are available at: https://eqe.ge/eng/static/213

Recognition of qualifications is valid for:
• General Education
• Vocational Education
• Higher Education.

Recognition is not valid to:
• Preschool Education (kindergarten)
• Residency (postgraduate medical training.)
• Education acquired in the frames of exchange programmes implemented by

Georgian educational institutions upon the permission of the Center.

10. Impact for end-users: on learners, employers, workers and institutions

The NQF is an important driver of the learning outcomes approach for all sub-sectors of education and training, and in the future has the potential act as a linkage between formal and non-formal education and training and between the three sub-sectors of the formal education system (general, vocational and higher).

The experience of NQF implementation has contributed to interconnect quality-assurance and inclusion of qualifications in the NQF; and to identification of areas of difficult permeability in the education and training continuum. Recent legislative initiatives (VET Law) should contribute to address and solve the long-standing structural difficulties to permeability between levels of vocational qualifications and higher education qualifications.

The transition to new the NQF will be supported by the EU Twinning project "Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications".

3 POLICY OBJECTIVES

3.1 REFORMS

As a transition country, Georgia is implementing reforms of education and training, qualifications and employment policies aimed at addressing simultaneously the objectives of growth and competitiveness, employment and social inclusion. Unemployment is a key problem the governments addresses as high priority, as the steady economic growth in the last decade has not been accompanied by commensurate job creation.

Stakeholders have high expectations regarding the NQF as a catalyst for implementation of essential reforms in education and training. The Georgian socio-economic context justifies the emphasis placed on employability, and the ongoing reforms of the education and training system contribute to this end. The new NQF is expected to contribute to improve permeability between sub-sectors, to better matching between qualifications and labour market needs, to support quality assurance of education and training and to increase public information on qualifications.

On 20/09/2018 the Parliament adopted the amendments to Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education. In addition, four main subordinate acts have been drafted for approval in 2019, as ministerial orders. A closer look at the new legal base is provided in section 4. Legislation.

1. A new section dedicated to the NQF in the *Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education[2] (*amendment to the Law): chapter IV[2]. The three articles cover:

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[2] Amended Law available at: https://eqe.ge/eng/static/121/legal-acts/laws

- o NQF and its goals
- o Management ad development of the NQF
- o Classifier of fields of study

2. An Order of MESCS on the new NQF and its structure, level descriptors and typical qualifications by level

3. An Order of the MESCS on the new Classifier of Fields of Study, based on ISCED-F 2013

4. An Order of MESCS on governance and monitoring of the NQF.

According to the first document - amendment to the Law on Development of Quality of Education - the goals of the draft new National Qualifications Framework will be as follows[3]:

a) "Classification of qualifications by protection of the following key principles of the National Qualifications Framework: compliance of learning outcomes, quality assurance, availability of qualification-related information;

b) Interconnection of general, vocational and higher education, its management and development;

c) Promoting lifelong learning;

d) Supporting quality assurance system;

e) Ensuring compatibility, comparison ability and transparency of qualifications at international level;

f) Promoting mobility;

g) Supporting recognition of formal education obtained during learning period;

h) Supporting recognition of informal education;

i) Providing public with information on current qualifications;

j) Reflection of permanently changing requirements in the education system and stimulation of renewable qualifications description relevant to it".

Comparing with the NQF 2010, this set of goals reflects a renewed vision of the NQF, which will now explicitly be open to such novel topics as: non-formal education; transparency in understanding the professional profiles for all types of users; responsiveness to changing requirements and renewal of qualifications. The new NQF is increasingly seen as a bridge between the sub-sectors of formal education, as well as between formal and non-formal learning.

3.2 Authorised providers of education and training

The overview of authorised providers, public and private shows a picture of some diversity, in terms of types. VET programmes can be provided by higher education institutions, colleges and schools.

Table 1: Authorised VET Providers by Type

Type	VET Colleges	HEIs	Schools	Total

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[3] According to the non-edited translation of the amended Law, as of December 2018

Public	24	11	1	36
Private	42	7	7	56
Total	66	18	8	92

Source: NCEQE, March 2019

Table 2: Authorised Higher Education Institutions by Type

Type	University	Teaching University	College	Total
Public	12	6	1	19
Private	18	13	4	35
Total	30	19	5	54

Source: NCEQE, March 2019

Table 3: Authorised General Education Institutions (Schools) by Type

Type	Schools
Public[4]	2085
Private	228
Total	1313

Source: NCEQE, March 2019

3.3   INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PRIORITIES

Georgia is a full member of the Bologna process since 2005 and participates in Ministerial meetings, and in regular reporting.

The EU provides substantial and continuing support to Georgia's reforms of the education and training system, at all levels, with a view to improve its performance and outcomes for economic and social development, youth employability and compatibility with international developments. The new EU programme "Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs", whose Financing Agreement was signed in November 2018 between the EU and Georgia, builds on previous programmes and expands the scope to new domains. Within this new programme a

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[4] Legal entities under public law – general educational institutions established/reorganised before 1 January 2014 by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia shall be authorised to carry out general educational activity as general educational institutions/schools until the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, and receive funding provided for by this Law. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia shall ensure gradual authorisation of the general educational institutions before the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Twinning project[5] will be implemented with the specific objective to support NCEQE to implement and monitor the reformed quality assurance framework of education, and the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF), through improved institutional capacities, effective instruments and procedures, participative governance, and delivery of relevant information for stakeholders and the population.

Georgia participates actively in Erasmus+.

Georgia aspires to closer integration with the EU, in line with the **Association Agreement** (AA) (signed in 2014, entered into force from 1 July 2016). The EU-Georgia Association Agreement was signed on 26/09/2014 and entered into provisional application since September 2014. Title VI, chapter 16 contains reference to cooperation towards recognition of qualifications. The relevant Annex (XXXII) lists the Acquis to be adopted by the country – and the EQF Recommendation is part of the annex. On another note, Article 96 of *Title IV on Trade and Trade related matters* refers to Mutual recognition (negotiation of mutual recognition agreements).

Sources:
- http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=10281
- http://www.eeas.europa.eu/georgia/index_en.htm
- http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0494&from=EN

More concrete information on the text of *Title VI - CHAPTER 16: Education, training and youth* is provided below:

Article 358

The Parties shall cooperate in the field of education and training to intensify cooperation and dialogue, including dialogue on policy issues, <u>seeking approximation to relevant EU policies and practices</u>. The Parties shall cooperate to promote lifelong learning, encourage cooperation and transparency at all levels of education and training, with a special focus on higher education.

Article 359

This cooperation in the field of education and training shall focus, inter alia, on the following areas:
(a) promoting lifelong learning, which is a key to growth and jobs, and can allow citizens to participate fully in society;

(b) modernising education and training systems, enhancing quality, relevance and access throughout the education ladder from early childhood education and care to tertiary education;

(c) promoting quality in higher education in a manner which is consistent with the EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education and the Bologna process;

(d) reinforcing international academic cooperation, participation in EU cooperation programmes, increasing student and teacher mobility;

(e) encouraging the learning of foreign languages;

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[5] Twinning Project: Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications

(f) promoting progress towards recognition of qualifications and competences and ensuring transparency in the area;

(g) promoting cooperation in vocational education and training, taking into consideration the relevant EU good practices, and

(h) reinforcing understanding and knowledge on the European integration process, the academic dialogue on EU-Eastern Partnership relations, and participation in relevant EU programmes.

Article 360

The Parties agree to cooperate in the field of youth to:

(a) reinforce cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth policy and non-formal education for young people and youth workers;

(b) support young people and youth workers' mobility as a means to promote intercultural dialogue and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences outside the formal educational systems, including through volunteering;

(c) promote cooperation between youth organisations.

Article 361

Georgia will conduct and develop policy consistent with the framework of EU policies and practices with reference to documents in Annex XXXII to this Agreement in accordance with the provisions of that Annex.

ANNEX XXXII: L 261/609
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)

Council Recommendation of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education (98/561/EC)

Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 on further European cooperation on quality assurance in higher education (2006/143/EC)

Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EEC)

Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01)

Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) (2009/C 155/02)

Recommendation of European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the

establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (2009/C 155/01).

4 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NQF

4.1 SCOPE

Article 2 of the amended (20/09/2018) Law of Georgia on the Development of Educational Quality defines the National Qualifications Framework as an "instrument that classifies qualifications for the education sub-systems (general, vocational and higher education, informal education) integration and coordination, as well as improvement of qualification quality, transparency, availability and development, taking the labor market and social interests into consideration".

The NQF includes quality-assured qualifications from general, vocational and higher education systems.

The redefined objectives of the NQF acknowledge a place for qualifications awarded outside of the formal education system.

In addition the new VET Law (2018) gives high priority to lifelong learning (training and retraining for better employability). The process of developing the legal base supporting implementation of the VET Law is in its initial phase.

4.2 NQF LEVELS

The new NQF is structured in eight levels. The typical qualifications for each of the eight levels in the draft Ministerial Order on NQF are presented in table 4. The detailed presentation of the NQF level descriptors is available in Annex 1 of this report.

