

APPROVED  
by the decision of the board of the  
Ministry of Education and Science of  
Ukraine  
as of December 02, 2021

# **SELF-CERTIFICATION REPORT**

## **on Compliance of the National Qualifications Framework**

### **Criteria and Procedures with the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area**

**Drafted by the Working Group  
pursuant to the Order of the  
Ministry of Education and Science  
No. 1554 as of December 24, 2020**

**KYIV, 2021**

## INTRODUCTION

The pan-European reform across the national education systems to create the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), now known as the Bologna Process, recently marked its 20th anniversary. It was formally launched by the ministers of education of 29 European countries in June 1999 in Bologna to celebrate the 900th anniversary of Europe's oldest university. Adopted by the ministers, the Bologna Declaration stated its ultimate goal, namely, to improve the European education's quality and competitiveness by maintaining national education legacy and enriching it jointly by further enhancing student and faculty mobility, developing a pan-European quality assurance and greater international cooperation.

The Bologna Declaration and the decisions of the follow-up Ministerial Conferences set out basic EHEA principles and alignment tools, among which the EHEA Qualifications Framework (EHEA QF) and the harmonized national qualifications frameworks play a special role. They build clarity and comparability of educational qualifications, help improve their quality, and serve as a tool for recognizing qualifications awarded in other countries.

The objective to establish a pan-European higher education qualifications framework was set in 2003 at the Berlin Ministerial Conference, and as soon as in 2005 the EHEA QF was approved at the Bergen Conference. At the same time, the Bergen Communiqué compelled the Bologna Process member states to build their national frameworks compliant with the pan-European one.

Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in 2005. This led to the accelerated effort towards higher education reform and implementation of the main Bologna Process tools, i.e., the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), Diploma Supplements (DS), as well as further enhancement of international cooperation and student & faculty academic mobility.

The objective to develop the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was set by the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of August 27, 2010, No. 1727-r, on 'Some Issues for Developing the National Qualifications Framework'. The Ordinance tasked the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MES) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Ukraine, with the engagement of other central government agencies involved in the implementation of public policy in education, employment, and social affairs, to establish an interagency working group on the development and implementation of the NQF. The Working Group's composition and Charter were soon approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of December 29, 2010, No. 1225 'On Setting Up the Interagency Working Group for the Development and Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework'. During the same period, the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of November 3, 2010, No. 1054, 'On Setting Up Working Groups to develop the National Qualifications Framework' established working groups to develop the NQF according to levels in higher, vocational, general secondary and preschool education. This order provided for the possibility of engaging employees from other central government agencies, institutions, and organisations in the working groups.

While developing the NQF draft, the working groups proposed the levels, structure, and scope of the descriptors. In order to maximize stakeholder engagement, broad consultations and public discussions of the NQF draft were held and, hence, proposals for it were provided. Those were elaborated in the course of working group meetings, national and international workshops, and conferences. Representatives of education and labour, national and international experts were engaged in the discussions and consultations. The Ukraine's NQF was approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of November 23, 2011, No. 1341, 'On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework'. The NQF first edition included 10 levels (0 to 9) and 5 descriptors (knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy and responsibility, as well as integrated competences). In general, the newly developed NQF was generally consistent with the EHEA QF in terms of both levels (NQF Levels 6 – 8 levels corresponded EHEA QF Cycles 1 – 3) and descriptors (NQF descriptors generally complied with the Dublin descriptors).

The NQF implementation in Ukraine was initiated by a joint order of the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sports of Ukraine and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine as of April 20, 2012, No. 488/225 'On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework's Action Plan'. The order envisaged organisational, methodological, regulatory, communication and human resource support activities in 2012 – 2015 for the NQF implementation; cooperation with social partners; onboarding international technical and financial assistance; international recognition of the NQF and a number of pilot projects.

In 2014, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted a new Law of Ukraine 'On Higher Education', which approved a competence-based education (CBE) and the use of learning outcomes in higher education standards, as well as in the development and implementation of educational programs/curricula. The law also introduced a new level in higher education – the initial (*or entry*) level (short cycle) of higher education – and aligned the levels in higher education with the NQF levels: initial level – NQF Level 5, Level 1 (bachelor's) – NQF Level 6; Level 2 (master's) – NQF Level 7; Level 3 (educational-scientific/educational-creative) – NQF Level 8. The higher education degrees/levels were junior bachelor, bachelor, master, Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts. The existing scientific level of 'the Doctor of Science' in Ukraine was referred to NQF Level 9.

To implement the provisions of the new Law and further facilitate the NQF implementation, the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of December 14, 2016, No. 1077-r approved the 'Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for 2016 – 2020'. As part of the Action Plan, the composition of the interdepartmental working group on the development and implementation of the NQF was updated. The working group was tasked to develop educational standards and programs with a competence-based approach using learning outcomes and bringing the higher education quality assurance system in line with European Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education Quality Assurance (ESG). The Ministry of Education and Science is committed to periodically review the National Qualifications Framework reflecting the needs for economic

development, society, the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework, and build effective communication with stakeholders on matters of the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications System.

