MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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ASEAN QUALIFICATIONS REFERENCE FRAMEWORK
REFERENCING REPORT OF VIETNAM

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION PUBLISHER

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one identity
one community

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BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The ASEAN Integration
One Vision. One Identity. One Community.

ASEAN QUALIFICATIONS REFERENCE FRAMEWORK
REFERENCING REPORT OF VIETNAM

Endorsed by the AQRF Committee on 24th October 2025

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**ASEAN QUALIFICATIONS REFERENCE FRAMEWORK
REFERENCING REPORT OF VIETNAM**

Acknowledgement:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQRF	ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
EQA	External Quality Assurance
GE	General Education
HE	Higher education
HEIs	Higher education institution
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
LOs	Learning outcomes
MOET NAC	Ministry of Education and Training National Advisory Council for the Development and Appraisal of the Referencing report
NOSC	National Occupational Skills Certificate
NOSS	National Occupational Skills Standards
NSQF	National Occupational Skills Framework
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs
NQFs	National Qualifications Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VQF	Vietnam National Qualification Framework

PREFACE

The Referencing Report of the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework (VQF) to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) establishes the alignment between the two frameworks based on the 11 Criteria prescribed by the AQRF Committee. This process provides a comprehensive overview of Vietnam's education and training system, detailing the content and methodology of the referencing, the institutions directly and indirectly involved, the national qualifications system, and the mechanisms in place for quality assurance (QA). The report also examines the conceptual underpinnings, technical descriptors, and defining characteristics of qualifications in both the VQF and AQRF, identifying key similarities and differences to establish referential alignment.

This report serves multiple national and regional purposes:

(1) It formalises Vietnam's alignment with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). The AQRF functions as a translation device to enable comparisons of qualifications and aims to support and enhance a Member State's national qualification framework (NQF) while serving as a mechanism for comparison, transparency, and recognition.

(2) It fosters national consensus and clarity around the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF). The process has been an important driver for system-wide dialogue, helping align stakeholders' understanding of the VQF's level descriptors, quality assurance mechanisms, and the broader purpose of qualifications reform. This report establishes Vietnam's formal alignment with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), ensuring our national qualifications are transparent, quality-assured, and regionally comparable in terms of learning outcomes and level descriptors.

(3) It enhances the global comparability and recognition of Vietnamese qualifications, enabling greater mobility and trust across borders. By linking the VQF to the AQRF, the report strengthens Vietnam's position in the global and regional labour and education markets, facilitating mutual understanding of qualifications and supporting worker and learner mobility.

The aim of the referencing process is to develop and enhance the zone of trust within the ASEAN Community for the qualifications awarded in each nation. To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this referencing process between the VQF and AQRF, it is essential to continue reviewing and refining the regulatory framework for HE and TVET qualifications. MOET's initiatives to define the structure, content, appendices, and procedures for qualification issuance and revocation have been implemented and will be further developed to support mutual recognition with ASEAN and international partners. The Government of Vietnam designated MOET as the lead agency for developing the Referencing Report. MOET assigned the Department of Higher Education to serve as the primary implementing unit. The Department is responsible for the overall report and the state management of higher education and pedagogical college education, encompassing training activities such as curriculum design, teaching materials, admissions, qualification awarding, and international cooperation. At the same time, it is responsible for working directly and coordinating with the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs

(MOLISA) on matters related to vocational education from Levels 1 to 5 under the VQF. The Department of Higher Education also plays a key role in guiding the development and implementation of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF).

As of 1 March 2025, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training was officially transferred from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), making MOET responsible for the entire national education system—from preschool to higher education, including TVET. This transfer represents an administrative restructuring rather than a policy reform. All legal documents, standards, and regulations previously issued by MOLISA remain in force and continue to govern the Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) sector until officially revised or replaced. The change concerns ministerial management authority only and does not alter the existing legal framework, articulation mechanisms, or implementation processes. Accordingly, references to MOLISA are retained in this Report to ensure consistency with the current legal documents until new regulations are promulgated under MOET.

To support this process, MOET established the National Advisory Council for the development and review of the Referencing Report (NAC) under Decision No. 1639/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 28 May 2021. The NAC consists of four subcommittees: the *Standing Subcommittee*, the *Secretariat Subcommittee*, the *Referencing Report Development Subcommittee*, and the *Referencing Report Review Subcommittee*. It comprises 49 members, including MOET officials and academic experts from leading domestic universities and colleges. The NAC is tasked with overseeing the preparation of the Referencing Report and conducting the comparative analysis between the VQF and the AQRF. The development process formally commenced in May 2021 with the establishment of the Council. The NAC is tasked with overseeing the preparation of the Referencing Report and conducting the comparative analysis between the VQF and the AQRF. The development process formally commenced in May 2021 with the establishment of the Council.

During the development phase, Vietnam conducted multiple direct and indirect consultations with key stakeholders to collect perspectives, feedback, and secure consensus on the referencing outcomes. MOET invited several international experts with experience in referencing national qualifications frameworks to regional and international frameworks to provide technical advice and support in finalizing the Referencing Report. These experts participated in developing the report through various means, such as directly revising and advising on the report or providing comments and recommendations.

The outcome of the referencing process confirms that the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) satisfies the AQRF's 11 criteria, demonstrating both methodological robustness and stakeholder endorsement in line with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) Referencing Guideline (August 2020) guidelines. The central achievement of this process is the establishment of a clear and demonstrable link between VQF levels and the AQRF level descriptors through a transparent application of the best-fit principle (refer to Criterion 4 for further details). This alignment, endorsed through national consultation and validated by international and ASEAN peer review, constitutes the central result of the report. The figure below presents the alignment between the VQF and AQRF levels:
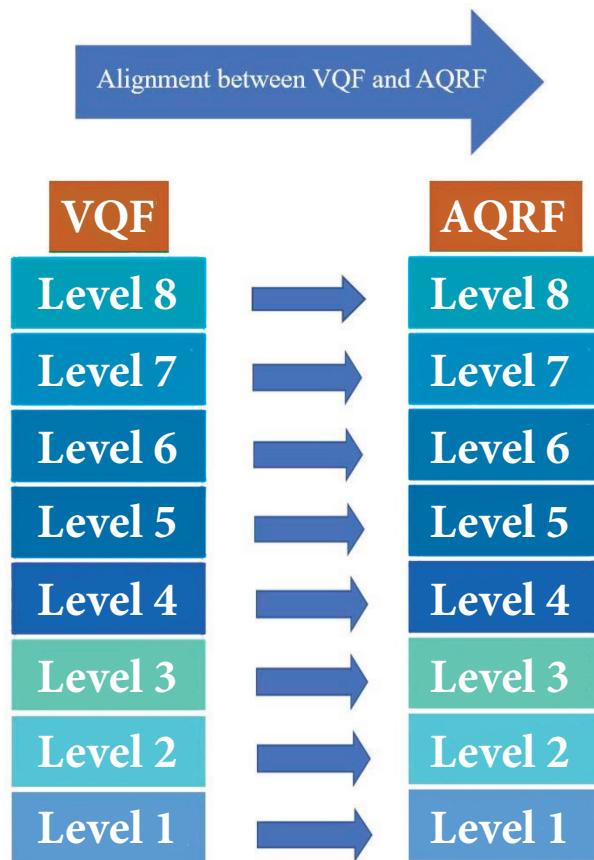
Figure 0. Alignment between the VQF and AQRF

Upon completion, Vietnam's Referencing Report was submitted to selected international experts for consultation, in line with international practice. The Vietnam's Referencing Report was developed based on the *ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) Referencing Guideline* (August 2020) issued by the AQRF Committee, and with reference to the structure, format, and content of Referencing Report from other countries in the region (e.g., Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia) and from European countries (e.g., Luxembourg, Portugal) that have referenced their national frameworks to the European Qualifications Framework. Once the Government of Vietnam approves content, this Referencing Report will serve as a basis for comparing qualifications awarded in Vietnam with those of ASEAN Member States.