Table 4: Typical qualifications of the new NQF, by level

	Documents, verifying qualifications, (existing) in education sub-systems	Documents verifying qualifications to be awarded upon completion vocational training/re-training programmers.
Level 1	Georgian-language course certificate	
Level 2	State document verifying completion of basic level of general education Georgian-language course certificate	2nd level VET training certificate 2nd level VET re-training certificate
Level 3	Basic VET education diploma Georgian-language course certificate	3rd level VET training certificate 3rd level VET re-training certificate
Level 4	State document verifying complete general education	4th level VET training certificate 4th level VET re-training certificate

	Secondary VET education diploma Georgian-language course certificate	
Level 5	Diploma verifying associate degree Diploma verifying higher VET education	5th level VET training certificate
Level 6	Bachelor's diploma Teacher training certificate	
Level 7	Master's diploma Doctor of Medicine (MD) diploma Doctor of Dental Medicine (DDM) diploma Master of Education M.Ed. diploma Master of Veterinary Science (MVSC) diploma Veterinarian training course certificate	
Level 8	Doctor diploma	

Levels 1 and 2

The first and second levels of the 8-level qualification (new NQF) include the programs for development of key competences for those adults, who have not received mandatory 9-year general education. By the completion of the mentioned program they will have the opportunity to continue their learning on the third or fourth levels of vocational educational programs. The basic education of general education (ninth grade certificate) is placed on the second level of the framework.

Qualifications at level 1 require General Basic Knowledge, Basic skills to perform simple tasks. Identification of simple tasks and ability to evaluate and solve them; Basic skills of using books and mathematical literature, oral and written communications, information technologies; In a homogenous environment, communication and exchanging of information on simple issues in foreign language.

Qualifications at level 2 Basic factual knowledge in the field of learning and activities; Basic cognitive and practical skills for the use of relevant information in the field of learning and / or work, simple tasks and methods to perform tasks and to solve routine problems. The ability to understand their own and others' actions, adapt to new situations, verbal and written communications and argumentative discussions about familiar activities. Ability to find, process, store, share and analyse information using information and communications technologies on specific issues

The current education structure complicates the placing of qualifications at lower levels of the NQF more problematic. Since the new NQF introduces reforms, such as new qualifications (ex.: secondary vocational qualification), further efforts will be necessary to develop certain qualifications and assigned to the NQF.

Levels 3, 4 and 5

Qualifications from formal vocational education are placed on the third, fourth and fifth levels of the framework. The program of general education is integrated in the vocational program of the fourth level, which gives the right to an individual holding the ninth grade certificate to obtain vocational diploma with equal level to the 12th grade certificate (Level 4). This is a very important reform tackling the long-standing problem of limited permeability of graduates from VET pathways (former step 4 VET level) to higher levels of learning.

Qualifications at level 3 requires knowledge and interpreting basic facts, principles, processes and general concepts characteristic of learning and / or field. The combination of analytical and practical skills for solving tasks and solving problems, using appropriate information, tools, selection of materials and basic methods. Evaluation of activities in relation to relevant standards; oral and written communication on issues related to studies and activities; use of relevant information and communication technologies; communication in everyday, familiar issues in foreign language, including terminology related to the field of activity.

Qualifications at level 4 require wide context of actual and theoretical knowledge characteristic of learning and / or activities. The combination of cognitive and practical skills required to solving specific problems that are characteristic of learning and / or activities. Seeking information to solve specific problems, its critically analyzing, selecting appropriate approach, reviewing alternatives and reasoning; oral and written communication on general issues, including relevant information and communication technologies, as well as in foreign language.

Since the new NQF acts a system reform instrument, particularly important to minimize existing dead-ends between VET and higher education pathways and qualifications, certain qualifications are yet to be developed to meet this objective.

Qualifications at level 5 require specialized, comprehensive and theoretical knowledge and understanding in the field of learning and / or activities. Wide-range of cognitive and practical skills to solve individual problems creatively. Identification, analysis and evaluation of clearly defined abstract and concrete problems data. Structural and consistent transmission of ideas and information by using qualitative and quantitative information for specialists and non-specialists. Use of modern information and communication technologies.

In Georgia level 5 qualifications have seen a relatively good pace of development. 30% of all new VET qualifications adopted between 2015 and 2018 are of level 5. As of December 2018 the total number of approved quality assured modular VET programmes included in the register is 97, in 62 sectors and 3 NQF levels (3, 4 and 5).

Higher education: levels 5, 6, 7 and 8

The higher education program of the fifth level will be a short cycle qualification (associate degree), which will be connected with the first level educational program of higher education. The credits of short cycle qualifications will be recognized for the

goals of Bachelor and integrated Master programs. The volume of short cycle qualification is 120/180 credits.

Higher education qualifications are placed on the sixth, seventh and eighth levels of the NQF. These levels are not open for other types of qualifications, but only for academic qualifications.

4.3   LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

The new NQF has three categories of descriptors:
- Knowledge and understanding
- Skills
- Responsibility and autonomy

4.4   USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Introducing a learning outcomes approach is an important part of the national reform programme for general education, VET and higher education, as indicated in the key legal acts. Linked to this is increased interest for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Higher education and vocational education are more advanced in implementing the learning-outcomes approach; in general education this approach is more recent. The learning outcomes approach is an established and generalised principle in the Georgian education and training system, albeit with varied degree of quality in different sub-sectors and education institutions. The application of the learning outcomes approach is a mandatory requirement of the legislation on quality assurance of education, notably in authorisation and accreditation.

The new VET Law (2018) defines Learning Outcomes as a fundamental principle:

"Z) Learning outcome – a statement regarding the "knowledge and understanding" (which implies results of assimilation of information, facts, principles, theory, theoretical and practical methods of learning or activities) and "skills" (which implies the ability of using the appropriate knowledge to carry out specific assignment and solve the problems), and / or the "responsibility and autonomy" (which means the use of knowledge and skills by the person through appropriate level of values and independence)".

In VET, since modularisation of the VET programs has started in 2013, all educational standards as well as modular program are based on learning outcomes. The aim was that learning outcomes-based qualifications levels would strengthen the outcomes-dimension and give learning outcomes a prominent role in planning education provision.

In higher education, learning outcomes, and the comparison between learning outcomes abroad and in the country are a key basis for recognition of acquired knowledge (Article 50 of the Law on Higher Education). The Law also prescribes to use learning outcomes for recognition of knowledge and skills acquired for a different qualification.

Learning outcomes are fundamental elements of quality assurance of higher education, mentioned both in authorisation and accreditation standards. Authorisation standards require clearly defined Learning Outcomes aligned with NQF level descriptors. Program accreditation has among its main functions to check feasibility of the outcomes, relevance and correspondence to the existing NQF.

ECTS: another legal document the Ministerial Decree on Regulation of Calculation of credits for educational programs (Ministerial Decree/Order Nr.3) defines details of use of ECTS credits in Georgian academia and the use of learning outcomes as mandatory for higher education. The decree defines ECTS as a student centred system, which relies on Learning Outcomes and transparency of the learning process. It further defines details of assessment for the entire system including regulations on mandatory intermediate assessment and thresholds for each type of assessment. The assessment should measure learning defined in the program/course. The decree prescribes (Article 4. 5) to align/introduce adequacy of assessment for the envisioned Learning Outcomes.

4.5   DEFINITION OF ''QUALIFICATION''

Article 2 of the Law of Georgia on the development of educational quality defines "Qualification" as a formal result of evaluation and approval of a learning outcome that is asserted with a state-recognized certificate, state document confirming higher or vocational education - diploma, or state document confirming general education. This definition applies to qualifications from all sub-sectors: general, vocational and higher education.

The new VET Law (2018) defines qualifications as follows:

> "H) Qualification - formal outcome of assessment and confirmation of the achievement of the learning outcome by the authorized institution (s) which is confirmed by State-recognized Certificate, by the state document confirming higher or vocational education – Diploma, or by the state document certifying the general education".

4.6   DEFINITION AND USE OF "QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS"

The Georgian legislation acknowledges and defines the following standards:
– Occupational
– Educational
– Programme

Educational standards differ according to education sub-systems. There are the following educational standards in Georgia:
– National Curriculum for general education;
– Vocational education standards for vocational education;
– Sector documents (benchmarks) on regulated programs of higher education, but can be developed for other fields of study as well.

The new VET Law (2018) defines three categories of standards as follows:

- "P) Profession standard - a combination of tasks and responsibilities related to a particular profession;

- Q) Vocational education standard - a document that defines qualification / qualifications to be granted, number of credits required for the relevant qualification / qualifications, learning outcomes to be achieved, the combination of those modules the learning outcomes of which are necessary to achieve for the qualification / qualifications to be granted, and prerequisites for admission and implementation of the relevant education program/programs, as well as the areas of employment and requirements for development and implementation of educational program / programs (if any);[SEP]

- R) Vocational education program - a combination of learning objectives, learning outcomes, module / modules, relevant credits, teaching methods, assessment forms and organizational characteristics. The vocational education program is completed with awarding the qualification relevant to the 3rd / 4th / 5th level of National Qualification Framework and issuance of the diploma;"

4.7 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF QUALIFICATIONS

The new VET Law (2018) includes important orientations on VET qualifications of all NQF levels (2 to 5), and types of VET qualifications, as follows:

Article 6 of the law of Georgia on Vocational Education provides explanation on vocational training and re-training programmes:

> "Vocational education is implemented:
>
> b) Through vocational training program, that prepares a person to perform individual tasks and obligations related to the profession. Learning outcomes under the Vocational Training Program may conform to the 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th levels of the National Qualifications Framework;
>
> c) Through vocational re-training program aimed at acquiring and / or developing competencies in the same field for professional activities. The learning outcomes provided by the vocational re-training program may comply with 2nd / 3rd / 4th / 5th levels of the National Qualifications Framework."

