Qualifications Framework
ANQAHE Model
Arab Qualification Framework (AQF)

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A National Qualifications Framework should:

- Value Learners
- Optimizes Access
- Learners Transfer
- Qualification Progression
- Qualification Recognition
- Knowledgeable Workforce
- Skilled Workforce
- Globally Competitive Workforce
- Learners Development
- Social & Economic Development
- Development of the Nation

Qualifications Framework Aims
Qualifications Framework: What is it for?

In theory ..

QFs are essential tools for everyone with any interest in education and training

They indicate:
- the ‘level’ of a qualification
- the relationships between qualifications
- progression pathways between qualifications

QFs appear to offer a lot to many different stakeholders, ‘employers’, ‘students’, education providers, QAA, all of whom seem to assume .. their expectations will be met,

Though they have different needs

Is it possible to ‘keep all of the people happy all of the time’?!
Qualifications Framework: What is it for?

Back to basics:
relationships, expectations and needs

Society’s needs and expectations

employers’ needs and expectations

Academic / Professional Communities’ needs and expectations
Qualifications Framework: Changing Relationships

“few decades ago”:
HE (largely) provided education *for* an ‘elite’
• for the general good of society
  (and particularly its administration and leadership)
• to ‘replenish’ the academic community
• and ‘was trusted’

“today”:
HE provides knowledge and skills training *to* many
• to enhance mobility and improve employability
• in the ‘globalised knowledge economy’
In practice..

Most QFs have been introduced (imposed?) as a ‘new’ QA ‘tool’
( Some consider it as “yet another burden” )

The immediate consequences - are often – seem to be ‘providers’ resent ‘more bureaucracy’

‘Stakeholder’s are often confused

Awareness campaigns are essential
Qualifications Framework & Quality Assurance

Integrating the ‘information tools’:

at the right level  .. Qualifications Framework

relevant and coherent .. ‘benchmarks’

Academic / professional specific expectations

Society’s General Expectations

Qualifications Framework

Benchmark Statements etc

HEI’s particular Programme Proposal (specification)
QFs are at the very centre of ‘the deal’ between society and education providers …

They can be:

• a valuable ‘information tool’ for non-specialists.

• an essential tool for QA (whether ‘internal’ or ‘external’), looking at the targeted program LOs in relation to QF level descriptor.

ALL of the (potential) benefits of QFs depend on .. **confidence** and **trust**
'consistency’ or ‘comparability’?

QFs should be about *comparability* – not consistency! Consistency *between* QFs is probably impossible and probably *within* frameworks too!!

... especially if VET/HE/LLL

Comparability of learning outcomes – means .. *NOT* .. focussing on where, how, or how long a learner studied

BUT
focussing on what the student knows and can do -
*and whether the assessments are trustworthy*
Qualifications Framework & Quality Assurance

Joining it all up ..

Qualification Frameworks

- Benchmarking
- Recognition/Mobility/Employability
- Impact of QA
- Transnational (QA)
Qualifications Framework & Quality Assurance

Factors to be considered in developing QF

- Integrated FW, covering all possible components and means of learning [schooling, HE (academic & professional), VET, RPL]

- Consider progression within various levels

- Clarity in description, for use by various stakeholders. Could it be really user-friendly?

- Balancing the distinction between different levels
Factors to be considered in developing QF (cont.)

- Involve relevant stakeholders, have REAL consultations
- Be realistic in your expectations
- Be very CLEAR and HONEST about purposes – and the limitations
Regional QF

Regional FW:

• Generic
• Used for referencing/ alignment
• Allow for differences in:
  Educational system
  Definitions & Terminology
  (in qualification titles & study units)

• Does NOT replace National QFs
Historical Background of ANQAHE

- Established in June 2007.
- Independent, nongovernmental and non for profit organization.
- Includes 18 QAA as full members 11 QA Centres as Associated members from 19 countries out of the 22 Arab Countries.
Members of ANQAHE
Arab QF

- Prescriptive to guide developing national QF.

- Benefited from other regional and national FWs.
Purpose of the AQF

1. Provide a single translational reference point to compare qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally

2. Provide a regional benchmark of qualified graduates, defined in a common language

3. Address the need for transparent mechanisms for assuring quality, rigor and consistency of regional qualifications for the country, employers, community and students

4. Provide guidance in designing and developing new qualifications

5. Provide an instrument to maintain parity in the demands and expectations of qualifications set at the same level

6. Help students make informed decisions about their education and training progression, mobility between levels, institutions, and in relation to employment opportunities

7. Serve as an indicator of occupational and employment relevance

8. Provide an additional tool for implementation of standards through quality assurance agencies, ministries and other national authorities and regulators of higher education

9. Indicate the outcomes required from programs/courses set at equivalent levels in national frameworks within the region
Structure of the AQF

Levels

- AQF covers 10 levels
- The cognitive representation of ideas, facts, principles, events or happenings
- It can be learned from practical or professional experience as well as from formal instruction or study and can comprise description, understanding, thinking, analysis, synthesis, debate and research.