In 2017, the Parliament of Ukraine adopted a new Law of Ukraine ‘On Education’, which introduced certain amendments in the NQF: an additional level was introduced for professional pre-higher education. Thus, Levels 6 – 10 became the levels of higher education (including Doctor of Science). These amendments were reflected in the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of June 12, 2019, No. 509, ‘On Amendments to the Addendum to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of November 23, 2011, No. 1341’, which also removed integrated competence from the descriptors.

In December 2019, the Law of Ukraine ‘On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Improving Higher Education’, No. 392-IX of December 18, 2019, stipulated that the NQF number of qualification levels was to correspond to the number of levels in the European Qualifications Framework, i.e., 8 levels. In pursuance of the requirements of this Law, on June 25, 2020, the relevant Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 519 ‘On Amendments to the Addendum to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of November 23, 2011, No. 1341’ was adopted.

Thus, today the NQF contains 8 levels – from the first to the eighth. The categories of level descriptors define knowledge, skills, communication, responsibility, and autonomy. Qualifications in higher education are arranged as follows: Junior Bachelor – Level 5, Bachelor – Level 6, Master – Level 7, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Arts and Doctor of Science – Level 8. Resolution No. 519 also defines the interpretation of the main NQF concepts, and also refers the qualifications of professional (vocational), professional pre-higher and higher education to the relevant NQF levels (Annex 1).

The aforementioned Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for 2016 – 2020 also set the task of drafting the necessary NQF recognition materials. In this regard, the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine as of December 24, 2020, No. 1554, set up a working group to design compliance measures of the National Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and criteria of the European Higher Education Area’s Qualifications Framework (EHEA QF) with the publication of the self-certification report. The working group included representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the State Education Quality Service of Ukraine, the National Qualifications Agency, the Information and Image Centre, the Social Policy Research Institute of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, EU4Skills in Ukraine, GIZ GmbH, Erasmus+ Project 609995-EPP-1-2019-1-PL-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP ‘Qualifications Recognition Support for Ukrainian Universities’ and leading universities of Ukraine. The composition of the working group was:

1. VITRENKO, Andriy — First Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine (Chairman)
2. BALANYUK, Yuriy – Chairman of the National Qualifications Agency (Deputy Chairman)
3. MELNYK, Serhiy – Member of the National Qualifications Agency
4. RASHKEVYCH, Yuriy – Member of the National Qualifications Agency
5. GOZHYK, Andriy – Vice-Rector of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
6. SOLODKA, Natalia – Chief of the Qualifications Framework Support Unit, Qualifications Department, National Qualifications Agency Secretariat
7. ZAKHARCHENKO, Vadym – Vice-Rector of the Odesa Maritime Academy, National Coordinator of the Erasmus+ Project 609995-EPP-1-2019-1-PL-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP ‘Qualifications Recognition Support for Ukrainian Universities’.
8. BALUBA, Ihor – Task Force Leader, Higher and Adult Education Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
9. PONOMARYOVA, Halyna – State Expert, Vocational Education Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
10. VASYLENKO, Natalia – State Expert, Professional Development Task Force, Directorate for Labor Market Development and Remuneration, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine
11. ILCHUK, Leonid – Acting Director, Social Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
12. SAVCHENKO, Natalia – State Expert, Professional Development Task Force, Directorate for Labor Market Development and Remuneration, Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine
13. HOROVOY, Roman – COP of EU4Skills in Ukraine, GIZ GmbH
14. LELET, Halyna – Chief Specialist, Adult Education Monitoring Unit, Higher, Professional Pre-Higher and Adult Education Monitoring Department, State Education Quality Service of Ukraine
15. KRASNOSHCHOK, Valentyna – Advisor on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, Information and Image Centre, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
16. MORKLYANYK, Bohdan – Deputy Chairman, National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance

17. MRUHA, Maryna – State Expert, Professional Pre-Higher Education Directorate, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The following international experts worked closely with the working group while drafting the report:

1. Professor Bastian Baumann – Managing Director, European Quality Assurance Agency, Managing Partner, Shbeemann Consulting.
2. Dr. Ilze Buligina – Senior Expert, VET and Adult Learning Department, Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia.
3. Linards Deidulis – Senior Expert, State Educational Development Agency, Latvia.

## Section 1. HIGHER EDUCATION IN UKRIANE

### *1.1. Higher education reform in the Bologna context*

At the time of its independence in 1991, Ukraine inherited higher education, which had been instantiated by the following features:

1. Relative elitism – only 20% of secondary school leavers continued were in pursuit of continued learning at higher education institutions (HEIs).
2. Entirety (no division into cycles) of educational programs – complete higher education was obtained from 4 (teachers training institutes) to 6 (medical institutes) years of study.
3. Lack of academic autonomy of HEIs – mandatory standards covered up to 90% of the curricula and provided a strict and unified list of disciplines, including their scope.
4. Centricity and no external quality assurance in higher education. Accreditation procedures were carried out within the system under the guidance of the Ministry without the external stakeholder engagement and foreign experts.
5. No academic mobility for students.
6. State-owned higher education institutions only.