This report is endorsed by all relevant national stakeholders, as listed in Appendix XI.

<p align="center">CRITERION
1</p>

VIETNAM'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

1.1. Socio-economic Context and Human Resource Development Strategy

Vietnam is a rapidly growing middle-income country in Southeast Asia, home to over 100 million people and characterized by a highly open economy. The GDP growth rate in 2015 - 2022 remains at 6.5–7%/year. By 2040, the population is forecast to reach more than 110 million people, of which the working age group (15-64 years old) accounts for over 65%.

Vietnam's labor force comprises approximately 52 million people, with a participation rate ranging from 68% to 70%. Although a large proportion of the workforce is employed in the agricultural and informal sectors, the government aims to shift the labor structure towards industrialization and modernization, focusing on developing the manufacturing sector, high-quality services, information technology and renewable energy.

The proportion of trained workers holding qualifications and certificates reached nearly 27% in 2022, with targets set to rise to 30% by 2025 and 35–40% by 2030. This poses an urgent requirement for the education and training system to provide high-quality human resources, in line with the development needs of the digital economy, green economy and international integration.

Vietnam has established a strong legal and strategic foundation to promote the development of education and training:

- The 2013 Constitution[1] (Article 61) affirms that education is a top national priority. It emphasizes the State's responsibility to invest in and develop education, particularly in remote, disadvantaged areas and for marginalized groups.

- The Education Development Strategy until 2030, with a vision to 2045[2], sets a clear objective of building an *open, flexible, interconnected, modern, equitable, and internationally integrated education system*. The strategy also prioritizes the development of high-quality human resources to meet the demands of industrialization, modernization, and digital transformation.

Within this strategy, Vietnam places specific focus on:

+ Enhancing the capacity of the young workforce to leverage the country's demographic dividend;

+ Developing a lifelong learning ecosystem, with expanded opportunities for retraining and upskilling;

+ Establishing a robust mechanism for close coordination between the State, educational institutions, and enterprises.

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1   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Bo-may-hanh-chinh/Hien-phap-nam-2013-215627.aspx

2   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Quyet-dinh-1705-QD-TTg-2024-phe-duyet-Chien-luoc-phat-trien-giao-duc-den-2030-tam-nhin-2045-638222.aspx

To realize these goals, Vietnam's education and training system is undergoing a gradual transformation toward learner-centered, competency-based development, with a strong emphasis on lifelong learning and interconnected pathways across education levels and forms. These reforms are expected to lay a solid foundation for deeper ASEAN integration and mutual recognition of qualifications across the region.

1.2. Vietnam's National Education System

Vietnam's national education system comprises both formal and continuing education, designed to ensure comprehensiveness, unity, flexibility, and interconnected pathways. It effectively supports human resource development and lifelong learning by organising education according to levels and training stages that reflect the evolving learning needs of the population. Formal education is a form of course-based education delivered across institutions to implement a certain educational program. It is designed according to the specific objectives of each level of education and training and aims to grant qualifications in the national education system.

Continuing education is a flexible form of learning in terms of programs, time, methods and location to meet learners' lifelong learning needs.

Vietnam's national education system is regulated and operated based on major legal documents, including:

- Education Law (2019)[1].

- Law on Vocational Education (2014)[2].

- Higher Education Law (2012 and amended in 2018)[3].

- Decision No. 1981/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 18/10/2016 approving the structural framework of the national education system[4].

- Decision No. 1982/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 18/10/2016 approving VQF[5].

The levels and training levels of the national education system are as follow:

- Early childhood education: includes nursery and kindergarten education for children from 3 months to 6 years old.

- General Education (GE): includes primary education (05 years), lower secondary education (04 years) and upper secondary education (03 years); primary education is compulsory, lower secondary education is universalized nationwide.

- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): includes primary,

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1   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Luat-giao-duc-2019-367665.aspx

2   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Lao-dong-Tien-luong/Luat-Giao-duc-nghe-nghiep-2014-259733.aspx

3   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Luat-Giao-duc-dai-hoc-sua-doi-388254.aspx

4   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Quyet-dinh-1981-QD-TTg-phe-duyet-khung-co-cau-he-thong-giao-duc-quoc-dan-328234.aspx

5   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Quyet-dinh-1982-QD-TTg-phe-duyet-khung-trinh-do-quoc-gia-Viet-Nam-2016-327841.aspx

intermediate, college and other vocational academic programs; focuses on training practical skills for the labor market.

- Higher education (HE) encompasses undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs, structured around two learning orientations: research-focused and application-oriented pathways.

The Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), officially adopted in 2016, provides a unified structure of eight levels that classify qualifications across all sub-sectors mentioned above, including GE, TVET and HE. Each level is described in terms of expected knowledge, skills, and levels of autonomy and responsibility, thereby ensuring comparability across sectors. The VQF is designed to promote transparency, facilitate lifelong learning pathways, and strengthen the link between education, training, and labour market needs.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the structure of the education system, indicating the education levels, prescribed duration of study, and the typical starting age for each level. The Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), comprising all eight levels from elementary vocational training to doctoral education, is fully embedded within this structural framework of the Vietnam's education system, as illustrated in the figure.
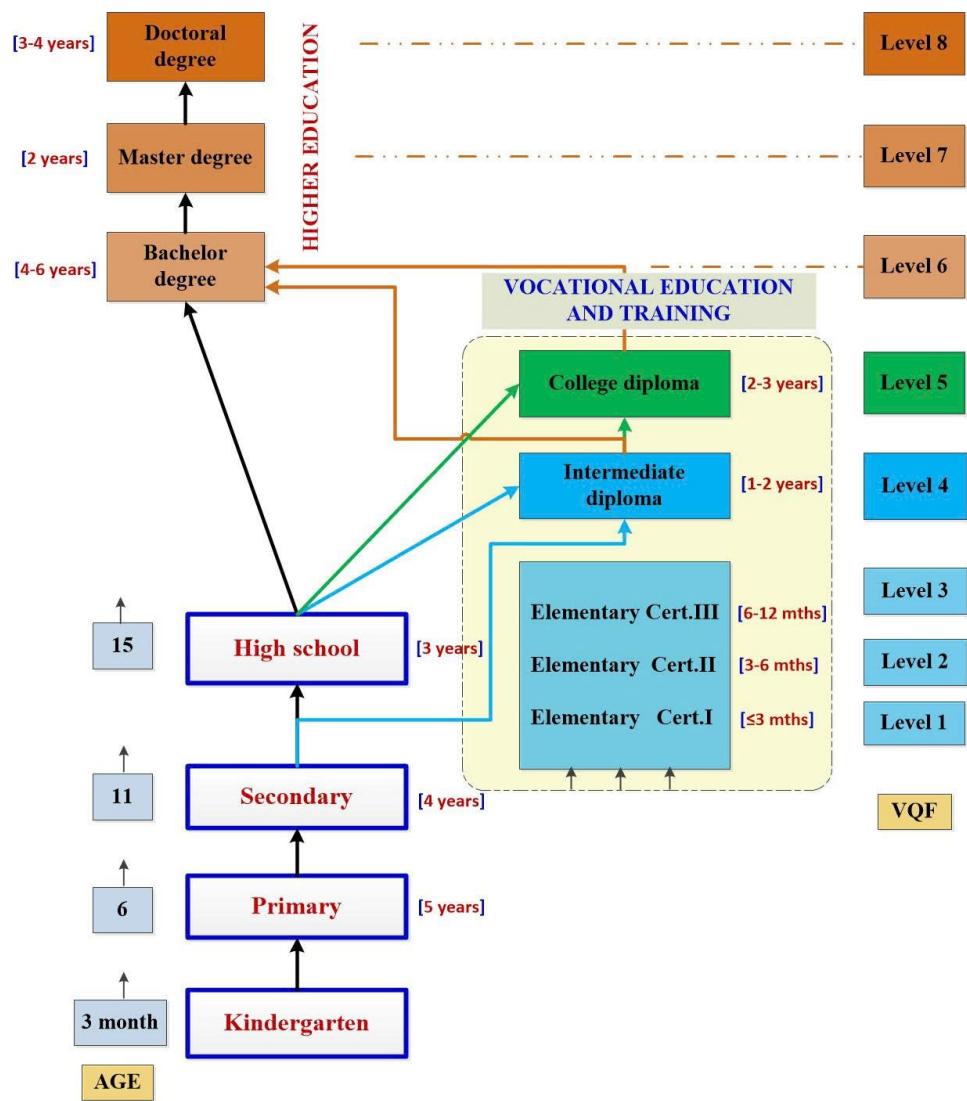
Figure 1.1. Structural framework of the national education system

