

Development of Jordan's Qualifications Framework

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NQF Evolution

- The development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) has been a major international trend in reforming national education and training systems since the late 1990s.
- The initiative first started, and was diffused mostly, among English-speaking developed countries. However, since the late 1990s such frameworks have also been adopted by non-English-speaking and developing countries.
- The International Labour Organization Recommendation No. 195 on human resources development: education, training and lifelong learning, adopted in June 2004, recommended the adoption of an NQF as a means of promoting the development, implementation and financing of a transparent mechanism for the assessment, certification and recognition of skills.



NQF Evolution

A growing number of countries **(100 until 2017)**, at very different stages of economic development and with very different cultural and political histories, either have introduced, or are in the process of introducing, some form of national qualifications framework (NQF).



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What is a national qualifications framework?

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the system that records the credits assigned to each level of learning achievement in a formal way to ensure that the skills, knowledge and competencies that have been learnt are recognized throughout the country.

The NQF is a set of principles and guidelines by which records of learner achievement are registered to enable national recognition of acquired skills and knowledge, thereby ensuring an integrated system that encourages life-long learning.



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What is a national qualifications framework?

- A Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies along a continuum of agreed levels.
- It is a way of structuring existing and new qualifications, which are defined by learning outcomes, i.e. clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do whether learned in a classroom, on-the-job, or less formally.
- The Qualifications Framework indicates the comparability of different qualifications and how one can progress from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors (and even across vocational and academic fields if the NQF is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework).



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A Qualifications Framework

- Defines and describes the learning outcomes, in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, which characterize awards and qualifications at different levels;
- Defines the relationship between levels and indicates how a learner may progress from one level to another;
-



Qualification Framework and Qualification System

The distinction between **a qualifications 'framework'** and a **qualifications 'system'** is important. Where it exists, the NQF is normally one component of the overall qualifications system.

A qualifications 'system' is broader, including all activities that result in the recognition of learning, such as the **means of developing and operationalizing policy on qualifications, along with institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, etc.**

NQF Main Goals

All national qualifications frameworks target two common goals. These are to:

- **make qualifications transparent for users, learners and potential employers so that the former know what they have to learn and the latter know what they can expect;**
- **enable flexibility and transferability between different educational and occupational fields and between learning venues and, in doing so, eliminate barriers that currently block horizontal and vertical education paths.**



Erasmus+ Objectives of the Qualification Frameworks

(a)-make national qualifications systems easier to understand and overview, both nationally and internationally;

(b) strengthen coherence of qualifications systems by connecting different parts of education and training and making it easier to understand;

(c) improving permeability of education and training by clarifying and strengthening the horizontal and vertical links within existing systems;

(d) support lifelong learning by making learning pathways visible and by aiding access, participation and progression;

(e) aid recognition of a broader range of learning outcomes (including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning);



Erasmus+ Objectives of the Qualification Frameworks

(f) strengthen the link and improve the communication between education and training and the labour market;

(g) open up national qualification systems to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training (for example awarded by sectors);

(h) create a platform for cooperation and dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders;

(i) provide a reference point for quality assurance.

Distinctive Features

The most important and distinctive characteristic of these NQFs is that the qualifications they contain are viewed as being independent of the institutions that offered the programmes leading to the qualifications.

In simple terms this means that educational and training qualifications become 'national property' rather than being owned by the education and training institutions themselves. a single system of levels for all qualifications based on standards or outcomes



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Main Elements of NQF

❖ Cycle/Level

❖ Credits

❖ Qualification Descriptors

They describe skills and competences expected at different levels of qualifications and make explicit the learning outcomes associated with each level of qualification.

What is a Regional Qualifications Framework ?

A more recent development has been the emergence of regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs), i.e. frameworks covering qualifications in a number of countries in a particular geographical region. Given that RQFs are such recent phenomena, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about their design or impact

Jordan's Effort to Develop NQF-J



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NQF-J

Jordan's Efforts to develop and implement a National Qualification Frameworks have started with the Erasmus+ project "[Towards a National Qualifications Framework for Jordan](#)"

(NQF-J) coordinated by the Universitat de Barcelona (UB). The project has received funding under the Key Action 2: Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, Capacity-building in higher education sub-programme.

