

Analysis of the National Qualifications System



LEPL –National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement

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Preface

This report presents an overview of Georgia's national qualifications system and highlights the specific characteristics of how qualifications are developed within individual subsystems of education. Its primary aim is to provide a baseline analysis of the system, assess its alignment with the criteria for referencing the National Qualifications Framework, and identify key issues that require further attention. The version of the report originally developed in 2021 was updated in 2025 within the framework of the project *“Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of the Georgian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Referencing and Self-Certification Processes”* (GEOREF). The updated document was reviewed and approved by the members of the Advisory Council established to support the implementation and development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study.

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Introduction

The first National Qualifications Framework¹ in Georgia was approved on June 19, 2010 by the Order No. 120/O of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia (hereinafter referred to as the Minister). Due to its structure and descriptors of the levels it introduced, the document had a significant impact on existing qualifications in Georgia. The framework was built on three sub-frameworks (general, vocational and higher education).

The process of analyzing the current National Qualifications Framework began in 2013. As part of this process, LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (hereinafter - the Center) organized working meetings with experts and specialists across all levels of education (general, vocational, higher). As a result of this work, an analysis document of the current National Qualifications Framework was prepared, outlining the shortcomings of the system and the necessary for addressing them.

In 2014, Georgia signed the Association Agreement between Georgia, on the one hand, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states, on the other. Under the Agreement, Georgia is committed to aligning its national education system closer to the European education system. One of the key aspects of this process was the adoption of EU recommendations, including the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.

In 2017, in collaboration with the Center and the European Training Foundation (ETF), a review of the updated drafts of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classification of Fields of Study was conducted, and further steps for their implementation were planned. As part of this collaboration, a two-year work plan (2017-2019) was developed to guide the planned activities. A comprehensive analysis of Georgia's Qualifications Framework was carried out, qualifications were described, and a conceptual document was prepared, outlining policy and methodological proposals on key aspects of the draft National Qualifications Framework.

In 2019, by the Order of the Minister, the updated National Qualifications Framework (hereinafter referred to as "the Framework") and the Classifier of Fields of Study (hereinafter referred to as "the Classifier") were approved, following the implementation of relevant activities. The developed documents ensured the sequence of education subsystems (general, vocational and higher education) and improved the quality of their interconnection. The updated framework

¹ Order No. 120/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia

aligns with the requirements and guiding principles of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF LLL) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). The document combines all qualifications in Georgia, reflects the learning outcomes of different levels of general, vocational and higher education, and determines knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility required to obtain a certificate confirming completion of the corresponding level. The classification of existing fields of study in Georgia and the determination of the corresponding qualifications to be awarded in each field were conducted using the national classifier. This process was guided by key reference documents developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the "Fields of Education and Training 2013 - Description of Detailed Fields" (ISCED-Foet-2013).

The next stage in the development of the National Qualifications Framework is its referencing to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning - EQF LLL and self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). We believe that this analysis document will play a key role in defining and planning the preparatory work for referencing. It is worth noting that in 2024, the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement received ERASMUS+ program funding for the project proposal - "Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of Georgian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Referencing and Self-certifications Processes" (GEOREF). The project was approved on November 4 of the same year by the Government of Georgia Resolution No. 1573.

The main objective of the GEOREF project is to align Georgia's National Qualifications Framework with the European Qualifications Framework.

The successful implementation of the project will ensure the fulfillment of commitments undertaken by Georgia under the Association Agreement with the European Union. As part of the project, and for the purpose of referencing and self-certification Georgia's National Qualifications Framework, a self-assessment document will be prepared by September 2026 with the active involvement of national and international experts, as well as the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

1. The National Qualifications Framework

1.1 Legislative Framework of National Qualifications Framework

The Law of Georgia "On Education Quality Improvement" regulates legal issues related to the framework. Specifically, the law defines the framework as an instrument that classifies

qualifications according to learning outcomes across different education subsystems, facilitates the integration and coordination of these subsystems, as well as enhances the quality, transparency, accessibility and development of qualifications. In doing so, it considers the interests of both the labor market and society². The law also outlines the number of framework levels and their objectives, and defines the subordinate legal acts related to the management and development of both the framework and the classifier. The current framework and classifier were approved in 2019 by the Order No. 69/O of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia 'On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study'. However, it is important to note that the laws (on “General Education”, “Vocational Education”, and “Higher Education”) regulating the various education subsystems are consistent with the structure and concept of the Framework levels. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth is the primary policymaking body for the framework and the classifier, responsible for approving the by-laws related to the framework through Ministerial Orders. The management, development, and monitoring of the framework³ and the classifier⁴ are delegated to the Center under these normative acts.

In particular, the Ministerial Order defines the management and development of the Framework, its structure, the rules for modifying its contents, the mechanisms for including qualifications in the Framework, the process for creating and managing the electronic register of qualifications, and the conditions for monitoring the Framework. However, the issues of management and development of the Classifier are regulated by the Order of the Center Director, which defines the issues related to the development of the structure and content of the Classifier, establishes the grounds for changes, and sets out its monitoring mechanisms and periodicity. . The Center is also responsible for coordinating and implementing the Framework, ensuring the quality of the education system and facilitating the recognition of qualifications.

1.2 Management of the National Qualifications Framework

According to the Minister's Order⁵, the Center is the main governing body and is responsible for managing, developing and monitoring of the framework and the classifier.

² Law of Georgia “On the Development of Quality of Education” Article 2¹

³ Order No. N103/N of 1 October 2020 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, On the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Qualifications Registry

⁴ Order No. N666/i of 31 July 2019 of the Director of the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement On the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the Classifier of Fields of Study (Amended on 21 September 2021 by Order No. N954601)

⁵ Order No. N103/N of 1 October 2020 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia On the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Qualifications Registry

The Advisory Board (hereinafter, the Advisory Board) established by the Order of the Center Director⁶ for the introduction and development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study, also serves as a governing body. Its main functions are as follows: to define the strategic goals and objectives of the Center related to the introduction and development of the Framework and the Classifier, as well as develop recommendations for the activities outlined in the annual action plans; to review report on the implementation of action plan; to review methodological guidance documents; to review a report on the monitoring plan; to review the annual report on the functioning of the electronic register of qualifications and develop recommendations to raise awareness among stakeholders about the Framework and the Classifier.

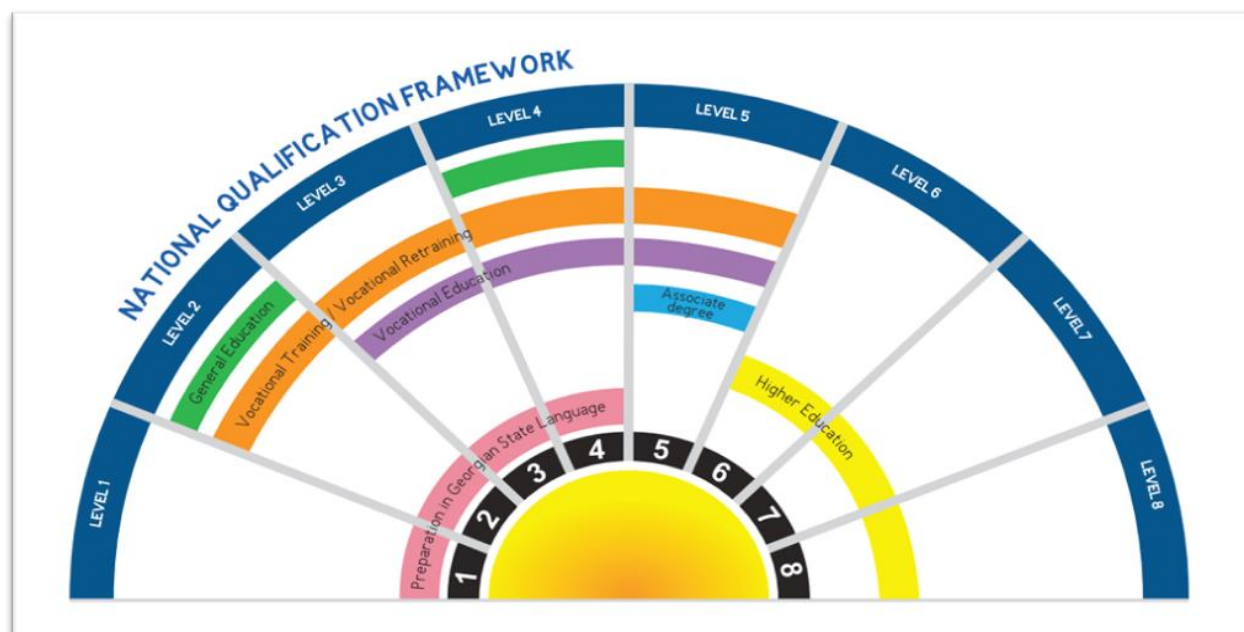
The Advisory Board is a representative body, composed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Specifically, it includes representatives from decision-making bodies at the systemic level (representatives of relevant ministries), individuals nominated by the Center, a representative from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, representatives from educational institutions, and a representative of the Georgian Student's Organizations Association. The term of office of the Board is set at 6 years. The decisions of the Advisory Board are of a recommendatory nature.

1.3 Structure of National Qualifications Framework and Level Descriptors

The Framework consists of eight levels, with the first corresponding to the lowest level and the eighth to the highest. It encompasses all qualifications across the three education subsystems (general education, vocational education, and higher education). The document also considers the recognition of qualifications obtained outside the formal education system and highlights the importance of lifelong learning.

Figure 1.1: The National Qualifications Framework

⁶ Order No. N163567 of 25 February 2021 of the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement On the Approval of the Rule for the Establishment and Operation of the Advisory Council for the Implementation and Development of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study (Amended on 27 November 2024 by Order No. N1529086)



The Framework envisions the formation of qualifications based on generalized learning outcomes and, for this purpose, defines three categories of descriptors that are identical to the categories of the European Qualifications Framework. These descriptors are as follows:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- Skills;
- Responsibility and autonomy.

Knowledge and understanding imply the result of acquisition of information, facts, principles, theories, theoretical and practical methods related to the field of study or activity.

Skill refers to the ability to apply knowledge in order to carry out specific tasks and solve problems, and is described in terms of cognitive and practical skills.

Responsibility and autonomy imply the ability to use knowledge and skills independently and responsibly.

The difficulty and complexity of these descriptors increase across the levels (see. Table N1: Levels and Descriptors of National Qualifications Framework).

Table N1: Levels and Descriptors of National Qualifications Framework

Qualification level	Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Responsibility and Autonomy
Level 1	Basic general knowledge, which serves as the foundation for social development, further learning, and the resolution of simple tasks in everyday life. Identification and interpretation of basic principles and facts.	Applying basic skills to perform simple and homogeneous tasks in a familiar environment. Ability to identify simple problems encountered in this process and solve them following the standard procedures. Oral and written communication on basic issues related to the outcomes of one's activities, using communication technologies.	Learning or/and performing simple tasks under direct supervision in structured, unchangeable environment.
Level 2	Basic knowledge and understanding of the field of study and/or activity.	Applying relevant basic cognitive and practical skills in the field of study and/or work. Using standard instruments/tools to solve familiar problems; Searching for basic information about facts, processes, and materials, selecting, analyzing, and applying. Oral and written communication about the outcomes of one's own activities, and reasoned argumentation using context-appropriate forms and communication technologies.	Learning or performing routine tasks in a structured, unchangeable environment with guidance and a certain degree of independence. Evaluating one's own activities, taking responsibility for one's own work and study.



Level 3	Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental facts, principles, processes, methods, and general concepts characteristic of the field of study and/or work.	<p>Applying a broad spectrum of skills characteristic of the field of study and/or professional activity to perform tasks; Solving identified problems by searching, recognizing, and analyzing appropriate sources, as well as selecting and applying suitable methods, tools, and materials.</p> <p>Oral and written communication about the outcomes of one's own activities, and reasoned argumentation using appropriate information and communication technologies.</p>	<p>Taking responsibility for performing work-related tasks in a predictable, partly changing environment and acting in accordance with the principles of professional ethics. Adapting one's behavior to solve a problem, considering the circumstances. Evaluating one's own professional development, learning under guidance and with a certain degree of independence.</p>
Level 4	Broad knowledge and understanding of the factual context and theoretical foundations of the field of study and/or activities.	<p>Using a wide range of cognitive and practical skills characteristic to the field of study and/or activity. Identifying non-homogeneous problems and searching, selecting, critically understanding the information to solve them, identifying proper approach and evaluating compliance. Communication on study or/and work by using structured and consistent arguments, with forms relevant to the context, by using information and communication technologies.</p>	<p>Managing one's own work activities and learning in a predictable but changing environment, considering the guidelines. Supervising homogeneous working process; Evaluating working and study activities and taking some responsibility on improvement. Evaluating one's own professional development and learning with a certain degree of independence.</p>



Level 5	Multifaceted, specialized, theoretical and practical knowledge of the field of study and/or professional activity, (tertiary education) and understanding of its scope and limitations	<p>Clearly defined abstract and concrete problems, as well as the application of a broad range of cognitive and practical skills in the field of study and/or professional activity to perform complex tasks, including identifying, analyzing, and evaluating relevant data.</p> <p>Communicating ideas and information to both specialists and non-specialists in a structured and consistent manner in appropriate context forms, using information and communication technologies.</p>	<p>Supervising and managing professional activities in a rapidly changing (unpredictable) environment in compliance with the principles of professional ethics; Responsibility for the work of others; Evaluating one's own and others' performance and ensuring continuous improvement.</p> <p>Identifying one's own learning directions and pursuing learning with a high degree of independence.</p>
Level 6	Broad knowledge of the field of study and/or professional activity (tertiary education) that includes critical understanding of theories and principles, as well as awareness of some of the latest developments in the field.	<p>Applying cognitive and practical skills characteristic of the field of study and/or professional activity to solve complex and unpredictable problems.</p> <p>Implementing research or practical project/work in accordance with predetermined guidelines.</p> <p>Collecting and interpreting characteristic of the field, also, analysis of the collected data and/or situations using standard and some of the latest methods; drawing appropriate conclusions, that consider relevant social, scientific and/or ethical issues.</p> <p>Communicating with specialists and non-specialists regarding ideas, on existing problems and solutions using context-appropriate forms, information, and communication technologies.</p>	<p>Conducting and taking responsibility for development-oriented activities in a complex, unpredictable learning and/or work environment. Performing one's activities by following the principles of ethics.</p> <p>Planning and supporting the implementation of one's own and others' continuous professional development. Identifying one's own further learning needs and implementing them with a high degree of independence.</p>



Level 7	<p>Deep, systematic knowledge and critical understanding of the field of study and/or professional activity, which includes some of the latest achievements in the field of study and/or professional activities and provides a foundation for innovations and the development of new, original ideas.</p>	<p>Seeking new, original solutions to complex problems in unfamiliar or multidisciplinary environments and/or conducting independent research in accordance with the principles of academic integrity, using the latest methods and approaches.</p> <p>Critical analysis of complex or incomplete information (including the latest research), innovative synthesis of information, evaluation and formulation of conclusions that reflects social and ethical responsibilities.</p> <p>Presenting one's own conclusions, arguments, and research findings to both academic and professional audiences in accordance with the standards of academic ethics.</p>	<p>Managing complex, unpredictable, or multidisciplinary learning and/or working environment and adapting by implementing new strategic approaches.</p> <p>Contributing to the development of professional knowledge and practice.</p> <p>Taking responsibility for the work and professional development of others.</p> <p>Independently managing one's own learning.</p>
Level 8	<p>Knowledge based on the latest achievements in the field of learning and/or activity, which allows for the expansion of existing knowledge or the use of innovative methods, including in a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary context. Systemic and critical understanding of the field of study or activity.</p>	<p>Planning and implementing research with adherence to the principles of academic integrity.</p> <p>Planning and implementing research in accordance with the principles of academic integrity; Development of new research or analytical methods and/or approaches that are oriented toward creating new knowledge (at the level of the standard required for international peer-reviewed publications).</p> <p>Ability of critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of new, complex, and contradictory ideas and approaches, through which they independently make correct and effective decisions for solving complex problems (in research and/or innovation).</p> <p>Ability to clearly and substantially present and communicate new knowledge related to existing knowledge to colleagues as well as wide society. Ability to participate in thematic discussions organized at international and local levels.</p>	<p>Ability to implement research projects based on the latest achievements and/or development-oriented activities in academic or professional contexts, adhering to the principles of leadership, academic and/or professional integrity, while also demonstrating innovation and independence.</p>

It is important to note that methodological documents have also been developed to establish compliance with the levels of the learning outcomes framework, both for vocational education programmes (levels 2 to 5 of the framework) and for higher education programmes (levels 6 to 8 of the framework). In 2025, the revision and update of these documents is planned as a part of the project "Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of Georgian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Referencing and Self-certifications Processes" co-funded by ERASMUS+ and the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.

The process of updating the methodology for defining learning outcomes with the level descriptors of the framework has outlined several shortcomings of the framework. Specifically, in some cases, the following issues have been identified:

- the problem of overlapping between descriptors across levels.
- difficulties in seeing progression between the descriptors across levels.
- alternation of progression and regression between the descriptors across levels.
- difficulties in reflecting the specific characteristics of so-called sub-levels (such as 60-credit master's educational programmes).

1.4 Types of Qualifications and their Alignment at the Levels of the National Qualifications Framework

Types of qualifications, their alignment at the levels of the National Qualifications Framework and supporting documents are defined by the relevant Order of the Minister⁷ (see. Table N2: Documents certifying qualifications in formal education).

⁷ Order No. N69/N of 10 April 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and Classifier of Fields of Study

Table N2. Documents Certifying Qualifications in Formal Education

Level of Qualification	Documents Certifying Qualifications in the Subsystems of Education.	Documents Certifying Qualifications issued upon completion of Vocational Training/Retraining Programme
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Georgian Language Certificate / State Language Certificate 	
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Document Confirming Basic Level of General Education. Georgian Language Certificate / State Language Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second-Level Certificate of Vocational Training Second-Level Certificate of Vocational Re-Training
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma Confirming Basic Vocational Education Georgian Language Certificate / State Language Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate of Vocational Training Certificate of Vocational Retraining
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Document Certifying Full General Education Diploma Confirming Secondary Vocational Education Georgian Language Certificate / State Language Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth-Level Certificate of Vocational Training Fourth- Level Certificate of Vocational Retraining
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diploma Confirming an Associated Qualification Diploma Confirming Higher Vocational Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifth Level Certificate of Vocational Training Fifth Level Certificate of Vocational Retraining
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's Diploma Teacher Training Certificate Special Education Teacher Training Certificate 	
Level 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master's Diploma 	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma of a Certified Medical Doctor • Diploma of a Certified Dentist • Diploma of Master of Education (M.Ed) • Diploma for the Degree of Master of Veterinary Medicine • Certificate of Veterinary Training 	
Level 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD Diploma 	



1.5 Inclusion of Qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework and the National Qualifications Register

In accordance with the current legislation⁸, the inclusion of educational programmes developed by educational institutions, as well as vocational training and vocational training programmes within the Qualifications Framework is carried out only upon completion of the external quality assurance process⁹.

At this stage, there is no unified database in Georgia — the National Qualifications Register — that combines the qualifications issued within all three education subsystems and their associated descriptors.

Information about qualifications in vocational education, as well as vocational standards and vocational education standards, is available on the website - www.vet.ge. This register is public and allows users to search for information both on vocational education standards and on programs based on those standards. At this stage, the Register of Higher Education Qualifications is not publicly available; however, once the electronic register of qualifications is developed, all formal qualifications available in Georgia are planned to be gathered in a single platform and made publicly accessible.

It is important to note that Georgia recognizes the significance of the electronic qualifications register (hereinafter -Register), for which the obligation to create and the rules for its administration have been defined at the legislative level. The content and technical management of the process is delegated to the Center and the LEPL Education Management Information System (EMIS). In addition, within the framework of the 2020 Twinning project, a document outlining the technical specifications of the Register was prepared, based on the recommendation by the European Council of May 22, 2017, regarding the European Qualifications Framework. In 2023, with the support of the EU-funded project “Technical Assistance to Skills Development for Matching Labour Market Needs in Georgia” and through the broad involvement of relevant stakeholders, the updated concept of “Georgian Electronic Register of Qualifications” was developed. This document provides a detailed description of the system’s features, the required information, and the related processes. Based on

⁸ Order No. N103/N of 1 October 2020 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia On the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Qualifications Registry

⁹ For detailed information, see the sections: "2.7. Quality Assurance of Qualifications in General Education"; "3.7. Quality Assurance of Qualifications in Vocational Education"; "4.7. Quality Assurance of Qualifications in Higher Education".



this document, the LEPL– Education Management Information System (EMIS) developed a document outlining the technical specifications and functional requirements for the software. It is noteworthy that, by the Order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (LEPL) and the Education Management Information System (LEPL) are mandated to jointly carry out activities for the development of the Electronic Register of Qualifications, by December 31, 2025 as defined in Article 1 of this Order¹⁰.

The Register will be accessible to stakeholders interested in the national qualifications system, including students, vocational students, school leavers, teachers, employers, graduates, educational institutions, and others. Its data structure will meet the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework.

At this stage, the development of the Electronic Register of Qualifications is in progress with the active involvement of the Center and the Education Management Information System. The estimated timeframe for the development of the electronic register platform is September 2024 - December 2025.

1.6 Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework and Classifier of Fields of Study

According to the order of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of Georgia No. N103 dated October 1, 2020, "On Approval of the Rules for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Register of Qualifications" and in accordance with the order No. 666/I dated July 31, 2019, issued by the Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, which approves the procedures for managing, developing, and monitoring the Classifier of Fields of Study, the monitoring of both the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study is conducted every 5 years. The purpose of this monitoring is to assess progress in key areas of the Framework and the Classifier, identify existing shortcomings, and develop recommendations for improvement.