Currently, preschool education and general education are governed by the Education Law (2019); the Law on Vocational Education (2014); HE is governed by the HE Law (2012), and the Law amending and supplementing several articles of the HE Law in 2018.

This system allows learners to choose the appropriate learning path, connecting levels and forms of training. The decentralization of the management between the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), responsible for general education and HE, and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), responsible for TVET, enables more specialized and sector-specific governance.

As of 1 March 2025, Vietnam's MOET oversees the entire national education system, including preschool, GE, TVET, and HE. Notably, this change involves the transfer of the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training, which was previously under the management of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). However, this is essentially an internal administrative restructuring exercise as the entire education system including matters such as the articulation mechanisms, and the regulations governing vocational and higher education remain unchanged. The legal documents already issued have not yet been replaced and continue to use the previous version promulgated by MOLISA. Furthermore, it is important to clarify that in Vietnam, all standards, criteria, and procedures concerning qualifications are issued as *legal normative documents* of the Government or the competent ministry. Once promulgated, these regulations have nationwide validity and remain in force until they are amended or replaced by a subsequent legal act, regardless of which ministry assumes governance responsibilities.

Accordingly, the transfer of administrative responsibility from MOLISA to MOET does not affect the legal status or applicability of the criteria and procedures already issued. These standards and procedures continue to be valid and are implemented consistently across the country. The change in ministerial responsibility concerns the *management function* (i.e., which ministry oversees implementation) but does not invalidate or interrupt the legal effect of the existing normative framework. Therefore, there is no uncertainty regarding institutional ownership: the current legal documents remain fully in force, and MOET, as the newly assigned authority, is responsible for their continued implementation and any future revisions or updates. Therefore, for sections relating to TVET, we continue to refer to MOLISA as the governing authority to ensure consistency between existing legal documents and actual implementation. We will revise and update the report once new documents are issued. However, this is solely a change in administrative management authority, not in the way the education system operates.

Vietnam's national educational system ensures comprehensiveness, unity, flexibility and interconnection, effectively serving human resource development and lifelong learning goals.

1.3. Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Education is the foundational level of Vietnam's national education system. It plays a critical role in nurturing, caring for, and educating children from 3 months to 6 years of age, laying the groundwork for their holistic development. The objective of early childhood education is to foster children's physical, emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic growth, support the formation of core personality traits, and prepare them for entry into primary education. Preschool education is carried out in public and non-public institutions, including:

- Kindergartens and independent children's groups accept children from 3 months to 3 years old;

- Kindergartens and independent kindergarten classes accept children from 3 to 6 years old;

- Independent preschools and preschools are institutions that combine kindergartens and independent kindergartens, accepting children from 3 months to 6 years old.

Vietnam's preschools may be state-owned and funded by the government, or privately owned by social organizations, socio-professional associations, private businesses, or individuals. Foreign organizations and individuals are also permitted to establish and operate preschools, provided they comply with the regulations set by the Vietnamese government authorities. The government has implemented a policy to universalise the five-year-old preschool program to prepare children for entry into primary education.

This program is designed to ensure children are well-prepared in terms of physical development, cognitive skills, emotional and aesthetic awareness, Vietnamese language proficiency, and school readiness, thereby supporting a smooth and high-quality transition into Grade 1. The Education Law stipulates Article 14 "The State shall universalize preschool education for children aged 5 years." Vietnam's Early Childhood Education is equivalent to Level 0 of the International Standard Classification of Education[1] in 2011 (ISCED 2011).

Presented below are key statistics on preschool education for the 2023–2024 school year.

Table 1.1. Number of schools, number of enrolled students of preschool education in the school year 2023-2024[2]

	Number of Institutions			Number of Learners		
	Public Institutions	Non-public Institutions	Amount	Public Institutions	Non-public Institutions	Amount
Kindergarten	1,566	134	**1,700**	447,776	250,904	**698,680**
Preschool	10,496	3,003	**13,499**	3,334,904	797,343	**4,132,247**

1.4. General Education

Currently, the levels and ages of general education are regulated as follows:

- Primary education lasts five (5) academic years, from grade 1 to grade 5. The standard entry age for grade 1 is 6 years old, calculated by calendar year;

- Lower secondary education lasts four (4) academic years, from the sixth grade to the end of the ninth grade. Students must complete primary education before entering grade 6. The standard age for grade 6 is 11 years old;

- Upper secondary education lasts three (3) academic years, from grade 10 to grade 12. Students must hold a lower secondary school diploma to enroll in grade 10. The standard age for grade 10 is 15 years old;

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1   UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)
2   Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET

- General education is divided into basic education and career-oriented education. The basic education stage, which includes primary and lower secondary levels; and the career-oriented education stage, which corresponds to the upper secondary level.

The official language used in general education is Vietnamese across general education institutions including primary schools, lower secondary schools, and upper secondary schools. Upper secondary schools may offer multiple educational levels. These institutions can be state-owned, state-funded, or state-established, or they may be owned and operated by social organizations, socio-professional associations, private enterprises, or individuals. In addition, foreign organizations and individuals are permitted to establish and manage general education institutions in accordance with regulations set by Vietnam's competent state authorities.

1.4.1. Primary Education

Primary education lasts five academic years, from Grade 1 to Grade 5. The age of students entering Grade 1 is 6 years old and is calculated by calendar year.

Article 14 of the Education Law stipulates, "Primary education is compulsory education."

The primary education program helps students form and develop the basic elements that lay the foundation for the harmonious development of physical and mental, quality and competencies. Its main orientation is to educate children on self-value, family and community relationships, as well as essential habits and routines for learning and daily life. Students who have completed the primary program and meet the conditions prescribed by MOET shall be certified by the school principal to complete the primary program.

Primary education in Vietnam is equivalent to Level 1 of ISCED 2011.

Table 1.2. Number of primary schools and number of enrolled students in the 2023-2024 school year[1]

No.	Type of Institution	Number of Institutions	Number of Students Enrolled
1	Public Institutions	12,010	8,721,555
2	Non-public Institutions	137	154,765
	Total	12,147	8,876,320

1.4.2. Lower Secondary Education

Lower secondary education is carried out in 04 school years, from the sixth grade to the end of the ninth grade. Students entering Grade 6 must complete the program for elementary certificate. The age of students entering Grade 6 is 11 years old and is calculated in years; Article 14 of the Education Law stipulates that "The State shall universalize lower secondary education."

