



# KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

## HANDBOOK



# FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS

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## **Vision:**

Globally Recognized and Competitive Qualifications for Transforming Kenya

## **Mission:**

To Establish and Manage the KNQF, Align and Validate qualifications, and Create a Credit Accumulation and Transfer

## **Motto:**

Shaping the Future of Kenya

## **Core Values:**

- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Responsiveness
- Relevance
- Teamwork
- Quality
- Equity
- Integrity

@KNQA 2024

**Kenya National Qualifications Authority**

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# Welcome Message- Council Chairperson

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**Hon. Stanley Kiptis**  
**Council Chairperson**

As the Chairperson of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) Council, it is with great pleasure and a sense of responsibility that I introduce the KNQF Handbook. This handbook stands as a cornerstone in our ongoing commitment to enhance the quality and recognition of qualifications within Kenya.

Education and qualifications serve as the bedrock of societal advancement, empowering individuals to realize their full potential and contributing to the prosperity of our nation. However, in a rapidly evolving global landscape, it is imperative that our qualifications framework remains robust, adaptable, and responsive to the needs of learners, employers, and society at large.

The KNQF Handbook represents a comprehensive guide to understanding and navigating the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). It elucidates the principles, processes, and procedures that underpin the recognition, equivalence, and articulation of qualifications across diverse education and training pathways. Whether you are a student, an educator, an employer, or a policymaker, this handbook offers valuable insights into how qualifications are structured, assessed, and aligned with national and international standards.

Furthermore, the handbook underscores our commitment to promoting inclusivity and equity in education and training. By recognizing a broad spectrum of learning experiences, including formal, informal, and non-formal pathways, the KNQF seeks to ensure that individuals from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to access, progress through, and succeed in their educational pursuits.

In an era of rapid technological advancement and economic globalization, the importance of a well-functioning qualifications framework cannot be overstated. It serves as a compass, guiding individuals as they navigate the complexities of an ever-changing job market and empowering them to adapt and thrive in diverse professional environments.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of this handbook, including members of the KNQA Council, technical experts, stakeholders from the education and training sector, and representatives from industry and civil society. Your collective expertise, dedication, and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping a framework that reflects the aspirations and aspirations of the Kenyan people.

As we embark on the journey outlined in this handbook, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence, integrity, and inclusivity. Together, we can harness the transformative power of education and qualifications to build a brighter future for all Kenyans.

# Foreword

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Welcome to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Handbook. This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to understanding and navigating the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). As education and training systems evolve, it is crucial to have a standardized framework that ensures transparency, comparability, and quality assurance in qualifications.



**Dr. Alice Kande, PhD**  
**Director General/ CEO**

As education and training systems evolve, it is crucial to have a standardized framework that ensures transparency, comparability, and quality assurance in qualifications. The KNQF fulfills this role by providing a common reference point for all qualifications awarded in Kenya, from basic education to higher education and beyond.

This handbook outlines the structure, principles, and implementation of the KNQF, offering insights into its purpose, benefits, and practical application. Whether you are a student, educator, employer, policymaker, or any other stakeholder in the education and training sector, this handbook will equip you with the knowledge needed to engage effectively with the KNQF.

We extend our gratitude to all those who have contributed to the development of the KNQF and this handbook. It is through collaborative efforts that we can enhance the quality and relevance of education and training in Kenya, thereby empowering individuals and driving national development.



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# **THE KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (KNQA)**

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# ABOUT KNQA

## Introduction

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) was established in 2015 under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act, Chapter 214 (Cap 214), with the primary mandate of coordinating and harmonizing the various levels of education within the country. Additionally, KNQA plays a crucial role in creating a comprehensive database of all KNQF quality assured qualifications offered in Kenya. The KNQF, developed and implemented by KNQA, is part of Kenya's international commitments to develop an accurate, reliable, and robust database of all qualifications within the country. This initiative aims to facilitate comparability, equation, recognition, and information sharing of qualifications on a global scale.

Through KNQF, the Authority seeks to ensure transparency, quality assurance, and mobility within the Kenyan education and training landscape. By maintaining a centralized database of qualifications, KNQA promotes the recognition and understanding of the competencies and skills associated with each qualification, thereby enhancing the credibility and transferability of Kenyan qualifications both nationally and internationally.



# ABOUT KNQA

Furthermore, KNQA's role in harmonizing the various levels of education contributes to the coherence and integration of the national qualifications system. This comprehensive approach fosters seamless progression pathways, enabling learners to navigate the educational landscape seamlessly.

Overall, KNQA's establishment and the implementation of the KNQF represent Kenya's commitment to aligning its qualifications framework with international standards, ensuring the quality and recognition of its education and training, and facilitating the mobility of learners and professionals within the global context.



## THE AUTHORITY'S MANDATE

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- 1.Co-Ordinate and Supervise the Development of Policies on National Qualifications;
- 2.Develop a Framework for The Development of An Accreditation System on Qualifications;
- 3.Develop a System for Assessment of National Qualifications;
- 4.Develop and Review Inter-relationships and Linkages Across National Qualifications in Consultation with Stakeholders, Relevant Institutions and Agencies;
- 5.Maintain A National Database of National Qualifications;
- 6.Publish Manuals, Codes and Guidelines on National Qualifications;
- 7.Advise and Support Any Person, Body or Institution Which Is Responsible for The Award of National Qualifications;
- 8.Publish an Annual Report on The Status of National Qualifications;
- 9.Set Standards and Benchmarks for Qualifications and Competencies Including Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes and Values;



## THE AUTHORITY'S MANDATE

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10. Define the Levels of Qualifications and Competencies;
11. Provide for The Recognition of Attainment or Competencies Including Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes and Values;
12. Facilitate Linkages, Credit Transfers and Exemptions and A Vertical and Horizontal Mobility at All Levels to Enable Entry, Re-Entry and Exit;
13. Conduct Research on Equalization of Qualifications;
14. Establish Standards for Harmonization and Recognition of National and Foreign Qualifications;
15. Build Confidence in the National Qualifications System that Contributes to the National Economy;
16. Provide Pathways That Support the Development and Maintenance of Flexible Access to Qualifications;
17. Promote the Recognition of National Qualifications Internationally.



