

Higher Education Qualification Framework, Nepal

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Basic Layout of the Framework

Chapter I

Introduction

- Background
- Context
- Rational
- Earlier efforts
- Goals
- Purpose
- Assumption
- Sector coverage
- State of implementation

Chapter II

Levels and Descriptors

- Qualification type
- Designator
- Qualifier
- Level specific qualification (for students)
- Course specific qualification (credit hours, academic year, credit transfer etc.)
- Interdisciplinary mobility
- Level descriptors (by skill, by knowledge, by competencies, and by abilities i.e. combination of skill, knowledge and competencies)
- Teachers' qualification in four levels (core knowledge, areas of activities, and professional values with their elaborations)

Chapter III

Lesson Learned and Way Forward

- Challenges and Issues
- Way forward

Background

Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF) is a national education framework for higher education in Nepal which has been offered and/ or would be offered by all the universities, their constituent colleges/ schools, affiliated colleges/ schools and other degree awarding institutes.

The main objective of the framework is to make uniform system of naming a qualification, the designators and qualifiers of each qualification identified by this framework. It further aims to standardize the overall objectives of degrees which would be awarded by the HEIs.

Context

Nepal has witnessed rapid expansion in higher education in the last few decades, especially after the establishment of multi-party democracy in 1990s. There are nine Universities and four medical academies At present some universities are under the phase of establishment. As of the data of 2013/14, there are 1369 higher education institutions including 98 constituent, 839 private and 432 community campuses.

Goals

- Make higher education qualifications transparent for stakeholders.
- Formalize flexibility and transferability among different education/professional fields

Purposes of HEQF

- Foster rational design and developments of learning objectives
- Ease national/professional agencies to steer skill development
- Ensure inter and intra institutional educational mobility and credit transfer systems
- Enhance quality of higher education considering international standards
- Establish the system of horizontal and vertical mobility

Assumptions of HEQF

- Qualifications can be described using ideal set of descriptors.
- Unique set of levels can express all qualifications.
- All qualifications can be defined in terms of learning outcomes irrespective of learning environment.
- Uniformity in standards of learning outcomes can be set with respect to minimum credits.

HEQF Sector Coverage

- In Nepal, higher education starts after the completion of grade 12 or equivalent. It involves grade 10 + 2 years of non-technical education, grade 10 + 3 years of technical courses such as overseer, para-medicines etc., TSLC (Grade 10 equivalent in technical education) + 2 years of work experience + 1 year of specification course.
- This HEQF covers the higher education including Bachelor level, Masters level, Post Master Level (MPhil/ MS), and PhD level.

Diagrammatic Representation of Higher Education Qualification Framework (HEQF)

Level	Qualification Awarded	Minimum Credits	Course Duration	Minimum requirement for entry
Higher Education Level (HEL) 1	Under Graduate Level/ Bachelor Level	120	Full time: 4 Years Part Time: 6 Years	Twelve Class Pass or Diploma certificate or Intermediate Level or Technical SLC (Grade 10/ TSLC) + 2 years Technical Certificate + 2 year work experience or Grade 10/ TSLC + 1 year Technical Certificate + 2 year Experience + 1 year Conversion Course of 60 credit hours
Higher Education Level (HEL) 2	Graduate Level/ Master Level	60	Full time: 2 years Part Time: 3 years	Successful completion of HEL 1 or equivalent
Higher Education Level (HEL) 3	Graduate Level/ Master of Philosophy	30	Full time: 1.5 year Part time: 2.5 years	Successful completion of HEL 2 or equivalent
Higher Education Level (HEL) 4	Graduate Level/ Doctor of Philosophy		Full time: 3 Years Part time: 5 years	Successful completion of HEL 3 or completion of HEL 2 + 2 years related work experience or research experience or equivalent