¹⁰ In accordance with the Order No. 103/N of 1 October 2020 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia, which approved the rules for the management, development, and monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, as well as the creation and administration of the Electronic Qualifications Registry



The monitoring of the Framework and the Classifier was carried out in 2024, and two working groups were established to ensure the effective implementation of the process:

- The working group for monitoring the National Qualifications Framework;
- The working group for monitoring the Classifier of Fields of Study.

These working groups developed a monitoring plan for effectively conducting the monitoring process, which involved broad participation of all stakeholders and provided them with the opportunity to present relevant proposals considering the scope of monitoring. The recommendations received have been reviewed by the relevant monitoring group, and after their discussion, a report was prepared on the monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study.

After the development of the monitoring report, the document was published on the Center's website for public consultation, providing interested parties with an additional opportunity to submit recommendations regarding the report. Following this process, a joint working meeting was held with the stakeholders. Based on the findings of the monitoring report on the Classifier of Fields of Study and the National Qualifications Framework, the working groups prepared the package of recommendations. The monitoring report of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study, along with the package of recommendations, has been agreed upon with the Advisory Board, the Coordinating Council of the Center (which was established to ensure the involvement of interested parties in the management and development processes), and the Center's director.

Based on the feedback received, the monitoring groups re-evaluated the document and developed a revised package of recommendations¹¹, which has been presented for further action.

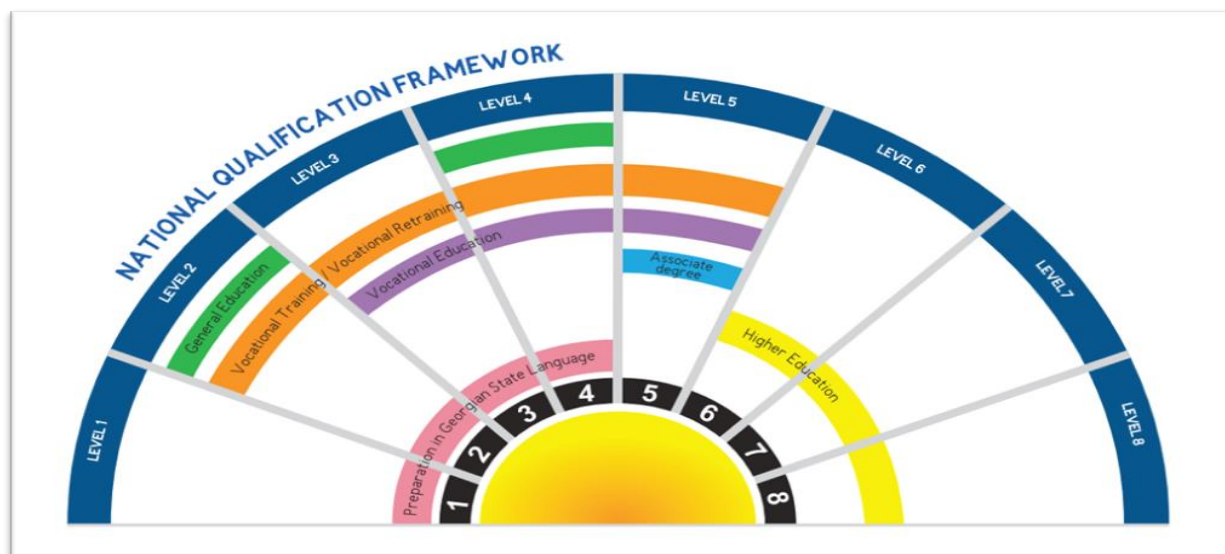
In 2025, discussions are planned with the relevant authorized Sectoral Skills Organizations (SSOs) and higher education sectoral councils to review the recommendations identified through the monitoring of the Framework and the Classifier. The aim of these discussions is to initiate appropriate amendments to the Minister's Order¹² on the approval of the Framework and the Classifier.

¹¹ Report on the Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework and Classifier of Fields of Study (<https://shorturl.at/wBWL0>)

¹² Order No. N69/N of 10 April 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and Classifier of Fields of Study

2. Qualifications System in General Education

2.1 Legislative Framework of General Education



General education in Georgia is regulated by the laws of Georgia: "On General Education", "On Education Quality Enhancement" and other related by-laws.

The Law of Georgia on General Education, adopted in 2005, defines the framework for conducting educational activities in the country. It outlines the principles and procedures for the management and funding of general education. The law also determines the legal status of all general education institutions (regardless of their organizational or legal form), and sets the rules for their establishment, operation, reorganization, liquidation, authorization, and accreditation. Additionally, it regulates the conditions and procedures governing the activities of teachers within general education institutions.

According to the Law on General Education, general education in Georgia currently consists of the following three levels: Primary (6 years), Basic (3 years), and Secondary (3 years); - From July 1, 2025, the levels of complete general education will have the following duration:

- Primary level - duration 6 years;
- Basic level - duration 4 years;



- Secondary level - duration 2 years;

The complete duration of general education in Georgia spans 12 years across three levels. It is important to note that primary and basic education are compulsory. Consequently, a pupil may not be excluded from the general education system before completing the basic level. Furthermore, a qualification is awarded only upon the completion of both the basic and secondary levels of education.

General education in Georgia is fully funded by the state. The law ensures flexible access to general education. The learning outcomes defined by the National Curriculum can be achieved through in-person instruction, external studies, and/or other alternative forms of education, considering the age-specific characteristics of pupils and the employment circumstances of their families.

The law defines key principles and guidelines for the development of qualifications in general education. Specifically, it states that the formation of learning outcomes of general education is based on the “National Goals of General Education”¹³ defined by the Parliament of Georgia and the National Curriculum¹⁴ approved by the Minister’s Order (for more details, see the subsection “Development of Qualifications in General Education”).

Since 2019, the education system in Georgia has provided the opportunity to integrate the secondary-level general education learning outcomes into the fourth-level vocational education programmes. This pathway enables pupils—and others as well—to complete their general education while simultaneously acquiring a profession, all within the framework of a single educational programme. The second key legislative act regulating the general education system is the Law of Georgia “On Development of Quality of Education”¹⁵. This legal document regulates the authorization of vocational education institutions and generally establishes the legal framework for quality assurance mechanisms in vocational education. The main directions of state policy and governance in the field of general education are determined by the Parliament of Georgia, while the implementation of state policy is carried out by the Government of Georgia. The primary policymaking body in this field is the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. In coordination with general education institutions and other agencies or structures under its authority, the Ministry is responsible for the continuous improvement and development of general education.

¹³ Resolution N4261-XIVms-Xmp of the Parliament of Georgia dated June 12, 2024, on the approval of the 'National Goals of General Education' document, <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/6193624?publication=0>

¹⁴ Order N40/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated May 18, 2016, on the Approval of the National Curriculum, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3285991?publication=38>

¹⁵ Law of Georgia "On Quality Development of Education" <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/93064?publication=30>

2.2 Typical Qualifications in General Education

The Law of Georgia on General Education and the relevant Minister Order define the following typical qualifications in the general education subsystem:

Qualification level according to the Framework	Qualifications within the General Education Subsystem
Level 2	Basic General Education
Level 4	Complete General Education

2.3 Development of Qualifications in General Education

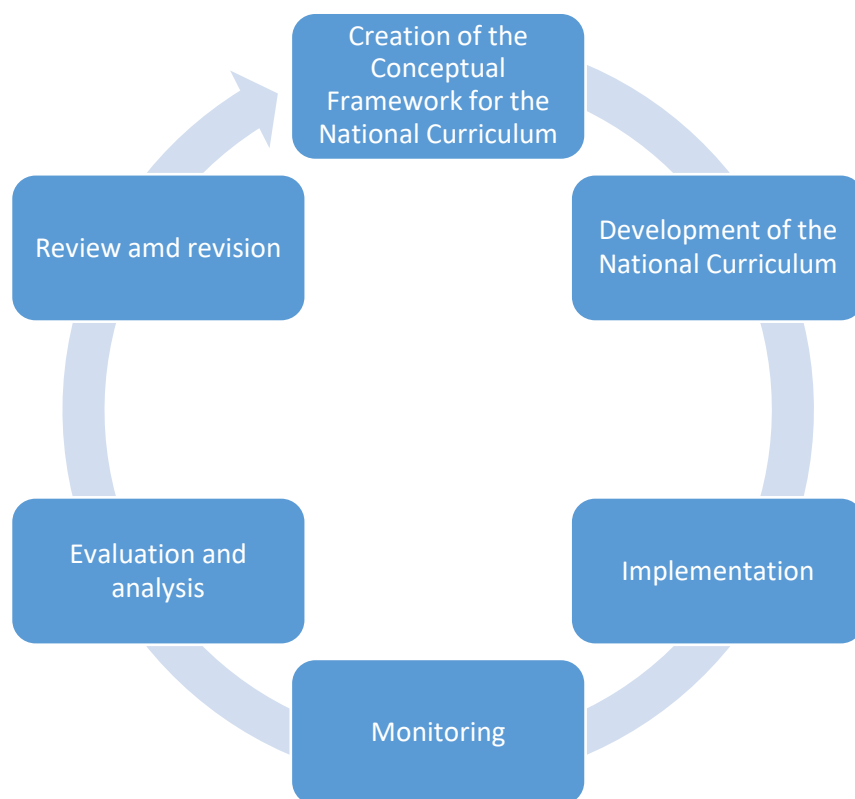
The development of qualifications in general education is centralized and guided by two key legislative documents: the "National Goals of General Education" as defined by the Resolution of the Government of Georgia, and the National Curriculum, approved by the Order of the Minister. At the same time, the National Curriculum is based on these national goals of general education and defines what kind of upbringing the Georgian general education system should foster.

It is one of the primary tools for achieving the national goals of general education and, therefore, is a mandatory document for general education institutions. The National Curriculum includes the allocation of hours across all levels of general education, the conditions and recommendations for organizing the learning environment, the required student workload, the list of achievements (skills and knowledge) that a student should possess by the end of each level, and a description of the methods and resources to acquire these skills and knowledge.

The first National Curriculum was developed in 2005, and its piloting and implementation processes began in 2006. It is important to note that the National Curriculum is a dynamic and evolving framework, functioning as a living, organic instrument. Accordingly, this document has been

updated three times since 2005 and today the system operates under the Third Generation National Curriculum guided by the 2018–2024 implementation strategy¹⁶ (see: Scheme N1: "National Curriculum Implementation Cycle").

Scheme N1: "National Curriculum Implementation Cycle"



The National Curriculum includes subject standards and annual programmes. The subject standard defines the mandatory minimum knowledge that a pupil should have acquired by the end of the level. The National Curriculum answers the following questions:

What should a pupil know? What should they be able to do? What values should the pupil develop within the framework of a specific subject? The annual programme outlines how the requirements of the subject standard are to be implemented throughout the teaching and learning process. Unlike the standard, the annual programme is of a recommendatory nature. Based on the National Curriculum, the general education institution elaborates the school curriculum that

¹⁶ III. Third Generation National Curriculum, <https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=12552&lang=geo>



specifies the means of achieving the outcomes by the students of the relevant level, which subsequently serves as the basis for awarding qualifications.

Compliance with the requirements of the subject standards is mandatory for all general education institutions. However, the law also permits schools to meet the requirements of the subject standard through subject-specific programmes developed by school itself. In such cases, the subject-specific programme developed by school must align with the corresponding subject standard. It is allowed to develop subject-specific programmes that differ from the National Curriculum, either for all subjects or for specific subject(s). The public school (unlike the private school) is required to submit the subject-specific programme to the Ministry for approval and ensure that students have access to the necessary additional educational resources, if required. - Learning outcomes of basic and complete general education must be compatible with the National Curriculum in accordance with the procedure established by the law.

2.4 Qualifications Documents in General Education, Institutions, Awarding Institutions and Conditions for Awarding Qualification

The following Qualification-certifying documents are issued within the framework of General Education:

- The official state document certifying the completion of the basic stage of general education – Certificate of Basic Education.
- The official state document certifying the completion of complete general education – Certificate of General Education.

The following documents are considered equivalent to the Certificate of General Education:

- An educational certificate issued upon completion of a foreign-recognized general education programme implemented in Georgia.
- Diploma of secondary vocational education, provided that the secondary vocational program integrates the learning outcomes of the secondary level of general education.



The forms of qualification-certifying documents have been approved by the relevant order of the Minister¹⁷, in particular:

- Basic Education Certificate Form.
- Complete General Education Certificate Form.

Accordingly, the qualification obtained in general education is regarded as the formal outcome of assessment and confirmation of the achievement of learning outcomes by an authorized institution/institution.

As for the rules and conditions for awarding the qualification, the basic level qualification will be awarded to a person upon completion of the corresponding level. A similar rule applies to the secondary level. It is also possible for the school to schedule an annual exam (end-of-year exam) at the basic and secondary levels, which must be included in the school curriculum. The school makes this decision based on the relevance and appropriateness of the issue.

There is also an alternative way of awarding a qualification, which entails obtaining general education at various levels through an external format. It provides for the independent completion of general education programmes for specific grade/grades or semesters, as well as subject/subjects within a particular class/semester by an individual. A Certificate of Complete General Education through external studies is issued to an individual as an external student, upon completion of the achievement level defined by the National Curriculum for the Secondary level of General Education.

If an individual, through external studies, successfully completes the educational programmes of multiple grades that include the final grade of the Basic Level, they are awarded a certificate confirming the completion of the Basic Level of General Education. A Certificate of Complete General Education through external studies is issued to an individual as an external student, upon completion of the achievement level defined by the National Curriculum for the Secondary level of General Education. This issue is regulated in accordance with the legislation of Georgia¹⁸.

It is important to note that the award of qualifications in general education is not based on external evaluation. A general educational institution is defined as the entity authorized to award general education qualifications.

¹⁷ Order N269 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated June 2, 2005, on the Approval of Unified State Educational Documents and Certificate Forms

<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/60586?publication=13>

¹⁸ Order N18/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated February 18, 2011, on the Approval of the Regulation on Certification of Education Acquired in the Form of External Studies

<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1209895?publication=21>



The issuance of state documents certifying general education is ensured by the LEPL State Service Development Agency, within the system of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia¹⁹.

2.5 Evaluation System in General Education

In the general education system, assessment is considered as an integral part of the teaching-learning process, which aims to improve and support the student's learning process.

The focus of the evaluation, depending on its purpose, may vary at different levels, however, it must always:

a) allow us to diagnose and receive feedback based on it, addressing questions such as: What does a pupil know? What is their target knowledge? What are their needs? How is the learning process going? What kind of support does the pupil need? etc.

b) allow us to evaluate progress, addressing questions such as: How does the pupil develop? What is their level of knowledge? What changes has the pupil's learning process experienced during a specific period? What teaching-learning methods and approaches are effective in supporting and assisting them, what types of changes and emphasis are needed in the learning process to facilitate the pupil's progress, and so on.

C) Assist education policymakers in shaping education policy, which includes the revision of standards and related documents, developing the support and enhancement mechanisms for introduction of standards and so on.

There are two types of assessment used in general education institutions (hereinafter referred to as schools): formative and summative.

- Formative assessment monitors the quality of learning, determines the level of pupil achievement in relation to the objectives set by the National Curriculum. A grade is given in the formative assessment. Schools have the autonomy to create their own original grading system and principles, according to which marks written in the school system are converted into the 10-point system defined by the National Curriculum.
- Summative assessment monitors each pupil's developmental dynamics and contributes to improving the quality of learning. In summative assessment, the teacher collects a wide range

¹⁹ Order N113/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated June 8, 2012, <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1671071?publication=13>



of data about a student to be able to modify the set tasks to suit them. The following means are mainly used for formative assessment: observation, verbal and/or written feedback, recommendations, self-assessment and peer-assessment and so on. This form of assessment is carried out throughout the whole learning process.

In general education institutions, summative assessment is carried out from the first grade to the 12th grade, while summative assessment is introduced from the second semester of the 5th grade and continues through the 12th grade. The score obtained in the formative assessment is the basis for advancing the pupil from one grade to another, unless otherwise provided by the school's internal regulatory documents (e.g. passing additional exams, etc.).

A 10-point grading system is applied in general education institutions. Each grade is assigned the following value:

- 9-10 points - high evaluation;
- 7-8 points - above average evaluation;
- 5-6 points - average evaluation
- 1-4 points - low evaluation;

A pupil is considered to have successfully completed a grade if they achieve a score of at least 5.0 in each subject; otherwise, they are assigned a make-up exam held in autumn.

2.6 Interrelation with other Education Subsystems and the levels of the National Qualifications Framework

Upon completion of the Basic Level of General Education, an individual is entitled to continue studies in one of the following:

- the secondary level of general education;
- a basic vocational education programme;
- the secondary vocational education programme that integrates the learning outcomes of the secondary level of general education;
- vocational training and retraining programmes.

Upon completion of the Secondary Level of General Education, an individual is entitled to continue studies in one of the following:



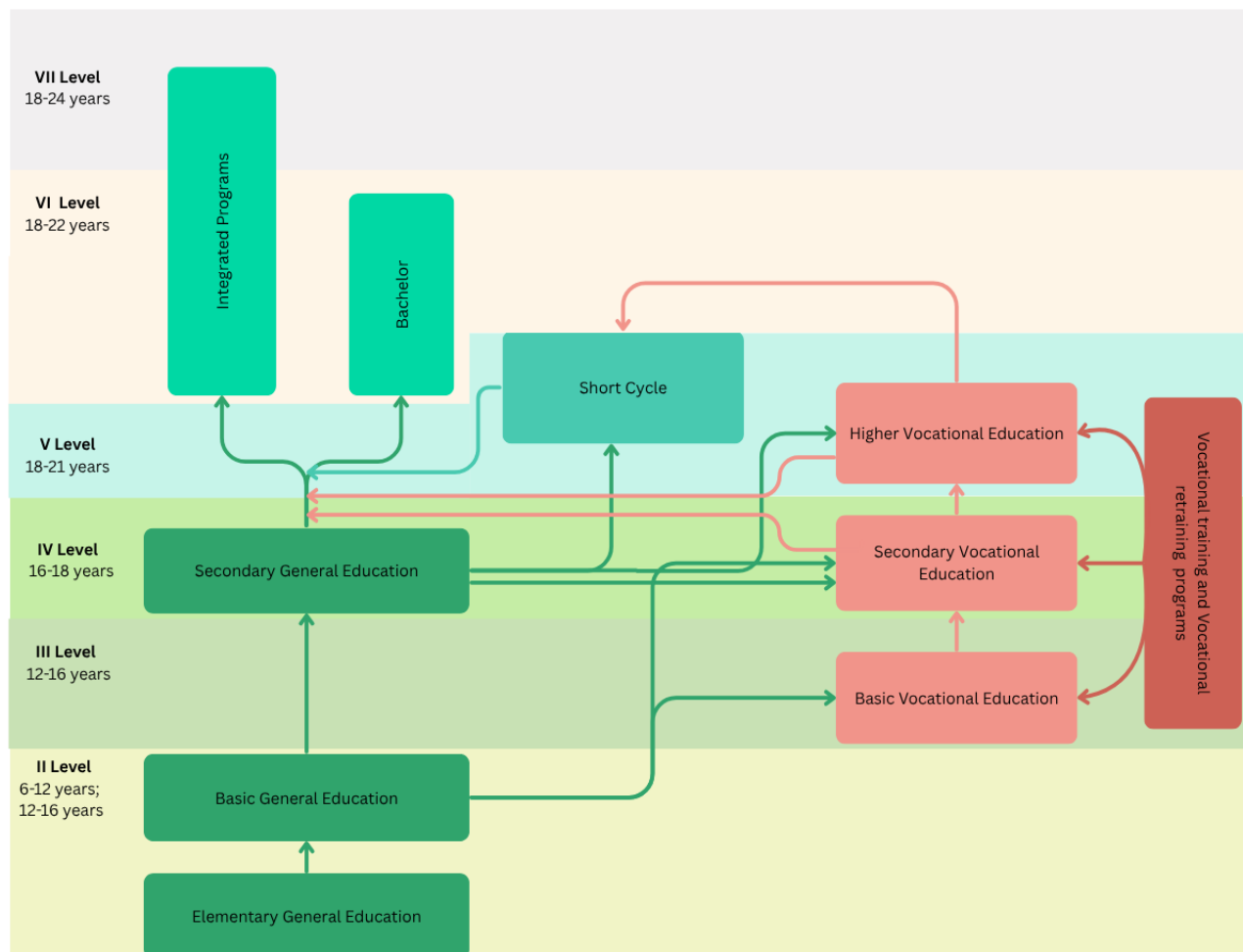
- a vocational education programme (at all levels);
- a vocational training and retraining programme;
- a short-cycle education programme;
- a BA programme;
- Integrated higher education programme (higher education programmes that include undergraduate and graduate study outcomes).

An individual holding a Certificate of Complete General Education is eligible to pursue studies in a teacher training educational program if they are a citizen of Georgia or a person defined under Article 2013 of the Law of Georgia on the "Rules of Registration of Georgian Citizens and Foreign Citizens Residing in Georgia, Issuance of Personal Identification Card (Residence Permit) and Passport for a Citizen of Georgia" and who has passed one of the following tests in the Unified National Examinations according to the rules established by the Ministry:

- a) General Aptitude Test in Azerbaijani;
- b) General Aptitude Test in Armenian;
- c) Ossetian Language Test;
- d) Abkhazian Language Test.

Scheme No. 2 shows the transitional ways in the education system based on basic and complete general education.