The Law on Vocational Education distinguishes two types of programmes:

1. Vocational education programmes;
2. Vocational training and re-training programmes.

Vocational education programmes/qualifications conform to the NQF 3rd, 4th and 5th levels and have the following characteristics:

- These programs are implemented within the education system, i.e. by the institution, holding an educational institution status;

- The admission right to these programmes is based on education system qualifications;

- Studying at this type of program, as a rule, precedes the employment period.

- Educational programme /qualification reflects all categories of the NQF-aligned level descriptors;
- Holding this qualification makes it possible to pursue studies at a higher level, within education system.

Vocational training/re-training qualifications conform with the NQF 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th levels and have the following characteristics:

- These programs are implemented and qualifications are awarded by legal entities outside education system. The entity is not required to get an educational status, although it must be authorized to implement a program and award a qualification. These programs may be implemented by educational institutions as well.
- These programs aim at rapidly meeting labor market demands. A person starts studying at the program after starting job: it is based on a limited share of academic workload or on upgrading current skills;
- Admission right is not based on general education qualifications. For example, it is not possible to require minimum basic education qualification for admission to 2nd level training/re-training qualification, dues to the fact that these two qualifications are placed at one and the same level. Although, professional experience or vocational education are required for participating in these programs.
- Learning outcomes of program/qualification partly cover the descriptors of relevant NQF level. Learning outcomes of vocational training/re-training programmes, out of the purposes of the program, might be focused on the only category of the NQF level, for example, on acquiring necessary skills for the labour market.
- This qualification makes horizontal progression possible at NQF same level in correspondence with the recognition of formal education, stipulated by legislation, which, provides a possibility to pursue studies at vocational education program and acquire relevant qualification.

In general education, the National Curriculum is an educational standard of general education. Learning outcomes of basic and complete general education shall correspond with the National Curriculum im compliance with the set rule of legislation.

The National Curriculum comprises subject standards of basic and upper (full) secondary education. According to the National Curriculum glossary of terms-"subject standard" determines the obligatory minimum of knowledge, a student must have upon completion the level. It provides answers to questions: what should a learner know, what is a learner able to do and what are the values a learner should share within the scope of a specific subject".

The National Curriculum stipulates, that learning outcome is knowledge, which is determined by the glossary of terms as: "synergy of three categories of knowledge: (declarative, procedural and conditional), answering questions of three types: what do I know, how do I perform and when, why, in what case is knowledge applied? The National Curriculum provides broad definition of "knowledge" and the NQF provides narrow definition of knowledge, as knowledge of only facts, principles, theories,

concepts, theoretical and practical knowledge. This definition corresponds to "declarative knowledge", determined by the National Curriculum.

The description of the educational standard provides the following information (example):

- Name of the Educational Standard: for example Web programmer
- Direction (grouped in 11 directions): Information and communication technologies
- Number of registration: 06108
- Level: V
- Entry requirements: Secondary education
- Credits: 170
- Compulsory VET modules: 20 modules
- Elective VET modules: 1 module
- General compulsory modules: 9 modules

All modules with detailed description of aim of the module, credit, level, learning outcomes, organization of teaching and assessment approach are attached to the document.

The application of the new Classifier of fields of study will play a central role in development and classification of programmes and qualifications. This new Classifier is in the approval process. It is structured in accordance with ISCED-F 2013.

4.8   ACCESS TO QUALIFICATIONS, PROGRESSION AND CREDIT

The NQF supports the credit system in two ways. First, to support that credit accumulation and transfer are built into the NQF's requirements for qualifications for approval within the framework. Second, NQF defines requirements for quality assurance that includes monitoring the quality of assessment that helps to build the reliability of credits awarded.

The integration of the credit system with the NQF can be represented as follows:
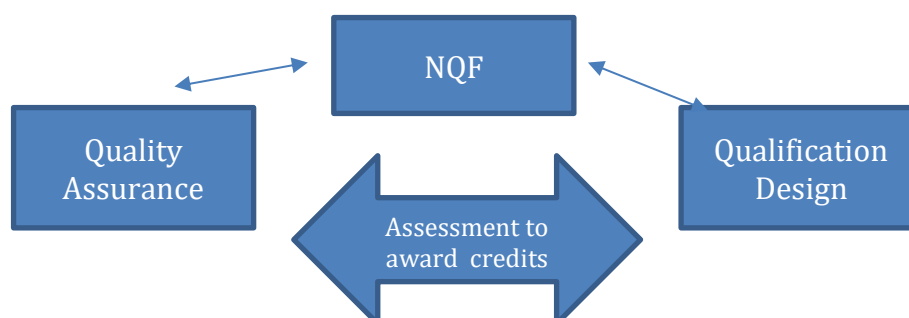
The legal document "Ministerial Decree on Regulation of Calculation of credits for educational programs" (Ministerial Decree/Order Nr.3) defines details of use of ECTS credits in Georgian education system. The decree defines ECTS as a student centred system, which relies on Learning Outcomes and transparency of the learning process.

The decree prescribes the hours/ or range of hours for each ECTS as 25-30 hours, defines the workload for an academic year as 60 ECTS, with a maximal amount of

75 ECTS in individual programs. It further defines details of assessment for the entire system including regulations on mandatory intermediate assessment and thresholds for each type of assessment. The assessment should measure learning outcomes defined in the program/course.

In Higher education 240 credits are allocated at Bachelor level (first cycle), 120 at Master level (second cycle) and 180 at Doctor level (third cycle).

According to the VET law (2010) credit expresses the amount of work to be done by a vocational student to master one subject. While in the revised law (2018) credit expresses the educational workload for a vocational student and which can be obtained through achieving the learning results. Credits are allocated to qualifications and modules based on the size of the qualification or module.

Credits are allocated by Curriculum Working Group members to the educational standard and modules; they use both up-down and top-down processes; one year program is about 60 credits in VET as well as higher education; in the process of allocation credits to individual modules in VET, working groups use the complexity of the learning outcomes; the sum of the credit values of all modules should be very close to the value of the full qualification; if the sum is not the same the working groups revisit the allocation of the credits.

If the programme leading to the qualification is much shorter than other full time VET programmes, a lower credit value may need to be considered. However, national VET qualifications delivered in schools will be of similar duration and therefore of the same credit value. VET providers use educational standards in the process of allocation credits to their educational programs.

4.9   NQF relationship with other instruments

Georgia is a full member of the Bologna process since 2005 and participates in the Ministerial meetings, and regular reporting.

Georgia plans self-certification to the QF EHEA.

Cooperation with the EQF is on the policy agenda, in line with the revised Recommendation on EQF for LLL adopted on 22/05/2017.

5   LEGISLATION

5.1   LEGAL ACT(S) DIRECTLY APPLYING TO THE NQF AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

The first Georgian NQF was adopted by ministerial decree in 2010 and has impacted through its level structure and descriptors the panorama of qualifications in Georgia. This was a sub-divided NQF, based on three sub-frameworks (general, vocational and higher).

In 2017-2018 a major revision of the NQF has taken place, to improve coherence and better linkages between the sub-systems (general education, VET and higher

education) and compatibility with EQF.

There is no single Law fully dedicated to the new NQF. On 20/09/2018 the Parliament adopted amendments to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Educational Quality*: Article 21 and Chapter IV² (3 articles) set the definitions of terms, goals and levels of the new NQF levels, and the role of the new classifier of fields of study.

Simultaneously, in 2017-2018 a package of subordinate legal acts supporting implementation of the new NQF have been drafted and consulted with the stakeholders. The main subordinate acts in form of orders of the Ministry of Education Science Culture and Sport of Georgia and rules and methodologies to be approved by the Director of NCEQE, which have developed in 2018 and 2019 include:

In 2018 – for approval:

- Ministerial Order on the 8-level structure of the NQF, level descriptors and list of typical qualifications
- Ministerial Order on the Classifier of Fields of Study, based on ISCED-F 2013
- Ministerial Order on Governance and Monitoring of the NQF

In 2019 the following acts are planned for finalisation and approval:

- Ministerial Order on rules for development of education programmes aligned with the NQF levels
- Rules for recognition of non-formal education, and related regulations on quality assurance of the education and training institutions delivering such programmes and credentials
- Methodology for levelling programmes' learning outcomes
- Concept and technical specifications for the new online register of qualifications
- Rules for VET educational standards (to be developed)

5.2 COHERENCE WITH RELATED LEGAL ACTS / REGULATIONS

In parallel the Laws on Higher Education, on General Education have been amended to ensure harmonisation with the new NQF structure and concepts.