The Law of Ukraine on Education (1991) actually consolidated this status quo having introduced one significant novelty though, i.e., the ability to establish private HEIs with the same requirements for licensing, accreditation of individual specialties and institutional accreditation of HEIs in general.

The beginning of genuine reforms in higher education can be considered the approval of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 896 as of November 3, 1993, with the introduction of the new National Program called 'Education' (Ukraine of the XXI century). Among the most important innovations was the introduction of a cycle-based education: firstly, a 3-cycle system (bachelor; specialist; master), and later a 2-cycle one (bachelor; specialist/master). The involvement of Ukrainian higher education in the pan-European TEMPUS program was extremely important for HEIs development potential, which had, among other things, a decisive influence on the international academic mobility of both students and faculty.

Further impetus to the reform was given by the massification of higher education (whereas in 1991, some 173'700 people were enrolled to the first year in HEIs, in 2006 already, there were around 507'700; accordingly, the number of HEIs increased as well – from 156 in 1991 to 350) and harmonization of educational systems in Europe with Ukraine's higher education system getting ready for accession to the Bologna Process. These and other moves are reflected in the National Education Doctrine of Ukraine approved by the Decree of the President of

Ukraine and the Higher Education Law (2002). Unfortunately, the new legislation failed to encourage aspects of the autonomy among HEIs, and the system as a whole remained traditionally centralized.

Further reform of Ukraine's higher education was in line with the principles and tools of the Bologna Process, which Ukraine joined in 2005. ECTS and DS were introduced, international cooperation, academic and scientific mobility were developing rapidly. One of the most important innovations was the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework. An important impact on higher education quality and accessibility was the new HEI enrolment procedure based on the external independent evaluation outcomes.

Indeed, radical reforms began with the adoption in 2014 of the new Law of Ukraine 'On Higher Education' with its quintessence of institutional autonomy and development in the spirit of the European Higher Education Area trends.

The most important innovations the new law has brought about are:

1. Modern level-based (cycle-based) higher education, consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011, 2013); introduction of four levels in higher education corresponding to four cycles according to modern EHEA QF (with amendments in 2018). For the first time ever, the law introduced the a Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts as a higher education level.
2. Institutional autonomy and academic freedoms are recognized as Ukrainian higher education's fundamental principles.
3. Building the higher education quality assurance framework based on European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
4. Establishment of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance as an institution independent of the Ministry and designed to ensure external quality assurance with the broadest stakeholder engagement possible.
5. Development of new competence-based standards for higher education.
6. Integration of educational and scientific specialties and creation of a new list of specialties harmonized with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-2013).
7. Academic integrity.
8. Support for student government.
9. Designing legal framework with new HEI funding mechanisms (money follows a student, formula-based funding, etc.).

During 2015 – 2021, the key provisions of the new Law were implemented, which was accompanied by further improvements to the legislation (amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Higher Education' 2019 and 2020 and the adoption of the new Law of Ukraine 'On Education' in 2017).



## ***1.2. Higher education today***

As of the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, higher education in Ukraine featured the following parameters.

The total number of HEIs of all types and forms of ownership – 289, including 211 of state and municipal ownership, and 78 privately owned. Compared to the previous years, there have been slight fluctuations quantitatively with a tendency to shrink in number (345 HEIs in 2011 vs. 289 in 2017).

Due to the demographic decline, there is a decrease in the number of students: 1.266 million in 2020 (including more than 25'000 postgraduates) vs. 1.370 million in 2017. However, the share of the population that has obtained or is obtaining higher education remains traditionally high – over 73% aged 15 – 64. About 80'000 foreign nationals study in Ukraine, and about 77,000 Ukrainians study abroad.

The range of HEI graduates is as follows: 44% represent social & economic and humanitarian fields of education, 16% – engineering; 8% – medical, 7% – education (teachers training?), 6% – transport, 4% – natural sciences, the rest – other fields and specialties. According to the share of HEI graduates of all levels in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which is 25.3%, Ukraine ranked fairly high – 35<sup>th</sup> place out of 131 countries according to the Global Innovation Index in 2020.

The public policy in the field of education is determined by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine and implemented by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science, other ministries and local government agencies.

Governance in higher education is carried out by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science, other ministries, the National Academy of Sciences and sectoral academies of sciences, local government agencies managing higher education institutions in their jurisdictions, and the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

Central to the higher education governance is the Ministry of Education and Science, which develops strategies and higher education development programs, delivers legislative support, and exercises many other powers in accordance with the law. At the beginning of 2020, according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science is also responsible for the vast majority of state-owned HEIs (142). Other ministries having 5 or more HEIs in their subordination are Ministry of Health of Ukraine (21), Ministry of Culture of Ukraine (12), Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (8), and Ministry of Internal Affairs (11). The Ministry of Social Policy and the Security Service of Ukraine manage one HEI each. Other HEIs are of municipal ownership.

Among the important powers of the Ministry of Education and Science is the development, enhancement and coordination regarding the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework. In this regard, the Ministry works closely with

the National Qualifications Agency, which is legally bound to supporting the implementation and communication of the NQF.