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# **THE KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

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# ABOUT **KNQF**

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## Introduction

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is designed as a learning outcome-based framework encompassing all sectors of education and training, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning. It consists of 10 levels, each distinguished by unique Level Descriptors. Qualifications are placed within these levels by aligning the learning outcomes of individual units and the overall qualification against these descriptors. Each level is characterized by three strands, namely Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

## **KNQF** Sub-frameworks

The KNQF consists of three sub frameworks namely academic, TVET and Industry each addressing different sectors and types of qualifications.



## **Academic Sub-framework:**

Academic sub-framework entails academic qualifications offered by educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and basic education. The qualifications offered are des qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, degrees, and postgraduate qualifications.

## **TVET Sub-framework:**

The TVET sub-framework focuses on Technical and Vocational Education and Training programs which covers a wide range of vocational qualifications designed to prepare individuals for employment in various industries and sectors.

## **Industry Sub-framework:**

The industry sub-framework addresses qualifications and skills needed in specific industries and sectors of the economy.

# **The KNQF Objectives**

The main objectives of the KNQF are:

- To enhance transparency, comparability, and portability of qualifications
- To facilitate recognition of prior learning and credit transfer
- To promote lifelong learning and continuous professional development
- To support the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce
- To align qualifications with national development goals and international benchmarks

# KNQF HANDBOOK

## Rationale

Currently in the region, Kenya has become a focal point attracting a variety of qualifications and skills from other African countries and even other parts of the world. An Alignment and Validation Standard is critical to the process of integration of such qualifications and movement of skills within and without the economy.

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) being the regulator for qualifications seeks to lead efforts to recognize and integrate qualifications and skills resident in the informal economy into the formal economy. This will be best achieved through the KNQF Prescribed Volume of Learning, minimum Entry requirements and Level Descriptors.

## Scope

The KNQF covers all qualifications awarded within the Kenyan education and training system, including:

- Basic Education (Early Childhood Development, Primary, and Secondary)
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- Higher Education (Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees)
- Professional and Occupational Qualifications
- Non-formal and Informal Learning



# The KNQF

## Guiding Principles

The development and implementation of the KNQF are guided by the following key principles:

1. **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Ensuring that the KNQF is accessible to all individuals, regardless of background or circumstance.
2. **Flexibility and Diversity:** Recognizing and valuing different pathways to learning and qualification attainment.
3. **Quality Assurance:** Maintaining high standards of education and training through robust quality assurance mechanisms.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging stakeholders from across the education, industry, and government sectors in the development and implementation of the KNQF.
5. **International Alignment:** Aligning the KNQF with international qualifications frameworks to enhance global recognition and mobility.

# Why KNQF?

- 1.To indicate the outcomes needed for a particular qualification and recognised at a given level in the KNQF.
- 2.To compare new and existing qualifications, and enable relationships to be defined
- 3.To facilitate:
  - the recognition of the learning achieved by all individuals
  - mechanisms to help learners make informed decisions about education and training, and career progression
  - the mobility of individuals between employment, the recognition and mapping of international qualifications
- 4.As an aid to design and develop qualifications.
- 5.As a frame of reference for purchasing government funded education and training.
- 6.As a means of national and international benchmarking of qualified individuals in the country.
- 7.As a tool to assure consistency and integrity of qualifications outcomes.
- 8.As an indicator of notional occupational and employment relevance.



# Conceptual- Technical Design

## Volume of Learning:

The volume of learning refers to the amount of time typically required for a learner to achieve the learning outcomes associated with a particular qualification or unit of learning. The volume of learning can vary depending on factors such as the complexity of the subject matter, the pace of learning, and the prior knowledge and experience of the learner.

The level descriptors on the KNQF provide a qualitative description of the learning outcomes, while the volume of learning provides a quantitative measure of the time and effort required to achieve those outcomes. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity and depth of learning associated with qualifications at different level



# Conceptual- Technical Design

KNQF LEVEL	KNQF NAME	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	NOTIONAL HOURS	CREDITS	DURATION
KNQF Level 1	Primary Certificate	Birth Certificate	-	-	6 Years
KNQF Level 2	Secondary Certificate / National Vocational Certificate / GTT III / National Skills Certificate III	Level 1 Qualification	-	-	6 Years (Except for NVC, NSC & GTT III)
KNQF Level 3	National Vocational Certificate II / GTT II / National Skills Certificate II	KCPE(Level 1) / KCSE Mean Grade E(Level 2)	300 - 599	30 -59	3 Months
KNQF Level 4	Artisan Certificate / National Vocational Certificate III / GTT I / National Skills Certificate I	KCSE Mean Grade E / Level 3 Qualification	600 - 1199	60 - 119	6 Months
KNQF Level 5	Craft Certificate / National Vocational Certificate IV / CPA I / Master Crafts Person III	KCSE Mean Grade D / Level 4 Qualification	1200 - 2399	120 - 239	1 Year
KNQF Level 6	National Diploma / CPA II / Master Crafts Person II	KCSE Mean Grade C- / Level 5 Qualification	2400 - 4799	240 - 479	2 Years
KNQF Level 7	Bachelor's Degree / CPA III / CPS / Master Crafts Person I / Higher National Diploma(HND)*	KCSE Mean Grade C+ / Level 6 Qualification	4800	480	4 Years
KNQF Level 8	Post Graduate Diploma / Professional Master Crafts Person / Professional Bachelor's Degree	Level 7 Qualification	1200	120 600	1 Year
KNQF Level 9	Master's Degree	Level 8 Qualification	2400	240	2 Years
KNQF Level 10	Doctorate Degree	Level 9 Qualification	3600	360	3 Years

