

METHODOLOGY OF INCLUDING THE QUALIFICATIONS INTO THE MQF

Skopje 2015

Content

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Coordinating the existing qualifications.....	3
3. Including the new qualifications.....	7

1. Introduction

The development and establishment of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework¹ (in further text: MQF) in the Republic of Macedonia brought about the need for including the already existing qualifications², acquired through publically enacted programs and a conducted prescribed assessment in the process of formal education, as well as the need for inclusion of new qualifications into the MQF, and also a need for defining the Methodology of including the old, already existing qualifications and the new qualifications into the MQF.

It should also be emphasized that the current qualifications do not contain the basic structural elements of qualifications which have been defined in the Law on National Qualifications Framework³ (in further text: NQF), such as are learning outcomes⁴, key competences⁵, credits⁶ and level⁷ descriptors⁸, apart from the higher education qualifications which have been developed on the basis of the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications adopted in 2010. Due to this, the current qualifications can only approximately be compared and aligned with the levels and the level descriptors of the MQF and this is why other factors should be taken into consideration concerning the process of alignment, such as are: the content and the context of the qualifications. There will be a complete alignment of the current existing qualifications with the MQF principles in the process of revision of the existing qualifications.

2. Coordinating the existing qualifications

The existing qualification in the Republic of Macedonia will be aligned with the MQF level descriptors by:

- Identifying the existing qualifications;

¹ **"Macedonian Qualifications Framework (MQF)"** is a mandatory national standard which regulates the acquisition and use of the qualifications in the Republic of Macedonia and is also an instrument for establishing a system of qualifications acquired in the Republic of Macedonia which provides the basis for clarity, approach, passability, acquisition and quality of the qualifications.

² **"Qualification"** is a formal result of the process of assessment and confirmation which is acquired when a responsible institution confirms that an individual has achieved the learning outcomes in accordance with the determined standards.

³ **Act 6** from the Law on National Qualifications Framework.

⁴ **"Learning outcomes"** are statements of what the participant knows, understands and is able to do as a result of the formal, non-formal or informal learning process. The learning outcomes are defined in the sense of knowledge, skills and competences (individuality and responsibility).

⁵ **"Key competences"** are a sum of competences on a certain level necessary to meet the personal, social and professional needs of the individual in the process of lifelong learning. There are eight key competences: communicating in the native language, communicating in a foreign language, mathematical, technical and scientific competences, civic awareness, information technology, entrepreneurship, learning how to learn and cultural expression.

⁶ **"Credit"** is a quantitative measure for expressing the scope of learning on the basis of the volume of work which is necessary for the participants in order to achieve the expected results from the learning process at a given level.

⁷ **"Levels within the framework"** is a series of consecutive steps of learning expressed in relation to a series of general results, structured according to a sum of descriptions/descriptors.

⁸ **"Qualification descriptors"** are measurable markers of the learning outcomes which have to do with the acquired knowledge, skills and competences.

- Assessing the existing qualifications in order to determine whether they can be included in the MQF;
- Comparing them with other qualifications by using the MQF criteria and
- Restructuring the curriculum with the learning outcomes.

The aligning of every existing qualification with the appropriate level of the qualification framework is enabled by using the level descriptors and the relevant parameters. These are the parameters which are present in the existing qualifications and which will also help the alignment procedure:

1. the level of education/level of complexity;
2. the prepared and adopted occupational standard or educational standard;
3. field (elementary, secondary, post-secondary and higher education);
4. duration of the educational or study program;
5. content of the program or part of the program and of the educational program as well;
6. learning goals and expected results in the program;
7. research activities, internship, etc.

These parameters must be compared with the level descriptors expressed in the context of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences).