In 2019, the total budget spending on education at all levels amounted to 6.07% of GDP, expenditures from participatory budgets – 5.44% of GDP. Education spending for ISCED Levels 5 – 8 (excluding research and scientific (experimental) developments) amounted to 1.84% of GDP, including from participatory budgets – 1.34% of GDP.

Spending on higher education (excluding research and development) in the EU was 0.9% of GDP in 2017. Although there are some discrepancies in the calculation methodology for this indicator, it can be concluded that, in relative terms, the total spending on higher education in Ukraine is at the level of EU member-states. At the same time, in absolute figures in US dollar terms, the total funding for higher education in Ukraine is still assessed as insufficient despite the constant increases.

### ***1.3. Levels, degrees, qualifications and standards in higher education***

#### ***Higher education levels and degrees***

The Law of Ukraine ‘On Higher Education’ defines the following levels in higher education (Annexe 2):

- Entry level (short cycle) of higher education corresponds to NQF Level 5, the scope of the educational program after completing general secondary education is 120 ECTS credits.
- Level 1 (Bachelor) corresponds to the NQF Level 6, the scope of the educational program after completing general secondary education is 180-240 ECTS credits.
- Level 2 (Master) corresponds to the NQF Level 7, the scope of the educational program after completing the bachelor's degree is 90-120 (for educational and professional programs) and 120 ECTS credits (for educational and scientific programs); for medical, veterinary and pharmaceutical specialties, the scope of the educational program after completing general secondary education is 300-360 ECTS credits.
- Level 3 (educational-scientific/educational-creative) corresponds to NQF Level 8; the standard time to educate a Doctor of Philosophy after completing the master's degree is 4 years, thus the scope of an educational component of the educational-scientific program requires 30-60 ECTS credits; the standard time to educate a Doctor of Arts after completing the master's degree is 3 years, thus the scope of an educational component of the educational-creative program is 30-60 ECTS credits.

When enrolling in Junior Bachelor's, Bachelor's and Master's Programs in medicine, veterinary and pharmaceutical specialties after completing professional pre-higher education, a higher education institution has the right to transfer ECTS credits in the amount specified by the higher education standard.

Obtaining higher education at each level presupposes requires successful completion of an educational program, which is the basis for awarding the appropriate higher education degree of a Junior Bachelor, Bachelor, Master, Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts with the issuance of a respective higher education document – a diploma.

### ***Educational qualifications***

The Law of Ukraine ‘On Education’ defines the concept of ‘*educational qualification*’ as one recognized by an educational institution or other authorized entity in education and certified scope of study by the relevant document in line with the educational standards and personal learning outcomes (competencies).

The Law also stipulates that:

- Organisations responsible for awarding, recognition and confirmation of educational qualifications are educational institutions or other education entities.
- Learning outcomes and competences required for awarding of educational and/or occupational qualifications can be achieved and obtained in formal, non-formal or informal education.

The Law of Ukraine ‘On Higher Education’ defines qualifications obtained in higher education as ‘educational’ and equates them with higher education degrees, since:

- a higher education qualification is the official evaluation and recognition outcome obtained when an authorized institution has established that an individual achieved competencies (learning outcomes) in accordance with the higher education standards, as evidenced by the relevant higher education document issued.
- • the title of the qualification consists of information about the degree of higher education obtained by the person, specialty (specialty, field of knowledge - for interdisciplinary educational programs), specialization.

In this case, the educational institution may independently introduce areas of study as components of specialties that are indicated in awarding educational qualifications to individuals who have successfully completed training in relevant educational programs.

### ***Higher education standards***

According to Ukraine’s Higher Education Law, an educational program must take into account the requirements of the higher education relevant standard, i.e., a set of educational program requirements that are common to all educational programs within a certain higher education level and specialty.

Higher education standards are developed for each level in higher education within each specialty in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework and are used to determine and assess the higher education quality and performance of

HEIs (research and development institutions), as well as learning outcomes in relevant specialties.

The Law of Ukraine ‘On Higher Education’ defines the key components in each higher education standard:

- ECTS credits required to obtain the appropriate higher education degree.
- Requirements for educational background of individuals who are eligible to undergo training under this program and their learning outcomes.
- Graduate’s mandatory competences.
- Standard scope of training for higher education seekers based on expected learning outcomes.
- Forms of appraisal (testing) of higher education applicants.
- Requirements for the developing single-, double- or multiple-specialty (subject-matter) educational and training programs (Junior Bachelor Standards), interdisciplinary educational and scientific programs (Master’s and Doctor of Philosophy Standards).
- Requirements for professional standards (if any).

The law also stipulates that the specialty higher education standards required for access to regulated professions may contain additional requirements for admission rules, educational program structure, learning scope, learning process and evaluation of graduates. The following regulations have been adopted to implement this legislative requirement:

- Cabinet of Ministers Resolution 765 of September 2, 2020, ‘On the Approval of the Pre-Higher Education Degree-Based List of Specialties for Regulated Professions.
- Order 673 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine of May 22, 2020, ‘On Approval of the Education Degree-Based List of Specialties for Access to Regulated Professions.

The development of educational standards is within the powers of the central government agency in the field of education and science. To develop a methodology for higher education standards and guidelines for their development, as well as the higher education and learning standards themselves, the Ministry of Education and Science shall establish a Research and Methodological Board (RMB) and Research and Methodological Commissions (RMCs).

