

# A comparative analysis of Higher National Diplomas awarded in Kenya in reference to Kenya National Qualifications Framework.

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## ABSTRACT

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority was set up in 2015 with a goal of coordinating and harmonizing Education, Training, Appraisal and Quality of certificates conferred in the country, the main objective of advancing quality and international comparability education and training. The Authority's mandates as stipulated in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQA) Act No. 22 of 2014 and KNQA Regulations, 2018. The obligations of the Authority cuts across the Basic, TVET and University Sectors in Kenya. The KNQA assures quality of Qualifications, accrediting and registering of Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs), professional bodies, external assurance agencies as well as domestic and foreign assessment. The Authority registers Qualifications Awarding Institutions, National Qualifications and Learners record data base as specified in both the Act and the regulations aforementioned above. The Authority also harmonizes and coordinates quality of all qualifications conferred in the country; with the opinion of enhancing excellence of qualifications and global comparability in qualifications in the region. In line with this, UNESCO has directed all nations to institute the process and timeline for developing qualifications frameworks globally for educational recognition and comparability.

**Keywords:** Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF), Qualifications Awarding Institutions (QAIs)

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## 1.Introduction

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority [thereafter referred as KNQA] was established in 2015 to synchronize and coordinate education and quality of qualifications conferred domestically and globally with an opinion of enhancing internationalization of education. The Kenya National Qualification Framework [thereafter referred to as KNQF] which KNQA has established and is currently executing is fragment of Kenya's international obligations to develop a reliable, precise and robust database of certifications in the country that shall permit for comparisons and certification data sharing in the qualifications globally.<sup>1</sup>

The KNQA is mandated to administer and regulate the mandate of the Basic, TVET and University qualifications. This also involves synchronizing, regulating and coordinating all qualifications. The Authority also expedites diligently and meticulously in collaboration with TVETA (The Technical and Vocational Training Authority), CUE (the Commission for University education), and the executor of basic education qualifications (KNEC). The KASNEB [Thereafter referred to as Kenya Accountants and Secretaries' National Examinations Board] offers the accountants and secretarial qualifications to locally and internationally.

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<sup>1</sup>Laws of Kenya, (2014), Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 22 of 2014, national Council for law reporting with the Authority of the Attorney-General, pg.5, Nairobi, Kenya

The KNQA has also initiated the Recognition of Prior Learning in Kenya in which individuals with skills not certified shall be assessed and issued with certification of recognition through various assessment centres in Kenya. The Authority is also presently perusing the establishment of a database of all qualifications attained in Kenya and those acquired from outside the country. This database shall facilitate one-stop shop of all qualifications as required by UNESCO as part of internationalization of education globally. The KNQA is similarly an imperative partaker to the educational reorganizations and reforms that are ongoing on within the training and educational sector in Kenya.

## **2. Rationale**

The purposes of this study are basically to establish the following;

- 1.Improving the understanding and harmonization of all Higher National Diplomas qualifications systems
- 2.The purpose of a Qualification Framework to integrate all higher National Diplomas into a unified structure of recognized qualifications.
- 3.Understanding the concept of Credit Accumulation and transfer in line with Higher National Diplomas level.
- 4.Reducing mismatch between various Higher National Diplomas qualifications offered in Kenya.
- 5.Improvement of Quality assurance systems in qualifications
- 6.Increasing comparability of Higher National Diplomas International and labour mobility
- 7.The attainment of broader global national qualification goals and objectives.

## **3. The Challenges confronting training and awarding of Higher National Diplomas**

There are various difficulties facing training and awarding of Higher National Diplomas, they are basically outlined as follows;

- 1.Lack of consistency in the application of standards in assessment standards of High National Diploma leading to award of qualifications
- 2.Their variations in the quality standards of education and training offered in Higher National Diploma provided by different institutions
- 3.There are variations in the number credits assigned in Higher National Diplomas training/courses
- 4.There are hitches in getting the country's Higher National Diploma recognized by international community.
- 5.There are multiple variations in the contact hours for different courses offered for Higher National Diploma training

## **4. Analysis of the Higher National Diplomas**

We are required to do an analysis of Higher National Diploma in Kenya. This is a follow up of the meeting we had with Aga Khan University. Use the table below to carry out the analysis.