The alignment procedure of the existing qualifications into the MQF must be transparent and carried out in several steps:

- Step 1: Examining the title of the qualification;
- Step 2: Examining the type of qualification (qualification at an educational level and vocational qualification);
- Step 3: Examining the context of acquiring a qualification (formal, non-formal, informal way);
- Step 4: Examining the structure of the acquired qualification (subjects, modules, units);
- Step 5: Examining the process of qualification assessment;
- Step 6: Examining the entry conditions (enrollment) (comparing the MQF levels in order to determine the entry (enrollment) conditions);
- Step 7: Examining the possibility of passability;
- Step 8: Identifying institutions which will enable acquiring a qualification and issuing a public document (diploma, certificate) for the acquired qualification;
- Step 9: Examining the type of public document for the acquired qualification;
- Step 10: Examining the affiliation to a specific sector;
- Step 11: Examining the connection and making a comparison with the neighboring countries and the EQF (comparison with the level descriptors);
- Step 12: Examining the competences, occupational standards and educational standards in terms of whether they are aligned with the MQF level descriptors;
- Step 13: Alignment with the MQF.

The procedure begins with filling out a form – **Form for aligning the existing qualifications** in which the following needs to be entered:

1. **Title of the qualification** – correct and full title of the qualification;
2. **Type of qualification** – qualification at an educational level or vocational qualification with an explanation concerning the true purpose of the qualification (ex. continuation of education, for personal development, for employment);
3. **Description of the content of the qualification** – brief description of the standard on which the qualification is based (national occupational standards, educational standard), details of the educational program⁹/qualification units, information on adopting the educational program or information from other sources;
4. **Description of the learning outcomes** – brief description of the knowledge¹⁰, skills¹¹ and competences¹² taken from the occupational standard or educational standard and details from the general part of the educational program. The active verbs from Bloom's taxonomy are used in the descriptions of the learning outcomes;
5. **Comparison with the MQF level descriptors** – comparison of the data from points 3 and 4 of the form with the MQF level descriptors;
6. **Entry conditions (enrollment)** – the conditions have been specified in the Laws on education (Law on Elementary, Law on Secondary, Law on Higher Education, Law on Vocational Education, Law on Adult Education);
7. **Name of the program¹³/module¹⁴ and duration** – two-year, three-year;
8. **Manner and assessment criteria¹⁵** - how the assessment was done;
9. **Who performs the assessment**
10. **Manner of acquiring the qualification** - formal education which is carried out according to publicly enacted educational programs, non-formal education acquired through visiting various programs offered by providers and informal education as a result of everyday activities at work, home, etc.;
11. **Institution where you can acquire the qualification** – vocational school, organization, verified educational institution;

⁹ The term educational program refers to an educational program for elementary, grammar school and vocational education and a study program for higher education.

¹⁰ **"Knowledge"** is a sum of acquired and systematized information, i.e. a sum of theoretical and factual information.

¹¹ **"Skill"** is an ability to apply knowledge, perform tasks and solve problems. Skills are described as cognitive (including the use of logical, creative and intuitive opinion) and practical (manual work and use of methods, instruments, tools and materials).

¹² **"Competences"** are a sum of acquired knowledge and skills, i.e. proved ability for using the knowledge and skills in learning situations and while working.

¹³ **"Program (educational/study)"** is a sum of educational competences based on learning outcomes which are recognized for awarding a specific qualification.

¹⁴ **"Module"** is an independent learning unit which presents a rounded unity or a part of an educational program.

¹⁵ **"Assessment"** is a process of valuing the knowledge, skills and competences according to previously defined criteria and learning outcomes, which include written tests, oral tests, practical tests, exams, projects and portfolios.

12. **Type of public document** (diploma, certificate);
13. **Institution which issues the public document;**
14. **Status of the institution which issues the public document** (public, private, Chamber, NGO);
15. **Classification (affiliation) to a sector;**
16. **Passability** - horizontal and vertical passability;
17. **International comparability** – referrals to EQF levels and comparison with similar qualifications in some European countries or in neighboring countries;
18. **Aligning the qualifications with the MQF**– you enter the MQF level with which the qualification was aligned.
19. **Connection to ISCO (International Standard for Classification of Occupations) and to the National Classification of Occupations (NCO)**

