

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK – EGYPT

This report on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Egypt has been developed by the European Training Foundation (ETF).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Egypt's national qualifications framework (NQF) was established in law in 2006. It is an 8-level framework, with two descriptor domains, incorporating qualifications from general education, higher education (HE), vocational education and training (VET) and specialised professional qualifications.

The National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) is the lead body for the development and implementation of the framework.

While there is an enabling legal framework and functioning institutional arrangements, no qualifications have been placed yet in the NQF.

Egypt's NQF is in the activation stage.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 Policy context

Geographically and geopolitically, Egypt occupies a strategic position and serves as an important bridge between Africa and the Middle East. Its population, according to Worldometer was 118 million in October 2025. It is the most populous Arab country. Economic growth slowed to 3.8% in 2023, down from 6.6% in 2022, due to high inflation.

Tourism, manufacturing, extractive industries and revenue from the Suez Canal are key sectors or economic assets.

Overall, population growth exceeds the country's economic capacity to create enough jobs, which results in significant, even severe, unemployment and underemployment among the young.

Egypt is a country of both major outward migration and of significant refugee and migrant labour arrivals. Its diaspora, through remittances, is a significant contributor to GDP. At the same time, Egypt has become a destination country for thousands of Arab and African immigrants and an important host country for hundreds of thousands of Palestinian, Sudanese and Syrian refugees. In recent years, the country has also served as a transit country for African migrants from sub-Saharan Africa travelling to Europe via the Mediterranean¹.

Education and training reform

Egypt's 2014 constitution commits it to expanding and improving the quality of general education and vocational training. The national development plan, the [Sustainable Development Strategy – Egypt Vision 2030](#) (2015), emphasises investment in human resources as the key to promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

New developments in TVET reform are driven by the Technical Education 2.0 (TE2.0) transformation strategy, launched in 2019. The Ministry of Education and Technical Education, or MoETE, is the main VET provider in the country. It implements TE2.0 in partnership with various stakeholders.

Based on five pillars, the strategy aims to increase the attractiveness and relevance of VET, ensure its quality, train teachers, review the governance model and establish new models of public–private partnership. A TVET QA authority (ETQAAN) and a teacher training academy are being established. TVET Egypt is a major programme for reform and boosting of the sector, co-funded by the Government of Egypt and the European Union (EU).

¹ ETF. 2020a. Egypt Education, Training and Employment Developments 2020. <https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-01/egypt.pdf>

In addition to the reforms within compulsory education, the government is seeking to modernise the higher education sector. In 2018, a Law for the Establishment of New Technological Universities was approved, with, initially, eight universities planned. These will be publicly owned and will offer two- and four-year programmes across a range of specialities, including agriculture, industry, technology and commerce. The courses will be open to students with general secondary school certificates, as well as those who have attended a technical school. It is envisaged that the model will build further on that of the Integrated Technical Educational Clusters (ITECs), which deliver all levels of technical and vocational qualifications in a given sector.

There are common positive trends across the different reform initiatives in recent years, including an emphasis on a more employment-oriented focus intensification of quality assurance systems; a more demand-oriented VET vision, and more work-based learning; models of public-private partnerships through, for example, applied technology schools etc.; and increased collaboration between stakeholders and international partners at regional and local levels.

2.2 NQF legal basis

The NQF's legal framework dates back to 2006 and includes:

1. Law 159 of 2022². This amendment to the 2006 law which established the quality assurance agency NAQAAE provides the legal and regulatory mandate for the NQF and its implementation².
2. Cabinet Decree No. 1681 of 2024, which updated the 2022 NAQAAE by-law to align with NQF-related law amendments³.
3. NAQAAE Board Decree No. 53 of 2024, which established an advisory committee dedicated to implementing the NQF. The committee is responsible for coordination, communication, policy proposals, evaluation, and fostering cooperation⁴.
4. Ministerial Decree No. 115 of 2023, issued by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. It established the Sector Skills Committee, which is mandated to coordinate various ministries and international bodies in skills development, license sectoral skills councils, determine skills needs, and update training systems to align with labour market demands⁵.