Descriptors of Learning Outcomes

- Descriptors of Learning Outcomes
- The learned ability to perform a function that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the individual
- The effective and creative deployment of knowledge and skills, including general, social and civic, as well as specific occupational contexts.

Descriptors of Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

- The learned ability to perform a function that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the individual
- It can be learned from practical or professional experience as well as from formal instruction or study and can comprise description, understanding, thinking, analysis, synthesis, debate and research.

Skills

- Reflecting widespread international practice
- Aiding mutual recognition of qualifications between nations
- The learned ability to perform a function that in some way responds to or manipulates the physical, informational or social environment of the individual
- The effective and creative deployment of knowledge and skills, including general, social and civic, as well as specific occupational contexts.

Competence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>A broad body of factual knowledge and an understanding of the underlying theories and principles and boundaries in a field of work or learning; an understanding of related knowledge and theories in other disciplines and, in the case of professional programs, other allied professional fields; in programs preparing students for professional practice, knowledge of relevant conventions, regulations and codes, and how these may be modified over time with changing circumstances.</td>
<td>Cognitive skills to critically review, analyze, consolidate and synthesize knowledge as a basis for life-long learning; skills to investigate relatively complex problems using a range of information technologies, quantitative techniques, and sources of knowledge, and to recommend creative and innovative solutions; initiative to identify issues requiring investigation and to address them on an individual or team basis with appropriate methods, procedures or techniques, leading to identified solutions; effective communication and information technology skills to present and explain complex matters to a range of audiences; interpersonal skills to deal with ethical and professional issues with tact, sensitivity and respect for the views of others.</td>
<td>Responsibility for developing new approaches to evaluating relatively complex and unpredictable work procedures and processes; management of technical, supervisory or design processes in unpredictable contexts; self-evaluation and responsibility for contributing to professional practice, and undertake regular professional development and/or further learning; autonomy in technical and supervisory contexts and adopt professional roles with minimal guidance; responsibility for the setting and achievement of group or individual tasks and outcomes, and for the management of the work of others or self in the context of study or supervised professional practice; participation in activities to keep up-to-date with developments in the academic or professional field; a sound level of ethical and responsible behavior and provide leadership in academic, professional and community environments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth in one or more specialist areas related to professional practice; familiarity with current issues, trends, and recent applied research and its impact on professional practice; a knowledge of principles, regulations, codes and operating procedures relevant to the professional field.</td>
<td>Technical, creative and conceptual skills appropriate to solving a range of problems associated with a field of work or learning and evaluate alternative solutions; the skill to identify relevant concepts and theories from the subjects studied and apply them outside the context in which they were learned, in both academic and professional contexts; ability to use appropriate investigative tools and strategies associated with the field of work or learning; the relevant mathematical and statistical skills to investigate problems and propose solutions; effective communication and technology skills to present and explain matters of relevance to professional practice.</td>
<td>Responsibility for developing appropriate approaches for managing work procedures and processes, and resources or learning, within a technical or professional activity; within broad parameters, the ability to provide specialist advice and functions; management of technical, supervisory or design processes in varied and unfamiliar contexts; initiative to function independently and contribute constructively within learning groups; an ability to evaluate own learning and identify learning needs in a familiar and unfamiliar environment; adopt professional roles under guidance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Level Descriptors for AQF - Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A broad and coherent theoretical and technical knowledge with some depth in one or more specialist areas related to professional practice; familiarity with current issues, trends, and recent applied research and its impact on professional practice; a knowledge of principles, regulations, codes and operating procedures relevant to the professional field.</td>
<td>Technical, creative and conceptual skills appropriate to solving a range of problems associated with a field of work or learning and evaluate alternative solutions; the skill to identify relevant concepts and theories from the subjects studied and apply them outside the context in which they were learned, in both academic and professional contexts; ability to use appropriate investigative tools and strategies associated with the field of work or learning; the relevant mathematical and statistical skills to investigate problems and propose solutions; effective communication and technology skills to present and explain matters of relevance to professional practice.</td>
<td>Responsibility for developing appropriate approaches for managing work procedures and processes, and resources or learning, within a technical or professional activity; within broad parameters, the ability to provide specialist advice and functions; management of technical, supervisory or design processes in varied and unfamiliar contexts; initiative to function independently and contribute constructively within learning groups; an ability to evaluate own learning and identify learning needs in a familiar and unfamiliar environment; adopt professional roles under guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Knowledge of important facts, principles and theories in a field of study and of regulations and operating procedures relevant to a professional field; familiarity with central current developments in professional practice, and recent applied research.</td>
<td>Technical, creative and conceptual skills, and, with some guidance, be able to solve routine problems and evaluate alternative solutions; a range of specialist cognitive and practical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge and ideas with some depth in the discipline; use of appropriate information retrieval tools and strategies associated with the field of work or learning; numeracy skills to apply in an assortment of contexts, which may be interrelated; communication and information technology skills to make a clear and coherent presentation of knowledge and ideas with some intellectual independence.</td>
<td>Responsibility for developing appropriate approaches for managing work procedures and processes, and resources or learning, within a technical or professional activity; within broad parameters, the ability to provide specialist advice and functions; management of technical, supervisory or design processes in varied, unpredictable and unfamiliar contexts; initiative to function independently and contribute constructively within teams in pursuit of common objectives; behavior in accordance with sound ethical standards in the context of learning and the workplace; evaluation of own learning and identify learning needs in a familiar and unfamiliar environment; adoption of professional roles under guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Secondary School Certificate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Concept of Credit Hours:

