



NATIONAL REFERENCING REPORT OF THE KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (ACQF)

Promoting Mutual Understanding, Transparency and Comparability of Qualifications.

Country: Republic of Kenya

Lead Institution: Kenya National Qualifications Authority

Drafting Team: National Referencing Committee

Presented to:

ACQF NETWORK

July 2026

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	6
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	8
CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN KENYA	9
1.0 Introduction.....	9
1.1 Process of Development of the Referencing Report.	10
1.1.1 The TRC was responsible for:	10
1.2 Stakeholder Consultation and Validation	10
1.3 Governance, Quality Assurance and Approval	11
1.4 Origin of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework	12
1.5 Structure of the Education and Training System in Kenya	13
1.5.1 Historical Development of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework..	13
1.5.2Governance of the Education and Training System in Kenya.....	16
1.6 Goal of Education and Training.....	17
1.7 Principles of Education and Training.....	17
1.8 Legal and Regulatory Framework	17
1.9 Structure of the Basic Education.....	18
1.9.1 Quality assurance, Assessment and Certification in Basic Education.....	19
1.10 Higher Education Sub-System.....	20
1.11 TVET Education Sub-System.....	21
1.12 Professional Education Sub-System.....	22
1.13 Industrial Training Sub-System	22
CHAPTER TWO: THE KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (KNQF)	24
2.0 Introduction.....	24
2.1 The goal of the KNQF	24
2.2 Objectives of KNQF.....	24
2.3 The Principles of KNQF.....	24
2.4 Legal and Regulatory Framework	25
2.5 KNQF Levels, Level Descriptors and Qualification Types.....	26
2.5.1 KNQF Structure and Level Descriptors.....	26
2.5.2 KNQF Scope and Coverage.....	29
2.5.3 Use of Learning Outcomes	30

2.6	Governance of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework	31
2.6.1	Ministry of Education	31
2.6.2	Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA).....	31
2.6.3	Sector Regulatory, Professional bodies, and Industry	32
2.6.4	Curriculum Development Bodies-.....	33
2.6.5	National Assessment, Examination and Certification Bodies	33
2.6.6	Qualifications Awarding Bodies.....	34
2.6.7	Education and Training Institutions.....	34
2.7	Qualifications Databases and Register	35
2.7.1	National Qualifications Database	35
2.7.2	Registration of Qualifications under KNQF	35
2.8	Status of KNQF Implementation and Impact.....	39
2.8.1	Status of KNQF Implementation	39
2.8.2	Status of registrations under the KNQF.....	40
2.8.2.1	Registered Qualification Awarding Bodies (QAB's).....	40
2.8.2.2	Registered Qualifications	41
2.8.3	Registration of Graduates in the NQD.....	43
2.9	Qualifications Alignment and Validation.....	44
2.10	Impact of the KNQF	47
2.11	Main Challenges.....	48
2.12	Plans for Further Development.....	48
CHAPTER THREE: REFERENCING CRITERIA		49
3.1.	Component ACQF referencing governance, procedures and follow-up ..	49
3.2	REFERENCING CRITERION ONE	50
3.2.1	Establishing Clear and Demonstrable Link	50
3.3	Structural comparison between KNQF and ACQF	50
3.3.1	KNQF Sub-Frameworks	50
3.3.3	Objectives of the KNQF	51
3.3.4	KNQF Levels, Level Descriptors and Credit System.....	51
3.3.5	Credit and Life Long Learning	53
3.4	The African Continental Qualifications Framework	53
3.4.1	Features or Architecture of the ACQF.....	54
3.4.2	Objectives of the ACQF	54
3.4.3	Scope/ Sectors.....	55
3.4.4	Qualification Types.....	55

3.4.5 ACQF Levels and Descriptors	55
3.6 Summary of KNQF Level Descriptors.....	55
3.7 Comparative Analysis of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Level Descriptors.....	58
<i>Table 1.8: Comparative Analysis of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Level Descriptors.....</i>	<i>68</i>
3.8 Differences and Similarities	69
3.8.1 Key Similarities and Differences	69
3.8.2 Summary of Similarities and Differences by Qualification Level	70
3.9 Establishing the Link Between KNQF and ACQF Levels	71
3.10 Conceptual comparison of the KNQF and ACQF	73
3.10.1 Deviations/ Differences:	73
4.0 CRITERION TWO.....	76
4.1 Learning Outcomes Approach	76
4.2 Lifelong Learning and Permeability between Sub-Systems	76
4.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	77
4.3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Graduates	77
4.3.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Graduates Per Qualification Awarding Body (QAB)	78
4.4 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (KCATS)	79
5.0 CRITERION THREE	80
5.1 Purpose and Context of Criterion 3	80
5.2 Legal and Policy Framework.....	80
5.3 Procedures for Including Qualifications in the KNQF	80
5.4 Classification and Level Placement of Qualifications	81
5.5 Trust, Quality Assurance and Integrity of Level Placement	81
5.6 National Qualifications Database (NQD)	82
5.7 Accessibility, Transparency and Verification	82
5.8 Alignment with ACQF Principles	83
6.0. REFERENCING CRITERION FOUR (4):	84
6.1. Addressing the Qualifications Quality Chain	84
6.2. Application of the Learning Outcomes Approach.....	84
6.3. Continuous Feedback and Quality Improvement	84
6.4. Internal and External Quality Assurance	85

6.5. Standards, Guidelines, and Resources	85
6.6. Transparency and Information Sharing.....	85
6.7. Alignment with AU Policy Orientations	85
6.8. Governance and Stakeholder Involvement	85
6.9 The Quality Assurance System in Education and Training	86
6.10 KNQF Quality Assurance System	87
6.11 Standards, Criteria and Guidelines for Accreditation and Alignment of qualifications	89
6.11.1 Accreditation (of Institutions / Qualifications).....	89
6.12.1 Alignment & Validation of Qualifications	90
7.0 Referencing governance procedures and follow up.....	91
8.1 REFERENCES.....	94

Glossary of Terms

Accreditation: The formal recognition by a competent authority that an education or training institution or programme meets defined quality standards and is authorized to award qualifications.

Alignment is the determination of the appropriate level of a qualification on the Kenya National Qualifications Framework

Articulation: The formal recognition of credit or learning achieved in one programme or qualification that allows a learner to gain entry into, or exemption from part of, another programme.

Comparability: The process by which qualifications from different systems or countries can be understood, assessed and recognized in relation to each other through a common reference framework.

Credit: A quantitative measure of the volume of learning required to achieve the specified learning outcomes at a given level. Under the KNQF, one credit equals ten notional hours of learning.

Credit Accumulation and Transfer: The process by which credits earned in one programme or institution are recognized and counted towards the requirements of another programme or institution.

Learning Outcomes: Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and/or be able to do upon successful completion of a qualification or unit of learning.

Level Descriptor: A set of statements describing the expected learning achievement — in terms of knowledge, skills, and competence — at a particular level of a qualifications framework.

Lifelong Learning: All learning activity undertaken throughout life to improve knowledge, skills, and competences within personal, civic, social, or employment-related perspectives.

Moderation the systematic process of reviewing and ensuring the quality, validity, and consistency of both assessment instruments and assessment results.

National Qualifications Framework (NQF): A unified national system that classifies qualifications by level based on learning outcomes, provides a basis for quality assurance, and supports recognition, articulation and mobility.

Portability: The ability of a qualification to be recognized and used across different sectors, institutions, or national boundaries.

Qualification: A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to a given standard.

Qualification awarding Body: Institutions legally mandated to award qualifications

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): The process of identifying, assessing, and formally acknowledging skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired through non-formal or informal learning.

Referencing: The process by which a national qualifications framework is systematically compared to a regional or continental framework in order to establish correspondences between their levels and quality assurance systems.

Validation: is the process undertaken by the Authority to ascertain whether a qualification awarded by a Qualification Awarding Body meets the prescribed KNQF requirements

Verification: confirmation of authenticity of qualifications through the NQD

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

S/No.	Abbreviation	Meaning
1	ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
2	AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
3	AU	African Union
4	CBC	Competency-Based Curriculum
5	CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
6	CUE	Commission for University Education
7	DQAS	Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards
8	EAC	East African Community
9	ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
10	KCATS	Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
11	KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
12	KNQCS	Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard
13	KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications Framework
14	NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
15	NQD	National Qualifications Database
16	NQF	National Qualifications Framework
17	QAB	Qualification Awarding Body
18	QAV	Qualifications Alignment and Validation
19	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
20	RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
21	TQM	Total Quality Management
22	TRC	Technical Referencing Committee
23	TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN KENYA

1.0 Introduction

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Policy Document, unveiled in 2023, marks a significant step forward in advancing Africa's educational and economic integration. By aligning with key strategic initiatives such as Agenda 2063, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the ACQF highlights its crucial role in promoting transparency, comparability, and mutual trust among qualifications frameworks across the continent. These efforts are vital for enabling seamless mobility and encouraging lifelong learning for all Africans.

The implementation of the ACQF Policy through seven targeted thematic areas including: - referencing national qualifications framework and systems to the ACQF; supporting recognition of prior learning; ACQF Qualifications Platform (database); qualifications structure, capacity development, advocacy, communication, networking, collaboration, analysis; monitoring and evaluation demonstrates a comprehensive and coordinated approach. This system not only guarantees credibility and recognition of qualifications but also bolsters systemic capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing monitoring. Ultimately, ACQF acts as a transformative platform that promotes Africa's vision of a unified, skilled, and competitive continent. This strategic initiative positions Africa to capitalize on its vast human capital potential, fostering inclusive growth and sustainable development across the region.

The core function of the ACQF Policy is referencing, which involves comparing and linking National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs) to the ACQF. This process fosters mutual understanding of NQF-levelled qualifications, transparency, and comparability, thereby facilitating recognition of individual qualifications and mobility within the Continent.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the alignment between the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the ACQF. The report provides evidence against the ACQF referencing criteria, highlighting the structure, governance, and quality assurance mechanisms of the KNQF.

Chapter one and two of this report provides an overview of Kenya's education and training system, including the Kenyan National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), educational goals and principles, legal and regulatory frameworks, governance, qualifications databases, current implementation status, main challenges, and development plans.

Chapter three, four & five describes the results of referencing the KNQF to the ACQF. This process used four criteria: 1) NQF level descriptors; 2) learning outcomes, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and credit systems; 3) transparent procedures for including qualifications in the NQF and maintaining a qualification's register; and 4) the quality assurance chain.

In conclusion, the referencing exercise will facilitate self-assessment of the status of KNQF, identifying areas for reform and improvement in line with ACQF, leading to enhanced transparency, credibility, and trust in the Kenyan Qualifications.

1.1 Process of Development of the Referencing Report.

In line with ACQF requirements for transparency and credibility, the development of this referencing report followed a structured, inclusive, and evidence-based process coordinated by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA).

A Technical Referencing Committee (TRC) was formally established to lead the process. The TRC comprised representatives from key sectors of education and training, Ministry of Education and other sister institutions, regulatory bodies, awarding bodies, industry and professional bodies

1.1.1 The TRC was responsible for:

- a) Coordinating the overall referencing process
- b) Mapping KNQF levels and descriptors to the ACQF
- c) Assigning and compiling evidence for each referencing criterion
- d) Drafting, reviewing, and consolidating successive versions of the report
- e) Ensuring consistency with ACQF methodological guidelines

1.2 Stakeholder Consultation and Validation

The development of the Referencing Report adopted a transparent, participatory and evidence-based consultation process to ensure national ownership, technical credibility and alignment with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Referencing Guidelines. Stakeholder consultations were undertaken progressively throughout the drafting process, allowing successive revisions to incorporate technical inputs from national, regional and continental stakeholders.

The consultation process included:

- a) **Participation in ACQF-organised webinars, technical capacity-building sessions and peer learning activities** coordinated by the ACQF Cluster on Referencing, which guided the national Technical Referencing Committee (TRC) on the application of the ACQF referencing criteria and evidence requirements.
- b) **Participation in ACQF Network meetings and technical forums held in Luanda (Angola), Nairobi (Kenya) and the Seychelles**, where Kenya presented progress on the referencing process,

exchanged experiences with other participating countries and received technical feedback from the ACQF Network and international experts.

c) **National technical consultations** involving representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Commission for University Education (CUE), the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS), Qualifications Awarding Bodies (QABs), professional bodies, industry representatives and technical experts to validate the evidence supporting the referencing criteria.

d) **A Wider Stakeholder Validation Workshop**, held virtually on 18 March 2026, brought together national and international stakeholders to validate the Fourth Draft of the KNQF–ACQF Referencing Report. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Education, DQAS, TVETA, CUE, NITA, KNEC, KASNEB, the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), the Central Organization of Trade Unions–Kenya (COTU-K), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the ACQF Network, the International Labour Organization (ILO), members of the Technical Working Committee and other key stakeholders. The workshop provided an opportunity to validate the technical content of the report, strengthen the evidence base, review the level-to-level correspondence between the KNQF and the ACQF, and identify areas requiring further refinement before submission to the ACQF Network.

e) **During the validation workshop**, stakeholders recommended strengthening references to legislation, quality assurance arrangements, practical implementation examples and regulator endorsement statements. They further recommended enhancing the explanation of level correspondence, documenting future implementation arrangements for displaying ACQF levels on qualification documents, and expanding evidence supporting the operation of the National Qualifications Database (NQD). These recommendations have been incorporated into the final Referencing Report.

f) Feedback received throughout the consultation process informed five successive drafts of the Referencing Report, progressively strengthening its technical accuracy, completeness, transparency and credibility. The final report therefore reflects the collective contributions of national regulators, Qualifications Awarding Bodies, industry, development partners and continental experts.

1.3 Governance, Quality Assurance and Approval

The referencing process was conducted under the institutional mandate of KNQA, ensuring alignment with national legal and regulatory frameworks. Quality assurance mechanisms were applied throughout the process, including peer review, stakeholder validation, and technical verification

1.4 Origin of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework

Kenya is characterized by a youthful population possessing a rich and diverse range of skills and competencies. In light of this demographic reality, the government of Kenya is committed to developing human resources that enhance the quality of its workforce, meeting both local and international standards. To achieve this objective, Kenya has been steadfast in the provision of quality and relevant education to all its citizens (Government of Kenya, 1964). The principles articulated in the Constitution of Kenya, promulgated on 27th August 2010, profoundly reflect a commitment to fostering a society that upholds the liberties and livelihoods of its citizens without any form of discrimination.

Focusing specifically on education, the Constitution of Kenya, through the enshrined Bill of Rights, notably Articles 43(1)(f), 53(1)(b), and 55(a), collectively affirm that education is a fundamental right for every Kenyan (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). It guarantees every child equal access to free and compulsory basic education, along with opportunities for affordable tertiary education and skills development. Consequently, the Constitution establishes an enabling framework that advances the paradigm of education and training from mere knowledge reproduction to knowledge production, christened as competence- based education.

Kenya Vision 2030 outlines the development of a middle-income country, placing significant emphasis on education to produce relevantly skilled human and social capital for sustainable development. To actualize the above, the Ministry of Education set up various task forces with the aim of re-aligning the education sector to bring to life the vision of the Constitution and Vision 2030. The task forces identified several challenges, gaps, and concerns that led to the implementation of numerous educational reforms (Government of Kenya, 2005), among them the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework, as recommended in Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012.

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is responsible for spearheading the National Qualifications Framework, aiming to promote a competency-based economy. This initiative was formally established through a legislative action under the KNQF Act CAP 214 ¹which adopted the National Qualifications Framework in December 2014. The provisions of the Act are implemented in accordance with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, Legal Notice No. 94, enacted in May 2025²

The KNQF was introduced in response to addressing challenges in the education system, including inequitable access to education and training, low quality education, skills mismatch, skills gaps and the lack of linkages between different education sub- sectors (Government of Kenya, 2012). To date,

¹ <http://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2014/22/eng@2022-12-31>

² **Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)**. Official website. Available at: <https://knqa.go.ke>

with its implementation, the education and training have seen significant success, including improvements in the quality and relevance of education and training, as well as recognition of the wide range of formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities that exist in Kenya.

The KNQF is progressively strengthening the country’s qualifications system through a range of strategic interventions. These include enhancing the transparency of qualifications to ensure that learning outcomes are clearly understood by both learners and employers; promoting flexibility, transferability and progression across various learning pathways; and removing systemic barriers to horizontal and vertical mobility within the education and training sectors. The Framework also emphasizes the importance of maintaining detailed level descriptors that specify the expected knowledge, skills and competences at each qualification level. Additionally, the KNQF is developing a nationally and internationally recognized qualifications database to serve as a reliable reference point for assessing and comparing learning achievements.

1.5 Structure of the Education and Training System in Kenya

1.5.1 Historical Development of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework

The establishment of the KNQF and its coordinating implementing agency, the KNQA, has been shaped by a progressive policy journey spanning over six decades. This evolution reflects the Kenyan government’s commitment to reform and harmonize the national qualifications system, enhance quality assurance, and align education and training outcomes with labour market demands.

The following table specifies the historical development of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework:

Report	Details
Ominde Report (1964): Establishing a Responsive Education System	The Ominde Commission laid the foundation for post- independence education reforms. It recommended the development of an education system aligned with national development needs and socio-economic transformation. The report highlighted the need for relevant qualifications that equip learners with skills for national progress and cohesion.

Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives (Gachathi Report) 1976: Curriculum Reform	The Gachathi Report recommended curriculum restructuring to better align education outcomes with national manpower and economic development needs. It called for the expansion of technical and vocational education and greater recognition of applied skills. It also identified the lack of structured progression pathways and the need for horizontal and vertical mobility in qualifications principles now embedded in the KNQF structure.
Commission of Inquiry into Education System of Kenya (Koech Report) 2000: Total Quality in Education and Training	The Koech Report introduced the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education. It proposed the establishment of a national framework for qualifications and stressed the recognition of alternative learning pathways and lifelong learning. The report articulated the need for a harmonized system that promotes quality, access, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL); core elements realized in the KNQF's strategic objectives.
Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005: Integration of Fragmented Qualification Components	This sessional paper addressed fragmentation in the qualifications system, calling for better coordination between basic, vocational, and higher education sectors. It also introduced the concept of lifelong learning as a national policy priority. It provided a clear policy directive to establish a standardized qualifications system that supports learner mobility and lifelong learning across sectors.
Taskforce on re-alignment of the education and training sector to the Constitution of Kenya, 2012, (Odhiambo and Some Report)	Proposed Curriculum reform to specify the expected competencies at every level of learning.

Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012: Formalization of the National Qualifications Framework	Sessional Paper No. 14 formally recommended the establishment of an NQF to provide structure, quality assurance, and transparency in the national qualifications system. The Paper established the formal policy basis for a regulated framework that enables comparability, consistency, and international recognition of qualifications.
KNQF Act, Cap. 214 (2014): Legal Establishment of the Framework	The Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap 214, legally established the KNQF and created the KNQA to manage and coordinate its implementation. The Act sets out the functions of the KNQF, including registration of qualifications, recognition of learning, and development of qualification descriptors. It provided the statutory mandate for implementing a national qualifications system based on defined learning outcomes and other regulatory standards.
Operationalization of KNQA (2015): Institutionalization of the Framework	Following enactment of the KNQF Act, the KNQA was operationalized in 2015. It began developing operational tools, including the Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS), RPL policy, National Qualifications Database (NQD), and related quality assurance instruments. It marked the transition from policy to institutional implementation, establishing mechanisms for registration, quality assurance, and stakeholder engagement
2019–2024: Coordination and Full Implementation	Between 2019 and 2024, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) successfully coordinated the full implementation of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), establishing a unified and functional national qualifications system. Key achievements during this period included the alignment of all sub-framework qualifications to the KNQF and the registration of Qualification Awarding Bodies and their qualifications. The period also saw the roll-out of key policy frameworks and standards, notably for the RPL and the KCATS, both aimed at enhancing access and learner mobility. Additionally, the Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard (KNQCS) was developed and applied to ensure consistent naming and coding of qualifications across sectors. To support qualification recognition and international comparability, KNQA launched the Qualifications Alignment and Validation (QAV)

	Portal, enabling the validation of both local and foreign qualifications. Collectively, these efforts positioned the KNQF as a coherent, credible and internationally aligned qualifications framework.
2025: Referencing to the ACQF	In line with Kenya's commitment to regional and continental integration, the KNQF will undergo referencing to the ACQF in 2025. This process will enhance international recognition of Kenyan qualifications and facilitate mobility across African countries. This referencing process aims to support comparability and global competitiveness of qualifications and ensures alignment with regional frameworks and recognition systems.

Table 1: Historical development of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework:

1.5.2 Governance of the Education and Training System in Kenya

The KNQF was designed as a reformative instrument in education and training to promote transparency, clarity, and a better understanding of Qualifications in Kenya. The KNQF acts as a solution to issues of access, equity, quality, relevance, and harmonization among the various sub-frameworks of education and training.