The lower secondary education program supports students in further developing the qualities and competencies cultivated at the primary level. It enables them to self-regulate in accordance with societal norms, apply active learning methods to acquire foundational knowledge and skills, gain initial awareness of various professions, and form a sense of career

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1   Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET

orientation to pursue upper secondary education, vocational training, or entry into working life. The head of the specialized education agency of the district-level People's Committee shall grant a lower secondary school diploma to students who complete the lower secondary school program and meet the conditions prescribed by MOET.

Lower secondary education in Vietnam is equivalent to Level 2 of ISCED 2011.

Table 1.3. Number of secondary schools and number of enrolled students in the 2023-2024[1] school year

No.	Type of Institution	Number of Institutions	Number of Students Enrolled
1	Public Institutions	10,644	6,411,228
2	Non-public Institutions	91	101,793
	Total	10,735	6,513,021

1.4.3. Upper Secondary Education/Vocational Secondary Education

Upon completing lower secondary school, students have two progression options. They may either continue along the general academic pathway by passing the national examination to enter Grade 10 in the upper secondary education system, or, for those who do not pass the exam or prefer to pursue vocational training, they may enroll in the vocational secondary education system (TVET).

1.4.3.1. Vocational Secondary Education

In this vocational pathway, each academic year corresponds to one level in the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF). Completion of the first year aligns with VQF Level 1, the second year with Level 2, and the third year leads to the attainment of a VQF Level 3 qualification. Students who complete the vocational pathway can progress to intermediate vocational schools to obtain a Level 4 qualification, followed by college-level training at Level 5, leading to a college diploma, and then advance to a bachelor's degree at Level 6[2]. For the volume of eligible learner's progress to each level of the education system taking TVET pathways, please refer to Appendix IX.

Students enrolled in intermediate-level TVET programs who also complete the continuing education curriculum and successfully pass the upper secondary graduation examination are eligible to receive an upper secondary education diploma.

For detailed information about the vocational pathway (TVET), please refer to Section 1.5.

1.4.3.2. Upper Secondary Education

Upper secondary education in Vietnam comprises three school years, from Grade 10 to Grade 12. Entry into Grade 10 requires completion of lower secondary education and the award of a junior secondary school diploma. Students typically enter Grade 10 at the age of 15, with age calculated in full years. The high school education program helps students

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1   Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET
2   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Quyet-dinh-1982-QD-TTg-phe-duyet-khung-trinh-do-quoc-gia-Viet-Nam-2016-327841.aspx

continue to develop the qualities and competencies necessary for workers, civic consciousness and personality, self-learning and lifelong learning awareness, the ability to choose careers by their abilities and interests, their own conditions and circumstances to continue their HE, TVET or participation in working life, the ability to adapt to changes in the context of globalization and the new industrial revolution.

Students who complete the upper secondary education program and meet the eligibility criteria set by MOET may sit the national high school graduation examination. Those who meet the examination requirements are awarded the High School Diploma by the Director of the provincial-level Department of Education and Training. Students who complete the upper secondary education program and are eligible for the examination but either do not sit the exam or do not pass are issued a Certificate of Completion of the General Education Program by the school principal.

Table 1.4. Number of high schools and number of enrolled students in the 2023-2024 school year[1]

No.	Type of Institution	Number of Institutions	Number of Students Enrolled
1	Public Institutions	2,462	2,652,201
2	Non-public/ Private Institutions	511	336,981
	Total	2,973	2,989,182

The Certificate of Completion of the General Education Program may be used by learners for specific purposes as prescribed by law, including progression to TVET programs, or in other cases where such certification is required. Students who hold a lower secondary education diploma and are enrolled in intermediate-level programs at TVET institutions may be issued a Certificate of Completion of General Upper Secondary Education Knowledge upon fulfilling the required volume of general education content, as prescribed by MOET. This certificate is granted by the head of the institution responsible for delivering the general education component, once the student has successfully completed the required coursework and examinations. The certificate may be used to pursue higher levels of TVET and in other specific cases as stipulated by law.

For detailed information about higher education pathways following upper secondary school, please refer to Section 1.6.

1.5. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET in Vietnam is an essential component of the national education and training system. It aims to train a skilled workforce for production, business, and services, with the capacity for professional practice, adaptability to international integration, and a rapidly changing labor market. TVET is governed by the Law on Vocational Education (2014) and overseen by MOLISA. As of March 1, 2025, TVET will be transferred back under the management of MOET.

The TVET system in Vietnam comprises two interconnected subsystems of qualifications: (i) the system of National Vocational Certificates under the Vietnam Qualifications Framework

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1 Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET

(VQF), and (ii) the system of National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) under the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF).

♦ **National Vocational Certificates under the VQF** *(formal qualifications)*

- *Elementary certificates (Levels 1–3 of VQF)*: Designed for learners with appropriate educational backgrounds. Training duration ranges from 3 months to under 1 year. Upon completion, learners are awarded elementary certificates (Levels I, II, or III).

- *Intermediate Vocational Certificate (Level 4 of VQF)*: Admits learners graduating from lower or upper secondary education. Training lasts 1 to 2 years. Graduates are awarded an intermediate diploma. Those who completed only lower secondary may take additional academic subjects to qualify for admission or transition to higher levels.

- *College diploma (Level 5 of VQF)*: Admits learners graduating from upper secondary education or those holding an intermediate diploma with sufficient academic knowledge. Training lasts 2 to 3 years. Graduates receive a college diploma and may progress to university-level education through credit transfer or bridging programmes.

Programs in the vocational education sector are developed based on competency-based learning outcomes, corresponding to VQF Levels 1 to 5. Each level is designed according to minimum standards of knowledge and competency required for graduates, as regulated by the MOLISA:

• **Levels 1–3:** Governed by Circular No. 42/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 20 October 2015 (as amended by Circular No. 01/2024/TT-BLĐTBXH), which prescribes the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at the **elementary (sơ cấp) level**.

• **Levels 4–5:** Regulated by Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH, which specifies the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at the **intermediate (trung cấp)** and **college (cao đẳng)** levels.

These sets of regulations are issued by the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET, formerly under MOLISA). Training is modular or credit-based, allowing flexible learning pathways. Assessment of learning outcomes is conducted through competency-based evaluations jointly implemented by institutions and enterprises. Authorised institutions issue vocational certificates and diplomas under strict quality monitoring.

♦ **National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSCs) structured around the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) under the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)** (*informal/non-formal education, labour market-oriented qualifications*)