Scheme №2: Interrelation of General Education with other Education Subsystems and the levels of the National Qualifications Framework



2.7 Quality Assurance of Qualifications in General Education

The Law of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement²⁰ defines the following mechanisms for ensuring the quality of general education:

- Internal Mechanisms for Quality Assurance;

²⁰ Law of Georgia "On Education Quality Enhancement"
<https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/93064?publication=31Zenodo+2>



- External Mechanisms Quality Assurance.

Internal mechanisms are defined and used by general education institutions to ensure continuous quality improvement and monitoring. In general, internal quality mechanisms of general education institutions ensure the efficiency of both the educational process and academic and administrative activities. Their goal is to create a constantly updated and adapted system that meets the demands of the education field. The internal quality management system is based on Deming's cycle: Plan - Do - Check - Act (PDCA).

External quality assurance mechanisms are established by the current legislation of Georgia and the Center is responsible for its implementation, which coordinates the quality assurance policies and procedures in the country.

Authorization is an external mechanism for ensuring the quality of education, the purpose of which is the institutional evaluation of a general education institution and its compliance with the standards of authorization. Therefore, for an institution to obtain the status of a general educational institution and become a qualification-awarding entity, it must satisfy the requirements established by all four standards (school philosophy, school curriculum, administrative and infrastructural support of the teaching process, and student support²¹).

Authorization is granted to a general education institution for a period of nine years. It should be noted that the quality of educational services provided by institutions is constantly monitored at the systemic level, for which the institution undergoes external inspection - monitoring from authorization to authorization, which ensures maintenance and further development of the quality of general education. External quality assurance is carried out by an authorization expert group and is based on the analysis of the information received through the application/self-assessment and the authorization visit of the institution. The final decision on granting / refusing / revoking / canceling an authorization to an institution is made by the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions.

The members of the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister upon the recommendation of the Minister, and their term of office is set for a term of two years.

Authorization of private schools in Georgia first began in 2011. This process involved ensuring that the school's operations were in line with standards set by the Ministry of Education, which

²¹ Authorization Standard of General Education, <https://shorturl.at/zlgnu>



contributed to quality assurance. Authorization means that the school meets the requirements of law and education policy and offers an education that meets minimum educational standards. As of March 2025, 206 private general educational institutions have been authorized.

The phased authorization of public schools began in 2023. According to the law, public schools are authorized to carry out general educational activities until the beginning of the 2030-2031 academic year. However, it should be noted that public schools established after January 1, 2014, are subject to authorization in accordance with Georgian legislation and are included in quality assurance processes. As of March 2025, 465 public schools are authorized within the general education system of Georgia.

One of the mechanisms for ensuring the quality of general education is also the recognition of internationally recognized general education programmes (hereinafter - the programme) in Georgia.

It should be noted that one of the prerequisites for programme recognition is a thorough review and evaluation, allowing only high-quality programmes that align with the national goals of general education and meet international standards to be accepted into the Georgian educational field. The Center evaluates the programme according to the criteria and standards defined by the legislation of Georgia and concludes an agreement with the authorized foreign institution responsible for recognizing the internationally accredited general education programme.

At present, five general education programmes recognized abroad are also recognized in the education system of Georgia, which are implemented by various private general education institutions operating in the country.

1. IB (International Baccalaureate)
2. QSI (Quality School International)
3. Cambridge Assessment International Education
4. Sabis Educational Holding
5. Cogna



Accreditation of schools in Georgia officially began in 2005. It was during this period that the National Curriculum and Accreditation Agency was established, which was responsible for improving the general education level of the country and managing the school accreditation process. Since 2022, the accreditation of general education programs has been abolished as an effective mechanism. It was partially integrated into the curriculum standard. Currently, only three general education programmes are accredited in the Georgian general education field.

Since 2023, the composition of the expert groups for the authorization of general education institutions has also changed. The expert groups have been expanded to include subject-specific experts in quality assurance of general education, through whom the school curriculum is properly studied and evaluated.

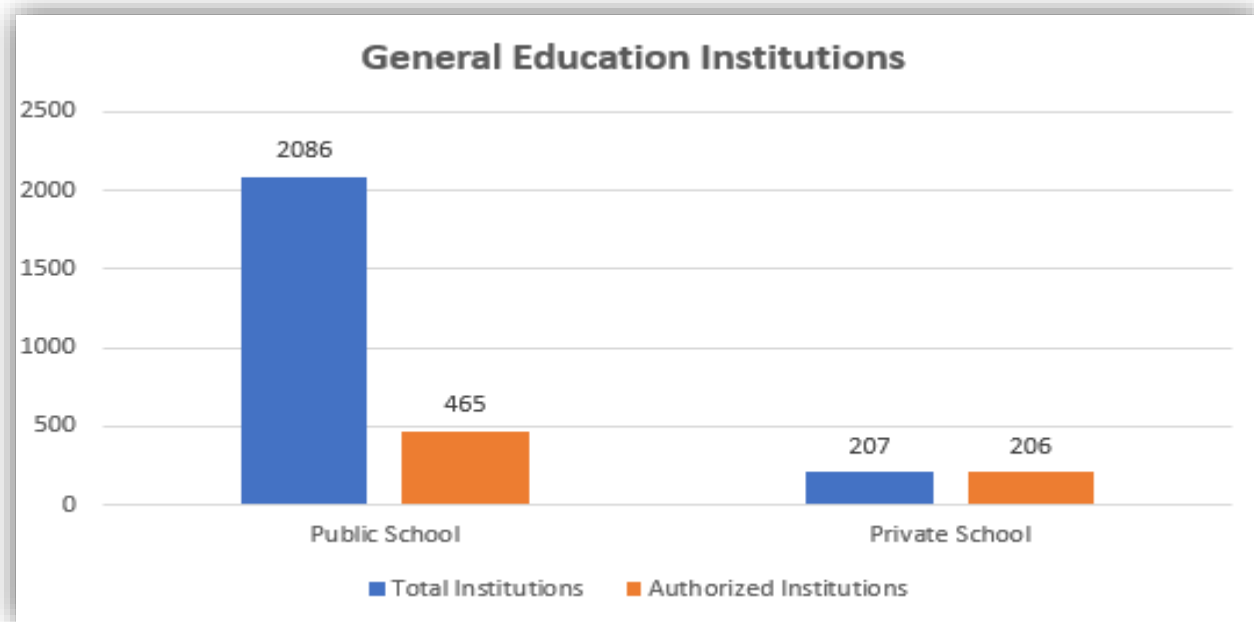
Since 2022, four standards for school evaluation have been in effect in the general education field:

1. School philosophy;
2. School curriculum;
3. Administrative and infrastructural support of the learning process;
4. Student support.

Each standard is divided into components based on relevant performance indicators and evidence. Significant changes have been made in the direction of introducing a differentiated system for evaluating standards. This means that the two-level evaluation model has been replaced by a four-level scale for assessing general education institutions. This allows for a comprehensive and consistent evaluation of the ongoing processes within the institution.

The four-level system of evaluation of the institution with the standards is as follows:

1. Complies with the standard requirements
2. Substantially complies with the standard requirements
3. Partially complies with the standard requirements
4. Does not comply with the standard requirements

Scheme N3. Statistics - Number of general education institutions

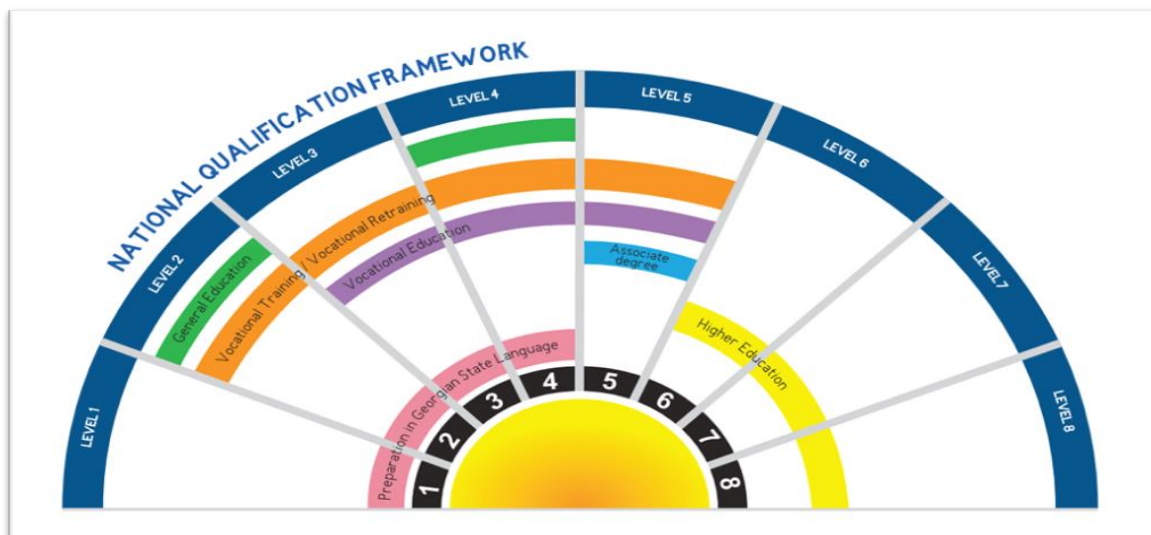
As of March 2025, 465 public and 206 private general education institutions are authorized.

2.8 Identified Challenges

The following challenges have been identified in relation to the general education qualifications system:

- Phased authorization of public schools;
- Development of processes related to the recognition of general education programmes recognized abroad within Georgia;
- Integration and implementation of vocational education in public schools;
- The transition to the new model of general education in Georgia, which involves a 6-year primary, 4-year basic, and 2-year secondary education format, where the secondary education level will be represented by both vocational and academic tracks.

3. Qualifications System in Vocational Education



3.1 Legislative Framework for Vocational Education

It is important to note that the current law is a framework document that outlines all the main subordinate acts required for managing vocational education.

Under the new law:

- The vocational qualifications system has changed. Vocational education programmes were placed at the third, fourth and fifth levels of the National Qualifications Framework;
- Professional training and professional retraining programmes have been introduced into the system, which are placed at the second, third, fourth, and fifth levels of the National Qualifications Framework;
- The profession standard and vocational educational standard were defined as the basis for forming vocational qualifications; qualification formation was based on a system of learning outcomes;
- A new qualification appeared - an associate degree - this qualification is awarded to a person after completing a short-cycle programme. This is a qualification that connects vocational and higher education and creates the opportunity for credits earned within a short-cycle programme to be recognized within the framework of a corresponding higher education programme;



- The prerequisites for admission (minimum level of prior education) to vocational educational programmes were defined - for third- level programmes, basic education is required as an admission prerequisite; for fourth- level programmes - basic or complete general education; and for fifth- level programmes and short-cycle programmes - complete general education;
- Integrated vocational educational programmes were introduced - the possibility of integrating learning outcomes from the secondary level of general education appeared in fourth- level vocational educational programmes. Based on this, a person with basic education can continue studies in a fourth-level vocational educational programme where, along with vocational skills, they will acquire competencies corresponding to complete general education and, upon completion of studies, will receive a vocational diploma that is equated with a document certifying complete general education - high school diploma;
- The credit system in the field of vocational education was defined - ECVET;
- Quality assurance mechanisms were changed and updated;
- Opportunities for recognition of formal and non-formal education, including non- formal education in regulated professions, were defined;
- Types of qualification certifying documents were defined (diploma, diploma supplement, certificate, certificate supplement, statement).

In addition to the issues listed above, the law also establishes the principles of vocational education system management, regulates the topics of establishment, reorganization and liquidation of colleges/vocational educational institutions, defines the principles of college management and its obligations, issues of financing vocational educational programs, regulates issues related to vocational education teachers, vocational students and listeners, etc.

The second important legislative act that regulates the vocational education system is the Law of Georgia "On Education Quality Enhancement." This normative document regulates the authorization issues of vocational educational institutions and creates the legal foundations for vocational education quality assurance mechanisms in general terms.

State policy in the field of vocational education is implemented by the Government of Georgia and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, which, through coordination of vocational educational institutions and other agencies/structures subordinate to the ministry, continuously



ensures the improvement and development of issues in the field of vocational education. In 2021, the LEPL Vocational Skills Agency was created in a public- private partnership format, which is the main institution implementing state policy in the field of vocational education.

It is noteworthy that the following challenges in the legislative sphere identified in the 2021 edition of the same document have been overcome, including:

- The rule for developing and approving occupational standard/occupational standards - approved by the Resolution No. 205 of the Government of Georgia dated June 5, 2023;
- The rule for developing, evolving, and approving vocational educational standards and module/modules - approved by the Order No. 80/n of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated August 23, 2023.
- The rules and conditions for implementing a vocational educational programme/short- cycle educational programme/vocational training programme/vocational retraining programme in the form of work-based learning - approved by the Resolution No. 416 of the Government of Georgia dated August 9, 2022.
- A prerequisite for granting a qualification to a vocational student is the successful completion of a qualification examination, which aims to assess the student's ability to comprehensively apply the achieved learning outcomes in the performance of professional duties and tasks.
- The general rules and conditions for conducting qualification examinations are determined by the Minister of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia (currently under development).
- In accordance with Clause 4 of the Transitional Provisions, the requirement for a qualification examination applies to vocational students enrolled in 2024 within the framework of dual education vocational programs, as well as to vocational students enrolled in programs based on a vocational education standard that designates the qualification examination as a prerequisite for qualification attainment, except for integrated vocational education programs.

It is also noteworthy that the partial implementation of the Law of Georgia "On Vocational Education" remains a challenge for the system. Not all subordinate acts defined by the law were adopted within the timeframes stipulated by the law, which hinders the development of several issues. In connection with the National Qualifications System, the failure to adopt the following subordinate acts is problematic:

- The rules and conditions for enrollment in short-cycle educational programmes - to be approved by the Ministry;
- The rules and conditions for recognition of non-formal education within the framework of regulated professions - to be approved by the Government of Georgia.

3.2 Typical Qualifications in Vocational Education

The Law of Georgia "On Vocational Education" and the corresponding Order of the Minister²² define the following typical qualifications in the vocational education subsystem:

Qualification level according to the Framework	Qualifications in the vocational education subsystem
Level 2	Vocational training programme/Vocational retraining programme
Level 3	Basic vocational qualification; vocational training programme/vocational retraining programme
Level 4	Secondary vocational qualification; vocational training program/vocational retraining programme
Level 5	Higher vocational qualification; associate degree; vocational training programme/vocational retraining programme

3.3 Formation of Qualifications in Vocational Education

²² Order N69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated April 10, 2019, on the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and Classification of Fields of Study



The formation of qualifications in vocational education is based on learning outcomes. These outcomes are defined by the vocational education standard, which serves as the framework document for vocational education programs. The vocational education standard, in turn, is based on the occupational standard (also referred to as the vocational standard)²³. In 2015, the Rule for Development of Vocational Standards, Educational Programme Framework Document and Module was elaborated (current version 04/08/16 N733/i)²⁴. According to this provision, any natural or legal person who demonstrates readiness and submits a labour market analysis (qualitative and/or quantitative research), along with supporting documentation justifying the identified needs in a specific field or profession, may initiate the development or modification of a vocational education programme framework document (hereinafter referred to as the "framework document") or module. The regulation also sets out the requirements for individuals involved in the development of the framework document or module.

Individuals involved in drafting the vocational standard, framework document, or module were required to have experience in the relevant field, either through formal or non-formal teaching, or to be representatives of a professional association or a state institution.

As of today, the development, improvement, approval, review, and termination of vocational education standards, modules, and occupational standards are carried out by the NNLE Vocational Skills Agency.

Qualifications within the vocational education system must be periodically reviewed and improved, and in certain sectors, new qualifications need to be introduced. This process helps align vocational education programmes more closely with labour market needs and supports the development of human capital in the country.

Active involvement of the private sector is especially important in the qualification development process. Through joint efforts and collaboration, stakeholders can identify in-demand skills and develop professional and vocational education standards. This, in turn, enhances the quality of vocational education programmes and ensures that the workforce is equipped with the skills and competencies required by the labour market.

²³ The current Law of Georgia on Vocational Education defines the following terms: 'Vocational Educational Standard' and 'Professional Standard.' However, documents with these titles have not yet been created within the system. Therefore, the terms established by the previous legislation will be used in the presented analysis

²⁴ Order N733/I of the Director of the National Center for Quality Development in Education, dated 04.08.2016, 'On the Approval of the Procedure for Developing the Professional Standard, the Educational Program Framework Document, and the Module' (last amended on 24/06/21, N627389). This procedure remains in force until the approval of the relevant regulatory acts established by the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education.



In the process of qualification development, the Vocational Skills Agency provides methodological support for the development of professional and vocational educational standards and validates standards with all relevant stakeholders. The agency also leads the approval process for these standards.

The development and advancement of vocational qualifications is regulated by the following legal documents:

- Decree N205 of the Government of Georgia - "Rule for Developing and Approving Occupational Standard/Occupational Standards";
- Order N80/n of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia - "Rule for Development, Improvement, and Approval of Vocational Educational Standard and Module/Modules";
- Order N1037032 of the General Director of NNLE Vocational Skills Agency - "Methodology for Development and Improvement of Vocational Qualifications".

The above-mentioned legal documents regulate the stages and procedures for developing and improving occupational and vocational educational standards.

It should be noted that the methodology considers international practices, local experience and needs, provides the opportunity for systematic involvement of employers in the process of developing and improving qualifications, which creates a solid foundation for creating programs needed for the labor market and conducting the qualification development process with a unified systematic approach.

- To develop professional qualifications, a working group is established consisting of a methodological support specialist and a field expert. The responsibilities of the working group include: Development of the initial draft of the occupational standard, including the identification of occupational duties, tasks, relevant knowledge, essential general skills, attitudes, capabilities, work context, and core professional values
- Development of the vocational education standard and modules based on the occupational standard – This includes defining the qualification level, a description of the qualification, employment opportunities, admission prerequisites, learning outcomes, a detailed description of those outcomes, the structure of the vocational education program, its modules, recommended material resources, etc.
- Analysis of international experience in the context of specific qualifications;
- Standardization of standard records - ensuring equal depth and detailed elaboration of standard records;



- Validation of standard records - analysis of feedback received from stakeholders (including educational institutions, individual employers, public institutions, and others) on the draft standards.

To agree on the primary records of the occupational standard and vocational educational standard/module in a small group, a sectoral focus group is created, consisting of at least 5 field representatives. To finalize the records, at least one working meeting should be held with the sectoral focus group; however, the number of meetings may vary depending on the content and scope of the standards. It is important to note that, during the development of a vocational education standard or module, at least three representatives (such as a teacher and a programme manager) from the institution implementing the vocational education programmes must be involved in the sectoral focus groups.

For final decision-making, the standards undergo comprehensive validation with all relevant stakeholders. The developed projects (occupational standards, vocational education standards/modules) are then registered by the Vocational Skills Agency.

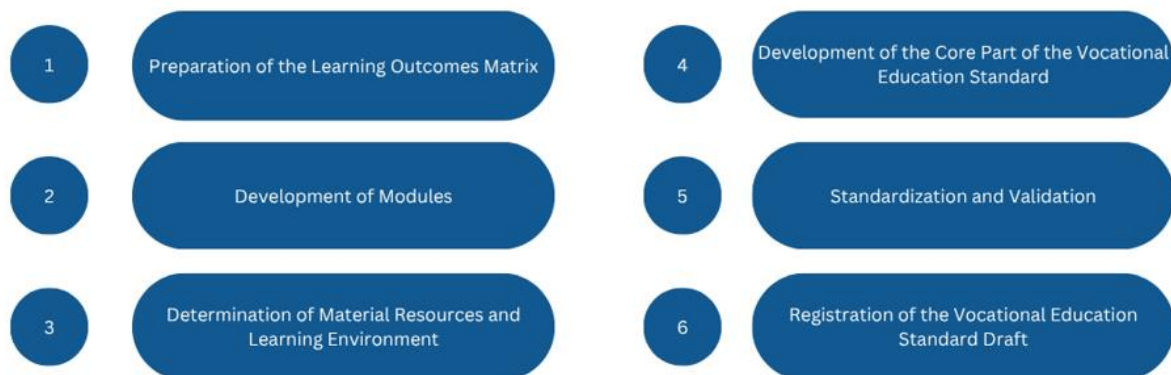
Additionally, if the entry into force of a vocational educational standard requires changes to the Order №69/n of April 10, 2019, by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia "On the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of the Fields of Study" (in cases where the standard introduces a new qualification), the Vocational Skills Agency is obligated to notify the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement in writing no later than 3 working days after the registration of the vocational educational standard in the registry.

Scheme N5: Stages and Procedures for the Formation of Vocational Qualifications

Occupational Standard Development Stages:



Vocational Educational Standard Development Stages:



The assessment of a short- term programme developed by a legal entity for compliance with established standards, along with the preparation of a conclusion, is carried out by field experts and staff members of the council. The final decision is made by the Council for Granting the Right to Implement Vocational Training/Vocational Retraining Programs, whose members are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister of Georgia upon the recommendation of the Ministry. The administrative support of the Council is provided by the Center.



There is a simpler way for educational institutions to gain the right to implement short-term programmes. Legislation allows institutions to obtain this right by registering the programme in an electronic system, provided that the program is based on an authorized vocational education programme. In such cases, the Center, without involving a field expert, evaluates the short-term programme submitted by the educational institution to ensure compliance with the following requirements:

- a) The Center evaluates the compliance of the short-term programme with the "Procedure for development and approval of the vocational training programme and vocational retraining programme" approved by the Ministry;
- b) The Center evaluates the compliance of the short-term programme with the authorized vocational education programme under which the programme has been developed.

The compliance of the learning outcomes outlined in short-term programmes with the levels of the National Qualifications Framework is determined by the methodology defined by the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement²⁵.