1 semester credit = 1 hour of time in class/week over a semester of 15 weeks or longer
1 hour in class = 2 hour outside class
1 academic credit = 45 hour over a semester
1 semester credit = 2 hours of laboratory/studio time / week over 15 week semester

1 credit = 10 learning hours
one-third may be class contact time.
The remainder divided between directed and independent learning.
The normal full load for a semester is 60 credits.
60 credits are allocated to the workload of a full-time academic year
30 credits are normally allocated to a semester
20 credits to a trimester
Qualifications that have formal programs lasting three full-time academic years in Europe are allocated 180 ECTS credits.

In the following sections of this AQF presentation the US system of credit hours will be used as a reference figure to which other credit awarding systems can be equated.
Characteristics of Principal Qualifications

- Level 10. Doctorate Degree
- Level 9. Master’s Degree
- Level 8. Post Graduate Diploma (Higher Diploma in KSA)
- Level 7. Bachelor’s Degree
- Level 6. Higher Diploma
- Level 5. Diploma (Associate)
- Level 4: Entry to Higher Education
# Qualification Credit Matrix for Academic Higher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Academic Qualification</th>
<th>US Credits (Minimum)</th>
<th>Minimum Duration of Post-Secondary Study (Year FT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>30 – 60 Post Master</td>
<td>8 (2 years post Master degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(PhD, DPhil)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>30 post Bachelor</td>
<td>6 (2 years post Bachelor degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(MSc/MA/MPhil/Master of…)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma (Higher Diploma in KSA)</td>
<td>24 post Bachelor (Dip)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>12 post Bachelor (Cert)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>120 post Secondary</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(BSc/BA/Bachelor of…</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
<td>90 post Secondary</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Associate Degree/Diploma</td>
<td>60 post Secondary</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>K12 School Certificate (HE Entry Level)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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## Qualification Credit Matrix Including Professional Training Stream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Principal Qualification</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>US Credits (Minimum)</th>
<th>Minimum Duration of Post-Secondary Study (Years FT)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctorate Degree (Professional Doctorate e.g. EdD, DBA)</td>
<td>Doctorate Degree (PhD, DPhil)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30 – 60 post-Master</td>
<td>8 (2 years post-Master Degree)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Advanced Professional Diplomas and Certificates</td>
<td>Master’s Degree (MSc/MA/MPhil/Master of…)</td>
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<td>30 post-Bachelor</td>
<td>6 (2 years post-Bachelor Degree)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Vocational Post Graduate Diploma/ Certificate,</td>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma/ Certificate</td>
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<td>24 post-Bachelor (Dip)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12 post-Bachelor (Cert)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Applied/Vocational Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree (BSc/BA/Bachelor of…)</td>
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<td>120 post-Secondary</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Higher Diploma (Vocational)</td>
<td>Higher Diploma</td>
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<td>90 post-Secondary</td>
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<td>Diploma (Vocational)</td>
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Alignment Across Regional Frameworks

<table>
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<th>Qualifications Framework Levels</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>AQF</th>
<th>EUROPEAN QF</th>
<th>BAHRAIN</th>
<th>KSA</th>
<th>OMAN</th>
<th>UAE</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
Current regional project – Gulf Qualifications Framework (GQF)

- Link NQF within GCC
- Enabling mobility of learners by utilizing a common reference framework
- Encourages the establishment of the NQFs in the GCC Member Countries
- Functions as a regional reference for Qualifications Frameworks (e.g. EQF)
- Encourages the values and principles of life long learning (LLL)
- Reference established NQFs of the GCC Members Countries to the GQF
- Promote transparency and synergy between Education and Training systems in GCC
Challenges

- Different education systems in the Arab region
- Different regulations that are sometimes conflicting with each other, affecting progression and mobility opportunities among countries
- Not all Arab countries have established qualifications frameworks, in fact some of them still do not have a national system for quality assurance.
- Implementation of the AQF requires intensive capacity building for all those involved
- Overcoming all these challenges require both human and financial considerations.
THANK YOU