

هيئة تقويم التعليم والتدريب  
Education & Training Evaluation Commission



# NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

FOR THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (NQF-KSA)

1441 - 2020

Frist Version

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## Education & Training Evaluation Commission

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**هيئة تقويم التعليم والتدريب**  
Education & Training Evaluation Commission

تميز  
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Qiyas

The National Qualifications Framework for Saudi Arabia was approved by the Education and Training Evaluation Commission Board of Directors at its first meeting, Second Session, on 10/02/2020





## INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to develop its education and training systems through adopting sound methodological approaches that utilize advanced international educational and training practices and experiences. The Kingdom regards education and training as considerable impetus towards national sustainable intellectual and economic development and growth as well as being the foundation for realizing the ambitious goals of its own Vision 2030. The Vision is the cornerstone for national empowerment regarding knowledge and skills acquisition while fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship together with providing lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Pursuant to the Saudi Cabinet Decision No. 108 on 25/10/2018, stating in Article 4 of Paragraph 11 "The creation of a national qualifications framework which sets out relevant rules, regulations, standards, descriptors, terms and conditions and special procedures, approved and supervised by the Cabinet." The Education and Training Evaluation Commission (ETEC) developed a National Qualifications Framework for Saudi Arabia (NQF-KSA) to make its terms of reference a guide for education and training institutions while building, developing, and restructuring their qualifications, in addition to be employed by recruiting agencies to draw on while identifying graduates' knowledge and skill sets and qualifications.

The NQF-KSA constitutes a comprehensive and uniform structure for building, organizing, and categorizing qualifications into levels based on learning outcomes. Equally significant, the Framework also provides a common language and a sound reference for comparison purposes. Furthermore, it is a functional tool to better facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills, and values across the various work environments at both national and international levels. Notably, the NQF-KSA acts as a key nexus that reinforces and consolidates relationships between education and training on the one hand, and the practical and realistic requirements of the labor market on the other. This relationship functions in such an interactive approach where education and training respond to and accommodate the conditions, aspirations and capabilities of the society, while fulfilling the requirements of sustainable development in Saudi Arabia.



## DEFINITIONS



### National Qualification Framework for Saudi Arabia (NQF-KSA)

An organizational structure used to place, design, develop and recognize qualifications in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



### Cross-Disciplinary Programs

Programs in which more than one discipline is involved, with specific learning outcomes that cannot be achieved through a single specialized knowledge, providing that the total body of knowledge gained from existing modules does not exceed 10%.



### Early Graduation

A certificate of qualifications accredited by the awarding body for a specific degree, halfway completed towards an extended academic or applied program such as a Bachelor's, Master's, and/or Doctoral degree program. The degree or certificate is granted to a learner if a certain level of knowledge, skills, and values in a specific discipline is achieved. This certificate is not equivalent to a full degree; rather, it is a recognition that a learner has fulfilled the required level of knowledge, skills and values that qualify such a learner for an academic level of early graduation.





## Major Specialization

A subject-area of specialty studied in college or any other recognized educational institution, with their basic area of specialization. The number of credit hours for a major specialization should be a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 60% of the primary requirements for the major specialization. University requirements are not included thereof. These requirements should be included in the learner's transcript.



## Minor Specialization

A support specialization outside the primary area of specialization studied in college or any recognized educational institution. The number of credit hours for a minor specialization should be a minimum of 25% and a maximum of 30% of the primary requirements for the specialization. This should be included in the learner's transcript along with the specialization field.



## Qualification Placement

The linkage of qualifications issued by recognized national and/or international academic educational and training institutions with the associated levels of the NQF-KSA.



## Distance Education

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) or other alternative tools to pursue and manage educational processes synchronously and/or asynchronously, where the teacher/faculty member and the learner are not physically together, according to what is approved by governing laws and regulations. Distance education includes correspondence and integrated education. Educational and/or training entities awarding qualifications can deliver their respective programs, as a whole or in part, through distance education.



## Awarding Body

An educational institution, founded for the purpose of delivering educational and training programs, licensed by competent authorities, and operating in light of national or international laws and regulations.



## Credit Hours

Amount of time required for acquiring a qualification, which is calculated by the number of instructional hours required to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification.



## Learning Domains

The knowledge and understanding, skills, and values, autonomy and responsibility learners are expected to acquire at a specific qualification level resulting in specific learning outcomes.



## Learning Outcomes

Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Learning outcomes can be measured using evaluation tools consistent with the associated level.



## Framework Levels

Eight levels encompassing the qualifications of public education, technical and vocational training, and higher education sectors: academic, applied, research, civil and military.



## Qualification Alignment

Placement of qualifications issued by educational or training institutions (mostly foreign) that are approved by relevant Saudi authorities on comparable NQF-KSA levels.



## Qualification

A set of learning outcomes and credit hours issued in the form of a document (certificate, diploma, or degree) by an educational and/or training institution as a recognized awarding body.





Regulation of national qualifications by standardizing their planning, design, and development processes to uniform standards across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Realization of lifelong learning principles by recognizing various learning styles as a reference for the progress of individuals through education and training.



Facilitation of learner' national and/ or international mobility between educational institutions, training sectors, and the labor market to navigate the different pathways associated with their qualification.



### NQF-KSA OBJECTIVES

The NQF-KSA aims to deliver an integrated system that incorporates high levels of quality, competitiveness, and international recognition of national qualifications, through:



Integration of different national qualifications in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to ensure consistency and quality leading to further enhancement of confidence among educational and training institutions



Maintaining consistency of qualifications and outputs in line with national trends, development requirements, and the labor market.



Creation of a common language among educational, training, and recruiting institutions ensuring transparency shared understanding of the qualification levels.



## FRAMEWORK IMPORTANCE



### A Term of Reference to Design Qualifications:

The NQF-KSA is based on scientific principles that guide educational and training institutions and employers while planning, building, and developing their qualifications. Recruitment agencies also draw on the framework to identify skills and abilities of qualified nationals.



### Equity and Equality:

The Framework seeks to achieve equitable opportunities for graduates of educational and training institutions and recruitment agencies, resulting in increasing learners' levels of confidence and ensuring they benefit from equal life-long learning and training for all opportunities, including individuals with disabilities.



### Alignment With Development and Labor Market Requirements:

The framework is structured around knowledge, skills, and values aligned with national development requirements. These requirements are incorporated in learning outcomes specifications to ensure the building of comprehensive national characters that are aligned with developmental requirements and labor market needs.

### Increase Confidence in Qualified Nationals:

The Framework increases employers' confidence in graduates' knowledge, skills, values, and labor market requirements.



### International Alignment:

The consistency of the Framework's main characteristics with those of other regional and international frameworks assures its collective alignment resulting in recognition of common features and specifications that lead to mutual reliability and to providing graduates with a range of national and international educational, training and employment opportunities.



