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Role of Qualification Databases

IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

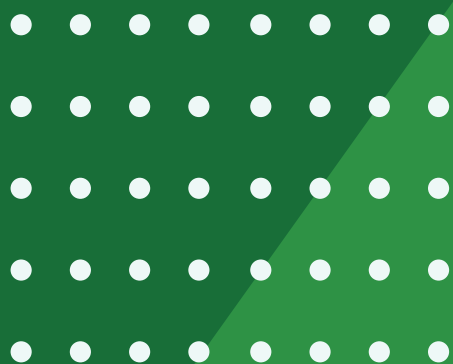




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Introduction & Learning Outcomes

This module provides an overview of the role of Qualification Databases (QDBs) in the international context, highlighting their importance in verifying and recognising educational and professional credentials.

Qualification Databases (QDBs) are pivotal in the global education and employment landscape, serving as essential tools for verifying and recognising educational and professional credentials. By promoting transparency and trust, QDBs support the development and implementation of informed policies. For African countries, well-functioning QDBs are not only crucial for aligning with the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) but also for participating effectively in the global qualifications economy.

QDBs operate as comprehensive repositories that house data on qualifications, ensuring that creden-

tials are accurate, authentic, and easily accessible. This centralisation plays a vital role in preventing credential fraud by enabling quick and reliable verification of qualifications. In a world where cross-border education and employment opportunities are expanding, QDBs facilitate the mobility of students and professionals by ensuring their qualifications are recognised and respected internationally.

The importance of QDBs extends beyond national borders, highlighting their significance in an international context. Well-maintained QDBs help standardise qualifications across regions, fostering mutual recognition agreements and enhancing comparability. This standardisation is particularly crucial for the ACQF, which aims to harmonise qualifications across Africa, promoting regional integration and cooperation.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this training module, you will:

1. Understand the Role of QDBs in Preventing Credential Fraud

- Learn how QDBs provide a centralised platform for storing and verifying educational and professional qualifications to ensure authenticity and build trust among international stakeholders

2. Facilitate Cross-Border Mobility

- Understand how QDBs support the recognition of qualifications across different regions, making it easier for individuals to pursue education and employment opportunities abroad

3. Enhance Transparency and Build Trust

- Recognise the importance of maintaining up-to-date and accurate databases to promote transparency among stakeholders, ensuring the reliability of the qualifications framework

4. Support Informed Policy Making and Educational Planning

- Learn how QDBs provide valuable data for government agencies and policymakers to develop and implement data-driven education and labour market policies

5. Maintain Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

- Understand the processes involved in using QDBs to ensure qualifications meet established standards, support continuous improvement, and maintain the credibility of educational institutions

The Importance of National and Regional QDBs in an International Context



Preventing Credential Fraud: Credential fraud undermines the integrity of the qualifications system, leading to unqualified individuals holding positions for which they are not qualified. QDBs help combat this by providing a centralised platform for storing and verifying educational and professional qualifications. By ensuring the authenticity of credentials, QDBs protect the integrity of the qualifications framework and build trust among international stakeholders.

Facilitating Cross-Border Mobility: QDBs support the recognition of qualifications across different regions and countries, making it easier for individuals to pursue education and employment opportunities abroad. For instance, a student from Kenya who wishes to study in Germany can have their qualifications verified and recognised through a QDB, streamlining the admission process and enhancing mobility.

Enhancing Transparency and Building Trust: By maintaining up-to-date and accurate databases, QDBs promote transparency among all stakeholders, including students, professionals, employers, and educational institutions. Reliable QDBs foster trust in the qualifications framework, ensuring that stakeholders can confidently rely on the information provided. This trust is essential for the success of international agreements such as UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.

Informed Policy Making and Educational Planning: QDBs provide valuable data that can be utilised by government agencies and policymakers to develop and implement education and labour market policies. By analysing data on qualifications, student outcomes, and labour market demands, policymakers can create informed, data-driven policies that align educational programs with the needs of the economy. This alignment supports the broader goals of the ACQF, ensuring that educational offerings meet regional and international demands.

Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement: QDBs support quality assurance processes by providing a reliable source of information on qualifications and the institutions that award them. Ensuring that qualifications meet established standards helps maintain the credibility of educational institutions. Additionally, the data from QDBs can be used to identify areas for improvement in the qualifications framework, leading to continuous enhancement of quality standards. Continuous improvement at the national level contributes to the overall effectiveness of the ACQF, ensuring that the qualifications framework evolves to meet emerging needs.

Using the African Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) as your quasi-QDB



Countries that do not yet have a high-quality Qualification Database (QDB) implemented can utilise the African Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) to access core functionalities that enable them to participate fully in the regional qualifications framework and thus serves as a quasi-national Qualifications Database.

By leveraging the QCP, these countries can ensure a base level of functionalities that help ensure the verification and recognition of credentials, enhance transparency and trust, support data-driven policy-making, and uphold quality assurance standards.

The alternative is to provide the regional or national QDB data to the QCP, so that the data can be accessed and utilised by other QCP users.

USE CASES

Understanding use-cases of QDBs in the international context

To help you get a better understanding of the benefits and importance of high quality Qualifications Databases in the international context, you will find in the following concrete examples and scenarios for the 5 main use-cases.

① Preventing Credential Fraud


🌐 Facilitating Cross-Border Mobility

🔍 Enhancing Transparency and Building Trust

📊 Informed Policy Making and Educational Planning

🎯 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Use-Case 1: Preventing Credential Fraud

 **Scenario:** A multinational corporation is looking to hire professionals across several countries in Africa. They need to ensure that the candidates' qualifications are legitimate and meet the required standards.


Application of QDBs:

- **Verification of Credentials:** The multinational corporation accesses a regional QDB to verify the educational and professional qualifications of the candidates. By using a centralised database, they can quickly confirm the authenticity of the credentials.
- **Preventing Fraud:** The QDB helps prevent the submission of falsified credentials, ensuring that only qualified individuals are considered for the positions. This enhances the integrity of the hiring process and ensures that the company employs competent professionals.

Example:

- **European Union's Europass:** Europass provides a set of online tools that help individuals manage their learning and career. By standardising the presentation of qualifications, it helps employers across Europe verify credentials easily and prevent fraud.

Use-Case 2: Facilitating Cross-Border Mobility

 **Scenario:** A student from Kenya wants to pursue higher education in Germany. They need their qualifications to be recognised and accepted by the German university.


Application of QDBs:

- **Verification of Credentials:** The multinational corporation accesses a regional QDB to verify the educational and professional qualifications of the candidates. By using a centralised database, they can quickly confirm the authenticity of the credentials.
- **Preventing Fraud:** The QDB helps prevent the submission of falsified credentials, ensuring that only qualified individuals are considered for the positions. This enhances the integrity of the hiring process and ensures that the company employs competent professional.

Example:

- **The Bologna Process:** In Europe, the Bologna Process harmonises higher education standards across participating countries, facilitating the recognition of qualifications and promoting student mobility across borders.

Use-Case 3: Enhancing Transparency and Building Trust

 **Scenario:** An international student from Nigeria is applying for a scholarship in South Africa. The scholarship committee needs to verify the student's qualifications and ensure they are legitimate.


Application of QDBs:

- **Promoting Transparency:** The scholarship committee accesses the Nigerian QDB to verify the student's qualifications. The up-to-date and accurate database provides transparent information about the student's credentials.
- **Building Trust:** The reliability of the QDB fosters trust in the qualifications framework, ensuring that the scholarship committee can confidently rely on the information provided. This trust is crucial for maintaining the integrity of the scholarship process.

Example:

- **UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications:** This convention promotes transparency and trust in the recognition of qualifications across borders, ensuring that educational credentials are reliable and recognised internationally.

Use-Case 4: Informed Policy Making and Educational Planning

 **Scenario:** The Ministry of Education in Ghana is developing a new policy to improve the alignment of educational programmes with the needs of the labour market. They need comprehensive data on the current qualifications landscape.