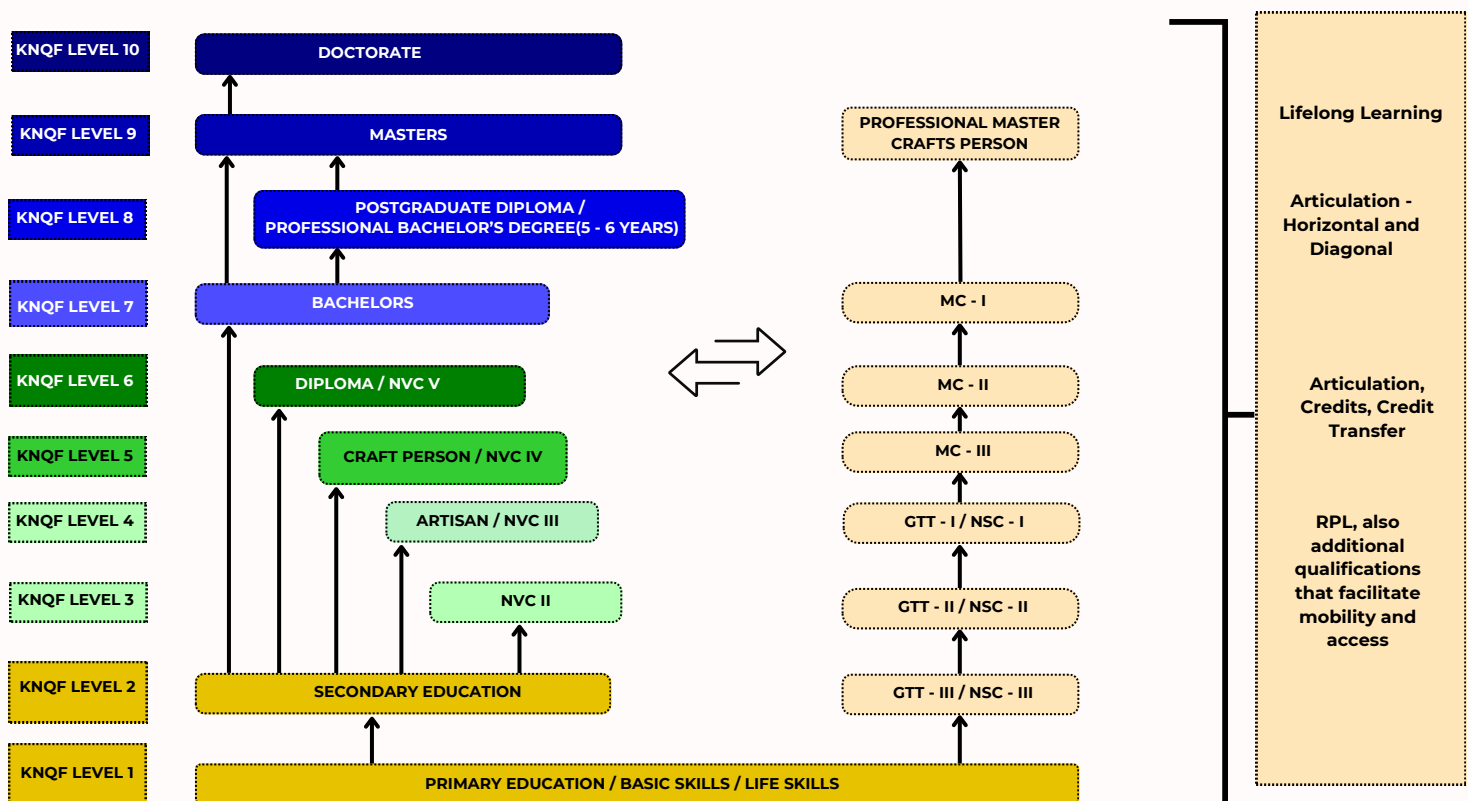


# CONCEPTUAL- TECHNICAL DESIGN

## Progression Pathways:

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is designed to provide a structured framework for the development, classification, and recognition of qualifications across various sectors which promotes progression pathways within the framework. These pathways illustrate how qualifications are interlinked and how they can lead to further educational opportunities or professional development.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRESSION PATHWAYS IN KENYA



MC - Master Crafts Person, NVC - National Vocational Certificate, GTT - Government Trade Test, NSC - National Skills Certificate

# CONCEPTUAL- TECHNICAL DESIGN

## Level Descriptors:

The KNQF's level descriptors are used to describe the learning outcomes associated with qualifications or units of learning at different levels. These level descriptors often include indicators related to knowledge, skills, and competencies that a learner is expected to possess upon completion of a qualification at a particular level.

# Company Value

- Business Relationships

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- Company Growth

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- Costumer Realtioship

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# **IMPLEMENTATION OF KNQF**

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# **REGISTRATION, ACCREDITATION & DOCUMENTATION**

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## Introduction

Section 5 of the KNQF Act CAP 214 states that an institution shall not award a national qualification unless it is recognized or accredited in accordance with the provisions of this Act. Registration and Accreditation is a critical process undertaken by the KNQA to examine or assess a QAI and a qualification based on a set of criteria. Any awarding body wishing to register a qualification and to be accredited as a QAI must submit an application to KNQA through the National Qualifications Management Information System (NAQMIS). Upon successful evaluation, the applicant is issued with a Certificate of Accreditation for their respective QAI and qualifications.