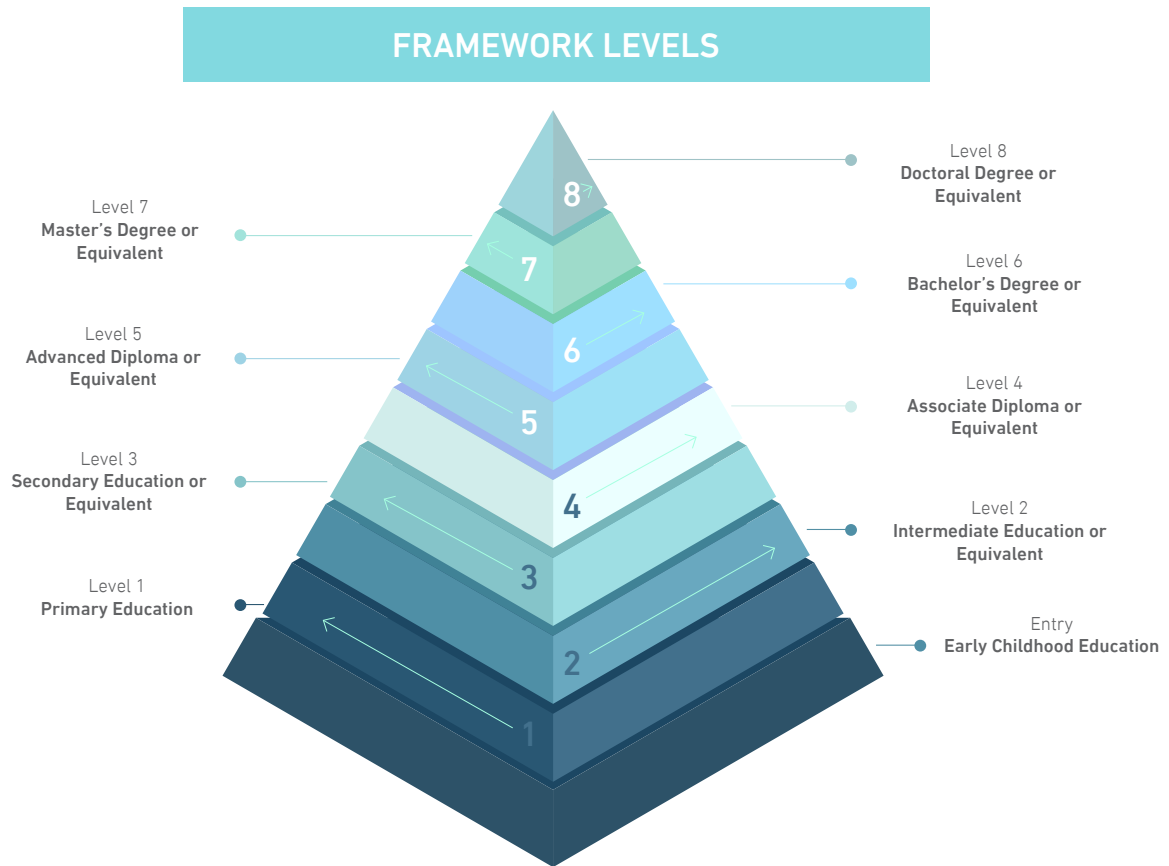
### Qualifications Comparison Tool:

The NQF performs as a tool for comparing relevant national qualifications, issued by all official educational and training institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with international equivalents, resulting in enhanced mobility opportunities for individuals through different educational institutions and acquiring recognition of their qualifications.



## LEVELS

The Levels are tiered vertical pathways categorized according to the breadth and depth of learning domains and their accumulation in educational programs. Levels start at an entry level and ending at level 8. Each level has a specific range and depth, as they cover public, technical and vocational training, higher, practical, civil, and military education sectors. Each level represents a progression of learning outcomes and including descriptions of the associated knowledge, skills, and values. Individual levels collectively form the NQF matrix of levels.





## LEARNING DOMAINS

The education which a learner needs, including the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills, and values to obtain the relevant qualifications organized according to each level specified in the Framework. These levels progress gradually in terms of scope and sequence, from the entry level to level 8.

They are expressed in terms of the dimensions of knowledge and understanding, skills, and values, autonomy, and responsibility according to the following criteria:



### Knowledge and Understanding

This includes the knowledge and understanding of a learner in the areas of learning, work, or profession

- Extensive deep knowledge, understanding of facts, concepts, principles, theories, processes, and procedures provided for in the area of learning, work, or profession.
- Depth of knowledge which can be general or specialized.
- Breadth of knowledge which can range from a single topic to multi-disciplinary areas of knowledge.
- Kinds of knowledge which range from concrete to abstract, segmented to cumulative.
- Complexity of knowledge which refers to a combination of kinds, depth, and breadth of knowledge.



### Values, Autonomy, and Responsibility

terms of principles and standards that are oriented towards success in the areas of life, work, or profession. They include:

- Academic and professional values and ethics.
- Continued self-learning and autonomy.
- Teamwork and responsibility.



### Skills

What a graduate can do in the field of study, work, or profession. Skills are described in terms of the kinds and complexity of skills and include:

#### - Cognitive skills:

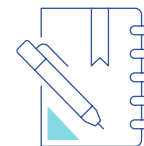
Involving the application of knowledge and conceptual understanding of concepts, principles, and theories; and the use of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, inquiry, and creativity.

#### - Practical and physical skills:

Involving motor skills and manual dexterity, and the use of appropriate materials, devices, and tools, along with mastering motor and manual skills.

#### - Communication and information technology skills:

Involving written, verbal, and non-verbal communication, numeracy skills, and the use and production of information and communication technology.





# NQF Level Descriptors

Levels

1

Level 1



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- Basic factual and procedural knowledge within general subjects,
- General foundational knowledge for everyday life and further learning,
- Basic knowledge and understanding of simple facts, ideas, and the most common tools and materials and their uses in everyday life.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within simple, familiar and highly structured contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate simple awareness and understanding of values and ethics required to carry out basic tasks and deal with everyday aspects of life including citizenship and the sense of belonging.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Demonstrate the desire to learn or work with limited autonomy,
- Punctually carry out basic routine activities under direct supervision
- Participate with colleagues in carrying out simple assigned tasks with limited responsibility,
- Demonstrate concern for personal health and hygiene.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have basic cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills:

- Apply foundational knowledge in familiar contexts, in everyday life,
- Identify and solve problems in simple, familiar, and highly structured contexts, in everyday life issues or field of study,
- Employ basic intuitive and logical thinking in simple and familiar contexts, in the field of study.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Use common basic tools and materials to deal with simple and familiar practical activities, safely,
- Carry out simple, familiar, and highly structured practical tasks based on well- defined procedural guidelines.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Apply basic literacy, listening and speaking skills for participation in everyday life,
- Carry out simple arithmetic operations in familiar contexts,
- Use familiar digital technology tools and applications to obtain and process information, and to support learning and communication with others based on well-defined and highly organized guidelines.

2

## Level 2



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- A range of basic factual and procedural knowledge for a field of study or work;
- Basic knowledge and understanding of a range of simple facts, ideas, tools, materials, and/or terminology, relevant to a field of study or work.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within simple, familiar and structured contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Represent the values and ethics required for dealing with others and life related matters, and demonstrate awareness and understanding of citizenship, belonging, and consideration of others,

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Plan for learning or work, and make simple decisions regarding learning and /or tasks, with limited autonomy,
- Punctually carry out major activities under direct supervision,
- Participate with colleagues in carrying out defined tasks with limited responsibility, and lead some activities,
- Demonstrate care for health and emotional aspects, and basic social relations.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a range of basic cognitive, practical, and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills

- Apply basic knowledge in familiar contexts, in a field of study or work.
- Systemically solve problems in simple, familiar, and structured contexts, in the field of study or work,
- Employ basic thinking methods in simple and familiar contexts, in the field of study or work.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Use safely and effectively basic tools and materials to deal with simple and familiar practical activities,
- Carry out a range of simple, familiar, and structured practical tasks and activities based on well-defined procedural guidelines, in the field of study or work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Communicate in written, verbal and non-verbal forms (in Arabic – and another language) to express a range of ideas, information, and emotions to others in familiar contexts,
- Carry out mathematical operations in simple and familiar contexts,
- Use a range of standard digital technological and ICT tools and applications to obtain and process information, and to support and enhance learning and communication with others based on well-defined and organized guidelines.



