



Review of the International Standard Classification of Education 1997 (ISCED 97)

Proposal on the revision of ISCED 97 levels 4, 5 and 6 for UIS regional expert meetings 2009/2010

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ISCED Technical Advisory Panel

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Preliminaries

Acronyms

BA: Bachelor's degree/programme (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science etc.)

MA: Master's degree/programme (Master of Arts, Master of Science etc.)

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy degree/programme

Proposal overview

1. This proposal regards the revision of ISCED 97 levels 4, 5 and 6. Those ISCED level 4 programmes that are equivalent to ISCED level 3A general programmes in terms of the qualifications they award are not covered by this proposal, but by a parallel proposal on the revision of ISCED levels 2 and 3.
2. More and more people acquire post-secondary/tertiary education in many countries all over the world and post-secondary/tertiary education differentiates as it expands. Issues identified in the ISCED review with respect to levels 4 to 6 are:
 - ISCED level 4 in its present form does not further international comparisons of education related data because it mixes rather diverse educational programmes in one level.
 - Sometimes not educational properties determine the ISCED level of an educational programme, but its institutional context, namely if a programme in a specific country is part of a designated tertiary/higher education sector or part of a separate vocational education sector that is not regarded as tertiary/higher. This situation leads to a low degree of comparability of ISCED level 4 and ISCED 5B across countries.
 - Data collected using ISCED 97 usually does not identify BA and MA level programmes and qualifications within the current ISCED 5A, although the ISCED framework provides the relevant complementary dimensions (position in the national degree structure, programme duration).
 - The complementary dimensions at the post-secondary/tertiary level make the classification rather complex. Experience over the years using ISCED suggests that separate ISCED levels are easier to understand and communicate than complementary dimensions.
 - 'Type of programme' at the tertiary level (distinguishing 5A as academically oriented and 5B as occupationally oriented programmes) has shown to be difficult to implement and lead to data of limited comparability. Whereas some countries classify all 2-year programmes as 5B and all 3-year (and longer) programmes as 5A, other countries classify some longer programmes as 5A and other longer programmes as 5B. In the former countries, this introduced a strong hierarchy between ISCED 5B and 5A. Overall, the classification according to type of programme at level 5 is not consistent across countries: some rely on duration criteria, whereas others rely on the type of programme (academic/occupational).
3. This proposal firstly aims at clarifying the boundaries between different ISCED levels and sub-categories in post-secondary/tertiary education. Secondly, the degree of differentiation within level 5, especially 5A, is strengthened.
4. This proposal suggests defining detailed 'blocks' of post-secondary/tertiary education programmes that are defined by specific characteristics. These blocks were identified by close analysis of the ISCED mappings. Four scenarios are proposed on how to assign these blocks to re-designed ISCED levels, and complementary dimensions are proposed. Finally the links with upper secondary education are established.

Proposed blocks of post-secondary/tertiary education programmes

5. **Block 0 (advanced vocational education programmes)**

Principal Characteristics: post-secondary advanced vocational education and training programmes that are, in terms of their content, below the level of block 1 programmes and do not generally require completion of ISCED 3A. They either target ISCED level 3 general education graduates who want to acquire initial vocational training, or ISCED level 3 vocational education graduates who want to increase their level of qualification/specialise further.

Minimum entrance requirement: successful completion of ISCED level 3

Certificates awarded: various labour market relevant qualifications

Programme Orientation: vocational

Programme Destination: primarily designed for direct labour market entry

Typical entrance age: ≥18 years

Theoretical duration: 6 months to less than 2 years. The cumulative duration of a block 0 and the preceding ISCED level 3 programme should be longer than the duration of the shortest ISCED 3A programme.

Correspondence to ISCED 97: usually ISCED 4 vocational

Explanatory note: This category serves the classification of programmes for which classification as (even short) tertiary/post-secondary programmes is not deemed appropriate, but are nevertheless more advanced or specialised than ISCED level 3 programmes.

Comment [UIS1]: It is expected that through the regional expert meetings discussions, we will be able to better distinguish between blocks 0 and 1. This is aimed at solving the current overlap in the criteria of ISCED 4 and 5B levels.

6. **Block 1 (short tertiary programmes)**

Principal Characteristics: This block contains short tertiary education programmes whose content shows a higher level of complexity than programmes in block 0 and that are shorter and/or at a lower level of complexity of content than block 2 programmes.