3.4 Qualifications Documents in Vocational Education, Institutions Awarding Qualifications and Conditions for Awarding

The following documents certifying a qualification are issued within vocational education:

- Diploma of Basic Vocational Education - upon completion of the vocational education programme of Level 3;
- Diploma of Secondary Vocational Education - upon completion of the vocational education programme of Level 4;
- Diploma of Higher Vocational Education - upon completion of the vocational education programme of Level 5;
- Diploma of Associated Degree - upon completion of a short-cycle educational programme;

²⁵ Order N971850 of the Director of the National Center for Quality Development in Education, dated October 9, 2020, on the Approval of the Methodology for Determining the Alignment of Professional Educational Standards, Professional Training, and Professional Retraining Program Learning Outcomes with the Descriptors of National Qualifications Framework Levels



- Certificate of Vocational Training Programme and Vocational Retraining Programme - upon completion of Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Vocational Training Programme and Vocational Retraining Programme.

Scheme N8: Types of Qualification Documents in Vocational Education:

Vocational Educational Program	• Diploma confirming vocational education
Short Cycle Diploma	• Diploma confirming an associated qualification
Vocational Training/Vocational Retraining Program	• Certificate
The document certifying the qualification shall be issued along with its annex.	

In addition, the respective Order²⁶ of the Minister approves the qualification documents and the samples of their annex. Namely:

- Form of the state document certifying vocational education - diploma form;
- Sample of the state document certifying vocational education - sample of the annex to the diploma (Georgian-English);
- Sample of the state document certifying vocational education - certificate of Vocational Training Programme and Vocational Retraining Programme;

²⁶ Order N99/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated May 29, 2019, on the Approval of the Forms of the State Document Confirming Vocational Education and Its Annexes



- Sample of the annex to the state document certifying vocational education - certificate of Vocational Training Programme and Vocational Retraining Programme (Georgian-English);
- Sample of the state document certifying vocational education - certificate of achievement of learning outcomes defined by individual modules;
- Sample of the annex to the state document certifying vocational education - certificate of achievement of learning outcomes defined by individual modules (Georgian-English).

It is important to note that the samples of the state document certifying vocational education - diploma and its annex comply with the requirements of EUROPASS.

A vocational education institution/college, as well as a general education institution and a higher education institution have the right to implement a vocational education programme. Moreover:

- A general educational institution is authorized to implement only 3rd and 4th level vocational educational programmes and short-term programmes;
- A vocational educational institution/college is authorized to implement vocational educational programmes and short-term programmes of all levels;
- A higher educational institution is authorized to implement vocational educational programmes and short-term programmes of all levels;
- A legal entity is authorized to implement short-term programmes of all levels.

Awarding a qualification within vocational education is a prerogative of the institution implementing the relevant programme. The general conditions for awarding a qualification are set out in the Vocational Education Standard and specified in the relevant curriculum of the education institution. There are three main alternatives to award a qualification:

- a) In order to be qualified, a vocational student must accumulate credits envisaged by the modules defined in the vocational education programme;
- b) If 50% or more of the learning outcomes envisaged by the programme are implemented in a real work environment, an additional condition for awarding the qualification is passing a qualification exam;



c) If a vocational student is studying in an integrated educational program, the confirmation of learning outcomes of the secondary level of general education must be carried out according to the rules established by the Minister²⁷.

Institutions Awarding Vocational Qualifications

- The diploma and the certificate of achievement of the learning outcomes (defined by the separate modules) are authorized by the education institution, the structural unit/branch of which has awarded the professional qualification or its successor or the Center.
- A legal entity entitled to implement short- term programmes in accordance with Georgian legislation, in which the listener completed a short-term programme, or its legal successor, is authorized to issue a certificate.

3.5 Credits System in Vocational Education

In Georgia, the ECVET credit system operates in the field of vocational education, which is regulated by the Order of the Ministry "On Approval of the Credit System in the Field of Vocational Education." This Order was issued on December 28, 2020 (N120/n). It is important to note that while establishing the Order, the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of June 18, 2009, "On the Establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)" (2009/C 155/02) was considered.

Also, to implement this Order, the methodology for awarding credits (ECVET) in the field of vocational education was prepared and approved by the Order of the Director of the Center²⁸. Based on the Order of the Minister, the followings were established:

- Principles of determining credits within the vocational qualification;

²⁷ Order N48/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated July 19, 2021, on the Approval of the Procedure for Confirming the Learning Outcomes of General Secondary Education Achieved by Vocational Students within Vocational Educational Programs Integrating General Secondary Education Outcomes

²⁸ Order N154301 of the Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, dated February 24, 2021, on the Approval of the Methodology for Awarding Credits (ECVET) in the Field of Vocational Education



- Volume of the learning outcomes achieved under the full training load within formal education;
- Rule on granting and transferring credits to a person.

The "Credit System in the Field of Vocational Education" once again emphasizes that the formation of qualification is based on learning outcomes. Furthermore, credits are distributed at three levels - qualification, module, and learning outcome. Credit for a learning outcome is determined by the importance, difficulty, scale and complexity of the learning outcome, and the effort needed for an individual to achieve the learning outcome. One ECVET credit may equal a 25–30-hour (contact and non-contact) workload. A person is awarded credit based on the confirmation of the learning outcome, which can be implemented by assessing the learning outcome or recognizing the learning outcome.

To date, only two modules have been created considering the "Credit System in the Field of Vocational Education." In the process of developing vocational qualifications, all vocational qualifications will gradually transition to this system.

Regarding the assessment system, vocational education employs a competency-based assessment system, which is not differentiated and is of two types:

- Learning outcome confirmed.
- Learning outcome not confirmed.

However, the learning outcome is considered confirmed if the assessed individual demonstrates possession of the knowledge and skills outlined in the learning outcome.

3.6 Relation to other Education Subsystems and Framework Levels

Vocational education creates diverse opportunities for continuing education. However, the law does not explicitly define a diploma from a secondary or higher vocational education programme as a prerequisite for admission to the first level of higher education. A graduate of a basic general education programme will only be admitted to a secondary vocational education programme if it integrates the learning outcomes of secondary-level general education. In this case, the document issued upon completion of the programme is considered equivalent to a document certifying complete general education.

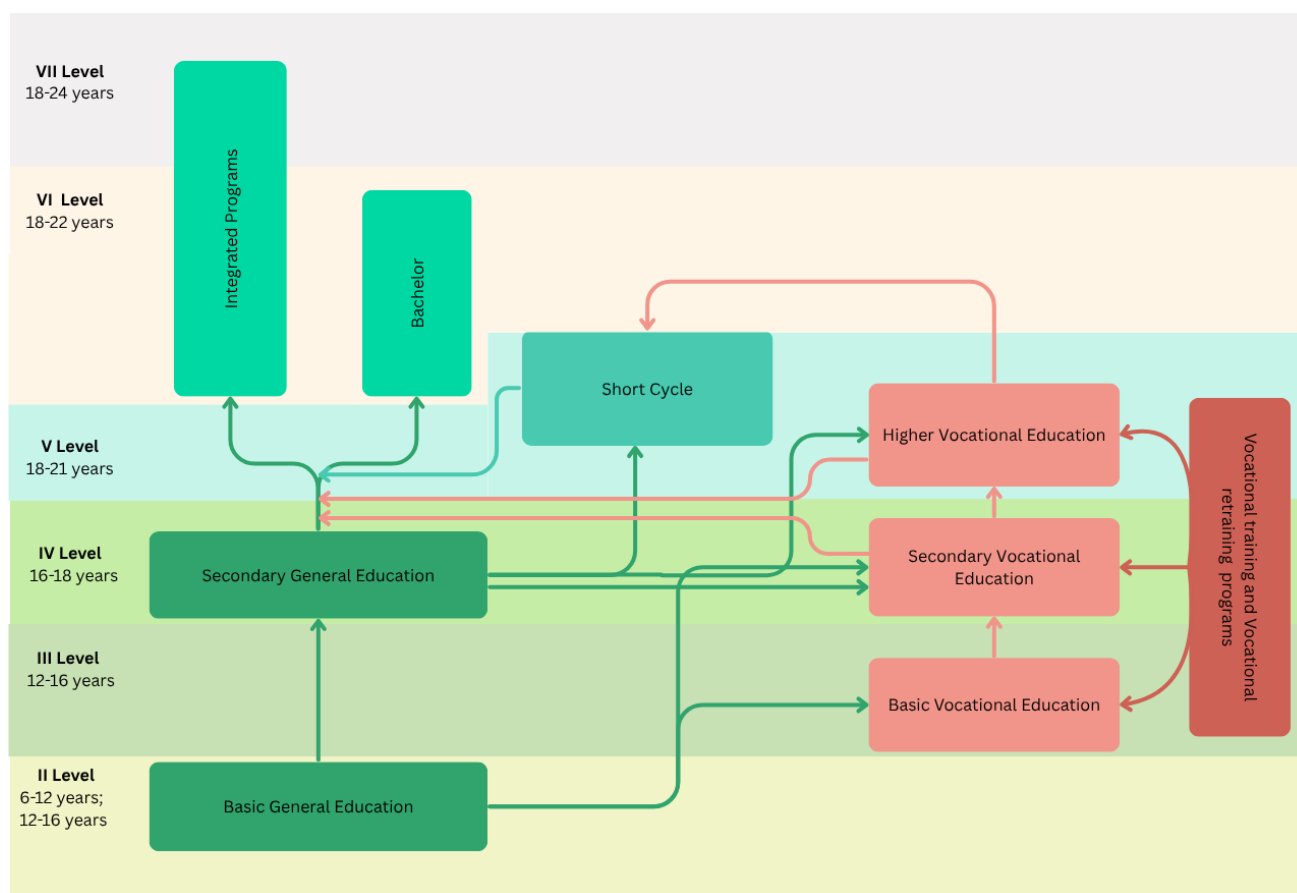


Otherwise, to be admitted to secondary and higher vocational education programs, an individual must possess a document certifying complete general education or a document equivalent to it (such as an attestation certificate). With this qualification, they will be eligible for admission to the first level of higher education.

According to the laws on higher education and vocational education, a graduate of a short-cycle programme is directly eligible to transition into a bachelor's or integrated higher education programme²⁹. In the case of continuing education in this direction, an individual is given the opportunity to recognize the learning outcomes achieved within the framework of vocational education and obtain the relevant higher education qualification in a shorter time. However, it is noteworthy that due to the lack of relevant bylaws, there is currently no established practice of implementing short-cycle educational programmes in the country. (See Scheme N9: Transition Paths in vocational education).

Scheme N9: Transition Paths in Vocational Education

²⁹ At this stage, this opportunity exists only at the level of the law, but it is not yet implemented in practice, as the corresponding regulatory legislative framework has not yet been established



3.7 Quality Assurance of Qualifications in Vocational Education

The Law of Georgia "On Education Quality Enhancement"³⁰ defines the following quality assurance mechanisms:

- Internal mechanisms of quality assurance;
- External mechanisms quality assurance.

The main mechanism for external quality assurance is authorization, which involves the institutional evaluation of an institution and granting of the right to implement vocational education programme/programmes. Authorization is mandatory for all vocational education institutions.

³⁰ Georgian Law on Education Quality Enhancement, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/93064?publication=30>



Furthermore, only an authorized institution is permitted to issue a state-recognized diploma. Authorization is granted to an institution for a period of six years. It is important to note that the quality of educational services provided by institutions is constantly monitored at a systemic level. To support this, an institution undergoes external inspection - monitoring processes conducted between authorization cycles—to ensure the maintenance and ongoing development of vocational education quality.

External quality assurance mechanisms include the addition of a new educational programme, an increase in the number of vocational students, and changes to the location or area where a programme is implemented. During these processes, the authorized institution is inspected based on relevant standards.

External quality assurance is conducted by an Authorization Experts Panel and is based on an analysis of information obtained through the institution's application/ self-assessment, as well as the findings from the authorization site-visit. The final decision to grant, refuse, or revoke an institution's authorization is made by the Authorization Council of General Education Institutions. Members of the Authorization Council are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister, based on the recommendation of the Minister. Each member serves a two-year term.

A significant breakthrough in the development of external quality assurance mechanisms occurred in 2020, when the updated Authorization Standards were adopted. These standards were developed in alignment with EQAVET recommendations and replaced the previous framework that had been in use since 2010.

The previous framework evaluated institutions based on three main standards - software, human resources and material resources. As a result of the systemic changes, the system was expanded to include five standards. In addition to the original three, the new standards address issues related to the institutional development of educational providers and support for vocational students. Currently, the following standards are in effect:

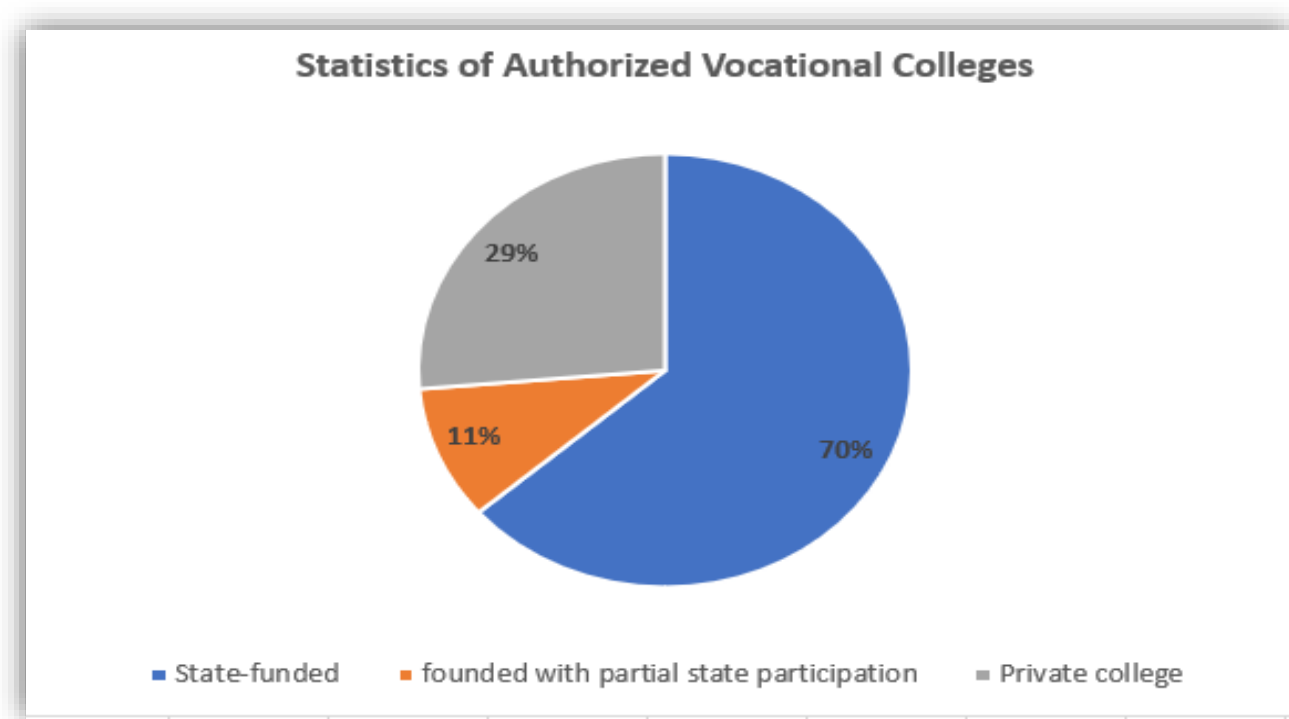
- Mission of a College and its Strategic Development
- Educational Programmes;
- Vocational students and their support mechanisms;
- Human Resources;
- Material, information and financial resources.

External quality assurance of education is provided by the Center, and this process is fully regulated by the respective Order of the Minister³¹.

Vocational education institution / college - legal entity that is authorized to carry out vocational education programmes, short-cycle educational programmes, vocational training and retraining programmes, as well as state language training programmes.

As of September 3, 2024, there are 19 state-established colleges, 7 colleges with state equity participation, and 39 private colleges operating as legal entities.

Scheme N10: Statistics of Authorized Vocational Colleges



Internal quality assurance in education is the responsibility of individual institutions. At the legislative level, there is only a requirement for the implementation of this process, while institutions are free to choose and apply the most suitable mechanisms. The Authorization Standards specify one

³¹ Order N99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated October 1, 2010, on the Approval of the Regulation on the Authorization of Educational Institutions and the Fees Thereof
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1031755?publication=53>



key requirement: institutions must develop a methodology for planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programmes based on the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act/Improve) or other alternative frameworks. As part of the internal quality assurance process, institutions are required to conduct periodic self-assessments. This involves evaluating their activities against established quality standards and submitting a corresponding report to the Center.

3.8 Identified Challenges

The following challenges have been identified in relation to the qualifications system of vocational education:

- Delays in the adoption of several by-laws defined by the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education, along with terminological and substantive discrepancies between Georgian laws related to short-cycle education (including the **Law on Vocational Education** and the **Law on Higher Education**), hinder the implementation of the Framework.
- Existence of associated degree at the theoretical level (there are no relevant legislative acts for implementation in practice), which hinders the promotion of lifelong learning and the introduction of the Framework;
- Structural unification of the occupational standard and vocational education standard - an occupational standard represents a collection of duties, tasks, and knowledge related to a specific occupation, while a vocational education standard is a document that defines the qualification to be awarded, the number of credits required to award the corresponding qualification, learning outcomes to be achieved, the collection of modules whose learning outcomes must be achieved to award the qualification, prerequisites for admission to and implementation of the corresponding educational programme, employment fields, and requirements related to the development and implementation of the educational programme. The basis for creating a vocational education standard is the corresponding occupational standard.

The methodology for developing and improving vocational qualifications considers the creation of occupational standards and vocational education standards as an integrated process. However, the methodology procedurally separates the stages of developing occupational standards and vocational education standards/modules. These stages and procedures overlap, as the two standards structurally cover similar fields with the same content and functions. Accordingly, the development of



occupational standard fields precedes the creation of vocational education standards. However, it is possible to review the occupational standard entries based on the needs of the vocational education standard and make appropriate adjustments to the occupational standard to ensure synchronization between two standards. It is noteworthy that to determine the content of a vocational education standard/modules, only the duties, tasks, and knowledge part of the occupational standard is sufficient (other fields of the occupational standard correspond to the vocational education standard). It should also be considered that employers often equate the occupational standard with a regulatory standard for the field, while the education system uses it only for educational purposes. The occupational standard is not used for developing a vocational programme; it is only a document describing an occupation. By merging the content of standards, the connection between qualifications and the labour market, and employer requirements will be further deepened - a direct link will appear between duties and modules.

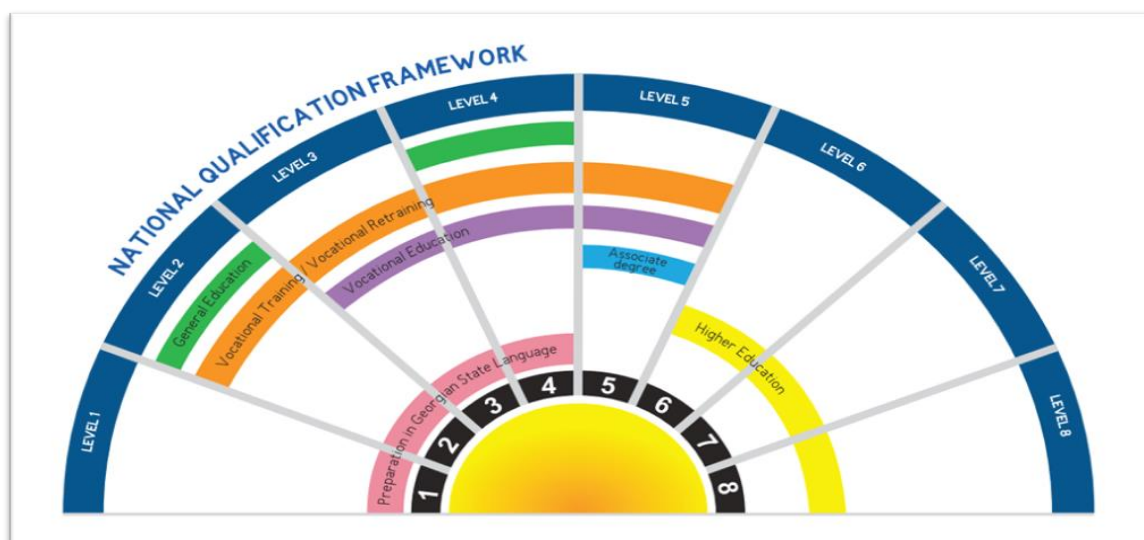
- There is also an ongoing challenge due to the inconsistency in the definition of regulated programmes between the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Vocational Education. According to the *Law on Higher Education*, a **regulated profession** is defined as an activity that, in addition to requiring an appropriate qualification, also requires passing a state certification examination—or for which the awarding of the qualification is contingent upon passing a relevant examination as specified by Georgian legislation. Meanwhile, a regulated educational programme is defined as one for which the state sets special accreditation requirements and/or through which it provides master's and doctoral level training via specialized research programmes.
- The Law of Georgia on Vocational Education defines a regulated profession as an activity for which the prerequisite for implementation is having the appropriate qualification and/or passing a state certification examination and/or for which the awarding of the required qualification requires passing a corresponding examination provided for by Georgian legislation and/or periodic vocational retraining. Regulated profession is a high-risk profession related to human health, personality development and / or high public interest.

It is significant that only the Law on Higher Education names regulated educational programmes, while the Law on Vocational Education does not define such a list. This causes ambiguity regarding the implementation of programmes at the vocational education level in fields corresponding to programmes defined as regulated at the higher education level. For example, Bachelor programmes in Nursing are regulated, but the Law on Vocational Education does not regulate higher vocational

educational programmes in nursing. It should be noted that according to the Law of Georgia on Healthcare³², graduates of both higher vocational nursing programmes and bachelor's educational programmes have the right to enter the profession.