### Objectives of the **registration & accreditation process**

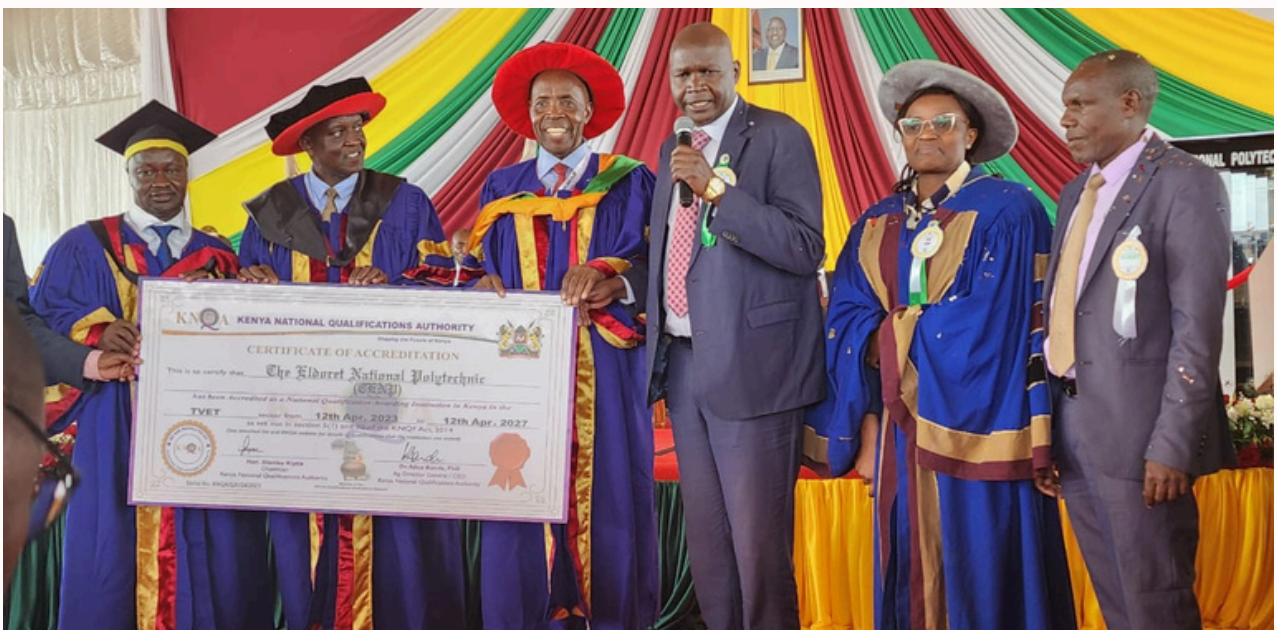
1. To uphold the credibility and recognition of qualifications awarded within Kenya's education and training landscape;
2. To ensure transparency, quality assurance, and national and international recognition of the qualifications awarded by various institutions within the Kenyan education and training landscape;
3. Registration process aims to establish an appropriate level of a Qualification on the National Qualifications Framework for quality assurance and recognition purposes
4. To ensure that the registered qualifications meet the established standards and learning outcomes for the respective level, maintaining the integrity and quality of the national qualifications system.

# ACCREDITATION OF QUALIFICATION AWARDING INSTITUTIONS

Accreditation refers to the formal process by which institutions offering education and training are formally recognized having met the standards outlined in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act and other relevant laws of Kenya.

In the education and training sector, the KNQA holds the mandate to accredit all education and training institutions with the legal authority to award qualifications in Kenya. An institution with such legal authority is referred to as a Qualification Awarding Institution (QAI). QAIs encompass universities, national polytechnics, national assessment and examination bodies (NABEs), specialized education institutions (SEIs), professional examination bodies, and foreign qualifications awarding institutions operating within the country.

Through the accreditation process, KNQA ensures that these QAIs adhere to the established standards and requirements, thereby maintaining the integrity and quality of the national qualifications system





Accreditation of QAIs encompasses the following;

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### **Registration of Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs)**

This refers to a local QAI with the legal mandate and where necessary regulated by the relevant regulatory body to award national qualifications in Kenya.

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### **Registration of Foreign Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAIs)**

This refers to a foreign QAI awarding qualifications in Kenya. The foreign QAI shall be authorized and have the legal mandate to offer qualifications in its country of origin and have a certificate of incorporation in Kenya or work in collaboration with a local education institution to award qualifications. ACCA, ICDL

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### **Registration of a Professional Body (PF)**

It refers to a body which regulates an industry or profession, and which wishes to be involved in the education and/or training and awarding of qualifications. Such professional body shall apply for registration by the Authority.



### **Registration of a National Assessment and Examination Body (NABE)**

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It encompasses local bodies responsible for assessing, examining and awarding qualifications in Kenya i.e. KNEC, TVET CDACC, KASNEB, NITA.

# **Eligibility criteria for Accreditation of QAIs**

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During the Accreditation stage the awarding body wishing to register their qualifications applies for recognition as a Qualification Awarding Institution. The following aspects of the applicant are considered:

1. Legal mandate
2. Governance structure
3. Quality enhancement mechanisms
4. Administration and support

# Registration of **Qualifications**



Qualifications, such as certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other credentials, are awarded by recognized Qualifications Awarding Institutions. These qualifications reflect defined learning outcomes, competencies, and standards that are consistent with the levels established by the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). The registration process involves evaluating the qualifications to determine their appropriate level, credit value, and alignment with the KNQF level descriptors.

## Registration of qualifications encompasses the following:

### ✓ **Registration of National Qualifications into the KNQF;**

It means listing national qualifications including part-qualifications and short courses awarded by local Qualification Awarding Institutions in Kenya onto the KNQF.

### ✓ **Registration of Foreign Qualifications into the KNQF;**

It entails listing foreign qualifications including part qualifications and short courses onto the KNQF

### ✓ **Registration of professional Qualifications in the KNQF;**

It refers to listing professional courses that relate to a specific industry or career path onto the KNQF.

### ✓ **Certificate of Qualification Equivalence (CoQE) \*Local Qualification;**

It means equating foreign qualifications awarded by local QAIs in Kenya with the local qualifications using the Kenya National Qualifications Framework.

### ✓ **Certificate of Qualification Equivalence (CoQE) \*Foreign Qualification;**

It refers to equating foreign qualifications offered by foreign QAIs with the local qualifications using the Kenya National Qualifications framework.