TERM/DURATION

15 October 2015 to 14 October 2018 and extended to 1st of May 2019.



7 EU Partners

- **Universitat de Barcelona as the coordinator,**
- **University College Cork,**
- **the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA),**
- **Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI),**
- **Tallinn University of Technology,**
- **Estonian Qualifications Authority-Kutsekoda**
- **ENQA.**

9 Jordan Partners

- **Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Jordan,**
- **Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC),**
- **Association of Arab Universities,**
- **University of Jordan,**
- **Princess Sumaya University for Technology,**
- **Yarmouk University (Local Coordinator)**
- **Mutah University**
- **Hashemite University,**
- **the German Jordanian University,**

NQF-J Aim

- The wider objective of the project is to support the structural reform of the higher education system in Jordan, develop a qualifications framework for higher education in line with national priorities, and implement at different institutional levels.
- **NQF-J shall provide a QF for higher education for implementation at institutional level and, importantly, set up the basis for a comprehensive NQF, and thus endeavours to establish an NQF model that identifies the generic expectations of all levels of higher educational programmes. These will be expressed as learning outcomes, mainly based on knowledge, skills and competences.**

NQF-J Aim

The standards of qualifications at each level will be created and established through a number of activities in which descriptors will be determined, along with appropriate QA processes, by all stakeholders in higher education.

The project will clearly demonstrate the standards of Jordanian higher education awards and their national comparability. Additionally, through rigorous comparison with other national QFs, the project will demonstrate comparability of Jordanian higher education wider awards with international norms and expectations, thus supporting mobility and employability.

NQF-Specific Objectives

In order to achieve its overall aim, the project will have the following specific objectives:

Strengthen and support national and institutional capacities for developing a national qualification framework in HE,

Create a model for a Jordanian national qualification framework and the develop statements at sectorial levels based on learning outcomes,

Build the capacity of higher education institutions to produce and assess learning outcomes that are based on descriptors related to different educational disciplines,

Pilot the new national qualification framework at partner universities,

Implement the national qualification framework within the higher education sector at the level of study programs,

Self-certificate the higher education levels of the national qualification framework against the European framework.



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NQF-Target Groups

Project's main target group is the teaching staff, administrative staff, students, trainees, technical staff, librarians, key stakeholders in areas of education and employment related to HE.



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NQF-J Main Results

- Assisting the Government of Jordan in the development of the National Qualifications Framework by providing the necessary spark for the national momentum
- The results of the project represent the initial core used for the development of Jordan's National Qualifications Framework



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Accreditation & Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions (AQACHE) Took the Lead