The regulation of the recognition of non-formal arts education for formal education purposes, as well as related quality assurance issues remain a challenge.

4. Qualifications in Higher Education



4.1 Legislative Framework of Higher Education

Higher education in Georgia is regulated by the laws of Georgia: "On Higher Education"³³, "On Education Quality Enhancement"³⁴ and other by-laws.

The Law of Georgia "On Higher Education" regulates the implementation of educational and scientific-research activities of higher education institutions in Georgia, the principles and

³² Georgian Law on Healthcare, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/29980?publication=10>

³³ Georgian Law on Higher Education, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/32830?publication=114>

³⁴ Georgian Law on Education Quality Enhancement, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/93064?publication=30>



procedure of management of higher education, establishes the rule on foundation, performance, reorganization and liquidation of a higher education institution, as well as the principles of its authorization and accreditation. The law also defines the cycle of higher education levels and regulates important issues in this area, in particular, the law stipulates that:

- The higher education system in Georgia has three levels and is implemented at Bachelor's (I level), Master's (II level) and Doctoral (III level) levels of higher education;
- The learning outcomes of the bachelor's level of higher education correspond to the generalized learning outcomes defined for the 6th level of the National Qualifications Framework. The learning outcomes of the master's level correspond to the generalized learning outcomes defined for the 7th level of the National Qualifications Framework, and the learning outcomes of the doctoral level correspond to the generalized learning outcomes defined for the 8th level of the National Qualifications Framework.
- In addition to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral educational programmes, higher educational institutions also implement short-cycle and one-cycle (where the awarded academic degree is equated with a master's academic degree) educational programmes. The minimum volume in credits has been established for educational programmes corresponding to each level of higher education³⁵.
- Medical/dental education programme is a one-cycle higher education programme that ends with awarding an academic degree of Certified Medical Doctor/Dentist - equal to the master's academic degree.
- Integrated Master's Educational Programme in Veterinary is a higher education programme based on respective standards and is completed by awarding an academic degree of Master of Veterinary.
- Teacher's Training Integrated Bachelor-Master's Educational Programme is a higher educational programme developed on basis of a respective standard and completed by awarding a master's academic degree in the subject/group of subjects for respective stage of general education. The law also defines the structure of the educational programme.
- The following certificate programmes are offered at the higher education level:
 - Teacher Training Educational Programme;
 - Special Teacher Training Educational Programme;
 - Veterinary Educational Programme;

³⁵ Higher education institutions use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) manual when developing and implementing educational programmes.



- Georgian Language Training Educational Programme.

The minimum volume in credits has been established for educational programmes corresponding to each level of higher education.

The current legislation also establishes the principles of progression within higher education levels, specifically: a person who holds a document certifying the completion of general education in Georgia or a document recognized as equivalent, is eligible to enroll in bachelor's programmes; a person with at least a bachelor's or equivalent academic degree is eligible to enroll in master's programmes; and a person with at least a master's or equivalent academic degree is eligible to pursue doctoral studies—except in cases where the master's degree was obtained within an educational program of at least 60 ECTS credits.

Upon successful completion of the components defined by legislation for each level of higher education, a person is awarded the corresponding academic degree—bachelor's, master's, or doctoral. After completing each cycle of higher education, the graduate receives a corresponding diploma along with a diploma supplement.

The Law of Georgia on Higher Education includes the definition of a regulated profession and defines it as an activity whose prerequisite for implementation, besides having the appropriate qualification, is passing a state certification examination, or for which the awarding of the required qualification requires passing a corresponding examination provided for by Georgian legislation. According to the same law, the state establishes special accreditation requirements for regulated educational programmes and/or provides master's and doctoral training via specialized research programmes.

Regulated educational programmes are:

- Law;
- Medicine;
- Pedagogical;
- Maritime;
- Veterinary;
- Nursing;
- Midwife;



The National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement ensures the development of the Sectoral Benchmarks for regulated educational programmes. The requirements outlined in these benchmarks are mandatory for the development, implementation, and quality compliance assessment of regulated educational programmes.

The law defines the types of higher education institutions and their powers in the context of implementing appropriate programmes at different levels. In particular, according to the law, there are two types of higher education institutions in Georgia: a) College - implements only first-level academic higher education - bachelor's - educational programmes; b) University - implements veterinary integrated master's educational programmes, integrated bachelor's-master's teacher training educational programmes, medical/dental education programmes, bachelor's and master's educational programmes, master's and/or doctoral educational programmes and scientific research, or educational programmes and scientific research at all three levels of academic higher education. A higher educational institution can be either a public or private legal entity.

There are also Orthodox theological higher education institutions in Georgia. Orthodox teaching—referring to theological education based on religious doctrine and cultural tradition—includes educational programmes at all three levels of higher education. These institutions follow a separate authorization process. Accreditation is mandatory for the implementation of higher educational programmes.

The legislative framework of higher education enables higher education institutions in Georgia to develop joint educational programmes (using the European approach³⁶). Higher educational programmes can be jointly implemented by several higher educational institutions of Georgia and/or higher educational institutions recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country.

In accordance with the rules established by the law, receiving higher education envisages the possibility of funding with a state educational grant. However, the state grant is awarded only to an accredited education programme.

³⁶ European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) „European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes“ <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/>



The Law of Georgia “On the Education Quality Enhancement” regulates the issues of authorization of higher education institutions and accreditation of educational programmes and generally creates the legal basis for the mechanisms to promote the quality of higher education.

- Authorization is a procedure for obtaining the status of a higher education institution, which is mandatory for all higher education institutions. The state recognizes only a diploma issued by an authorized and equivalent higher education institution. The authorization process is carried out in accordance with the rules established by the Authorization Regulation³⁷, which also approves the authorization standards of higher education institutions.
- It defines the concept of cluster accreditation, and accreditation is mandatory for educational programs of all types and levels of higher educational institutions (except for theological higher educational programs implemented by Orthodox higher educational institutions). Accreditation of higher educational programmes can be carried out both for individual educational programmes and for educational programmes grouped in a cluster. The accreditation process is carried out in accordance with the rule established by the Accreditation Regulation³⁸. Under the same regulation, accreditation standards for higher education programmes are also approved.

In this direction, the following exceptions are defined by Georgian legislation: The establishment and functioning of LEPL - Kutaisi International University, to which different rules from the authorization and accreditation regulation apply, and other additional regulations determine the institution's activities. It should be noted that the Law “On the Establishment of Kutaisi International University, a Legal Entity of Public Law”, defines the legal features of the establishment and functioning of Kutaisi International University as a fundamental and applied scientific-educational complex. The institution is considered authorized by internal regulation and is not subject to external quality assessment. The institution's strategic development plan requires it to undergo international accreditation within a certain time.

It is also noteworthy that to fulfill the obligations provided for by an international treaty of Georgia ratified by the Parliament of Georgia, in accordance with the Law of Georgia 'On Higher Education',

³⁷ Order N99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, dated October 1, 2010, titled "On the Approval of the Regulation on the Authorization of Educational Institutions and the Fees Thereof," <https://www.eqe.ge/res/NewFolder%202/NewFolder/%E2%84%9699.%E1%83%9C.pdf>

³⁸ Order No. 65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated May 4, 2011, on the Approval of the Regulation on the Accreditation of Educational Programs of Higher Education Institutions and the Fees Thereof. <https://www.eqe.ge/res/images/%E2%84%9665.%E1%83%9C%20%E1%83%91%E1%83%A0%E1%83%AB%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%90.pdf>



different rules and conditions from those established by Georgian legislation are defined for the implementation of higher educational programmes to be carried out through the cooperation between a Georgian higher educational institution and San Diego State University. These programs are implemented by LEPL - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, LEPL - Ilia State University, and LEPL - Georgian Technical University.

According to the law, higher educational programmes implemented through cooperation are considered accredited for the period during which they are considered recognized/accredited by the legislation of the United States of America. These programmes have received accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Higher College and University Commission of California, USA, as well as accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The Parliament of Georgia defines the main directions of state policy and management in the field of higher education, the Government of Georgia implements the state policy, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia is the body implementing state policy in the field of higher education. The National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement facilitates the development of education quality in Georgia.

4.2 Typical Qualifications in Higher Education

Higher education can be received after full general education. It ensures achievement of the 6- 8th levels of the National Qualifications Framework and is confirmed by the relevant document of the qualification.

The Law of Georgia "On Higher Education" and the relevant Order of the Minister³⁹ define the following typical qualifications in the higher education subsystem:

Qualification level according to the Framework	Qualifications in the higher education subsystem
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³⁹ Order No. 69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated April 10, 2019, on the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classification of Fields of Study



Level 6	Bachelor's; Teacher Training Certificate; Special Teacher Training Certificate.
Level 7	Master's; Certified Medical Doctor/Dentist; Master of Education; Master of Veterinary Medicine; Veterinarian Training Certificate
Level 8	Doctor

4.3 Qualification Formation in Higher Education and Sectoral Benchmarks of Higher Education.

The formation of qualifications in higher education is based on learning outcomes. This is confirmed by:

- Regulatory legislative acts of the education system, which define the learning outcomes and stipulate that educational programmes must be composed of the learning outcomes;
- The National Qualifications Framework Document, which establishes the generalized learning outcomes as a tool for determining the level of qualifications;
- The Classifier of Fields of Study, where the classification of fields of study in the detailed sphere is based on the learning outcomes;
- The Minister's Order, which establishes that an educational programme awarding a qualification must be described by learning outcomes, which, in turn, must correspond to the generalized learning outcomes of one of the levels of the framework and/or the educational standard;
- Accreditation Standards, where the first standard requires that an educational programme has clearly defined objectives and logically inter-related learning outcomes;
- By authorization standards, according to the third standard - educational programmes - the institution must have clearly formulated learning outcomes in the educational programme, and they must correspond to the level of higher education and the qualification to be granted;



The process of developing sector benchmarks of higher education (hereinafter, sector benchmark) started in Georgia in 2011.

The document of sectoral benchmarks is based on the National Qualifications Framework, the European Higher Education Qualifications Framework, the European Lifelong Learning Qualifications Framework, labour market requirements, national and international standards, the best practices and legislation. The sectoral benchmark is the standard of academic education, which is an intermediate document linking the National Qualifications Framework and the educational programme. It sets out the minimum learning outcomes required to get the qualification in a particular field of study (although it does not exhaust the learning outcomes associated with that field), also the approaches of teaching- learning and assessment, resources and other essential characteristics required to achieve them. Development of higher education programmes based on the sectoral benchmarks ensures the quality and uniformity of qualifications issued in the country. To date, a total of 84 higher education Sectoral Benchmarks have been approved by the respective higher education field councils. Of these, 64 Sectoral Benchmarks are currently in force at the time of this document's development, while 20 have been repealed as a result of revisions⁴⁰.

Accordingly, in the fields of study where the sector benchmarks exist, the higher education institution creates and develops bachelor's degree, master's degree, 60-credit and integrated educational programmes based on the sector benchmarks. When determining the compliance of the regulated educational programme with the accreditation standards, special requirements set by the sector benchmarks are considered, while in the fields of study where the document has not been created yet, the higher education institution relies on and is oriented by the generalized learning outcomes.

The draft of sector benchmark is developed by the Sector Council of Higher Education of the respective direction and approved by the Director of the Center. The methodology for creating Sectoral Benchmark and the rules of Council activity are established by the corresponding Order of the Director of the Center⁴¹. It is important to note that the current methodology has been revised within the framework of the 'Twinning Project' and considers the best international practices.

⁴⁰ LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, Sectoral Benchmarks Registry - <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/parent/946/umaghlesi-ganatilebis-kvalifikaciebis-ganvitareba>

⁴¹ Order No. 476/I of the Director of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, dated June 11, 2019, on the Approval of the Procedure for Developing, Updating, and Approving Sectoral Characteristics of Higher Education, and the Creation and Operation of Sectoral Councils and Working Groups.



According to the current methodology, the development of a sector benchmark is an open and public process. It can be implemented at the initiative of the Center or external initiator. In both cases, the process is carried out according to the following steps.

Initiation of development/updating of the sector benchmark by the Center → Development of a draft of sector benchmark by the Sector Council/Sector Working Group → Placement of the document draft on the Center's website for receiving proposals → Public discussion on the draft document → Submission of the draft sector benchmark by the Council to the Center's director for approval → Approval of the sector benchmark by the Center's director → Publication of the approved sector benchmark on the Center's website.

External initiation of development/updating of the sector benchmark by the Working Group/Sector Working Group → Development of a draft sector benchmark → Submission of the draft sector benchmark for consideration to the relevant sector Council → Placement of the draft document reconciled by the sector Council on the Center's website for receiving proposals → Public discussion on the draft document → Submission of the draft sector benchmark by the Council to the Center's director for approval → Approval of the sector benchmark by the Center's director → Publication of the approved sector benchmark on the Center's website.

As of the current state, sector benchmarks have been created/are in the process of development or updating for all educational programmes of regulated professions (this obligation is specified by the Law of Georgia 'On Higher Education'), and as of January 2025, 15 sector benchmarks have been approved for regulated fields, and 49 sector benchmarks for other fields of study⁴². The sector benchmark has a validity period, which is determined by the specifics of the field and ranges from 5 to 7 years. After this time, the document is subject to revision and/or development and/or cancellation.

It is important to note that a sector benchmark is one of the grounds for adding, changing, removing, merging or dividing a qualification relevant to the field of study in the Classifier. One of the essential aspects in developing sector benchmarks is the use of a consistent and transparent methodology, ensuring the correct distribution of qualifications within the framework, increasing the transparency

⁴² Sector Benchmarks Registry - <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/parent/946/umaghlesi-ganatilebis-kvalifikaciebis-ganvitareba>

and reliability of the framework itself, and facilitating the process of referencing the European Qualifications Framework. The following programmes are available in higher education:

Level	Programme type	Description	Admission to the next level
VI	Bachelor's Programmes	The programme volume is at least 240 credits, with a duration of 4 years. <u>Exception:</u> According to the 'Classifier of Fields of Study' approved in accordance with Georgian legislation, bachelor's educational programmes classified in the narrow fields of arts, business, and administration can, as an exception, include at least 180 credits. In other fields of study, the implementation of 180-credit bachelor's educational programmes is possible only in the case of joint implementation by a Georgian higher educational institution and a higher educational institution recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country.	Master's Programme
VII	Master's Degree Programmes	The programme volume is at least 120 credits, with a duration of 2 years. <u>Exception:</u>	Doctoral Programme <u>Exception:</u> 60-credit master's educational



		<p>A higher education institution is authorized to develop a master's educational programme in accordance with the law, which includes at least 60 credits. According to the rule, the development and implementation of a 60-credit master's educational programme is possible in the narrow field of business and administration to obtain a master's academic degree, including an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) qualification. The prerequisite for admission to the programme is having a bachelor's degree or an equivalent academic degree. The rules and conditions for enrollment in this programme are determined by the relevant higher education institution. To obtain an Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) qualification, additionally, at least 5 years of professional experience in the field of management/administration is mandatory.</p>	programmes do not provide admission to the next level of education, doctoral studies.
VI	Special Teacher Training Educational Programme	The programme volume is 60 credits, duration 1 year.	No



VI	Teacher Training Educational Programme	The programme volume is 60 credits, duration 1 year.	No
VI-VII	One-cycle education programmes (integrated)	<p>Medical Doctor programme - volume 360 credits, duration 6 years.</p> <p>Dentist programme - programme volume 300 credits, duration 5 years.</p> <p>Integrated Bachelor's - Master's Teacher Training programme. Programme volume 300 credits, duration 5 years.</p> <p>Integrated Veterinary Master's Education Programme Program volume is 300 credits, duration 5 years.</p>	Doctoral Programme
VII	Master's Degree Programmes	Master's in Business Administration (MBA) Programme volume is 60 credits, duration 1 year;	No
VII	Veterinary Training Educational Programme	Programme volume is 60 credits, duration 1 year; Only persons with a Bachelor's qualification in Veterinary Medicine are admitted to the programme; After completion of the	Doctoral Programme



		programme, a Veterinarian certificate is issued.	
VIII	Doctoral Programmes	The educational component of the programme includes at least 60 credits; duration at least 3 years.	

4.4 Qualifications Documents in Higher Education, Institutions Awarding Qualifications and Conditions for Awarding

The following documents certifying a qualification are issued within the higher education:

- Bachelor's Diploma;
- Master's Diploma;
- Diploma of Certified Medical Doctor;
- Diploma of Certified Dentist;
- Diploma of MA of Education;
- Diploma of MA of Veterinarian;
- Teacher Training Certificate;
- Special Education Teacher Training Certificate;
- Veterinarian Training Certificate;
- PhD Diploma.

In addition, the relevant orders⁴³ of the Minister approve the form of the diploma - document certifying qualification and annex to the diploma, which is designed according to the format

⁴³ Order No. 126/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated July 22, 2011, on the Approval of the Form of the State Document Confirming Higher Education – Diploma; Order No. 149 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated April 5, 2005, on the Approval of the Form of the Annex to the State Document Confirming Higher Education - Diploma.



approved by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES. The document certifying qualification shall be issued together with its annex.

The form of the teacher training/special teacher training certificate has also been approved by the relevant Order of the Minister⁴⁴. The form of the veterinarian training certificate⁴⁵ has also been approved by the Order of the Minister.

The diploma is awarded upon completion of an educational programme recognized by the state. Its content should allow the possibility to identify the qualification awarded.

Upon completion of the educational programme and fulfillment of its requirements, the student is awarded the appropriate qualification. Determining the conditions for awarding a qualification is a prerogative of a higher education institution.

The decision to award a qualification to a graduate is made by the basic educational unit/faculty/school. The Dissertation Council awards a qualification to a candidate at the PhD level.

4.5 Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and Credits System in Higher Education

To develop the structure of an educational programme, in terms of qualification, education recognition or mobility, the higher education system in Georgia is largely based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). A credit refers to the amount of learning load, which is determined by the needs to achieve learning outcomes. The Order No. 3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of January 5, 2007 “On Approval of the Rules for Calculating Higher Education Programmes by Credits”⁴⁶ establishes the rules for the distribution of credits and regulations on student workload, as well as the rules for student assessment for educational and scientific-research components, establishes different forms of assessment for performance-related artistic education, and other issues. The scope of regulation of the Order is based on the principles and approaches developed by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Those parts of the accreditation standards relate to the distribution of credits between educational components and

⁴⁴ Order No. 142/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated October 26, 2016, on the Approval of the Procedure for Issuing a Teacher/Special Education Teacher Training Certificate <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/3394180?publication=2>

⁴⁵ Order No. 142/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, dated October 26, 2016, on the Approval of the Procedure for Issuing a Teacher/Special Education Teacher Training Certificate.

⁴⁶ Minister Order, <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/68458?publication=16>

student workload, teaching and learning methods of the educational programme, and the assessment of student learning and research components shall be assessed in accordance with the requirements established by this Order and the ECTS Guidelines. According to this Order, as well as the accreditation standards, "the volume of courses offered within the components of the programme must be presented in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System, according to which 1 credit equals 25-30 hours" and "the volume of each course must be defined in credits. When planning a course and awarding credits to it, both contact and independent work hours should be considered, their volume and ratio should be relevant to the student's study load, the volume and complexity of the assignments to be performed within the course, and the teaching methods used within the course."⁴⁷

According to the order N3, a credit shall be granted to a student in case of receiving one of the positive evaluations. Types of evaluation are as follows:

- A - Excellent – 91-100 points;
- B - Very good – 81-90 points;
- C - Good – 71-80 points;
- D - Satisfactory – 61-70 points;
- E - Sufficient – 51-60 points;
- FX - did not pass (the student is given the right to take an additional examination) - 41-50;
- F - Failed - Student must retake the course - 40 points or less.

Order No. 3, among other things, provides for:

Separation of student assessment for educational and scientific-research components, on the basis of which student assessment issues are regulated considering the peculiarities of the scientific-research component; Assessment of creative/performing practical projects/works for artistic-creative higher education programmes using a different system (a) passed successfully – 91-100 points; b) passed – 51-90 points;

c) Failed – 50 points or less);

The peculiarities of preparation and evaluation of bachelor's thesis, master's thesis/dissertation of a student amid the pandemic, determine the conditions conducive to the submission of the thesis.

⁴⁷ Accreditation Statute - <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1320588?publication=27>



4.6 Transition Pathways and Specific Qualifications in Higher Education

There are the following ways of transition in the higher education system of Georgia: After completing the first level (Bachelor's), a person can continue his/her studies at the second level (Master's), which in turn is a prerequisite for continuing the studies at the third level (PhD). An applicant is flexible when moving from undergraduate to graduate level or from graduate to doctoral level. Restrictions are imposed only within the framework of the regulated programmes.

It is possible to continue the studies from one-cycle (Integrated Bachelor's and Master's) programmes to a Doctoral Programme. Exception is:

The Georgian Language Educational Training Programme – The programme aims to develop the skills and knowledge (writing, reading, listening, speaking) in the Georgian language necessary for continuing studies at the bachelor's level or in an integrated programme for those enrolled in Georgian-language educational programmes for whom Georgian is not their native language. The Georgian language educational training programme consists of 60 credits. It can be done only during the first academic year.

Upon completion of the programme, the higher education institution issues a certificate confirming its completion. Only state-established educational institutions are obliged to implement the programme. After completing the programme, students are required to continue their studies in the Georgian language within a bachelor's or integrated educational programme.