## 3

## Level 3



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will exhibit:

- A range of factual and procedural knowledge relevant to a field of study or work,
- Basic theoretical and technical knowledge and understanding within a discipline or field of work,
- Basic knowledge and understanding of a range of facts, concepts, principles, tools, materials, and/or terminology relevant to a certain discipline or field of work,
- Basic knowledge of research and inquiry methodologies.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within moderately complex and familiar contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate commitment to social values, public morals, laws, and exhibit responsible citizenship, consideration, and coexistence with others.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Plan for self-development, organize study or work tasks, and take decisions regarding learning and /or tasks, with some autonomy,
- Perform and complete major tasks and activities under limited supervision,
- Work collaboratively and assume some responsibility while managing small groups to achieve common goals,
- Exhibit concern for health, emotions, and society.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a range of cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills:

- Apply basic theoretical and technical knowledge in familiar contexts within a field of study or work,
- Solve problems in moderately complex and familiar contexts, in a field of study or work,
- Apply critical and creative thinking, in moderately complex and familiar contexts, in a field of study or work,
- Exercise basic techniques of inquiry in familiar issues and/or problems.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Select and use safely and effectively a range of tools and materials to deal with moderately complex and familiar practical activities,
- Carry out moderately complex and familiar practical tasks and procedures, based on specified guidelines, in a field of study or work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Effectively express a range of ideas, information, and emotions through written, verbal (in Arabic – and another language), and non-verbal communication with others in familiar contexts,
- Carry out mathematical operations in moderately complex and familiar contexts,
- Employ a moderate range of standard digital technological and ICT tools and applications to obtain, generate, process, and analyze data and information to enhance learning and communication with others.



4

Level 4



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- Basic theoretical and technical knowledge and understanding with some depth in a discipline or field of work.
- Basic specialized knowledge and understanding of various facts, concepts, principles, processes, techniques, practices, tools, materials, and/or terminology relevant to a certain discipline or field of work,
- Basic knowledge of research and inquiry methodology.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within moderately complex and unfamiliar complex contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate strong awareness of values and ethics associated with professional practices in a discipline or work, and exhibit responsible citizenship, and consideration, and coexistence with others.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Self-manage learning and working, work towards achieving goals and plans, and take decisions regarding learning and /or tasks based on specified evidence, with moderate autonomy,
- Manage major tasks and activities related to the discipline and/or work under indirect supervision,
- Collaborate with diverse work teams, supervise tasks with moderate responsibility, and work to achieve common goals,
- Demonstrate support of the health, psychological, and social aspects of life and work.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a limited range of specialized cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills

- Apply and adapt theoretical and technical knowledge in specific and unfamiliar contexts in a specialist area related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Resolve specific issues and problems in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts in specific discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Apply critical and creative thinking, in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts, in specific area within a discipline or field of work,
- Conduct research or investigations on unfamiliar issues and/or problems.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Select and use specific processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials to deal with moderately complex and unfamiliar practical activities,
- Carry out moderately complex and unfamiliar practical tasks in a specific discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Communicate in a variety of forms to transfer specialized knowledge and skills to audience groups,
- Use and interpret numerical data and graphical representations in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts in a specific discipline, or field of work,
- Employ and adapt a broad range of standard digital technological and ICT tools and applications to search, process, combine, and analyze information and data.



## 5

## Level 5



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- A range of theoretical and technical knowledge and understanding with focus in one or more areas related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- A range of specialized knowledge and understanding of various facts, concepts, principles, techniques, practices, tools, materials and/or terminology relevant to a certain discipline or field of work,
- Basic knowledge of research methodology and inquiry techniques.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Adhere to the values and code of ethics associated with professional practices in a discipline or work, and demonstrate responsible citizenship, and consideration, and coexistence with others.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Self-manage learning or work, set and achieve goals, and take decisions regarding learning and /or tasks based on different types of evidence, with moderate autonomy,
- Manage tasks and activities related to specialization and/or work under indirect supervision,
- Collaborate and lead teamwork to perform a range of tasks with moderate responsibility, and work effectively towards achieving common goals.
- Promote health, psychological and social aspects.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a range of specialized cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills:

- Apply and adapt a range of theoretical and technical knowledge in specific and unfamiliar contexts, in a specialist area related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Resolve issues and problems, in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts, related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Apply critical thinking and foster creativity and innovative in practical solutions, in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts, related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Plan and conduct research or investigations on specialized unfamiliar issues and/or problems.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Select and adapt specialized processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials to deal with moderately complex and unfamiliar practical activities,
- Perform moderately complex and unfamiliar practical tasks in specific discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Appropriately communicate to demonstrate knowledge comprehension, knowledge transfer, and specialized skills to a range of audiences,
- Analyze and interpret numerical data and use graphic representations in moderately complex and unfamiliar contexts related to a discipline or field of work,
- Use various digital technological and ICT tools and applications to search, process, and analyze a variety of information and data.

6

Level 6



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- Broad in-depth integrated body of knowledge and comprehension of the underlying theories, principles, and concepts in one or more disciplines or field of work,
- In-depth knowledge and comprehension of processes, materials, techniques, practices, conventions, and/or terminology,
- A broad range of specialized knowledge and understanding informed by current developments of a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Knowledge and comprehension of research and inquiry methodologies.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within various complex contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate commitment to professional and academic values, standards, and ethical codes of conduct, and represent responsible citizenship and coexistence with others

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Effectively plan for and achieve academic and/or professional self-development, assess own learning and performance, and autonomously make decisions regarding self-development and/or tasks based on convincing evidences.
- Autonomously and professionally manage tasks and activities related to the discipline and/or work,
- Collaborate responsibly and constructively on leading diverse teams to perform a wide range of tasks while playing a major role in planning and evaluating joint work,
- Actively participate in advancing the discipline and society.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a broad range of advanced cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills

- Apply integrated theories, principles, and concepts in various contexts, related to a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Solve problems in various complex contexts in one or more disciplines or fields of work,
- Use critical thinking and develop creative solutions to current issues and problems, in various complex contexts, in a discipline, profession or field of work,
- Conduct inquiries, investigations, and research for complex issues and problems

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Use and adapt advanced processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials in dealing with various complex practical activities,
- Carry out various complex practical tasks and procedures related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Communicate effectively to demonstrate theoretical knowledge comprehension and specialized transfer of knowledge, skills, and complex ideas to a variety of audiences,
- Use mathematical operations and quantitative methods to process data and information in various complex contexts, related to a discipline or field of work,
- Select, use, and adapt various standard and specialized digital technological and ICT tools and applications to process and analyze data and information to support and enhance research and/or projects.