Minimum entrance requirement: successful completion of ISCED level 3; alternatively or additionally entrance exam

Certificates awarded: various labour market relevant qualifications

Programme Orientation: academic, vocational or professional

Programme Destination: designed for labour market entry, but programmes might also give the opportunity to access block 2 or 3 programmes. Block 1 programmes do not give access to block 4 or 5 programmes.

Typical entrance age: ≥18 years

Theoretical duration: ≥2 years (less possible for 2nd programmes in this block).

Correspondence to ISCED 97: usually 5B programmes of at least 2 years duration that are not equivalent to a block 2 programme

7. Block 2 (medium first degree programmes)

Principal Characteristics: academic and professional educational programmes of 3 to 4 years duration that prepare for a first qualification/degree. This block is traditionally offered by universities and equivalent institutions. Instruction is informed by knowledge of the forefront of the field. May involve completion of a research project or thesis, but one that is less advanced than those expected in block 3b or 4.

Order in the national degree structure: First qualification/degree

Minimum entrance requirement: usually successful completion of ISCED 3A; alternatively or additionally entrance exam; transfer into a higher year sometimes possible after successful completion of block 1

Certificates awarded: BA degree or equivalent qualification¹

Programme Orientation: academic, vocational or professional

Programme Destination: prepares for high skills occupations, professions and block 4 programmes. However there might also be block 2 programmes that do not give access to block 4, especially amongst the vocational programmes. No direct access to block 5.²

Typical entrance age: ≥18 years

Theoretical duration: programmes take 3 to 4 years to complete. Cumulative duration: If a block 2 programme allows transfer from block 1 or requires completion of an intermediate programme in block 2, its duration may be only 1 year.

Correspondence to ISCED 97: usually 5A 1st and medium. Programmes formerly classified as 5B in ISCED 97 because of their applied/vocational character should be classified in block 2 *if* these take 3 or more years to complete (cumulative duration since beginning of 5B) *and* are considered as equivalent to a block 2 programme in the country.

Explanatory note: Intermediate programmes in this block form the initial (usually 2) years of a full block 2 programme. They are not considered as self-contained educational programmes. Their completion thus does not count as successful completion of block 2. Enrolment in the intermediate programme is regarded as enrolment in the full programme.

8. Block 3a (long first degree programmes - low)

Principal Characteristics: academic and professional educational programmes with a minimum duration of more than 4 years that prepare for a first degree that in terms of complexity of content is equivalent to block 2 programmes in the same country. May involve completion of a research project or thesis, but one that is less advanced than those expected in block 3b or 4.

¹ Some countries/universities offer 4-year Master degree programmes as first (undergraduate) degrees. These should also be classified here, despite their name.

² Indirect access to block 5 may be possible if the block 5 PhD programme contains an introductory phase at the Master's level, which should however be considered as block 4 conceptually.

Order in the national degree structure: First qualification/degree

Minimum entrance requirement: successful completion of ISCED 3A; alternatively or additionally entrance exam; transfer into a higher year sometimes possible after successful completion of block 1

Certificates awarded: BA degree and equivalent

Programme Orientation: academic or professional

Programme Destination: prepares for high skills occupations and gives the same prospects for subsequent education and labour market entry as block 2 programmes (e.g. no direct access to block 5)

Typical entrance age: ≥18 years

Theoretical duration: > 4 years

Correspondence to ISCED 97: 5A 1st and long

9. **Block 3b (long first degree programmes - high)**

Principal Characteristics: academic and professional/technical educational programmes with a minimum duration of more than 4 years that prepare for a first degree that in terms of complexity of content is equivalent to block 4 programmes. May involve completion of a research project or thesis, but one that is less advanced than those expected in block 5.

Order in the national degree structure: First qualification/degree

Minimum entrance requirement: usually successful completion of ISCED 3A; alternatively or additionally entrance exam; transfer into a higher year sometimes possible after successful completion of block 1

Certificates awarded: MA degree and equivalent³

Programme Orientation: academic or professional

Programme Destination: prepares for high skills occupations and typically also block 5 programmes. In contrast to 3a, these programmes give the same prospects for subsequent education and labour market entry as block 4 programmes.

Typical entrance age: ≥18

Theoretical duration: > 4 years

Staff qualifications: Typically require that the faculty have advanced research credentials (block 5 qualification).