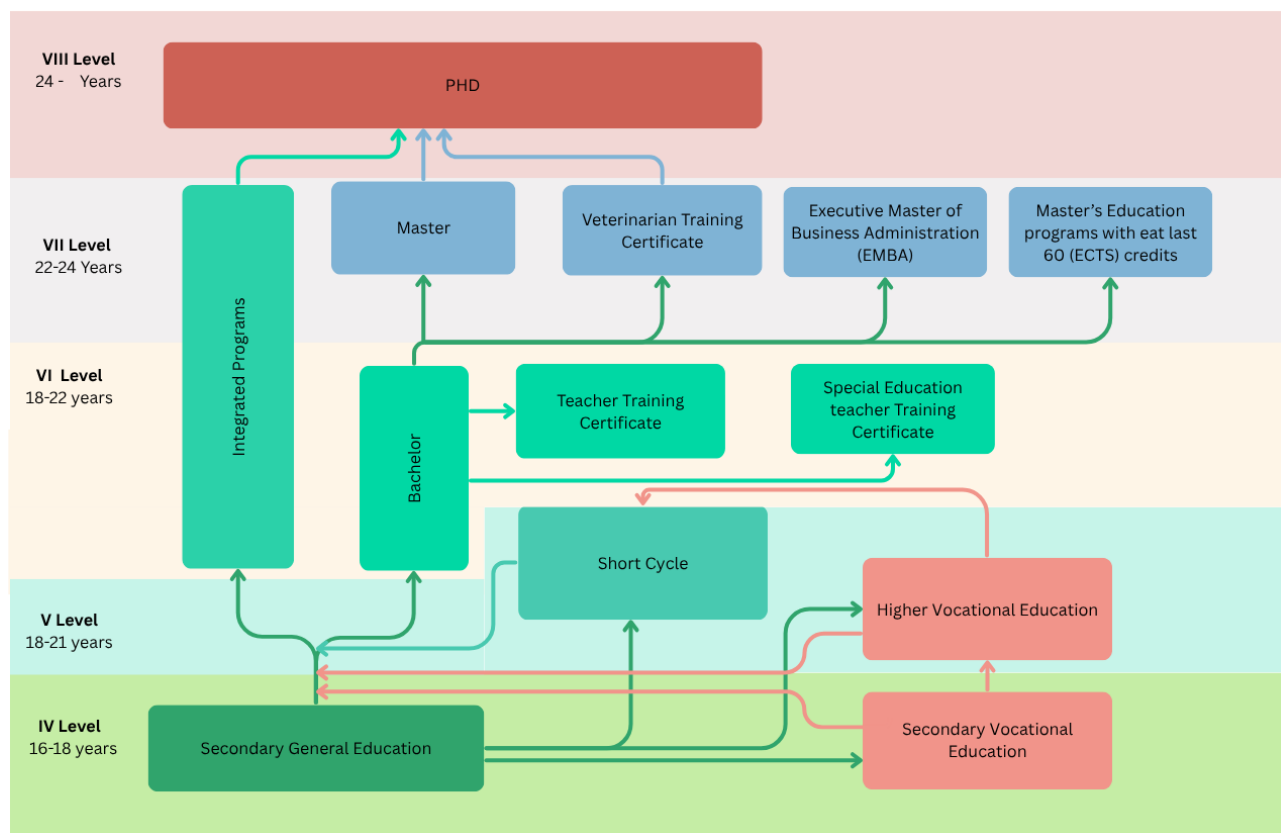
Teacher training educational programme and special teacher training educational programme - are implemented at level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework. The teacher training/special teacher training educational programme includes at least 60 ECTS credits and is implemented for at least 1 academic year. The teacher training educational programme is implemented in the direction of the subject/subject group provided for in the National Curriculum and is implemented within the framework of a bachelor's educational programme or independently of the bachelor's educational programme and the integrated bachelor's-master's educational programme of teacher training. The special teacher training educational programme is implemented independently of the bachelor's educational programme and the integrated bachelor's-master's educational programme of teacher training. Upon completion of the teacher training/special teacher training educational programme, a

teacher training/special teacher training certificate is issued, which is awarded to the individual after passing the subject-specific exam. This certificate provides the opportunity to be employed as a teacher. If the bachelor's degree programme included in the main field of study of a subject/subject group includes a teacher training programme, the diploma and diploma supplement will also indicate the right to teach the subject/subjects of the corresponding level of general education.

Veterinary training educational programme - by achieving learning outcomes, it corresponds to level 7 of the National Qualifications Framework, therefore it gives an individual the opportunity to continue their studies at a doctoral level.

A master's programme with a volume of at least 60 credits and an EMBA programme - grants a person a master's degree but does not grant the right to continue studies at the doctoral level.

Scheme N11: Pathways for Transition to Higher Education





4.7 Quality Assurance of Qualifications in Higher Education

The Law of Georgia "On Education Quality Improvement" defines the following mechanisms for the quality assurance:

The main mechanism of external quality assurance is authorization, which means the institutional evaluation of the institution and granting of the right to implement the higher education programme/programmes. In the process of implementing the external mechanisms of quality assurance in HEIs, the Center considers the EU's Agenda of Higher Education Modernisation and the recommendations of the Bologna process, including the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Authorization is mandatory for the functioning of higher education institutions, and accreditation is also mandatory for the implementation of educational programmes. During the transitional stage, non-accredited programmes operate in the system, the accreditation terms of which are determined by legislation; Moreover, only an authorised institution has the right to issue a state-recognised educational credential—a diploma—and only a student enrolled in an accredited programme is eligible to receive state funding/grants.

Authorization is granted to an institution for a period of 6 years. It is noteworthy that, at the systemic level, the quality of educational services provided by institutions is subject to continuous monitoring. For this purpose, institutions undergo periodic external evaluations (follow-up processes), including monitoring (scheduled and unscheduled) and the assessment of reports (annual and interim three-year reports). These mechanisms ensure the maintenance and further development of the quality of higher education and qualifications.

An external quality assurance mechanism also includes increasing the student quota within the institutional limit and determining the maximum number of students for the Medical Doctor programme during the authorisation evaluation process. During these procedures, the authorized institution is verified for compliance with the relevant procedures stipulated by the authorization regulation.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Order No. 99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on the Approval of the Regulation on the Authorization of Educational Institutions and the Fees Thereof, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1031755?publication=0>



External quality assurance is carried out by an authorization experts panel and is based on the analysis of the information received through the application/self-assessment and the authorization visit of the institution. The final decision on granting/refusing/revoking an authorization to an institution is made by the Authorization Council of Higher Education Institutions. Members of the Higher Education Institutions Authorization Council are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister upon the nomination of the Minister.

It is noteworthy that the authorization expert panel is led by an international expert. In cases where an institution implements a one-cycle educational programme for Medical Doctor, the panel is joined by an additional international expert who serves as the deputy chair.

A significant shift in the development of external quality assurance mechanisms took place in 2017–2018, when the updated standards for authorization and accreditation were approved. These standards were developed with reference to the ESG-2015 standards and guidelines, established within the context of the European Higher Education Area. The accreditation regulation approves the accreditation standards:

- a) Mission and strategic development of a higher education institution;
- b) Organizational structure and management of the higher education institution;
- c) Educational programmes;
- d) Staff of a higher education institution;
- e) Students and their support services;
- f) Research, development and/or other creative activities;
- e) Material, information and financial resources.

At the current stage, a draft of amendments to the authorization standards has been prepared by the working group at the Center. The draft includes provisions for assessing the quality of universities' third mission activities, indicators for evaluating the specific features of e-learning, as well as indicators for assessing the quality of research policy within the institution, along with other requirements aimed at evaluating the institution's development and progress.

In the accreditation process, external quality assurance is carried out by an accreditation experts panel and is based on the analysis of the information received through the application/self-



assessment and the accreditation site-visit at the institution. The final decision on granting/refusing/revoking accreditation to an institution is made by the Accreditation Council of Higher Education Programmes. The members of the Council are appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister upon the recommendation of the Minister. It is noteworthy that the accreditation expert panel is led by an international expert, except for individually implemented educational programmes of Georgian language training, teacher/special teacher training, and veterinary training.

The accreditation regulation approves the accreditation standards:

- a) The aim of the educational programme, its learning outcomes, and the programme's alignment with those outcomes;
- b) Teaching methodology and organisation, and the adequacy of the assessment of programme mastery;
- c) Student achievements, individual work with them;
- d) Providing teaching resources;
- e) Opportunities for improving the quality of learning.

With the broader involvement of various stakeholders in the higher education system, as well as international experts, a shared vision for updating quality assurance mechanisms at the programme level was developed and agreed upon. Within the framework of the EU twinning project “Capacity Building for Quality Assurance and Qualifications Management” TWINING, the Center began developing a new accreditation model, the cluster accreditation concept, in 2020. In accordance with the legislative changes in 2022, a legal framework was established to launch the cluster accreditation system. Simultaneously, a quality assurance system for cluster accreditation was introduced, allowing higher education institutions to submit a single accreditation application for educational programmes grouped into a cluster for accreditation purposes. The rules and conditions for clustering educational programmes are defined by the Order of the Minister.

The selection of internal quality assurance mechanisms is the prerogative of higher education institutions. However, this issue is also regulated by the Law on Higher Education, which requires that, in addition to other administrative bodies, a HEI must have a quality assurance service with a defined functional workload. The effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms is assessed through authorization and accreditation standards, which require institutions to have a methodology



for planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programmes, based on the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act/Improve).

As part of internal quality assurance, institutions are required to conduct periodic self-evaluations, assessing their activities against established quality standards. They must also submit an interim report to the Center three years after receiving authorization or accreditation.

In terms of ensuring the quality of qualifications, the relevant records are provided in the authorization and accreditation standards. Specifically, Section 3 of the authorization standards defines the requirement that the programme must be based on the National Qualifications Framework and, where applicable, the relevant subject benchmark statement. The same requirement is reiterated in the first accreditation standard regarding learning outcomes. Additionally, the first standard clarifies that the content and structure of the programme must align with the qualifications outlined in the programme. Standard 2 considers the prerequisites for admission, which also requires taking into account the conditions for admission to the next level and the characteristics of the qualification in accordance with the legislation, and according to Standard 4, the implementing staff must be proven to have the competence to achieve and produce the learning outcomes of the programme. Standard 5 assesses quality assurance capabilities and indicates the planning of implementation of cyclical processes, which is an important process for quality assurance of qualifications. Compliance with these requirements ensures the reliability of the quality of qualifications issued by higher education institutions.

During 2021, several changes were made to the Regulations on Accreditation and Authorization to implement the recommendations developed by the experts of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and to eliminate various shortcomings identified in the accreditation process of higher education programmes.

As part of the cyclical development of quality assurance, changes are currently being made to implement the provisions on authorization and accreditation. As part of the changes, quality assurance procedures are closer to good practices and characteristics of the European Higher Education Area.

In 2024, the Center offered an important innovation to users of the higher education area, approving the standard for the evaluation of doctoral educational programmes. This document defines the requirements, which are based on both the best local and international practices identified in the



process of accreditation of doctoral educational programmes, as well as the "Salzburg II Recommendations". The document will contribute to the development of doctoral educational programmes and scientific research activities in Georgia.

In accordance with the amendments made to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education in 2024, by 2026, an online university concept/model should be developed in the higher education system, which will consider the issues of developing external quality assurance mechanisms. In accordance with the amendments also made to the law, the components of the implementation of e-learning have been significantly encouraged. And by Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia⁴⁹ a detailed list of fields provided for by the classifier of fields of study, as well as the maximum number of credits of higher education programmes, within the framework of which e-learning will be allowed, was approved.

4.8 Academic Integrity and Research Ethics

Academic integrity represents a unity of fundamental values—honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. In the higher education system, the values of academic integrity are widely embraced, and the external quality assurance system encourages all stakeholders involved to recognize the importance of upholding academic integrity standards as a matter of protecting broader public interests.

The standards for the authorization of higher education institutions and the accreditation of educational programmes consider the issues of protecting academic integrity. According to the authorization standards, the university promotes the establishment of integrity and ethical principles in the institution during the management process. Component 2.3 envisages adherence to the principles of ethics and integrity. Accordingly, the HEI has developed regulations and mechanisms that ensure the availability of publicly accessible rules and the enforcement of ethical and integrity principles. The HEI has implemented mechanisms for the detection and prevention of plagiarism. The HEI follows the principles of academic freedom. To confirm this, universities have presented:

⁴⁹ Order No. 142/N of the Minister of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, dated August 30, 2024, on the Approval of the List of Detailed Fields Provided by the Classification of Fields of Study, as well as the Maximum Number of Credits in Higher Education Programs Within Which Electronic Learning Will Be Permitted. <https://www.eqe.ge/res/NewFolder%202/NewFolder/%E2%84%96142%20%E1%83%9C%20%E1%83%91%E1%83%A0%E1%83%AB%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%90.pdf>



- Codes of ethics and conduct;
- Procedures for addressing violations;
- Procedures and mechanisms for the detection and prevention;
- of plagiarism, as well as for responding to cases of plagiarism;
- HEI's regulatory act(s), etc.

One of the objectives of the newly adopted framework for doctoral education is to promote academic integrity and research activity, as well as to guide doctoral candidates in their career development through adherence to ethical principles. According to the requirements, universities must offer support services within doctoral programmes that foster the development of principles related to research ethics and academic integrity. According to the requirements of the document, research ethics and academic integrity are presented as a key point of scientific research activities. The regulation of research ethics and academic integrity is presented as an obligation of universities. To meet the requirements of the standards, universities must provide:

- Norms and mechanisms of research ethics;
- The rules of operation of the Research Ethics Commission or other relevant responsible structural unit;
- Mechanisms for academic integrity, prevention, detection, and response to plagiarism.

4.9 Identified Challenges

- The existence of an associated degree only at the legislative level (with no corresponding subordinate acts for implementation in practice), which hinders the promotion of lifelong learning and the removal of barriers to progression from vocational education to higher education.
- The limitation of formal education recognition at the academic level (higher vocational education learning outcomes are not recognized, although the recognition of associated degree learning outcomes is allowed, even though both fall under the fifth level of learning outcomes).
- Clarification of the level 7 descriptor of the Qualifications Framework for 60-credit master's degree programmes for the mentioned programmes. Whereas the Law of Georgia on Higher



Education stipulates, a master's educational programme, except for artistic-creative or sports higher specialties, cannot consist solely of teaching.

It must necessarily involve the independent conduct of research or the implementation of activities that will enable the student to present a master's thesis and/or project, considering the specifics of the field of study and the direction. It is noteworthy that in 2024, monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework was carried out, within the framework of which the mentioned issue was discussed. The monitoring working group believes that the difference between 60-credit and 120-credit master's educational programmes, particularly regarding the mandatory nature of research papers, should be reflected in the relevant subordinate acts.

In accordance with the monitoring results, a draft amendment to Order 206/n of September 30, 2019, has been prepared for submission to the Ministry.

- The credit system in HEIs is often tailored to everyday and pragmatic needs—such as recognition of education, mobility, and the straightforward distribution of the curriculum. However, the modeling of credit volume calculation is not properly achieved, especially in the context of external quality assessment.
- A challenge in the accreditation process remains the consideration of admission requirements for master's programmes, as the Law on Higher Education allows potential students to change their profession (except for regulated educational programmes). However, the sectoral scope of this change (broad, narrow, or detailed field) is not defined anywhere, while the standard requires that the admission requirements must align with the content of the programme.
- The issue of making the research component of the programme mandatory at the bachelor's level should be considered, as the descriptor for Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework requires "the implementation of a research or practical project/paper according to predefined guidelines," while the descriptor for Level 7 states "the search for new, original solutions to complex problems in an unknown or multidisciplinary environment and/or the independent execution of research, adhering to the principles of academic integrity, using the latest methods and approaches," which cannot be achieved without the corresponding prior knowledge and experience.



This issue is particularly relevant for one-cycle academic programmes, where a graduate continues their studies at the doctoral level under conditions where they may not have completed a qualifying (master's) thesis/project. It is also worth noting that in certain fields, including regulated ones such as dentistry, medicine, and veterinary medicine (note: regulation changed from 2025), where single-cycle educational programmes are implemented, the completion of a master's thesis/project is not mandatory, although it does include a scientific research component. It is advisable to have a uniform approach to one-cycle programmes, which is determined by the relevant legislation.

- Development of qualifications in line with labour market demands and industry trends;
- Continuous development and quality assurance of regulated programmes in accordance with European directives;
- In response to global challenges, changes are being made in higher education quality standards (e.g., the introduction of micro-credentials in higher education, electronic/distance learning, dual education, transnational education, the use of artificial intelligence, and the development of quality standards);
- Improving the quality of doctoral education and research conducted at this level;
- Developing quality assurance in higher education in line with sustainable development goals;
- Creation of mechanisms for recognizing non-formal education/micro-credentials in higher education;
- Continuous development of the higher education system and qualifications in line with the development of the European quality assurance system.

5. Facilitate Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning combines formal (preschool, basic, full general, vocational and higher education) and non-formal (informal) education systems. It includes a wide range of opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills, as well as a diverse environment to acquire this knowledge and skills. Lifelong learning has become especially relevant in Europe since 2001, when the European Commission elaborated a development concept for this direction and identified adult education as one of the key components of system development. In the national context, the development of this topic began in 2005, when Georgia joined the Bologna Process and faced several challenges. These



involved: creating legal foundations for the recognition of formal and non-formal education, developing a national qualifications framework, raising the level of public awareness, and other related initiatives.

The Association Agreement concluded between Georgia and the European Union in 2014 raised this issue once again and identified the promotion of lifelong learning as one of the most important commitments.⁵⁰ According to the document, Georgia should have considered the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of December 18, 2006 on basic lifelong learning skills (2006/962/EEC). In response to this, in 2014, the Ministry developed a document outlining the strategic directions for the development of the education and science system. According to this document, the Ministry's priority was the development of a lifelong learning system, with the effective implementation of mechanisms for the development of key competencies at all levels of education being considered a significant prerequisite for this.

The concept also provided for the promotion of non-formal education. In this regard, priority was given to the implementation of mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal vocational education, the promotion of adult education, and the involvement of educational institutions in the realization of the concept. In line with the set goals, the vocational education reform, which began in 2013, considered the tasks defined by the Ministry's strategy and made the block of general modules an essential part of the vocational education standards (framework documents). These modules respond to the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council, which focuses on key lifelong learning skills and their development.

In 2022, the Ministry developed a document on the Unified National Strategy for Education and Science for 2022-2030, which also aims to support the holistic and sustainable development of the system, and to ensure universal and lifelong learning opportunities. The document, considering the problems and challenges identified as a result of the situational analysis, defines three main sectoral priority directions:

1. Ensuring a quality and sustainable education and science system focused on the needs of society and the state;
2. Ensuring an equitable, inclusive and diverse education and science system;
3. Ensuring a system of management and accountability of the education and science system.

⁵⁰ Association Agreement between, on the one hand, Georgia, and on the other hand, the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, Annex XXXII.



The strategy also includes recommendations developed by the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to address challenges identified in the education and science sectors.

According to the document, despite the reforms carried out, challenges remain: the relevance of education to the demands of the labour market; the fragmentation of public-private partnership in the vocational education sector; the development of the ecosystem of 21st century and digital competencies and the elimination of digital inequality; the promotion of science and research; also, in regions densely populated by ethnic minorities, the issue of full-fledged knowledge and use of the state language remains a significant challenge; international and domestic mobility, as well as unequal access to virtual and distance internationalization, are also challenges; the qualification and accessibility of inclusive education specialists at all levels of education are challenges.

Other challenges identified in the document have already been eliminated, namely:

- Educational deadlock - was a significant challenge in the context of lifelong learning. The problem was addressed with the updated version of the "Vocational Education Law of Georgia" (detailed in Chapter 4. 1. Legislative Framework of Vocational Education);
- Updating the National Qualifications Framework and its referencing/self-certification - this issue is partially resolved. In 2019, The Minister's Order approved the updated National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study, based on the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL) and the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). It is noteworthy that in 2024, the LEPL - National Center for Education Quality Enhancement obtained funding from the ERASMUS+ program on the project application - "Capacity Building for the Implementation of the National Qualifications Framework of Georgia through Referencing and Self-Certification Processes (GEOREF)". The project is co-financed by the Center. The project aims to develop referencing and self-certification reports to harmonize the Georgian National Qualifications Framework with European meta-frameworks. The successful implementation of the project will also ensure the fulfillment of Georgia's obligations under the Association Agreement with the European Union. Within the framework of the project, a self-assessment document will be prepared by spring 2026 with the active involvement of national and international experts and the participation of all stakeholders to referencing and self-certify the Georgian National Qualifications Framework. Work is currently underway on the activities envisaged in the GEOREF project plan.



- The strategic document also stressed the need to develop and implement procedures for the recognition of vocational education credits in higher education. According to the document, in order to achieve the set goal, it will be necessary to create an effective system of lifelong learning at the higher education level, which means the existence of a variety of means of education and the creation of flexible mechanisms for the recognition of education received (see, sub-chapters "Recognition of Formal Education", "Recognition of Non-formal Education").

5.1 Recognition of Formal Education

Recognition of formal education is one of the most important tools for the promotion of lifelong learning. here are the following opportunities in the Georgian education system in this direction:

General education - the relevant Order of the Minister regulates the rule on recognition of education received abroad, while the authority to provide this service is delegated to the Center.⁵¹ The rule defines the recognition procedure and the documents to be submitted during the process. In the context of lifelong learning, it is important that the rule allows a person to attend a relevant class to participate in the learning process until a decision is made to recognize his or her education. For this, it is necessary for the person to submit a certificate to the educational institution, which reflects that the relevant proceedings on the recognition of his/her education are underway at the Center. The rule also provides an alternative mechanism in cases where the recognition of an individual's obtained education cannot be confirmed. In such cases, the person is authorized to master the relevant class material through the external examination process and then continue their studies in the formal educational system. This is also regulated by the Order on Approval of the Rules for Student Mobility in General Educational Institutions⁵², which allows general educational institutions to determine, through an interview or examination, the compatibility of the knowledge and skills of

⁵¹ Order No. 98/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated October 1, 2010, on the Approval of the Rule and Fees for Verifying the Authenticity of Educational Documents Issued in Georgia and for the Recognition of Education Received Abroad.