## 7

## Level 7



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- In depth and specialized body of knowledge and understanding covering theories, principles, and concepts in main areas of a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Critical knowledge and understanding of processes, materials, techniques, practices, conventions, and/or terminology relevant to a certain discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines, areas of practice, or professions,
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of a range of established and specialized research and/or inquiry techniques of in a discipline, profession, or field of work.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within complex and advanced contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate integrity and professional and academic values when dealing with various issues.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Initiate professional planning for learning and/or work, professional development, monitor learning and performance, and participate in academic and/or professional strategic decisions, with high autonomy,
- Effectively manage specialized tasks and activities in a discipline, work, or field of practice with high autonomy,
- Effectively collaborate and participate in research or professional projects or groups, undertake leadership roles, and take high responsibility of the work,
- Contribute to the fostering community quality life.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a range of advanced and specialized cognitive, practical and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills:

- Apply specialized theories, principles, and concepts in advanced contexts in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Solve problems in complex and advanced contexts in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Critically assess, review, and reflect on key concepts, principles, and theories; and provide creative solutions to current issues and problems in complex and advanced contexts, in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Conduct advanced research or professional projects using specialized research and enquiry methodologies in a discipline, profession, or field of work.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Use advanced and specialized processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials to deal with complex and advanced practical activities,
- Carry out complex and advanced practical tasks and procedures in specialized areas related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

- Communicate in various forms to disseminate knowledge, skills, research results, and innovations related to a discipline or field of work to specialist and non-specialist audiences,
- Process data and information quantitatively and/or qualitatively in complex and advanced contexts related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Select, use, and adapt advanced digital technological and ICT tools and applications to process and analyze a variety of data and information sets to support and advance leading research and/or projects related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

8

Level 8



## Knowledge and Understanding

The graduate at this level will have:

- A substantial and advanced body of knowledge and understanding of a field of study or work, while integrating complex information, specialized theories, leading principles, and concepts necessary to create new and leading interdisciplinary knowledge,
- Comprehensive critical knowledge and understanding of various processes, materials, techniques, practices, conventions, and/or terminologies relevant to a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of recent developments and emerging issues and challenges in one or more disciplines, areas of practice, or professions,
- Current advanced knowledge from conducting original research and scholarly activities considerably contributing to advancing a discipline, profession, or field of work.



## Values, Autonomy and Responsibility

The graduate at this level, within highly complex and new contexts, will:

### Values and Ethics

- Demonstrate high levels of integrity and professional and academic values while dealing with and promoting emerging ethical and professional issues, research, and knowledge.

### Autonomy and Responsibility

- Continuously acquire professional experiences, and make academic and/or professional strategic decisions, with substantial autonomy,
- Efficiently manage specialized tasks and activities in a discipline, work, or field of practice, with substantial autonomy,
- Collaborate and participate professionally and proactively leading groups in various research and/or professional projects while assuming full responsibility for the work,
- Foster professional relationships, a knowledge-based society, and quality of life.



## Skills

The graduate at this level will have a range of highly advanced cognitive, practical, and physical, and communication and ICT skills to:

### Cognitive Skills

- Apply leading theories, principles, and concepts in highly complex contexts in a discipline, profession, or field of work,
- Solve key challenges in highly complex contexts, in a discipline, profession, or field of work;
- Evaluate, integrate, and critically review and reflect on emerging concepts, principles, and theories; and develop creative and innovative solutions to emerging and highly challenging and complex issues and problems in one or more disciplines, areas of practice, or professions.
- Develop, adapt, and implement highly advanced research or inquiry methodologies to generate original knowledge that significantly contributes to a discipline, profession, or field of work.

### Practical and Physical Skills

- Apply novel and highly advanced processes, techniques, tools, instruments, and/or materials to deal with highly complex, emerging, and challenging practical activities in one or more specializations,
- Carry out a range of highly advanced and complex practical tasks and procedures related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.

### Communication and ICT Skills

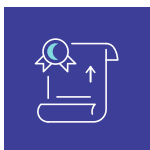
- Communicate in numerous forms to disseminate and promote original knowledge and new insights, and to conduct scientific and professional dialogue with peers, the community, and the society at large,
- Process, interpret, and employ quantitative and/or qualitative data in highly complex and new research, projects, or innovations related to a discipline, professional practice, or field of work,
- Apply and adapt highly advanced and up-to-date digital technological and ICT tools and applications to support and advance research and innovations in a discipline, professional practice, or field of work.





## Qualifications Types .....

Qualifications vary between academic, applied, professional, or technical corresponding to labor market and development needs, renewable knowledge, and rapid changes demanded by cognitive and technical transformations of work environments. These qualifications may be in a specific field or interdisciplinary. To this end, the NQF identifies two types of qualifications: Primary and Supplemental Qualifications.



### Primary Qualification .....

a qualification associated with formal education and recognition representing an integrated curriculum of knowledge, skills, and values that qualify the learner to enter the labor market or to continue learning. Examples of a Primary Qualification include secondary education certificates, and Bachelor's, or others.



### Supplemental Qualification .....

a qualification encompassing a set of knowledge, skills, and values, however that occurs in shorter duration and to lesser levels of depth and breadth than a Major Qualification. This type of qualification is often used for purposes of meeting job performance requirements, to pursue further education in later stages, or for career mobility purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to diplomas, and professional certifications at various levels.

Qualifications originate from major-specialized programs built on a scientific basis -representing either a single knowledge discipline or cross-disciplinary, based on scientific evidence in which more than one discipline is involved, with specific outcomes that cannot be achieved through a single knowledge discipline. Providing the total knowledge acquired from other modules does not exceed 10%, in light of the following:

- **A Major Specialization:** is a specialty subject-area studied in college or any other recognized educational institution. The number of credit hours for a major specialization should be a minimum of 30% and a maximum of 60% of the primary requirements for the specialization. University requirements are not included thereof. These requirements should be included in the learner's transcript.
- **A Minor Specialization:** is a subject-area studied outside the primary area of specialization in college or any recognized educational institution. The number of credit hours for a minor specialization should be a minimum of 25% and a maximum of 30% of the primary requirements for the specialization. This should be included in the learner's transcript along with the specialization field.





## Key Qualification Levels

All levels of qualifications approved by NQF-KSA have been classified for all sectors of education and training, including Public education programs, academic and applied higher education; civil and military education, and technical and vocational training, according to the following

### KEY Qualifications LEVELS

Levels	Public Education	Higher Education (Academic and Applied)	Vocational and Technical Training	Military Education
8	-	Doctoral Degree or Equivalent	-	Doctoral Degree and Equivalent
7	-	Master's Degree or Equivalent	Applied Master's Degree	Technical / Applied Master's Degree and Equivalent
6	-	Bachelor's Degree	Vocational / Technical / Applied Bachelor's Degree	Technical / Applied Bachelor's Degree and Equivalent
5	-	Advanced Diploma Intermediate Diploma	Vocational / Technical / Applied Advanced Diploma Vocational / Technical / Applied intermediate Diploma	Vocational / Technical Advanced Diploma Vocational / Technical intermediate Diploma
4	-	General Associate Diploma	Vocational / Technical Associate Diploma	Vocational / Technical Associate Diploma
3	Secondary Education	-	Secondary Education Vocational/Industrial	-
2	Intermediate Education	-	Intermediate Education Vocational/Industrial	-
1	Primary Education	-	-	-
Entry	Early Childhood	-	-	-



## DETERMINATION OF CREDIT HOURS (ACCREDITED UNITS)

Credit hours are the number of hours a learner spends to learn, or the amount of required learning leading to obtaining a qualification. Credit hours are calculated through the number of hours required to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification, based on the following regulations and by-laws:

- The number of credit hours (accredited units) accredited for each course or program is an indication of the expected amount of learning linked to the number of actual study hours in different learning activities, such as classes, auxiliary classes, and laboratories.
- The minimum learning hours for a bachelor's degree are (120) credit hours (accredited units).
- The minimum learning in one semester is (15) weeks for a full-time program, or its equivalent carried out part-time.

## NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS (ACCREDITED UNITS) FOR QUALIFICATIONS

### Associate Diploma

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (24) credit hours (accredited units), usually achieved after spending one full-time academic year, or the part-time equivalent in higher education. This qualification is awarded at the post-secondary level, either as the continuance of public education after secondary school, or for qualification purposes for employment in an administrative or vocational field, which requires limited specialized experience. Though this degree essentially is a competent qualification, it usually provides students with the necessary grounding for subsequent studies to obtain a higher qualification.

### Intermediate Diploma

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (60) credit hours (accredited units), usually achieved after spending two full-time academic years of study, or the part-time equivalent in higher education. An "Intermediate diploma" degree is designed to develop the knowledge and skills needed for employment in administrative fields, or professional supporting fields. This qualification leads to the attainment of general and theoretical knowledge fundamentals as the required academic background for further pursuing a Bachelor's Degree. Awarding this degree, in a specific vocational field, involves adequate coverage of a minimum of 50% of the field-related knowledge, skills, values, and trends required for employment.





## Advanced Diploma

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (90) credit hours (accredited units), usually achieved after spending three full-time academic years, or the part-time equivalent in higher education. This qualification leads to the attainment of general and theoretical knowledge fundamentals as the required academic background for a specific field. This qualification is usually awarded for either specializations that do not require a Bachelor's Degree or as an exit point for undergraduate programs, as the learning outcomes for this qualification are identical to those of the intermediate diploma qualification, with different credit hours.

## Bachelor's Degree

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (120) credit hours (accredited units), usually achieved after spending (3-4) full-time academic years, or the part-time equivalent in higher education which varies by specialization. However, some specializations require completing more accredited units and time-spent, as in the case of in several vocational disciplines, still the qualification remains unchanged regarding the title and level. Accredited units and the amount of additional learning required are disclosed and documented in the academic record for these specializations, with the exception of some specializations that require (6) or more full-time years of study, such as medical specialties and others.

## Higher Diploma

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (24) credit hours (accredited units) after obtaining a Bachelor's Degree, usually achieved after spending a minimum of two full-time semesters, or the part-time equivalent in higher education. Programs leading to this qualification aim to provide learners with advanced academic and professional learning to improve their professional knowledge and skills. It usually includes a set of advanced courses related to a specific professional specialization and may require the completion of a primary or secondary project. Higher diploma graduate can further pursue a Master's Degree and in some cases might be required to complete additional theoretical or applied learning.



## Master Degrees

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a bachelor's degree, usually achieved after spending a minimum of four full-time semesters, or equivalent in higher education, and can be achieved through successful completion of a minimum of (24) credit hours (accredited units) of graduate courses in addition to submitting a thesis or successful completion of a minimum of (30) credit hours (accredited units) of graduate courses including submitting a research graduation project.

Master's Degrees that are focused on research are awarded and require the submission of a thesis, in addition to successful completion of a number of courses with titles, such as: Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MSc).

Professional master's degrees that include studying courses and submitting a graduation project are awarded, such as: Master of Business Administration (MBA), (Master of Business -MBus), Master of Education (MEd), Master of Engineering (ME), (Master of Engineering -MEng) or any other titles related to the professional field. The executive or applied master is equivalent to the professional master in terms of level. The educational institution has the right to set any additional requirements for completing the PhD for these two degrees.

## Doctoral Degree

This degree is awarded upon the successful completion of a minimum of (30) hours (accredited units) of advanced courses, after obtaining a Master's Degree, usually achieved after spending a minimum of six full-time semesters, or equivalent in higher education in addition to submitting a dissertation. Another available option for doctoral programs within some educational institutions, in which the focus is placed on autonomous research in a specific field of study with courses, provided that it is not less than (12) credit hours (accredited units) designed for directed studies, seminars, or research, according to the learner's scientific background and minor specialty.

Philosophy doctorate are usually awarded under the name of PhD for research doctorate, and professional doctorate based on advanced courses, a basic application thesis, or a master project are awarded under a name, such as: Business Administration doctorate (D. BA), education doctorate (D. Ed), engineering doctorate (D. Eng) or any appropriate name to the professional field.



## EARLY GRADUATION FROM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The NQF, in pursuance of seeking flexibility regarding successful and continuous transitioning across educational and training levels, as well as promoting continuing education, outlines early graduation regulations and procedures to award certificates for accredited qualifications for a specific degree halfway towards academic, applied, or vocational programs (e.g. Bachelor's, Master's, and/or Doctoral Degree programs). These degrees may be awarded to learners after meeting the knowledge and skills required in a specific discipline. Though this degree qualification is not equivalent to the initial program, it is considered a recognition that learners have achieved the required knowledge and skills qualifying them for an academic or vocational level, which is determined during the construction and design of the educational or training program. As such, the awarded certificate falls within the previous educational level of the qualification awarded by the program and must comply with the following guidelines:

1. Descriptions of early graduation points are integral parts of the program design.
2. Define levels of the qualification's early graduation points and title of the certificate in light of the NQF regulations to count as an independent and recognized qualification.
3. Grant permission to learners, enrolled to graduate early from a program, to complete the qualification degree after meeting the academic and GPA requirements.





## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFICATION PLACEMENT

Placement of national qualifications in the education or training requires that the qualification be of complete components. The NQF has identified six general requirements to be fulfilled for national qualifications so they may be placed at each level of the Framework, as follows:



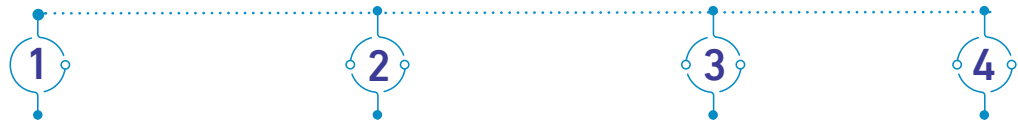


## PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS BY QUALIFICATION TYPES



### Doctoral Degree and Equivalent ..... ● Level 8

Academic, research, or professional Doctoral Degree qualification



#### Placement Requirements

1. Completion of a minimum of (30) credit hours (units) of coursework along with a dissertation, or a minimum of (12) credit hours (units) with a dissertation and some courses, based on the learner's academic background and minor specialty requirements.