In addition to the NQF-specific laws, other recent legislative changes impact the framework:

- Law 160 of 2022, which established the Egyptian Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in TVET (ETQAAN), a new governmental body responsible for quality assurance and accreditation of technical and vocational education and training institutions and programmes⁶.
- amendments to Labour Law No. 12 of 2003 (Chapter 3, addressing VET), which are currently under discussion by the Egyptian parliament. These amendments were a result of the official discussions on the Labour Law, which were conducted by the "Supreme Committee of Social Dialogue". The amendments cover multiple topics, including vocational training funding and emphasizing the role of private-sector partnerships in developing vocational training. The amendments have been approved by the Egyptian Senate Council and are now subject to discussion by the Parliament⁷.

² National Gazette, Issue No. 40 bis, October 11, 2022. (Arabic document only, the official copy is a hard copy)

³ National Gazette, Issue No. (20 bis/B), May 21, 2024. (Arabic document only, the official copy is a hard copy)

⁴ NAQAAE's Board decree No. 53 of 2024, June 2024, National Authority for Quality Assurance & Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE). (Arabic document only, the official copy is a hard copy- unpublished)

⁵ Ministerial decree (No. 115 of 2023) by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (Arabic document only, unpublished)

⁶ National Gazette, Issue No. 40 bis, October 11, 2022. (Arabic document only)

⁷ <https://www.transatlanticlaw.com/content/egypts-labor-law-reform-new-employees-rights-and-work-patterns-recognition-of-digitalization-and-disputes-settlement-changes/>

3. NQF OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

Objectives and functions of the NQF are:

- acting as a reference to support development of related, future, sectoral qualification frameworks.
- setting reference standards for qualifications based on learning outcomes.
- linking qualification levels allowing progression from one level to another.
- linking TVET & the general education systems, promoting level progression (no dead ends) and permitting horizontal mobility between the two systems.
- guiding quality assurance tools and systems standards.
- supporting and fostering lifelong learning (LLL) and recognizing learning acquired outside the formal education system.
- supporting the identification of new qualifications and the review and development of existing ones.
- strengthening public confidence in education and training outcomes, ensuring their alignment with labour market needs.
- serving as a comparability tool for recognition of Egyptian qualifications, allowing overseas mobility in education systems and labour markets.

4. LEVELS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND QUALIFICATIONS

4.1 NQF structure and level descriptors

The NQF is a comprehensive framework that accommodates qualifications awarded in general education, HE, VET, adult learning, and non-formal education and training.

It is composed of eight horizontal levels of learning outcomes, and two vertical columns of domains.

Its levels ascend Level 1 (the general primary certificate is at this level), up to Level 8 e.g., doctorate.

Its domains are a) Knowledge and Understanding and b) Skills. This second domain contains 5 sub-domains: Cognitive skills; Professional skills; Responsibility & autonomy; Communication; and ICT.

These arrangements were introduced in 2021, replacing the earlier 3-domain model.

4.2 NQF scope and coverage

The NQF distinguishes between qualifications, programmes and curriculum, but links these, with a qualification defined as the outcome of a learning process based on a programme and assessment.

The NQF applies three classifications to qualifications to be placed on its levels: degrees, diplomas and certificates. Qualification types are presented in the following table.

Table: Types of Qualifications

Levels	Broad types	Qualifications
Level 1	Certificates	Certificate

Levels	Broad types	Qualifications
Level 2	Certificates	Certificate (9y) General Prep
Level 3	Diplomas; Certificates	General Secondary Certificate (3y) Technical Secondary Certificate (3y) Diploma (level 3)
Level 4	Diplomas; Certificates	Technical Diploma (2y)
Level 5	Degrees; Certificates	Bachelor / Licence Professional Bachelor
Level 6	Diplomas; Degrees; Certificates	Post-Graduate Diploma
Level 7	Degrees; Certificates	Master Professional Master Professional Master in Technology
Level 8	Degrees	Doctor Professional Doctor Professional Doctor in Technology

Military and police qualifications are recent additions.