- NOSCs are primarily designed for employment purposes, certifying practical skills rather than academic achievement. NOSCs are awarded to workers who demonstrate occupational competencies through assessment centres accredited by MOET (formerly MOLISA). Currently, they articulate only within the NSCF system and do not transfer into the VQF system, though reforms are underway (draft amended Law on Vocational Education and Training, 2025) to enable recognition and transfer between the two systems, fostering lifelong learning and mobility. Figure 1.2. Relation between VQF and NSCF and Table 1.5. Aspects between VQF and NOSS below provide a structured comparison between *National Vocational Certificates under the VQF* (formal qualifications) and *National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSS)* (under the NSCF)
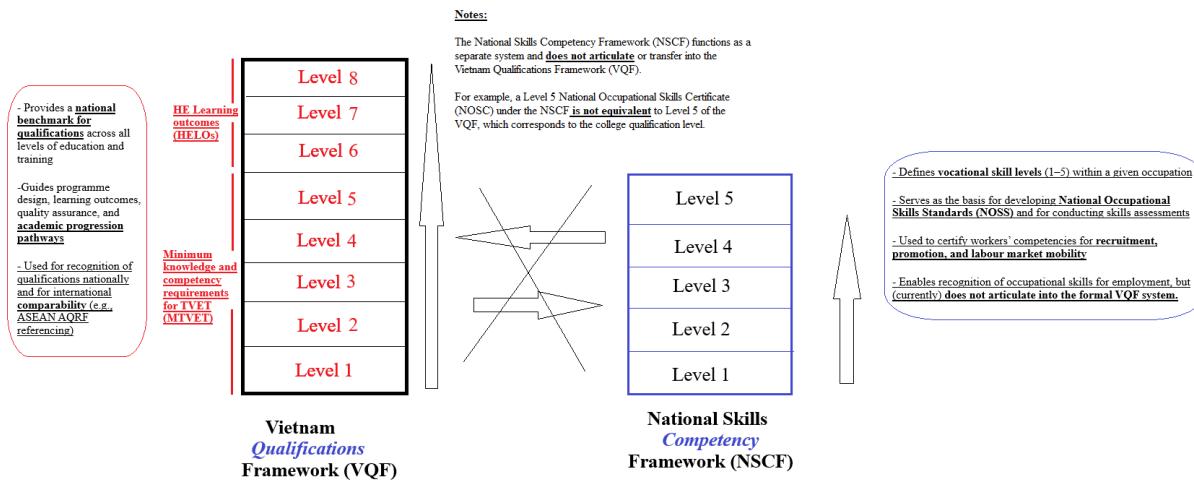
Figure 1.2. Relation between VQF (Level 1-5) and NSCF (5 levels)

- NOSCs functioned under the NSCF and is organized into five levels, based on descriptors that reflect: (i) *the nature, level, and complexity of the tasks to be performed;* (ii) *the required level of autonomy, flexibility and creativity in task performance*; and (iii) *the degree of coordination and responsibility involved*. Each occupational NOSS comprises three (03) core components: *Occupation Description*, a *List of Competency Units*, grouped into basic, common, and specialized competencies, and the *Detailed Competency Units*, which include the unit title, elements and performance criteria, key skills and essential knowledge, performance conditions, and assessment guidelines.

- The **National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)** (Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH, Article 5) provides a five-level classification based on the nature and complexity of tasks, scope of work, required flexibility and creativity, and level of responsibility (see further in Section 3.4.6.2).

Process of Developing National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS)

- The development of Vietnam's National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) began in 2008. Under the 2015 regulatory framework, NOSS are structured around units of competency and corresponding job positions to facilitate the comparison, mutual recognition, and alignment of workers' skills between Vietnam and other countries in the ASEAN member states and international partners.

- NOSS plays a critical role in the development of academic programs by defining LOs that are responsive to labour market demands. They serve as a foundational reference for identifying the essential knowledge and skills learners are expected to acquire upon completion of each training program. The legal basis for NOSS is provided by the Law on Employment, which mandates the MOLISA to lead and coordinate the development and issuance of NOSS in collaboration with other ministries and sectors.

- Currently, the development and implementation of NOSS are governed by the Law on Employment (previously under the Law on Vocational Training). In 2018, selected NOSS sets were revised and updated under Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLDTBXH. Updates included 04 tourism-related occupations (Culinary Arts, Travel Management, Tour Guiding, and Travel Services) and 07 occupations in the industrial sector (Underground Mining Engineering, Underground Mine Construction Engineering, Underground Mine Electromechanical

Engineering; Information Technology, Industrial Electronics, Computer-Aided Drawing and Design, and Industrial Electrical Installation and Control). As of December 2018, NOSS had been developed for 193 occupations, with 191 officially issued standards —13 of which had been revised and updated.

- The development of the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) in Vietnam follows a two-stage process: (I) *Drafting and Development* and (II) *Appraisal*. In the drafting stage, a drafting council is first established, including representatives from the lead ministry (such as the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Construction), employers and enterprises that use labour in the occupation, relevant professional associations and unions, training institutions providing education in the field, and subject-matter experts. The council conducts an occupational analysis, drawing on international experience and both domestic and overseas documents, in order to identify the list of essential skills and the occupational positions within the field. Based on this analysis, a draft set of occupational standards is prepared. Stakeholder input is then sought through written consultations and dedicated workshops. The draft is revised accordingly, and a comprehensive dossier is compiled for appraisal. In the appraisal stage, an appraisal council is established, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (now transferred to the Ministry of Education and Training), employers, labour unions, professional associations, and experts. The council reviews and verifies the dossier within a period of ten working days (five days for appraisal and five days for the decision-making process). The decision to promulgate the NOSS is issued by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (currently MOET). The line ministry responsible for the occupation (e.g., Health, Construction, etc.) is tasked with updating, monitoring, and revising the standards to reflect changes in occupational practice. This process ensures that the NOSS is developed in consultation with all key stakeholders, benchmarked against international references, and regularly updated to maintain its relevance.

Quality Assurance of the Assessment of National Occupational Skills Standards:

Under the 2014 Law on Vocational Education, MOLISA oversees the development of occupational standards, vocational teacher qualifications, equipment norms, and economic-technical benchmarks. These frameworks, alongside the VQF and NOSS, guide TVET institutions in developing learning outcomes aligned with national competency standards and labour market needs.

✓ *Registration of TVET Activities:* Before offering training, institutions must be inspected and approved. The Directorate of TVET certifies college-level programs, while provincial Departments oversee intermediate and vocational centres. The registration certificate defines the enrolment quota per occupation, which institutions may not exceed by more than 10%.

✓ *Training and Certification of NOSC Assessors:* NOSC assessors—authorised evaluators of occupational skills—are certified by MOLISA. Candidates must meet regulatory requirements. To date, nearly 1,750 assessors have been trained and certified. National skills competitions, organised annually by the Directorate of TVET, identify talent for regional and international contests and inform improvements to TVET curricula. Over 3,000 expert-turns have contributed to the development and appraisal of NOSS.

✓ *NOSS Assessment and Certification:* Vietnam's NOSS system offers certification across levels 1–5, aligned with ASEAN standards. In 2019, exam sets (MCQs and practical tests) were developed for six occupations, with ILO support adding two more. By end of 2019, 92 exam sets had been completed, including two aligned with Japanese standards. These are continually updated to reflect evolving standards and practices.

As of end-2018, 41 institutions—mostly colleges and universities—were licensed to assess and issue NOSS certificates (NOSCs), primarily at levels 1–3, with a few up to level 4. The Directorate of TVET manages certification and recertification of assessment bodies. So far, over 96,000 workers have been assessed, and 83,000 have received NOSS certificates across 59 occupations. Fifty-two organisations are currently certified to deliver assessments nationwide.