Correspondence to ISCED 97: 5A 1st and long

Explanatory note: This category covers long first programmes preparing for the professions (e.g. medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, engineering, pharmacy and law) in many countries. It also serves the classifica-

³ Certificates awarded in block 3b may also be called BA degrees in countries that call all first degrees BA degrees.

tion of pre-Bologna long university degrees in continental Europe, which are regarded as equivalent to Master's degrees.

10. **Block 4 (second/further qualification/degree programmes)**

Principal Characteristics: academic and professional educational programmes that prepare for a second degree or post-graduate professional qualification and build on prior learning at the tertiary level (blocks 2 or 3). These programmes are often more specialised than first-degree programmes. May involve completion of a research project or thesis, but one that is less advanced than those expected in block 5. This block also includes all research programmes that are not an integral part of a doctoral programme.

Order in the national degree structure: Second and further qualifications/degrees, pre-doctoral research degrees

Minimum entrance requirement: a first degree (block 2 or 3 qualification); further and research degree programmes might require a second degree (block 4)

Certificates awarded: MA degree and equivalent; various vocationally or professionally oriented 2nd qualifications⁴

Programme Orientation: academic, vocational or professional

Programme Destination: prepares for entry into high skills occupations and original research in doctoral programmes (block 5).

Typical entrance age: Entrants are usually aged 21 or 22, but participants may be older if they enter block 4 programmes after a number of years of work experience.

Theoretical duration: 1 to 4 years; cumulative theoretical duration from the beginning of tertiary education is 4 to 8 years.

Correspondence to ISCED 97: 5A 2nd/further and long or very long, also 5B 2nd/further and long or very long if these programmes lead to an equivalent cumulative duration *and* are considered as equivalent to a MA degree in the country.

11. **Block 5 (advanced research/doctoral programmes)**

Principal Characteristics: academic and professional educational programmes that are focused on advanced study and original research (doctoral programmes). Doctoral programmes typically require the submission and defence of a thesis, dissertation or equivalent written work of publishable quality representing a significant contribution to knowledge. These programmes therefore are not based on course-work only so that practical/non-academic doctorates that might exist in some countries are excluded.

⁴ Some universities award higher BA degrees that in terms of cumulative duration, entrance and qualification requirements correspond to a Master's degree (i.e. they are postgraduate qualifications). These should also be classified here, despite their name.

Minimum entrance requirement: depending on the country, successful completion of a long first or second university degree (block 3b or 4). In some countries, students pursuing a doctorate enrol for an advanced research qualification directly after completion of block 2. In this case, the part of the programme concentrating on advanced research should be classified as block 5 and the initial years as block 4.

Certificates awarded: doctoral degree/title of Doctor.⁵ This is the terminal degree in most academic fields in most countries, although there are 2nd advanced research qualifications in some countries (e.g. 'Habilitation' in Germany and 'doctor nauk' in the Russian Federation). These latter qualifications are not separately accounted for by ISCED.

Programme Orientation: academic/research or professional

Programme Destination: This block prepares for work in advanced research (e.g. research posts in universities, government and industry). In many countries, completion of block 5 is a requirement for becoming a university professor, but some countries have additional requirements.

Typical entrance age: Entrance and exit age vary substantially within and across countries. Typically, the minimum entrance age is 22.

Theoretical duration: Programmes take at least 3 years to complete. Minimum cumulative duration from beginning of tertiary education is 7 years (e.g. 3 years BA, 1 year MA, 3 years PhD), but usually the completion of a doctorate takes (sometimes considerably) longer.

Correspondence to ISCED 97: Level 6

Explanatory note: Diplôme d'études approfondies (DEA) in French-speaking countries, Licentiate in the Scandinavian countries and similar pre-doctoral programmes requiring completion of block 3b or 4 *and* being a prerequisite for continuation to the doctoral programme itself are regarded as intermediate programmes in block 5. However, Research Master's and similar programmes that are not strictly necessary for continuation to the doctoral programme are to be included in block 4, even if they require completion of a block 4 programme for entry.

⁵ N.b., in some countries medical and law study programmes do not always lead to a doctoral degree and medical doctors and law professionals are not required to hold a doctorate. Also in some countries lower level studies lead to a title that is called 'doctor' nationally but does not involve original research (e.g. 'Dottore Magistrale' in Italy). All these cases should not be classified in block 5.