2. The study duration to obtain the qualification is at least six (6) semesters.

3. Target learning outcomes (knowledge, understanding, skills, and values) are achieved at the eighth level

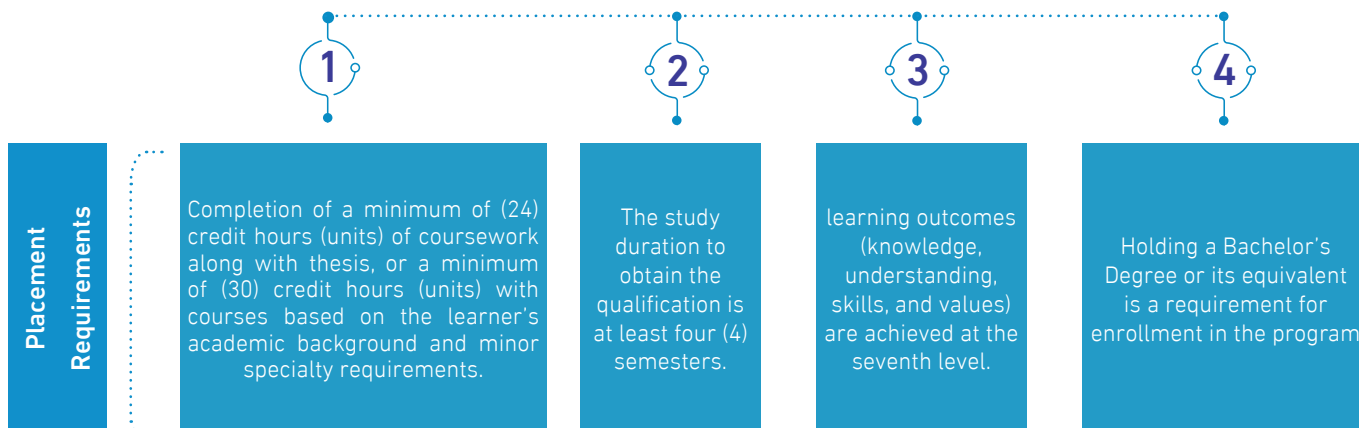
4. Holding a Master's Degree qualification is a requirement for enrollment in the program.



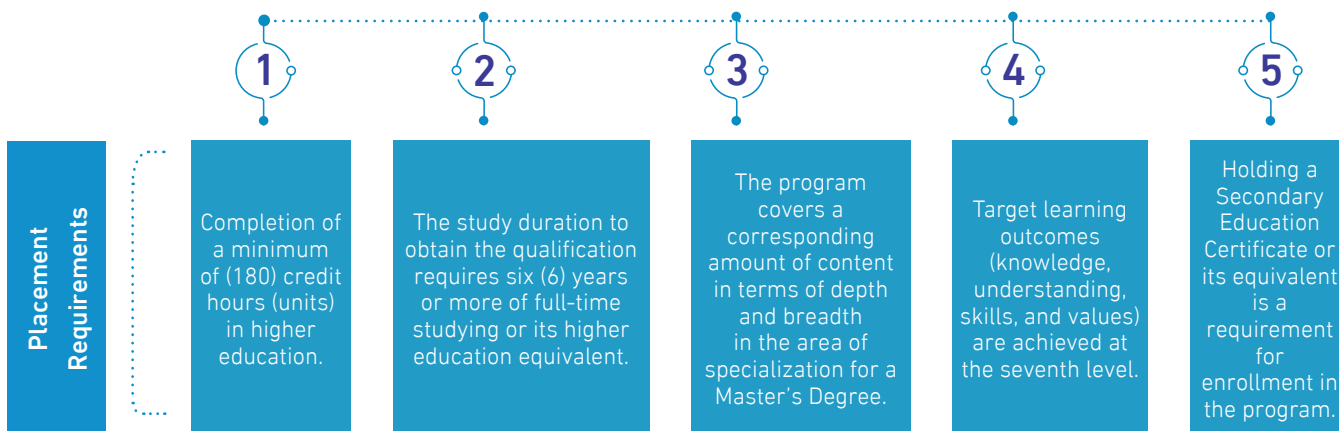


## Master's Degree and Equivalent ..... Level 7

### 1. Academic, applied, or professional Master's Degree qualification:



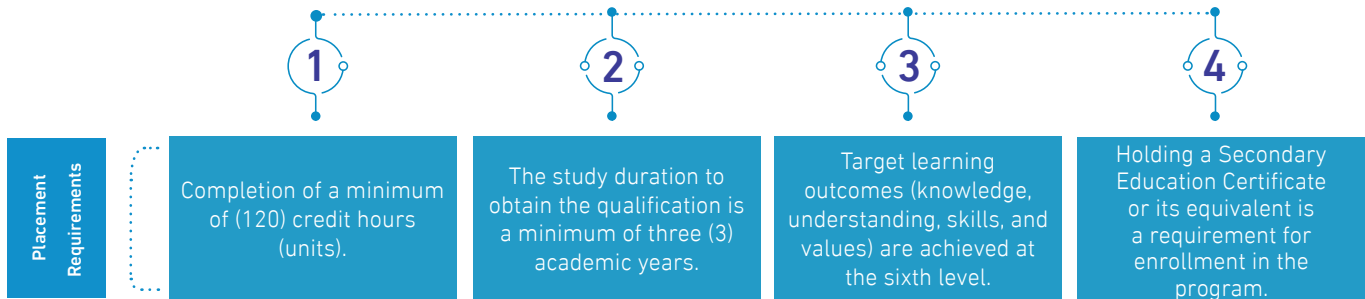
### 2. Bachelor's Degree qualification six (6) years or more, requiring complex specialized learning equivalent to the level a Master's Degree according to the following:



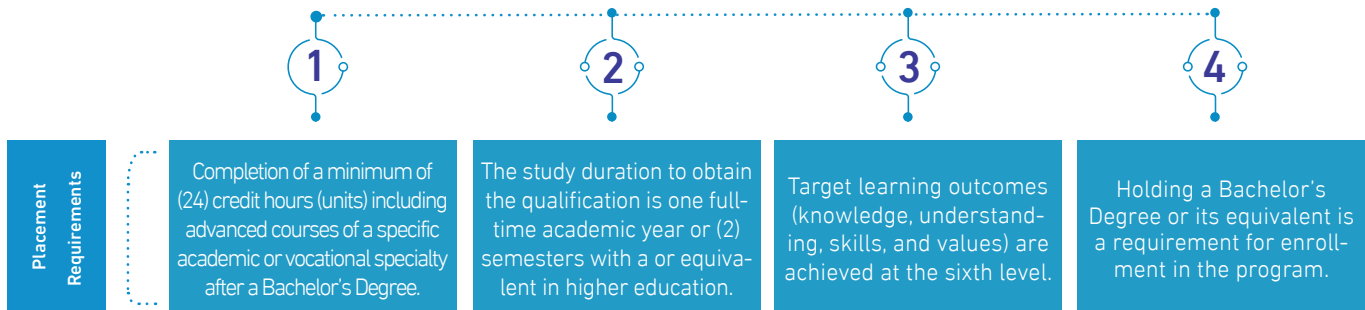


## Bachelor's Degree and Equivalent ..... Level 6

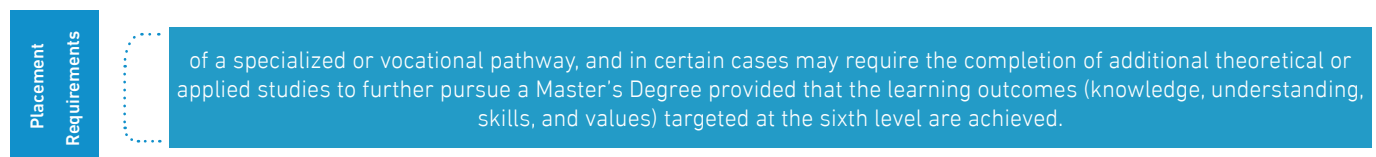
### 1. Academic, applied, or vocational Bachelor's Degree qualification