# **Eligibility criteria for Registration of qualifications**

A qualification is recognised if it meets the standards of the criteria and thereafter recognised at an appropriate level of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework. Qualifications that fail to meet the standards are not recognised.

Applications for approval and registration of qualification (s) must satisfy the conditions set in section 6 (2) of KNQF Act and Regulations 2018. When considering an application made for registration as a National Qualifications the Authority shall have regard to—

1. Qualification details
2. Delivery Modes
3. Qualifications of Trainers and Assessors
4. Duration
5. Qualification Aims and Objectives
6. Coherence
7. Assessment modalities
8. Learning Outcomes with alignment to the Level Descriptors
9. the suitability of entry requirements for qualification;
10. the appropriate education training and pathways;
11. the determined exit points in the training, education or instruction of a qualification;
12. the relevance of a qualification to industry, enterprise, law or community;
13. the regulator's or professional body's, approval or standards or industry standards, where applicable;
14. the specific course assessment strategies, including—validity, reliability, flexibility; authenticity and verifiable evidence; consistency with assessment guidelines for a qualification; its compliance with relevant statutory, workplace, and regulatory requirements; its workplace attachment; the guidance on delivery mode; its specialized facilities and resources; the competence of trainers and assessors of a qualification acquired from the course; and its course monitoring and evaluation processes; and any other matter that the Authority deems fit

# REGISTRATION OF LEARNERS ON NAQIMS

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The KNQA is responsible for registering all learners on the Kenya National Learners Records Database (KNLRD) in accordance with the KNQF Act. QAls are required to upload learner records onto this database. Accreditation of QAls registration of qualifications, and registration of learners are seamlessly conducted through the online platform known as the National Qualification Management Information System (NAQMIS). This integrated system ensures efficient processing and management of accreditation and registration procedures. All data submitted through NAQMIS is automatically fed into the KNLRD, establishing a comprehensive repository of qualification-related information. This streamlined process enhances transparency, accessibility, and accuracy, facilitating effective oversight and administration of qualifications within the KNQF.

## **Decision Making and Appeals**

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The KNQA Council is the final authority that approves the Accreditation of QAls and registration of national qualifications including part qualifications and short courses onto the KNQF. Institutions have the right to appeal decisions through established appeal mechanisms, providing additional evidence or clarification to support their case.



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# **KENYA NATIONAL LEARNERS RECORDS DATABASE (KNLRD)**

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# Introduction

KNLRD is a comprehensive relational database that acts as a central repository for registered Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAI's), Qualifications and Learners records. The structure and functionality of the database is both robust and resilient, hence the procedures and validations that govern how it runs allow for minimum user input which facilitates the management of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and enables the KNQA to report accurately on most aspects of the education and training in Kenya.

Learners data will be submitted by Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs), using a predefined template which has the following details.

Kindly note that the fields indicated in bold are mandatory while the one indicated with an asterisk is the primary key(Unique Identifier). The following are the required details

## LEARNERS RECORDS

- 1.ID (Identity No./Passport No)\*
- 2.Name of Learner
- 3.Mobile Number
- 4.Email Address
- 5.Gender
- 6.Date of Birth
- 7.Contact Address
- 8.Country of Origin
- 9.Country
- 10.Sub County
- 11.Ward
- 12.Years of Work Experience



## LEARNERS QUALIFICATIONS

The following are the required details

- 1.ID (Identity No./Passport No)\*
- 2.Title of Qualification
- 3.KNQF Level
- 4.Qualification Type
- 5.Field of Study
- 6.Institution Attended
- 7.Admission Number
- 8.Certificates Number
- 9.Year of Enrollment
- 10.Year of Graduation





# Objectives of KNLRD

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KNLRD is intended to make qualifications management in Kenya seamless. The main objective is to establish an integrated national learners record database to facilitate easy access of records of learners by the various stakeholders. This will allow the Qualifications Awarding Institution to enter, edit, update, append and list all the academic details of all the learners with respect to referential integrity. It will also enhance effective and efficient management of learners' information. The system is also intended to allow various stakeholders to verify the validity of various qualifications with a click of a button. This will go a long way into weeding out fake certificates.

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## Why KNLRD?

KNLRD allows registration of QAIs, affiliated qualifications per QAI into the system and the respective learners; online submission and processing of learners' qualifications for recognition, equation and verification and automation of Credit Accumulation & Transfer (CATs) processes for quality assurance. KNLRD democratizes the flow of information, through a decentralized system that will have a network of education institutions, quality assurance bodies, education agencies, learners and other relevant stakeholders, contributing information on qualifications, accreditation status, learner credentials etc.

## Why KNLRD?

The following benefits will be realized as a result of implementing the KNLRD.

1. Creates trust & transparency
2. Efficient verification of certificate authenticity
3. Increases efficiency and effectiveness
4. Enhances information security
5. Improves compliance & audits
6. Reduces operational risks

# Challenges and Possible Solutions

## Data Integrity Enhancement:

Implementation of measures to ensure that KNLRD data originates solely from accredited Qualification Awarding Institutions (QAls). Implementation of a database query-only system, preventing complete dataset access by KNQA personnel.

## Data Validation & Verification Mechanisms:

Integration of robust validation and verification mechanisms into the system design. Encouragement for QAls to establish their own data validation and verification protocols before data upload, with KNQA not liable for invalid data.

## Data Volume Management:

Compliance with the KNQF Act, mandating QAls to submit data from 2014 onwards. Provision for QAls to voluntarily submit data predating 2014.

Introduction of a revenue-sharing model, with QAls earning Ksh 300 for each query received, incentivizing increased data submission and potentially higher revenue generation.

## Regulatory Compliance:

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2019, KNQA is obligated to implement robust measures to safeguard the privacy and security of the personal data contained within the database. Compliance with other relevant regulations, such as the Access to Information Act, 2016, and the Kenya Information and Communications Act, 1998, is also essential to maintain transparency and accountability in the handling of learners' data. By upholding these legal requirements, KNQA can foster trust and maintain the integrity of the Learners Records Database, safeguarding the privacy rights of individuals while enabling the effective management and utilization of educational records.