The composition of the RMB and RMCs includes representatives of the state, employers and their associations, higher education of all forms of ownership, R&D institutions, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and sectoral national academies of sciences, professional associations, international experts for up to three years.

RMCs can be sectoral and intersectoral. Within each RMC, sub-committees may be set up for individual specialties. Today there are 14 RMCs, which include 126 sub-committees, with a total number of more than 1’000 people.

Higher education standards of all levels are competence-based for each specialty and developed by the relevant sub-committee with the consideration of proposals from subject-matter government agencies managing the respective HEIs and sectoral employer associations. They are approved once endorsed by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

The standards define only those learning outcomes that are common to all possible educational programs within the specialty. For master's degrees, the difference of learning outcomes for educational & occupational and educational & research programs is reflected. The standard may provide for additional mandatory learning outcomes in educational programs required for regulated professions.

As of September 17, 2021 – 107 of the required 113 bachelor's standards and 89 of the required 121 master's standards have been approved. The standards for the Doctor of Philosophy are still under development.

### ***Awarding educational qualifications***

Awarding higher educational qualifications is carried out by a higher education institution based on the evaluation results establishing compliance of learning outcomes (research or creative) of higher education students with the educational programs and/or the state qualification examination requirements.

The Unified State Qualification Exam is conducted across higher education specialties at Level 1 (bachelor's) and/or Level 2 (master's) in the manner prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The law established the possibility of revoking a graduate's degree and an appropriate qualification awarded by a higher education institution in case academic integrity violations are found, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification.

## ***1.4. Quality assurance in higher education***

According to the legislation, higher education quality assurance is part of the mandate of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (hereinafter – the Agency), which is a standing collective body with the status of a legal entity under public law that operates under the Law of Ukraine 'On Higher Education' and the Charter approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Mandate of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance:

- Drafting legislative proposals for higher education quality assurance and requirements for the higher education quality assurance framework, developing regulations on the accreditation of educational programs.
- HEI performance quality monitoring, annual reporting on higher education quality in Ukraine.
- Institutional accreditation.
- Maintaining the uniform specializations database.

- Educational program accreditation.
- Development of the criteria for HEIs performance quality assessment, including R&D achievements and rating of HEIs in Ukraine.
- Developing the awarding and revocation procedures for Doctor of Philosophy degrees by non-recurrent dissertation committees at HEIs.
- Accreditation of independent evaluators and quality assurance institutions in higher education, maintaining the register of those.

The Agency is composed of 23 individuals appointed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine based on competitive vetting carried out by a Selection Commission consisting of nine experts – four internationals from the European Higher Education Area and the other 5 from MES of Ukraine, the Joint Representative Body of All-Ukrainian Associations of Employer Organisations, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Association of Students – the Member of the European Students' Union. The Agency, as well as higher education quality assurance framework in general, operate based on the European Higher Education Area's Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

The composition of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance is based on the representation of no more than one person from a single field of study and includes:

- three individuals elected from among the representatives of all-Ukrainian associations of employer organisations
- two individuals from among Level 1 or Level 2 higher education students
- at least one representative from among full-time employees of:
  - National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
  - National sectoral academy of sciences (one representative from each of the 5 academies)
  - State-owned HEI
  - HEI of municipal ownership
  - Private HEI.

Members of the Agency are appointed for three years, while the same individual may not serve as a member of the Agency for more than two terms.

The legislation contemplates independent higher education evaluators and quality assurance institutions accredited by the Agency, which may issue their own evaluation certificates for HEI's educational programs and quality assurance reports, as well as make program accreditation proposals to the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

The main tool for external quality assurance in higher education is the educational program accreditation, which is mandatory for all HIE regardless of their ownership. Newly created educational programs are accredited by the Agency for 5 years, certificates of second and subsequent accreditations are valid for 10 years.

The current membership of the Agency was appointed in December 2018, and it assumed operations in February 2019. A number of legislative, regulatory and guidance documents were developed, including a new 'Regulation on Educational Programs Accreditation of for Higher Education' approved by Order 977 of July 11, 2019, of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The Regulation takes full consideration of all the requirements and recommendations outlined in the European Higher Education Area's Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines (ESG-2015). For the first time in Ukraine, this Regulation introduced a new educational program accreditation framework in line with all the recommendations of the Bologna Process. The Agency also proposed the Recommendation on Internal Quality Assurance at HEIs and the Recommendation for HEIs on Academic Integrity.

From October 2019 to February 2020, the Agency accredited 400 bachelor's and master's degree programs. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions since March 2020, accreditations have been conducted online. The Agency has developed and implemented an Interim Due Diligence and Accreditation Procedure based on Videoconferencing Solutions. In 2021, educational program accreditations of Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts began.

In total, as of March 2021, more than 1'500 accreditations were conducted with the following results: exemplary accreditation – 3.3%, standard accreditation – 68.9%, conditional accreditation (for 1 year) – 25.4%, failed accreditation – 2.4% of all submitted educational programs.