### 2. Academic, applied, or vocational higher diploma qualification



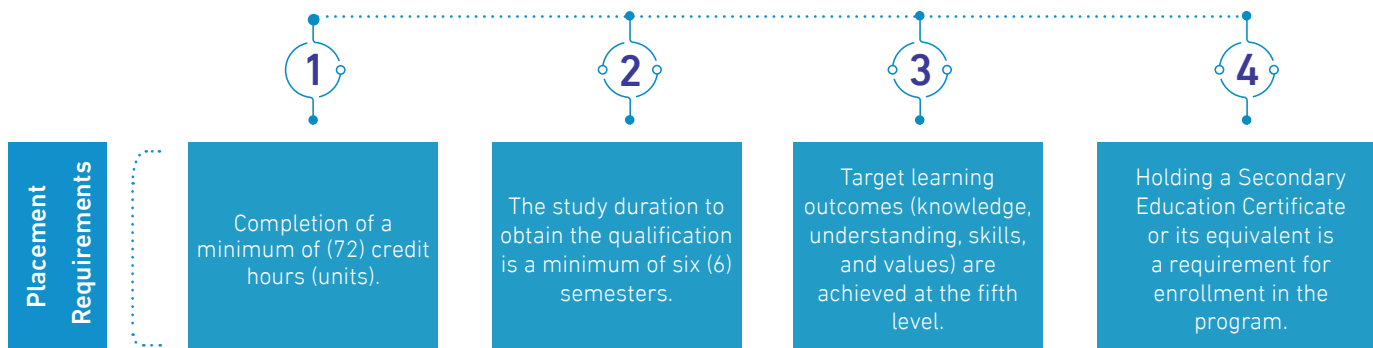
### 3. An additional qualification after a Bachelor's Degree program or a second university degree



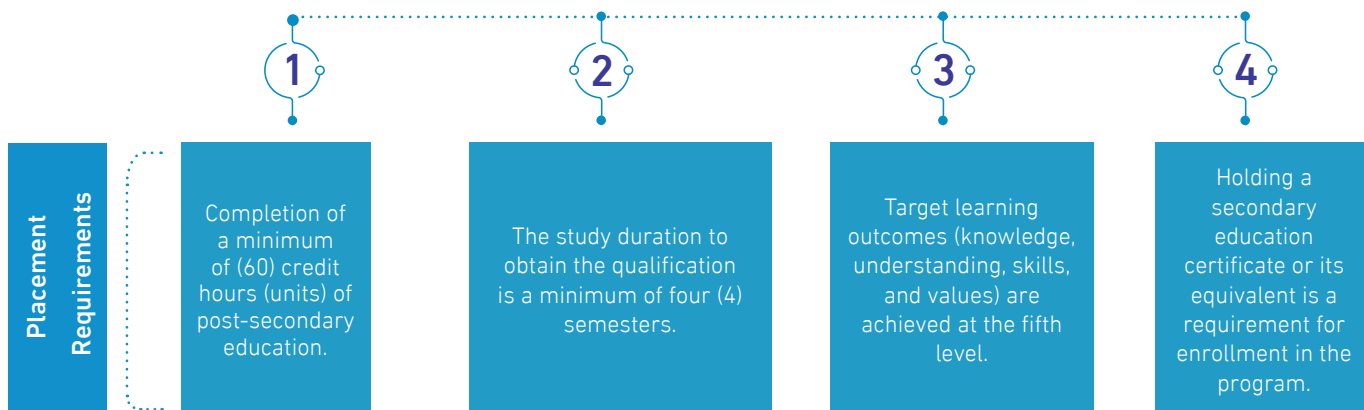


## Advanced Diploma and Equivalent ..... Level 5

### 1. Qualification of an advanced academic, applied or vocational diploma



### 2. Qualification of academic, applied, or vocational Intermediate diploma

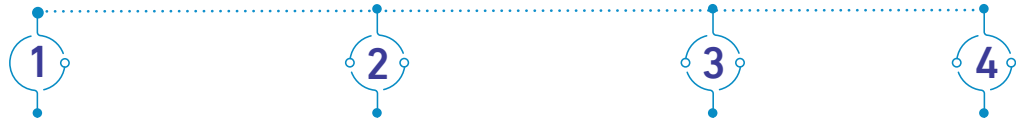






## Associate Diploma and Equivalent .....● Level 4

### 1. Qualification of associate academic, applied, or vocational diploma



#### Placement Requirements

Completion of a minimum of (24) credit hours (units).

The study duration for obtaining the qualification is a minimum of one year or two (2) semesters.

Target learning outcomes (knowledge, understanding, skills, and values) are achieved at the fourth level.

Holding a secondary education certificate or its equivalent is a requirement for enrollment in the program.