Interdisciplinary Mobility Requirement

Entry Level	Requirement
Higher Education Level (HEL) 1	+2 or equivalent in any field + 30 Credit hours conversion course (Time duration: 1 Semester)
Higher Education Level (HEL) 2	HEL 1 in any field + 60 Credit hours conversion course (Time Duration: 2 Semester)
Higher Education Level (HEL) 3	HEL 2 in any field + 2 years experience in same field or 30 Credit hour conversion course)
Higher Education Level (HEL) 4	HEL 3 in any field +2 Years experience in same Field or 30 credit hour conversion course Or +3 years experience in same field

Level Descriptors

Level: Higher Education Level (HEL) 1

Example: BA, BBS, BBA, BEd, BE, BSc, MBBS, BPharma, BPH etc.

Knowledge:

- Advanced knowledge of respective field
- Critical understanding of related theories and principles

Skills:

- Advanced skills, with mastery in the field, capable to solve complex problems in a specialized field

Competence:

- Manage complex technical or professional activities
- Make decision in complex situation
- Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups

Abilities

(combination of knowledge, skills and competencies)

HEL 1

- Sufficient knowledge and understanding of the area of study.
- critically analyze, make judgments and propose solutions to problems;
- Efficient and effective use practical skills and enquiry within the area of study
- construct and sustain arguments/ ideas/techniques and use these for problem solving
- aware and updated to development in the area of study being engaged in scholarly activities
- communicate knowledge and skill and competency of the field of study efficiently and effectively;
- aware of individual responsibility, rights, duties and accountability
- involve in continuous professional development
- show leadership skill in the professional environment/work place
- demonstrate positive attitudes and social responsibility

Level: Higher Education Level (HEL) 2

Example: MA, MBS, MBA, MEd, ME, MSc, MD, MPharma, MPH etc.

Knowledge:

- specialized knowledge in the field of study demonstrating original thinking and idea
- Critical knowledge in the field and capacity to refer to other fields as well

Skills:

- Specialized problem-solving skills
- Innovative idea and skill to integrate knowledge from different fields

Competence:

- Apply new strategies and approaches to cope and progress in complex situation
- take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

Abilities

(combination of knowledge, skills and competencies)

HEL 2

- analyze and evaluate with critical awareness to current development in the area of specialization
- innovate ideas in the field of specialization and demonstrate self direction and originality in addressing problems
- plan, implement and evaluate professional task in professional and academic milieu
- construct and sustain arguments/ ideas/techniques and use these for problem solving
- address complex issues systematically and make decisions and communicate effectively with different levels of audience
- advance knowledge and understanding and develop additional skills;
- foster knowledge, skill and understanding of different field to acclimatize and take personal responsibility; and
- demonstrate skills of independent learning for continuous professional development

Level: Higher Education Level (HEL) 3

Example: MPhil etc.

Knowledge:

- Highly specialized knowledge in the field of study demonstrating original thinking and idea
- Critical knowledge in the field and capacity to refer to other fields as well

Skills:

- Highly Specialized problem-solving skills
- Innovative idea and skill to integrate knowledge from different fields

Competence:

- Apply innovative strategies and approaches to cope and progress in complex situation
- take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

Abilities

(combination of knowledge, skills and competencies)

HEL 3

- Construct new knowledge through independent research meeting international standard of academia
- Analyze, synthesize and evaluate research findings and established knowledge and methodologies in the area of specialization
- use practical skills and enquiry efficiently and effectively within the area of study;
- supervise and guide research to generate new knowledge
- make rational judgments, prediction and decision dealing with complex issues systematically
- demonstrate self directed and originality to envious professional environment
- plan and implement tasks efficiently and effectively in professional, technical or academic settings;
- advance knowledge and understanding and develop additional skills
- demonstrate skills of independent learning for continuous professional development

Level: Higher Education Level (HEL) 4

Example: PhD

Knowledge:

- Knowledge at the most advanced level of the field with sufficient knowledge of other fields

Skills:

- the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including analyzing, synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical situations in research and show innovation to redefine established knowledge and theory