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Education, Training and Research is intended to address the government's vision and strategies for reforming the education and training sector to meet national and global development needs. Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 proposed the development of the National Qualifications Framework to provide a structured national system for recognizing learning achievements, promoting inclusion and access in education and training, and making visible progression across the education and training spectrum.

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority was established through the adoption of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Chapter 214, as a statutory body under the Ministry of Education to coordinate and harmonize the various levels of education and training. That is, basic education, TVET, university, industry, professional education and training pathways. The framework aims to provide inclusive, equitable, quality, and relevant education, training, and research that promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Additionally, Section 8 (a) of the KNQF Act Cap. 214 mandates the Authority to coordinate and supervise the development of policies on national qualifications. The Authority is developing National policies, standards, and guidelines on the implementation of the Framework to cover qualifications design and development, accreditation and registration, quality assurance, implementation, assessment, examination and certification.

Kenya's education and training system is managed through a centralized framework designed to ensure effective policy execution, oversight, and support. The goal is to improve access, equity, quality, and relevance in education and training within Kenya's system. It is aligned with RQFs to promote mobility and lifelong learning. This multi- tiered structure involves several key bodies:

- i. **Ministry of Education:** Policy and overall oversight.
- ii. **Kenya National Qualifications Authority:** Develops, maintains and implements the National Qualifications Framework.
- iii. **Sector Regulatory Agencies:**
 - **Commission for University Education (CUE):** Oversees and regulates universities.
 - **Technical, Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA):** Regulates and supervises the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector.
 - **National Industrial Training Authority (NITA):** Oversees industrial training;
 - **Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards:** Ensures regulation and oversight within the basic education sector.
 - **Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Certification Bodies:** Responsible for developing, assessing, and certifying occupational competencies.
 - **Education Boards and Councils:** Provide strategic advice on educational policies and ensure alignment with national development goals.
 - **National Sector Skills Committees:** Domiciled under the Ministry of Labour to focus on labour market information and the development of occupational standards.

1.6 Goal of Education and Training

To provide equitable, high-quality learning experiences that foster holistic development, empower individuals with relevant skills for economic and social advancement, and promote national unity and sustainable development.

1.7 Principles of Education and Training

Include inclusivity, quality, relevance, and equity, aiming to foster holistic development, prepare individuals for the workforce, and promote national and global citizenship.

1.8 Legal and Regulatory Framework

Kenya's education and training system is governed by the following:

- i. **Constitution of Kenya:** Guarantees the right to quality education for all.
- ii. **Education Act (2013):** Regulates educational institutions, curriculum development, and examinations.

- iii. **Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act (2014):** Establishes the NQF and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority.
- iv. **Policies and Strategies:** Includes the National Education Sector Strategic Plan (NESSP) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) strategy.
- v. **Regulatory Bodies:** Directorate of Quality and Standards (DQAS), Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), Commission for University Education (CUE) and National Industrial Training Authority (NITA).

1.9 Structure of the Basic Education

The 8-4-4 basic education structure, introduced in 1985, has played a significant role in Kenya's education system by providing the academic foundation for several generations of learners. Following education sector reforms, the Government of Kenya initiated a phased transition to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which is being implemented progressively and is expected to fully replace the 8-4-4 system by 2028, when the final cohort under the 8-4-4 structure completes secondary education. During this transition period, both the 8-4-4 and the Competency-Based Curriculum remain valid and nationally recognised, with learner progression managed according to the respective curriculum under which learners are enrolled.

The Competency-Based Curriculum was developed by the **Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)**³ under the Ministry of Education to enable every Kenyan learner to become an engaged, empowered and ethical citizen equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and competencies required for the twenty-first century. Since 2017, Kenya has progressively implemented the 2-6-3-3-3 education structure, which provides a more flexible, learner-centred and learning outcomes-based approach to education and training.

The age-based pathway is organised into three levels: Early Years Education, Middle School Education, and Senior School. In addition, the curriculum provides stage-based progression pathways organised into four stages, namely Foundational, Intermediate, Pre-vocational, and Vocational. This structure supports learner progression based on the attainment of defined competencies and learning outcomes rather than solely on time spent in school, thereby strengthening alignment with the principles underpinning the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). *Figure 1.1* illustrates the current structure of basic education in Kenya.

³ **Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).** Official website. Available at: <https://kicd.ac.ke>

1.9.1 Quality assurance, Assessment and Certification in Basic Education

Quality assurance within Kenya's basic education system is governed principally by the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Basic Education Act, No. 14 of 2013, the Kenya National Examinations Council Act, No. 29 of 2012, and the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act CAP 214. These legal instruments collectively provide the framework for curriculum implementation, institutional quality assurance, learner assessment, certification and progression within the education system.

The Ministry of Education, through the **Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS)**⁴ established under the Basic Education Act, is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, evaluating compliance with national education standards, conducting school quality assurance visits, and advising education institutions on continuous quality improvement. Quality assurance is complemented by curriculum development undertaken by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and national assessment and certification administered by the **Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC)**.⁵

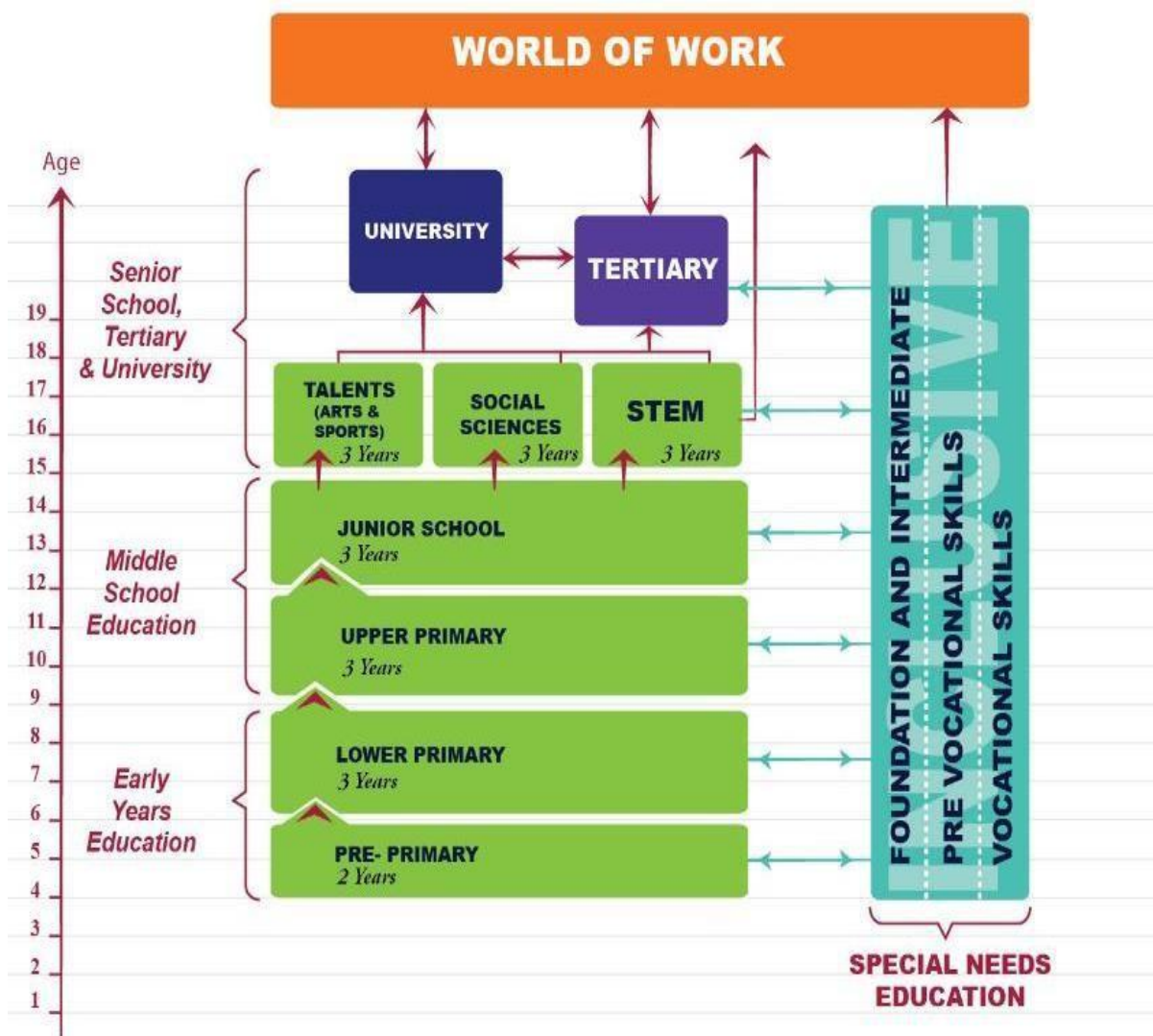
National assessment forms an integral component of quality assurance in Kenya's basic education system. These assessments are centrally developed, administered and quality assured by KNEC in accordance with the Kenya National Examinations Council Act, No. 29 of 2012. Under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), assessment combines continuous school-based assessment with national assessments administered at key transition points. These assessments provide evidence of learner achievement and support progression to subsequent levels of education and training. Qualifications awarded following successful completion of national assessments are nationally recognised and contribute to learner progression within the Kenya National Qualifications Framework.

The Competency-Based Curriculum is explicitly founded on a **learning outcomes approach**, with curriculum designs specifying the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies expected at each stage of learning. Learning outcomes therefore guide curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment throughout the basic education cycle and provide an important foundation for progression into Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), university education and other qualifications recognised within the KNQF.

⁴ Ministry of Education. Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS). Available at: <https://www.education.go.ke>.

⁵ Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Kenya National Examinations Council Act, No. 29 of 2012. Available at: <https://www.knec.ac.ke>.

Fig. 1.1: Current Structure of Basic Education in Kenya



1.10 Higher Education Sub-System

The Higher Education sub-system in Kenya is governed principally by the **Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012**, which establishes the legal framework for the establishment, governance, accreditation and regulation of universities. The **Commission for University Education (CUE)**⁶ is the statutory body established under the Act and is mandated to regulate university education through institutional accreditation, programme accreditation, quality audits, recognition of qualifications, monitoring compliance with quality standards, and advising the Government on matters relating to university education.

Quality assurance within the higher education sub-system is implemented through both **external** and **internal** quality assurance mechanisms. Externally, the Commission for University Education develops quality assurance standards, conducts institutional and programme accreditation, undertakes periodic quality audits, monitors compliance with national standards, and reviews academic

⁶ **Commission for University Education (CUE).** *Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012.* Available at: <https://www.cue.or.ke>

programmes to ensure they meet the minimum requirements for university education. Internally, universities are required to establish quality assurance systems that support continuous improvement in teaching, learning, research, community engagement, governance and institutional management. Universities are also required to comply with the Standards and Guidelines for University Education in Kenya, the Universities Regulations, and other regulatory instruments issued by the Commission for University Education.

Governance of universities is exercised through University Councils, Senates, and institutional management structures in accordance with the Universities Act, under the policy oversight of the Ministry responsible for Education. Academic programmes are developed using a learning outcomes-based approach, specifying programme learning outcomes, graduate attributes, assessment strategies and credit requirements consistent with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). This approach supports learner progression, transparency, comparability and recognition of qualifications nationally and internationally.

The higher education sub-system also provides opportunities for lifelong learning through continuing professional development (CPD), executive education, postgraduate diplomas, professional certification programmes and other approved short courses. These programmes are subject to the quality assurance and regulatory oversight of the Commission for University Education where applicable, thereby ensuring that higher education qualifications continue to meet national quality standards and respond to evolving labour market needs.

1.11 TVET Education Sub-System

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training sub-system is governed by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, CAP 210A.. The Act establishes the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority⁷ as the regulator responsible for registration, licensing, accreditation, and quality assurance of TVET institutions, trainers, and programmes.

Quality assurance is competency-based and is guided by the TVET Act, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Regulations, and TVETA's Quality Assurance Framework, Standards and Guidelines, which provide requirements for institutional accreditation, programme approval, trainer qualifications, institutional inspections and continuous quality improvement.

Curriculum development, assessment and certification are undertaken by the relevant statutory bodies within the TVET sector, while TVETA provides regulatory oversight to ensure consistency, labour

⁷ **Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA).** *Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, No. 29 of 2013.* Available at: <https://www.tveta.go.ke>

market relevance and alignment with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). Non-formal learning within the TVET sub-system includes community-based skills training, workplace learning programmes and industry-led short courses. Recognition of competencies acquired through these pathways is facilitated through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework operationalized under the KNQF.

1.12 Professional Education Sub-System

Professional education in Kenya operates under profession-specific statutory Acts establishing professional regulatory bodies responsible for regulating training, licensing, and professional practice. These bodies accredit professional training programmes, set competency standards, administer professional examinations, and enforce continuing professional development requirements. Quality assurance is implemented through dual oversight, whereby academic programmes are regulated by education authorities, while professional competence and practice are regulated by professional bodies. Entry into professional practice requires completion of accredited training, successful assessment, and registration by the relevant regulatory authority. Non-formal learning is recognised in the professional education sub-system through continuing professional development (CPD) requirements administered by professional regulatory bodies. CPD points and credits may, where applicable, contribute to Recognition of Prior Learning assessments under the KNQF.

1.13 Industrial Training Sub-System

The Industrial Training sub-system is governed by the **Industrial Training Act (Cap. 237)**, which establishes the **National Industrial Training Authority (NITA)**⁸ as the statutory body responsible for regulating industrial training, workplace-based learning, apprenticeships, and trade testing in Kenya. NITA is mandated to accredit industrial training providers, register industrial training programmes, administer national trade tests, issue certificates of competence, and promote skills development that responds to labour market and industry needs.

Quality assurance within the industrial training sub-system is based on competency-based occupational standards, nationally coordinated trade testing, workplace training compliance, trainer and assessor registration, and the accreditation of industrial training providers. The Authority develops and applies quality assurance procedures to ensure that industrial training programmes,

⁸ National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). *Industrial Training Act (Cap. 237)*. Available at: <https://www.nita.go.ke>

assessments and certifications are consistent with nationally approved occupational standards and industry requirements. In carrying out these functions, NITA works closely with employers, industry associations and other stakeholders to ensure that training remains relevant to current and emerging workforce demands⁹

A distinguishing feature of the industrial training sub-system is the recognition of skills acquired through non-formal and informal workplace learning. The NITA trade testing system provides a formal mechanism for assessing and certifying competencies acquired through apprenticeships, on-the-job training, work experience and other forms of experiential learning. This supports lifelong learning and complements the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework by providing progression pathways for individuals who have acquired occupational competencies outside the formal education system.

Non-formal education in Kenya provides flexible learning opportunities for adults, out-of-school youth and school drop-outs to acquire literacy, numeracy, life skills and vocational competencies outside the formal education system. General adult education programmes focus on adult literacy, continuing education and community learning, while non-formal TVET programmes are delivered through vocational training centres, community-based organisations, industry training initiatives and workplace learning. These programmes support lifelong learning, employability and social inclusion. Learners may subsequently transition into the formal education and training system through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), credit accumulation and transfer arrangements, and other progression pathways provided under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF).

CHAPTER TWO: THE KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (KNQF)

2.0 Introduction

KNQF is a comprehensive system for articulating, classifying, registering, accrediting, ensuring quality, and monitoring and evaluating national qualifications. It is an outcome-based 10-level, '3-domain framework (Knowledge, Skills & Competences) established by the KNQF Act Cap. 214 to coordinate and harmonize education and training. The Framework comprises the Basic Education, University, TVET, & Industrial/Skills sub-frameworks. Each sub framework is regulated by a legally mandated sub-sector regulatory.

2.1 The goal of the KNQF

- a) To promote Access and Equity- Life Long Learning;
- b) improve the quality, relevance and authenticity of qualifications in Kenya; and
- c) Promote internationalization of Kenyan Qualifications.

2.2 Objectives of KNQF

- a) Enhance standardization and transparency in qualifications awarding system;
- b) Create a centrally integrated national framework for education and training;
- c) Align education with the labour market;
- d) Promote articulation and of lifelong learning;
- e) Strengthen quality and relevance of qualifications;
- f) Enhance Recognition and portability of local qualifications; and
- g) Internationalization of Kenyan Qualifications.

2.3 The Principles of KNQF

The following principles guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of qualifications in Kenya:

- a) Inclusivity;
- b) Transparency;
- c) Quality Assurance;
- d) Relevance: Progression;
- e) Recognition;
- f) Comparability;
- g) Consistency.

2.4 Legal and Regulatory Framework

The KNQF legal and policy framework is designed to support national, regional, continental, and international objectives for education, skills development, lifelong learning, and labour mobility. At the regional and continental levels, the KNQF promotes the comparability, transparency, and recognition of qualifications through its alignment with regional qualifications frameworks. This includes the East African Community (EAC) commitments on education, skills development, and labour mobility, as well as the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF), which supports the mutual recognition and comparability of qualifications across Africa in line with Agenda 2063.

Nationally, the KNQF contributes to the achievement of Kenya Vision 2030 by strengthening human capital development through a coherent and quality-assured qualifications system. It also supports broader continental development priorities under the African Union Agenda 2063, including the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), both of which recognise education, skills development, lifelong learning, and workforce mobility as key drivers of economic growth, regional integration, and sustainable development.

The legal foundation of the KNQF is anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap. 214, which establishes the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) and provides the statutory basis for the development, implementation, coordination, quality assurance, and regulation of the national qualifications' framework. The Act is operationalised through the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025, which prescribe the framework's governance arrangements, level descriptors, qualification standards, quality assurance requirements, registration procedures, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and the Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS).

The KNQF is further supported by the Constitution of Kenya (2010), which guarantees the right to education and provides the constitutional basis for equitable access to quality education and training. Complementary legislation strengthens the implementation of the framework across the education and training sectors. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act, Cap. 210A provides the legal framework for the regulation, quality assurance, and accreditation of TVET institutions and programmes, while the Universities Act, Cap. 210 governs university education and requires higher education institutions to maintain quality standards consistent with the national qualification's framework.

The KNQF is also informed by national education and training policies, notably Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Education, Training and Research, which recommended the establishment of a unified national qualifications framework to address fragmentation within the education and training system, promote Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), strengthen lifelong learning, and improve the alignment of qualifications with labour market needs. This policy laid the conceptual foundation for the establishment of the KNQF and continues to underpin its strategic objectives.

2.5 KNQF Levels, Level Descriptors and Qualification Types

2.5.1 KNQF Structure and Level Descriptors

KNQF is structured as a ten-level integrated system that covers the entire spectrum of qualifications, from pre-primary education to doctoral-level training. Each level is characterized by a descriptive set of statements that outline the level descriptors across classified under three domains: Knowledge, Skills, and Competence, commonly known as KNQF level descriptors. The level descriptors, which are descriptive rather than prescriptive, articulate the expected breadth and depth of learning at each level, facilitating clear distinctions between qualifications. The KNQF level descriptors are organized to capture the increasing complexity and demanding learning outcomes. This structure supports the comparability of vertical, diagonal, and horizontal progression between different types of qualifications on the KNQF. The determination of the position of a qualification on the KNQF is based on the qualification's conformity with the KNQF Level Descriptors. Thus, the KNQF Level Descriptors enable accurate placement of a qualification at the appropriate KNQF level, regardless of the qualification type or learning pathway.

KNQF level descriptors provide a reference point for evaluating the purpose, complexity, and learning outcomes of qualifications. During qualification registration, these descriptors are used, together with other criteria such as total credits and notional hours, to guide the determination of the appropriate KNQF level. Alignment with the descriptors is a key requirement to ensure consistency, transparency, and comparability across different types of qualifications.

This structured approach facilitates lifelong learning, recognizes non-traditional learning pathways, and provides a transparent and credible basis for classifying and recognizing qualifications. It also supports referencing to regional and international frameworks, thereby promoting the global comparability and recognition of Kenyan qualifications. The table below (*Table 1.2*) specifies the various Qualification types across the Sub-Frameworks of the KNQF and *Fig. 2* specifies the Education and Training Pathways.

With regard to the industrial training pathway, progression routes are available but are still evolving. Holders of National Skills Certificates, awarded under the industrial training sub-framework, may access further learning opportunities within the formal TVET and professional education and training systems. For example, individuals with relevant occupational skills and experience may transition into TVET programmes at artisan, craft, or diploma levels through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or credit accumulation and transfer mechanisms, where such arrangements have been operationalized.

However, these progression pathways are not yet fully systematized across all sectors. In some cases, linkages between industrial training qualifications and formal TVET or higher education pathways remain limited or unclear, creating potential “dead ends” for learners seeking upward or horizontal mobility. This is a recognized challenge within the KNQF implementation.