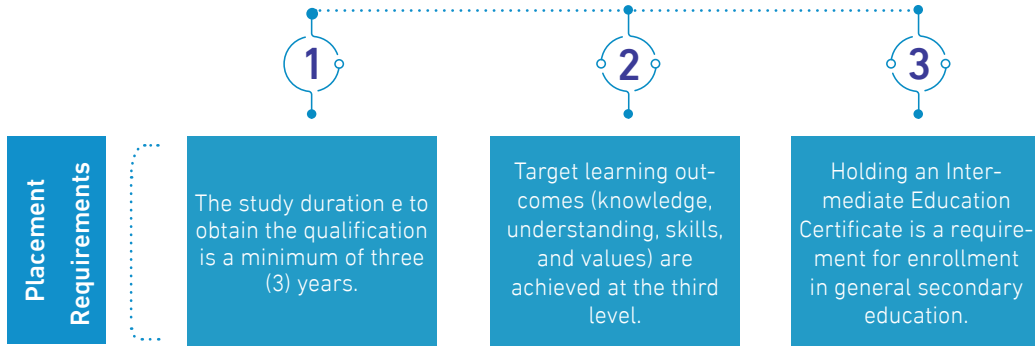




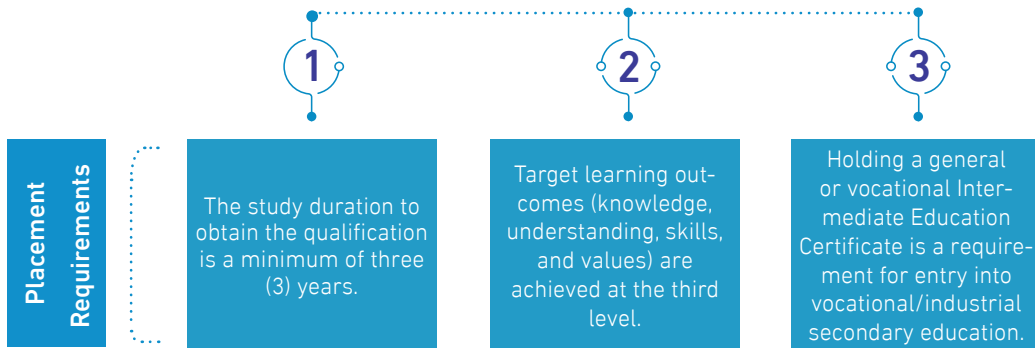
## Secondary Education and Equivalent

Level 3

### 1. Secondary school qualification in Public education



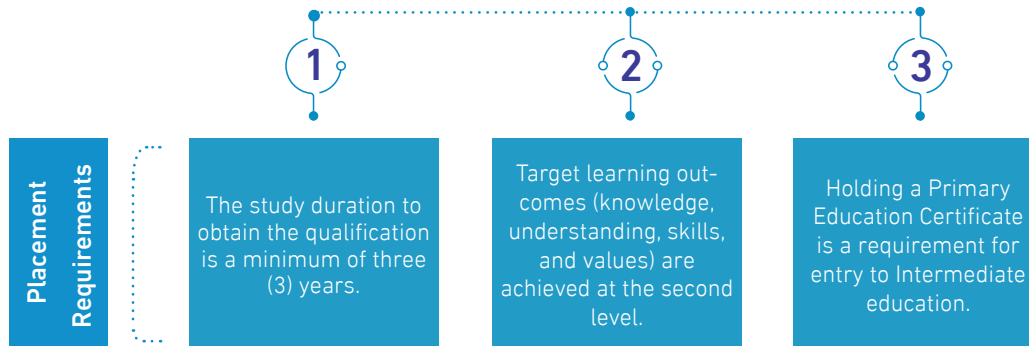
### 2. Intermediate education qualification in vocational/industrial education



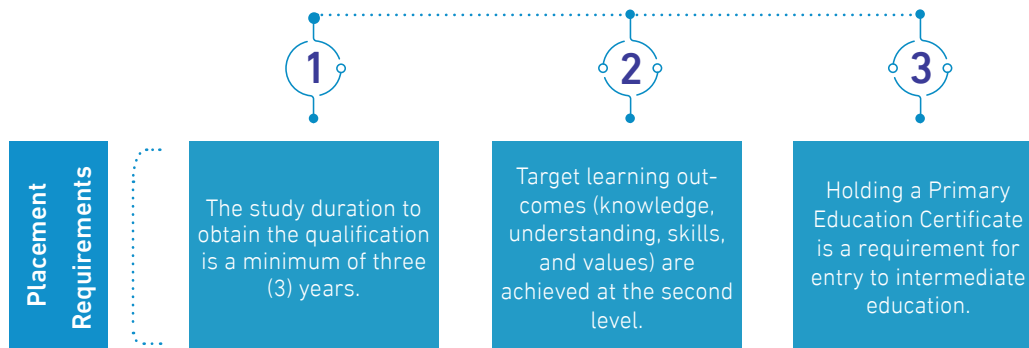


## Intermediate Education .....● Level 2

### 1. Intermediate certificate qualification in Public education



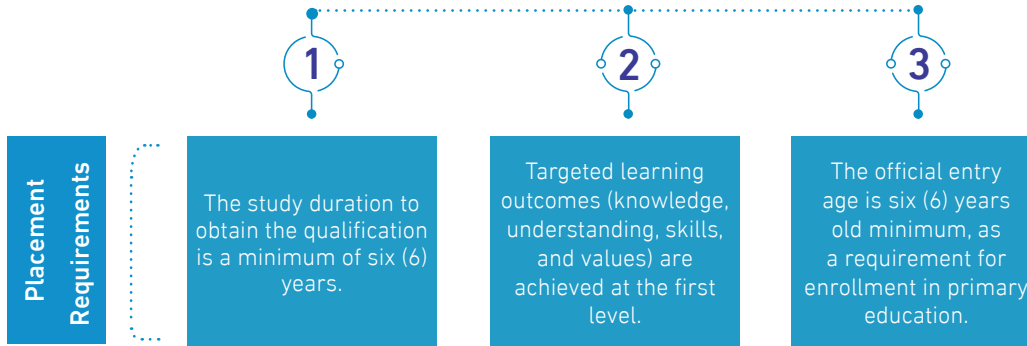
### 2. Intermediate education certificate qualification in vocational/industrial education is based on the following





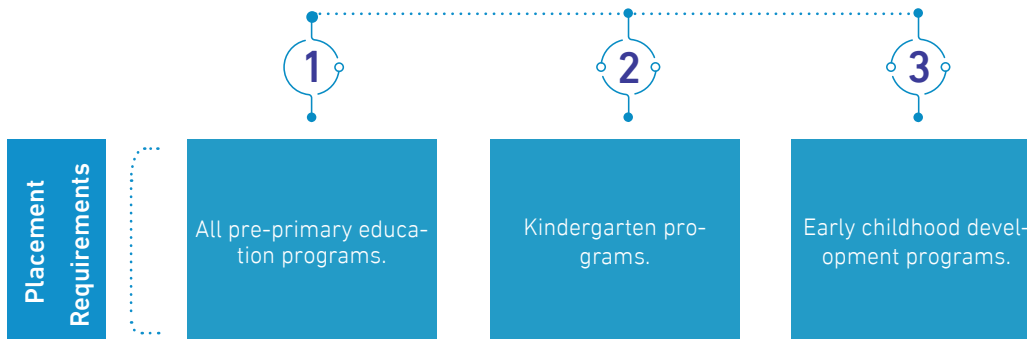
## Primary Education .....● Level 1

1. Primary certificate qualifications in Public education are placed at level (1)



## Early Childhood .....● Entry

This level is considered an entry point, and includes:





## ALIGNMENT OF NQF LEVELS AND INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION (ISCED)



**NQF**



**ISCED Classification**

Qualification	Levels	Qualification	Levels	Qualification Type	ISCED Code
Doctoral Degree or Equivalent	8	Doctoral Degree or Equivalent	8	Doctorate	844
Master's Degree or Equivalent	7	Master's Degree or Equivalent	7	Master's Degree	747
				Bachelor's Degree (6) years	746
Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	6	Bachelor's Degree or Equivalent	6	Higher Diploma (1) year	667
				Academic Bachelor's Degree (5) years	646
				Vocational Bachelor's Degree (5) years	656
				Bachelor's Degree (3-4) years	645
Advanced Diploma or Equivalent	5	Short-Term Higher Education	5	Academic Diploma	544
				Vocational Diploma	554





NQF



ISCED Classification

Qualification	Levels	Qualification	Levels	Qualification Type	ISCED Code
Associate Diploma or Equivalent	4	Post-Secondary Non-Tertiary Education	4	General Associate Diploma	444
				Vocational Associate Diploma	454
Secondary Education	3	Second Stage of Secondary Education	3	General Secondary Education	344
				Vocational Secondary Education	354
Intermediate Education	2	Second Stage of Secondary Education	2	General Intermediate Education	244
				Vocational Intermediate Education	254
Primary Education	1	Primary Education	1	Primary Education	100
Early Childhood	Entry	Pre-Primary Education	02	Pre-Primary Education	020
		Early Childhood Education	01	Early Childhood Education	010





[www.etec.gov.sa](http://www.etec.gov.sa)  
[info@etec.gov.sa](mailto:info@etec.gov.sa)

Tel. 011 4974080 - 920033515 Fax 011 4974047  
Saudi Arabia P.O. Box 93655 Riyadh 11683



**هيئة تقويم التعليم والتدريب**  
Education & Training Evaluation Commission