Competence:

- demonstrate and apply significant authority and innovative strategies and approaches in scholarly and professional horizon including extensive research activities
- take authority and responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

Abilities

(combination of knowledge, skills and competencies)

HEL 4

- Construct and sustain new knowledge through independent research meeting international standard of academia
- Analyze, synthesize and evaluate research findings & established knowledge and methodologies in the area of specialization
- Use critical knowledge, practical skills and enquiry efficiently and effectively within the area of study
- supervise and guide research to generate new knowledge and insights in the field of study
- make rational judgments, prediction and decision dealing with complex issues systematically
- demonstrate self directed and originality to envious professional environment
- plan and implement tasks efficiently and effectively in professional, technical or academic settings
- conceptualize, design and implement new projects to generate new knowledge and applications
- advance knowledge and understanding and develop additional skills
- demonstrate leadership skills and skills of independent learning for continuous professional development

Teachers' Qualification Framework

Level	Name of the Level
Teachers' Qualification Level One (TQL 1)	Instructors/Teaching Assistant/ Graduate Assistant
Teachers' Qualification Level Two (TQL 2)	Assistant Professor or Lecturer
Teachers' Qualification Level Three (TQL 3)	Associate Professor or Reader
Teachers' Qualification Level Four (TQL 4)	Professor

Challenges

- Teachers and students are habituated with the book based teaching learning. In many cases teachers, students and even entire campus are found to be unaware about the curriculum and learning objectives determined by the courses.
- Independent and collaborative research culture among the faculty members has not been even started. So, it will be challenge to make teachers to orient towards the research culture and utilization of research in daily teaching learning activities.
- There is no clear pathway for the professional development in community and private campuses (having more than 67% of student coverage).
- Intra university and interuniversity qualification recognition has not been established. Credit transfer from one faculty to another faculty or one campus or university to another campus or university has not been even started.
- Online learning, distance learning and self learning credits has not been recognized yet. No skill test, knowledge test, and ability test system is functioning to recognize the credits that could be acquired by a student in his or her study.

Way Forward

- Curriculum should focus on knowledge, skill and competencies that students achieve from the course.
- Teachers should be encouraged to conduct independent, collaborative researches.
- Universities should ensure that teachers with proper qualification teach in their affiliated colleges especially in private campuses.
- Intra and inter-qualification recognition and credit transfer system should be implemented.
- Self learning and distance learning and online learning credits should be recognized based on the knowledge, skills and competencies expected by qualification framework.

Process Adapted

UGC Inputs

- Formation of HEQF committee at UGC (the committee was chaired by the UGC Chair)
- Series of meetings of the committee members
- Assignment of the two members HEQF draft committee from among the committee members

Contd...

QEF Draft Committee's Activities

- Review of the selected countries' HEQF
- Consensual understanding of the HEQF
- Review of the Asia Pacific HEQF
- Adoption of the Asia Pacific HEQF for Nepal
- Drafting HEQF for Nepal
- Submitting the draft HEQF report to the HEQF committee at UGC

Current Status

- UGC has sent the HEQF draft report to all the Vice Chancellors of 9 universities of the country
- HEQF draft committee has also sent the same draft report to UNESCO for the comments and suggestions
- UGC has been waiting for their comments and suggestions from Vice Chancellors
- HEQF draft committee members have been waiting comments and suggestions from UNESCO

Plan Ahead

- Receive the Vice Chancellors' comments and suggestions over draft HEQF report
- Receive the UNESCO's comments and suggestions over HEQF draft report
- Finalize the HEQF draft report by incorporating the comments from the Vice Chancellors of Nepal and the UNESCO Experts
- Request by UGC to the Vice Chancellors of all universities for the effective application of HEQF final report

Ongoing Parallel Activities

- MOE has been developing QEF for school level education
- Technical and Vocational Education Center has been developing TEVT QEF

**Thank you for your kind
attention**