Table 1

Form for aligning the existing qualification		
1.	<i>Title of the qualification</i>	
	<i>Number of Resolution by which it is approved</i>	
2.	<i>Type of qualification</i>	
3.	<i>Description of the content of the qualification</i>	
4.	<i>Description of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences)</i>	
5.	<i>Comparison with the MQF level descriptors</i>	
6.	<i>Entry conditions (enrollment)</i>	
7.	<i>Name of the program/module and duration</i>	
8.	<i>Manner and assessment criteria</i>	
9.	<i>Who performs the assessment</i>	
10.	<i>Manner of acquiring the qualification</i>	
11.	<i>Institution where you can acquire the qualification</i>	
12.	<i>Type of public document (diploma, certificate)</i>	
13.	<i>Institution which issues the public document (diploma, certificate)</i>	
14.	<i>Status of the institution which issues the public document (public, private, Chamber, NGO)</i>	
15.	<i>Classification (affiliation) to a sector</i>	
16.	<i>Passability (horizontal/vertical)</i>	
17.	<i>International comparability</i>	
18.	<i>Alignment with the MQF</i>	
19.	<i>Connection to ISCO (International Standard for Classification of Occupations) and to the National Classification of Occupations (NCO)</i>	

The registry of the conducted procedure for aligning the existing MQF qualifications is carried out by the Sector Committee which analyses and evaluates the existing qualifications, and also examines the suggestions for introducing new qualifications.

The registry is then sent to the National Board which makes a decision for assigning the new qualifications to the MQF and makes a decision to align the existing qualifications into the MQF.

The qualification approved by the National Board is entered into the MQF Registry.

3. Including the new qualifications

The procedure for including the new or revised qualifications into the MQF is done in several steps:

Step 1: Reviewing the title of the qualification;

Step 2: Reviewing the type of qualification (qualification at an educational level or vocational qualification);

Step 3: Reviewing the learning outcomes in accordance with the national occupational standards or educational standards;

Step 4: Reviewing the context of acquiring a qualification (formal, non-formal or informal way);

Step 5: Reviewing the structure of the qualification (units, units of key competences, learning outcomes, subjects, modules);

Step 6: Reviewing the entry conditions (enrollment) (comparison with the MQF levels in order to determine the entry conditions (enrollment));

Step 7: Reviewing the possibility of passability;

Step 8: Identifying the institution that enables the acquisition of a qualification and the issuing of a public document (diploma, certificate) for an acquired qualification;

Step 9: Reviewing the type of public document for the acquired qualification;

Step 10: Reviewing the affiliation to a certain sector;

Step 11: Reviewing the connection and comparison with the neighboring countries and the EQF (comparison with the level descriptors);

Step 12: Comparison with the neighboring countries and the EQF;

Step 13: Including the qualification into the MQF.

The procedure begins with filling out a form – **Form for including the new qualifications** in which the following should be entered:

1. ***Title of the qualification*** – correct and full title of the qualification;
2. ***Type of qualification*** – qualification at an educational level or vocational qualification with an explanation concerning the true purpose of the qualification (ex. continuation of education, for personal development, for employment);
3. ***Code of the qualification***
4. ***Description of the content of the qualification*** – brief description of the standard on which the qualification is based (national occupational standards,

educational standard), details of the educational program¹⁶/qualification units, information on adopting the educational program or information from other sources;

5. **Description of the learning outcomes** – brief description of the knowledge, skills and competences. The active verbs from Bloom’s taxonomy are used in the descriptions of the learning outcomes;
6. **Comparison with the MQF level descriptors** - comparison of the data from points 4 and 5 of the form with the MQF level descriptors;
7. **Entry conditions (enrollment)** – the conditions have been specified in the Laws on education (Law on Elementary, Law on Secondary, Law on Higher Education, Law on Vocational Education, Law on Adult Education), but a precondition for the qualification (ex. completed level 2) can also be entered;
8. **Number of obligatory and elective subjects**
9. **Credit value of the qualification and its units** – enter the level and credit value for each unit of the qualification and for the qualification itself;
10. **Manner and assessment criteria** - how the assessment will be done;
11. **Who will perform the assessment**
12. **Manner of acquiring the qualification** - formal education which is carried out according to publicly enacted educational programs, non-formal education acquired through visiting various programs offered by providers and informal education as a result of everyday activities at work, home, etc.;
13. **Institution where you can acquire the qualification** – vocational school, organization, verified educational institution;
14. **Type of public document (diploma, certificate);**
15. **Institution which issues the public document;**
16. **Status of the institution which issues the public document** (public, private, Chamber, NGO);
17. **Classification (affiliation) to a sector**
18. **Passability** - horizontal and vertical passability;
19. **International comparability** – referrals to EQF levels and comparison with similar qualifications in some European countries or in neighboring countries;
20. **Level of the qualification in the MQF** – assigning a level to the qualification in the MQF;
21. **Connection to ISCO (International Standard for Classification of Occupations) and connection to the National Classification of Occupations (NCO)**