Table 1.5. Aspects between VQF and NSCF

Aspect	National Vocational Certificates under the VQF	National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) under NSCF
Legal basis	Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH (20 April 2017) on minimum knowledge and competency requirements at Intermediate and College levels	Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH (Article 5) on the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF); Law on Employment; Decree No. 31/2015/NĐ-CP (Article 16)
Framework alignment	Fully integrated into the **Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)**	Aligned with the **National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)** (5 levels)
Purpose	Formal education and training system; structured study programmes; counted in national qualification statistics	Designed for the **labour market**; certifies practical skills and competencies for employment purposes
Qualification skill levels	Levels 1–5 are based on the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates. - **Levels 1–3:** Circular No. 42/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 20 October 2015 (as revised by Circular No. 01/2024/TT-BLĐTBXH) issued by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), specifying the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at the elementary level. - **Levels 4–5:** Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH issued by MOLISA, stipulating the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at the intermediate (trung cấp) and college (cao đẳng) levels.	Five levels (NSCF Level 1–5) based on complexity of tasks, scope of work, flexibility, creativity, and responsibility
Issuing authority	MOET (formerly MOLISA) through licensed TVET institutions	MOET (formerly MOLISA) through skills assessment centres authorised by line ministries
Recognition status	Recognised as formal qualifications; contribute to education planning and labour force statistics	Recognised for employment but not counted in national formal qualification statistics
Transfer/articulation	Pathways exist within the VQF system (e.g., Intermediate → College → Higher Education)	Articulation allowed only within NSCF levels; **cannot transfer into VQF system** (Intermediate/College) under current law

Aspect	National Vocational Certificates under the VQF	National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) under NSCF
Ongoing reforms	Already embedded in VQF; formal system consolidated	Draft amended **Law on Vocational Education and Training (2025)** proposes recognition and transfer of NOSS into the VQF system, enabling lifelong learning and alignment between labour market and education systems
Strategic importance	Crucial for education planning, labour market statistics, and ensuring comparability of national qualifications	Crucial for validating workforce skills, labour market mobility, and industry-driven recognition of competencies

Modes of Delivery and Types of Qualifications/Certificates in TVET (formal and informal/non-formal)

TVET in Vietnam is delivered through multiple modes, each of which provides pathways for learners to acquire different types of qualifications and certificates:

(i) Formal training at vocational schools and colleges → National Vocational Certificates under the VQF (formal qualifications)

• These include **Elementary (Levels 1–3), Intermediate (Level 4), and College (Level 5)**, officially recognised within the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF).

• Regulated by Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH (20 April 2017), which specifies minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at intermediate and college levels.

• As part of the formal education system, these qualifications are aligned with the VQF, count towards national statistics, and are central for education planning and labour market monitoring.

(ii) Informal/Non-formal education (flexible, for working learners) → National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSCs)

• NOSCs are awarded to workers who pass skills assessments in specific occupations, based on the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS).

• Developed under the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF) (Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH, Article 5), which classifies skills into five levels based on task complexity, work context, creativity, and responsibility.

• NOSCs are designed primarily for the labour market, certifying practical competencies. Under current law (Decree No. 31/2015/NĐ-CP, Article 16), NOSC holders can articulate only within NSCF levels and not into the formal VQF.

• However, the draft amended Law on Vocational Education and Training (2025)—endorsed by the Prime Minister and pending National Assembly approval—proposes recognising and transferring NOSS and prior learning outcomes into VQF qualifications. This would enable lifelong learning, articulation, and greater labour market flexibility.

(iii) Community-based training (short-term, local authority partnerships) → Professional and sectoral certificates / course completion certificates

• Training often focuses on upskilling or short-term competencies, sometimes leading to:

- Professional and sectoral certificates (e.g., foreign language, IT, law practice, medical practice). These are legally recognised but not part of the VQF, and are issued by line ministries or professional bodies under strict licensing.

- Certificates of course completion (Giấy chứng nhận hoàn thành khóa học), typically issued by enterprises or local providers. These are not officially recognised in the national qualifications system VQF but may be used internally or later validated for NOSC through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

(iv) Enterprise-based training (Dual Training System: study + work) → NOSS and course completion certificates

• Delivered directly in enterprises, this mode integrates workplace practice with vocational training.

• It plays a role in preparing learners for NOSC assessments by building occupational competencies in real work contexts.

Enterprises may also issue completion certificates for internal or sector-specific recognition, though these are not part of the VQF.

In recent years, Vietnam has prioritized the development of high-quality TVET institutions, promoted the active involvement of enterprises and employers in training and assessment, and enhanced international cooperation to progressively align with regional and global standards. Efforts to align TVET with the VQF and to reference it against the AQRF are being actively advanced to promote transparency, portability, and mutual recognition of qualifications across the ASEAN region.

Table 1.6. Number of intermediate schools, colleges, TVET centers and number of their learners[1]

No.	Type of Institution	Number of Institutions	Number of Learners
1	Colleges	409	260,000
2	Intermediate institutions (or Intermediate-level vocational school)	459	350,000
3	Continuing education institutions (including Continuing Education Centres, Vocational and Continuing Education Centres, and Community Learning Centres)	11,087	524,692

In the period of 2021-2024, a total of 8,914,762 learners were enrolled in the TVET system. This included 843,400 students at the college level, 1,254,600 at the intermediate level, and 6,816,762 enrolled in primary-level vocational training, short-term programs of less than three months, and other vocational courses. In 2024 alone, the TVET system was expected to enroll approximately 2,506,322 learners. Of these, 681,901 students were enrolled at the

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1   Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET

intermediate and college levels, while 1,824,421 participated in elementary and short-term vocational training.

Several key industries were anticipated to experience increased enrollment in 2024. These include: Information Technology, Electronics - Refrigeration - Mechanical Engineering; Restaurant Services and Services - Hospitality, Medical and Healthcare, High-Tech Agriculture, Logistics, Energy and Environment. The growth in these sectors was driven by the rapid development of e-commerce, the widespread impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0), and the rising demand for skilled labor in areas such as software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), and service-oriented industries. In the period of 2021-2024, 8,914,762 people were enrolled. Of these, 843,400 students were enrolled at the college level, 1,254,600 students were enrolled at the intermediate level, 6,816,762 students were enrolled in primary vocational programs and short-term vocational academic programs (less than three months), as well as other vocational academic programs.

In 2024, the total enrollment in Vietnam's TVET system was projected to reach 2,506,322 learners. Of this number, 681,901 were expected to enroll at the intermediate and college levels, while 1,824,421 enrolled at the elementary levels.

According to data reported by the 63 provincial and municipal Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, more than 70% of TVET graduates (from college, intermediate, and primary levels) have secured employment immediately after graduation. In certain occupations and at specific institutions, this employment rate reaches 100%. Employer assessments indicate that 80% to 85% of vocationally trained graduates are employed in jobs that align with their training level, and over 30% possess occupational skills rated above average.

Vietnamese TVET students have also achieved impressive results in regional and international skills competitions. Among the nine ASEAN Skills Competitions in which Vietnam has participated, the national team has ranked first overall three times, second twice, and third twice. At the WorldSkills Competitions, Vietnamese contestants have earned multiple medals and Medallions for Excellence, demonstrating the competitiveness and quality of Vietnam's vocational training system.

These achievements attest to the significantly improved quality of TVET in Vietnam. However, further efforts are needed to enhance training quality, especially in the context of Vietnam's ongoing regional and international integration.

1.6. Higher Education (HE)

HE in Vietnam is structured into three main qualification levels within the VQF: bachelor's degree (level 6), master's degree (level 7), and doctoral degree (level 8). Academic programs at each level are developed based on competency-based LOs, with specific requirements on study duration, minimum credit volume, delivery format, and assessment methods. This system is governed by the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), the Education Law (2019), and related guiding regulations. A unique feature of Vietnam's education system is its non-adoption of a program registration model. Instead, the system operates through a catalogue of academic disciplines. Universities submit dossiers for approval to offer specific disciplines. Once approved, institutions are authorised to deliver the program in various modalities—including in-person, online, or distance learning—under specific MOET regulations tailored to each delivery mode.

Bachelor's degree programs in Vietnam typically last from 4 to 6 years, depending on the discipline and specific training model. Upon graduation, students are awarded a bachelor's degree or an equivalent professional qualification (such as Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Dentistry, Traditional Medicine Doctor, Pharmacist, Veterinary Doctor, Engineer, Architect, etc.). The minimum learning volume required for this level is 120 credits. The bachelor's degree is awarded to those who complete a program meeting the legal requirements and the LOs standards of level 6 in the VQF. Vietnam's bachelor-level qualifications are aligned with level 6 of ISCED 2011. Programs awarding engineer or medical degrees may correspond to level 7 of ISCED 2011.