⁵² Order No. 114/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated June 29, 2011, on the Approval of the Rule for Student Mobility in General Education Institutions."



a mobility applicant with the achievement level established by the National Curriculum for a particular grade/grades prior to enrollment.

In the context of vocational education, the Ministerial Order on "Confirmation of the Authenticity of Educational Documents Issued in Georgia and the Procedure for Recognition of Education Received Abroad and Fees" regulates the issues related to the recognition of vocational education obtained abroad.

It is noteworthy that significant changes were made in the direction of recognition of formal education at the vocational education level in 2020, when the relevant Ministerial Order was adopted⁵³. According to the above-mentioned order, for the purposes of the vocational education programme, it is possible to recognize formal education acquired within the levels of vocational as well as general and higher education. According to the rule, recognition of formal education is allowed if:

- A) The learning outcomes envisaged and achieved by the educational programme are formulated in the same way or there is a slight difference in the wording, which does not prevent them from being identified as identical; besides, given the appropriate level descriptor of the National Qualifications Framework, the learning outcomes are compatible with each other;
- B) In terms of the appropriate level descriptor of the National Qualifications Framework, the learning outcomes achieved exceed the learning outcomes envisaged by the educational programme.

Recognition of formal education is carried out by an education institution implementing a vocational education programme. Based on a normative act, this education institution is obliged to develop internal institutional regulation and provide vocational students with information about this opportunity upon enrollment. The subordinate legal act, at a systemic level, defined all the important procedural and substantive details that must be considered in the process of formal education recognition, thereby significantly organizing the field. In particular, the rule established: The stages of the recognition process, administrative deadlines (the overall deadline should not exceed one month from the receipt of the application), the form of the procedure (consideration of the application by a collegial body, decision-making), important issues of the commission's regulations, and the content of the administrative reporting documents (written statement of the applicant, decision, individual legal act regarding the results of the formal education recognition).

⁵³ Order No. 121/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated December 28, 2020, on the Approval of the Rule for the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved Within Formal Education.



The results of the recognition of formal education are reflected in the information system of education management.

In the context of higher education, the issues of recognition of formal education are regulated by law⁵⁴. It defines both the issues of recognition of education obtained abroad and the topics of recognition of learning outcomes achieved within one qualification for the purposes of another qualification. In the first case, the recognition procedures are carried out by the center, while in the second case, the authority to handle the relevant qualification-related issues is delegated to the higher education institution itself.

It is important to note that according to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, learning outcomes achieved within one qualification can be recognized for the purpose of awarding another qualification only if the learning outcomes were achieved by covering another educational programme of the same level of academic higher education.

The legislation also envisages the recognition of learning outcomes (Level 5 of the Framework) achieved within short cycle educational programmes for the purposes of Bachelor's (Level 6 of the Framework) or integrated educational programmes (Levels 6 and -7 of the Framework), thus limiting to some extent the recognition of learning outcomes, achieved within vocational education, at the higher education level. This poses a kind of challenge in the context of promoting lifelong learning.

5.2 Introduction of Mechanisms for the Recognition of Non-Formal Education in Higher Education

Regarding the introduction of mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal education in higher education: it is noteworthy that the transition to a green economy has led to a shift in the digital format of the work process due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the adaptation of approaches has become the basis for changes in all areas of life, learning and work. This process has also highlighted the need for people to be better equipped to deal with current and future challenges.

One of the main challenges facing the European employment market today is the mismatch between employees' competencies and the requirements of the EU labor market. Increasingly, employees are unprepared for changes in work organization. At the same time, the shift toward a digital and green

⁵⁴ Georgian Law on Higher Education, Article 50¹



economy is creating growing demand for a workforce with advanced competencies—individuals who are retrained, adaptable, and prepared for continuous transformation.

In response to the above-mentioned challenges, the Council of Europe's Recommendation No. 2023/0100 (NLE) of May 25, 2022, offers guidance and principles for employment policy to member states, according to which continuous upgrading and retraining of the workforce are essential, so that employees meet the requirements set for their employment positions or have the opportunity to retrain and be employed in other developing sectors.

Accordingly, there is growing demand for education systems to become more flexible and to develop strategies that promote inclusiveness in the learning process. This includes supporting diverse learning formats and emphasizing student-centered teaching approaches, while also offering new, innovative ways to enhance qualifications and facilitate retraining.

The experience of introducing micro-credentials in European countries shows that they offer numerous benefits, including:

- **Increased access to formal education, including higher education** – Micro-credentials can make higher education more accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who work full-time or have other obligations.
- **Financial accessibility** – Micro-credentials typically have more affordable fees compared to traditional higher education programmes.
- **Flexibility** – Micro-credentials can be earned in a relatively short period and tailored to the individual needs of learners.
- **Relevance to labor market needs** – Micro-credentials should be designed to align with employer requirements and current labor market demands.
- **Stackability** – Micro-credentials can be combined to form broader qualifications (e.g., vocational or higher education qualifications).

It should be noted that in Georgia, work on the introduction of the micro-credentials system in higher education began in 2020 at the initiative of LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. Since this period, the center has been involved in the project of the Bologna Process Implementation Group (BICG) thematic expert group on quality development (TPG C on QA) - “MICROBOL - credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments.” The project was implemented by the European Commission’s financial support and aimed at supporting the introduction of a



micro-credentials system in higher education in line with the key commitments of the European Higher Education Area. Based on the survey of higher education institutions conducted by the center in 2021, a document analyzing the existing experience of micro-credentials at the national level was prepared.

Since 2020, issues related to the development of micro-credentials have been actively discussed on the agenda of the National Qualifications Framework Thematic Working Group (TPG A on QF). It should be noted that Georgia has been the co-chairing country of the mentioned working group since 2021. Since 2022, the Center has also been involved in the work of the Micro-credentials quality assurance working group, which was initiated within the framework of the project "Implementation and innovation in quality assurance through peer learning" (IMINQA) implemented in partnership with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In 2023, the Center developed a thematic analysis document - "Analysis of Best International Practices and National Legislative Framework for the Introduction of Microcredentials in the Higher Education System of Georgia". Within this framework, international practices and guiding (framework) documents related to the introduction, implementation, and recognition of micro-credentials in the higher education system were discussed, as well as the national experience in the field of implementing the micro-credentials system in higher education. The discussions also focused on identifying the legislative needs for the implementation, execution, and recognition of micro-credentials.

Based on the thematic analysis, in 2024, recommendations were developed regarding the introduction of an optimal micro-credentials system in Georgia's higher education system. These recommendations also included mechanisms for the legal regulation of the introduction, implementation, recognition, and quality assurance of micro-credentials. The recommendations were presented to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia for consideration.

Starting from 2024, the Center, together with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, participates in the project "Micro-Credentials for Higher Education Systems in Georgia and Armenia: SOUTH CAUCASUS LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT (MICRO-GEAR)," which is financed by the European Union's ERASMUS+ program. The project involves 16 institutions from 5 countries. The project aims to investigate and present, in a unified and structured manner, the established



practices, policies, and regulatory legislation in the region, as well as to explore the best European practices for the development and implementation of micro-credentials. It also seeks to involve relevant stakeholders in the development of national legislative frameworks in Georgia and Armenia to support the introduction of micro-credentials in higher education.

5.3. Recognition of Non-Formal Education

Recognition of non-formal education is the second most important tool in promoting lifelong learning. Its purpose is to validate learning outcomes achieved by the interested parties beyond formal education, which promotes personal development, continuous education, qualification granting, employment/career growth/self-employment.

In the Georgian education system, non-formal education can be recognized within the framework of general education and vocational education. Such an opportunity has not been created in the higher education area so far. The concept of non-formal education in Georgia is used in a broad sense and includes both non-formal and informal education.

Recognition of non-formal education within general education is performed through external examination. This issue is regulated by the relevant Order of the Minister.⁵⁵ According to the regulation, in cases where general education programmes are mostly completed independently, an individual has the right to take the general education programme(s) of a specific class/subject in the form of external examination, provided that their age corresponds to or exceeds the age group of students for the class to be completed externally, and they have completed the educational programme of the previous class.

In addition, regarding age restrictions, in the presence of objective circumstances, the Minister of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia is authorized to determine exceptional cases.

⁵⁵ The Minister of Education and Science of Georgia's Order No. 18/n, dated February 18, 2011, "On the Approval of the Rules for Certifying Education Acquired in the Form of External Examination."

⁶⁶ Order N188/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of September 6, 2019, "On Approval of the Rule on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved within Non-Formal Education"

The general education external examination/certification is conducted by the educational school that the external student is enrolled in, except in cases where the person requests to complete the general education curriculum/subjects (Georgian language and literature, mathematics, history, English language, civil defense and safety) for the 12th grade in an external format.

In this case, the examination is conducted centrally, by the Ministry's system through the Educational Management Information System (EMIS), in electronic format.

In vocational education, the possibility of recognition of non-formal education is defined by the Law of Georgia on Vocational Education (recognition is possible within all three levels of vocational education—levels three, four, and five). The specific opportunities and conditions for recognition are regulated by a Government Decree of Georgia – “On the Procedure and Conditions for Obtaining the Right to Recognition of Non-Formal Education”⁵⁶ – as well as by the relevant Ministerial Order⁶⁶.

It is worth noting that the stages and processes set out in the Order are fully in line with the Framework established by the EU for the process. In particular, the stages of recognition of non-formal education were established as follows:



Adherence to the principles of impartiality, transparency and conflict of interests is important for the conduct of the process. Besides, the Committee recognizing non-formal education should be formed with the involvement of the interested parties, including a representative of employers and/or employers/sectoral association.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 459 of September 20, 2019 - "Rules and Conditions for Obtaining the Right to Recognition of Non-Formal Education" <https://shorturl.at/ixT4J>

⁵⁷ Order N188/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of September 6, 2019, "On Approval of the Rule on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Achieved within Non-Formal Education".



The Committee is authorized to recognize non-formal education in full or in part. In the case of full recognition, a qualification certificate—a diploma—is issued, while in the case of partial recognition, a certificate is issued (if all learning outcomes defined by the module(s) are confirmed), or a notice (if only part of the learning outcomes defined by the module(s) is confirmed).

To obtain the right to recognition of non-formal education, an education institution/legal entity must meet the conditions stipulated in the relevant Resolution of the Government of Georgia.⁵⁸

At present, the right to recognition of non-formal education has been acquired by 4 vocational education institutions⁵⁹, which, in total, allows the recognition of 17 vocational qualifications in the following fields of study:

- 041 Business and Administration
- 071 Engineering and Engineering Work
- 101 Personal Services
- 011 Education
- 061 Information and Communication Technologies
- 091 Health Care
- 073 Architecture and Construction
- 103 Security Services

According to the current regulations, separate competencies can also be confirmed within the framework of vocational training/vocational retraining programmes.

Many activities are carried out at the systemic level to promote the recognition of non-formal education. Among them, the Center has developed "Rule on Selection, Certification and Status

⁵⁸ Resolution No. 459 of the Government of Georgia of 20 September 2019, "On the Approval of the Rule and Conditions for Obtaining the Right to Recognition of Non-Formal Education and the Fee for Obtaining the Right to Recognition of Non-Formal Education".

⁵⁹ Source: <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/873/araformaluri-ganatlebis-aghiareba>
<https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/873/araformaluri-ganatlebis-aghiareba>



Termination of Consultants of Non-formal Education Recognition"⁶⁰; a pool of certified consultants was established; methodological textbooks and guidelines⁶¹ on the stages and features of the process were developed for interested institutions, seekers and consultants; unified forms were developed to document the process, and an electronic portal was prepared for administration.

As of March 2025, 14 institutions have obtained the right to recognize non-formal education: NATALY ACADEMY Public College LLC; Tegeta Academy LLC; Academy of Business and Technologies LLC; Georgian Business Academy LLC; Blacsea College LLC; Spectrum College LLC; Iberia College LLC; Iakob Gogebashvili Georgian College LLC; Institute of Culture LLC; International Education Academy BIDIS LLC; Gldani Vocational Training Center LLC; Mermisi College LLC; Genesis International Training Center LLC; New Wave College LLC.

Informal education recognition services are available in 11 areas: Business and Administration, Information and Communication Technologies, Personal Services, Engineering, Security Services, Education, Healthcare, Architecture, and Construction, Agriculture, Production and Processing, Art.

In 2024, a total of 41 recognition processes were conducted by seven certified consultants for the recognition of non-formal education. As a result, 20 applicants received partial recognition, another 20 obtained full recognition, and one applicant was denied recognition. The following challenges remain in the recognition of non-formal education:

- Low level of public awareness of the benefits of recognizing non-formal education and of this opportunity in general. There is almost no information about the recognition of non-formal education on the Internet and in the media, and there is a lack of information on the websites of the providers who have obtained the right to recognition. The information presented is essentially identical to the approved regulations and is not explained in plain language, which makes it difficult for interested non-professionals to understand. Moreover, it does not clarify

⁶⁰ "Rule on Selection, Certification and Status Termination of Consultants of Non-formal Education Recognition . Order №837/I of the Director of LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of September 16, 2019<https://shorturl.at/PAJNR>

⁶¹Source: <https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/873/araformaluri-ganatilebis-aghiareba>

<https://eqe.ge/ka/page/static/873/araformaluri-ganatilebis-aghiareba>;

<https://vet.ge/ge/services/non-formal-education>

<https://edu.aris.ge/news/rogor-xdeba-saqartveloshi-araformaluri-ganatilebis-agiareba-detaluri-instrukcia.html>



the opportunities that accompany the recognition of non-formal education, among other important aspects.

- Individuals do not need to have a formal qualification for employment purposes. In some cases, entry into the profession, development or career advancement does not require possession of relevant formal education.
- Recognition of non-formal education is related to financial resources. The applicant is required to finance the process independently, which can also be considered an obstacle to the effective implementation of the recognition of non-formal education. In this regard, it is important to increase funding opportunities (for instance, the possibility of including the process within a state funding scheme could be considered).
- The recognition of non-formal education is linked to a framework document/vocational education standard, which complicates the process.
- It is important that the recognition of non-formal education is based on a vocational standard.

The Georgian Law on Vocational Education also establishes "an opportunity of recognition of non-formal education within the regulated profession", although the relevant rule has not yet been approved by the government. The situation is complicated by the fact that the Law on Vocational Education does not define the list of regulated professions. Also, there is no unified list of regulated professions in the field of vocational education in the country. The determination of these issues is delegated to the relevant sectoral ministries and legislative norms.

5.4 Identified Challenges

In the context of promoting lifelong learning, the following challenges have been identified:

- the absence of mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal education at the level of academic education;
- the limitation of recognition of formal education at the level of academic education (learning outcomes of higher vocational education are not recognized, although recognition of learning outcomes of associate degree programmes is allowed, even though both correspond to Level 5 learning outcomes. Moreover, it should be considered that according to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, a higher education institution is authorized to recognize the learning outcomes achieved by an individual within an academic higher education programme of the



corresponding level for the purpose of awarding the relevant qualification through completion of another academic higher education programme of the same level.);

- the absence of a relevant base (register) that would indicate within which qualifications the recognition of non-formal education is possible;
- the complete integration of lifelong learning competences into educational programmes and ensuring alignment with the updated Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on key competences for lifelong learning.

6. Internationalization

6.1. Bologna Process

The Bologna Process was launched in 1999 and aimed at creating a unified European Higher Education Area by integrating intellectual, cultural, social, and scientific-technological dimensions, which, in turn, would promote the harmonization of higher education systems in European member countries.

Georgia joined the Bologna Process at the summit held in Bergen, Norway in 2005. Joining the Bologna Area enabled the transition to a three- cycle (bachelor, master, doctoral) system of higher education in our country, and also laid the foundation for the development of a national qualifications framework aimed at advancing the qualifications system at the national level.

In 2018, in accordance with the requirements of the Paris Communiqué, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) established the Bologna Implementation Coordination Group (BICG) to support the implementation of the Bologna Process Key Commitments in member countries. For this purpose, within the framework of an EU-funded project, working meetings and conferences were organized with the involvement of Bologna member countries. Within the working structure of the Bologna Process, three thematic peer groups (TPG A, TPG B, TPG C) were established, composed of representatives of state structures responsible for higher education policy and higher education experts represented at the national level. In all three working groups, Georgia is represented by the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement.



In 2018-2019, Georgia actively participated in the work of these thematic working groups. The Qualifications Framework Thematic Working Group (TPG A) included key commitments such as: the implementation of the national qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA QF) at the national level; carrying out self- certification activities to establish the compatibility of the national qualifications framework with the EHEA QF; full implementation of the ECTS Users' Guide (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System); implementation of short cycle qualifications in higher education; use of the qualifications framework by stakeholders; study programmes beyond the Bologna three-cycle structure; the link between qualifications frameworks and quality assurance; and the digitalization of national qualifications.

Georgia 's active participation in these working groups has played an important role in further developing Georgia' s qualifications system and raising awareness. It is precisely the result of this cooperation that Georgia, for a second term (first term – 2021–2025 and second term – 2024–2027), serves as a co-chair country of the thematic peer group on qualifications framework development (TPG A), together with France and Latvia. This position enables Georgia to participate in the planning and implementation of policies for the development of the European qualifications framework within the scope of key commitments of the Bologna Process . In 2021 – 2025, Georgia is participating as an associated partner in a project funded by the European Commission: QUATRA-TPG A – “Qualifications Frameworks for Trust, Transparency and Diversity – TPG A.” The project is implemented within the Erasmus+ programme and supports the implementation of the key Bologna commitment - namely, the three- cycle system compatible with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and the first and second cycle qualifications measured in ECTS - in accordance with the 1999 Bologna Declaration and the Communiqués. The project supports opportunities for sharing experience and best practices among EHEA member countries. To this end, it organizes PLA events and working groups on qualifications framework- related topics and also develops specific recommendations on issues related to qualifications frameworks. Within the TPG A working group, during 2021–2025, Georgia co-organized 12 working meetings of the thematic peer group on qualifications framework development (TPG A on QF). In addition, Georgia led the thematic working group that reviewed the self-certification mechanism of the Bologna Process. A recommendations document on improving the self- certification mechanism was developed with Georgia's co-authorship (the document is available at the following link: <https://ehea.info/Immagini/QUATRA - TPG A recommendations self-certification 20.12 .2023 .pdf>).



As a co- chair country of TPG A on QF, in 2023 Georgia hosted a peer- learning conference on the topic of self- certification, which was attended by higher education experts from 23 countries and representatives of EU structural bodies.

In 2023, Georgia became a member of the European Commission’s Qualifications Framework Advisory Group (EQF Advisory Group). Since then, Georgia has been actively participating in the work of the group.

Within the framework of this group, in 2024 the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement launched a project funded by the European Commission: “Strengthening Capacities for the Implementation of Georgian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Referencing and Self-certifications Processes (GEOREF)”. The project aims to harmonize the National Qualifications Framework of Georgia and establish its compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), which implies the referencing and self- certification process of Georgia’s National Qualifications Framework to the European meta-frameworks (EQF-LLL, QF-EHEA).

For this purpose, within the framework of the project, a working group was established for the implementation of the referencing and self- certification processes of the National Qualifications Framework, which is working on the referencing and self-certification report. Completion of the report is planned for 2026. The project ensures the increased visibility of Georgia’s education system and will contribute to establishing the international compatibility of qualifications awarded in Georgia.

From the perspective of internationalization, an important development is the Erasmus+ European Union programme in the field of vocational education, the implementation of which began in 2021 and envisions development in three directions: These directions are: sharing of experience by teachers and students arriving from European countries; internships for vocational students and teachers in European countries for institutional development and the establishment of regional vocational education centers in collaboration with European partners, along with the strengthening of specific fields.



As a partner, the NCEQE is involved in the Erasmus+ capacity building project “Responsible conduct of research – Research Integrity and Ethics in Georgian Universities (ETHICS).” The coordinator of the project is Ilia State University, and the project partners include 10 Georgian and 4 European universities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia, the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, and the LEPL – Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation. The goals of the project are related to supporting system- level improvement in higher education and academic research quality based on the latest high- level research and academic achievements; The specific objectives of the project include the introduction of mechanisms for research ethics, research reliability, and research integrity, as well as the strengthening of the concept of responsible conduct of research in researchers’ activities, high-level academic programmes, and doctoral programme accreditation standards, which aims to prevent plagiarism in academic works and promote authentic research practices in Georgian universities.

It was within the framework of this very project that the doctoral education framework document, developed by the NCEQE, was developed.

The activities planned within the project include: (a) policy change and capacity building of doctoral programme accreditation experts, (b) development of a research integrity module/MOOC, (c) implementation of researcher training and preparation of research support [INTEGRITY] officers, (d) as well as support for the establishment of a research ethics board.

In this case, the NCEQE is involved in the implementation of the project as the agency responsible for the development of external quality assurance and we are cooperating to ensure that research ethics and academic integrity issues are explicitly integrated into our external quality assurance standards. The NCEQE is also responsible for the preparation of the expert pool with competencies for the evaluation of doctoral programmes, considering the specific aspects of assessing research ethics and academic integrity.

6.2. Membership and Partnership in International Organizations

To bring the education quality assurance system of Georgia closer to European and international standards, the NCEQE actively cooperates with international organizations and introduces the best international experiences.