12. The following table summarises the classification criteria for identifying these five blocks:

Cumulative theoretical duration	Position in national qualification structure	
	1 st qualification	2 nd /further qualification
0.5 to < 2 years	Block 0	
2 to ≤ 3 years	Block 1	
3 to ≤ 4 years	Block 2	
> 4 years	Block 3a, 3b	Block 4
≥ 7 years		Block 5

i.e. 'cumulative theoretical duration' and 'position in the national degree structure' (as already used in ISCED 97) are in many cases sufficient for distinguishing blocks 1, 2, 3 and 4 (i.e. there is no overlap in the *typical* durations within the same position of a qualification/degree). For the identification of blocks 0 and 1, blocks 3a and 3b, as well as blocks 4 and 5, additional criteria have to be met.

13. Blocks 2, 3, 4 and 5 are in all countries regarded as part of higher education and usually regulated as such by law (e.g. requiring special accreditation). They typically require that the faculty have advanced research credentials (a block 5 qualification). Block 1 *may or may not* be regarded as higher education in a specific country, often depending on the institution in which these programmes are provided, the minimum entrance requirements, or the government authorities responsible for their regulation.

Proposed post-secondary/tertiary levels of education

Four scenarios of how to align the blocks defined above to ISCED levels are proposed for evaluation in the regional consultations.

Scenario 1: The minimalist (review) scenario

No change to current ISCED levels. Block 0 is assigned to level 4. To identify blocks 1 to 5 of tertiary, we use subgroups labelled 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 6. 3a and 3b not differentiated (but this could be envisaged).

Block	Description	Level	Sub-level	Level label
0	advanced vocational programmes	4		Post-secondary non-tertiary level
1	Short tertiary programmes	5	1	Tertiary education, first level
2	medium first degree programmes	5	2	
3	long first degree programmes	5	3	
4	second/further degree programmes	5	4	
5	advanced research/doctoral programmes	6		Tertiary education, second level

Advantages: Stability of statistics over time. Easily implemented.

Drawbacks: Identification of short tertiary, BA and MA programmes only through subgroups that are not clearly hierarchical and that might not always be reported separately. This would e.g. be especially problematic for educational attainment.

Scenario 2: The maximalist (revision) scenario

Revision of ISCED levels with 2 additional levels: one for block 1, one for splitting BA and MA level programmes.

Block	Description	Level	Sub-	Level label
0	advanced vocational programmes	4		Post-secondary non-tertiary level
1	short tertiary programmes	5		Sub-degree level
2	medium first degree programmes	6	1	BA level
3a	long first degree programmes – low	6	2	
3b	long first degree programmes – high	7	1	MA level
4	second/further degree programmes	7	2	
5	advanced research/doctoral programmes	8		PhD level

Advantages: Allows identification of advanced vocational, short tertiary, BA, MA and PhD levels at the first digit. It minimises use of sub-groups within levels. It would be suitable for the measurement of educational attainment in surveys.

Drawbacks: It will be difficult to get such detailed information for teachers and finances, but useful aggregations for such statistics could be proposed.

Scenario 3: The medium (revision) scenario

Revision of ISCED levels with 1 additional level for MA level programmes (first and second/further)

Block	Description	Level	Sub-level	Level label
0	advanced vocational programmes	4		Post-secondary non-tertiary level
1	short tertiary programmes	5	1	?
2	medium first degree programmes	5	2	
3a	long first degree programmes – low	5	3	
3b	long first degree programmes – high	6	1	MA level
4	second/further degree programmes	6	2	
5	advanced research/doctoral pro-	7		PhD level

Advantages: Allows identification of the MA and PhD levels at the first digit, while minimizing the number of additional levels.

Drawbacks: Identification of short tertiary level and BA programmes only through sub-groups that might not always be reported separately. This scenario is problematic for the measurement of educational attainment in surveys. Conflicts with Bologna structures where block 1 would not be part of the first tertiary level. It will be difficult to get such detailed information for teachers and finances, but useful aggregations for such statistics could be proposed.

Scenario 4: An alternative medium (revision) scenario

Revision of ISCED levels with 1 extra level for MA. Post-secondary programmes below the BA level, blocks 0 and 1, are reported combined in one ISCED level.

Block	Description	Level	Sub-level	Level label
0	advanced vocational programmes	4	1	sub-degree level
1	short tertiary programmes	4	2	
2	medium first degree programmes	5	1	BA level
3 a	long first degree programmes – low	5	2	
3 b	long first degree programmes – high	6	1	MA level
4	second/further degree programmes	6	2	
5	advanced research/doctoral programmes	7		PhD level

Advantages: Allows identification of short tertiary, BA, MA and PhD levels at the first digit, while minimising the number of additional levels. It would thus be very suitable for measuring educational attainment in surveys.