The new VET Law is aligned with the NQF and provides important definitions of terms and new policies coherent with the objectives of the NQF. The new VET Law modernises the understanding of VET and widens the scope of VET policy. To this end the new VET Law gives a new impetus to non-formal and informal learning, and emphasises the role of the reformed NQF as a policy instrument to support solutions to long-standing obstacles to permeability and progression between VET and higher education, and to recognition of diverse types of qualifications.

6 ORGANISING SYSTEMS: MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE, INSTITUTIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR NQF IMPLEMENTATION

NCEQE is the lead institution in charge of the NQF governance. This role is confirmed by the amended Law of Georgia on Educational Quality Enhancement (2018). NCEQE is the authorized body for governing, developing and monitoring of the NQF. NCEQE is also the lead body in charge of implementing the quality assurance policy and coordinate and supervise application of authorization and accreditation mechanisms throughout the education system.

NCEQE has been established as a legal entity of public law by Ministerial order Nr 89/5 of 14/09/2010 to support the promotion of educational quality assurance and improvement. NCEQE has independent management, staffing and human resource development, and budget.

NCEQE performs its activities based on principles of transparency and publicity.

NCEQE's activities can be grouped in three main components: a) quality assurance of educational programmes and institutions; b) support to quality improvement to educational institutions via information and advice; c) qualifications development and improvement. Besides, NCEQE hosts the Georgian ENIC-NARIC Centre and recognises foreign qualifications. Supervision over the activities of the NCEQE is administered by the Ministry in accordance with the procedure, envisaged by Law of Georgia on Legal Entities of Public Law.

Detailed presentation of NCEQE's organisational structure, functional set-up and staffing are provided in annex 3. The organisational structure is presented at: http://eqe.ge/eng/structure.

Since 2013 NCEQE has the status of affiliated member European Association for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA)[6]. The application to full membership of ENQA is underway.

The governance of the NQF, as a key policy instrument for transparency of qualifications and facilitation of recognition and mobility, is a matter for further debate and development. The new phase of the Georgian NQF opens new opportunities to include qualifications of different types beyond those from formal education, to promote closer links between education and the market demands, and to be better used by all stakeholders groups. These perspectives will require more participative governance and decision-making, and more active dissemination and information among stakeholders.

NCEQE's Strategy Document 2016-2020 takes account of lessons from the activities carried out in 2013-2016 and responds to international experts' reviews, notably those conducted in the framework of the Centre's application for full membership of the ENQA, as well as in the framework of cooperation with European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM)[7]. This Strategy defines key strategic landmarks for organisational development, indispensable to respond to challenges, raise effectiveness, service quality, customer satisfaction, sustainability and reliability as an institution. NCEQE's Strategy Document pursues the following aims:

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[6] ENQA: http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/enqa-agencies/affiliates/

[7] http://www.efqm.org/

1. Improve organisational management systems and build capacity of NCEQE, strengthen its institutional independence according to state policy, government priorities and international standards
2. Develop outcomes-oriented quality assurance system for educational institutions and programmes and improve relevant services.
3. Improve services to support educational institutions.
4. Implement the principle of LLL in qualification system, using best international practice to optimise and improve education recognition services.
5. Raise awareness about Georgia in the European Higher Education Area, support internationalisation of education.

6.2 ACTORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The new NQF Advisory Board likely to be established by order NCEQE director, once the relevant subordinate legal act is approved by the Minister (in 2019) could represent a coordinated voice of stakeholders on the strategic orientation and important developments of the new NQF.

In 2017 and 2018 the debates to improve governance of the new NQF led to a proposal to create a new consultative NQF body, composed of varied stakeholders: the **NQF Advisory Board (NQF AB).** The new draft subordinate act on NQF governance and monitoring defines the mission and full set of functions of this proposed NQF AB:

- Review strategic directions of the NQF development, elaborate proposals;
- Review the draft action plan for the NQF implementation, its correspondence with the strategic directions of development, elaborate proposals;
- Review the performance report of the annual action plan, elaborate proposals;
- Review the results of periodic, comprehensive monitoring and the draft of a roadmap of further development and implementation of the NQF, elaborate proposals;
- Review other issues, related to the NQF development and elaborate respective recommendations.

Once this subordinate act is approved, NCEQE and the new NQF Advisory Board will work together to further develop the NQF structure and content, develop learning outcomes-based programs and respective qualifications, transparent inclusion of qualifications into the NQF, defining the format of the electronic qualifications register, and disseminating information for key stakeholders, users and the wider public.

NCEQE coordinates the activity of the Sector Councils, which are entrusted with the role to critically assess new occupational standards qualifications and issue recommendations for final decision by NCEQE director. In this context, Sector Councils play an important role in the qualifications development chain. These Councils are inter-stakeholder groups, representing social partners and education providers. The future legal status and sustainability of these Sector Councils, and the ways to strengthen their real capacity are yet to be decided.

The Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) plays an important role in strategic thinking on human resources development, as well as implementation of

new models of partnerships with VET (for work-based learning). GCCI is interested to support further the Sector Councils, and contribute to their reform.

The social partners – Georgian Trade Unions Confederation and Georgian Employers Association – are important players as regards strategic decisions on qualifications legislation, although their contribution is considered uneven.

7   QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) OF NQF AND QUALIFICATIONS

7.1   SCOPE OF THE QA FRAMEWORK

In 2005, Georgia joined the Bologna Process and took the responsibility to harmonize its educational system with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and to implement higher education quality assurance system. In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia established a first quality assurance agency – the National Center for Educational Accreditation (Order N222, the Ministry of Education and Science), which was authorized to conduct institutional accreditation of higher education institutions of Georgia. The system has been reformed in 2010 aiming at strengthening the role of the external quality assurance and extending the mandate of the quality assurance body. In 2015-2017 further reforms were introduced, notably related with the standards of authorization and accreditation.

The core functions of the NCEQE are: implementing external quality assurance mechanisms of all educational institutions (higher education institutions (HEI), vocational education institutions and general education institutions) operating in the country, on both institutional and programme level; development of the national qualifications framework; recognition of foreign education.

To fulfill its function of implementation and development of external quality assurance mechanisms for higher education institutions, the NCEQE continuously works on the development of the education quality concept, creates and maintains up-to-dated quality assurance (QA) standards and procedures and ensures relevant mechanisms for their proper implementation. In this regard, several external reviews of the agency's activities and the external quality assurance mechanisms have been conducted by international peers. The recommendations of the reviews have been considered for the development of the QA system.

Currently, two main external quality assurance mechanisms – **authorization of educational institutions and accreditation of educational programmes are in place.**

The authorization of higher education institutions is an obligatory for all HEIs in order to be allowed to carry out educational activities and to issue a diploma that is recognized by the state. The procedure identifies the compatibility of educational institutions with authorization standards. The term of the authorization is 6 years after which the HEIs are obliged to go thought the re-authorization procedure in order to continue its activates.

The accreditation of educational programmes determines the compatibility of educational programmes with accreditation standards. Programme accreditation is mandatory only for doctoral programmes and programmes of regulated professions

(Medicine, Law, Teacher Education, Veterinary, and Maritime). However, due to the fact that state funding goes only to accredited programmes, 98% (1950 accredited programmes) of all academic programs are accredited.

To ensure the continuous development of education quality and the consideration of the external evaluation results by the HEIs, the NCEQE carries out follow-up monitoring procedures for both educational institutions and educational programmes.

Furthermore, the NCEQE supports the development of internal quality assurance mechanisms of HEIs through providing various capacity building activities, including provision of guidelines, consultations and workshops for HEIs.

In 2015-2017, NCEQE revised the system of higher education quality assurance to strengthen the development-oriented and outcome-based function of quality assurance and to ensure its compliance with the requirements of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). Specifically, the quality assurance standards and procedures have been revised; formal procedure of complaints and appeals has been introduced; students, employer representatives and international experts have been involved in the review panels; evaluation reports became publicly available (Table 5).

Table 5: Standards and components of authorization and accreditation (higher education)

Authorisation standards	Accreditation standards
1. Mission and strategic development of HEI 2. Organisational structure and management of HEI 3. Educational programmmes 4. Staff of the HEI 5. Students and their support services 6. Research, development and / or other creative work 7. Material, information and financial resources	1. Educational programme objectives, learning outcomes and their compliance with the programme 2. Teaching methodology and organization, adequate assessment of students 3. Student achievements and individual work with students 4. Provision of teaching resources 5. Teaching quality enhancement opportunities

Source: National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia, Self-assessment report for the ENQA Review, 2018.

To support adequate implementation of the revised QA system, NCEQE carried out pilot evaluations of HEIs, disseminated information through capacity building activities for HEIs and experts, and developed guidelines for the review process. A dedicated programme under the project "Study in Georgia" supported these activities.

From 2018, the NCEQE has started the system-wide implementation of the revised quality assurance standards and procedures at Georgian higher education institutions.