The NCEQE is a member of leading organizations in international and European quality assurance matters. One of the main achievements for the NCEQE is its membership in the European



Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the status of which the NCEQE gained in 2019, for a period of five years. The ENQA Council concluded that the activities carried out by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement complied with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) and met ENQA membership criteria. In addition, in 2019 the Center was registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Following registration, the publication of evaluation reports conducted by the NCEQE began in the relevant database (DEQAR) maintained by EQAR, which significantly contributes to enhancing the reputation and visibility of higher education institutions operating in Georgia at the European level.

In 2023, the Center submitted a self-evaluation report for the purpose of renewing its ENQA membership status, which reflected development indicators and outcomes from the period following 2019. Based on the report and application, in October 2023, ENQA conducted an external evaluation, including an on-site visit by experts. ENQA membership status was renewed in 2024. The NCEQE expects the renewal of ENQA status in 2025.

With the aim of improving education quality assurance, the NCEQE became a member of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA), which unites 22 quality assurance agencies from the Central and Eastern European region. The aim of the network is to improve the quality of higher education in the Central and Eastern European region by enhancing cooperation and sharing experience between its member organizations. For the NCEQE, membership in this network is an opportunity to collaborate with member agencies, including a possibility to get involved in the discussions regarding the European Higher Education Quality Assurance Policy. The NCEQE can also participate in joint projects and share the experience of network member agencies.

In 2018, the NCEQE joined the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) for a period of 10 years. In 2018, the NCEQE has been evaluated by the WFME international experts, who confirmed that the higher education quality assurance standards, sector benchmarks and procedures in place in Georgia comply with the joint requirements of the World Health Organization and the World Federation for Medical Education. It is important to note that the recognition of the NCEQE's by the World Federation of Medical Education is directly linked to the recognition of education received by medical graduates in Georgia in the United States and beyond, enabling them to be employed and continue their studies in any country. The right for the conduct of accreditation obtained by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement from the Federation means



that the accreditation granted by the NCEQE to universities both in Georgia and abroad will be recognized worldwide.

Within the framework of cooperation in the matters of quality assurance, and for the purpose of sharing best practices and experience, the NCEQE actively collaborates with quality assurance agencies of the European Higher Education Area, including AQAS, HAKA, NAQA, FIBAA, IAAR, AIC, ANQA, ANACEC, ASHE, EPDAD, and QAA within the scope of memoranda of understanding. The memoranda cover several key areas of cooperation, aiming to ensure the commitment of the NCEQE and the partner agency to share relevant information regarding the external quality assurance systems, procedures, and good practices of their respective countries. The cooperation also envisions staff mobility, joint events, and conferences. It is possible to offer and arrange mobility for experts with relevant qualifications and competencies for external quality assurance processes from existing expert pools.

These initiatives will enable professionals from both agencies to gain practical experience, which will ultimately strengthen the institutional capacity and expertise of both sides.

Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications – TWINNING
With the aim of aligning the education quality assurance system with European and international standards and introducing international best practices, a significant contribution was made to the NCEQE by the EU-funded 24-month public sector TWINNING project – “Strengthening capacities for quality assurance and governance of qualifications” (TWINNING).

The supporting project began implementation in July 2019 and was carried out through cooperation between the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Estonian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) (now HAKA). The main goal of the project was to support the NCEQE and its partners in reforming the education quality assurance system and in enforcing and monitoring the new national qualifications framework, by improving the institutional capacity of the NCEQE through effective tools and procedures, participatory governance, and provision of relevant information to stakeholders and the public. Within the framework of this project, an action plan for the implementation of the new National Qualifications Framework was developed, along with the concept and technical specifications of the electronic qualifications register.

Based on the prepared concept, an advisory council was established for the implementation and development of the National Qualifications Framework and the classification of the fields of study.



To strengthen capacity, seminars were held for council members, with the participation of international experts.

With the aim of introducing a systemic approach of research-based decision-making, a thematic analysis methodology was developed within the project framework. Based on this methodology, and with the involvement of international experts, the relevant departments of the NCEQE conducted thematic analyses in the fields of general, vocational, and higher education on the following topics:

- Content changes in the fields of study of vocational education in Georgia and their compliance with the European Qualifications Framework;
- Challenges related to the recognition of foreign education programmes recognized abroad in Georgia and ways to solve them;
- Thematic analysis of quality assurance of medical education, including clinical training.
- a thematic analysis of interim self- evaluation reports submitted to the NCEQE every three years;
- the first wave of cluster accreditation: experiences, achievements, and challenges; Analysis of the Best International Practices and National Legal Framework for the Introduction of Micro-Credentials in the Higher Education System of Georgia

7. Compliance to the Criteria and the Procedures for the Reference to European Qualifications Framework

As mentioned in the beginning of the document, the Georgian National Qualifications Framework was updated in 2019, and the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF-LLL) and the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (QF-EHEA) were considered in this process. However, to determine the compatibility between the Georgian framework and these meta-frameworks, Georgia must go through two important processes: These are referencing (determining the compliance of the national framework with the European Qualifications Framework) and self-certification (determining the compliance of the national framework with the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework). In addition, referencing involves determining the compatibility of the entire framework with the European Qualifications Framework (compatibility is established for all eight levels), whereas self- certification establishes the



compatibility of higher education qualifications only with the qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (compatibility is established for levels 6–8 of the framework).

In 2017, the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation regarding the appropriate reflection of information about qualifications within national qualifications frameworks. Annex III of this recommendation defines the criteria that a country must meet to determine the compatibility of its national framework with the European Qualifications Framework. The criteria given in the Annex are of two types: Content-related and procedural. The content related topics address and regulate the requirements related to the management of the framework, its structure, qualifications' quality assurance, recognition of non-formal education, while procedural issues relate to the stages of preparing a reference report and defining the persons / institutions involved in the process.

The following are the 10 criteria and the assessment of the National Framework on the requirements of these criteria. The evaluation conclusions are based on the present analysis.

Criterion N1: The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.

The Law of Georgia on the Educational Quality enhancement and the Order of the Ministry ⁶² prepared on its basis define the NCEQE as the body authorized to manage, develop and monitor the framework. By the same Order, to determine compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and / or the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL), the NCEQE is also defined as an organization responsible for the development of a self-assessment document. Based on the Law of Georgia on the Educational Quality Enhancement, the function of management, development and monitoring of the classifier is delegated to the NCEQE and is regulated by an order of the Director of the NCEQE. The information on the NCEQE's functions and activities is public and available at its website: www.eqe.ge The National Qualifications Framework Advisory Board has been established and is operational.

⁶² Order No. 103/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated October 1, 2020, on the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Register of Qualifications, <https://www.eqe.ge/res/matsne-4999693-2.pdf>



Criterion N2: There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.

According to Law⁶³, the framework consists of 8 levels, the first of which is the lowest and the eighth is the highest. According to the Order of the Ministry⁶⁴, an appropriate descriptor for each level (in the form of generalized learning outcomes) and a qualification document are defined.

The descriptions provided are in line with the descriptors and levels set out in Annexes I and II, defined by the Council of Europe Recommendation 2017. By the same order of the Minister, the layout of typical qualifications at the framework levels is established. Also, the Order of the Minister⁶⁵ stipulates that the program that grants qualification, must be described in terms of the learning outcomes and must be in accordance with one of the levels of the framework and educational standards (if Available). It is notable that according to the law of Georgia on general education, the learning outcomes of the basic level of general education comply with the generalized learning outcomes determined for the second level of National Qualification Framework, while the learning outcomes of secondary level (full general education) comply with the generalized learning outcomes determined for the fourth level of National Qualification Framework. It is noteworthy that only those general education qualifications that are certified by state-issued documents in accordance with Georgian legislation are placed at the corresponding levels of the National Qualifications Framework. The compatibility of general education qualifications with the levels of the National Qualifications Framework is ensured by the National Curriculum. According to the Law of Georgia on General Education, the National Curriculum includes learning objectives and expected outcomes (skills, knowledge, and values) for all levels of general education, the content of instruction, the hourly distribution of subjects, conditions for organizing the learning environment, conceptual principles of the learning process, and administrative issues. It is important to note that, considering a student's special educational needs, it is possible to develop an Individual Learning Plan, which is a part of the school curriculum. In the case of teaching students with severe/profound intellectual and/or multiple disabilities or multiple sensory impairments (deaf and blind), general

⁶³ Law on Education Quality Enhancement, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/93064?publication=30>

⁶⁴ Order No. 69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated April 10, 2019, on the Approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classification of Fields of Study, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4480034?publication=23>

⁶⁵ Order No. 103/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated October 1, 2020, on the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Register of Qualifications, <https://www.eqe.ge/res/matsne-4999693-2.pdf>



education institutions follow the relevant parts of the National Curriculum based on the conclusion of a psycho-educational assessment. This includes the use of an alternative curriculum and/or an expanded curriculum, including a sensory curriculum and/or a curriculum for delayed or accelerated learning.

To strengthen the specific competences of a pupil with sensory impairment, if necessary, the general education institution uses extended curriculum defined by the national curriculum.

Additionally, the methodology for determining the compatibility of vocational education standards, vocational training and retraining programmes' learning outcomes with the level descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework has been approved by the Order of the Director of the NCEQE⁶⁶. However, this document does not cover Level 1 of the framework and is linked only to vocational education, whereas general education is also included at Levels 2 and 4. In 2022, within the framework of the “National Qualifications Framework Manual,⁶⁷” the methodology for formulating and/or determining the compatibility of higher education sector benchmarks and/or higher education programme learning outcomes with the level descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework was approved. The revision of this methodology is planned for 2025 within the framework of the “GEOREF” project.

The Classifier of Fields of Study is based on documents of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): “International Standard Classification of Education – Fields of Education and Training 2013 (ISCED-F-2013)” and “Fields of Education and Training 2013 – Detailed Field Descriptions (ISCED-FoET-2013).” The fields and codes of study of the classification correspond to the fields of study and codes defined by ISCED.

Compatibility of the National Qualifications with the Levels of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011)

⁶⁶ Order No. 971850 of October 9, 2020, of the Director of the LEPL – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, on the Approval of the Methodology for Determining the Compatibility of Learning Outcomes of Vocational Education Standards, Vocational Training, and Vocational Retraining Programs with the Descriptors of Levels of the National Qualifications Framework.

⁶⁷ National Qualification Framework Guideline (2022) <https://shorturl.at/aRcjH>



ISCED 2011 Level	Level of the National Qualifications Framework	Documents confirming qualifications existing in the sub-systems of education	Documents confirming qualifications to be issued as a result of completion of vocational training/retraining programs
ISCED 0: Early Childhood Education			
ISCED 1: Elementary Education	Level 1	Certificate of Preparation in the Georgian Language / Certificate of Preparation in the State Language	
ISCED 2: Basic Education	Level 2	State document confirming basic level of general education. Certificate of Preparation in the Georgian Language / Certificate of Preparation in the State Language	Vocational Training Level 2 Certificate Vocational Retraining Level 2 Certificate
ISCED 3: General Education	Level 3	Basic Vocational Education Diploma Certificate of Preparation in the Georgian Language / Certificate of Preparation in the State Language	Vocational Training Level 3 Certificate Vocational Retraining Level 3 Certificate
ISCED 4: Post-secondary Non-tertiary Education	Level 4	State Document Certifying Completion of Full General Education Secondary Vocational Education Diploma Certificate of Preparation in the Georgian Language / Certificate of Preparation in the State Language	Vocational Training Level 4 Certificate Vocational Retraining Level 4 Certificate



ISCED 5: Short-cycle/tertiary education	Level 5	Associate Degree Diploma Higher Vocational Education Diploma	Vocational Training Level 5 Certificate Vocational Retraining Level 5 Certificate
ISCED 6: Bachelor's or equivalent level	Level 6	Bachelor's diploma Teacher Preparation Certificate Special Education Teacher Preparation Certificate	
ISCED 7: Master's or equivalent level	Level 7	Master's Degree Diploma Medical Doctor Diploma Doctor of Dental Medicine Diploma Master of Education Diploma Master of Veterinary Medicine Diploma Veterinary Training Certificate	
ISCED 8: Doctoral or equivalent level	Level 8	PhD Diploma.	

Criterion N3: The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems

Each level of the framework is described by generalized learning outcomes. According to the Order of the Minister⁶⁸, a qualification-granting programme must be described in terms of learning outcomes. In general education, the formation of qualifications is based on the learning outcomes defined by the National Curriculum, which are presented in the form of subject standards.

In vocational education, the qualification is based on the vocational education standard, which is described through learning outcomes. At the tertiary education level, programmes are based on learning outcomes defined either by the higher education sector benchmark (if available) and/or by the National Qualifications Framework.

⁶⁸ Order No. 103/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia dated October 1, 2020, on the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Register of Qualifications.



Considering the descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework and the learning outcomes-based approach, a higher education sector benchmark has been developed for all regulated higher education programmes. Additionally, for the purposes of cluster accreditation, and based on consultations with institutions implementing educational programmes, a list of fields is defined in which the higher education sector benchmark will be developed/updated.

Credit system is introduced in Georgia. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ESTC Credit) has been introduced and is operating in higher education, and the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET Credit) has been approved since 2020.

The requirements of the higher education institution authorization and educational programme accreditation standards define the requirements for the structure of an educational programme, according to which programmes must be based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), and the learning outcomes must be defined in relation to the framework descriptors.

In Georgia, a system for the development of educational programmes and the assessment of student learning outcomes has been introduced. In higher education, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) has been implemented and in operation since 2005, while at the vocational education level, the methodology for awarding ECVET credits in the field of vocational education was approved in 2020.

A system for the recognition of non-formal education has been introduced at the general and vocational education levels. The list of regulated professions in vocational education and the rule for the recognition of non-formal education in those professions is yet to be approved.

At this stage, mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal education are not implemented at the higher education level. However, work is underway on the introduction of microcredentials in Georgia's higher education system, which entails the recognition of learning outcomes achieved within the framework of non-formal education (microcredentials) received in a formalized/structured environment within higher education. In December 2024, a package of recommendations was submitted by the NCEQE to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia for the purpose of creating the legislative framework necessary for the introduction of mechanisms for the recognition of non-formal education in higher education.



Criterion N4: The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent. The criterion is substantially met.

The inclusion of qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework is regulated by the Law of Georgia on Educational Quality Enhancement, as well as by the relevant authorization (institutional accreditation) and programme accreditation (only for higher education programmes) standards. The referencing of qualifications in general, vocational, and higher education to the levels of Georgia's National Qualifications Framework is regulated by respective Orders of the Minister⁶⁹.

To ensure the transparency and comparability of qualifications, from September 2024, the development of the electronic qualifications register is underway, which will be available in both Georgian and English languages.

Criterion N5: The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this recommendation.

According to Georgian legislation⁷⁰, internal and external quality assurance mechanisms are defined for all levels of educational institutions (general, vocational, and higher education). Internal mechanisms are implemented by the educational institutions themselves. External quality evaluation is carried out within the framework of institutional authorization and educational programme accreditation (only higher education programmes are subject to programme accreditation), as well as within the scope of monitoring activities (planned/case-based) and the review of self-evaluation reports periodically submitted by institutions to the NCEQE.

⁶⁹ Order No. 103/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia, on the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the National Qualifications Framework, and for the Creation and Administration of the Electronic Register of Qualifications. Order No. 666/I of the Director of the LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, dated July 31, 2019, on the Approval of the Rule for the Management, Development, and Monitoring of the Classification of Fields of Study. Order No. 40/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, dated May 18, 2016, on the Approval of the National Curriculum.

⁷⁰ Georgian Law on Education Quality Enhancement



The body responsible for implementing external quality assurance and for the development of the quality assurance system is the NCEQE.

It should be noted that no common European recommendations have been developed regarding the quality assurance processes in general education. Therefore, according to the Law of Georgia “On General Education,” the body responsible for defining national indicators for the quality of general education is the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia.

The quality assurance mechanisms for vocational education were updated in 2020 and considered the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) principles.

To ensure the quality of higher education, a quality assurance system aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) has been introduced. The functions of the NCEQE and the core principles of external quality assurance are fully compatible with ESG standards and guidelines. The NCEQE became a member of ENQA in 2019. In the same year, the NCEQE was registered in EQAR. The repeated evaluation of the NCEQE for the purpose of renewing its ENQA and EQAR membership status was conducted in Tbilisi in October 2023 with the involvement of international experts. According to the expert panel’s conclusion (the document is publicly available on both the ENQA and the NCEQE websites)⁷¹, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement was assessed as fully compliant with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) in 11 standards. It should also be noted that the NCEQE was recognized for best practice in the implementation of 5 standards; was assessed as partially compliant with 1 standard, and as non-compliant with 1 standard (ESG 3.3). By ENQA’s decision, the NCEQE retained its membership rights and responsibilities for a period of 2 years with the status of “Member under Review.” Within this period, the ENQA will check the consideration of the recommendations given to NCEQE.

By the decision of 27 November 2024, the NCEQE’s registration in EQAR was discontinued⁷². In higher education institutions, as qualification-granting bodies, complex quality assurance systems aligned with ESG have been established.

⁷¹ External review of NCEQE (2023) <https://www.enqa.eu/review-database/external-review-of-nceqe/>

⁷² Rejection of the Application by National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) for Renewal of Inclusion on the Register
https://backend.deqar.eu/reports/EQAR/A146_NCEQE_Rejection_decision_v1.pdf



Higher education institutions develop educational programmes in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, the Classification of Fields of Study, and the standards for institutional authorization and educational programme accreditation. In the programme development process, the higher education sector benchmarks developed by the NCEQE are successfully applied. The NCEQE holds recognition from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME). Medical qualifications are recognized and comply with the joint requirements of the World Health Organization and the World Federation for Medical Education. Accordingly, a quality assurance system for medical programmes is in place.

Within the framework of lifelong learning quality assurance, mechanisms have been established for the quality assurance of vocational training/retraining; mechanisms have also been established for the quality assurance of non-formal education in vocational education.

Criterion N6: The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.

The procedures and current practices related to quality assurance presented in the referencing report will be agreed upon with the NCEQE's quality assurance departments, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth of Georgia, and stakeholders involved in the quality assurance process (representatives of institutions, members of the authorization/accreditation councils, experts, etc.).

Following the completion of the referencing process, amendments will be made to the relevant ministerial orders and qualification certificates will include information on compatibility with the corresponding level of the European Qualifications Framework.

Criterion N7: The referencing process shall involve international experts and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.

The reference report will indicate the international foreign experts involved in the process.



In particular, the report will reflect from what period and from what stage the experts were involved in the process of preparing the report, when the first version of the document was received and what feedback was returned, as well as when they were given the opportunity to comment on the final version of the report.

Criterion N8: The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the reference, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.

The reference report will be complex and will include a descriptive analysis prepared in accordance with each of the criteria required by the recommendation, as well as evidences of factual circumstances will be provided. The reference report will be agreed with the Coordinating Council and approved by the Director of the NCEQE.

Criterion N9: Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal.

Upon completion of the referral process, the report will be published on the official website of the NCEQE (<http://www.eqe.ge>) and on the European Qualifications Framework Portal (https://europa.eu/europass/en/reports-referencing-national-qualifications-frameworks-eqf?fbclid=IwAR2cleoUBVmltvnpAKBmq_RPGyM_BQbfQTlMyify7RL6XVnH9ISWnzMcyI8)

Criterion N10: Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.

Upon completion of the referencing process, changes will be made to the relevant Ministerial Orders and information on compliance with the European Qualifications Framework level will be added to the qualification documentation form. Based on the above, qualification-granting institutions will indicate, in the relevant documents they issue (diploma, diploma supplement, certificate, certificate supplement), alongside the name of the qualification, information on its compatibility with the corresponding level of the European Qualifications Framework. As for the register, since its development is currently in progress, the structure of the register will initially include a field indicating the corresponding level of the European Qualifications Framework.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Accordingly, the present analysis has identified the key issues that need to be addressed to enable reference to the European Qualifications Framework. The main findings in this direction are presented in the form of a table, which reflects the level of compliance with each criterion and identifies the processes/documents for which activities need to be planned in terms of their creation or further development.

Criterion	Compliance with requirements			
	Full	Substantial	Partial	Non-compliance
N1 The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process are clearly determined and published by the competent authorities.	√			
N2 There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications frameworks or systems and the level descriptors of the EQF.		√		
N3 The national qualifications frameworks or systems and their qualifications are based on the			√	



principle and objective of learning outcomes and related to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where appropriate, to credit systems				
N4 The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.		√		
N5 The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer(s) to the national qualifications frameworks or systems and are consistent with the principles on quality assurance as specified in Annex IV to this recommendation.	√			
N6 The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies that the referencing report is consistent with the relevant national quality assurance arrangements, provisions and practice.				
N7 The referencing process shall involve international experts, and the referencing reports shall contain the written statement of at least two international experts from two different countries on the referencing process.				
N8 The competent authority or authorities shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications frameworks or systems with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the reference, and the evidence supporting it, shall be published by the competent authorities, including the EQF National Coordination Points, and shall address separately each of the criteria. The same report can be used for self-certification to the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher				



Education Area, in accordance with the self-certification criteria of the latter.	
N9 Within 6 months from having referenced or updated the referencing report, Member States and other participating countries shall publish the referencing report and provide relevant information for comparison purposes on the relevant European portal	
N10 Further to the referencing process, all newly issued documents related to qualifications that are part of the national qualifications frameworks or systems (e.g. certificates, diplomas, certificate supplements, diploma supplements) and/or qualification registers issued by the competent authorities should contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications frameworks or systems, to the appropriate EQF level.	

The statistical data used in the present analysis has been processed as of March 2025.

Scheme N10: Educational System of Georgia