Strengthening these linkages, including formal articulation routes between industrial training, TVET, and higher education, as well as expanding the use of RPL and credit transfer systems, remains a key priority for future development of the KNQF

Table 1.2. KNQF Levels and Qualification Types

KNQF Level	Sub-Framework for Basic Education	Sub-Framework for TVET	Sub – Framework for Higher Education	Sub-Framework for Professional Education and Training	Sub-Framework for Industrial Training
10			Doctorate Degree		
9			Master’s Degree		
8			Professional Bachelor’s Degree Post Graduate Diploma	Post Professional Qualification	National Skills Certificate VII Professional Master Crafts Person
7		Higher National Diploma	Bachelor’s Degree	Professional Qualification	National Skills Certificate VI Master Crafts Person I
6		Diploma		Professional Qualification	National Skills Certificate V Master Crafts Person II

5		Craft Certificate			National Skills Certificate IV Master Crafts Person III
4		Artisan Certificate			National Skills Certificate III Government Trade Tests I
3	Senior Secondary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate II			National Skills Certificate II Government Trade Tests II
2	Junior School	National Vocational Certificate I			National Skills Certificate I Government Trade Tests III
1	Primary Education Pre-primary Education				Basic Skills or Skills for Life

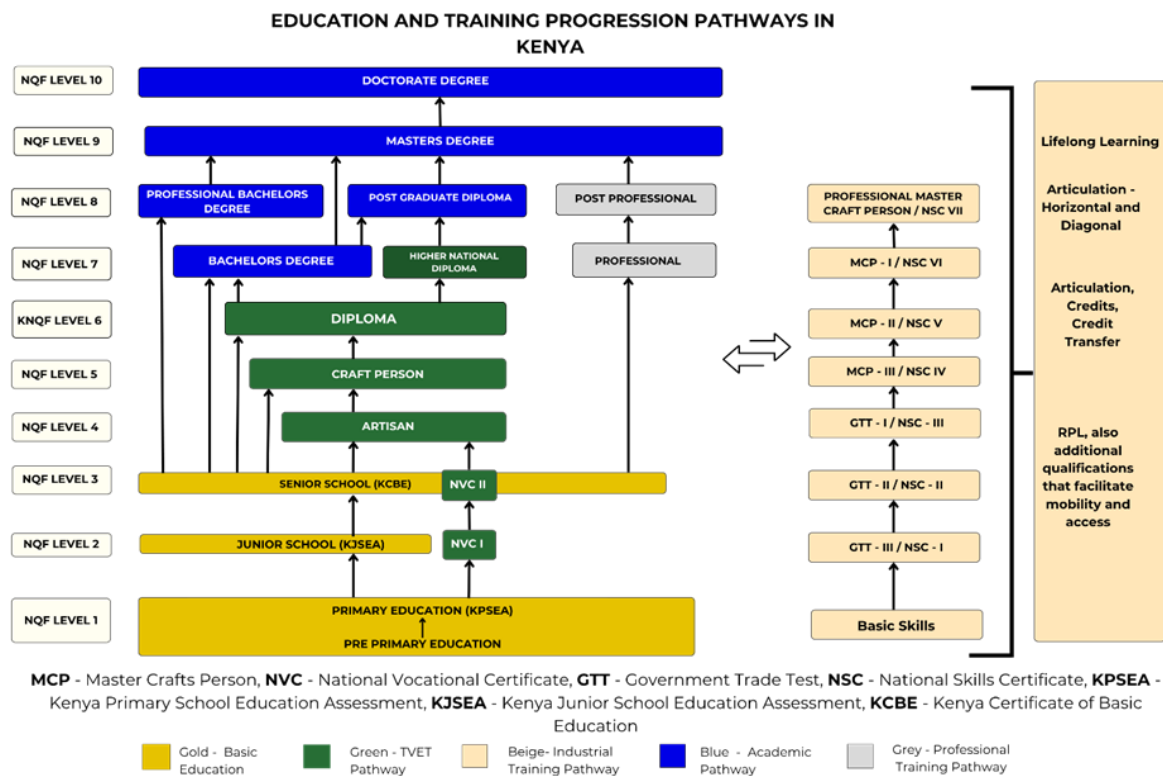


Fig 1.2. Education and Training Progression Pathways in Kenya

Figure 1.2 illustrates the progression pathways within Kenya's education and training system. Learners completing industrial training programmes may progress to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Professional Education or other learning pathways where the applicable admission requirements, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) arrangements and Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS) provisions are satisfied. Holders of industrial training qualifications may access formal TVET or professional education pathways through recognised progression arrangements, including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation and Transfer (KCATS) and institutional admission requirements, where applicable. These mechanisms promote learner mobility and lifelong learning within the Kenya National Qualifications Framework.

While significant progress has been made in strengthening progression pathways across education and training sub-systems, some articulation pathways between industrial training, technical education and higher education continue to evolve. KNQA, in collaboration with sector regulators, is implementing policy and operational measures to strengthen these linkages and enhance learner progression across the national qualifications system.

2.5.2 KNQF Scope and Coverage

KNQF applies to all qualifications awarded within Kenya and those entering the Country's borders, regardless of the sector in which the qualification is conferred. It encompasses qualifications from formal, informal and non-formal under basic education, technical and vocational, academic, professional, and industrial education and training. Specifically, this includes basic education

outcomes from primary and secondary schooling; TVET qualifications regulated by the TVETA; academic qualifications offered by universities under the regulation of the CUE; industrial training qualifications under the NITA; and professional qualifications awarded by statutory professional examination bodies.

KNQF recognizes and registers not only full qualifications, but also part qualifications, micro-credentials, and short courses. All qualifications awarded in Kenya, regardless of type or level, are to be conferred by duly registered Qualification Awarding Bodies, aligned to the appropriate KNQF level descriptors, and recorded in the National Qualifications Database to ensure quality, credibility, and national mutual recognition.

2.5.3 Use of Learning Outcomes

The KNQF is fundamentally based on a learning outcomes approach. This ensures that all qualifications are clearly defined, measurable, and responsive to the needs of learners, employers, regulatory bodies, and the broader education and training ecosystem. Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do upon successful completion of a qualification, making them central to every stage of the qualification lifecycle.

The use of learning outcomes within the KNQF is grounded in the legal and regulatory framework governing the development and registration of qualifications. The Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap. 214 (2014), under Section 8(b), mandates the Authority to establish an accreditation system for qualifications based on defined standards including learning outcomes. Further, the KNQF (General) Regulations, 2025, Part V (Level Descriptors), require that all qualifications be aligned to level descriptors expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, and competences, which are articulated through learning outcomes.

Within the framework, learning outcomes are foundational to the development of qualification standards and registration criteria, guiding the design, structuring, and approval of qualifications.

In particular, the procedures for inclusion of qualifications into the KNQF, as outlined under Section 2.7.2 of this report, require awarding bodies to submit detailed qualification documentation, including clearly defined learning outcomes, credit values, and alignment to KNQF level descriptors. This requirement is derived from the KNQF Act Cap. 214 and operationalized through the KNQF (General) Regulations, 2025, which set the criteria for accreditation and registration of qualifications.

They also inform curriculum design and review processes, ensuring alignment between institutional content and the intended level of knowledge, skills, and competence expected at each KNQF level.

Furthermore, learning outcomes serve as the basis for assessment and certification, providing an objective benchmark for evaluating learner achievement.

Additionally, national policies and guidelines developed by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), including standards and procedures for qualification design and development, require that all qualifications be expressed in outcome-based formats, with explicit statements of learning outcomes aligned to KNQF level descriptors.

Beyond curriculum and assessment, learning outcomes underpin both internal and external quality assurance systems. They are essential to RPL, enabling individuals to have their experiential or informal learning assessed against established qualification requirements. Learning outcomes also facilitate the positioning of qualifications on the KNQF, as well as credit accumulation and transfer under KCATS, thus supporting learner mobility, academic progression, and flexible pathways.

2.6 Governance of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework

2.6.1 Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education¹⁰ is responsible for setting the national education policy direction, providing overall leadership and coordination of the Education and Training sector in the country.

a) Role in the Implementation of the KNQF

Pursuant to Section 8 of the KNQF Act Cap 214, the KNQA role may be summarized as follows:

- i. Provides overarching policy direction and strategic guidance for the implementation of the KNQF;
- ii. Oversees legal and institutional frameworks that support the qualifications system; and
- iii. Ensures alignment of national education and training objectives with socio- economic development goals.

2.6.2 Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) is a State Corporation established under Section 3 of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap. 214 to coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework. In line with provisions of KNQF Act Cap 214, Section 6, KNQA is governed by a Council comprising the following: -

¹⁰Ministry of Education, Kenya. Official website. Available at: <https://www.education.go.ke>

- a) A Chairperson appointed by the Cabinet Secretary responsible for Education;
- b) The Principal Secretary responsible for Education;
- c) The Principal Secretary responsible for the National Treasury;
- d) The Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), who serves as the Secretary to the Council;
- e) One representative from the Commission for University Education (CUE);
- f) One representative from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA);
- g) One representative from Basic Education
- h) One representative from the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA);
- i) One representative from professional bodies;
- j) One representative from the private sector (employers); and
- k) Workers Union

The Council Oversees the NQF and ensures that qualifications meet national standards.

a) Role in the Implementation of the KNQF

- i. Custodian of all qualifications in the Country and developer and implementer of the KNQF;
- ii. Ensures harmonization, quality assurance, and standardization of qualifications across sectors and levels; and
- iii. Coordinates recognition of prior learning (RPL), qualifications referencing, and stakeholder engagement.

2.6.3 Sector Regulatory, Professional bodies, and Industry

Sector regulatory bodies are established under sector-specific legislation and are responsible for regulating education and training, accrediting institutions and programmes, and assuring the quality of qualifications within their respective sectors. These include, among others, the Commission for University Education (Universities Act, 2012), the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVET Act, 2013), the National Industrial Training Authority (Industrial Training Act, Cap. 237) and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards under the Basic Education Act, 2013.

Professional bodies and industry complement these functions by identifying labour market needs, developing occupational standards, validating occupational competence requirements and supporting continuous improvement of qualifications

Role in the implementation of the KNQF

Sector regulators, professional bodies and industry:

- i. Ensure qualifications comply with the requirements of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework;
- ii. Develop and implement sector-specific quality assurance systems consistent with the KNQF;
- iii. Accredite institutions, programmes and courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications;
- iv. Validate occupational standards and contribute to external quality assurance processes;
- v. Provide labour market intelligence to support qualification review and development; and
- vi. Promote alignment of qualifications with current and emerging labour market needs.

2.6.4 Curriculum Development Bodies-

Curriculum development bodies are responsible for the design, review and continuous improvement of curricula to ensure that qualifications meet national education, training and labour market requirements. Develop sector specific curriculum and derive their mandates from sector-specific legislation and policies governing curriculum development within their respective education and training sectors.

a) Major Role in NQFs

- i. Design outcome-based curricula that align with KNQF level descriptors;
- ii. Ensure learning outcomes are competency-based and meet both academic and occupational requirements;
- iii. Review curricula periodically to maintain relevance, quality and consistency with national qualifications policies.

2.6.5 National Assessment, Examination and Certification Bodies

National assessment, examination and certification bodies are established under sector-specific legislation to conduct assessments and award nationally recognised qualifications. Examples include the **Kenya National Examinations Council (Kenya National Examinations Council Act, 2012)** and other authorised assessment and certification bodies recognised under the KNQF. These bodies are charged with the mandate to assess and award qualifications at a national level while working with schools, education and training institutions as assessment centres.

a) Major Role in NQFs

- i. Conduct valid, reliable, and credible assessments;
- ii. Award qualifications that meet KNQF standards and reflect defined learning outcomes;
- iii. Support RPL processes and credit accumulation and transfer.

2.6.6 Qualifications Awarding Bodies

Qualification Awarding Bodies are recognised and registered in accordance with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap. 214 and the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025. These are bodies that have a mandate to develop their own curriculum, deliver, assess and award. They ensure that the work flow process to arriving at a qualification aligned to KNQF requirement and the National Policies, Standards and Guidelines.

a) Major Role in NQFs

- i. Develop and deliver education and training programmes aligned to KNQF levels;
- ii. Ensure they admit learners as per the KNQF minimum entry requirements;
- iii. Assess learners against approved learning outcomes;
- iv. Award qualifications upon learners after successful completion of assessments;
- v. Maintain academic and institutional quality assurance;
- vi. Submit lists of qualifications and graduates to KNQA for registration onto the NQD.

2.6.7 Education and Training Institutions

Education and training institutions deliver education and training programmes within the framework established by the relevant regulatory authorities. These are institutions used for any activity aimed at imparting skills, knowledge, competences, values, attitudes and information towards assisting the learner improve their performance. They may not have the mandate to award qualifications but are used as training and assessment centers.

a) Major Role in KNQF

- i. Comply to the KNQF requirements such as the minimum entry requirements, volume of learning and duration of learning.
- ii. Ensure they comply to the national policies and standards such as those of RPL and KCATS.
- iii. Maintain internal and external quality assurance

2.7 Qualifications Databases and Register

2.7.1 National Qualifications Database

Under Section 8(e) of the KNQF Act, the Authority is mandated to maintain a national database of national qualifications. The Authority has established this database, which it has coined as ‘The National Qualifications Database’, to serve as the digital repository for informing the implementation of the KNQF and to act as a one-stop shop for all data on qualifications. The Database serves to facilitate data collection and reporting at all KNQF levels, enable secure data sharing between the awarding bodies, KNQA and other persons, ensure standardization and comparability of qualifications across the KNQF and other regional and global Frameworks, facilitate lifelong learning and provide real-time statistics on all qualifications for informed decision making.

The NQD has various modules that enable the feeding of data to the database, including the upload of registered awarding bodies in the country, the qualifications they award, and the graduates they confer these qualifications. Additionally, it includes data from qualifications alignment and validation, as well as graduates' recognition of prior learning assessments. The NQD components include a register of credible qualifications awarding bodies, a register of national qualifications, a register of graduates, alignment and validation of qualifications, and a qualifications verification component. The scope of the Qualifications Register typically includes essential data such as the title of the qualification, its NQF level, and credit value, minimum entry requirements, awarding body, accreditation and registration status, learning outcomes, and intended education or career pathways. The inclusion of qualifications in the register follows transparent quality assurance processes that ensure qualifications meet the requirements of the KNQF.

The NQD provides various reports at any given period that inform on the status of qualifications.

A report is published by the Authority on an annual basis according to the mandate under Section 8 (h) of the KNQF Act. The NQD is currently being integrated with the ACQF Qualifications Credentials Platform to provide information on the register of awarding bodies and national qualifications at the continental platform, ensuring transparency and cross-border recognition and comparison of qualifications.

The National Qualifications Database is publicly accessible. Stakeholders can search, verify, and browse registered qualifications, awarding bodies, and graduate record <https://nqd.knqa.go.ke/>

2.7.2 Registration of Qualifications under KNQF

The **KNQF Act Cap 214** is the foundational law that mandates a system for “articulation, classification, registration, quality assurance, and monitoring” of national qualifications. The Act gives KNQA the powers to register, coordinate, and maintain the quality and database of

qualifications. The **KNQF General Regulations (2025)** guide the regulatory environment for how registration, accreditation, and quality assurance are executed under KNQF.

2.7.3 Registration process of Qualifications Under KNQF

- **Registration of Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs)**

An education institution is eligible for registration as a credible awarding body only when the institution or body conferring the award holds an explicit statutory mandate to examine, assess, and certify learners, and operates under an established external quality assurance regime. The evaluation undertaken for registration as an awarding body entails verification of the entity's legal mandate, charter, operation license or accreditation status by the sub sector regulator.

- **Registration of Qualifications**

Accredited QABs are eligible to submit their qualifications for registration in the National Qualifications Database. The KNQA reviews the qualification's alignment to KNQF standards, assessment, credit structure, alignment with level descriptors, etc., to determine whether it meets the criteria for registration as a National Qualification on the KNQF.

- **Placing a KNQF Level on a Qualification**

The qualification is matched against level descriptors (knowledge, skills, competence) and assigned a level. It also receives a credit value and is mapped to ISCED fields via Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard that is heavily referenced from the ISCED-F-2013 and ISCED-P-2011.

- **Database Inclusion**

Once registered, the qualification is added to a national database coined as the National Qualifications Database which is a central repository of all credible awarding bodies and national qualifications.

- **Ongoing Monitoring, Review, and Renewal**

Registrations are not perpetual; the awarding bodies and their qualifications must meet ongoing quality standards, and registrations are subject to review, suspension, or revocation in the case of non-compliance to the requirements of the KNQF.

2.7.3.1 Pre-Registration Stage of Qualifications: Institutional Eligibility

Step	Action / Requirement	Responsible Body	Key Documents / Evidence
------	----------------------	------------------	--------------------------

1.1	Confirm institutional recognition as a Qualification Awarding Body (QAB) under KNQA Act Cap 214.	Institution & KNQA	Certificate of Registration as QAB; legal charter or mandate; QA manual.
1.2	Verify accreditation by external quality assurance bodies i.e. relevant regulatory bodies (CUE, TVETA, DQAS or NITA or Professional or Industry Regulatory bodies, or industry standards.	CUE / TVETA / Professional Council	Accreditation letter; compliance reports.
1.3	Institutional readiness self-assessment (curriculum design, staff, facilities, QA systems).	Institution	Self-assessment report, organizational structure.

2.7.3.2 Qualification Development Stage

Step	Action / Requirement	Responsible Body	Key Documents / Evidence
2.1	Design qualification outcomes in line with KNQF level descriptors (knowledge, skills, competences).	Institution	Draft qualification document; learning outcomes matrix.
2.2	Determine total credit value using KNQF credit framework.	Institution	Credit structure sheet (1 credit = 10 notional hours).
2.3	Assign ISCED field and sub-field using the Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard (KNQCS).	Institution and KNQA	ISCED code assignment table.
2.4	Develop assessment and moderation strategy (including RPL).	Institution	Assessment framework, moderation policy.

2.5	Internal validation and approval by institutional Academic Board / Senate and external approval	Institution and External Quality Assurance Bodies	Senate/ Academic boards or councils minutes, endorsement letter.
-----	---	---	--

2.7.3.3 Submission for Registration to KNQA

Step	Action / Requirement	Responsible Body	Key Documents / Evidence
3.1	Submit Application for Registration of Qualification through the NQD portal	Institution	Filled Digital Application Form
			- Institutional Registration certificate
			- Qualification document
			- Evidence of accreditation
3.2	Pay applicable registration fee (as per KNQF (General) Regulations, 2025)	Institution	Payment receipt.
3.3	KNQA conducts document review and technical evaluation of the qualification.	KNQA Secretariat	Evaluation checklist; technical report.
3.4	KNQA aligns learning outcomes and assigns KNQF level (1–10) and credits.	KNQA	Evaluation report; level assignment letter.

2.7.3.4. Verification, Quality Assurance, and Approval

Step	Action / Requirement	Responsible Body	Key Documents / Evidence
------	----------------------	------------------	--------------------------

4.1	External verification	KNQA / Sector External QA bodies	Verification report
4.2	Approval by KNQA's Qualifications Committee and Board of Directors.	KNQA	Board minutes, approval resolution
4.3	Issuance of Certificate of Registration of Qualification.	KNQA	Certificate of Registration
4.4	Entry into the National Qualifications Database (NQD)	KNQA	Database entry confirmation.

2.7.3.5 Post-Registration: Monitoring & Alignment

Step	Action / Requirement	Responsible Body	Key Documents / Evidence
5.1	Continuous curriculum review reviews).	Institution	Reviewed curricula for registration
5.2	Periodic monitoring for compliance of qualifications to the KNQF	KNQA	Review report, renewal certificate.
5.3	Update of qualification metadata to reflect changes (credits, title, duration, ISCED).	Institution → KNQA	Revision submission.

2.8 Status of KNQF Implementation and Impact

2.8.1 Status of KNQF Implementation

The implementation of KNQF has progressed from a policy vision to a legal mandate, operational rollout, review, and is now moving toward continental alignment. The process was formally initiated through Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012, which recommended the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework to enhance quality, transparency, and comparability of qualifications in Kenya. This policy direction laid the groundwork for a unified and credible qualifications system. In 2014, the KNQF Act, Cap. 214 legally established the KNQF and created the KNQA to coordinate

and oversee its implementation. KNQA became operational in 2015, marking the transition from policy to implementation. Between 2019 and 2025, KNQA led the full rollout of the KNQF.

This phase saw the alignment of qualifications across all sub- frameworks of the KNQF, registration of QABs and their qualifications, and implementation of national instruments including the KNQCS, QAV & NQD Portal, development and implementation of national policy frameworks and standards for RPL, KCATS and QA of qualifications. These actions firmly established the KNQF as the national standard for qualifications development and recognition. Implementation has been complex. Unlike in most countries, Kenya's sub-sector regulators, CUE, TVETA, NITA, and DQAS, were established before KNQA. This required KNQA to coordinate across pre-existing systems, assert its national mandate, and harmonize quality assurance practices across sectors.