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# **KENYA CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SYSTEM (KCATS)**

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# Assessment & Quality Assurance of National Qualifications

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The Kenya National Qualifications Authority is mandated under section 8 (1)(c) to develop a system for the assessment of national qualifications. A national qualifications system describes all the structures and activities that lead to the award of a qualification. The Authority has developed National Assessment Standards and Quality Assurance Policy and expects all accredited QAIs and assessment bodies to institutionalize and implement because these documents envisage to guide all QAIs and assessment bodies in education and training.

The Authority ensures that education and training institutions apply quality, integrity, and professionalism in all assessment processes, this is achieved by KNQA monitoring and quality assuring the process.

The National assessment standard is aligned to the KNQF with very important parameters being measured, these include;

1. Accreditation of the Qualifications Awarding Institutions
2. KNQF minimum entry requirements for each level
3. Volume of learning/notional hours
4. Credits
5. Methods of assessment
6. Level descriptors/taxonomy of learning outcomes and objectives
7. Kenya National Learners Database
8. National grading system
9. Certification system





# About KCATS

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The KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 established the KNQA to facilitate articulation, classification, registration, accreditation, quality assurance, monitoring, and evaluation of national qualifications. Further section 8(1) (L) of the KNQF Act provides for facilitation of linkages, credit transfers, and exemptions, vertical, horizontal & diagonal mobility at all levels. A robust credit-based learning framework is essential for fostering inclusivity, accessibility, and continuous education.



## a) **CATS is designed to:**

- Monitor, record and maintain student achievement & progress through modular certificate, Diploma and Degree courses
- Facilitate recognition, comparability and transferability of periods of study thus enhances student mobility
- Facilitate progression: - entry, re-entry and exit between and within QF levels, courses and institutions

## b) **CATS envisaged to transfer learners through;**

- Sectorial approach
- Inter institutional transfers
- Program to program
- Level to level (Vertical, Horizontal and Diagonal)

## c) **Requirement for credit transfer:**

- An institution must be accredited and recognized by relevant regulators and have domesticated the CATS guidelines in the institution
- Program leading to the award is accredited/registered
- Student presenting the qualification meets the entry requirement for that qualification
- Volume of learning is aligned to the KNQF

#### **d) Cats Mandatory Requirements:**

- Applicant must have acquired Expected Learning Outcomes
- Credits can only be transferred once - up to 49%
- Age of the qualifications
- Foreign qualifications have to be validated and aligned to KNQF
- Post graduate programmes, credit transfers may be approved for course work only
- Credit transfer shall not apply to the core units, project work, attachment, teaching practice and research
- The transferred credits must be indicated on the student's transcript (\*)

#### **e) Benefits and Outcomes of CATS Policy**

- Creating a single integrated national roadmap/ framework to guide learner progression
- Promotes lifelong learning by facilitating seamless access, mobility and seamless progression within, education, training and career paths
- Enhancing transparency, efficiency, recognition and quality of education and training
- Enhances compatibility and transferability of skills
- Accelerating the redress of past unfair discrimination in access to education, training opportunities







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# **KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS CODING STANDARD (KNQCS)**

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# About KNQCS

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The KNQF Act mandates KNQA to coordinate and harmonize various levels of education and training by publishing manuals, codes and guidelines on national qualifications. KNQA has developed the Kenya National Qualifications Coding Standard (KNQCS). This standardized system encodes national qualifications and is based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Kenya, being a UNESCO member state, has adopted the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as a global framework for categorizing and comparing education systems worldwide. The KNQCS classifies and codes programmes and resulting qualifications based on three main variables: fields of education and training (ISCED-F 2013), KNQF levels, and levels of educational attainment (ISCED-P 2011).



## Purpose of KNQCS

The purpose of the standard is to provide guidelines for classifying and coding education and training qualifications to facilitate smooth mobility, comparability, and recognition of qualifications within Kenya and globally.

## KNQCS Objectives

- 1.To classify education and training qualifications and their related qualifications in terms of ISCED fields of classification based on content;
- 2.To allow for clear identification of similar or related education and training qualifications, ensuring each qualification has an identification code that represents its specifics;
- 3.To foster transparency in the education and training system by providing a clear, consistent and standardized coding system that reflects the content and outcomes of qualifications, enhancing understanding and trust in the qualifications awarded;
- 4.To enable comparability and recognition of Kenyan qualifications both nationally and internationally, promoting a clear understanding of the value and level of qualifications across different contexts;

# KNQCS Objectives

KNQCS facilitates the classification and coding of education programs and related qualifications based on education levels and fields.

Enhances transparency, comparability, and global recognition of qualifications

To foster transparency in the education and training system by providing a clear, consistent and standardized coding system that reflects the content and outcomes of qualifications, enhancing understanding and trust in the qualifications awarded;

To enable comparability and recognition of Kenyan qualifications both nationally and internationally, promoting a clear understanding of the value and level of qualifications across different contexts.

Generally, coding system comprises eight digits, aligning with ISCED and KNQF components





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# **ALIGNMENT AND VALIDATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

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# ORGANIZATION AND AWARDS OF QUALIFICATIONS- POST BASIC EDUCATION

## Introduction

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, 2014, Section 29 gives Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) the mandate to access, evaluate and give consultation services for qualifications. This led to the formation of Qualifications Alignment & Validation.

- 1.To advice government on registered qualifications and qualification awarding bodies
2. To facilitate skills and qualification mobility
3. To advice training institutions and learners on foreign equivalent qualification awards
- 4.Oversee implementation of policies, standards and guidelines on alignment & validation
- 5.Align foreign qualifications to their local equivalence
- 6.Transpose foreign qualifications to their local equivalence

**Alignment:** Procedure used to evaluate a qualification or part qualification with an aim to determine the qualifications' place on the KNQF.