In VET the key elements of the revised and reinforced quality assurance framework are:

- The main objective of QA reform in VET is to revise authorization standards and procedures in order to bring them in compliance with EQAVET principles and consider context of modular, competence based teaching and assessment approaches including dual education principles.
- New draft authorization standards are mainly based on EQAVET principles.

- The agreed changes in VET QA will include:
  ✓ The new draft QA standards, besides programs, material and human resources, will consider some important issues as strategic planning and development, student services, information resources and financial stability of an institution.
  ✓ New procedures will introduce institution's "partial compliance to the standards" assessment, which will enable institution to work on further development without losing an authorization.
  ✓ New requirements to institutions self-assessment will be introduced which will enable NCEQE to observe institution's progress between self-assessment periods.
  ✓ Verification of student assessments will be introduced as an additional QA mechanism.

- Milestones for development of VET QA:
  ✓ New standards and procedures will enter into the force after adoption of new VET law by the parliament, before 2019.
  ✓ New self-assessment process piloting will take place in 2019 and self-assessment reporting for TVET providers will be mandatory in 2020;
  ✓ Assessment verification is under piloting in 2018. In 2019 piloting will cover most of providers and in 2020 will become official QA mechanism.

7.2   LEGAL BASE OF THE QA FRAMEWORK

The Law of Georgia on Development of Educational Quality was amended on 20/09/2018. This Law represents a common framework for QA for all sub-sectors of education. Article 2 sets the supporting mechanisms for the development of educational quality as follows:

1. Development of educational quality is supported through internal and external mechanisms.
2. External supporting mechanisms of the development of educational quality are authorization and accreditation.
3. Internal supporting mechanisms of the development of educational quality are implemented by the educational institution, as provided for by Georgian legislation.

7.3 QA BODIES AND REGULATORS IN NQF IMPLEMENTATION

Governance of the Georgian educational quality assurance system is mainly under the responsibility of NCEQE for development of legislative proposals, standards, rules and procedures, management of experts' corps. The Ministry of Education is the policy-making body, adopts ministerial orders and supervises NCEQE.

The authorisation and accreditation councils play an important role in decision making in the respective fields. Universities and VET colleges have personnel dedicated to quality assurance.

NCEQE prepares the new rules and procedures, and is responsible for the adequate implementation of accreditation and authorisation processes with participation of the relevant actors (experts' teams and decision-making Councils).

7.4 PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Georgia ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999, and the ENIC centre is member of the ENIC-NARIC Network.

NCEQE is an affiliate member of ENQA and currently seeks to meet the conditions to become a full member. The process is designed in line with the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in line with the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*. Detailed information on the status of the ongoing ENQA review is available at: http://enqa.eu/index.php/national-center-for-educational-quality-enhancement-nceqe/

NCEQE self-assessment report for the ENQA review is available at:

https://eqe.ge/res/docs/SAR_NCEQE_ENQA_Review.pdf

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by NCEQE including the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to NCEQE;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review Committee;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency, including a voluntary follow-up visit.

Review panel

The panel is composed of the following members:

- Mark Frederiks, International Policy Coordinator, Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), The Netherlands – Chair, Quality assurance professional (ENQA nominee)
- Jana Moehren, Head of Higher Education and Professional Learning, East Kent College Group, Former Head of International Office at Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes of Engineering, Information Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN e.V), Germany – Secretary, quality assurance professional (ENQA nominee)
- Melita Kovacevic, Full Professor, Head of the Laboratory for Psycholinguistic Research, University of Zagreb, Croatia – Academic (EUA nominee)
- Gohar Hovhannisyan, Master student at Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE), Armenia – Student (ESU nominee)

NCEQE is also applying for registration in EQAR.

More information on the statute, activity reports, legislation, key activities, ongoing initiatives and projects can be found on NCEQE's website: http://eqe.ge/eng.

8   NQF IMPLEMENTATION

8.1   INCLUSION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN REGISTER / DATABASE

Existing qualifications registers

The currently existing registers of qualifications in Georgia are active and regularly updated. Different registers and databases cover higher education and VET qualifications.

All VET qualifications together with occupational standards and Educational standards in Formal education are placed on www.vet.ge and www.eqe.ge. The two portals are linked but serve different users and purposes:

- www.eqe.ge covers quality assurance and programme development themes related to all levels of education; while www.vet.ge is focused on VET as is designed as an electronic platform to guide and inform different users groups. In this quality, it contains information about enrolment procedures, VET institutions and pathways.
- www.eqe.ge covers information about all occupational standards and educational standards in VET, while www.vet.ge covers information about the occupational standards and links to educational standards placed on www.eqe.ge.

The new generation modular VET programmes adopted between 2015-2017 and aligned with new NQF levels were included in the register www.vet.ge included 70 qualifications in a wide range of sectors, as of December 2017, as follows:

- Level 3: 25 qualifications
- Level 4: 23 qualifications
- Level 5: 22 qualifications

As of December 2018 the number of modular VET programmes aligned with the new NQF levels and the new VET Law increased to 97, in the three levels (3, 4 and 5) and in 62 sectors. See this updated list in Annex D.

The register of higher education programmes is not open for public use, as it serves as an instrument for internal use and control of NCEQE's quality assurance processes. This register contained 1,940 programmes of all relevant cycles in 12 fields of study, as of November 2017, according to ETF's inventory and baseline analysis. In Match 2019, total number of accredited programmes was 1,640 (tables 6 and 7).

Table 6: Summary of higher education qualifications (from NCEQE Register) – by fields (as of March 2019)

By fields:	Numbers
Agrarian	59
Business Administration	198
Education	43
Engineering	214
Sciences/Natural Sciences	137
Law	74
Social Studies	214
Arts	76
Health	140
Humanities	219
Interdisciplinary directions	224
Null / cancelled	42
Total	1,640

Table 7: Inventory of higher education qualifications (NCEQE Register)

By cycle / level	Number of Qualifications
Bachelor	754
Master	579
Doctoral	202
One cycle Medicine	53
Veterinary integrated (Bachelor-Master)	1
Veterinary Training Certificate	1
Teacher Training Integrated Programme (Bachelor-Master)	8
Teacher Training Certificate	17
Georgian Language Program	25
Total	1,640

Developments linked with the new NQF

A package of legal acts as well as rules and methodology have been drafted in 2018 and will be further developed in 2019 to support transparent and coherent alignment

of programmes and their learning outcomes to the new NQF principles and level descriptors. This package includes:

- Ministerial Order on rules for development of education programmes aligned with the NQF levels
- Rules for recognition of non-formal education, and related regulations on quality assurance of the education and training institutions delivering such programmes and credentials
- Methodology for levelling programmes' learning outcomes
- Concept and technical specifications for the new online register of qualifications
- Rules for VET educational standards (to be developed)

In general terms, the inclusion of a specific qualification in the NQF is based on the internal and external quality assurance in the education system, notably on the following building blocks:

- The alignment of program learning outcomes with the relevant NQF level is determined within the program design/approval phase.
- External quality assurance checks the alignment of program learning outcomes with the level of qualification framework, indicated in the program (methodology)
- After completion of external quality assurance process, a specific qualification becomes a part of the NQF and is registered in the electronic registry of qualifications

The register of qualifications will include qualifications from the formal education and training system, and for the first time, will also contain qualifications for lifelong learning (training and re-training) awarded by various providers, at condition that they follow due quality assurance processes in line with the legislation.

An important pillar of the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF and the register is the new Classifier of fields of study (draft Ministerial order in the process of adoption).

The amendment to the Law on Development of Quality of Education, in Article 24[4] defines the purpose of the Classifier: "classifies field of studies and qualifications existing in Georgia". The structure and content of draft Classifier of fields of study is identical to ISCED-F 2013, with a fundamental difference: the Georgian Classifier added an additional level of disaggregation of the "detailed field" of ISCED-F 2013 (4 digits), and create a new layer of 6 digits.

Table 8 shows an example of the Georgian construct of broad field 01, narrow field 011 and detailed field 0111 is more complex (disaggregated) than ISCED-F 2013, which does not include 0111.1.1 and 0111.2.1.

Table 8: Example from new draft Classifier of Fields of Study

Broad field	Narrow field	Detailed field		
01 Education	011 Education	**0111 Education science** Is the study of the learning process and the theories, methods and techniques of imparting knowledge to others.		
		0111.1.1 Education science	0111.2.1 Educational research	

Source: Draft Ministerial Order on Classifier of Fields of Study

The new package of subordinate acts supporting the implementation of the new NQF address the overall concept of the new online register of qualifications. The detailed architecture and technical specifications will be developed with support of the new EU Twinning project in 2019.

The draft concept of the NQF register defines its main objectives as follows:

- Ensure dissemination of reliable information about the qualifications included in the NQF;
- Provide assistance to students, pupils to make an informed decision about desired qualification and ways of obtaining education;
- Provide assistance to employers to define necessary qualifications for operations, as well as to select relevant training or/and re-training programs for their employees.
- Facilitate recognition of Georgia-awarded qualification abroad through accessibility of comprehensive and reliable information in English-language.