Despite these challenges, KNQA has successfully embedded the KNQF as the harmonizing framework for all qualifications awarded in Kenya. Today, the KNQF stands as a fully operational framework, legally grounded, institutionally embedded, and strategically aligned to

2.8.2 Status of registrations under the KNQF

Registration of Qualifications Awarding Bodies (QABs) is a regulatory process through which KNQA formally recognizes institutions that have the mandate and capacity to develop, assess, certify, and award qualifications. The purpose is to ensure that qualifications issued are credible, standardized, and aligned to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Registration of Qualifications Awarding Bodies is a crucial mechanism for strengthening the credibility, comparability, and portability of qualifications within and beyond national borders. A transparent, well-regulated system of QAB registration enhances trust in the education and skills ecosystem and contributes to a skilled, competitive workforce.

Registration of qualifications is the formal process through which KNQA evaluates, approves, and records qualifications onto a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This ensures that all qualifications offered meet defined quality standards, are credible, and are nationally and internationally recognized. The process provides assurance that learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and certification align to national skills needs and education standards. Registration of qualifications is the cornerstone of KNQF. It ensures that all qualifications offered within Kenya are quality-assured, transparent, relevant, and recognized. A strong registration framework enhances lifelong learning, employability, and mobility for learners while strengthening national human capital development.

2.8.2.1 Registered Qualification Awarding Bodies (QAB's)

Mapped qualifications are qualifications that have been analysed and classified against the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) to determine their appropriate KNQF level but have not

yet completed the statutory qualification registration process. Registered qualifications, on the other hand, are qualifications that have successfully undergone the prescribed registration process and have been entered into the National Qualifications Database (NQD) as qualifications formally recognised under the KNQF. Table 1.3 presents the status of mapped and registered qualifications, as well as recognised Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs), as of June 2026.

Institution Type	Mapped QABs	No. of registered QABs
National Polytechnics	33	32
National Assessment & Examination Bodies	4	2
Universities	86	16
Specialized Institutions	20	9
Foreign QABs	20	10
Professional Examination Bodies	5	3
TOTAL	168	72

Table 1.3: Mapped Vs Registered QABs

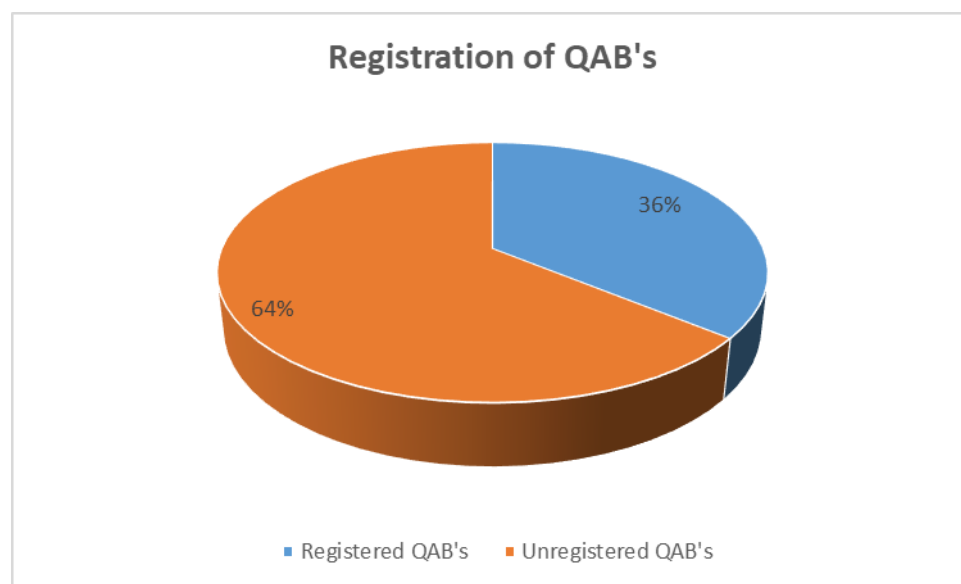


Figure 1.3: Registered Qualification Awarding Bodies (QAB's)

2.8.2.2 Registered Qualifications

A registered qualification has completed the full accreditation and quality assurance process and has been assigned an official KNQF Level. Registered qualifications are distinct from mapped or aligned

qualifications. Mapped qualifications have been assessed against KNQF level descriptors but may not yet have completed the full registration process; registered qualifications have fulfilled all requirements and appear in the NQD

No.	Category	Mapped Qualifications	Registered Qualifications	Unregistered Qualifications
1	Universities	5,432	510	4922
2	National Polytechnics	966	977	11
3	Professional Examination Boards	213	19	194
4	Specialized Institutions	442	138	304
5	Foreign Institutions	90	55	35
6	National Assessment & Examination Bodies	1060	907	153
	TOTAL	8,203	2,606	4,596

Table 1.4 Mapped Vs Registered Qualifications

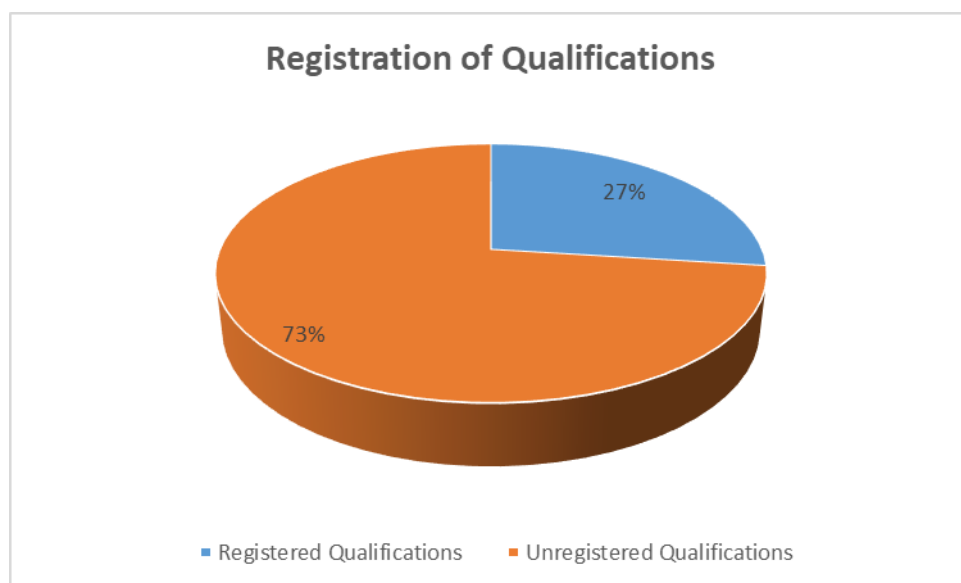


Figure 1.4 Registered Qualifications

both national and continental development priorities.

2.8.3 Registration of Graduates in the NQD

The Registration of Graduates under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is a formal process coordinated by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to record and verify individuals who have successfully completed qualifications that are accredited, aligned, and registered within the KNQF. This process ensures that graduates hold credible, nationally recognized qualifications that support employability, skills mobility, and lifelong learning pathways. KNQF Registration of Graduates is a critical pillar in promoting a credible, transparent, and skills-driven education and labour market ecosystem in Kenya. By ensuring that every graduate is registered, verified, and recorded in the National Qualifications Database (NQD)¹¹, Kenya strengthens employability, combats qualification fraud, enhances regional and global mobility, and supports national human capital development. Move the table with statistics on graduates here and adapt the numbering of the table

a) Registered Graduates

Graduates Over the Years

Year	Graduates
2009	4,998
2010	5,065
2011	4,904
2012	6,023
2013	6,654
2014	6,881
2015	7,534
2016	7,842
2017	9,085
2018	10,967
2019	13,074
2020	27,326
2021	64,652
2022	224,019
2023	23,451
2024	24,173
2025	124

¹¹ Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA). *National Qualifications Database (NQD)*. Available at: <https://nqd.knqa.go.ke/>

Table 1.5 Graduates Registration

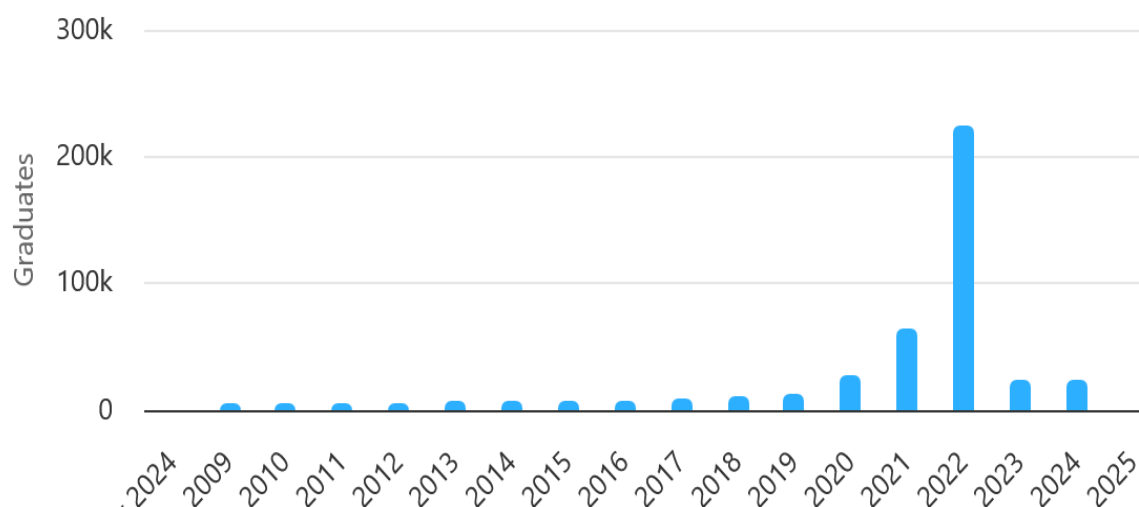


Figure 1.5 Graduates Registration over the years

2.9 Qualifications Alignment and Validation

Qualification Alignment and Validation (QAV) is a service provided by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) for the evaluation of **foreign qualifications** in accordance with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). To support this function, KNQA operationalised the **Qualification Alignment and Validation (QAV) Portal**¹² in 2021 as a dedicated digital platform for the online submission, processing and management of applications for the alignment and validation of foreign qualifications. The portal facilitates efficient application processing, document verification, qualification assessment and communication of decisions. It is distinct from the National Qualifications Database (NQD), which serves as the national register of qualifications recognised under the KNQF.

Within the QAV process, **alignment** refers to the comparison of a foreign qualification with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) to determine the level to which it is equivalent in Kenya. **Validation** refers to the verification that the qualification is authentic, was awarded by a recognised institution, and meets the prescribed requirements before a recognition decision is made. Accordingly, validation and alignment are complementary but distinct processes. Validation establishes the authenticity and credibility of a foreign qualification, while alignment determines its corresponding KNQF level. Together, these processes support the transparent, fair and consistent

¹² Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA). Qualification Alignment and Validation (QAV) Portal. Available at: <https://qa.knqa.go.ke/>

recognition of foreign qualifications for further education, employment and other lawful purposes in Kenya.

Table 1.6 presents the volume of foreign qualification applications processed through the KNQA Qualification Alignment and Validation (QAV) Portal since its operationalisation in 2021.

Alignment of Qualifications Processed on the QAV Portal

	12,744
Alignment of Qualifications Processed Manually (before the Portal)	2,927
Bulk Applications from Institutions	1,158
Validation of Qualifications	1,256
Totals	16,979

Table 1.6: Qualifications Aligned & Validated to KNQF

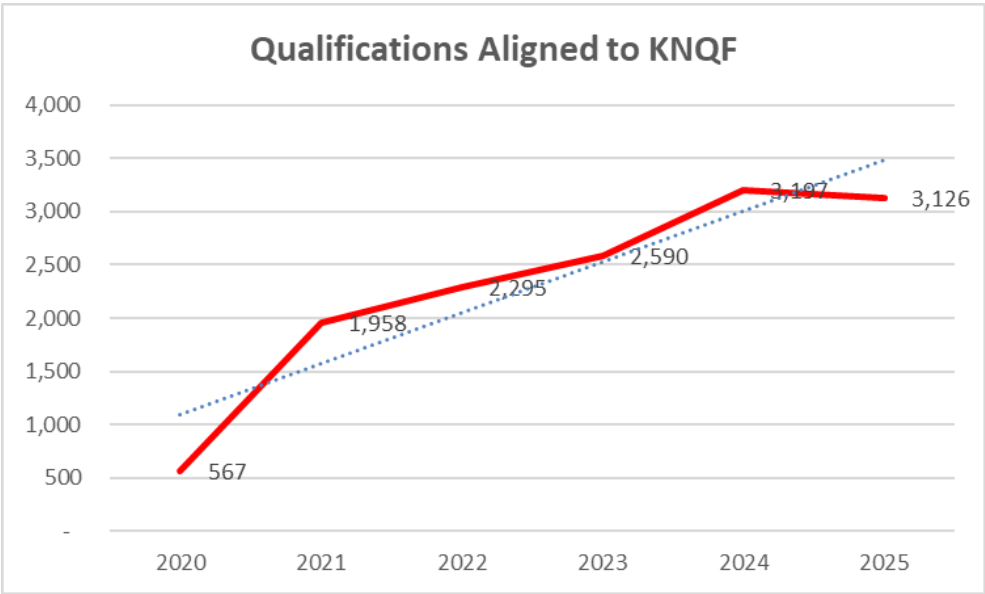


Figure 1.6 Qualifications Aligned to KNQF

b) Qualifications Aligned to KNQF Per Country of Origin

No	Country	Qualifications
----	---------	----------------

1	South Sudan	1,688
2	Somalia	1,611
3	DRC	1,115
4	Uganda	521
5	Nigeria	474
6	Tanzania	453
7	Rwanda	391
8	Burundi	260
9	Ethiopia	248
10	India	189
11	Malawi	186
12	Cameroon	135
13	Sudan	135
14	Liberia	106
15	Chad	103
16	Botswana	101
17	Zimbabwe	100
18	Comoros	88
19	Others	6,096

Table 1.7 Qualifications Aligned to KNQF Per Country of Origin

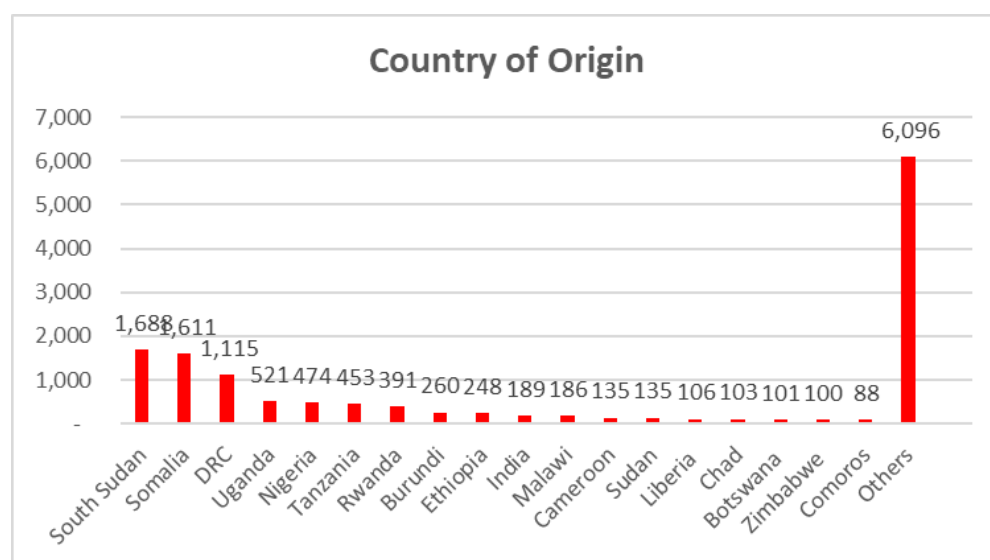


Figure 1.7 Qualifications Aligned to KNQF Per Country of Origin

2.10 Impact of the KNQF

The implementation of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) has had far-reaching and transformative impacts on the qualifications landscape in Kenya to date. As a national reference point, the KNQF provides a structured guide for educators and curriculum developers on curriculum development, the preparation of curriculum support materials, and the design of assessment tools.

The Framework has also provided clarity to learners by specifying the clear articulation and progression of qualifications, thereby enabling seamless education and career progression pathways. In the same spirit, it has provided employers with an understanding of the KNQF levels and competencies associated with different qualifications, supporting fair and informed recruitment, placement, and talent development decisions. Employers are gradually adopting KNQF Level qualifications, rather than traditional qualification types, by incorporating qualification types within a specific KNQF level that align with the appropriate skills and competencies, regardless of the sub-framework for job placement eligibility.

Education and training institutions heavily depend on the KNQF for transparent learner admissions to qualifications across the country, thereby solving the previously common issue of qualifications with different minimum entry requirements and durations, which is now a thing of the past. Additionally, when establishing membership, professional bodies rely on the KNQF to determine membership eligibility and to license members to professional bodies.

Furthermore, the Framework plays a critical role in the recognition and equation of qualifications, both locally and internationally, facilitating the mobility of learners and skilled workforce and promoting education tourism. Notably, the KNQF has enhanced access to qualifications by enabling flexible entry, re-entry, and exit points within and across the different sub-frameworks, thereby allowing permeability between pathways. This permeability, combined with support for Recognition of Prior Learning, has opened up opportunities for lifelong learning, addressed historical barriers to progression, and fostered inclusivity for all types of learning.

The NQD has provided a central platform for registering and verifying qualifications, and providing public access to all recognized and quality-assured qualifications conferred by Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs), and graduate achievements. This has significantly enhanced transparency, accessibility, and public confidence in Kenya's qualifications ecosystem.

The KNQCS, which was heavily referenced from the ISCED-F-2013 and ISCED-P-2011, has provided a harmonized and structured way of naming, classifying and coding education programmes or courses of study, thus enabling students to accumulate and transfer credit seamlessly. Overall, the KNQF has built trust in Kenya's qualifications, enhanced the quality and relevance of education and training, and positioned the Country as the destination for a globally competitive workforce.

2.11 Main Challenges

- i. **Resource Constraints:** Limited financial and human resources impact the implementation and maintenance of the NQF;
- ii. **Curriculum Alignment:** Ensuring curricula meet NQF standards consistently is challenging;
- iii. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Achieving broad stakeholder support is critical but challenging;
- iv. **Quality Assurance:** Maintaining quality across all levels requires robust mechanisms; and
- v. **Awareness:** Increasing understanding of the NQF among all stakeholders is necessary.

2.12 Plans for Further Development

In addressing the above concerns, the following issues are prioritized for further exploration to ensure optimal implementation. They include:

- i. Continuous alignment of programme or courses of study design and curriculum development to the KNQF Level Descriptors;
- ii. Strengthening Labour market occupations and Qualifications linkages;
- iii. Aligning emerging qualifications, including micro-credentials and digital badges, with the KNQF;
- iv. Embrace emerging industry concepts such as greening the KNQF.
- v. Strengthening International Comparability of Qualifications
- vi. Enhanced advocacy and capacity-building strategies to foster “buy-in” from policymakers’ involvement, continuous commitment, and persistence;
- vii. A strong institutional support base for the implementation of the KNQF in terms of both manpower and infrastructure;
- viii. Greater visibility of the KNQF on regional, continental, and global stage

CHAPTER THREE: REFERENCING CRITERIA

Referencing to the ACQF is guided by four Criteria and a set of procedures and follow-up steps defined in the Governance, procedures and follow-up steps.

Criterion 1: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

Criterion 2: The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

Criterion 3: There are transparent processes and procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in a national register(s) of qualifications.

Criteria 4: The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

3.1. Component ACQF referencing governance, procedures and follow-up

1. Responsibilities and/or legal competence of relevant national bodies involved in the ACQF referencing process are clearly defined and published by the relevant competent authorities.
2. The relevant national quality assurance bodies state their agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.
3. People from other countries who are experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in certain aspects and steps of the referencing process. Their role is advisory and supports transparency, improvement and credibility. The national referencing committee informs the ACQF Governance Structure on the involved international experts.
4. Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria.
5. The referencing outcome is published by the participating country and the ACQF network upon its final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, on the dedicated ACQF website.
6. Following the completion of referencing, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g.: certificates, diplomas,

supplements) and qualifications registers issued by the competent national authorities will contain a clear reference to the appropriate ACQF level, based on national legislation and procedures.

3.2 REFERENCING CRITERION ONE

There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the ACQF.

3.2.1 Establishing Clear and Demonstrable Link

The purpose is to establish the clear and demonstrable link between the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), qualification system levels, and the levels of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). The section is arranged as follows:

- i. Broad structural comparison of the Frameworks, overall architecture of both Frameworks, and scope, and
- ii. Technical matching with the Level-to-Level comparison of level descriptors.

3.3 Structural comparison between KNQF and ACQF

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), established under the **Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, CAP 214** and operationalised through the **Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025**, provides the national framework for the classification, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications across all education and training sectors. For the purposes of this referencing exercise, the structural comparison between the KNQF and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is based on the provisions of the KNQF Act, the KNQF (General) Regulations, 2025, and the implementation arrangements currently in force. The comparison focuses on the alignment of qualification levels, level descriptors, learning outcomes and other structural characteristics of the two frameworks.