New qualification types are planned or in development. Egyptian Vocational Qualifications or EVQs; and micro credentials. EVQs will be allocated to NQF Levels 1, 2, 4, 5 and 7. Microcredentials are envisaged for the vocational and professional sectors, and in adult learning. NAQAAE anticipates that such qualifications would be placed at NQF Levels 1 to 7.

The framework is open in principle to qualifications from non-formal providers, partial qualifications, units of learning outcomes, and international qualifications⁸. So far, no qualifications belonging to any of these types has been proposed for inclusion.

4.3 Use and renewal of learning outcomes and standards

The NQF is based on an outcomes-based approach.

Use of outcomes in HE

In HE, NAQAAE develops standards for programmes, called National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) as the base for programmes or courses. As an example, the NARS for Nursing elucidates how the outcomes statements are grouped: attributes of the graduate; knowledge and understanding; practical and clinical skills; intellectual skills, general and transferable skills; and attitudes.

To date, three programmes in the tourism sector have been developed for the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) but not yet implemented in the colleges. The related qualifications are at Levels 4 and 5 of the NQF.

Use of outcomes in VET

In VET, Competency-based (CBT) programmes are associated with curricula and the respective qualifications standards, which are defined in Units.

⁸ Certificate, diploma or title awarded in several countries by a legally established international authority (association, organisation, sector or company) or by a national body accredited by an international authority", Cedefop Glossary, [Glossary | CEDEFOP](#)

Units represent a collection of related knowledge and skills (competencies), expressed in terms of learning outcomes. Units are allocated NQF levels, include typical tasks and activities in the occupation, and performance criteria

Examples of use of CBT in VET programmes are 37 programmes developed for 4 sectors: industry, agriculture, tourism, and commerce, and 32 CBT programmes implemented across 105 technical secondary schools, within MoETE's remit, at Level 3 of the NQF.

Planned occupational standards, which the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) will develop, will likewise be outcomes-based, starting with labour market needs.

4.4 Quality assurance of qualifications

In Egypt, quality assurance of qualifications is closely linked to standards development and programme accreditation.

Quality assurance in higher education

NAAQE's founding legislation from 2006 empowers it to oversee quality assurance (QA) in higher education in Egypt.

Quality assurance in higher education includes self-assessment by the HEIs, and NAQAEE's evaluation and accreditation of these providers, and assessment and accreditation of their programmes.

NAQAEE accredits universities as a whole, as well as individual faculties and programmes. To gain full institutional accreditation, at least 60% of a university's faculties must already be accredited.

NAQAEE's quality criteria are laid out in several guides; they include having in place adequate financial resources, management structures, teaching staff, facilities, research output, and quality assurance mechanisms.

NAQAEE may grant conditional accreditation to an institution if it meets more than 75% of the criteria, including the standards related to teaching and learning. An institution granted conditional accreditation undergoes a re-evaluation process and a short one-day external review visit, which may be a field visit or a virtual visit, before a final decision is reached.

Although accreditation is technically mandatory for all HEIs, the implementation of Egypt's new quality control regime is still in transition and progressing gradually.

Quality assurance for TVET

In QA in TVET, the main authority is the Egyptian Technical and Vocational Education and Training Quality Assurance and Accreditation Authority (ETQAAN), which was established by Law 160 of 2022. Although ETQAAN is still in its establishment phase, its main task is to develop and implement quality measures and accreditation standards for technical and technological educational institutions and programmes as well as vocational training centres.

In addition, the Sector Skills Committee created by Ministerial Decree No. 115 of 2023 monitors and licences the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The SSCs are responsible for defining the skills requirements for current and future occupations and for developing national occupational standards. These standards serve as the basis for the creation of new qualifications in the field of vocational education and training. The SSCs also licence VET centres that offer programmes that meet these standards to ensure the quality of VET programmes.

The Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MoETE) is responsible for the quality assurance of the design of technical education programmes. Since the 2019-2020 academic year, MoETE has introduced new competency-based training (CBT) programmes in the fields of industry, agriculture and trade. These new programmes have been developed in collaboration with industry partners and

various stakeholders and will gradually replace the older, traditional programmes by the end of the 2024-2025 academic year. Each new programme includes a detailed framework describing competences, learning outcomes and assessment tools.