Application of QDBs:

- **Informed Decision-Making:** The ministry accesses data from the national QDB to understand trends in education and employment. This data-driven approach ensures that the policy is based on accurate and comprehensive information.
- **Educational Planning:** The data from the QDB helps the ministry plan educational programmes and initiatives that are aligned with the needs of the labour market. This alignment helps produce graduates with the skills and knowledge required by employers.

Example:

- **International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED):** ISCED provides a comprehensive framework for collecting and analysing educational data, supporting informed policy-making and planning in countries worldwide.

Use-Case 5: Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

 **Scenario:** A professional body in Botswana is responsible for certifying engineers. They need to ensure that the qualifications of the engineers meet national and international standards.

Application of QDBs:

- **Maintaining Standards:** The professional body uses the national QDB to verify the educational and professional qualifications of the engineers. The QDB ensures that the qualifications meet established standards and are reliable.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The data from the QDB helps identify areas for improvement in the qualifications framework, leading to continuous enhancement of quality standards. This continuous improvement ensures that the qualifications remain relevant and up-to-date.

Example:

- **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK:** The QAA uses QDBs to maintain and enhance the quality of educational qualifications, ensuring that they meet national and international standards.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Training Activity



Objective: To enable participants to understand and apply the purposes and roles of QDBs in an international context through practical engagement and discussion.

1. Scenario Assignment:

- Divide participants into small groups of 4-6 members.
- Assign each group one of the following 5 scenarios involving QDBs.



Depending on your needs and number of participants involved, you might want to focus on certain scenarios only. Adapt the scenarios to your context if you feel this supports the learning process.

Scenario 1: University Accreditation and Recognition

Background: A university in Ghana, seeking to expand its international reach, wants to establish a new engineering programme that meets both national and international standards. To attract students from across Africa and gain international recognition, the university must ensure its new programme is accredited and that the qualifications are recognised by other countries, especially within the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF).

Issues to Address:

- How can the university use the national QDB to ensure the new programme meets international accreditation standards?
- What role does the ACQF play in facilitating the recognition of the university's qualifications across Africa?
- What challenges might the university face in getting the programme accredited and recognised internationally?

Scenario 2: Employer Verification of Credentials

Background: A multinational corporation headquartered in Kenya is expanding its operations across East Africa. The company is recruiting engineers, but it needs to verify the educational and professional qualifications of candidates from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda to ensure they meet the required standards for employment.

Issues to Address:

- How can the corporation use regional QDBs to verify the credentials of candidates from multiple countries?
- What are the benefits of using a QDB in this hiring process?
- What potential challenges might the corporation encounter in verifying qualifications across different countries?

Scenario 3: Government Policy Development

Background: The Ministry of Education in Nigeria is developing a new policy aimed at improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. To create an effective policy, the ministry needs comprehensive data on the current qualifications, student outcomes, and labour market demands.

Issues to Address:

- How can the ministry leverage the national QDB to gather the necessary data for policy development?
- What role does the ACQF play in ensuring that the TVET programmes align with regional standards and labour market needs?
- What challenges might the ministry face in collecting and analysing data from the QDB?

Scenario 4: Scholarship Application Verification

Background: An international scholarship committee based in South Africa is reviewing applications from students across Africa. To ensure fairness and integrity in the selection process, the committee needs to verify the academic qualifications and achievements of the applicants, who come from various educational systems.

Issues to Address:

- How can the scholarship committee use QDBs to verify the academic qualifications of applicants from different African countries?
- What are the benefits of using a QDB for this verification process?
- What challenges might the committee face in verifying the qualifications of students from diverse educational backgrounds?

Scenario 5: Professional Body Certification

Background: The Health Professions Council in Botswana is responsible for certifying foreign-trained healthcare professionals who wish to practice in the country. The council needs to ensure that the qualifications and training of these professionals meet national and international standards before granting certification.

