

KENYA

The Kenyan Qualifications Framework (KQF) is currently being developed by the Kenyan Qualifications Authority (KQA) in accordance with the Kenyan Qualifications Framework Act of 2012 and under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (See Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST), 2012, pp. 99–100).

1. CHALLENGES THE NQF WOULD NEED TO ADDRESS

The Sessional Paper of 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2005) and the Policy Framework of Education of 2012 (MoE, 2012) highlighted the need to both coordinate and rationalize Kenya's education and training system. The current multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies¹ makes it difficult for employers to understand what competences they can expect the holder of a particular qualification to possess (Ibid.). The KQF is intended to address this situation by establishing a common regulatory system for the development, assessment and award of qualifications. A central register of qualifications will set out clear criteria for the achievement of awards, detailing the knowledge and skills required in each case (MoHEST, 2012).

2. MAIN POLICY OBJECTIVES

The KQF needs to be understood in the context of the two major reforms to Kenya's education and training policy, which occurred in 2005 and 2012. The objectives of these reforms were:

- To implement the recommendation in the Mackay Report (1982) to create two parallel progression routes from primary to university education, one for general education and the other for technical and vocational education and training (TVET)
- To unify the fragmented TVET sector, which was previously scattered across fifteen different ministries
- To create curricula which encourage an entrepreneurial and imaginative attitude to work
- To put in place mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- To revitalize the Youth Polytechnic (YP) programmes
- To facilitate the horizontal and vertical mobility of vocational trainees and increase progression from TVET to university

The KQF shares these objectives. The following further objectives of the KQF are highlighted in the Bill of 2012 which established the KQA:

- To improve access to qualifications for all individuals, thus promoting skills development and lifelong learning
- To align the KQF with international qualifications frameworks in order to enhance the national and international mobility of graduates and workers

¹Kenya's three main awarding bodies are the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) and the Council of Higher Education (CHE).

- To strengthen national regulatory and quality assurance systems for education and training

3. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The KQA has the function of maintaining, monitoring and promoting the KQF. It maintains a national database of existing academic and professional qualifications in Kenya and advises government departments on all matters relating to qualifications and standards. It provides quality assurance by ensuring that all qualifications on offer at educational institutions are authorized by accrediting agencies. The KQA sets accreditation indicators for each qualification level and establishes equivalencies between qualifications at all levels. It also advises institutions on the design of new educational programmes in order to ensure that they are responsive to industry needs.

In order to avoid reinventing the wheel, the government intends to reform existing institutions for the implementation of the KQF. One of these institutions is the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), which was established in 1980 to oversee national examinations and award certificates in both the formal and informal learning sectors. In the formal education and training system, a national system of certification from primary through secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education already exists in Kenya. In the informal learning sector, trade tests are used to certify artisans and craftspeople (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). The KQF will continue to use these existing systems of certification.

4. LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS AND THE USE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The 10-level KQF is aligned to the 10 levels of the East African Community (EAC) Qualifications Framework. The EAC Framework is annexed to the Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market on Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications, to which Kenya is a signatory.

The KQF acknowledges two separate sub-frameworks within this overarching framework, one for academic and the other for vocational qualifications. However, core generic competences involving the application of knowledge in practical situations are the same for both domains. These core competences include the ability to:

- analyze, synthesize and create.
- solve problems.
- organize, plan and communicate.
- use ICT.
- work in teams.
- engage in developing projects, research and innovations.
- work autonomously.

KQF qualifications therefore incorporate both theoretical knowledge and employable skills. Credits obtained through RPL are taken into account in order to determine which level of qualification an individual should work towards.

The KQF contains level descriptors at primary, secondary, tertiary, TVET and university levels. Descriptors are also provided for 'short cycles' linked to the main TVET levels and graded 'sub-cycles' for artisanal skills. See Table 1 below.