Given the role of these different institutions, coordination is crucial. As the sole national authority for assessing the quality of VET programmes, ETQAAN must work closely with its key partners, including MoETE, technological universities and SSCs. This co-operation and the development of clear and transparent accreditation standards are critical to ETQAAN's success and public confidence.

A coordinated plan of actions between a) the expected completion of the CBT-transformation of all TVET curriculum from one side, and b) the piloting and roll-out of certification of providers by ETQAAN from the other, should take account of the strategic goals of TVET reform; but also let ETQAAN organise and deliver quality assurance measures according to the terms of the legislation and international practice, that is, with the necessary independence, credibility and transparency.

Procedures for placing qualifications in NQF register

The same procedure is used to place all types of qualification in the NQF: institutions proposing qualifications for placement submit a file covering intended learning outcomes, linked learning pathways, targeted NQF level and related occupations. The awarding body must be listed in the NQF Register.

NAQAAE reviews applications. Where approved, a qualification is listed on the NQF register for five years.

5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

5.1 Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

NAQAAE coordinates NQF development. It is also, as indicated at Section 4.4, above, responsible for the quality assurance of qualifications developed and awarded in the general and higher education, while ETQAAN regulates QA in VET.

Within NAQAAE, a dedicated NQF Administration Department manages day to day development, implementation and monitoring of the framework.

There is no allotted specific budget for the NQF and NAQAAE must cover all NQF operations from its current financial budget. Two experts comprise the NQF Administration Department's complement of staff.

5.2 Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

Currently the sector skills councils or committees are not directly involved in the development of the NQF. However, industry and organised labour, with which NAQAAE has conducted extensive consultations, have contributed to the development of the NQF.

The NQF's development involves a broad network of government bodies and key stakeholders. Major actors are the Ministries of Higher Education; of Education and Technical Education; of Planning; of Economic Development and International Cooperation; of Defence; of Internal Affairs; of Health and Populations; and the Al-Azhar Sheikhdom⁹; the Central Bank of Egypt; and ETQAAN, the QA agency in TVET.

⁹ An Islamic scientific body and the largest religious institution in Egypt.

In recent years, the scope of stakeholder consultation has expanded to include military and police education, and the newly established Sector Skills Councils, ensuring the NQF captures a wider range of qualifications.

6. RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

6.1 Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

Egypt does not yet have a national system for RPL, though NAQAAE developed a proposal for a national RPL policy in 2022.

However, some RPL practices can be seen in both education and the labour market. Notably, the Ministry of Manpower oversees the Skill Measurement Certificate Test, completion of which enables the successful candidates to work in various occupations.

6.2 Credit systems

There is not yet an integrated national credit system which enables accumulation and transfer across institutions and education and training sectors. It is a goal of the NQF to contribute to achieving this system, however. For now, within individual institutions, credits are used.

7. NQF IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT

7.1. Stage of implementation

No qualifications are yet placed in the NQF. However, the requisite legal framework to enable NQF development is in place and institutional roles have been allocated.

Moreover, the outcomes approach at the heart of the NQF already influences development of standards, qualifications and curricula.

7.2 Indicating NQF/RQF levels

Certificates, diplomas etc. and other qualifications documents do not yet bear NQF levels.

7.3 NQF dissemination

NAQAAE's communication strategy for the NQF includes guides, training workshops, information events, and a website. One planned guidebook will present the NQF in detail, covering its rationale, functions, structure and relationship with Egypt's education and training system and labour market.

During 2024, NAQAAE organised events dedicated to promoting the developing NQF register.

7.4 Qualifications databases and registers

NAQAAE has been developing a qualifications register, anticipating that the allocation of qualifications and microcredentials will commence in early 2026.

7.5 Use of NQF in recognition of foreign qualifications

Recognition of Foreign Qualifications is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Egypt has not yet ratified the 'Revised Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualificators in Higher Education in African States' ([Addis Convention](#))¹⁰, signed in 2014.