The Agency is active internationally. Memoranda of cooperation and understanding were signed with the agencies of Poland, France, Georgia and Kazakhstan. The National Agency sees its task to assume full membership in ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and join the EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register). In November 2019, representatives of the Agency took part for the first time in the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQUAF). In June 2020, the National Agency received an affiliated status in ENQA. In February 2020, it received full membership in INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education). In July 2020, the National Agency became a member of the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI). At the same time, the National Agency was granted full membership in the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA).

### ***1.5. Recognition of foreign qualifications***

Recognition of foreign educational qualifications is carried out in Ukraine to promote mobility and secure the rights of citizens who have studied abroad to continue their education and/or professional activity in Ukraine. The recognition procedure involves the authentication and assessment of foreign educational qualifications or length of study by the competent recognition body in order to enable the right holder to apply for admission to an educational institution and/or continuing education, as well as to apply for employment in Ukraine.

Recognition of foreign educational qualifications in Ukraine is carried out on the basis of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region – Lisbon, April 11, 1997 (hereinafter - the Lisbon Convention), ratified by the Law of Ukraine of December 3, 1999, No. 1273-XIV ‘On Ratification of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region’, international agreements on mutual recognition and equivalence academic credentials and titles, and the relevant national legislation, namely: The Recognition Procedure for Higher Education Degrees Obtained in Foreign Higher Education Institutions; and the Ukraine’s Recognition Procedure for Secondary, Vocational and Professional Education Credentials Issued by Foreign Educational Institutions (approved by Order 504 May 5, 2015, of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, registered in the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on May 27, 2015, Registration Numbers 614/27059 and 615/27060 respectively).

Approved by the Ordinance of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of December 14, 2016, No. 1077-r, ‘Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for 2016 – 2020’ requires explicitly to use of the National Qualifications Framework as a tool for foreign qualification recognition.

Ukraine has signed more than 20 bilateral mutual recognition agreements and equivalence of academic credentials and titles with countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. Their provisions are considered in the recognition procedure.

The foreign educational qualifications recognition procedure in Ukraine is carried out by the following competent bodies:

- A higher education institution for the purpose of enrolment in this institution and/or appointment to the position of a research associate or academic staff at this HEI.
- The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for the purpose of studying at educational institutions and/or access to professional occupation in Ukraine.

ENIC Ukraine – the National Information Centre of Academic Mobility – was established under Article IX of the Lisbon Convention to promote recognition of higher education qualifications by providing access to reliable and accurate information on the higher education and qualifications in Ukraine and other countries, sharing information on recognition procedures applicable in Ukraine and recommendations on recognition and assessment of qualifications under the national law.

According to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution 924 as of August 31, 2011, called ‘Issues of National Information Centre of Academic Mobility’, its functions were assigned to the Information and Image Center (a state-owned enterprise) under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in order to perform the following tasks (for more information about the Centre please go to: <http://enic.in.ua/>):



- free access for Lisbon Convention stakeholders and member states to information on integration of the national education system into the European education area
- sharing information and clarifications with citizens and stakeholders on academic mobility and recognition of credentials
- authenticity verification of educational credentials (proof documents) issued by educational institutions of Ukraine and other countries
- due diligence for equivalence of qualifications awarded in accordance with credentials issued by educational institutions of foreign countries
- drafting opinions on the recognition of foreign educational qualifications based on the authentication and qualification assessment findings for informed decision on recognition by the competent authority
- hosting conferences and workshops on academic mobility and recognition, application of the Lisbon Convention in the recognition procedure
- engagement in drafting bilateral and multilateral intergovernmental agreements on the recognition of qualifications.

In addition, the Centre operates under the auspices of the international information network of European national information centres on academic recognition and mobility ENIC-NARIC, which was established to facilitate information exchanges on education frameworks and qualifications, sharing recognition experiences and best practices (for more information go to <https://www.enic-naric.net/>), in particular:

- The Centre shares one-stop information on the national legislation in the field of education, qualification awarding procedures, accreditation status of Ukrainian educational institutions, licensing of educational services, issuance of credentials and confirmation of their authenticity
- It shares operational data within the information network to contribute to efficiency of the recognition mechanism for credentials issued in Ukraine and other Lisbon Convention member states
- ENIC Ukraine takes part in information and research programs, international projects, workshops and other events initiated by the information network and is engaged in the implementation of latest standards.

Within its international agenda and ENIC-NARIC network engagement, the Centre participated in implementing international educational projects aimed at developing national legislation on recognition in accordance with the Lisbon Convention (I-Comply, Thematic Peer Group on the Lisbon Recognition Convention). EHEA's automatic recognition (I-AR), quality assurance of recognition authorities (SQUARE, TST Peer Review), preventing diploma mills and document fraud (FRAUDOC) and creating educational databases (SCAN-D).

As part of its international operation, the Centre also cooperates with competent educational bodies, embassies and educational institutions of other

countries, recognition centres in other regions, participates in the work of the Lisbon Convention Committee and monitors the implementation of its provisions.