Drawbacks: Backward comparability between ISCED 97 and the revised ISCED is problematic if blocks 0 and 1 are not reported separately. Under this scenario, level 4 should neither be aggregated with level 3 nor with level 5 for indicator construction. It will be difficult to get such detailed information for teachers and finances, but useful aggregations for such statistics could be proposed.

Complementary dimensions of post-secondary education

14. All tertiary blocks and levels can all be differentiated using 'fields of education and training'. This is a 3-digit level classification prepared in 1999 which requires to be updated for changes in the different fields of education and training as well for adding new ones⁶.
15. Furthermore, fields of education and training could be aggregated into broad categories of academic and professional fields. Examples for academic programmes are those in the humanities, social and natural sciences. Examples for professional programmes are those in engineering, social work, health related areas, music and arts, and preparation for the teaching and law professions.
16. Furthermore, programmes in blocks 2, 3 and 4 could be differentiated by 'programme destination' (similar to ISCED 97): type A programmes would typically give access to the next higher tertiary education level (even if most students possibly will not chose to pursue more education). Thus, block 2 and block 3a programmes would give access to block 4. Similarly, block 3b and block 4 would give access to block 5 (although some block 4 programmes may also be suitable for 3b graduates). Type B programmes would typically not give access to the next higher level and thus serve preparation for the labour market *only*.
17. Most countries consider institutional differentiations in order to e.g. make the distinction between academic and applied programmes for national purposes if their educational system is binary (consisting of two types of higher education institutions: traditional, research oriented universities on the one hand, and more recent, application oriented universities, institutes of technology or 'polytechnics' on the other hand). Although not strictly comparable, information on institutional differentiation within countries is important, especially since institutional differentiation within countries is related to the country's linkages between the educational system and the labour market. Therefore it could make sense to include such information in the ISCED mappings as a tool to help in defining the classification of certain programmes.

Comment [UIS2]: How useful would this distinction be?

Comment [UIS3]: This distinction may be useful for blocks 2 and 4. However, how useful this distinction could be for block 3 is not clear yet. The current block 3a could be regarded as ISCED 3B and 3b as ISCED 3A of access to block 5 is used as one criterion for distinguishing within block 3.

Comment [UIS4]: ISCED 97 states the institutional differentiation should not be the basis for programme classification. Experience in the ISCED mappings, however, shows that this is an important factor for countries when classifying programmes. Could **international comparability** still be guaranteed if this becomes a central criteria or to just keep it as a tool for difficult cases?

Link to ISCED level 3

18. For all post-secondary/tertiary educational programmes, the successful completion of ISCED level 3 is normally required. In some countries or for some programmes, entrance examinations have to be passed, either replacing or complementing an ISCED level 3 qualification. In some countries or for some programmes, labour market experience may either replace or complement an ISCED level 3 qualification.
19. The complementary dimension 'programme destination' at level 3 is simplified in such a way that only programmes that are designed to prepare for blocks 2 and 3 (ISCED 3A) and programmes that do not give access to blocks 2 and 3 and are thus designed to prepare for labour market entry or post-secondary education in block 0 (ISCED 3B), are differentiated. Level 3A programmes can be general or vocational, forming three sub-categories at ISCED level 3. More detail to be found in the dedicated proposal.

⁶ This work is planned for after the 2011 General Conference.

Application examples from the world regions

For each region, (at least) one example is given. The examples quote the name of the country, the classification of the programme in ISCED 97 (e.g. **4Av** refers to: ISCED level 4, destination A, orientation = vocational) the name of the programme, the entry requirement(s) and its classification in ISCED, certificate(s) awarded, typical entrance age and theoretical duration.

Block 0

- Arab States
 - Morocco 4Av: Post-secondeaire technique; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificate awarded: Diplôme CPGE ou BTS; entrance age: 18; duration: 2
- Asia and the Pacific
 - Pakistan 4Bv: Paramedical; entry requirement: Secondary school certificate or Matriculation (10 years of schooling, 3Ag); entrance age: 17; duration: 1-2
- Europe and North America
 - Germany 4Av and 4B: berufliche Zweitausbildung/Ausbildung nach Abitur (apprenticeship after upper secondary); certificate awarded: beruflicher Abschluss/Lehrabschluss; entrance age: 19; duration 3 (alternatively 3B 2nd)
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - St Lucia 4Ag: Post secondary & Division of Technical education and Management studies; entry requirement: Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC, 3Ag); certificate awarded: Diploma, Certificate in the area(s) of study; entrance age: 17; duration: 1-2
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 4Bg: Formation des enseignants; entry requirement: BAC (3Ag/3Bt); certificate awarded: CAPIEMP (certificat d'aptitude pédagogique d'instituteur pour l'enseignement maternel et primaire); entrance age: 19; duration: 1

Comment [UIS5]: This one may be eligible for block 1. It is hard to tell. This shows the difficulty in establishing the distinction between block 0 and block 1.

