

GABM GLOBAL ACADEMY QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Supporting learning, work and certification.



GLOBAL ACADEMY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT



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Foreword from Director, GAQF

In our modern world, people need opportunities to build their skills and put them to use as they move between jobs, types of work and further training and certification of their skills. The Global academy qualifications framework is cornerstone of our cooperation on making people's skills and qualifications more easily understood and recognized when they move either at home or abroad for work.

Thanks to GAQF, employers can more easily compare foreign qualifications to our ones and better understand the skills profiles of candidates. The GAQF helps people put their talent to use, smoothing the path to further learning and supporting better skills in international market.



Introduction

In our modern world, people need a higher and broader set of skills to work, communicate, access information, products and services, and take part in management activities.

A proper understanding and valuing of skills and qualifications is fundamental in order to achieve a better match between the supply of skills and the needs of international market. A GAQF can support the understanding and valuing of skills and qualifications. It can also help individuals to acquire and update skills throughout their learning journey as they move between different types of levels of education and between education and employment, within and across countries.

Qualifications express what people know, understand and are able to do. They can take different forms such as diplomas or skills certificate. Transparency about what people actually learned in order to obtain a qualification (“learning outcomes”) is key to ensuring that individuals, employers, and education and training providers give the appropriate economic, social and academic value to qualifications.

The Global Academy Qualifications Framework, for lifelong learning aims to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people’s qualifications. The GAQF was set up as a common reference framework of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes at increasing levels of proficiency.

The framework serves as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels. It is intended to benefit learners, workers, jobseekers, employers, trade unions, education and training providers qualification recognition bodies, government authorities and international organizations.

The GAQF was formed in order to adapt it to the reality of today and be ready for the challenges of tomorrow. Its formation has kept the core objectives agreed to create transparency and mutual trust in the landscape of qualifications in Europe, Asia, USA and Middle East.

The very first of the pillar principles is that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and successfully manage transitions in the international labor market.



The GAQF : What is it and how does it work

What is Qualifications?

The GAQF defines a qualification as “the formal outcome of an assessment and validation process obtains when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

Why are qualifications important?

Qualifications serve a variety of purposes. They signal to employers what their holders are expected to know, do and understand (“learning outcomes”). They may need to access certain professions. They help education and training authorities and providers to determine the level and content of learning acquired by an individual as an expression of personal achievement. Qualifications play an important role in raising employability, easing mobility and improving access to further education.

Qualifications usually take the form of certificates and diplomas awarded following education, training, learning and (sometimes) work. The content and the level of qualifications that are part of a quality assured framework are trusted sources of information. They act as a form of currency that individuals can use for employment or further learning purposes.

What is Vocational Qualifications?

National vocational qualifications were work based awards that are achieved through assessment and training.

Vocational qualifications are work related qualifications available in a wide range of career areas. They are designed to enable the learner to acquire knowledge and skills that meet recognized standards to perform a particular job.

Making qualifications more transparent and comparable across countries.

Global Academy education and training systems are diverse and reflect national traditions. The difference between them make it difficult to assess what someone with a qualification from another country knows, understands, and is capable of doing in learning or work contexts. The value of a qualification awarded in one country is therefore not necessarily understood in others, which can hamper trust in the quality and context of such qualifications.

The GAQF is a common reference framework that allows qualifications from different countries to be compared easily. This is achieved by supporting the use of learning outcomes for each qualification, in order to make them more transparent and easier to understand. In this way GAQF supports the cross-border mobility of learners and workers and promotes lifelong learning and professional development across all countries.



What is qualifications framework?

A qualifications framework classifies qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. It aims to integrate and coordinate qualifications as well as improve the transparency, accessibility and quality of qualifications in relation to the international market, the education and training system and civil society.

Qualifications framework support lifelong learning (i.e. all learning activity undertaken throughout life) with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civil and social and/ or employment related perspective. This definition covers the full range of formal, non-formal and informal learning.



GAQF: Learning outcomes as a main principle.

Qualifications have traditionally provided information about the duration of learning and the institution or location where the learning has taken place. Information on what to expect from the holder of the qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competences has been less common and transparent.

The GAQF and all national qualification frameworks that have been referenced to it, follow a learning outcomes approach. This means that both the context and the level of a qualification reflect what holders are expected to know, understand and be able to do (learning outcomes).

The shift to learning outcomes increases the transparency of a qualification and enhances its comparability between countries and within countries (e.g. between different types of qualifications of the same type). Through its focus on learning outcomes the GAQF can help citizens to find their way in an increasingly diverse and complex qualifications landscape.

A learning outcomes approach further supports a better match between the skills needed of the international market and education and training provision, while also facilitating the validation of learning acquired in different settings. By focusing on what a learner knows, can do and can understand, learning outcomes help to open up qualifications to a wider variety of learning pathways and experiences.

The common reference framework of level descriptors is the core of the GAQF.

The GAQF is defined by eight learning outcomes based levels. Accompanying level descriptors show how expectations of knowledge skills, autonomy and responsibility increase as learners progress from level 1 to level 8. These levels, along with the descriptors function as a translation grid and make it possible to compare qualifications from different countries and institutions.

Learning outcome descriptors

The GAQF learning outcome descriptors reflect two dimensions. The level and the learning outcome.