The new online register of qualifications will structure the information is a manner aligned with the fields recommended in Annex VI of the EQF Council Recommendation of 22/05/2017[8], notably:

1. The program title

2. The name of qualification

3. Field of study/education - according to ISCED-F-2013

4. Country (code ISO- only in English form)

5. Qualification level (the NQF level)

6. Qualification description:

   6.1 Learning outcomes; knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility or

   6.2. In a text format: what knowledge the student will have, what he/she will understand and what he/she will be able to do.

7. Agency awarding qualification da its address, web-page

8. Credits (ECTS or ECVET), if applicable

9. Internal quality assurance of qualification (not mandatory)

10. External quality assurance of qualification

Institution, conducting the quality assurance process

Address, web-page

11. Date of awarding authorization/accreditation and its term

12. Additional information about qualification

13. Source of additional information

14. Qualification URL

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[8] Council Recommendation of 22/May/2017 on t he European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/en.pdf

15. Access and Admission

16. Ways of obtaining qualification

17. Opportunity to pursue studies

18. Qualification validity term

19. Respective employment spheres for qualification

(According to ISCO-08, for vocational education, training and re-training qualifications)

The draft NQF Handbook, currently in partial form, is the first NQF information package for users of the history of the Georgian NQF. This Handbook will evolve and will include specific modules customized for different users' groups.

8.2 FUNDING

The state budget is the main source of funding of the past and ongoing activities related with NQF operations – coordination, steering and decision making, exercised chiefly by NCEQE.

The development of the new NQF has benefited from some support from international partners, which contributed since 2017 to the debate on the new NQF, through knowledge-sharing and analysis. ETF has been the major partner of NCEQE since 2017, supporting the review of the existing drafts of the new NQF legal base, development of concept and policy notes and draft subordinate acts, the basis of the register of qualifications and of the NQF Handbook.

From 2019 a new EU Twinning project will support NCEQE in further developing the key elements of the quality assurance framework of education (all sub-sectors) and the new NQF. This cooperation will focus on reviewing the legal and regulatory base of quality assurance and the NQF, methodology packages, reinforce capacity, develop the detailed conceptual and technical specifications of the new NQF online register and portal.

8.3 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholders in the education and training system, and in the world of work have expectations regarding the added-value and impact of the new NQF.

To become the expected operational policy tool for improved management and development of qualifications in a lilelong learning perspective, fit to reach out to end-users and to decision-makers alike, the authorities and stakeholders need to agree a well-structured strategic and operational plan to build the NQF system.

The objectives of the new NQF as defined in the amended legislation represent a framework for monitoring and evaluation, and some guiding principles and questions have been integrated in a new draft subordinate act awaiting approval (act on NQF governance and monitoring). According to this draft legal act, NQF monitoring would comprise two complementary dimensions:

– Ongoing, annual monitoring;
– Periodic, comprehensive monitoring.

Ongoing monitoring aims to support good implementation of tasks defined in the NQF annual action plan. It will also include the evaluation of activities performed according to assessment criteria.

The periodic, comprehensive monitoring will support further NQF development, and be carried out with a periodicity of 4-5 years. A specially formed group will plan and coordinate the activities and analysis of periodic, comprehensive monitoring. The plan for further NQF development is worked out on the basis of the results and conclusions of comprehensive monitoring.

Indicative questions for comprehensive monitoring:

- Are the NQF objectives relevant and valid? Should they be revised?
- Do NQF levels correspond to the wide variety of qualifications in the country?
- Is it necessary to introduce new types of qualifications?
- To what extent are the qualifications defined by the legislation compatible with the country's requirements?
- To what extent do level descriptors correspond to requirements of educational and employment spheres?

9 VNFIL

9.1 RELATION OF NQF AND VNFIL

Georgian legislation uses the term "informal education" for both non-formal and informal learning. The new VET Law defines informal education in its article 3: "Informal education - a part of a lifelong learning system that implies acquisition of "knowledge and understanding" and / or "skills" and / or "responsibility and autonomy" beyond formal education".

The new VET Law (2018) establishes a clear link between the development of the NQF and creation of validation mechanisms of non-formal learning (Art 2). The amended Law of Georgia on Development of Educational Quality acknowledges the recognition of informal learning as key objective the new NQF, while the new VET Law (2018) gives high priority to lifelong learning (training and retraining for better employability).

In 2018 a policy proposal has been drafted on "Recognition of non-formal education", to pave the way for further development of a legal base to quality-assure programmes and providers in this domain, and include such qualifications in the NQF.

A decree by the Minister of Education and Science #8/n of 3 February 2011 on "Approving the Conditions and procedures for Recognizing Non-formal and Informal vocational Education" sets out framework regulations with regards to VNFIL in Georgia. The decree allows for recognition of vocational education at levels 1-3, defines the bodies responsible for recognizing informal/nonformal education and describes the framework for recognition and formation of validation/examination committees. The decree delegates definition of exact procedures and rules for validation of evidences (work experience, prior non-formal qualification) and

assessment of competencies to bodies responsible for recognition (VET institutions that deliver respective formal education).

The authorities developed: a) a concept paper on VNFIL in 2013, which was revised in 2016; b) a guide for recognition; c) amendments to the Decree; d) prepared and launched two pilots (in IT and Agriculture).

In further discussing and developing validation of non-formal and informal learning, the following issues are important:

- Further possibilities of validation Georgia
- Bodies authorised for to carry our the different phases of validation
- Interconnections and specific features of the phases of validation
- Outcomes of validation and link to the NQF

10 RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

Georgia ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999. NCEQE represents Georgia in the ENIC-NARIC Network. Department of International Education is responsible for providing the representatives from ENIC-NARIC Network with the relevant and reliable information about Georgian education system as well as Georgian educational institutions and credentials. NCEQE closely cooperates with the ENICs and NARICs in the process of recognition of foreign education in Georgia.

NCEQE's International Education Department is responsible for all activities related with recognition of education received abroad, for communication and coordination with European Information Centres and National Academic Recognition Network (ENIC-NARIC Network). Recognition decisions of the department are binding. This is a department handling a substantial workload, expressed by several thousands of applications annually. This department has the highest number of staff (23 in total).

In 2017 NCEQE issued 10,876 decisions of recognition of foreign education, and in the period 01/Jan to 31/Aug/2018 the number of decisions reached 5,134. These decisions concern requests of Georgian and foreign citizens.

For the recognition of foreign education, the Center verifies the authenticity of an educational document, issued by a foreign institution and establishes the compatibility of the qualification, contained in this document or the learning outcomes, attained during the period of study with the qualifications, existing in Georgia. The procedures and documentation required for applications for recognition are available at: https://eqe.ge/eng/static/213

Recognition of qualifications is valid to:

• General Education
• Vocational Education
• Higher Education.

Recognition is not valid to:

• Preschool Education (kindergarten)
• Residency (postgraduate medical training.)

• Education acquired in the frames of exchange programmes implemented by Georgian educational institutions upon the permission of NCEQE

11 CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS AND FUTURE PLANS

11.1 CHALLENGES

In 2017-2018 the NQF regained a new impetus as NCEQE and Ministry of Education lead the debate and stakeholders consultation on the new NQF and its future implementation mechanisms.

The 2010 National Qualifications Framework (NQF)[9] is undergoing a substantial reform in conceptual and structural terms, and the transition is gradually starting. In 2018 NQF-related amendments to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Educational Quality* [10] were adopted. NCEQE management recognises that implementation of the revised NQF legislation will require effective planning of key steps; coherence and coordination with the QA reforms; as well as improved capacity at NCEQE (human resources, instruments, and information) to ascertain that the NQF stimulates transparency of qualifications, permeability and the necessary interaction between qualifications and the world of work (demand for skills and qualifications).

The governance of the NQF, as a key policy instrument for transparency of qualifications and facilitation of recognition and mobility, is a matter for further debate and development. These perspectives will require more participative governance and decision-making, and more active dissemination and information among stakeholders.

NCEQE coordinates the activity of the Sector Councils. The Sector Councils need further support and reorganisation to strengthen their capacity to deliver the expected contribution for high quality programmes and qualifications. The future legal status and sustainability of these Sector Councils is yet to be decided.

NCEQE prepares the new QA rules and procedures, and is responsible for the adequate implementation of accreditation and authorisation processes with participation of the relevant actors (experts' teams and decision-making Councils). But effective implementation of the new and revised procedures is challenging, as it requires enhanced capacity at NCEQE, efficient procedures, improved information and support documentation (handbooks and methodological support) for the stakeholders and practitioners; and establishment of monitoring instruments to gather feedback and data necessary for review and recalibration of the new QA mechanisms.

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[9] The key legal acts of the NQF 2010, now being reformed, are accessible at: http://eqe.ge/eng/static/125/education-system/national-qualifications-framework
[10] Current (not yet amended) version of the Law available at: http://eqe.gov.ge/res/docs/2014120816015474706.pdf

The reforms of QA and NQF have commonalities, as both concern the entire system of education and training, and express the country's determination to improve the compatibility with similar developments in the EU and beyond. NCEQE is the key implementing body of education QA and the NQF, and its resources (human, technical), organisation and leadership will be under pressure to deliver the expected improvements in processes and outcomes.