3.3.1 KNQF Sub-Frameworks

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is organized into five independent but interrelated sub-frameworks—for Basic Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Higher Education, Professional Education and Training, and Industrial Training. Together, they form a unified and coherent system that facilitates comparability, progression, and lifelong learning.

At the foundation levels (Levels 1–4), qualifications fall mainly within the Basic Education and TVET sub-frameworks. They include Pre-primary, Primary, Junior School, and Senior Secondary Certificates, as well as Artisan and Craft Certificates. These qualifications emphasize the acquisition of foundational knowledge, literacy, numeracy, and technical competencies necessary for further education or entry into the world of work.

The intermediate levels (Levels 5–7) mark the transition from foundational to higher technical and professional education. They include Diplomas, Higher National Diplomas, and equivalent Professional Qualifications. Learners at these levels develop specialized technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and competencies for supervisory or managerial roles. The National Skills Certificates (Levels IV–VII) and Master Crafts Person designations under the Industrial Training sub-framework recognize high-level occupational proficiency and craftsmanship.

At the advanced levels (Levels 8–10), qualifications fall primarily within the Higher Education and Professional Education sub-frameworks. These include Bachelor’s Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master’s Degrees, and Doctorates, as well as advanced Professional and Post-Professional Qualifications. Learning at these levels focuses on analytical reasoning, research, innovation, and leadership within specialized fields.

The hierarchical structure of the KNQF ensures that each level builds upon the previous one, allowing for seamless progression both vertically (to higher qualifications) and horizontally (across related sectors). This interconnected design supports lifelong learning, enabling individuals to continuously upgrade their skills and qualifications in response to personal goals, professional needs, and national development priorities.

3.3.3 Objectives of the KNQF

Objectives of the KNQF are set out in Part II Regulation 6 of the KNQF (General) Regulations, 2025. The objectives of the KNQF are to—

- i. Promote national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training;
- ii. Promote lifelong learning through national and international mobility of a learner and labour;
- iii. Enable the alignment of the KNQF with international qualification frameworks
- iv. Promote relevance and responsiveness of national qualifications to the labour market needs; and
- v. Provide flexible progression and access to national qualifications

3.3.4 KNQF Levels, Level Descriptors and Credit System

The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is a national instrument for the classification of qualifications based on nationally agreed and internationally benchmarked criteria. It classifies qualifications according to learning outcomes, levels of complexity and a

nationally recognised credit system, thereby promoting transparency, comparability, learner progression and lifelong learning across all education and training sectors.

The KNQF comprises ten hierarchical qualification levels (Levels 1–10), each defined by a unique level descriptor prescribed under Part V of the First Schedule to the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025. The level descriptors define the expected learning outcomes at each qualification level by specifying what learners are expected to know, understand and be able to do upon successful completion of a qualification.

The descriptors are expressed in terms of the application of knowledge, skills and competence, reflecting the breadth, depth, complexity and sophistication of learning expected at each level. They establish the minimum learning requirements for qualifications while providing flexibility for education and training providers to design programmes appropriate to their disciplines, occupational fields and institutional mandates. Consequently, the descriptors are descriptive rather than prescriptive, allowing different qualification types to share a common set of level descriptors while recognising their distinct purposes and contexts.

The determination of a qualification's placement within the KNQF is based on its demonstrated conformity with the relevant level descriptor. Accordingly, there is one common set of level descriptors applicable across all qualification types within the KNQF, ensuring consistency in the classification and recognition of qualifications across the education and training system.

The hierarchical structure of the KNQF facilitates both vertical and horizontal progression, enabling learners to move within and across education and training sectors. This supports articulation, credit accumulation and transfer, recognition of prior learning, and lifelong learning while enhancing the transparency and comparability of Kenyan qualifications nationally, regionally and internationally.

The KNQF also operates as a credit-based qualifications framework, where a credit represents a quantitative measure of the learner workload required to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification. One credit is equivalent to ten (10) notional learning hours, comprising both contact and non-contact learning activities. Except for qualifications in Basic Education Levels 1–3 and specified Skills Level 2 programmes, qualifications must meet the minimum credit requirements prescribed under Part V of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025 before they are eligible for registration on the KNQF.

The KNQF level descriptors and minimum credit requirements provide a common national reference for the classification of qualifications, curriculum design, assessment, quality assurance, learner progression and recognition, while facilitating the comparability of Kenyan qualifications with regional and continental qualifications frameworks such as the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

3.3.5 Credit and Life Long Learning

Within the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), levels and qualifications are defined not only by learning outcomes but also by the credit system, which provides a measurable way to express the volume of learning required to achieve a qualification. Credits reflect the total learning time—both guided and independent—that a learner needs to demonstrate the prescribed competencies at a given level. They help to quantify and standardize the learning effort across programmes and institutions, making qualifications comparable, transferable, and cumulative.

The use of credits under the KNQF facilitates lifelong learning by allowing learners to accumulate and transfer credits across programmes or institutions. This supports flexible learning pathways and mobility across the education and training system. Learners can build on previously earned credits to progress vertically to higher levels or move horizontally across related fields and sectors without unnecessary repetition of learning.

In this way, the credit system serves as a bridge for recognition and progression, enabling individuals to learn at their own pace, return to education after periods of employment, and gain formal recognition for knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal, informal, or work-based learning. Through this structure, the KNQF promotes a lifelong learning culture, ensuring that all learning—regardless of where, when, or how it occurs—is valued and contributes meaningfully to personal development, employability, and national growth.

3.4 The African Continental Qualifications Framework

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is a continental policy instrument developed under the African Union to support the harmonization, comparability, and recognition of qualifications across African countries. Its primary goal is to create a coherent framework that connects national and regional qualifications systems, thereby promoting mobility, lifelong learning, and mutual recognition of skills and competencies across the continent.

The ACQF serves as a reference framework rather than a replacement for national systems. It provides a common structure of levels, descriptors, and principles that help countries align their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and ensure that qualifications are transparent and credible. Through this alignment, learners and workers can have their qualifications recognized in other African countries, facilitating academic progression, employability, and labour mobility.

The framework also supports quality assurance, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and the integration of informal and non-formal learning, promoting inclusivity and lifelong learning. Its development is anchored in the African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions “an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa” driven by its own citizens and capable human capital.

In essence, the ACQF is a strategic tool for building trust, transparency, and cooperation among African education and training systems—strengthening both intra-African and international recognition of African qualifications.\

3.4.1 Features or Architecture of the ACQF

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is built around a ten-level structure that defines learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and autonomy. These levels act as a reference point for aligning national and regional qualifications frameworks, promoting comparability and mutual recognition across Africa. The framework embraces all forms of learning—formal, non-formal, and informal— and places strong emphasis on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to value competencies gained outside traditional education settings.

A central feature of the ACQF is its commitment to lifelong learning. It enables flexible learning pathways and the accumulation and transfer of credits across education sectors and national borders, facilitating both vertical and horizontal mobility for learners and workers. This supports employability, access to further education, and regional labour mobility.

The ACQF also embeds a robust quality assurance component, requiring that qualifications and frameworks referenced to it meet common standards of credibility and relevance. Each country must demonstrate alignment between its national quality assurance mechanisms and ACQF principles through a referencing process.

Additionally, the framework envisions a continental digital qualifications platform to enhance transparency, data sharing, and access to information on qualifications and accredited institutions. Implementation is coordinated by the African Union Commission, in partnership with Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and is supported by technical guidelines and capacity-building initiatives.

Overall, the ACQF fosters trust, comparability, and cooperation among African education and training systems, advancing the goals of Agenda 2063 by building a skilled, mobile, and globally competitive African workforce.

3.4.2 Objectives of the ACQF

The objectives of the ACQF are:

- i. To support comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications and foster lifelong learning.
- ii. To facilitate validation of learning from different contexts, contribute to recognition of diplomas an certificates and support mobility (of learners, workers, services);
- iii. To work in cooperation and complementarity with national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and
- iv. systems and regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs), support NQF development, strengthen human and technical capabilities, and the creation of a common African

education and qualifications space; and

- v. To promote cooperation, trust, and mutual understanding, by means of referencing with qualifications frameworks in Africa and worldwide.

3.4.3 Scope/ Sectors

The ACQF describes ten level of learning without reference to the sectors or type of education, however it is clear to include all qualification from the formal, non-formal or informal sectors.

3.4.4 Qualification Types

The ACQF does not provide any qualification titles or types or nomenclature for each level

3.4.5 ACQF Levels and Descriptors

The African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) comprises ten levels, each defined by clear level descriptors that outline the expected learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and autonomy and responsibility. These descriptors capture the increasing depth, breadth, and complexity of learning as one progresses through the levels, illustrating the continuum and accumulation of competencies across formal, non-formal, and informal learning. They serve as continental benchmarks for referencing national and regional frameworks to the ACQF, promoting comparability, coherence, and mutual recognition of qualifications across Africa.

3.6 Summary of KNQF Level Descriptors

The Kenya National Qualifications Level descriptors are categorized according to the level, purpose, knowledge skills and competence. The level descriptors are descriptive and not prescriptive in terms of increasing complexity and demanding learning outcomes. The level of autonomy and responsibility is integrated within the specified knowledge, skills, and competence for each KNQF level.

KNQF Level	Purpose	Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
Level 1		Basic general and functional knowledge in a narrow area	Basic every day, cognitive communication and simple technical skills. performs simple tasks	Operates with very limited autonomy in simple, predictable contexts

Level 2	Basic factual, and/or technical, and procedural knowledge in a defined area.	Applies know solutions, uses simple equipment, solves predictable problems	Limited autonomy, some responsibility for own work, collaborates in teams	Performs tasks with limited autonomy
Level 3	Factual, theoretical and/or technical concepts with some depth.	Analyses and evaluates information, uses specialists, technical skills, and transfers knowledge.	Personal responsibility organizes one's own and others' work within set parameters.	Takes responsibility for the completion of tasks
Level 4	Technical and theoretical knowledge with depth in some areas or topics	Problem-solving, planning, and design skills in varied situations, specialized technical abilities	Applies concepts in contexts, coordinates teams, ensures quality outputs	Exercises self-management with some guidance
Level 5	Technical and theoretical knowledge with greater depth in field of work/learning	Advanced cognitive, technical, and creative skills to address unpredictable problems	Autonomy in complex operations, plans and evaluates team work, meets quality standards	Works independently; may supervise others
Level 6	Specialized and integrated technical/theoretical knowledge with depth in specific field	Formulates responses to complex problems, transfers specialist knowledge, applies creative techniques.	Adapts principles to varied contexts, accountable for team and personal outputs	Takes responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable contexts

Level 7	Coherent, advanced knowledge of principles, concepts and research methods	Critical thinking, advanced analysis, research design and communications skills.	Professional practice, adapts in diverse contexts, executes research/projects.	Leads and innovates in work/study contexts
Level 8	Highly specialized and advanced systematic knowledge in a discipline or professional area	Critical analysis, generates/ evaluates complex ideas, applies specialized creative or technical skills	Makes high-level judgements, plans and manages specialized functions, accountable for others work	Leads research, innovation, or high-level practice
Level 9	Mastery of theoretical knowledge and recent developments in a discipline	Designs and conducts complex research, synthesizes concepts, justifies decisions to varied audiences	High autonomy, plans substantial research, and innovates in practice	Leads in highly complex and multidisciplinary environments
Level 10	Original knowledge creation and significant contribution to the field	Generates new knowledge through original research, applies expert technical and creative skills	Intellectual independence, full responsibility, ongoing capacity to innovate and lead in knowledge creation	Exercises strategic leadership at the highest level

3.7 Comparative Analysis of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Level Descriptors

The table 1.8 below presents a side-by-side comparison of the ACQF and the KNQF Level Descriptors and It maps equivalent levels and summarizes similarities across the three domains of Knowledge, Skills, and Competence/Autonomy & Responsibility.

KNQF				ACQF			
Green = essentially the same concept, Blue = same concept expressed differently or with a different level of emphasis, Red = concept present in one framework but not explicitly reflected in the other.							
Level – Purpose	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 1 qualifies a graduate to have basic functional knowledge and skills to undertake work, further	A graduate at this level should have basic fundamental Knowledge and understanding in a narrow	A graduate at this level should have basic skills to participate in everyday life and further learning; cognitive and communication skills to receive, pass on and recall information in a narrow range of areas; and technical skills involving the use of tools appropriate to the activity and use	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for some autonomy in defined contexts and within established parameters ; and communication in contexts that may include preparation for further learning, life activities or a variety of initial routine and	Level 1	Simple knowledge, literacy and numeracy.	Simple communication, cognitive and practical skills required to follow simple instructions and use simple, repetitive solutions to address simple problems.	Highly structured, repetitive contexts under close supervision and guidance taking minimal responsibility for self.

learning and community involvement.	area of work and learning.	of basic communication technologies.	predictable work-related activities including participation in a team or work group.				
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 2 qualifies a graduate to undertake mainly routine work and as a pathway	A graduate at this level should have basic factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a defined area of work and learning.	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to access, record and act on a defined range of information from a range of sources; cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems; and technical skills to use a limited range of equipment to complete tasks involving known routines and procedures with a limited range of options.	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for some accountability for the quality of own outcomes and some responsibility for own outputs in work and learning; for limited autonomy and judgement in the completion of own defined and routine tasks in known and stable contexts; and for limited autonomy and judgement to complete routine but variable tasks in collaboration with others in a team environment.	Level 2	basic knowledge incorporating comprehension and recall of factual and operational knowledge in some areas.	basic communication, cognitive and practical skills required to use concrete information, ideas and known solutions to address straightforward problems.	structured contexts under limited supervision and guidance taking limited responsibility for self and group outcomes.
KNQF				ACQF			

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 3 qualifies a graduate to apply a broad range of knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning	A graduate at this level should have factual, technical, procedural and theoretical knowledge in an area of work and learning .	A graduate at this level should have cognitive, technical and communication skills to interpret and act on available information; cognitive and communication skills to apply and communicate known solutions to a variety of predictable problems and to deal with unforeseen contingencies using known solutions; technical and communication skills to provide technical information to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences ; and technical skills to undertake routine and some non-routine tasks in a range of skilled operations.	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for discretion and judgement in the selection of equipment, services or contingency measures ; to adapt and transfer skills and knowledge within known routines, methods, procedures and time constraints ; and in contexts that include taking responsibility for own outputs in participation in teams and taking limited responsibility for the output of others within established parameters.	Level 3	factual and operational knowledge incorporating some theoretical aspects in some areas.	a range of communication, cognitive, practical and technical skills required to interpret and communicate ideas and detailed information and select and use known solutions to address familiar problems .	predictable contexts under routine supervision and guidance , with initiative for self-responsibility and some responsibility for group outcomes .
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility

Level 4 qualifies a graduate to apply a broad range of specialized knowledge and skills in varied contexts to undertake skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.	A graduate at this level should have broad factual, technical and theoretical knowledge in a specialized field of work and learning.	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to identify, analyze, compare and act on information from a range of sources; cognitive, technical and communication skills to apply and communicate technical solutions of a non-routine or contingency nature to a defined range of predictable and unpredictable problems; specialist technical skills to complete routine and non-routine tasks and functions; and communication skills to guide activities and provide technical advice in work and learning.	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills to specialized tasks or functions in known or changing contexts; for responsibility for own functions and outputs, and may have limited responsibility for organization of others; and for limited responsibility for the quantity and quality of the output of others in a team within limited parameters.	Level 4	Mainly factual, operational or technical knowledge incorporating theoretical aspects in one or more areas.	Well-developed technical skills required to analyse information and new ideas, make informed judgements, communicate outcomes and apply varied solutions to varied (familiar and unfamiliar) problems.	Varied (predictable and unpredictable) contexts with adaptability and initiative for self-direction under general guidance, taking full responsibility for self, some planning and responsibility for group outcomes and initiative for responsibility for others.
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 5 qualifies a graduate to	A graduate at this level should have	A graduate at this level should have cognitive and communication skills to identify,	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills to transfer	Level 5	Mainly technical or theoretical	A range of well-developed technical skills, with some	Unpredictable contexts with full autonomy and full

apply integrated technical and theoretical concepts in a broad range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning.	technical and theoretical knowledge and concepts, with depth in some areas within a field of work and learning.	analyze, synthesize and act on information from a range of sources; cognitive, technical and communication skills to analyse, plan, design and evaluate approaches to unpredictable problems and/or management requirements; specialist technical and creative skills to express ideas and perspectives; and communication skills to transfer knowledge and specialized skills to others and demonstrate understanding of knowledge.	and apply theoretical concepts, technical or creative skills in a range of situations; for personal responsibility and autonomy in performing complex technical operations with responsibility for own outputs in relation to broad parameters for quantity and quality; and for initiative and judgment to organize the work of self and others and plan, coordinate and evaluate the work of teams within broad but generally well-defined parameters.		knowledge with substantial depth in a discipline/are a.	specialisation, required to analyse information and new ideas, construct and communicate a coherent argument, and apply a range of solutions, often in combination, to address unfamiliar problems.	responsibility for self and group outcomes, and some responsibility for others.
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 6 qualifies a graduate to apply specialized	A graduate at this level should have specialized and integrated	A graduate at this level should have cognitive and communication skills to identify, analyze, synthesize and act on information from a range of	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for depth in areas of specialization, in contexts subject to change; for initiative	Level 6	Highly technical or theoretical knowledge, with	Highly technical and specialised skills required to collate, analyse, synthesise and communicate a range of	Highly variable contexts with well-developed autonomy and responsibility for

knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway for further learning.	technical and theoretical knowledge with depth within one or more fields of work and learning.	sources; cognitive and communication skills to transfer knowledge and skills to others and to demonstrate understanding of specialized knowledge with depth in some areas; cognitive and communication skills to formulate responses to complex problems; and wide-ranging specialized technical, creative or conceptual skills to express ideas and perspectives.	and judgment in planning, design, technical or management functions with some direction; to adapt a range of fundamental principles and complex techniques to known and unknown situations; and across a broad range of technical or management functions with accountability for personal outputs and personal and team outcomes within broad parameters.		specialization in a discipline/are a.	information and new ideas, and formulate or adapt different solutions to address complex and sometimes abstract problems.	self and group outcomes and responsibility for resources and processes.
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 7 qualifies a graduate to apply a body of knowledge in a specific context to	A graduate at this level should have coherent and advanced knowledge of the underlying	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to review, analyze, consolidate and synthesize knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problems with intellectual independence; cognitive and	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for initiative and judgment in professional practice and/or scholarship; to adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts; for	Level 7	Advanced analytical and/or specialised knowledge of a	Advanced, specialised skills required to demonstrate advanced analysis and initiative for new insights and ideas in research and/or innovation, and	Complex and variable contexts with advanced autonomy and responsibility.

undertake professional work and as a pathway for research and further learning	principles and concepts in one or more disciplines and knowledge of research principles and methods.	technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with advanced understanding in some areas; cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgment in developing new understanding; technical skills to design and use research in a project; and communication skills to present a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences.	responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters; to plan and execute project work or a piece of research and scholarship with some independence.		discipline/are a.	formulate advanced solutions to address highly abstract problems.	
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 8 qualifies a graduate to apply a body of knowledge in a range of	A graduate at this level should have advanced knowledge within a	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to review, analyze, consolidate and synthesize knowledge and identify and provide solutions to complex problems; cognitive	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills to make high level, independent judgements in a range of technical or management functions in	Level 8	Highly advanced, complex knowledge of a	Highly advanced, complex skills required to demonstrate highly advanced analysis, communicate new insights and ideas in	Highly complex contexts with some specialisation demonstrating highly advanced

contexts to undertake professional or highly skilled work and as a pathway for further learning.	systematic and coherent body of knowledge that may include the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills in a new or existing discipline or professional area.	skills to think critically and to generate and evaluate complex ideas; specialized technical and creative skills in a field of highly skilled or professional practice; communication skills to demonstrate an understanding of theoretical concepts; and communication skills to transfer complex knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences.	varied specialized contexts; to initiate, plan, implement and evaluate broad functions within varied specialized technical or creative contexts; and for responsibility and accountability for personal outputs and all aspects of the work or function of others within broad parameters.		discipline/are a.	research and/or innovation, and formulate highly advanced solutions to address highly complex and abstract problems.	autonomy and responsibility.
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 9 qualifies a graduate to apply an advanced body	A graduate at this level should have a body of knowledge	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for creativity and initiative to new situations in professional practice	Level 9	Mastery of a complex body of knowledge at the forefront	skills mastery required to demonstrate originality and new insights	Highly specialised contexts demonstrating mastery in autonomy and responsibility.

of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.	that includes the understanding of recent developments in a discipline or area of professional practice; and knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to a field of work or learning.	professional practice or scholarship; cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyze and synthesize complex information, problems, concepts and theories and to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice; cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level; communication and technical research skills to justify and interpret theoretical propositions, methodologies, conclusions and professional decisions to specialist and non-specialist audiences; and technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyze and theorize about developments that	or for further learning; for high level personal autonomy and accountability; and to plan and execute a substantial research-based project, capstone experience or piece of scholarship.		of a discipline/are a.	in research and/or innovation and formulate and test theories to show mastery of highly complex, abstract problems.	
---	--	--	--	--	------------------------	---	--

		contribute to professional practice or scholarship.					
KNQF				ACQF			
Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competence	Level	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy & Responsibility
Level 10 qualifies a graduate to apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge, in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice	A graduate at this level should have a substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitutes an original contribution; and substantial knowledge of research	A graduate at this level should have cognitive skills to demonstrate an expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice; cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge; expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning; communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions,	A graduate at this level should demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills for intellectual independence; for initiative and creativity in new situations or for further learning; for full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs; to plan and execute original research; and to have an ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice.	Level 10	Substantial and original knowledge contribution that extends the forefront of a discipline/are a and/or at the interface between disciplines/areas.	Expert skills and techniques that demonstrate innovation, interpretation and creation of new ideas required to critically evaluate, formulate and test theories to address emergent, new and critical problems.	Emergent new contexts demonstrating expertise in management of new ideas.

	principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning.	methodologies and conclusions; communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peers and the community; and expert skills to design, implement, analyze, theorize and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice.					
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Table 1.8: Comparative Analysis of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Level Descriptors

3.8 Differences and Similarities

From the foregoing analysis of the key elements of both frameworks, several similarities and differences emerge. While both aim to promote comparability, quality, and lifelong learning through clearly defined levels and descriptors, variations arise from their distinct contexts and purposes. These differences are therefore understandable and expected, reflecting each framework's unique mandate, scope, and national or continental focus.