The Centre is actively involved in awareness building among higher education institutions of Ukraine. In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine together with the Centre jointly established UaReNet – the All-Ukrainian Foreign Qualifications Recognition Network. The intent behind it was to build a platform for effective interaction and sharing information with higher education institutions on recognition of foreign qualifications, databases and facilitating international recognition of Ukrainian educational qualifications and length of study abroad.

## **Section 2. EHEA QF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES APPLICABLE FOR NQF**

The entire process of development and implementation of NQF was taking place based on the requirements and recommendations of the National Qualifications Framework comparability verification with EHEA RF.

### **2.1. Compliance criteria**

***Criterion 1. National Qualifications Framework of higher education and the body or bodies responsible for its development shall be appointed by the national ministry responsible for higher education.***

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued an Ordinance as of August 27, 2010, No. 1727, instructing the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine engaging other stakeholders to set up an interagency working group on the development and implementation of NQF. The Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution dated December 29, 2010, No.1225, on the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Science approved the composition of the group and the Charter governing its engagement.

The implementation of NQF in Ukraine was commenced through a joint order of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine as of April 20, 2012, No.488/225. All the subsequent changes to NQF, as described in the Introduction, were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine based on the Ministry of Education and Science proposals.

The Law of Ukraine on Education prescribes that the National Qualifications Framework as well as amendments thereto shall be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine proposed by a central executive body for education and science, which is the Ministry of Education and Science.

**Conclusion.** The criterion has been met: according to the law the Ministry of Education and Science is directly responsible for the development and modernization of NQF while the working groups responsible for the development and implementation of NQF were set up by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine following a proposal by the Ministry of Education and Science.

***Criterion 2. Shall be is a clear and explicit connection between the qualifications in the national framework and qualification cycle descriptors of EHEA Qualification Framework.***

The development of NQF started in 2010 when both EHEA Qualification Framework and European Qualification Framework were introduced, and their coherence was demonstrated (three cycles of EHEA QF and EQF Levels 6 – 8).

NQF reflects Ukraine's qualification system. However, in the course of NQF descriptor list selection and formulation both the Dublin and EQF descriptors were taken into account. The first revision of NQF contained 4 descriptors: knowledge, aptitudes/skills, communication, responsibility and autonomy, as well as an additional fifth descriptor – integral competency. This integral descriptor was removed from the current revision of NQF. Thus, the list of NQF descriptors is in full accordance with the descriptors of both European frameworks – EHEA QF and EQF.

As stated in Chapter 1.3, qualifications of higher education in Ukraine are in full compliance with EHEA QF cycles: Junior Bachelor – short cycle, Bachelor – first cycle, Master – second cycle, Doctor of Philosophy – third cycle.

Regarding comparability of descriptions of NQF Levels 5-8 descriptors with EHEA QF descriptors, the comparative analysis mentioned in Annex 3 demonstrates their high correlation.

Conclusion. Criterion 2 has been fully met since:

- There is a clear connection between NQF and EHEA QF descriptors;
- Qualifications of the higher education in Ukraine clearly refer to both NQF and EHEA QF.

***Criterion 3. The National framework and the qualifications included therein shall be based on educational performance while the qualifications shall be related to ECTS credits.***

The Law of Ukraine on Higher Education clearly states that both the higher education standards and training programs are drafted on a competence basis and are based on educational performance. The Law also defines the number of ECTS credits necessary to obtain each of the higher education qualifications. Also, for the Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts qualifications the ECTS credits are used just to determine the scope of the educational component.

Conclusion. Criterion 3 has been fully met since:

- Descriptors in NQF are cascaded according to educational performance for various levels (cycles) of higher education;
- ECTS credits are stated for all the qualifications of higher education.

***Criterion 4. The procedures of inclusion of qualifications in the National Framework shall be transparent.***

1. Levels and qualifications of higher education are defined by the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” while their breakdown to the NQF levels – by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework.” According to the Resolution the qualifications of higher education comply with:

Junior Bachelor – Level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework and the short cycle of higher education of European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

Bachelor – Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework and the first cycle of higher education of European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

Master – Level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework and the second cycle of higher education of European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Arts – Level 8 of the National Qualifications Framework and the third level of higher education of European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

*Conclusion.* Criterion 4 has been fully met since the procedures of qualification inclusion in the National Framework are clearly defined by the Ukrainian legislation.

***Criterion 5. National higher education quality assurance shall refer to the National Qualifications Framework and, according to the Berlin Communiqué and any other subsequent communiqués, be approved by the ministers under the Bologna Process.***

The internal and external quality assurance in higher education according to the European Higher Education Area’s Quality Assurance Standards and Recommendations (ESG) is clearly envisaged by Article 16 of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Higher Education’. All the criteria and procedures used by the National Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency in the accreditation of educational programs also comply with ESGs, which is reflected in their Self-Assessment Report (SAR) <https://naqa.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Self-Assessment-Report.pdf>

The National Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency is a full-fledged member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Central and Eastern European Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (EENQA) as well as an associated member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) since 2020.

*Conclusion.* Criterion 4 has been fully met since the national system of quality assurance in higher education has been organized in compliance with the Berlin and the subsequent communiqués while the NQF is the basis for quality assurance of educational programs and qualifications in higher education.