The level dimension captures how the complexity of the learning outcomes increases along with the qualification levels. For example, the level of autonomy expected of the holder of a level 2 qualification is much less than the expectations of level 7 qualification holders.

The learning domains dimension distinguishes between knowledge, skills and autonomy and responsibility allowing different types of qualifications to be classified at the same level. For example qualifications with the same overall learning outcomes level can be of more academic, vocational or professional orientation.

The GAQF is designed to cover all types and levels of qualifications including those from higher education, vocational education and training and general education as well as qualifications awarded by the private sector or international organizations.



Boundaries of the GAQF

Policies and actions in relation to skills and qualifications are based on academy article on the functioning of the global academy. The articles make it clear that the action relates to encouraging cooperation between member organization and if necessary supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting their education and training systems and cultural and linguistic diversity.

The GAQF is not,

- A framework to harmonize qualifications or qualifications standards between countries but it may lead to the development of similar qualification between two or more countries.
- A framework focused on the qualification of individual competencies through its learning outcomes based descriptors but the GAQF may inspire and facilitate the assessment and validation of, for example skills acquired through work and life experiences.



Quality Assurance principles for qualifications with a GAQF level.

In accordance with national circumstances, and taking into account sectorial differences, quality assurance of qualifications with an GAQF level should,

- Address design of qualifications as well as the application of the learning outcomes approach.
- Ensure valid and reliable assessment according to agreed and transparent learning outcome-based standards, and address the process of certification.
- Consists of feedback mechanism and procedures for continuous improvement.
- Involve all relevant stakeholders at all stages of the process.
- Be composed of consistent evaluation methods, self-assessment and external review.
- Be an integral part of the internal management, including sub-contracted activities of bodies issuing qualifications with a GAQF level.
- Be based on clear and measurable objectives, standards and guidelines.
- Be supported by appropriate resources.
- Include a regular review of existing external monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance.
- Include evaluation results that can be accessed electronically.



Descriptors Defining Levels in the GAQF

	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
	In the context of the GAQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and / or factual.	In the context of GAQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)	In the context of the GAQF, responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility.
Level 1	Basic general knowledge.	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks.	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context.
Level 2	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study.	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to carry out tasks and solve routine problems using simple rules and tools.	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy.
Level 3	Knowledge of facts principles, processes and general concepts in a field of work or study.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods tools, materials and information.	Take responsibility of completion of tasks in work or study. Adapt own behavior to circumstances in solving problems.
Level 4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study.	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change. Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the valuation and improvement of work or study activities.
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialized factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change. Review and develop performance of self and others.
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles.	Advanced skills, demonstrations mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study.	Manage complex, technical, professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.
Level 7	Highly specialized knowledge some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and / or research. Critical	Specialized problems-solving skills required in research and / or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different levels.	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice,



Level 8

awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.		and / or for reviving the strategic performance of teams.
Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields.	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation required to solve critical problems in research and or innovation, and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including research.



How can the GAQF be used and who benefits from the GAQF.

The GAQF was created for a number of purposes. While its key purpose is to help individual academy learners pursue their learning and employment careers, the framework also supports stakeholders in education, training and employment to improve policies and practices.

Some experienced and expected benefits for different target audiences are summarized below.

- The GAQF supports careers in the labor market. Qualifications give access to jobs and provide the basics on which careers are built. Getting a job, or moving between jobs, require qualifications to be understood, fairly judged and correctly valued by employees and other international market stakeholders. The ability of a qualification to signal what its holder knows, understands and is able to do is therefore essential.

The use of learning outcomes to describe qualifications makes it easier for employers to interpret applicant's qualifications.

The GAQF also enables employers to better assess qualifications from other countries and institutions not known to them. They can better understand the level of each candidate compare their qualifications with national qualifications, understand the relevance of those qualifications and see how the learning outcomes match the needs of the company or sector.

- The GAQF promotes a common language between education and training and the labor market.

By promoting the shift to learning outcomes, the GAQF can also facilitate dialogue on the needs of the education and training systems. Structured dialogue using learning outcomes as a common language helps to strengthen the relevance and increase the attractiveness of qualifications.



- The GAQF facilitates lifelong learning.

Opening up qualifications to a wider variety of opening experiences, for example from work and leisure time, is essential for promoting lifelong learning. The learning outcomes approach makes it possible to take into account experiences form outside formal education.



Qualifications with a GAQF level are a trusted currency.

Because education and training systems differ between countries, it can be difficult to appreciate the value and relevance of foreign qualifications. As a result, there is a risk that qualifications are not fairly judged and assessed. The same problem can arise when combining qualifications from different education and training sectors and institutions.

The GAQF levels are now increasingly being included in national certificates and diplomas, making it possible to see how a particular qualification relates to others in global context.



The GAQF makes the recognition of qualifications easier

The GAQF facilitates recognition of qualifications by promoting the use of learning outcomes, allowing holders and receivers of qualifications to directly assess the context, level and profile of the qualifications in question.

The GAQF works together with other international instruments supporting the recognition of qualifications. While there instruments either focus on regulated and / or academic qualifications, the GAQF supports the recognition of learning for all qualifications.

