

REFERENCING TO THE ACQF

QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

Version 18/03/2026

ACQF Referencing Report — Self-Assessment Tool

STRUCTURAL COMPLIANCE

- All legal, regulatory, policy, and operational documents cited in the report are identified with full references
- Links to official sources or references to document repositories are provided
- The status of each evidence source is indicated (e.g., legislation, regulation, policy document, operational template, institutional document)
- The report demonstrates a clear evidence trail for each ACQF referencing criterion

TERMINOLOGY AND CONSISTENCY

- A glossary of key terms is included, reflecting both national and ACQF terminology
- National terminology is clarified where it diverges from ACQF or continental terminology
- A list of abbreviations and acronyms is provided, including national and ACQF-specific acronyms
- Terminology is used consistently throughout the report
- ACQF level descriptors are accurately represented and correctly referenced

PRESENTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- Tables, charts, and diagrams are used to present level correspondences, QA system structures, and stakeholder mapping clearly

- The report's structure is logical and headings are clear, with each ACQF criterion addressed in a dedicated section
- Internal cross-referencing is accurate and functional
- Annexes are referenced in the main text and clearly labelled
- Tables and figures are correctly numbered and referenced
- The report is accessible to readers unfamiliar with the national qualifications system

CRITERION-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

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.

- Evidence supporting each level-to-level correspondence between the national NQF and the ACQF is provided
- Reasoning for each level correspondence is clear, transparent, and defensible
- The methodology used to establish level correspondences is described
- A level correspondence table is included, mapping each national level to the corresponding ACQF level
- Where a national level does not correspond to an ACQF level, the gap is clearly identified and explained

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.

- The national framework/system is demonstrated to be based on a learning outcomes approach, consistent with ACQF principles
- A description of how learning outcomes are defined and used in each education and training sub-system is included

- The lifelong learning dimension of the national system is explained, including access pathways for all learners
- Permeability between education and training sub-systems (e.g., general, vocational/technical, higher education) is described
- Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (RPL) are explained
- The relationship between validation/RPL, credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), and the NQF is clarified

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.

- Procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the NQF are clearly described for each education and training sub-system
- Criteria for the allocation of qualifications to specific levels are explained
- Information is provided on qualifications outside the formal system and whether/how they may be included in the NQF
- The status of the process of inclusion of qualifications in each sub-system is clearly stated
- All registered qualifications are verifiable and publicly accessible in a national register(s) of qualifications

CRITERION 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).

- National quality assurance systems are clearly described for all relevant education and training sub-systems
- QA bodies are clearly identified and their mandates clarified, with coverage across sectors and levels explained

- The relationship between national QA systems and the NQF is described
- Consistency with relevant continental and regional QA principles is addressed, including alignment with African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA) or equivalent regional instruments
- The extent to which QA arrangements support recognition and portability of qualifications within the African continent is noted

GOVERNANCE PROCEDURES AND FOLLOW-UP

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:

- All national bodies involved in qualifications governance are identified
- Their legal mandates and responsibilities are clearly described with reference to the enabling legislation
- Their roles, functions, and legal mandates are explicitly documented
- The relationship between the national qualifications authority and relevant ministries, QA bodies, and sector bodies is explained
- Documentation of responsibilities and legal competence is formally published by the relevant authorities. The information is publicly accessible to ensure transparency regarding who holds authority and accountability in the referencing process.

The relevant national quality assurance bodies state their agreement with the referencing outcome and referencing report.

- Formal statement(s) of agreement from relevant national quality assurance bodies are included as an annex
- Any limitations, conditions, or reservations expressed by QA bodies are clearly documented and addressed
- The process through which QA bodies were engaged and provided their statements is described

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.

- International and/or continental experts have been involved in the referencing process
- The selection process and criteria for expert involvement are described
- The role of each expert is documented (e.g., peer reviewer, technical advisor, workshop facilitator)
- Expert feedback is reflected in written form in the final report
- Where technical support from the ACQF Cluster on Referencing was provided, this is acknowledged

Competent national bodies certify the referencing to the ACQF and publish one comprehensive, evidence-based referencing report, which addresses all referencing criteria

- The competent national body responsible for the referencing process is clearly identified
- Arrangements for the national certification and endorsement of the referencing report are described
- The report is structured as one comprehensive document, incorporating all required evidence and annexes
- Evidence supporting the referencing conclusions is clearly included and referenced throughout

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.

- Arrangements for the publication of the referencing report are described, including the intended platform(s) and timeline
- The report will be made available on the ACQF Website and national qualifications authority website
- A dissemination plan to key national and continental stakeholders is outlined

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.

- Arrangements for including ACQF levels on national qualification certificates, diplomas, and transcripts are described
- An implementation timeline for the inclusion of ACQF level indicators on certificates is provided
- Communication and awareness-raising plans for stakeholders regarding the display of ACQF levels are referenced

SIGN-OFF

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| Checklist completed by: | |
| Institution: | |
| Date: | |
| Version: | |

This checklist should be completed by the lead drafting expert and verified by the National Referencing Committee before submission of the referencing report to the ACQF Network Presidency.