***Criterion 6. NQF and any harmonization with the EQF shall be mentioned in all the Diploma Supplements.***

The Law of Ukraine ‘On Higher Education’ defines the European Diploma Supplement (DS) as an integral part of the diploma of Junior Bachelor, Bachelor, Master, Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Arts. DS contains information on the

Ukraine's education system, compliance of educational levels with NQF levels and an estimated compliance with EHEA QF and EQF levels.

*Conclusion.* Criterion 5 has been fully met.

***Criterion 7. The responsibilities of the national parties for the National Framework are clearly defined and published.***

Article 35 of the Law of Ukraine 'On Education' defines the Ministry of Education and Science as a responsible body for the development and updating of NQF, while the Article defines the National Qualifications Agency as a responsible body for information support of NQF.

The Law of Ukraine 'On Higher Education' has assigned responsibility to the Ministry of Education and Science for the development of standards of higher education taking into account NQF, while the higher education institutions are individually responsible for educational programs in compliance with the requirements of these standards.

The relevant laws are published, thus the information on the responsibilities of the national parties is readily available.

*Conclusion.* Criterion 7 has been fully met since the legislation has explicitly defined and published with specific the responsibilities of all the parties involved in development, upgrading, implementation and support of the National Qualifications Framework.

## **2.2. Compliance procedures**

***Standard 1. Competent national authority/authorities shall certify compliance of NQF with EQF***

Pursuant to National Qualifications Framework Implementation Action Plan for 2016 – 2020 approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the MES Order established a working group to draft and publish a self-certification report on the National Qualifications Framework's compliance with the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework. The self-certification report prepared by the working group was presented for public discussion and approved by the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which included representatives of all the stakeholders.

*Conclusion.* Standard 1 is reached

***Standard 2. The self-certification process shall include the consent of the quality assurance body in the country concerned and be recognized under the Bologna Process.***

Higher education quality assurance in accordance with the legislation is within the competence of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance. Bohdan Morklyanyk, Deputy Head of the Agency and a member of the National Qualifications Agency, is a member of the working group that drafted the self-

certification report. Thus, the report was agreed with the competent quality assurance body.

Conclusion. Standard 2 is reached

***Standard 3. The self-certification process shall engage international experts***

The following international experts worked closely with the working group while drafting the report. They provided consultancy and recommendations for the conclusions:

1. Professor Bastian Baumann – Managing Director, European Quality Assurance Agency, Managing Partner, Shbeemann Consulting.
2. Dr. Ilze Buligina – Senior Expert, VET and Adult Learning Department, Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia.
3. Linards Deidulis – Senior Expert, State Educational Development Agency, Latvia.

Conclusion. Standard 3 is reached

***Standard 4. The self-certification outcomes and evidence for the conclusions shall be published and match each individual criterion***

Upon completion of self-certification, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine will publish the final report on its website ([www.mon.gov.ua](http://www.mon.gov.ua)), the website of the National Information Centre of Academic Mobility – Information and Image Centre ([www.enic.in.ua](http://www.enic.in.ua)) and the National Qualifications Agency ([www.nqa.gov.ua](http://www.nqa.gov.ua)), as well as on the websites of ENIC-NARIC and the Bologna Process ([www.enic-naric.net](http://www.enic-naric.net), [www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)).

The report will provide evidence for the conclusions in the context of each criterion in particular.

Conclusion. Standard 4 is reached

***Standard 5. ENIC and NARIC networks should keep an open list of countries that confirmed to have passed the self-certification process***

According to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution 924 of August 31, 2011, ‘Issues of the National Information Centre of Academic Mobility’, the functions of the National Information Centre of Academic Mobility are assigned to Information and Image Centre (state-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine).

Valentyna Krasnoshchok – Advisor on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications at the Information and Image Centre – is a member of the working group that drafted the self-certification report.

Conclusion. Standard 5 is reached

***Standard 6. Completion of self-certification shall be noted in the diploma supplements issued later to demonstrate the link between the National Framework and the European Framework***

In Ukraine, the Diploma Supplement template has been determined by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Upon full completion of the self-certification process, the MES will make appropriate changes to the Supplement template and communicate this to the higher education institutions that issue the supplements to each graduate.

Conclusion. Standard 6 is reached

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The working group set up by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine of December 24, 2020, No. 1554, to design compliance measures of the National Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and criteria of the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework (EHEA QF) with the publication of the self-certification report. The working group included representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the State Education Quality Service of Ukraine, the National Qualifications Agency, the Information and Image Centre, the Social Policy Research Institute of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, EU4Skills in Ukraine with the engagement of international experts from Germany and Latvia found that there are significant similarities between the National Qualifications Framework (Levels 5 – 8) and the European Higher Education Area's Qualifications Framework. This similarity applies to all the 7 criteria and 6 procedures for verifying the comparability of the NQF with the EHEA QF approved by the Bologna Follow-Up Group in 2005.

The conclusion was unanimously supported by all the Working Group members.

**Annex 1.** National Qualifications Framework

**Annex 2.** Higher Education in Ukraine - Diagram

**Annex 3.** Comparison of NQF Level Descriptors and EHEA QF Cycle Descriptors