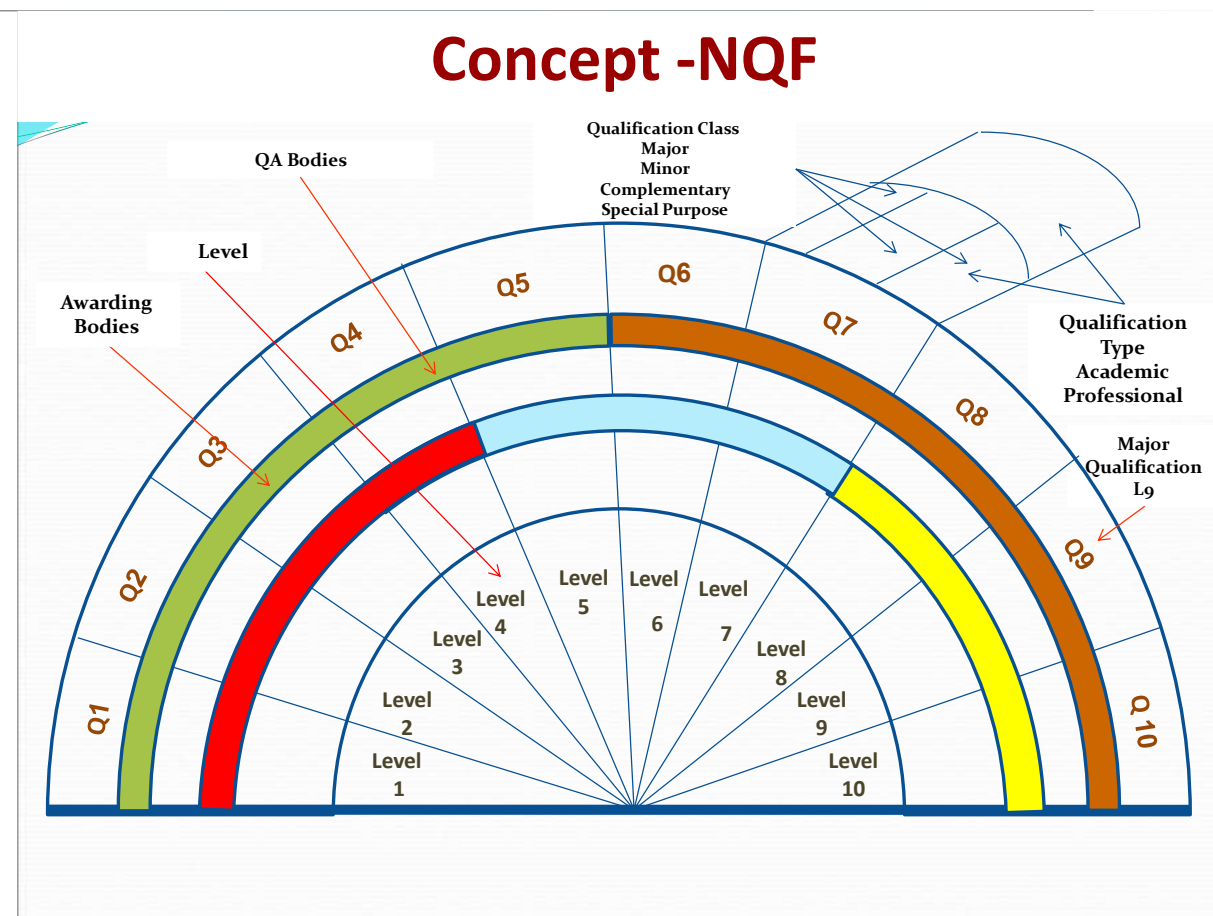
A National Committee of NQF was formed under the leadership of HEAC in accordance with a unified vision that strengthens the bonds of complementarity and joint cooperation between the national strategy for the development of human resources and the systems of public education, higher education and vocational and technical education, thus ensuring the development of an NQF that responds to the aspirations of citizens and the government and the private sector.

The Committee took the ideal steps to establish the framework and has reached its proposal of NQF-J which was finalized after the necessary consultations with all targeted sectors. The proposal was submitted to the Council of Ministers and was approved. The government is now working on the necessary legal procedures for NQF implementation