**Validation:** Is the process by which the Authority determines whether certificates awarded by Qualification Awarding Institutions were issued in accordance with Section 5(1) and Section 30 of the KNQF Act 2014



## Purpose of Alignment

Through the Qualifications Alignment & Validation (QAV), KNQA Aligns qualifications so as to: -

- 1.Advise training institutions on foreign equivalent qualifications;
- 2.Verify academic credentials;
- 3.Create international comparability of Kenyan qualifications;
- 4.iv.Advise learners on registered qualifications and qualification awarding body





# Target Audience/ Beneficiaries



1. **Qualification holders:** who have successfully completed a recognized educational program or training course and have been awarded a qualification as a result.
2. **Training Providers:** Organizations that offer training programs or courses, such as corporate training providers, industry-specific training centers, or professional development organizations, may also apply for qualifications alignment and validation.
3. **Professional Bodies and Industry Associations:** institutions that represent specific professions or sectors may apply for qualifications alignment and validation for programs or certifications related to their respective fields.
4. **Government Agencies, Regulatory Bodies & Employers:** Government agencies, such as ministries of education or labor, regulatory bodies overseeing specific professions or industries and employers may also play a role in qualifications alignment and validation.
5. **Quality Assurance Bodies:** Quality assurance bodies responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education and training provision.





## Articulation Pathways

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The articulation and pathways in the qualifications framework in Kenya is as follows:

- 1. Levels of Qualifications:** The KNQF consists of several levels that signifies a progression in the complexity, depth, and specialization of knowledge and skills.
- 2. Credit Accumulation and Transfer:** The framework allows for the accumulation and transfer of credits between different qualifications and institutions. This enables learners to progress smoothly along their educational and career pathways, whether they are moving horizontally (across similar levels) or vertically (progressing to higher levels).
- 3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** The qualifications framework recognizes prior learning, where Individuals can undergo assessment processes to have their prior learning recognized and credited towards a qualification.
- 4. Articulation Pathways:** Articulation pathways refer to the seamless progression of learners from one qualification level to another. For example, a student who completes a certificate program may have clear pathways to progress to a diploma, and then to a degree program in a related field. These pathways are designed to minimize barriers and facilitate smooth transitions for learners.



**4. Quality Assurance:** The qualifications framework incorporates quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that qualifications offered by different institutions meet defined standards. This includes accreditation processes for institutions and programs, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation to maintain quality.

**5. Alignment with National Development Goals:** The qualifications framework is aligned with national development goals and priorities, ensuring that the education and training provided address the needs of the economy and society. This alignment helps to promote relevance and responsiveness in education and training provision.

**6. Curriculum Alignment:** Institutions align their curricula with the requirements and standards set by the qualifications framework, ensuring consistency and coherence in the learning outcomes across different levels of education and training.

Overall, the logic behind articulation pathways is rooted in the principles of accessibility, flexibility, efficiency, and lifelong learning. By establishing clear connections between qualifications and providing structured pathways for progression, articulation pathways support individuals in achieving their educational and career goals while also benefiting society as a whole through the development of a skilled and adaptable workforce.



# Kenya National Qualification Alignment and Validation Portal

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Kenya National Qualifications Authority accepts online applications of academic qualifications for alignment into the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) according to the level descriptors and validation from both Kenyans and Foreigners through this platform. **Link:** [qa.knqa.go.ke](https://qa.knqa.go.ke)

## Application Steps: Sign Up/ Register

- 1.Type [qa.knqa.go.ke](https://qa.knqa.go.ke)
- 2.Click on Account on main menu
- 3.Click on Register followed by Register as an Applicant
- 4.Read all instructions carefully
- 5.Fill the applicants' details and click Sign up Check the applicants' email and click the link provided for account verification
- 6.Sign in using the email and password you have created





## Application Steps: Upload Qualifications

1. Click on Apply for service and read the application guidelines
2. Click on Proceed to submit an application
3. Fill in the details of the qualification and upload certified documents.  
Once done click Save and proceed to upload certificates/documents.
4. Repeat the process by clicking Save and add if you have more than one qualification.
5. Click on Submit an application. Select the qualification to be evaluated and click the checkbox for the service you require.
6. Upload affidavit if there is a conflict of facts

## Application Steps: Payment



1. Proceed to make payment
2. Download payment receipt

**Note:** The payment is done through the e-citizen platform.





## **Requirements for Alignment and Validation of Qualifications on the Portal**

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1. Upload clear certified copies of certificates and transcripts. The documents should be certified by an Advocate and Commissioner for oath (for Kenyan citizens); an Advocate and Notary public (for Foreigners); or the issuing institution;
2. All non-English Language certifications and academic transcripts must be translated into English by a certified language translator. The translation must bear the official stamp / letter-head of the language translator;
3. National Identity Cards or Passports of Kenyan citizens, showing clear photograph of applicant, must be certified by an Advocate and Commissioner for Oaths;
4. Passports, work permits and visas submitted by foreigners and showing clear photograph of applicants, must be certified by an Advocate and Notary Public;
5. In case of name change, an affidavit should be attached;
6. For Post Graduate qualifications, applicants to provide a complete signature page in English as proof of research work and or project;



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# **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)**

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# ABOUT RPL

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process through which the skills, knowledge, and competencies gained by an individual through work experience, informal training, or life experiences are recognized towards the attainment of a formal qualification or certification. RPL assesses these prior learnings against the standards of a specific qualification within a framework.

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is tasked with coordinating and harmonizing the education, training, assessment, and quality assurance of all qualifications awarded in Kenya, including those recognized through RPL.