3.8.1 Key Similarities and Differences

Table 1.9 provides description of the key similarities and differences between the KNQF and the ACQF.

Similarities	
1	Both frameworks promote comparability, transparency, and quality assurance of qualifications.
2	Each framework is structured into hierarchical levels that reflect progression across all forms of learning — formal, non-formal, and informal.
3	Both use learning outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, and competences/ autonomy/responsibility.
4	Their level descriptors are generic and neutral to accommodate diverse sectors and disciplines.
5	Both frameworks promote lifelong learning, mobility, and integration between education and training sectors.
Differences	

1	The KNQF is a national framework for regulation, coordination, and quality assurance in Kenya, while the ACQF is a continental framework for referencing and comparability among African countries, i.e., acts as a translational instrument to the NQFs.
2	The KNQF comprises ten levels , aligned to Kenya's education and training sub-frameworks, while the ACQF also has ten levels but

	provides a continental benchmark for referencing NQFs rather than prescribing national qualifications.
3	The KNQF explicitly specifies qualification types and titles at each level, whereas the ACQF does not prescribe qualification titles.
4	The KNQF incorporates a credit accumulation and transfer system , while the ACQF serves as a referencing tool without a credit mechanism.
5	The KNQF level descriptors are contextualized to Kenya's sub-frameworks (Basic Education, TVET, Higher, Professional, and Industrial Training), whereas the ACQF descriptors are broader and generalized for continental applicability.
6	The KNQF directly supports national regulatory, recognition, and accreditation processes; the ACQF focuses on mutual recognition, policy alignment , and capacity development across Africa.
7	Ethical and personal competencies are more explicitly embedded in the KNQF, while the ACQF maintains a broader focus on knowledge, skills, and autonomy.

Table 1.9 Similarities and differences between the KNQF and the ACQF.

3.8.2 Summary of Similarities and Differences by Qualification Level

Level	Similarities	Differences
1	Both describe basic functional knowledge, simple skills for everyday life, minimal autonomy.	KNQF links to Primary Certificate and 'skills for life'; ACQF focuses on basic literacy/numeracy without qualification names.
2	Basic factual and procedural knowledge, ability to follow routines, limited autonomy.	KNQF ties to NSC-III/GTT-III/NVC-I; ACQF uses generic outcome-based description without national award titles.

3	Technical and theoretical knowledge with some depth, ability to solve predictable problems, moderate autonomy.	KNQF includes organizing work of self and others; ACQF highlights analysis/synthesis in familiar contexts without explicit team coordination.
4	Broader technical knowledge, problem-solving in varied contexts, responsibility for quality outputs.	KNQF specifies Artisan Certificate/GTT-I; ACQF emphasizes adaptability to known and unpredictable contexts without qualification names.
5	Substantial technical/theoretical knowledge, advanced problem-solving, autonomy in complex operations.	KNQF links to National Craft Certificate; ACQF focuses on integrating cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills.
6	Specialized knowledge, complex problem-solving, accountability for self and team outputs.	KNQF specifies Diplomas; ACQF stresses integrated specialized knowledge and adaptability without formal titles.
7	Advanced knowledge of principles/concepts, research capability, critical thinking.	KNQF ties to Bachelor's Degree; ACQF uses broader professional scope and research orientation without national award terms.
9	Mastery of theoretical knowledge, advanced research capability, innovation in practice.	KNQF specifies Master's Degree; ACQF describes research leadership and originality without naming specific degrees.
10	Frontier knowledge, original contribution to field, high intellectual independence.	KNQF specifies Doctorate; ACQF adds emphasis on societal impact and international standards.

Table 1.10: Summary of Similarities and Differences by Qualification Level

3.9 Establishing the Link Between KNQF and ACQF Levels

The referencing of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) to the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is based on a systematic comparison of level descriptors. Both frameworks are structured into ten levels and use learning outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, and competence (KNQF) or knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility (ACQF).

KNQF Level	ACQF Level	Correspondence Decision	Basis of Correspondence
Level 1	Level 1	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe foundational knowledge, basic skills and guided responsibility.
Level 2	Level 2	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe basic operational knowledge, routine skills and limited responsibility.
Level 3	Level 3	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe factual and theoretical knowledge, practical skills and responsibility for tasks.
Level 4	Level 4	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe broad knowledge, problem-solving skills and responsibility in familiar contexts.
Level 5	Level 5	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe specialised knowledge, technical skills and autonomy in defined work or study contexts.
Level 6	Level 6	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe advanced knowledge, analytical skills and responsibility for decision-making.
Level 7	Level 7	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe advanced knowledge, research-informed practice and professional responsibility.
Level 8	Level 8	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe highly specialised knowledge, critical analysis and leadership responsibility.
Level 9	Level 9	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe mastery of knowledge, advanced research capability and high-level autonomy.
Level 10	Level 10	Direct correspondence	Both frameworks describe original knowledge creation, advanced research and full intellectual independence.

Table 1.11 demonstrates that the ten levels of the KNQF correspond directly to the ten levels of the ACQF. The correspondence is based on comparison of level descriptors rather than qualification titles. This is important because the ACQF does not prescribe qualification types such as certificates, diplomas or degrees; it provides level descriptors only. The KNQF, as a national framework, assigns qualification types within its national system, while the ACQF functions as a continental reference framework for transparency, comparability and recognition.

3.10 Conceptual comparison of the KNQF and ACQF

Correspondence & Similarities:

- i. Underpinned by AU's Agenda 2063, CESA:2016-2025 & AfCFTA);
- ii. Designed to support recognition, quality, transparency and comparability of qualifications;
- iii. Learning Outcomes based; Assessment based;
- iv. Three (3) learning domains (knowledge, Skills & competencies/Autonomy & responsibility);
- v. Underpinned by Quality Assurance.

3.10.1 Deviations/ Differences:

- i. ACQF defines domains to specify **content & scope, type of skill & how/where it's used and context and extent** of application of autonomy and responsibility before description of each level;
- ii. KNQF did not define the domains but stated the purpose and description of each level;
- iii. ACQF captures the nuances of the domains concisely and explicitly;

Level descriptors define the expected learning outcomes, including the knowledge, skills and competencies (or autonomy and responsibility), that learners are expected to demonstrate at each qualification level.

Table 1.12 below compares the level structures and descriptors of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

S/No.	Theme	KNQF	ACQF	Comparison
-------	-------	------	------	------------

1	Level structure of the NQF.	• 10- Level structure (1-10) descriptors organized in hierarchy of complexity; depth, & learning outcomes that increases from lowest to highest level; • Learning outcomes-based; • Assessment based; • Each level is defined by set of learning Outcomes; • Designed to facilitate progression from lower level to high/complex levels; • The levels are integrated with all the sectors/pathways; • Recognition & comparability of qualifications Each level is defined by set of learning Outcomes; • Designed to facilitate progression from lower level to high/complex levels; • levels are integrated with all the sectors/pathways; • Recognition/comparability of qualifications.	• 10- Level structure (1-10) descriptors organized in hierarchy of complexity; depth, & learning outcomes that increases from lowest to highest; • Learning outcomes-based; • Assessment based;	Similar
2	Domains of Level descriptors.	Comprises 3 domains: • Knowledge; • Skills; • Competencies	Comprises 3 domains: • Knowledge; • Skills • Autonomy & responsibility	One domain is not Similar

3	Qualifications map;	Qualification Levels: ● Level 1-2: Basic education (6-3- 3) & foundational skills; ● Level 3-4: Vocational training & technical qualifications; ● Level 5-7: Higher education Craft Certificates, diplomas & undergraduate degrees; ● Level 8-10: Postgraduate & professional certifications. ● Learning Domains- ● Academic: Degree, Diplomas & Certificates; ● Vocational Certificates; ● Professional Certificates ● Learning outcomes & competences; ● Progression Aligned to RQFs & ACQF	ACQF policy document does not define qualifications types per level or progression	Different
---	---------------------	--	--	-----------

Table 1.12 Overall analysis of the KNQF and ACQF Level Structures and Descriptors

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: CRITERION TWO

The national qualifications frameworks or systems are based on learning outcomes principles and related to arrangements for recognition of prior learning (including non-formal and informal) and, where appropriate, to credit systems.

4.1 Learning Outcomes Approach

The KNQF is fundamentally based on a learning outcomes approach, consistent with the principles of the ACQF. All qualifications registered on the KNQF are required to be expressed in terms of clearly defined, measurable learning outcomes aligned to KNQF level descriptors. Since 2021, all newly developed or reviewed qualifications are outcomes-based. This requirement applies across all five sub-frameworks — Basic Education, TVET, Higher Education, Professional Education and Training, and Industrial Training. See Section 2.5.3 of this report for the full legal and regulatory basis for the learning outcomes approach. In each sub-system, learning outcomes are used as follows: in basic education, outcomes inform curriculum design and competency-based assessment under the CBC framework; in TVET, outcomes form the basis for competency standards developed and administered by TVETA and TVET CDACC; in higher education, outcomes are required in all programme documentation submitted for accreditation to CUE; in professional education, outcomes underpin the competency standards set by professional regulatory bodies; in industrial training, outcomes are the basis for occupational standards and trade testing administered by NITA.

4.2 Lifelong Learning and Permeability between Sub-Systems

The KNQF is designed to promote lifelong learning by enabling flexible entry, re-entry, and exit points at all levels of the framework. The credit-based structure of the KNQF facilitates the accumulation and transfer of learning across programmes, institutions, and sub-frameworks. Learners may enter or re-enter at the appropriate KNQF level based on their prior qualifications, recognised prior learning, or accumulated credits. Progression is possible both vertically — from lower to higher KNQF levels — and horizontally — between related fields of study or sub-frameworks.

Permeability between sub-systems is enabled through the unified level structure of the KNQF, which ensures that a qualification at Level 5, for example, carries equivalent standing whether

awarded in the TVET, higher education, or professional sub-framework. Where specific articulation agreements between sub-systems are not yet fully formalised, this is acknowledged as an area for further development (see Section 3.1: Plans for Further Development).

4.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The KNQF provides for the recognition of learning acquired outside formal education settings through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework. The RPL Policy Framework, published by the Ministry of Education in 2024, provides the national policy basis for RPL across all education and training sub-systems. RPL enables individuals to have their knowledge, skills, and competences — however acquired — formally assessed against KNQF level descriptors and, where appropriate, awarded credits or qualifications.

RPL arrangements are in place across sub-systems: TVET institutions offer RPL pathways for learners with informal or non-formal occupational experience; NITA facilitates recognition of workplace learning through the trade testing system; and KNQA coordinates RPL standards nationally.

4.3.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Graduates

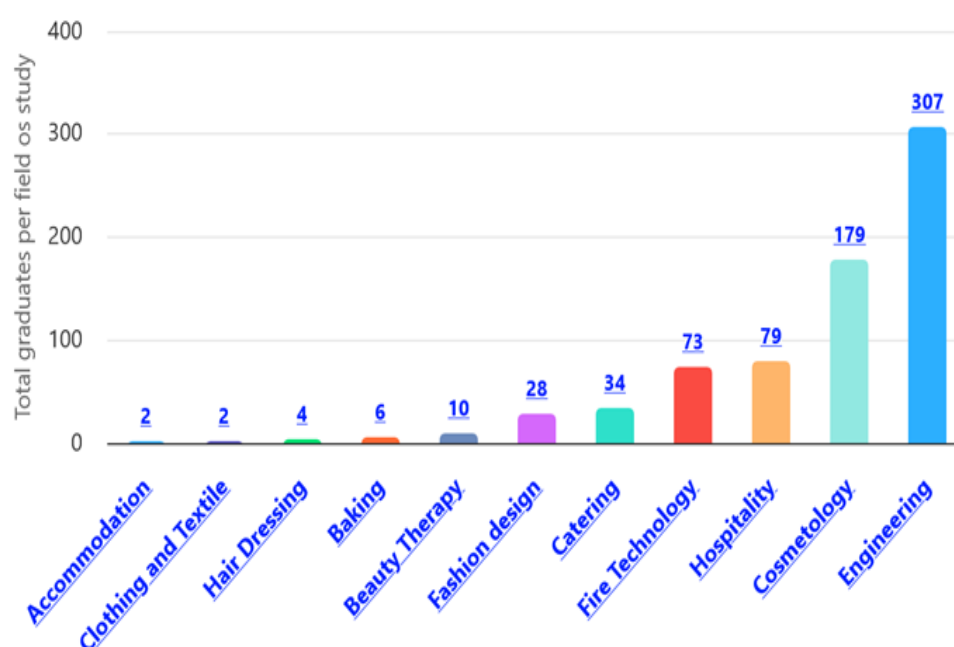


Figure 1.8 RPL graduates per field of study

Category	Fields of Study
Accommodation	2
Clothing and Textile	2
Hair Dressing	4
Baking	6
Beauty Therapy	10
Fashion design	28
Catering	34
Fire Technology	73
Hospitality	79
Cosmetology	179
Engineering	307

Table 1.13 Recognition of Prior Learning Graduates Per Field of Study

4.3.2 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Graduates Per Qualification Awarding Body (QAB)

Category	Graduates
Eldoret National Polytechnic	16
Kitale National polytechnic	59
Sigalagala National Polytechnic	60
Nyeri National Polytechnic	589

Table 1.14 Recognition of Prior Learning Graduates Per Qualification Awarding Body

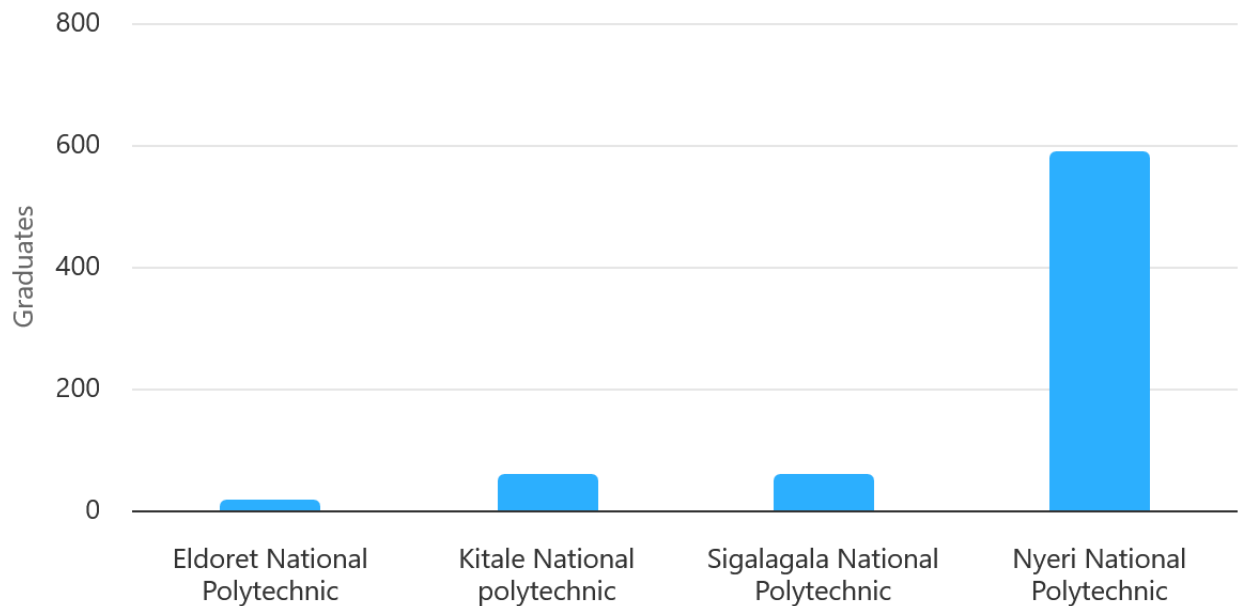


Figure 1.9 Recognition of Prior Learning Graduates Per Qualification Awarding Body

4.4 Credit Accumulation and Transfer (KCATS)

The Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATS) operationalises the credit dimension of Criterion 2. Under the KNQF, one credit equals ten notional hours of learning — both contact and non-contact time [KNQF (General) Regulations 2025, Part V]. Every qualification registered on the KNQF, except those at basic education Levels 1–3 and skills Level 2 programmes, is assigned a minimum credit value. KCATS enables learners to accumulate credits across programmes and institutions and transfer those credits towards a qualification, supporting flexible learning pathways and reducing unnecessary repetition of learning. RPL outcomes may also be expressed as credits under KCATS, creating a direct link between prior learning recognition and formal credit accumulation.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE: CRITERION THREE

There are transparent processes and procedures for including qualifications in the NQF or for describing the place of qualifications in the NQS and information on qualifications is accessible, trustworthy and verifiable in national register(s) of qualifications.

5.1 Purpose and Context of Criterion 3

Criterion 3 examines the mechanisms through which qualifications are classified within the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), the procedures used to determine their placement within the Framework, and the arrangements for ensuring that qualification information is transparent, accessible, trustworthy and verifiable. It also demonstrates how Kenya has established a nationally coordinated system for the registration of qualifications and recognised Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs), thereby promoting confidence in qualifications, facilitating learner and worker mobility, and supporting national, regional and continental recognition.

5.2 Legal and Policy Framework

Kenya has established transparent, structured and quality-assured processes for the inclusion of qualifications in the KNQF. The legal basis for these processes is provided under Section 8(b) of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act (Cap. 214), which mandates the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to establish an accreditation system for qualifications, and Section 8(e), which mandates the Authority to establish, maintain and continuously update the National Qualifications Database (NQD). These provisions are operationalised through the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025, which prescribe the procedures for the recognition of Qualification Awarding Bodies, registration of qualifications, assignment of KNQF levels and publication of registered qualifications in the National Qualifications Database.

5.3 Procedures for Including Qualifications in the KNQF

The procedures for including qualifications in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) are described in detail in Section 2.7.2 (*Registration of Qualifications in the KNQF*).

Qualifications are included in the KNQF through a transparent and quality-assured registration process administered by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), which ensures that all qualifications satisfy the prescribed requirements before they are registered on the National Qualifications Database (NQD)

The process comprises six key stages:

1. Institutional eligibility confirmation and recognition of the Qualification Awarding Body;
2. Qualification development and alignment with the KNQF level descriptors;
3. Submission of the qualification through the National Qualifications Database (NQD) portal;
4. Technical evaluation, validation and assignment of the appropriate KNQF level;
5. Approval by the KNQA Qualifications Committee; and
6. Registration of the qualification and publication in the National Qualifications Database.

5.4 Classification and Level Placement of Qualifications

Qualifications registered under the KNQF are classified into ten qualification levels based on learning outcomes. Level placement is undertaken through systematic comparison of qualification learning outcomes against the KNQF level descriptors contained in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025. The evaluation considers the knowledge, skills and competence associated with each qualification to ensure consistency, comparability and integrity of qualification levels across all education and training sub-systems.

5.5 Trust, Quality Assurance and Integrity of Level Placement

The integrity of qualification classification and level placement is safeguarded through multiple quality assurance mechanisms involving sector regulators, professional bodies and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority. Qualifications undergo accreditation, technical evaluation, validation and external quality assurance before registration. These mechanisms ensure that qualifications are assigned to KNQF levels solely on the basis of demonstrated learning outcomes and compliance with national quality assurance requirements.