Master's degree (VQF Level 7) admission requires applicants to have completed, or be eligible to be recognised as having completed, a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent or higher qualification) in a relevant field; for research-oriented programmes, applicants must have graduated with at least a "Good" (Khá) classification or have relevant scholarly publications in the intended field of study. Applicants must also demonstrate foreign language competence at Level 3 or higher under the Vietnamese 6-level Foreign Language Competence Framework (or an equivalent qualification), and meet any additional entry requirements set out in the national programme standard and the specific master's programme. Master's programmes are offered in two orientations: research-oriented and application-oriented. Both include compulsory and elective courses and may be delivered in a combination of in-person and online modes (with online learning not exceeding 30% of total programme volume, and online assessment not exceeding 50% of a course grade). Learners on the research-oriented track must complete a thesis worth 12–15 credits over a minimum period of six months; the thesis must demonstrate theoretical, scholarly, technological or innovative contributions, comply with academic integrity and intellectual property regulations, and is publicly defended before an academic committee. Learners on the application-oriented track must complete a graduation project worth 6–9 credits over at least three months in the form of a project, design or applied solution that addresses a real-world problem, and this project is also defended before an academic committee. Course results are only counted as passed when assessed at grade C or higher. Institutions may organise admission by examination, selection, or a combination of both, one or more times per year, and must publish transparent admissions information (including eligibility criteria, required background fields, and any bridging requirements) at least 45 days before the application deadline. To be eligible for graduation, learners must have completed all required coursework and successfully defended the thesis (research-oriented track) or graduation project (application-oriented track); must meet the exit foreign language requirement at Level 4 of the Vietnamese 6-level Foreign Language Competence Framework (or an approved equivalent, e.g. a degree taught in the relevant foreign language); and must satisfy all other institutional obligations. Master's degrees are awarded to learners who are formally recognised as having met programme completion requirements and achieved the learning outcomes for VQF Level 7; the diploma and its supplement specify whether the programme followed the research-oriented or application-oriented orientation.

Doctoral programs are designed for those holding a master's degree or, in exceptional cases, an outstanding bachelor's degree. The minimum duration is 3 years. Programs emphasize independent and original research, requiring publication of scientific articles and defence of a doctoral dissertation before an academic committee. Depending on the entry pathway, the minimum credit volume is 90 credits (for those entering with a master's) or 120 credits (for those entering with a bachelor's). The doctoral degree is awarded to graduates of legally recognised programs that meet the LOs standards of level 8 in the VQF. Vietnam's doctoral

training is aligned with level 8 of ISCED 2011. In the academic year 2023–2024, Vietnam had 243 HEIs nationwide, with over 2 million students enrolled at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Modes of Delivery and Types of Qualifications in Higher Education (Formal and Non-formal)

INTRODUCTION TO VIETNAM EDUCATION						NO ONE LEFT BEHIND		
VIETNAM NQF	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
EDUCATION LEVEL								
Higher Education						Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctoral Degree
Vocational Education	Elementary Certificate level I	Elementary Certificate level II	Vocational diploma / Elementary Certificate level III	Intermediate Level diploma	College Diploma			
General Education	Secondary diploma	Baccalaureate						
COMPETENCY LEVEL								
Occupational skills	National Occupational Skills Certificate 1	National Occupational Skills Certificate 2	National Occupational Skills Certificate 3	National Occupational Skills Certificate 4	National Occupational Skills Certificate 5			

Figure 1.3. Modes of Delivery and Types of Qualifications

Higher education (HE) in Vietnam is delivered through multiple modes that provide learners with flexible pathways to acquire qualifications and credentials at different levels of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF). The HE system comprises formal qualifications recognised within the VQF and non-formal learning opportunities that support professional development and lifelong learning.

(i) Formal higher education (university and academy-based programmes) → National Qualifications under the VQF (Levels 6–8)

- Formal higher education includes Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral programmes corresponding respectively to Levels 6, 7, and 8 of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF).

- These qualifications are regulated under the Law on Higher Education (No. 34/2018/QH14, amended 2018) and related decrees and circulars issued by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), which specify programme standards, expected learning outcomes, credit structures, and quality assurance requirements.

- All formal HE qualifications are fully aligned with the VQF, are nationally recognised, and contribute to national statistics on higher-level qualifications.

- Programmes are delivered in various modes, including full-time, part-time, and distance learning, all subject to MOET's quality assurance and accreditation regulations.

(ii) Collaborative and transnational education (joint and dual-degree programmes) → Co-awarded or jointly recognised qualifications

- Delivered through partnerships between Vietnamese and foreign universities, these programmes award either:

+ Dual degrees (each institution issues its own qualification), or

+ Joint degrees (one jointly recognised qualification).

- Regulated by Decree No. 86/2018/NĐ-CP on foreign cooperation and investment in education and Circular No. 38/2013/TT-BGDĐT on transnational education quality assurance.

- These qualifications are formally recognised within the Vietnamese HE system once approved by MOET and may also be recognised in partner countries, contributing to cross-border comparability and mobility under the VQF–AQRF referencing.

(iii) Non-formal higher education (continuing education and professional development) → Institutional or sectoral certificates and diplomas

- Non-formal higher education consists of structured, short-term, or professional training programmes organised by universities, research institutes, or professional bodies.

- Examples include university-issued short courses in management, accounting, or technology.

- These programmes are **not part of the formal VQF**, but they are **regulated under MOET's regulations.** Awarding institutions must be formally recognised and licensed by the competent authorities to deliver courses and issue qualifications.

- These courses are recognised for labour market purposes but are not classified within the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF).

(iv) Enterprise- and industry-based training (cooperative education and applied research) → Professional and sectoral certificates

- Many universities collaborate with industries to deliver cooperative training programmes, internships, and applied research projects that lead to professional or sectoral certificates.

- Examples include:

+ Industry-certified qualifications in ICT, accounting, logistics, or tourism (e.g., Cisco, ACCA, or ASEAN Tourism Standards).

+ Sectoral professional licences (e.g., teaching certificates, legal practice certificates).

These courses are recognised for labour market purposes but are not classified within the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF).

(v) Online and distance learning (e-learning, blended delivery)

- **Formal online degree programmes (e.g., e-Bachelor or e-Master programmes)** are accredited by MOET and result in qualifications equivalent to those delivered in traditional settings, provided that the online component does not exceed 30% of the total programme or course content.

- **Non-formal online programmes** (e.g., MOOCs, certified online training, and professional micro-credentials) might be used by employers or skill upgrading but are not yet classified under the VQF.

- **Other forms of informal learning** (e.g, a professional attending academic seminars or research group meetings without earning credits or a certificate) are not yet recognized or classified under the VQF.

Table 1.7. Number of universities and enrolled students, trainees and doctoral candidates in the 2023-2024[1] academic year

No.	Type of Institution	Number Of Institutions	Student Size	Number of Master Students	Number of PhD Students
1	Public Institutions	176	1,819,416	85,983	11,028
2	Non-public/Private Institutions	67	536,295	11,332	331
	Total	243	2,355,711	97,315	11,359

1.7. Articulation Pathways/Transfer mechanism within the Vietnam's TVET and HE system

Within TVET:

The recognition of knowledge and skills for credit exemption purposes in vocational education applies only to programmes leading to qualifications (certificates or diplomas) under the VQF. In other words, it is limited to elementary certificates (Levels 1, 2, 3), vocational secondary diplomas, and vocational college diplomas. This provision is stipulated in Article 10 of Circular No. 04/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 30 March 2022 of MOLISA. Specifically:

"*Learning outcomes accumulated by learners from another training programme, another training level, or another institution within the vocational education system may be recognized in the current programme, regardless of whether the previous learning was conducted face-to-face or online. In particular: learners may be exempted from attending classes and from taking final exams in modules or subjects already completed in another programme, provided the content and duration match those of the current programme; learners may also be exempted from part of the learning content within a subject or module, but must still take the final exam, in cases where the content was previously studied but not examined, or where the content and duration were not fully equivalent to the current programme.*"

In addition, learners may be exempted from specific general subjects if they have previously studied and passed them, such as National Defense and Security Education, Political Education, Foreign Languages, Information Technology, and Physical Education.