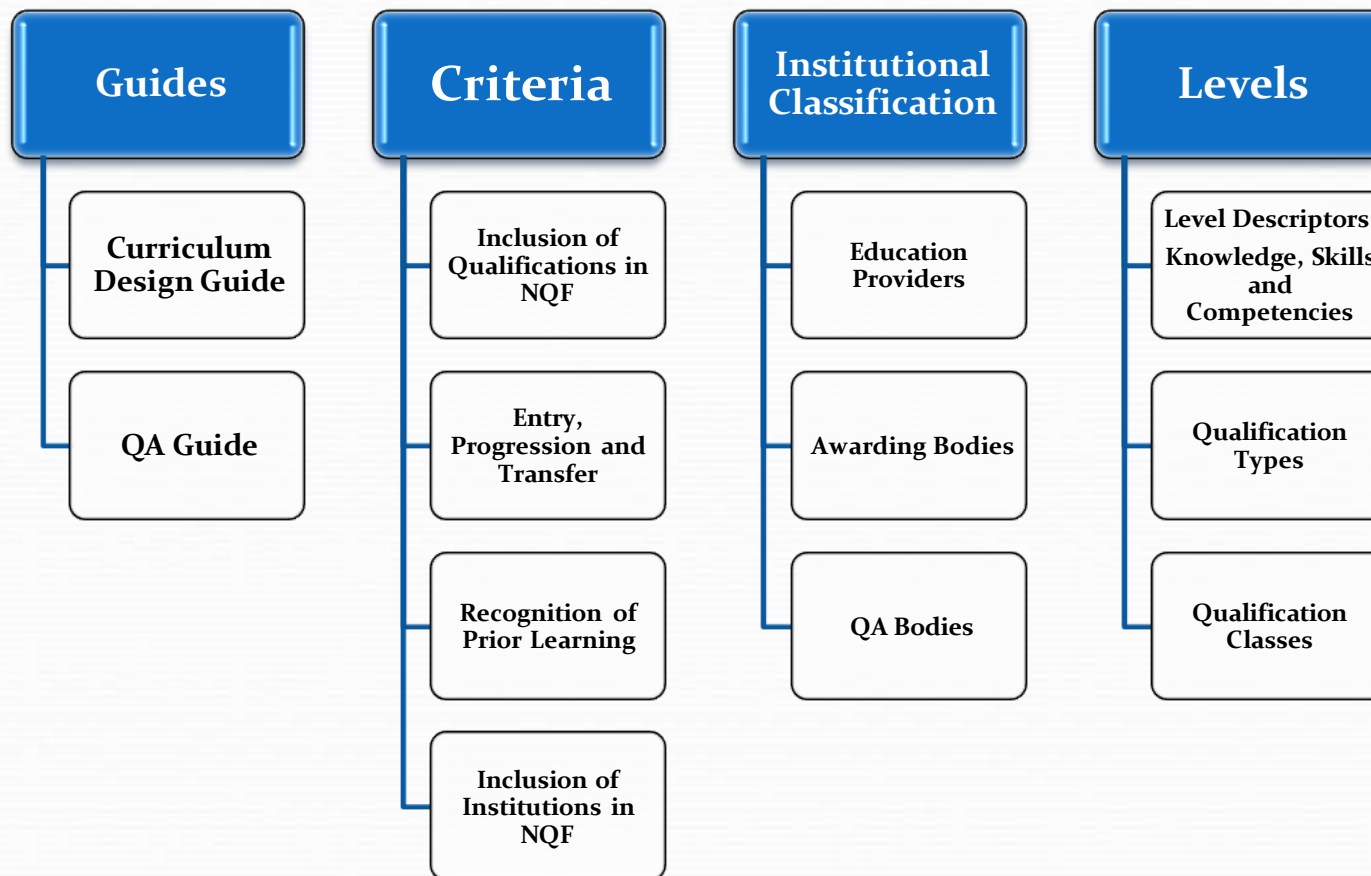
A Unified Qualifications Framework

- A comprehensive frameworks covering all levels and types of qualifications has been developed.
- It consists of 10 levels
- 4 levels of Higher Education