5.6 National Qualifications Database (NQD)

The National Qualifications Database (NQD)¹³ is Kenya's official national register of recognised qualifications and Qualification Awarding Bodies established pursuant to Section 8(e) of the KNQF Act (Cap. 214). The database provides a publicly accessible platform through which qualifications, Qualification Awarding Bodies and graduate records can be searched and verified.

The NQD contains information on:

- Registered qualifications;
- Recognised Qualification Awarding Bodies;
- KNQF qualification levels;
- Credits and learning outcomes;
- Accreditation status; and
- Graduate records.

The NQD promotes transparency, protects the integrity of qualifications, supports verification of credentials and facilitates national, regional and international recognition of Kenyan qualifications. The NQD is integrated with the ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform to support cross-border recognition and comparison of qualifications at continental level.

5.7 Accessibility, Transparency and Verification

The National Qualifications Database is publicly accessible and enables learners, employers, regulatory bodies, education institutions and international stakeholders to verify qualifications and recognised Qualification Awarding Bodies. The availability of verified qualification information promotes public confidence, reduces qualification fraud and supports implementation of the UNESCO Addis Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in Africa.

¹³ Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA). *National Qualifications Database (NQD)*. Available at: <https://nqd.knqa.go.ke/>.

5.8 Alignment with ACQF Principles

Kenya's qualification registration and classification system is consistent with the principles of the African Continental Qualifications Framework. Transparent procedures for qualification registration, objective assignment of qualification levels based on learning outcomes, publicly accessible qualification information and digital verification through the National Qualifications Database collectively support transparency, comparability, credibility and recognition of qualifications across Africa.

6.0. CHAPTER SIX: REFERENCING CRITERION FOUR

The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF). Kenya has established a systematic and holistic quality assurance (QA) process that covers the entire qualifications lifecycle—from the design of occupational standards and learning outcomes to delivery, assessment, certification, and recognition of qualifications.

6.1. Addressing the Qualifications Quality Chain

The QA system spans the full quality chain, ensuring coherence between qualifications design, curriculum development, assessment, and certification. It is implemented collaboratively through statutory agencies such as the Commission for University Education (CUE), the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA). As of 2026, **72 Qualifications Awarding Bodies (QABs)** had been registered and **2,606 qualifications** formally entered on the NQD, reflecting a growing ecosystem of accredited and quality-assured qualifications across all education and training sectors.

6.2. Application of the Learning Outcomes Approach

Kenya's qualifications system is grounded in the learning outcomes approach, which guides the formulation, assessment, and validation of qualifications. Since 2021, all newly developed or reviewed qualifications have been outcomes-based, aligning with both the KNQF and ACQF principles. This alignment enhances transparency, portability, and comparability of qualifications nationally and continentally.

6.3. Continuous Feedback and Quality Improvement

Continuous improvement is embedded through mechanisms such as tracer studies, labour market surveys, stakeholder consultations, and evaluations of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiatives. The **National Qualifications Database (NQD)** currently captures data on **over 640,000 graduates**, providing an evidence base for monitoring skills supply and institutional performance. These insights feed back into standards review and qualification renewal cycles, ensuring that qualifications remain responsive to industry and labour market needs.

6.4. Internal and External Quality Assurance

The QA system integrates both internal and external processes. Internal QA is managed by individual institutions through self-evaluation and compliance audits, while external QA is conducted by regulatory agencies. Regular institutional audits by CUE and TVETA uphold compliance with accreditation standards. To date, over 80% of TVET institutions have adopted competency-based standards and quality assurance instruments validated by KNQA, demonstrating strong institutional alignment with national and continental QA norms.

6.5. Standards, Guidelines, and Resources

Kenya's QA framework is anchored on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines that define institutional performance expectations and quality benchmarks. Resource allocation for QA implementation has grown steadily, with increased investment in capacity-building for assessors, verifiers, and QA practitioners across the education and training spectrum.

6.6. Transparency and Information Sharing

KNQA promotes transparency through public access to the National Qualifications Database, annual QA status reports, and dissemination of audit findings. These instruments ensure accountability and public confidence in the quality of Kenyan qualifications.

6.7. Alignment with AU Policy Orientations

The national QA framework is harmonized with **African Union policy orientations**, including the *African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA)*. Collaboration between KNQA, CUE, and regional networks has strengthened alignment of Kenya's QA practices with continental standards.

6.8. Governance and Stakeholder Involvement

Governance procedures for referencing are participatory and transparent. The referencing process has actively engaged **over 150 stakeholders** representing education regulators, industry bodies, professional associations, and academia. Their contributions have informed evidence-based mapping of Kenya's QA system to the ACQF principles and ensured national ownership of the referencing outcomes.

6.9 The Quality Assurance System in Education and Training

The quality assurance system of education and training in Kenya is the responsibility of agencies with different but interconnected and complementary functions which include KNQA, CUE, TVETA, TVET CDACC and KICD. The functions include, among others, regulatory functions, quality assurance (QA) functions on Training institutions, qualification awarding bodies, training and qualification recognition functions (see Figure 1.9).

Ministry of Education is the primary regulator for the establishment and registration of education and training institutions and the approval of their programs. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection's role focuses on the aspect of industrial training and skills development, particularly through the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA).

Quality assurance of higher Education is carried out by various QA bodies, namely, the KNQA, CUE, TVETA, TVET CDACC and KICD DSD and the professional bodies such as KISEB, CHRP, CIPS, KASNEB, and ISPAK which implement the standards in the professional training.



Figure 1.9 of quality assurance system in education and training

The recognition function is conducted by authorized bodies, depending on the purpose of recognition. These purposes may include employment (e.g., the Public Service and/or Private sector), further education and educational funding (e.g., the Higher Education Fund Corporation and the Skills Development Fund Corporation), and professional practice. Quality

assurance (QA) outcomes are vital for regulatory and recognition bodies to make informed decisions within their respective mandates. In certain instances, regulatory, QA, and recognition responsibilities are vested in a single organization. For professional bodies, this involves ensuring the quality of programmes within their jurisdiction and recognizing qualified individuals for professional practice.

6.10 KNQF Quality Assurance System

The Quality Assurance (QA) system of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) consists of four key components (see Figure 1.10) The first component is the framework, which serves as the overarching benchmark defining Kenya's qualifications system.

The second component comprises the standards in higher education and training, which provide operational benchmarks reflecting diverse learning contexts and orientations within the national system.

The third component involves the implementation of audits and assessments to ensure quality in line with established standards.

The fourth component is qualification referencing, through which QA outcomes are made accessible to various stakeholders, both within and outside the country, for relevant purposes.

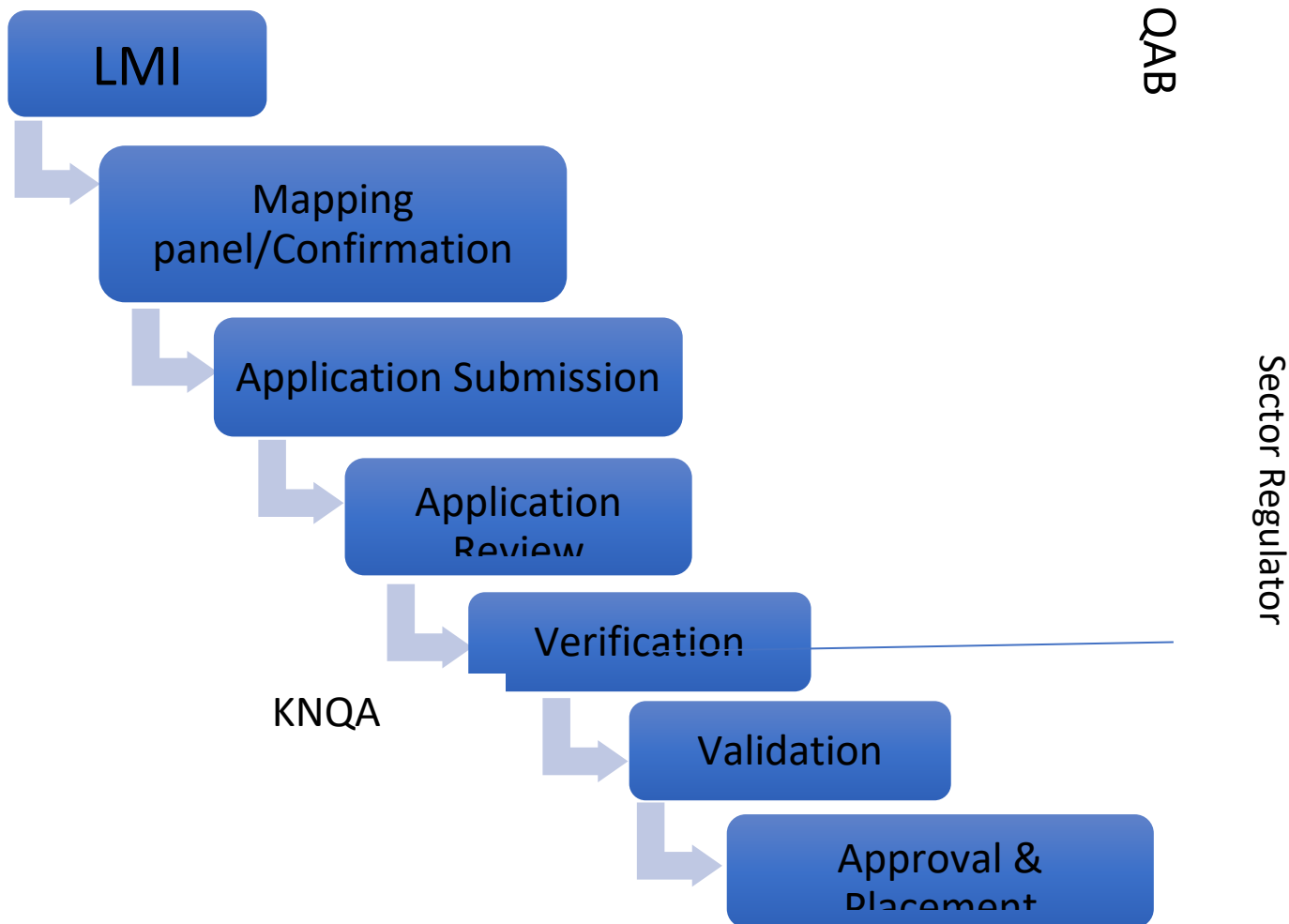


Figure1.10 Quality system in education and training

Learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities that learners are expected to acquire and demonstrate after completing a course or training programme. They serve as reference points for maintaining educational quality and standards, guiding curriculum design, teaching and learning processes, credit allocation, and student evaluation.

These elements are closely linked and mutually reinforcing, ensuring alignment with national priorities, policies, and international best practices. Effective implementation depends on the active participation of key stakeholders, including policymakers, quality assurance professionals, subject-matter experts, industry representatives, and institutions of education and training.

Through this KNQF-based quality assurance framework, the KNQA is able to establish a coherent and credible national qualifications system that is widely recognized and trusted both domestically and internationally.

6.11 Standards, Criteria and Guidelines for Accreditation and Alignment of qualifications

6.11.1 Accreditation (of Institutions / Qualifications)

From the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025 (“2025 Regulations”)¹⁴

- Regulation 38(1): An **Accreditation System on Qualifications** is established under the Authority.
- Regulation 39 sets out “Requirements for accreditation” and states that when accrediting a body/institution or programme, the sub-sector regulator shall have regard to:
 - i. statutory mandate to award a qualification and governance structures of the institution as specified in the Quality Standards (Sixth Schedule)
 - ii. approval by relevant professional body or industry regulatory body (where applicable)
 - iii. a hierarchy of qualifications defining articulation and progression within the national qualifications’ framework
 - iv. institutional infrastructure for governance, financing, operations and quality assurance (as specified in the Sixth Schedule)
 - v. procedures for assessment or examination of learning outcomes on qualifications as specified in the Quality Standards (Sixth Schedule)
- Under the earlier 2018 Regulations (Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations, 2018) (now repealed):

¹⁴ <https://knqa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/L.-N.-94-The-Kenya-National-Qualifications-Framework-ActGeneral-Regulations.pdf>

- Regulation 5(1): When considering an application for accreditation, the Authority had regard to criteria including:
 - (a) the consistency of subject qualifications with respective learning levels; (b) suitability of entry requirements; (c) appropriate training / instruction; (d) exit points; (e) relevance of a qualification to industry, enterprise, law or community; (f) regulator/professional body's approval or industry standards; (g) specific course assessment strategies including (i) validity, reliability, flexibility; (ii) authenticity and verifiable evidence; (iii) consistency with assessment guidelines; (iv) compliance with statutory, workplace, regulatory requirements; (v) workplace attachment; (vi) supportive delivery mode; (vii) specialized facilities and resources; (viii) competence of trainers/assessors; (ix) course monitoring and evaluation.
- The Second Schedule ("Quality Standards") of these 2018 Regulations gives detailed standards covering planning, governance, curricula, assessments, foreign qualifications etc.

6.12.1 Alignment & Validation of Qualifications

From the 2025 Regulations

- Regulation 4(1): The Authority shall develop a National Policy Framework, **Standards, Guidelines and Procedures** for alignment and validation of qualifications.
- Regulation 4(3): Applications for alignment shall be in accordance with the "First Schedule".
- The earlier 2018 Regulations (and KNQA website) also specify that for alignment of qualifications into the framework, the Authority acts under Section 10(1) of the Act.

Regulation 39 sets out "Requirements for accreditation" and states that when accrediting a body/institution or programme, the sub-sector regulator shall have regard to:

- (a) statutory mandate to award a qualification and governance structures of the institution as specified in the Quality Standards (Sixth Schedule)
- (b) approval by relevant professional body or industry regulatory body (where applicable)
- (c) a hierarchy of qualifications defining articulation and progression within the national qualifications framework

- (d) institutional infrastructure for governance, financing, operations and quality assurance (as specified in the Sixth Schedule)
- (e) procedures for assessment or examination of learning outcomes on qualifications as specified in the Quality Standards (Sixth Schedule)
- (f) a quality assurance system...

Under the earlier 2018 Regulations (Kenya National Qualifications Framework Regulations, 2018) (now repealed) :

- Regulation 5(1): When considering an application for accreditation, the Authority had regard to criteria including:
 - (a) the consistency of subject qualifications with respective learning levels; (b) suitability of entry requirements; (c) appropriate training / instruction; (d) exit points; (e) relevance of a qualification to industry, enterprise, law or community; (f) regulator/professional body's approval or industry standards; (g) specific course assessment strategies including (i) validity, reliability, flexibility; (ii) authenticity and verifiable evidence; (iii) consistency with assessment guidelines; (iv) compliance with statutory, workplace, regulatory requirements; (v) workplace attachment; (vi) supportive delivery mode; (vii) specialised facilities and resources; (viii) competence of trainers/assessors; (ix) course monitoring and evaluation.
- The Second Schedule ("Quality Standards") of these 2018 Regulations gives detailed standards covering planning, governance, curricula, assessments, foreign qualifications etc.

7.0 Referencing governance procedures and follow up

7.1 Composition and Mandate of the Technical Referencing Committee (TRC)

The referencing of the KNQF to the ACQF was led by a Technical Referencing Committee (TRC) formally established by the KNQA Council under its authority as the overseeing body of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority. The TRC was mandated to: coordinate the overall referencing process; map KNQF levels and descriptors to the ACQF; assign and compile evidence for each referencing criterion; draft, review, and consolidate successive versions of the referencing report; and ensure consistency with ACQF methodological guidelines. The TRC comprised senior representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Commission for University Education (CUE), the Technical and

Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS), registered Qualifications Awarding Bodies, industry and professional bodies, and technical experts in qualifications frameworks and quality assurance.

7.2 Stakeholder Consultation Process

The referencing process was conducted in a transparent, consultative, and inclusive manner in accordance with ACQF requirements on stakeholder engagement. The report was shared with national and continental stakeholders at key stages of its development. Consultations included: national stakeholder validation workshops convening representatives from education regulators, industry bodies, professional associations, and academia; participation in ACQF-organised webinars and peer learning activities; presentation and peer review at ACQF Network forums in Luanda, Nairobi, and the Seychelles; and bilateral technical discussions with the ACQF-II Project Team. Feedback from these engagements informed five successive drafts of the report (Draft 1 to Draft 5).

7.3 Endorsement by National Quality Assurance Bodies

The following national quality assurance and regulatory bodies have reviewed the findings of this referencing report and formally agree with the referencing outcomes: [list: KNQA Council; Commission for University Education (CUE); Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA); National Industrial Training Authority (NITA); Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS)]. Signed endorsement statements from each body are included as Annex

7.4 International Expert Advisory Input

Consistent with ACQF referencing procedures, two international experts with experience in qualifications frameworks from ACQF member countries were engaged to provide advisory input to the referencing process. Their role was advisory — to support transparency, rigour, and credibility. Their observations and recommendations were considered by the TRC in finalising the report. The names and institutional affiliations of the international experts, and their signed advisory statements, are included as Annex [X]. The KNQA has notified the ACQF Governance Structure of the involvement of these experts.

7.5 Post-Referencing Arrangements for Display of ACQF Levels on national credentials.

Following the successful completion and validation of this referencing report, KNQA will undertake the following actions to embed the referencing outcomes in Kenya's qualifications system: All newly issued certificates, diplomas, transcript supplements, and similar qualifications documents issued by registered Qualifications Awarding Bodies will carry a reference to the appropriate ACQF level alongside the KNQF level, based on the correspondence table established in Criterion 1 of this report.

The National Qualifications Database (NQD) will be updated to include an ACQF level field for all registered qualifications, enabling automatic cross-referencing between KNQF and ACQF levels. KNQA will communicate the referencing table and its implications to all registered Qualifications Awarding Bodies through a formal circular and capacity-building sessions.

7.6 Publication of the Referencing Report

Upon final validation by the ACQF Governance Structure, this referencing report will be published on the official ACQF website (<https://acqf.africa>) and on the KNQA website (<https://knqa.go.ke>). The report will be made available in the public domain to ensure transparency and to enable stakeholders across Africa and globally to access and use the referencing outcomes.

8.1 REFERENCES

National Legislation

Republic of Kenya. (2010). *Constitution of Kenya, 2010*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, Cap. 214*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. (2025). *Kenya National Qualifications Framework (General) Regulations, 2025*.

Republic of Kenya. *Basic Education Act, No. 14 of 2013*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, No. 29 of 2013*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Universities Act, Cap. 210*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Kenya National Examinations Council Act, No. 29 of 2012*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Industrial Training Act, Cap. 237*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

Republic of Kenya. *Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development Act, No. 4 of 2013*. Available at: <https://new.kenyalaw.org/>

National Policies, Standards and Frameworks

Kenya National Qualifications Authority. (2025). *Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard (KNQCS)*.

Kenya National Qualifications Authority. (2025). *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Kenya National Qualifications Framework*.

Kenya National Qualifications Authority. *National Policy Framework for the Accreditation System on Qualifications*.

Kenya National Qualifications Authority. *National Standards and Guidelines for the Accreditation System on Qualifications*.

Ministry of Education. (2024). *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy Framework*.

Ministry of Education. *Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform*. Available at: <https://www.education.go.ke/images/2023/REPORT-OF-THE-PRESIDENTIAL-WORKING-PARTY-ON-EDUCATION-REFORM.pdf>

Republic of Kenya. *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research*.

Official Institutional Websites

Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA). <https://knqa.go.ke>

National Qualifications Database (NQD).

<https://nqd.knqa.go.ke>

Ministry of Education.

<https://www.education.go.ke>

Commission for University Education (CUE).

<https://www.cue.or.ke>

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA).

<https://www.tveta.go.ke>

Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC).

<https://www.knec.ac.ke>

National Industrial Training Authority (NITA).

<https://www.nita.go.ke>

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD).

<https://kicd.ac.ke>

Regional and Continental Frameworks

African Union. *Agenda 2063*.

<https://au.int>

African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

<https://acqf.africa>

East African Community.

<https://www.eac.int>

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

<https://au-afcfta.org>

Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025).

International References

UNESCO. (2016). *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action: Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All*.

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. (2010, June 23). *Revised Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications*.

UNESCO. *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)*.

<https://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/international-standard-classification-education-isced>

UNESCO. *Addis Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in Africa*.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/higher-education/addis-convention>

Benchmarking Reports

Malaysian Qualifications Agency. *Malaysia Referencing Report to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf)*.