Table 2

Form for including the new or revised qualifications		
1.	<i>Title of the qualification</i>	
	<i>Number of Resolution</i>	
2.	<i>Type of qualification</i>	
3.	<i>Code of qualification</i>	

¹⁶ The term educational program refers to an educational program for elementary, grammar school and vocational education and a study program for higher education.

4.	<i>Description of the content of the qualification</i>	
5.	<i>Description of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences)</i>	
6.	<i>Comparison with the MQF level descriptors</i>	
7.	<i>Entry conditions (enrollment)</i>	
8.	<i>Name of the program/module and duration</i>	
9.	<i>Credit value of the qualification and its units</i>	
10.	<i>Manner and assessment criteria for the learning outcomes</i>	
11.	<i>Who will perform the assessment</i>	
12.	<i>Manner of acquiring the qualification</i>	
13.	<i>Institution where you can acquire the qualification</i>	
14.	<i>Type of public document (diploma, certificate)</i>	
15.	<i>Institution which issues the public document (diploma, certificate)</i>	
16.	<i>Status of the institution which issues the public document (public, private, Chamber, NGO)</i>	
17.	<i>Classification (affiliation) to a sector</i>	
18.	<i>Passability (horizontal/vertical)</i>	
19.	<i>International comparability</i>	
20.	<i>Level (sublevel) of the qualification in the MQF</i>	
21.	<i>Connection to ISCO (International Standard for Classification of Occupations) and connection to the National Classification of Occupations (NCO)</i>	

The registry of the conducted procedure for aligning the existing MQF qualifications is carried out by the Sector Committee which analyses and evaluates the existing qualifications, and also examines the suggestions for introducing new qualifications.

The registry is then sent to the National Board which makes a decision for assigning the new qualifications to the MQF and makes a decision to align the existing qualifications into the MQF.

The qualification approved by the National Board is entered into the MQF Registry.

APPENDIX 1:

Comparison of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework with the European Qualification Framework

MQF level	Sub level	General education	Formal vocational education and training	Non-formal vocational education and training	Higher education	EQF level
8					III Study cycle Doctoral studies	8
7	7 A				II Study cycle Masters academic studies	7
	7 B				II Study cycle Specialist studies	
6	6 A				I Study cycle University studies Vocational studies	6
	6 B				I Study cycle University studies Vocational studies	
5	5 A				Vocational studies Short vocational study programs as part of the first cycle	5
	5 B		Post-secondary education (specialist)	Post-secondary education (specialist)	Post-secondary education	

			education and workmanship exam)	education and workmanship exam)		
4	Grammar school education	Four-year technical education		Non-formal education for acquiring a qualification or part of a qualification (level of complexity - IV, in accordance with the occupational standards)		4
3		Vocational education for an occupation (in duration of three years)		Non-formal education for acquiring a qualification or part of a qualification (level of complexity - III, in accordance with the occupational standards)		3
2		Vocational training in duration of two years		Non-formal education for acquiring a qualification or part of a qualification (level of complexity - I and II, in accordance with the occupational standards)		2

1	Elementary education		Functional literacy and numerical skills		1
---	----------------------	--	--	--	---

APPENDIX 2:

Level descriptors in the Macedonian Qualifications Framework

Level	Knowledge and understanding	Skills	Competences
VIII	<p>Shows systematic understanding of the research field and perfect knowledge of the methods and skills for research in that field in accordance with the highest international standards;</p> <p>Possesses knowledge acquired through personal research or work with which he/she gives important contribution to the professional and scientific field of research but also to the related fields;</p>	<p>Shows ability to interpret, design, apply and adapt essential research subject with scientific integrity;</p> <p>Uses his/her knowledge as a basis for original ideas and researches which surpass the existing limits of knowledge, developing new knowledge valued at the level of nationally and internationally reviewed publications;</p> <p>An ability for critical analysis, assessment and synthesis of new and complex ideas necessary for solving complex problems in the research field;</p> <p>An ability for independent initiation and participation in national and international research networks and events with a scientific integrity;</p> <p>An ability for independent</p>	<p>Undertakes maximal responsibility for the results of his/her individual work but also for the work of others in the group;</p> <p>Undertakes responsibility for managing complex processes while showing care for the professional development of the individual and the group as a whole;</p>

		<p>initiation of research and development projects through which he/she will generate new knowledge and skills for developing the research field;</p> <p>It is expected that he/she will be able to promote him/herself in academic and professional terms as well as in the technological, social or cultural development in society based on knowledge;</p> <p>Is able to communicate with his/her colleagues, the wider academic community and with society in whole in terms of his/her domain of expertise;</p>	
VII	<p>Shows knowledge and understanding of the scientific field of research (or study) which is an upgrade to the first cycle, applying the appropriate methodologies for solving complex problems in a systematic as well as a creative way which provides the basis or possibility for originality in the development and/or application of the autonomous ideas in</p>	<p>An ability for critical, independent and creative problems solving with a specific originality in new or unknown environments and in a multidisciplinary context associated to the field of study;</p> <p>An ability for synthesizing and integrating the knowledge and coping with complex issues in a systematic and creative way;</p> <p>An ability for assessing and selecting scientific theories,</p>	<p>Shows considerable responsibility for the individual as well as common results, for managing and initiating activities;</p> <p>An ability for solid assessment even with incomplete and limited information which include personal, social and ethical responsibilities during the application of the acquired knowledge and evaluation;</p>

	<p>context of the research;</p> <p>Shows high level of competency in one or several specific scientific fields;</p> <p>Possesses knowledge from one or several subject fields which, in the given scientific fields, are based on most renowned international researches in that scientific field, as well as an ability to connect a wider and more in-depth knowledge in related professions or scientific fields;</p>	<p>methodologies, tools and general skills from the subject fields and setting new analyses and solutions on a scientific base;</p> <p>An ability to recognize the personal need for further knowledge and an ability for independent and individual acting while acquiring new knowledge and skills in societal terms;</p> <p>An ability for exchange of conclusions and suggestions with arguments and rational supporting of the same, with experts as well as non experts in a clear and unambiguous way;</p>	<p>An ability to undertake responsibility for further professional development and improvement, both personal and of the group with which he/she cooperates;</p>
<p>VI</p>	<p>Shows knowledge and understanding of the scientific field of study which is an upgrade to the previous knowledge and training, including knowledge of the domain with theoretical, practical, conceptual, comparative and critical perspectives in the scientific field in accordance with an appropriate methodology;</p> <p>Understanding of a specific field and knowledge of current</p>	<p>Is able to apply the knowledge and understanding in a way that shows a professional approach to work or the profession;</p> <p>Shows an ability to identify, analyze and solve problems;</p> <p>An ability to find and support arguments within the profession or study field;</p> <p>An ability to collect, analyze, assess and present information, ideas and concepts from appropriate</p>	<p>Undertakes responsibility for the personal results and partial responsibility for the collective results;</p> <p>Ability for independent participation with a professional approach in specific scientific and interdisciplinary discussions;</p> <p>Performs appropriate evaluation taking into consideration the personal, social, scientific and ethical aspects;</p>

	<p>issues in relation to scientific research and the new sources of knowledge;</p> <p>Shows knowledge and understanding of various theories and methodologies necessary for a wider research area;</p>	<p>data;</p> <p>An ability to assess theoretical and practical issues, to give explanations for the reasons and to choose an appropriate solution;</p> <p>Undertakes initiative to identify the needs for acquiring further knowledge and learning with a high level of independence;</p> <p>An ability to converse and debate about information, ideas, problems and solutions when the criteria for decisions and the scope of the task have been clearly defined with both the expert and non expert public;</p>	
--	--	---	--