Issues to Address:

- How can the council use the national QDB to verify the qualifications of foreign-trained professionals?
- What role does the ACQF play in facilitating the recognition of these qualifications across Africa?
- What challenges might the council face in verifying and recognising foreign qualifications?

2. Role-Playing:

Each group member takes on a role relevant to the scenario (e.g., university administrator, employer, student, government official).

Groups discuss and act out their scenarios, focusing on how the QDB serves its purpose in their specific context (verification of credentials, recognition of qualifications, transparency, policy making, and quality assurance).

3. Group Analysis and Presentation:

After role-playing, groups analyse their scenarios and discuss:

- How the QDB helped address the issues in their scenario.
- The benefits and challenges experienced by each stakeholder.
- Potential improvements to the QDB system.

Each group presents their scenario, role-playing experience, and analysis to the larger group.

CASE STUDIES

Case Studies per Continent

Europe

Europass:

- **Function:** Europass is a set of online tools that help individuals manage their learning and career. It includes a portfolio of documents that record skills and qualifications, making it easier for individuals to present their credentials across Europe.
- **Impact:** Supports transparency and mobility by providing a standardised format for presenting qualifications.
- **Reference:** [Europass](#)

European Qualifications Framework (EQF):

- **Function:** The EQF acts as a translation device to make qualifications more readable across Europe. By linking different countries' national qualifications systems, the EQF helps individuals and employers better understand and compare qualifications.
- **Impact:** Supports the mutual recognition of qualifications and enhances mobility within the European Union.
- **Reference:** [EQF](#)

United States

National Student Clearinghouse:

- **Function:** This organisation provides educational reporting, data exchange, verification, and research services. It offers a comprehensive QDB that includes data on student enrolment, degrees, and certifications.
- **Impact:** Helps prevent fraud, supports policy-making, and enhances transparency and trust in the education system.
- **Reference:** [National Student Clearinghouse](#)

Credential Engine:

- **Function:** Credential Engine aims to create transparency in the credentialing marketplace by providing a common language for describing credentials and their value.
- **Impact:** Supports the recognition and comparison of qualifications across different states and sectors, promoting mobility and trust in the U.S. education and employment systems.
- **Reference:** [Credential Engine](#)

Asia

ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF):

- **Function:** The AQRF is a regional framework that enables the comparison and recognition of qualifications across ASEAN member states.
- **Impact:** Supports the development of human resources and promotes the mobility of learners and workers in Southeast Asia by providing a common reference for the recognition of qualifications.
- **Reference:** AQRF

China's Higher Education Student Information and Career Center (CHESICC):

- **Function:** CHESICC provides verification services for academic degrees and transcripts, supporting the recognition of Chinese qualifications internationally.
- **Impact:** Ensures the authenticity of academic records, facilitating the mobility of Chinese students and professionals.
- **Reference:** CHESICC

India's National Academic Depository (NAD):

- **Function:** The NAD is an online storehouse of academic awards, facilitating the safe storage, retrieval, and verification of academic records.
- **Impact:** Prevents fraud and ensures the authenticity of academic records, supporting the recognition of Indian qualifications globally.
- **Reference:** [NAD](#)

South Korea's Academic Credit Bank System (ACBS):

- **Function:** The ACBS allows individuals to accumulate credits earned from various educational institutions and non-formal learning experiences to obtain academic degrees.
- **Impact:** Promotes lifelong learning and the recognition of diverse learning experiences, supporting educational mobility and flexibility.
- **Reference:** ACBS

Australia

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):

- **Function:** The AQF integrates and aligns qualifications from different education and training sectors into a single comprehensive system.
- **Impact:** Enhances the recognition of Australian qualifications both nationally and internationally, supporting educational and professional mobility.
- **Reference:** [AQF](#)

My eQuals:

- **Function:** My eQuals is a secure online platform used by Australian and New Zealand universities to issue and verify digital academic credentials.
- **Impact:** Ensures the authenticity of academic records and supports the recognition of qualifications across borders.
- **Reference:** [My eQuals](#)