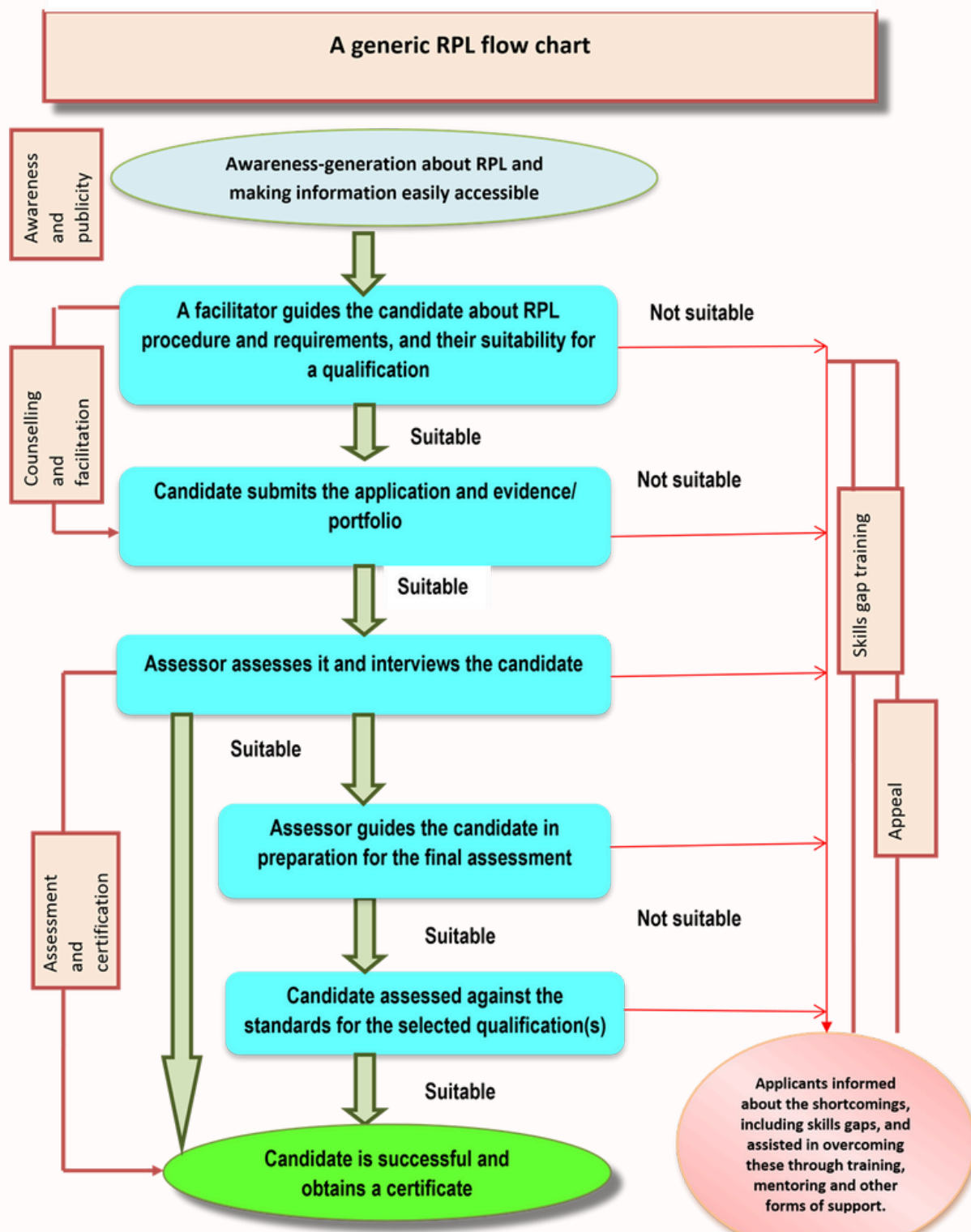
The KNQF supports the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, making it fundamental to the RPL process.

## Benefits of RPL

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- **Accessibility:** Provides a pathway to formal qualification for those who have acquired skills informally.
- **Recognition:** Validates and acknowledges skills and knowledge acquired outside traditional educational settings.
- **Career Advancement:** Helps in improving employment opportunities and potential for promotion.
- **Time and Cost Efficiency:** Reduces the time and cost of obtaining a qualification by eliminating the need to take courses in skills already mastered.

# RPL Process Flowchart



Note: RPL process used by various countries, including Australia, Mauritius, Tanzania, and the EU was considered while preparing this generic flow chart. While the purpose is to show how RPL takes place, adapting the model to suit the local context is important – one approach doesn't suit all.

# Where to Access RPL Services

RPL services can be accessed through various accredited institutions across Kenya. These include:

- Assessment Centres accredited by QAIs; e.g Workplace, Training Institutions.
- Qualifications awarded through RPL must be registered onto the KNQF.

## Portfolio of Evidence

A Portfolio of Evidence is a collection of documents that provides proof of an individual's skills, knowledge, and competencies. This may include:

- Job descriptions and references
- Certificates and awards from in-house training
- Samples of work
- Records of assessments
- Reflective narratives
- Videos/Picture of the work

For more information visit: [knqa.go.ke](https://knqa.go.ke)

## Award of Qualifications through RPL

Upon successful completion of the RPL assessment, candidates may either be awarded a full qualification or provided with a statement detailing the competencies mastered and any gaps that may exist. If gaps are identified, the candidate may be advised to undertake specific training or education to achieve full qualification.

## What is the cost of RPL?

The cost of RPL depends on the skills area making reference to the Differentiated Unit Cost (DUC) for RPL.

Potential candidates will be advised on RPL costing once they express interest at assessment centers.



## Target Audience/ Beneficiaries of RPL



The following are the beneficiaries of the RPL; Refugees, Informal sector, Formal Sector, Migrants, Never been to school, Non-formal sector, Asylum seekers, Out of school youth and Retirees.

## RPL Appeal Process

Candidates unsatisfied with the assessment outcome may appeal for review within 30 days of the release of results. Appeal forms shall be obtained from the relevant QAIs. Appeals will be determined by the RPL Appeals Committee in accordance with the QAI policy. The decision of the Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs) shall be final.





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# Kenya National Qualifications Authority

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