<p>V</p>	<p>Shows knowledge and understanding of the study field or work which is upgraded on the general secondary education supported by specialized literature;</p> <p>Possesses specialist theoretical and vocational knowledge and understanding of separate basic theories from a specific scientific and vocational area;</p> <p>Possesses limited knowledge of contemporary trends in the area of work or study which support the field of work or profession, possibility for personal development and basis for further studies in order to complete the first cycle;</p>	<p>Applies skills based on understanding of theoretical principles and their application in problem solving and conducting of complex and specific tasks in the field of work and study by choosing and using relevant data, methods, actions, techniques, instruments, devices, tools and materials;</p> <p>Possesses learning skills in order to undertake further research with a determined level of independence;</p> <p>Possesses an ability to converse and debate with target groups from the imminent profession or area of study, with colleagues, superiors and clients;</p>	<p>Possesses higher level of personal and business responsibility and value of the personal work and the group work based on the criteria in the opus area;</p> <p>Is capable of transferring knowledge to others, organizing, informing and controlling the personal work and the work of others;</p> <p>Undertakes responsibility for the personal results but also partial responsibility for the activities, results and the work of the others in the group;</p>
<p>IV</p>	<p>Knows concepts, principles and processes from the studied subjects and areas;</p> <p>Possesses systematic theoretical and vocational knowledge as part of a specific area of the opus or study, which include analyzing and connecting of the facts and theoretical principles while performing the work and at the same</p>	<p>Possesses various cognitive, practical and creative skills, based on theoretical knowledge and principles which are necessary for learning, working and problem solving in variable conditions in a specific area of the opus or learning;</p> <p>Is able to collect, analyze, select and use relevant information from various sources, tools,</p>	<p>Individually plans, organizes and conducts his/her personal work and monitors the joint work;</p> <p>Individually performs complex assignments and solves problems, adopting his/her behavior in accordance with the set guidelines in variable conditions;</p> <p>Is responsible for the</p>

	time allowing further studying;	<p>methodologies, techniques and materials in the learning field;</p> <p>Is able to perform complex procedures and to use methods, instruments, tools, installations and materials in the work;</p> <p>Communicates and cooperates with the group in variable conditions;</p>	personal work in terms of valuing the results from the work and improving the quality in accordance with the previously determined standards and criteria;
III	Possesses theoretically and systematically adopted expert knowledge, facts, principles, processes and general concepts for a separate opus or study field, at the same time allowing further studying;	<p>Possesses practical and creative skills which enable solving known (foreseeable) and less familiar (unforeseeable) situations;</p> <p>Performs tasks and assignments with medium complexity, less standardized and relatively concise;</p> <p>Uses various devices, tools, equipment and materials in the process of production and in the services;</p> <p>Communicates and cooperates with the group;</p>	<p>Plans, prepares, organizes and values the personal work on the basis of previously assigned authorizations within the scope of his/her work;</p> <p>Performs tasks which have not been previously defined with a certain degree of individuality and responsibility;</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">II</p>	<p>Possesses basic theoretical and expert knowledge necessary for knowledge of the opus area and can apply them while performing simple work tasks, at the same time allowing further studying;</p>	<p>Possesses practical and creative skills for conducting simple or less complex and previously defined tasks in familiar conditions and foreseeable situations;</p> <p>Uses simple methods, tools, instruments, devices and materials on the basis of detailed instructions;</p> <p>Communicates and cooperates with individuals;</p>	<p>Works independently in familiar conditions under occasional surveillance and with limited responsibility for conducting the work assignments;</p> <p>Establishes simple communication and cooperation with some of the employees in familiar situations;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">I</p>	<p>Possesses basic knowledge of the function of specific objects and events with a possibility of applying it in practice and the other disciplines, at the same time allowing further studying;</p>	<p>Possesses basic skills for performing simple tasks;</p> <p>Uses simple methods, tools and instruments with instructions and under surveillance;</p> <p>Possesses general rules of communication;</p>	<p>Performs simple tasks under direct surveillance;</p> <p>Undertakes responsibility for conducting simple tasks;</p>