Elements of NQF



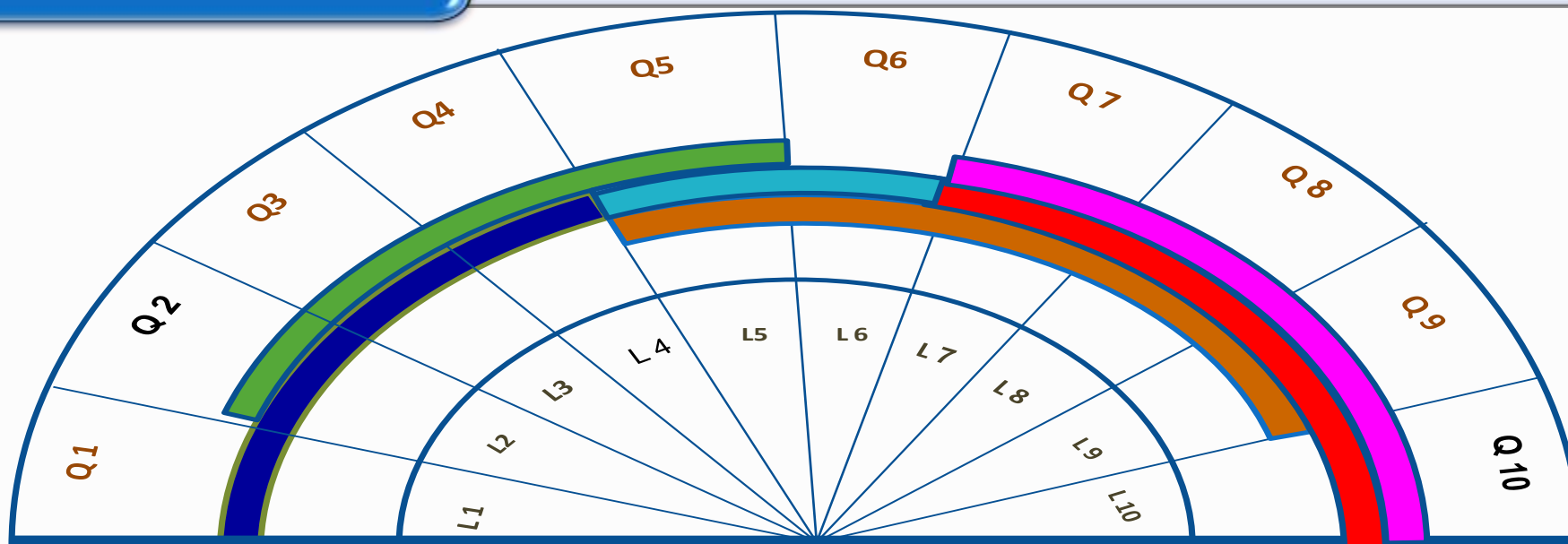


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دائرة التعليم « قطاع التعليم »

Educational Providers

- Schools, TVET, Community Colleges, Technical Universities, Academic Universities, Hospitals