Block 1

- Arab States
 - Morocco 5Bs 1st: Études universitaires professionnelles; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificates awarded: Diplôme d'études universitaires professionnelles (DEUP); entrance age: 18; duration: 2
 - Qatar 5Bs/m 1st: Diploma; entry requirement: General secondary certificate (3Ag); certificate awarded: Diploma certificate; entrance age: 18; duration: 2-3
- Asia and the Pacific
 - Indonesia 5Bm 1st: Diploma III programmes (1st); entry requirement: Secondary school leaving certificate (3A/3B) and an entrance examination; certificates awarded: Diploma (DIII); entrance age: 19; duration: 3
- Europe and North America
 - Germany 5Bs: Fachschule (trade and technical school); entry requirement: lower secondary school certificate (2A) and Lehrabschluss (3B) and work experience; certificates awarded: Meisterbrief (Master crafts certificate); entrance age: 21+; duration: 2

- France 5Bs 1st: Enseignement en institut universitaire de technologie (IUT) et par apprentissage; entry requirement: baccalauréat (3A, 3B); certificate awarded: Diplôme universitaire de technologie (DUT); entrance age: 18-20; duration 2 years
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Honduras 5Bs 1st: Técnico universitario; entry requirement: Título de Bachiller en ciencias y letras (3Ag); entrance age: 18; duration: 2
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 5Bs 1st: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: BAC (3Ag/3Bt) + concours; certificate awarded: BTS-DUT-Honduras (Higher diploma) - DESP (Diplôme d'étude sup.prof) - HPD (Higher professional diploma); entrance age: 19; duration: 2

Block 2

- Arab States
 - Qatar 5Am 1st: Bachelor; entry requirement: General secondary certificate(3Ag); certificate awarded: Bachelor degree; entrance age: 18; duration: 4
- Asia and the Pacific
 - Indonesia 5Bm 1st: Diploma IV programmes; entry requirement: Secondary school leaving certificate (3A/3B) and an entrance examination; certificate awarded: Diploma (DIV); entrance age: 19; duration: 4. The note explains that this is considered equivalent to the Graduate Diploma, which is 5Am 1st.
- Europe and North America
 - Germany 5Am 1st: Fachhochschule; entry requirement: Fachhochschulreife (3Ag); certificate awarded: Diplom (FH); entrance age: 19; duration: 4
 - France 5Am 1st: Enseignement de premier grade des études universitaires (LMD) et par apprentissage; entry requirement: baccalauréat (3A, 3B); certificates awarded: Licence professionnelle; entrance age: 18-20; duration: 3
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Haiti 5Am 1st: 1e cycle de l'enseignement supérieur et universitaire; entry requirement: Certificat de baccalauréat 2e partie (3Ag); certificate awarded: Licence; entrance age: 19; duration: 4
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 5Am 1st: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: DEUG; certificate awarded: Licence; entrance age: 21; duration: 1. DEUG takes 2 years and is the relevant intermediate programme in block 2; cumulative duration is thus 3 years.

Block 3a

- Arab States
 - Morocco 5AI 1st: Médecine dentaire; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificate awarded: Doctorat en Médecine dentaire; entrance age: 18; duration: 5
 - Morocco 5AI 1st: Médecine et pharmacie; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificate awarded: Doctorat en Médecine et pharmacie; entrance age: 18; duration: 7
- Asia and the Pacific

- Bangladesh 5AI 1st: Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS); entry requirement: Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), Grade 12 (3Ag); certificates awarded: Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS); entrance age: 18; duration: 5
- Europe and North America
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Honduras 5AI 1st: Medicina; entrance age: 18; duration: 7
 - Panama 5AI 1st: Licenciatura; entry requirement: Diploma de Secundaria (3Ag/p); certificate awarded: Diploma de Licenciatura; entrance age: 18; duration: 5. Completion of this programme is insufficient for entering block 5 since a block 4 programme (Maestria; 5A 2nd, 2 years) needs to be completed first.
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 5AI 1st: Enseignement supérieur; BAC (3Ag/3Bt) + concours; certificate awarded: Docteur en medecine; entrance age: 19; duration: 7