<https://www2.mqa.gov.my/myaqrf/DRAF%20Final%20Consolidated%20AQRf%20Report.pdf>



FIELD MONITORING TOOL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KNQF

Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA)
NACOSTI Building, 4th Floor, Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P.O. Box 72635 – 00200 Nairobi
Tel: 020-2100272
Email: info@knqa.go.ke
Website: www.knqa.go.ke

1. GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE QUALIFICATION AWARDING BODY(QAB)

DETAILS	REMARKS
Name of the institution	XY Polytechnic
Category	a) University () b) National Polytechnic () c) Professional examination bodies () d) Other ()
QAB Contact Person (Name & Designation)	
Monitoring Officers	

2. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KNQF

A. QUALIFICATIONS AWARDING BODY (QAB) AND ITS QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRATION STATUS

Indicator	Indicator Type	Definition / Description	Means of Verification	Remarks	Rating (0-1)
QAB Registration with KNQA	Output	Confirms whether the Qualification Awarding Body is formally registered by KNQA.	KNQA QAB registration records, registration certificate	The QAB is registered and recognized by KNQA	1
Proportion of accredited programmes vs. registered national qualifications on the KNQF	Outcome	Determines the percentage of a QAB's programmes accredited by sub-sector regulators, compared to registered national qualifications by KNQA.	Licensing letters and NQD records	194 up taken modular programmes are awaiting accreditation	0

Presence of KNQF Level & Qualification Title (Inclusive of the Qualification Type & KNQCS Code) on each qualification	Output	Checks that each qualification has a defined title (Inclusive of the Qualification Type & KNQCS Code) and level consistent with KNQF standards.	Form KNQF 5, NQD	Programmes don't have the correct KNQCS codes	0
---	--------	---	------------------	---	---

B. ALIGNMENT AND VALIDATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS

Indicator	Indicator Type	Definition / Description	Means of Verification	Remarks	Rating (0-1)
Number of learners admitted with foreign qualifications aligned and validated to the KNQF	Output	Refers to the total count of learners granted admission into Kenyan education and training institutions based on foreign qualifications that have been aligned and validated through KNQA processes and mapped to KNQF levels. Compare these other foreign qualifications that maybe aligned to the	Validation and alignment reports, KNQA decision letters, institutional admission records, foreign qualification assessment logs, KNQF level mapping forms	The Institution hasn't yet registered or admitted learners with foreign qualifications that need alignment. Three scenarios of applications received from IGCSE were referred to KNEC for alignment	0

C. ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

PART

I: GOVERNANCE OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Indicator	Indicator Type	Definition / Description	Means Verification	Remarks	Rating (0-1)
Existence of documented assessment policy and procedures aligned to KNQF	Output	Measures whether the QAB has formal policies and guidelines governing assessment that align with KNQF descriptors	Assessment policy documents, manuals, internal QA reports	FKNP has SOPs on CBET assessment and an academic policy that guide on matters assessment in the institution.	1
Proportion of QABs with established internal assessment governance structures	Outcome	Evaluates the extent to which QABs have functional departments or committees overseeing assessment design and integrity	Organograms, governance charts, minutes of assessment boards	FKNP has placed assessment functions under the office of registrar academics who works with the deputy registrar's department which serves as the examination office. Each department also has examination coordinating officer who supports assessment matters	1
Existence of mechanisms to appoint, train, and accredit assessors and verifiers	Output	Monitors governance procedures for ensuring professional competence and ethical conduct of assessors/verifiers	Assessor training records, accreditation lists, ToRs	Criteria for appointment of external Assessors at this center is not	1

Existence of Institutional RPL Governance Structure	Output	Presence of formally documented RPL implementation framework, governance structure, and financing strategy	RPL policy documents, org charts, budgets	Verify if framework aligns with RPL/STD/01 and includes MEAL system		
Implementation of RPL Communication Strategy	Output	Extent to which the institution has a published and accessible RPL communication strategy	Communication strategy document, promotion records	Must include up-to-date, accurate information about RPL process		
Capacity Building for RPL Practitioners	Output	Tracking the number and quality of RPL practitioner trainings held and attended	Training records, RPL Practitioner Manual, CPD records	Ensure alignment with minimum training hours and entry requirements		
Application Process and Use of SOPs	Compliance	Presence and use of standard operating procedures in RPL application handling	Application SOPs, candidate application forms	As required under RPL/STD/09		
Post-RPL Support Mechanisms	Outcome	Availability of structured post-assessment support such as skills gap training or job linkages	Support program reports, tracer studies	Check provision for all stakeholder categories including employers		
Documentation and Archiving of RPL Records	Compliance	Proper maintenance and archiving of all RPL-related documents for audit and verification	RPL documentation logs, MIS entries	Ensure documents are complete and retrievable		
Availability and Use of Quality Assurance Manual and use of RPL M&E findings	Compliance	Use of an internal and external QA framework specific to RPL implementation and implementation of Recommendations on M&E	QA manual, QA reports, implementation logs	Must be periodically reviewed and adhered to		
Number of Learners assessed and certified via RPL	Output	Total count of learners who successfully under RPL process and received full or partial qualifications	Enrolment log, Database queries	Verify if the genuineness of certificates issued and graduates data captured.		

[illegible]

RATING GUIDE	
RATING	IMPLICATIONS
0	Compliance
1	Non-compliance



**MONITORING REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
COMPETENCY BASED ASSESSMENT – JULY/AUGUST 2025
SERIES
AND
OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE KENYA NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (KNQF)
AT THE SIGALAGALA NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC**

AUGUST, 2025

**SUBMITTED BY: DR. ALICE KANDE,
DG/CEO, KENYA NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

SIGN:

DATE: 04.09.2025

**Kenya National Qualifications Authority
NACOSTI Building, 4th floor, Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P.O. Box 72635 – 00200, Nairobi
Tel: 020-2100272
Email: info@knqa.go.ke
Website: www.knqa.go.ke**



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
<i>Key Strengths.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Critical Gaps.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Priority Actions</i>	<i>4</i>
A. INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE AND GENERAL INFORMATION	5
B. METHODOLOGY	5
C. OBJECTIVES OF THE MONITORING EXERCISE	5
C. ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD MONITORING EXERCISE	6
KNQF COMPONENT 1: QUALIFICATIONS AWARDING BODY (QAB) AND ITS QUALIFICATIONS	
REGISTRATION STATUS.....	6
<i>Compliance Overview.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Strategic Recommendations.....</i>	<i>6</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 2: GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS	6
<i>Compliance Overview.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>7</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 3: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) OF ASSESSMENT8	
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>9</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 4. ASSESSMENT TOOL DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT	10
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>10</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 5: ASSESSMENT PREPLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION.....	11
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Strategic Recommendations.....</i>	<i>11</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 6: GRADING, CERTIFICATION AND GRADUATES' RECORD MANAGEMENT12	
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>12</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 7: PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE (PoE)	13
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>13</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 8: INDUSTRIAL ATTACHMENT AND WORKPLACE LEARNING13	
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>14</i>
KNQF COMPONENT 9: IMPLEMENTATION OF CATS.....	14
<i>Compliance Overview</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Strengths.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Gaps</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Recommendations.....</i>	<i>15</i>
CONSOLIDATED COMPLIANCE GAPS AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR ACCELERATING KNQF	
IMPLEMENTATION	15

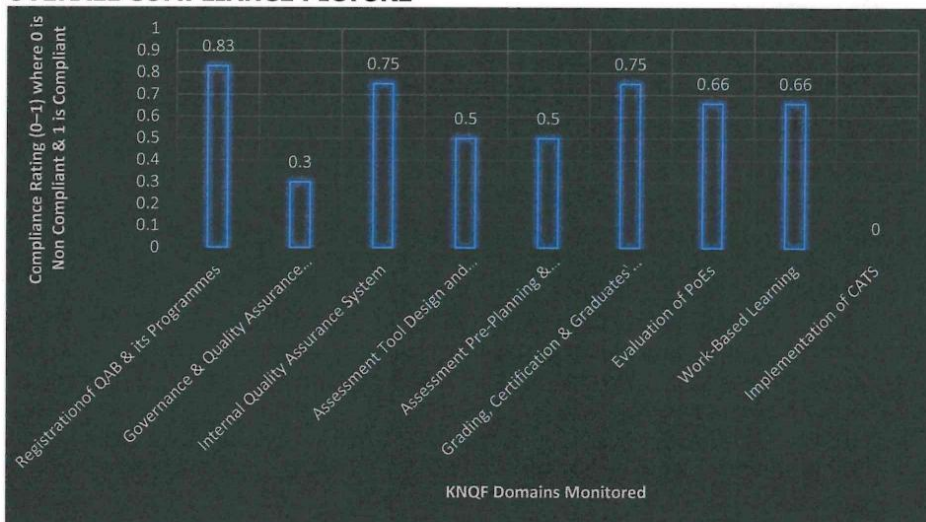
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGALAGALA NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC: KNQF IMPLEMENTATION AND ADHERENCE TO THE QUALIFICATIONS QUALITY STANDARDS

The follow-up review on 31st July 2025 at the Sigalagala National Polytechnic found commendable progress in accreditation and registration of qualifications, proper IQA establishment, Improved POE maintenance systems, assessment and certification and grading frameworks are well established and are being adequately implemented. However, some deficiencies persist in assessment tool validation, assessment administration, assessment governance and implementation of CATS. Positive progress was also observed on work based learning framework.

The chart below summarizes the institution's domain-level compliance performance, highlighting areas of full compliance, partial compliance, and non-compliance. Rating (0-1) where 0 is non-compliant & 1 is compliant

OVERALL COMPLIANCE PICTURE



Partial Compliance – **7 domains (0.50–0.90)**

Low/Non-Compliance – **2 domains (≤ 0.50)**

Key Strengths

1. **Accreditation and Registration:** SNP is fully accredited and registered with KNQA, with 26 programmes accredited and 20 more submitted for approval.
2. **Quality Assurance Systems:** IQA structures are established, including policies, SOPs, departmental committees, continuous monitoring, trained assessors, and termly stakeholder feedback.
3. **Assessment Integrity:** Learner briefings and exam security procedures are documented and implemented.
4. **Certification and Records:** Grading guidelines developed and under validation; certificates standardized with security features; graduate data submitted to KNQA; electronic records system under development.

5. **Evidence and Workplace Learning:** Standardized PoE templates in place; electronic PoE storage adopted; mentoring tools integrated; learner placement aligned to curriculum readiness.

Critical Gaps

1. Absence of KNQF-compliant coding for qualifications.
2. External assessor registry incomplete, lacking specialization details.
3. Assessment centre constructed but not equipped or operational.
4. IQA audits conducted once per term, with no follow-up mechanisms.
5. Not all assessment tools subjected to full internal validation.
6. Some programmes lack full Occupational Standards coverage, with output components excluded.
7. Certification processes inconsistent: non-standardized transcripts, incomplete SOPs, and lack of standardized qualification titles with KNQF levels.

Low/Non-Compliance include:

8. Assessment tools not aligned to Table of Specifications; validation forms lacked IQA signatures.
9. Moderation oversight weak; validation recommendations not implemented, with some tools administered without validation.
10. KNQF Quality Standards as per the KNQF Regulations are embedded in the institutional QA and CBA Framework

Priority Actions

1. **Standardization:** Implement KNQF-compliant coding for all qualifications; standardize transcript formats, qualification titles, and certification SOPs. In addition, embed the KNQF Regulations into institutional operational policies and guidelines to ensure consistent application and compliance.
2. **Validation and Moderation:** Enforce use of validation/verification templates with IQA signatures; require 100% of tools to undergo internal validation; institutionalize moderation with standardized templates and mandatory reporting.
3. **Governance Capacity:** Update the external assessor registry to reflect qualifications and specializations; reduce reliance on external assessors by building internal capacity. Align all internal QA policies and manuals to KNQF Regulations.
4. **Infrastructure:** Equip and operationalize the CBET assessment centre to support full functionality.
5. **Audit and Compliance:** Strengthen IQA audits by increasing frequency to quarterly and introducing structured follow-up mechanisms to ensure implementation of recommendations.
6. **Assessment Design:** Ensure all assessment tools cover the full scope of Occupational Standards, including output components, with use of external validators and checklists.

Area of Focus	Recommended Action	Remarks	Rating (0–1)
	training at the institution		

✓ **Subtotal Compliance: 2/3 –Compliance**

Strengths

- Mentoring tools have been integrated into PoEs to support workplace assessment evidence.
- Placement of learners aligned with curriculum readiness during the transition to the modularized curriculum

Gaps

- Absence of Dual Training Guidelines:** Although dual training is being implemented at the institution, there are **no formal institutional guidelines** to regulate, standardize, or monitor its application. This gap exposes inconsistencies in how dual training is coordinated and undermines accountability. *(Rating: 0)*
- Inconsistent Standardization of Dual Training Practices:** Without approved guidelines, departments rely on **ad hoc practices** to manage dual training, which risks variation in quality, duration, and expected learning outcomes across programmes.
- Weak Quality Assurance in Dual Training Implementation:** Lack of documented procedures means there is **no structured mechanism for quality assurance, monitoring, or reporting** of learners' experiences and achievements in dual training.

Recommendations

- Align learner placement with curriculum readiness to ensure practical experiences directly support and reinforce taught competencies.
- Integrate validated industrial attachment evidence into **(PoEs)** to enhance the authenticity and reliability of assessment records.
- Establish clear guidelines on implementation and coordination of dual training at the institution.

KNQF COMPONENT 9: IMPLEMENTATION OF CATS

Compliance Overview

Indicator	Means of Verification	Observed Evidence	Rating (0–1)
Existence of institutional CATS framework	Institutional CATS framework, QA reports	No framework in place	0
Proportion of programmes with credit transfer and articulation provisions	Curriculum documents, programme approval forms	No provisions in the curriculum documents	0
Number of learners awarded credit transfers and exemptions	Learner records, transfer logs	No learner awarded credit transfer	N/A
Time taken to process and approve credit transfers	Request logs, approval reports		

Indicator	Means of Verification	Observed Evidence	Rating (0–1)
Number of disputes/appeals related to credit transfer resolved annually	Appeals registers, resolution reports		

X Subtotal Compliance: 0/2 – Non-Compliance

Strengths

Presence of CATS provisions in academic policy offers a foundation for future implementation.

Gaps

- No operationalization of CATS policy into actual credit transfer processes, articulation pathways, or learner record systems.
- Absence of provisions on credit transfer and exemption on curricular.

Recommendations

Establish credit transfer exemption and articulation agreements for learner progression (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal) within and across qualifications.

CONSOLIDATED COMPLIANCE GAPS AND STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR ACCELERATING KNQF IMPLEMENTATION

Thematic Area	Critical Gaps Identified	Strategic Action Plan
QAB & Qualifications Registration (Component 1)	Absence of KNQF-compliant coding for qualifications.	Prioritize integration of KNQF-compliant codes across all registered qualifications; fast-track accreditation and registration of pending programmes.
Governance & QA Systems (Component 2)	- Business assessment tools did not comply with Table of Specifications; validation forms lacked IQA signatures. - Validation recommendations not incorporated; some tools administered without validation. - External assessor registry lacks specialization details. - Assessment centre constructed but unequipped. - IQA audits limited to once per term, no follow-up mechanism.	- Enforce use of validation/verification templates with IQA signatures. - Institutionalize moderation with standardized templates and ensure all tools are validated before administration. - Update external assessor registry with qualifications and specializations. - Equip and operationalize the assessment centre. - Conduct quarterly IQA audits and introduce structured follow-up mechanisms.
Internal QA of Assessment (Component 3)	- Some tools not subjected to full internal validation before use. - Implementation of IQA recommendations weak. - Reliance on external assessors in some departments.	- Ensure 100% of tools undergo internal moderation/validation before administration. - Establish mechanisms to track and enforce implementation of IQA recommendations. - Expand internal training programs to reduce reliance on external assessors.
Assessment Tool Design & Alignment (Component 4)	- Some tools lacked full coverage of OS components; outputs not tested. - Validation exercises lacked external verifiers.	- Ensure all assessment tools cover all OS components, including outputs. - Involve external verifiers in validation processes.

Thematic Area	Critical Gaps Identified	Strategic Action Plan
	- Qualification titles/codes not KNQF-compliant. - Validation personnel not adequately supported with checklists/subject experts.	- Standardize qualification titles and codes in line with KNQF Regulations. - Provide validation personnel with checklists and technical support.
Assessment Administration & Preplanning (Component 5)	- Errors in moderated tools indicate inadequate departmental moderation and insufficient trainer familiarity with CBA/KNQF.	- Train all trainers on CBA and KNQF alignment, emphasizing the CBET framework. - Strengthen departmental moderation processes.
Certification, Grading & Records (Component 6)	- Frequent policy shifts affecting certification policy. - Transcripts not standardized across departments. - SOPs for certification under development. - Qualification titles and KNQF levels not standardized. - E-registry system not fully operational.	- Finalize and validate grading guidelines. - Standardize transcript formats and complete SOPs. - Standardize qualification titles and KNQF levels. - Fully implement electronic record management system.
Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) (Component 7)	- No centralized institutional PoE storage system. - No PoEs availed during monitoring to demonstrate evaluation.	- Establish centralized PoE registry and secure storage system. - Implement structured verification checklist for consistent evaluation.
Industrial Attachment & Workplace Learning (Component 8)	- No formal guidelines for dual training despite implementation.	- Develop and implement clear institutional guidelines on dual training to ensure standardization and quality assurance.
Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) (Component 9)	- No institutional framework in place. - No curriculum provisions for credit transfer/articulation. - No learners awarded credit transfer.	- Establish institutional CATS framework. - Integrate credit transfer and exemption provisions in curricula. - Develop articulation agreements for learner progression (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal).

**EVALUATION TOOL FOR REGISTRATION OF XYZ NATIONAL POLYTECHNIC AS A
QUALIFICATION AWARDING BODY ONTO THE KENYA NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

PART A: Registration as a Qualification awarding body (QAB)

S/No.	Component	Provide Details
1.	Name of the Qualification Awarding Body	XYZ National Polytechnic
2.	Legal Document Mandating the Award of Qualifications	Legal Notice No.33 dated 14 th February, 2025
3.	Regulatory body/ Professional Body/ Industry Regulatory Body or industry standards license to implement/train curricula	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA)
4.	Approval from the country of origin to award <i>(for foreign QABs)</i>	Not Applicable
5.	Certificate of compliance <i>(for foreign QABs)</i>	Not Applicable

**CLIENT APPEAL FORM FOR ALIGNMENT AND VALIDATION OF
QUALIFICATION**

Name of the Applicant: Mary Beatrice Amondi Kojwang

Application Reference Number: KQAV-E7BDMK259

National ID/Passport No: AK1391821

Alignment/Validation Certificate Serial Number: KNQA-CF8DSE259

Date of Appeal: 2nd October 2025

Reason for Appeal

Reason for appeal
The alignment was done based on a certificate I submitted earlier rather than the one I pasted for a second and different alignment.

Additional Supporting Documents at the time of Appeal

1. Passport
2. O level Certificate
3. O level transcript
4.

Declaration

I hereby confirm that the information provided in this appeal is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:.......... Date.....8 October 2025.....

For Official Use

Received By	
Date Received	



MEMO

TO : DIRECTOR GENERAL
FROM : Ag. DEPUTY DIRECTOR, REV
REF : KNQA/REV/S/VOL. 1
DATE : 8TH OCTOBER 2025
SUBJECT : APPEAL ON REVIEW OF ALIGNMENT CERTIFICATE – SPECIMEN

Reference is made to an application dated 2nd October, 2025 requesting for the definition of level of qualification of Pearson Edexcel International GCSE certificate awarded by Pearson Edexcel, UK.

Based on the alignment certificate dated 1st October 2025 Serial No: KNQA-CF8DSE259, the learner's certificate was erroneously aligned to KNQF Level 2 (Secondary Certificate instead of Part Qualification of KNQF Level 2 (Secondary Certificate).

The purpose of this communication is to request the Management Committee to approve the recommendations of this memo if you concur.

Name.....

Signature.....

Ag. Deputy Director, QAV

**Report on evaluation of application for alignment and validation of qualification****1.0 PROFILE**

Name	Specimen	Citizenship	Kenyan
Qualification to be evaluated	Pearson Edexcel O Level	Purpose	Alignment
		Country	United Kingdom

2.0 QUALIFICATION PROFILES**2.1 Pearson Edexcel O Level****2.1.1 Accreditation**

	Training Institution	Qualification awarding body
Name	DHT Kisumu Senior Academy	Pearson Edexcel
Accreditation	Accredited	Accredited
Country	Kenya	United Kingdom
Regulator	MOE, Kenya	OFQUAL
Duration	3 years	Date of issue 30 th September, 2022

The training institution had a legal mandate to train secondary education. Pearson Edexcel is authorised by OFQUAL, UK to award secondary school certificates.

2.1.2 Volume of learning and results

Learner studied secondary education for three years as per the qualification awarding bodies basic education regulations and studied for 9 subjects. The qualification prepares learner for advanced secondary education.

2.1.3 Minimum admission requirement

The learner met the minimum entry requirements.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The training institution and the qualification awarding body for the qualification under review had been authorized to train and award respectively.

In view of the above and in accordance with the Kenya National Qualifications Framework CAP 214 The Pearson Edexcel International GCSE is aligned as Part Qualification of KNQF Level 2(Secondary Certificate)

4.0 ASSESSORS**Name****Signature****Date**

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
(ACQF)