Technical Univ

Hospitals

Community College

Universities

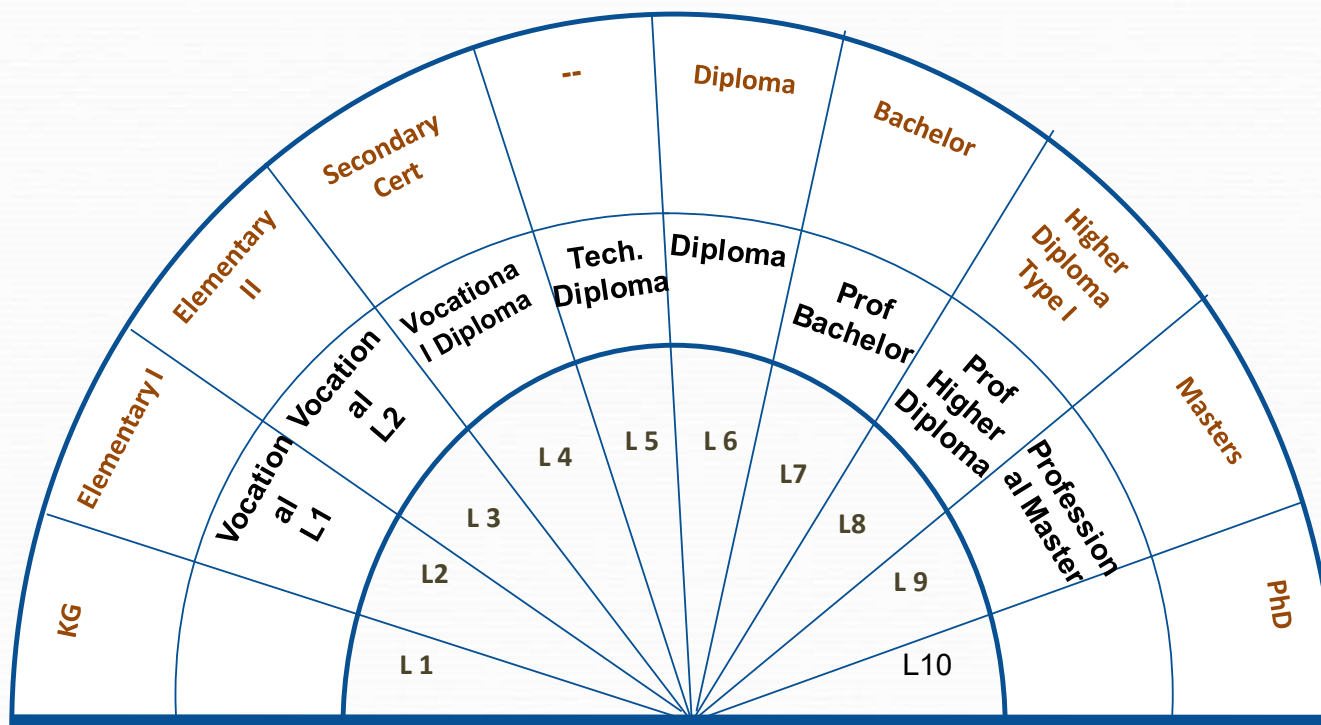
Vocational Training

Schools



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NQF Design Levels



Level Descriptors Bachelor Degree

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical understanding of theories and principles of a field of work or study, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex problems in the field of work or study Specialised skills in the field of work or study Practicing evaluation of planning, design and technical tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing complex technical or professional activities or projects Taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts Taking responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups Transferring and applying diagnosis and innovation skills in multiple contexts



Level Descriptors

Master's Degree

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields Sufficient knowledge of innovation strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized problem-solving skills required in research Innovation skills to develop new knowledge and procedures including new and emerging technological skills Ability to integrate knowledge from different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing and transforming work or study contexts that are complex Managing unpredictable work or study context that require new strategic approaches Self-reviewing and taking responsibility of self-learning Taking responsibility of teams Contributing to professional knowledge Reviewing the strategic performance of teams



Level Descriptors

PhD Degree

Level	Knowledge	Skills	Competencies
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields through quality scientific research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating the most advanced and specialised research skills and techniques Synthesizing, evaluating and creating new and complex ideas, Solving critical problems in research and/or innovation and extending and redefining existing knowledge or professional practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating substantial authority Demonstrating innovation and autonomy Scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research Criticizing Applied knowledge in a specific context Ability to understand social values and acquiring leadership skills to change such values

Capacity Building

2 Training Workshops (Cork and Madrid) on various aspects of the development and implementation of National Qualifications Framework were completed with participation of academic and administrative staff from all Jordanian partners. (30 participants).

Transfer of European experience and know-how to Jordanian partners

- Networking workshop was organized by ANECA in Brussels in January 2019
- Providing the Jordanian partners with the equipment and software necessary for the implementation of the National qualifications Framework at the institutional level**



Erasmus+ : the new national qualification framework at partner universities

Selected study programs in certain disciplines were selected for assessing their adaptation to the recently established Jordanian Qualification Framework.

4 piloting studies were completed and obtained results are of vital importance for the future implementation of NQF-J at Jordanian Universities

-Yarmouk University: Science (B.Sc. and M.Sc. In Chemistry)

-Mutah University : Business (BA, MA and Ph.D. in Business Administration)

-University of Jordan: Education: (BA, MA and Ph.D.)

-Princess Summaya University of Technology and Hashemite University: Engineering and Computer Sciences



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Problems and Challenges of NQF Implementation

Revolution Not Evolution

Implementing QF is a revolutionary not an evolutionary change. It is a shift from the traditional qualification systems, which in most countries have developed in a relatively ad hoc way in response to specific needs to qualification frameworks.

All countries implementing national qualifications frameworks have faced problems. Most of them relate, in one way or another, to the failure of governments to recognize the radical implications of the changes that they seek to introduce.

Is the government of Jordan fully aware and recognize the radical implications of the changes that they seek to introduce by implanting NQF?

Are universities' administrations and faculty fully aware of the requirements (technical, administrative and financial) of implementing NQF at their institutions and the drastic changes that this will cause?

Initial expectations are too high in terms of both what can be achieved, and how quickly the benefits of introducing an NQF are likely to become apparent..



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Political Challenges

Different agendas and perspectives

Political difficulties can arise from the fact that the responsibility for an NQF is never easily located within one government department.

In most national governments, the departments of education, labour and industry and trade are all likely to be involved and are likely to have different agendas concerning how an NQF should develop.

Interdepartmental tensions have caused considerable—and as yet unresolved—difficulties in many countries which implemented NQF.

Will the Jordanian model be different?



Government Support

The authority responsible for control and monitoring of NQF implementation should have in addition to the government political support adequate skillful human resources and sufficient financial resources.

Is this issue a priority for the government?