**Fig.1** Current Scenario of Higher National Diplomas in Kenya

No .	Qualification type	Field of Study	Awarding Institution	Learning (Hours)	Credits Assigned	Minimum Admission Requirements
1.	Higher National Diploma in Secretarial Management	Secretarial	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Secretarial Management.
2.	Higher National Diploma in Business Management	Business Management	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Business Management.
3.	Higher National Diploma in Human Resource Management	HRM	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Human Management.
4.	Higher National Diploma in Entrepreneurship Development	Entrepreneurship Development	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Entrepreneurship.
5.	Higher National Diploma in Tourism Management (Modular)	Tour Operations	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Tourism Management.
6.	Higher National Diploma in Library and Information Management	Information Management	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Library and Information Management.
7.	Higher National Diploma in Archives and Records Management	Archives and Records Management	KNEC	2600	260	KNEC Diploma in Secretarial Management.
8.	Higher National Diploma in Electrical Engineering (KNEC)	Engineering	KTTC	2600	260	Any TEP Diploma in Electrical and Electronics or Technician Certificate part

SOURCE: KNEC

## 5. A comparative analysis of placement of Higher National Diplomas with various countries' National Qualifications Frameworks

Fig.2

S. No	Country/Region	Level	No. of Credit	Qualification Type	Maximum levels	Qualifications Types
1.	East African qualification framework (EAQFHE)	6	300	Advanced Diploma	8	Undergraduate
2.	SAQA	7	300	Advanced Diploma	10	Degree
3.	Tanzania Qualification Framework	7	240	Higher National Diploma	10	Degree
4.	Ghana National Qualification Framework	5	240	Higher National Diploma	8	Undergraduate
5.	Ethiopia Qualifications Framework	6	120	Higher National Diploma	10	Undergraduate
6.	Kenya National Qualifications Framework	7	480	Higher National Diploma	10	Degree
7.	Indian National Qualification Framework	7	400	Advanced Diploma	10	Degree

SOURCE: KNQA

In Ghana, higher national Diploma qualification is placed lower than the bachelor's degree, the degree is placed in level 6, while the higher National Diploma is placed in level 5.<sup>2</sup>

The Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework positioned Advance Diploma in level 6, which is lower than a degree level in the Ethiopia Qualifications Framework.<sup>3</sup>

## 6. Recommendations

The findings from the above analysis of global National Qualifications Framework suggests the following recommendations;

1. Harmonization of the all credits for all Higher National Diplomas offered in Kenya to 480 credits (2 years contact time).
2. The minimum entry requirements for all higher National Diploma National should be a Diploma with 240 credits.
3. Industrial attachment be made mandatory for all Higher National Diplomas minimum for a **period of 720 notional hours**.

## 7. Conclusion

Basically, National Qualifications frameworks are internationally considered as a tool for facilitating holistic approaches to compare and internationalizing qualifications for mobility human resource and labour force internationally. The aspect of establishing national qualifications framework and harmonization of qualifications, as a matter of fact, should be used a parameter for guiding the development of Competency Education and Training curriculum. The NQF is a key enabler for establishing the tools and national assessment standards for CBET. The delivery of national assessment standards, conduct of assessment and certifications should be in line with KNQF. The competency of the graduates churned out must be addressed in line with the requirements and needs of respective industry. Likewise, Kenya National Qualification Framework was established as a twin functionality of reference and a pointer for structured learners' mobility and credit transfer parameter for all forms of educational models globally. Notwithstanding the current challenges of the global job market, the NQF can be a panacea for solving issues of human resource comparison and convertibility of qualifications. Moving forward, Challenges of sorting out skills gap and skills audit can be resolved focusing on skills mapping of country.

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