Block 3b

- Arab States
 - Morocco 5AI 1st: Médecine dentaire; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificate awarded: Doctorat en Médecine dentaire; entrance age: 18; duration: 5
 - Morocco 5AI 1st: Médecine et pharmacie; entry requirement: Baccalauréat (3Ag); certificate awarded: Doctorat en Médecine et pharmacie; entrance age: 18; duration: 7
- Asia and the Pacific
 - Bangladesh 5AI 1st: Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS); entry requirement: Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), Grade 12 (3Ag); certificates awarded: Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS); entrance age: 18; duration: 5
- Europe and North America
 - Germany 5AI 1st: Diplomstudium,; entry requirement: Abitur (3Ag); certificate awarded: Diplom; entrance age: 19; duration: 4.5
 - France 5AI 1st: Enseignement des écoles d'ingénieur et par apprentissage; entry requirement: baccalauréat (3A, 3B); certificate awarded: Diplôme d'ingénieur; entrance age: 18-22; duration: 5
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Honduras 5AI 1st: Medicina; entrance age: 18; duration: 7
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 5AI 1st: Enseignement supérieur; BAC (3Ag/3Bt) + concours; certificate awarded: Docteur en medecine; entrance age: 19; duration: 7

Block 4

- Arab States
 - Qatar 5BI 2nd: Higher diploma; entry requirement: Bachelor degree (5A 1st); certificate awarded: Higher diploma; entrance age: 22; duration: 1
 - Qatar 5AI 2nd: Masters; entry requirement: Bachelor degree; certificate awarded: Master degree; entrance age: 22; duration: 2
- Asia and the Pacific

- China 5AI 2nd: Master's; entry requirements: Bachelor's degree; certificate awarded: Master's degree; entrance age: 22; duration: 2-3
- Europe and North America
 - Estonia 5AI 2nd: Magistriõpe (Master's study programmes); entry requirement: Bakalaureuskraad (5Am 1st) or Rakenduskõrgharidusõppe diplom (5Bm 1st); certificate awarded: Magistrikraad (Master's degree); entrance age: 22; duration: 2
 - France 5AI 2nd: Enseignement de deuxième grade des études universitaires et par apprentissage; entry requirement: Licence (5Am 1st); certificate awarded: Master (LMD); entrance age: 21-23; duration: 2
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Haiti 5AI 2nd: 2e cycle de l'enseignement supérieur et universitaire; entry requirement: Licence; certificate awarded: Maîtrise; entrance age: 23; duration: 2
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 5A 2nd: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: Licence; certificate awarded: Maitrise; entrance age: 22; duration: 1
 - Cameroon 5AI 3rd: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: Maitrise; certificate awarded: DESS; entrance age: 23; duration: 1

Block 5

- Arab States
 - Morocco 6: Doctorat; entry requirement: DESA (block 4, but used to be ISCED 6); certificate awarded: Doctorat; entrance age: 23+; duration: 5-7
- Asia and the Pacific
 - Indonesia 6: Specialist II (SpII); entry requirement: Specialist I (Spl, 5B 2nd, which is equivalent to a Master's); certificate awarded: Specialist II (SpII); entrance age: 25; duration: 3-5. Note indicates that this is equivalent to a Doctorate.
 - Indonesia 6: Doctorate programmes; entry requirement: Master's degree (SII, 5AI 2nd); certificate awarded: Doctorate degree (SIII); entrance age: 25; duration: 3-5
- Europe and North America
 - Estonia 6: Doktoriope (Doctoral study programmes); entry requirement: Magistrikraad (5A 2nd); certificate awarded: Doktorikraad (Doctor's Degree); entrance age: 24; duration: 4
- Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Brazil 6: Doctorate Programmes (Post-graduate prog, stricto sensu); entry requirement: Tertiary Diploma (5Am/l 1st) or Master's degree (block 4, but used to be ISCED 6); certificate awarded: Diploma de Doutorado (Doctoral degree); entrance age: 22; duration: 4
- Sub-Saharan Africa
 - Cameroon 6: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: Maitrise (block 4/5Am 2nd); certificate awarded: DEA; entrance age: 23; duration: 2. This is an intermediate block 5 programme.
 - Cameroon 6: Enseignement supérieur; entry requirement: DEA; certificate awarded: Doctorat ou PhD; entrance age: 24; duration: 3

Recommendations

The regional consultations organised by UIS are invited to discuss the implications of the following recommendations for their region and give specific feedback to the ISCED TAP.