CHANGES REQUIRED AT THE UNIVERSITIES



Study Plans reformulation

Study plans of all academic programs should be redesigned and reformulated to be outcome-based at program level and course level to fit the criteria of the framework

-Study programs should reflect the distinct knowledge, skills and competencies for the level of the program.



Change in teaching methods

Outcome based teaching requires a paradigm change in the teaching-learning process, making it more active and learner-centered.

Lectures and other face-to-face classroom presentations are mostly replaced with an array of interactive materials and activities that move students from a passive, note-taking role to an active-learning orientation.



Learner-Centered Teaching

In the traditional approach to university teaching, most class time is spent with the professor lecturing and the students watching and listening. The students work individually on assignments, and cooperation is discouraged.

Learner-centered teaching methods shift the focus of activity from the teacher to the learners. These methods include **active learning**, in which students solve problems, answer questions, formulate questions of their own, discuss, explain, debate, or brainstorm during class; **cooperative learning**, in which students work in teams on problems and projects under conditions that assure both positive interdependence and individual accountability; and **inductive teaching and learning**, in which students are first presented with challenges (questions or problems) and learn the course material in the context of addressing the challenges.



Erasmus+ **Change in assessment approaches and methods**

outcome-based systems require a change in the assessment approaches and methods.

The shift from norm-referenced assessment to criteria-based assessment is quite essential



Norm-referenced assessment

Previously, the most common approach had been to rank students in order of merit and to allow a certain percentage of students to pass. **Those above the cut-off line passed; those below failed.** Essentially, **students were not being compared against criteria but against each other.** This form of assessment was called norm-referenced.

Written examinations are the most usual form of assessment in a norm-referenced system.



Criterion-based assessment

In the outcome based learning students are assessed against explicit written standards and assessment has become increasingly based on detailed criteria. This criterion-based assessment is thought to be fairer because all students who meet the requirements gain the qualification, regardless of how well or badly other students perform.

There is also the advantage that criterion-based assessment, unlike norm-referenced assessment, can be used to show whether educational standards are rising or falling over time.

With norm-referenced assessment (by definition) the same percentage of students will always pass, whether overall student performance is improving or worsening, whereas if the criteria for assessment are held steady over time, analyses can be carried out to show how progressive cohorts of learners perform against these criteria



Erasmus+ criterion-based assessment is very demanding

The implementation of criterion-based assessment can be problematic. The most common problem is that assessment procedures become too detailed and cumbersome.

The understandable desire to create rigorous standards can lead those who design qualifications to over-assess. This can occur where there are too many criteria or the criteria are too detailed, with the result that the amount of evidence of competence required for assessment imposes heavy burdens on learners to produce and teachers to assess.

Learning programmes can then become dominated by assessment to the detriment of the quality of teaching and learning.



Change in the quality of facilities needed

The traditional classroom sitting arrangements represents a major challenge of implementing learner-centered teaching. In addition to:

- ☐ **Inadequate library resources**
- ☐ **Inadequate lab equipment**
- ☐ **Inadequate technology resources**



Change in the size of classroom

Students should be given independent projects, involved in group discussions, debates, field trips. They should keep reflective diaries, choose their own topics/ projects, make presentations, come up with portfolio developments, and be involved in peer assessment

- **This approach of teaching and learning is not possible to be implemented based on the large number of students in a classroom in most courses offered at Jordanian universities.** large number of students in a class is a factor that inhibits teachers from adopting a student-centered approach in their classroom
- **Smaller classes are essential to enable the teacher to effectively supervise student performance and learning**



Erasmus+ Universities' teachers ready for this paradigm change?

Are university teachers ready for major changes in

- Curriculum structure
- Teaching methods
- Assessment methods

Professional Development and upgrading of faculty skills are quite essential



Erasmus+ · Universities ready technically and financially capable of implementing NQF?

NQF implementation is costly (requires investment in upgrading facilities and staff, reducing class size and improving the faculty-student ratio)

-Most universities suffer from severe acute financial situation (big debits and severe deficit in their budgets)

-Government is reducing its financial support to universities and in its way to totally withdraw from universities funding.

-Is the government willing to financially support the universities to enable an effective implementation of NQF that they will impose on universities?



It's just the beginning

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