7.6 Career guidance and counselling

The NQF aims to bridge the gap between educational outcomes and labour market needs, and effective career guidance is essential for this alignment.

While Egypt has made progress in widening access to education, there is still a significant gap between the qualifications of graduates and the requirements of employers. This has led to high unemployment rates, especially among university graduates. Career counselling and guidance is being used as one means of addressing this problem.

The NQF supports lifelong learning and career guidance is an important tool to help people make informed decisions about retraining and further education throughout their lives. It helps them recognise new opportunities and understand how they can upskill.

7.7 Awareness and use of the NQF

The level of awareness of the NQF inevitably varies by stakeholder or education sector. Among institutions and providers in TVET, the level of awareness is relatively high, due to the active participation of people from this sector in the framework's development.

In HE, there is good understanding of the NQF and familiarity with it. This engagement is attributable to the investment by individual universities and their umbrella body, the Supreme Council of Universities.

8. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORK / OTHER FRAMEWORKS

8.1 Referencing to regional frameworks

Although the NQF is not operational, authorities aspire to its eventual comparison with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the Arab Qualifications Framework (AQF) and [the African Continental Qualifications Framework \(ACQF\)](#) or ACQF.

As an African Union member state, Egypt can reference its NQF to the ACQF once it is advanced in implementation, according to the ACQF's defined five development stages.

NAQAAE is a Board Member of the Arab Network for Quality Assurance (ANQAHE).

¹⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/news/unescos-addis-convention-higher-education-enter-force>

NAQAAE actively participates in the Africa-EU Partnership Project Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA).

8.2 International donor support

The EU remains a strong supporter of Egyptian education, with particular emphasis on increasing access, especially for the most vulnerable children. The current EU cooperation portfolio in education includes two complementary primary community schooling programmes, to a total of 90 million euros.

In VET, the EU provides support through the TVET Egypt programme, which is co-funded by the Egyptian government and aims to improve the performance of the TVET system to better respond to Egypt's rapidly changing socioeconomic needs, with a focus on youth employability and national competitiveness. The TVET Egypt programme includes a component focused on the NQF and development of the NQF register of qualifications.

GIZ and USAID contribute substantially to advance the TVET and employment policies.

Since 2024, NAQAAE has been working with USAID to support the activation of the sector skills committees (SSCs) and to develop the Egyptian Vocational Qualifications (EVQs). This includes unifying the methodology, approaches, and coding system of the qualifications, and ensuring alignment with the NQF.

9. REFLECTIONS AND PLANS

While not formally operational, the NQF influences standards, qualifications and curricula in VET and HE through its outcomes approach.

Allocating qualifications to the NQF levels, fully operationalising the register (placing of qualifications is scheduled for early 2026) and indicating NQF levels on certificates would all boost transparency of Egyptian qualifications.

The framework would benefit in implementation from efforts by NAQAAE and partner ministries and agencies in raising awareness in various sectors and with industry and the public.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics
EQF	European qualifications framework
ETQAAN	Egyptian TVET Quality Assurance and Accreditation National Authority
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
ETF	European Training Foundation
EVQs	Egyptian Vocational Qualifications
GDP	Gross domestic product
ISCED	International standard classification of education
MoETE	Ministry of Education and Technical Education
NARS	National Academic Reference Standards
NAQAAE	National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SSCs	Sector Skills Councils
TE2.0	Technical Education 2.0
TVET	Technical Vocational education and training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Teacher's Academy
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning
WENR	World Education News and Reviews

REFERENCES

European Training Foundation (ETF), *Key policy developments in education, training and employment – Egypt 2024*, Turin 2025. Available online at: [Key policy developments in education, training and employment - Egypt 2024 | ETF](#)

Further information

NAQAAE, <http://en.naqaae.eg/>

Ministry of Education and Technical Education, <https://moe.gov.eg/en>

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, <http://portal.moheer.gov.eg/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>

Supreme Council of Universities, <https://scu.eg/en/>

Ministry of Manpower and Migration, <https://www.manpower.gov.eg/index-e.html>