1. A detailed system of clearly defined blocks of post-secondary/tertiary education clarifies which types of programmes are common at this level. The system proposed here provides a holistic classification of post-secondary/tertiary education programmes, leading to improved borderlines between advanced vocational education currently classified at ISCED 4, tertiary education programmes not leading to a degree equivalent to a BA degree (currently classified as 5B), and BA, MA and PhD/doctoral degree programmes. Based on the specification of blocks, ISCED levels are to be defined.
2. The system of blocks and the levels should aim to support the link of times series data between different ISCED versions.
3. Seven blocks are defined at the post-secondary/tertiary level, as outlined in the main part of this document: 0, 1, 2, 3a, 3b, 4 and 5. The regional consultations are invited to comment about the applicability and pertinence of these blocks in their specific region.
4. Programmes in sport and culture of very long duration that span secondary and post-secondary/tertiary education should be classified according to the same block structure. ISCED needs special guidance how to classify programmes that span blocks or levels.
5. Further discussions are needed concerning professional post-graduate specialisation programmes that require a block 3b or 4 degree for entry, but are below the PhD level (currently considered part of block 4). They might alternatively be considered as part of block 5 or require a block on their own. Depending on the decision taken, the label and description of the affected blocks would need to be adjusted.
6. Special instructions are recommended for intermediate diplomas that are part of the programmes classified in blocks 1, 2, 3 or 5. Such diplomas should not be accounted for in statistics on graduates because they do not mark the successful completion of the full programme (i.e. obtaining the degree). However it is recommended to consider intermediate diplomas for statistics on educational attainment (for which a separate proposal exists).
7. The blocks are defined in terms of educational *programmes*. Educational *qualifications* and thus *attainment* will in some cases have to be assigned to ISCED levels in a slightly different way (especially in the case of 'intermediate' certificates), which will be specified in dedicated documentation on educational attainment.

Comment [UIS6]: The current proposal, without a clear distinction between blocks 0 and 1, does not improve the borderlines between block 0/ISCED 4 and block 1/ISCED 5B. Feedback from the regional meetings should help in solving this problem.

Comment [UIS7]: This recommendation is only really useful if we distinguish blocks 0 and 1 by the assignment of programmes to levels 4 and 5B in ISCED 97

8. These blocks will be arranged into ISCED levels. Four options to allocate blocks to levels should be considered, given as scenarios 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the main part of this document. Core decisions to be taken when assigning blocks to levels are thus:

- Blocks 0 and 1 to be assigned to one level (scenario 4) or to two different levels (all other scenarios)?
- Blocks 1 and 2 to be assigned to one level (scenarios 1 and 3) or to two different levels (scenarios 2 and 4)?
- Separate blocks for BA-level programmes (blocks 2 and 3a) and MA-level programmes (blocks 3b and 4)? Yes according to scenarios 2, 3 and 4, no according to scenario 1.

Comment [UIS8]: The decision will largely depend on how block 0 and 1 are in the end distinguished.

The regional meetings are invited to discuss these scenarios, add to the lists of advantages and disadvantages (for the respective region) and indicate their preferences.

9. The final system of blocks and levels should be considered as the most detailed application of the classification. This level of detail will be used e.g. for the reporting of enrolment.

10. Differentiation of block 2, 3 and 4 education programmes along the dimension of programme orientation is highly problematic in practice. The regional meetings are invited to discuss the use of complementary dimensions for the classification of post-secondary/tertiary education. Please

- a. comment on the terminology for programme orientation to be used for tertiary education: academic, professional, vocational and general (see attached glossary);
- b. comment and state how important they think such a differentiation according to orientation is, *in addition* to detailed fields of education;
- c. if programme destination would be a useful alternative or additional complementary dimension (see paragraph 16); and
- d. indicate how they would implement both programme orientation and programme destination in their region so that the achievable level of cross-national comparability can be assessed by the TAP.

11. Further work should be performed to investigate if fields of education (as available in the current ISCED) can be aggregated in such a way as to distinguish academic, professional and vocational programmes (as defined in the attached glossary) at the tertiary level across countries.

Furthermore,

12. The definitions proposed in the attached glossary, especially the definitions of programme orientation, duration and position in the national qualification structure should be discussed in the regional consultations.