NCEQE is called to join and cooperate with a range of international developments related with recognition of qualifications, driven by the digital revolution (credentials from online courses and programmes) as well as by mass movement of people (migrants and refugees), such as recognition of qualifications of refuges without documented qualifications. Some of these issues will be discussed / developed in the frame of the upcoming EU Twinning project (from 2019).

12 ANNEXES

Qualification Level	Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Responsibility and Autonomy
Level 1	General, basic knowledge, serving a basis for social development, further studies and performing simples tasks in everyday life. Identifying and interpreting of basic principles and facts.	Applying basic skills for perfoming simple and homogenous tasks in a familiar environment. Revealaing simple problems during this process and ability of addressing them in a standard way. Verbal and written communication on the results of own work by means of communication technologies.	Learning and /or perfroming simple tasks in a structured/unchanged environment.
Level 2	Knowledge of a field of study and /or occuppation and its undertsanding.	Applying relevant basic cognitive and practical skills in the field of study and/or work; Applying standard tools for addressing familiar problems; searching, selecting, analyzing basic information on facts, processes, materials. Verbal and written communication on the results of own activities, justified reasoning by using context-relevant forms and by means of communication technologies.	Learning and /or perfroming routine tasks in a structured/unchanged environment under supervision and with a certain degree of independence. Assessing own work/studies and take responsibility over own work and studies.

Level 3	Knowledge and understanding of main facts, principles, processes, methods and general concepts, related to study and/or occupation fields.	Ability of applying wide-range skills, related to occupation and/or study fields for performing a task. Addressing identified problems by searching proper sources, identifying, analyzing, as well as selecting and applying respective methods and instruments. Verbal and written communication over the issues, related to own studies/work, by means of relevant information and communication technologies.	Taking responsibility on performing tasks, related to work in a predictable, partly-changing environment and carrying out activities adhering to principles of professional ethics. Adapt own behaviour for solving a problem, considering a circumstance. Evaluation of own professional development, learning under supervision and with a certain independence degree.
Level 4	Broad knowledge based on factual circumstances and theoretical basis of a study and/or work field and its undertsanding.	Wide application of cognitive and practical skills, related to study and/or occuppation field. Identifying multi-sided problems and searching, selecting information for addressing them, criticaly reasoning, identifying a relevant approach and assessing conformity. Commucication about study and/or work by means of structured and conssistent arguments, context-relevant forms, using information and communication technologies.	Managing own work or study in predictable, but changing environment considering guiding principles. Supervising homogenous work-process; Taking certain responsibility over assessment of working/learning activities and their improvement. Assessing own professional development and learning with a certain independence degree.
Level 5	Broad, specialized, theoretical and practical knowledge (post-general education) of study and/or work fields and understanding its possibilities (boundaries?).	Applying wide-range of cognitive and practical skills of study and/or occuppation fields for addressing clearly-defined abstract and conctrete problems, as well as perfoming complex tasks, icluding: identification of relevant data, its analysis and assessment. Conveying ideas and information in a structured and consistent manner to specialists and non-specialists by means of context-relevant forms, using information and communication technologies.	Supervising and managing activities (processes) in rapidly changing environment adhering principles of professional ethics. Taking responsibility over others' performance; Assessing own and other's performance and making efforts for improvements. Defining the direction of own studies and carrying out learning process with high degree of independence.
Level 6	Broad knowledge of study and/or work fields (post general education), implying critical reasoning of theories and principles and some-most updated- aspects of knowledge.	Applying cognitive and practical skills, related to study and/or occuppation fields for addressing complex and unpredictable problems. Implementing a project/paper of a research or practical nature	Conduct development-oriented activities and taking responsibility over them in a complex, unpredictable learning and /or working environment. Conducting own activities following ethical principles.

		according to pre-determined instructions. Collecting and explaining data, relevant to a field. Also, analyzing abstract data and/or situations by applying standard and some latest methods; making proper judgments, which anticipate respective social, scientific and/or ethical issues. Communicating with speciliasts and non-specialists on ideas, current problems and solution ways by means of context-relevant forms using information and communication technologies	Planning own and others' professional development and facilitating its implementation. Identifying needs for own further studies and impementing with high independence degree.
Level 7	Deep, systematic knowledge of study and/or occuppation field and its critical understanding, which comprises some latest accom plishments of study and/or work field and produces grounds for innovations, development of new, original ideas.	Looking for new, original ways for addressing complicated problems in unfamiliar or multi-discipline environment and/or conducting research independently by adhering academic integrity principles and applying latest methods and approcahes. Critical analysis of complex and incomplete information (including latst studies), innovative synthesis of information, evaluation and making judgemnt, reflecting social and ethical responsibilities Presenting own judgement, reasoning and research results to academic, as well as professional society in compliance with ecedemic ethical standards.	Managing and adapting complex, unpredicatble or multi-discipline learning and/or working environment through new strategic approcahes. Making contribution to professional knowledge and practical development. Taking respinsibility over others' performance and professional development; Leading own studies independently.
Level 8	Knowledge, based on latest achivements of study and/or work field, giving opportunity to enhance current knowledge and apply innovative methods, among them: in multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary context. Systematic and critical understanding of study or work field.	Planning and conducting a research observing academic integrity principles; Elaboration new research or analytical methods or/and approaches, which is oriented on creation of new knowledge (at the level of a necessary international referencing publication standard); Crytical analysis, synthesis and evaluation of new, complex and contradictory ideas and approaches, which encourages making proper and effective decisions for addressing complex problems independently (in research and/or innovation).	Conducting research projects and/or development-oriented activities, based on latest achievements in an academic /professional context, observing managerial, academic, and/or professional integrity principles, as well as demonstrating innovative approaches and independence.

| | | Skills of presenting and conveying new knowledge, linked with the current one, clearly and in a justified manner to collegaues, as well as wide society.

Skills to participate in thematic discussions, conducted at local and international levels. | |

Vocational Education Standard	Existing programs	Programs according to the new VET law
Forestry	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Forestry	Secondary vocational education program
Logistics and Port Management	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Port Logistics	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Port Logistics Management	Higher vocational education program
Water Supply and Sewage Systems	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Water Supply Systems Exploitation	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Water Sewage Systems Exploitation	Secondary vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Plumbing	Basic vocational education program
Crane and Related Plants Operation	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Crane Operation	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Crane Operation	Secondary vocational education program
Fishing Vessel Navigation	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Fishing Vessel Navigation	Short Cycle
Hotel, Restaurants and Catering	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Hotel Service	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Restaurant Service	Secondary vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Cooking (restaurant and hotel-type)	Basic vocational education program
	4.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Confectionery	Basic vocational education program
Electricity	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Electricity	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Electricity	Secondary vocational education program
	3.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Mechatronics.	Higher vocational education program
Mechanics and Metal Trades	1.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Mechanics	Higher vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Metal Trades	Basic vocational education program

Industrial Automation	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Electronic Equipment Exploitation	Higher vocational education program
Information Technology	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Information Technology Support	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Computer Network and Systems	Secondary vocational education program
	3.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Computer Network Administration	Higher vocational education program
Fisheries	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Fisheries	Secondary vocational education program
Mining	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Mining	Basic vocational education program
Welding	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Welding	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Forth** Level Vocational Program of Welding	Secondary vocational education program
Occupational Safety and Environmental Technology	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Occupational Safety and Environmental Technology	Higher vocational education program
Air Conditioning	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Air Conditioning	Secondary vocational education program
Photography	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Photography	Secondary vocational education program
Fine Arts	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Fine Arts	Secondary vocational education program
Adventure Tourism	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Adventure Tourism	Secondary vocational education program
Marine Transport Services	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Ship Deck Operation	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Ship Engine Room Operation	Basic vocational education program
Construction Manufacturing	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Building Construction Structures	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Wall Covering Works	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Floor and Tile Works	Basic vocational education program
Construction of Transport Infrastructure	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Road Construction	Basic vocational education program
Reporter and Anchor in Journalism	1.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Reporting	Higher vocational education program
	2.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of TV-Radio Anchoring	Higher vocational education program
Floristry	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Floristry	Basic vocational education program

Wood, Stone and Metal Artistic Processing	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Wood Artistic Processing	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Stone Artistic Processing	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Metal Artistic Processing	Basic vocational education program
Digital Art	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Digital Art	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Animation	Secondary vocational education program
Production of Footwear and Leather Products	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Production of Footwear and Leather Products	Basic vocational education program
Jewellery	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Jewellery	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Gemstone Cutting/ Lapidary	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Enamelling	Basic vocational education program
Manufacture of Ceramic Products	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Manufacture of Ceramic Products	Basic vocational education program
Audio-visual Art	1.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of TV Directing	Higher vocational education program
	2.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Camera Operating	Higher vocational education program
	3.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Video Editing	Higher vocational education program
	4.**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of TV Graphic Design	Higher vocational education program
	5.Fourth Level Vocational Program of Lighting Design	Secondary vocational education program
Dentistry	**Forth** Level Vocational Program of Dental Technology	Secondary vocational education program
Software Developing	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Software Developing	Higher vocational education program
Survey-Topography	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Topography	Secondary vocational education program
Telecommunication	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Telecommunication	Secondary vocational education program
Print Media Technologies Specialist	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Print Media Technologies	Basic vocational education program
Motor Vehicles and Special Purpose Vehicle	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Repairing of Trucks and Special Purpose Techniques	Secondary vocational education program