Table 1. Kenyan Qualifications Framework

No.	Cycle	KQF Level	Qualification	Holders (Nomenclature: ICSCEP 07)
1.	Cycle V: HIGHER Education:	10	PhD/ Doctoral degree	Researcher/Innovator
2.	H.E. Sub Cycle 2 : Master's Programme	9	Master's degree	Scientist/Manager
3.	H.E. Sub Cycle 1: Undergraduate Programme	8	Bachelor's degree + professional cert./award Bachelor's degree	Professional Nonprofessional / Uncertified worker
	Cycle IV : POST SECONDARY TRAINING (P.S.T.) Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 6: Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 5: Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 4: Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 3: Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 2: Post-Secondary Training Sub Cycle 1:	7 6 5	KCVET/KCSE+ Tech. Diploma KVCET/KCSE + Craft Certificate KVCET/ KCSE + Non tech. Diploma KVCET/ KCSE+ craft certificate KVCET + non employment skill certificate	Associate Professional, Certified Specialist or Technician Master Craftsperson Semi-skilled paraprofessional Craft Operator Semi-skilled Semi-skilled
5.	Cycle IV : UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION	4	KVCET KCSE	Semi-skilled school leaver Unskilled school leaver
6.	Cycle III : JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION	3	KJCVET KJSE Artisan Cert. (Theory and Practice) Artisan Cert. (Practice)	Semi-skilled Unskilled Skilled Artisan Skilled Operator
7.	Cycle II: UPPER PRIMARY Cycle I: ECDE & LOWER PRIMARY EDUCATION	2 1	CPE + GTT Cert. I CPE + GTT II CPE + GTT III	Teenager Skilled Operative Semi-skilled Semi-skilled Child

Source: MoE and MoHEST, 2012.

5. PROGRESSION PATHWAYS AND RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

One of the key goals of the KQF is to recognize and assess the outcomes of learning in all settings—whether formal, non-formal or informal, including the workplace. A number of measures are being taken to pursue this goal.

Progression pathways from primary to higher education in the TVET sector are being promoted through the TVET Curriculum Development Framework (TCDF), which was established in 2010 according to KQF occupational standards. This is helping to link Youth Polytechnics (YP) and Vocational and Industrial Training (VIT) qualifications to formal TVET provision.

A wide range of agencies offer courses at various levels to young people and adults. Open universities offer a variety of distance learning courses, evening courses, bridging courses and RPL.

Such courses were previously available only at the University of Nairobi since the 1950s. Complementary Basic Education (COBET) programmes (non-formal programmes equivalent to formal education) offer children and teenagers who have dropped out of school the opportunity to reintegrate into the formal system.

Three international standards guide the assessment of skills in Kenya. These are the International Labour Organization's ISCO 88 Standard, UNESCO's ISCED 97 Standard, and the ISO Standard 9000 Series on Education. In addition, the Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard (KNOCS) guides the Exemption and Credits Transfer System (ECTS), which is promoted through a combination of conventional testing methods and e-assessment methods for RPL.

6. REFERENCING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

The Annex to the Protocol for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC) Common Market on Mutual Recognition of Academic and Professional Qualifications has proposed a ten-level framework designed to accommodate all qualification types and levels in the region. This framework emerged as a result of an audit of qualifications frameworks in the East African Partner States, which have agreed to harmonize the qualifications frameworks within the EAC. Other qualifications frameworks with ten levels include those of Mauritius, Tanzania and Australia. An exercise on harmonization of the East African education systems and training curricula is currently in progress.

7. MPORTANT LESSONS AND FUTURE PLANS

The Kenyan Government sees the KQF as tool to aid accreditation, teaching and assessment in accordance with established national curriculum development practice and standards. The KQF has already had a number of successes. One example concerns the mutual recognition of Kenyan and international qualifications, which has been greatly facilitated by the KQF. Foreign qualifications can now be much more easily assessed, which has resulted in an influx of foreign teachers to Kenya.

Kenya's endeavour to develop the KQF highlights the importance of building on existing institutions and structures, rather than importing models from outside the country or trying to reinvent the wheel.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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