Services	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Motor Vehicle Mechanics	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Repairing the Drainage of Motor Vehicles	Basic vocational education program
Aircraft Flight Exploitation	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Aircraft Flight Exploitation (CPL)	Short Cycle
Aircraft Maintenance	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Aircraft Maintenance (B1, B2)	Short Cycle
Viticulture and Winemaking	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Viticulture and Winemaking	Higher vocational education program
Customs Study	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Customs Study	Higher vocational education program
Accounting	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Accounting	Higher vocational education program
Finance Services	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Finance Services	Basic vocational education program
Office Work and Event Management	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Office Work	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Event Management	Secondary vocational education program
Nursing	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Nursing	Short cycle
Pharmacy	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Pharmacy	Short cycle
Sewing Industry	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Sewing Industry	Basic vocational education program
Railway Operation	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Railway Operation	Secondary vocational education program
Rail Motor Vehicles	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Rail Motor Vehicles	Secondary vocational education program
Web Technology	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Web Technology	Secondary vocational education program
Organic Farming	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Organic Farming	Higher vocational education program
Food Production	**Forth** Level Vocational Program of Food Production	Secondary vocational education program
Veterinary	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Veterinary	Short cycle
Horticulture	**Forth** Level Vocational Program of Horticulture	Secondary vocational education program program
Agriculture	1.**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Agriculture	Secondary vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Beekeeping	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Viticulture	Basic vocational education program

	4.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Horticulture	Basic vocational education program
	5.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Horse-Breeding	Basic vocational education program
Hair and Beauty Services	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Hair and Beauty Services	Basic vocational education program
Artistic Fabrics	1.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Artistic Knitting	Basic vocational education program
	2.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Felt Preparation	Basic vocational education program
	3.**Third** Level Vocational Program of Embroidering	Basic vocational education program
Artistic Glass	**Third** Level Vocational Program of Glass Artistic Processing	Basic vocational education program
Agromechanization	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Agromechanization	Secondary vocational education program
Dental Studies	**Fourth** Level Vocational Program of Dental Studies	Secondary vocational education program
Early Childhood Teaching	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of Early Childhood Teaching	Short cycle
Lybrarian	**Fourth** level Vocational Program of Librarian	Secondary vocational education program
Pianist - Accompanist	**Fifth** Level Vocational Program of pianist – accompanist	Higher vocational education program
Music Tutor	**Fifth Level** Vocational Program of Music Tutor	Higher vocational education program

NCEQE Organizational Set-Up and Responsibilities

NCEQE's director decides the organisational structure and functions of the different units. Two deputy directors coordinate the activities of operational departments and divisions, as indicated in the organisational structure below. NCEQE operates with a total of 51 staff working with fixed term labour attachment; in addition, 102 staff members are contractual agents.

The most important NCEQE's departments and divisions for the scope of the proposed Twinning project are:

- Higher education Quality Assurance Department
- VET Quality Assurance Department
- General Education Quality Assurance Department
- Registry Division
- Qualifications Development Division
- International Qualifications Department
- Legal Department
- Strategic Development and International Relations Department

A brief overview of key functions and staffing of these most important departments follows:

- The Department of Higher Education QA has two structural divisions: one focusing on authorisation; the other – on accreditation. This department is in charge of aligning the national quality assurance mechanisms with the European Higher Education Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines (ESG); carry out the authorisation and accreditation processes and monitor them; promote involvement of international experts in development of new standards and procedures and manage the experts' corps.
- The VET QA department has a very extensive list of functions and areas, going from implementation of authorisation and accreditation processes, to management of experts' corps, monitoring and control of VET programmes and participation in the development and improvement of standards and methodologies.
- The General Education QA department is entrusted of a wide range of functions, including authorisation and accreditation processes, improvement of standards and procedures, as well as monitoring mechanisms and counselling to stakeholders. In total this department has the lowest number of staff (5 in total), compared with the other QA departments, which might be a constraint given the high number of educational institutions of this sub-sector.
- The Registry division has an important role: assure reliable and updated documentation of the key processes of NCEQE, in form of electronic registers, which include data on educational institutions, students enrolment, student mobility, educational programmes (qualifications). The division has started development of a new database, with better integration with other databases and takes into account information aligned with the NQF.

- The Qualifications development division has a wide range of tasks, while the number of its staff is low (in total: 4). This division responds for the development of the NQF and its key instruments (such as the NQF register), and the NQF legal base (bylaws, rules and procedures) necessary for operationalization of the amendments (in adoption process) to the *Law of Georgia on Development of Quality of Education.* Besides, this division bears the responsibility to develop methodology and rules for elaboration of occupational standards and VET programmes (modules, curriculum), to manage the VET standards and programmes, and to develop and promote "recognition of non-formal education".
- The International Education Department is responsible for all activities related with recognition of education received abroad, for communication and coordination with European Information Centres and National Academic Recognition Network (ENIC-NARIC Network). Recognition decisions of the department are binding. This is a department handling a substantial workload, expressed by several thousands of applications annually. This department has the highest number of staff (23 in total).
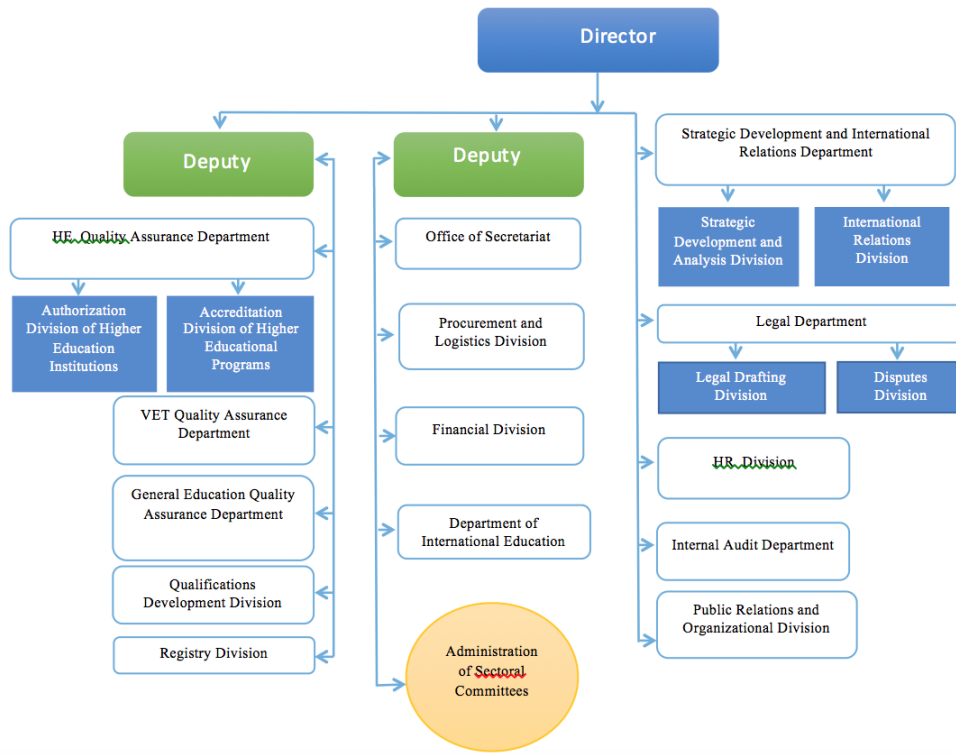
The Legal Department deals amongst others, with the legal coherence of legislative and normative texts (amendments to primary Laws, bylaws, rules and procedures), and represents NCEQE in legal cases.

The Strategic Development and International Relations Department assures the coordination and smooth operations of activities carried out together with international partners and projects, and will play an important role in the oversight of this Twinning project.

Table 1: Selected structural units of NCEQE and their staffing

NCEQE - Department/Division	Staff	
	Fixed Term	Contracted
Higher education Quality Assurance Department	5	10
VET Quality Assurance Department	3	7
General Education Quality Assurance Department	2	5
Registry Division	3	10
Qualifications Development Division	2	5
International Education Department	5	17
Total staff at NCEQE	**51**	**100**

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

Director

Deputy

HE Quality Assurance Department

Authorization Division of Higher Education Institutions

Accreditation Division of Higher Educational Programs

VET Quality Assurance Department

General Education Quality Assurance Department

Qualifications Development Division

Registry Division

Deputy

Office of Secretariat

Procurement and Logistics Division

Financial Division

Department of International Education

Administration of Sectoral Committees

Strategic Development and International Relations Department

Strategic Development and Analysis Division

International Relations Division

Legal Department

Legal Drafting Division

Disputes Division

HR Division

Internal Audit Department

Public Relations and Organizational Division

13 List of abbreviations

ECTS	European Credit and Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres in the European Region
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
HE	Higher education
MESCS	Ministry of Education Science Culture and Sport
NCEQE	National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality assurance
VET	Vocational education and training

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