Accordingly, credit transfer is permitted between formal TVET institutions. Under the 2014 Law on Vocational Education, learners may have previously completed modules, credits, or academic programmes recognised and transferred to continue their studies at the same or a higher level. Circular No. 04/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH dated March 30th 2022 issued by MOLISA provides detailed guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), allowing exemptions from study and assessment for previously acquired learning outcomes deemed equivalent. For

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1   Statistical Yearbook of Education and Training 2023–2024 by MOET

example, if a learner has studied at another vocational school, their accumulated credits may be assessed and recognised by the new training provider, provided the content and volume of learning are equivalent. This process facilitates learner mobility within the formal TVET system, though it remains limited to formally certified learning. It also creates opportunities for learners who have completed short-term training courses to progress to intermediate or college-level programmes without repeating content already mastered.

That said, it is still important to re-emphasize that National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) under the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF) are designed primarily for labour market recognition and employment purposes, rather than formal education pathways. As such, NOSC holders are currently permitted articulation only within NSCF levels and cannot transfer into the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) system. Efforts, however, have been made to establish the foundation for recognising NOSC within the VQF, with notable progress achieved as Vietnam continues to work progressively and intensively to align these two systems. The draft amended Law on Vocational Education and Training, once approved, will provide significant ground for:

- **Recognition and transfer of accumulated learning outcomes** from training programmes or certificate courses into formal qualifications (Elementary, Intermediate, College).

- **Recognition of occupational competencies acquired through NOSC** or other forms of experience as equivalent to modules or courses within formal training programmes.

This reform has completed development and stakeholder engagement, and has been approved by the Prime Minister following full consultation. It is currently pending National Assembly approval as of October 2025. Once adopted, the law will provide the legal foundation for integrating NOSC into the VQF formal system, thereby supporting articulation pathways, promoting lifelong learning, and enhancing labour market flexibility.

From TVET to HE:

According to Decision No. 18/2017/QĐ-TTg on the Regulations on Articulation between Intermediate (Trung cấp), College (Cao đẳng), and University (Đại học) Levels in Vietnam, policies on progression from TVET to HE have been in place for many years.

Under this policy, learners holding an intermediate or college diploma, typically from the TVET system may apply for admission to a university. The academic credits they have accumulated at the intermediate or college level may be considered for exemption if the content and volume of learning are deemed equivalent. Following the Ministry of Education and Training's guidelines, universities are required to issue institutional regulations on the recognition of prior learning and exemption within their university programmes. These decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis for each learner.

However, there are two important limitations:

1. The total number of credits recognized and exempted from the university programme may not exceed 50% of the total credit load.

2. The intake of learners admitted through articulation pathways is capped at 20% of the university's total full-time student population.

In addition, certain fields such as teacher education and health (medical and allied health disciplines) do not allow articulation from intermediate or college levels. This does not mean learners are not allowed to pursue university study in these fields; rather, it means that the knowledge and skills acquired at intermediate or college level cannot be credited or exempted in the corresponding university programmes. Learners must complete the full curriculum without any exemptions.

Within HE

Article 19 of Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT issued by the Ministry of Education and Training regulates articulation (học liên thông) pathways for learners holding different qualifications[1]:

For bachelor's degree: A university graduate may pursue a second degree in another field of study, provided that the receiving institution has uniformly adopted the credit-based training system and that the chosen programme, in the relevant field and mode of study, has already admitted at least three cohorts of students. (For security and defence-related fields, articulation is governed by the specific regulations of the respective training institutions.)

Articulating students are required to follow the study programme and register for courses in accordance with the general study plan, in the same manner as other students enrolled in the programme. Based on credit recognition and transfer, students may be exempted from modules equivalent to the learning volume already accumulated.

Each higher education institution is responsible for issuing detailed regulations on the conditions and procedures for admitting articulating students. These regulations must clearly define processes for credit recognition, transfer, and module exemption, and must be implemented on the principles of fairness and transparency for all candidates, ensuring strict adherence to quality requirements and applying the same learning outcome standards as for other students.

For master's degree: Circular No. 23/2021/TT-BGDĐT (dated 30 August 2021, issued by the MOET) provides clear provisions for learners to transfer between training institutions, study locations, or training programmes at the master's level[2].

Learners may be considered for transfer if they satisfy the admission requirements of the intended programme, and if the receiving institution meets all quality assurance conditions and has not exceeded its approved training capacity. Transfers also require the consent of both sending and receiving rectors in the case of institutional transfer. For transfers of study location or programme within the same institution, approval must be obtained from the heads of the relevant academic units, campus directors (where applicable), and the rector. Additional conditions stipulate that learners must still have sufficient time to complete their programme as required by regulations and must not be under disciplinary action at the level of warning or higher.

The recognition of accumulated study results and the transfer of credits must be consistent with the provisions of Article 4 of the same Regulation, ensuring that previously achieved

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1 https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Thong-tu-08-2021-TT-BGDDT-Quy-che-dao-tao-trinh-do-dai-hoc-470013.aspx

2 https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Thong-tu-23-2021-TT-BGDDT-Quy-che-tuyen-sinh-va-dao-tao-trinh-do-thac-si-486650.aspx

learning outcomes are appropriately recognised. Furthermore, each higher education institution is responsible for issuing its own detailed regulations governing the conditions, processes, and procedures for transfer.

This framework provides a transparent mechanism for learner mobility within the master's level, ensuring that articulation is possible while maintaining strict quality assurance standards.

For doctoral degree: Circular No. 18/2021/TT-BGDĐT (dated 28 June 2021, issued by MOET) provides regulations on the recognition and transfer of accumulated study and research results for doctoral candidates[1].

Accordingly, doctoral study and research results may be retained, recognised, and transferred in specific cases: (i) when a doctoral candidate discontinues their programme and wishes to continue in a corresponding master's programme, provided that they meet the requirements of current master's admission and training regulations; (ii) when a doctoral candidate transfers to another field of study or training institution; or (iii) when a doctoral candidate, after discontinuation, re-applies and is admitted as a new doctoral candidate at the same institution. The recognition and transfer of accumulated results must align with the content and requirements of the receiving programme and are based on the recommendation of a specialised academic council. In cases of transfer to another institution or enrolment as a new doctoral candidate, recognition and transfer are capped at no more than 50% of the total doctoral training programme. Each higher education institution is required to issue detailed internal regulations specifying the retention period, the composition of the specialised academic council, and the procedures for recognition and transfer. This mechanism provides a structured framework for flexibility and learner mobility at the doctoral level, while maintaining rigorous quality assurance standards.

1.8. Recent Reforms of Vietnam's Education

In recent years, Vietnam has implemented a wide range of profound reforms in the education sector to improve educational quality and meet the demands of socio-economic development and international integration. These reforms focus on the following key areas:

1.8.1. Reform of General Education

In accordance with Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated November 4, 2013 on the fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training, MOET began implementing a new general education curriculum starting from the 2020–2021 academic year, beginning with Grade 1 and gradually extending to subsequent grades. The new curriculum emphasizes the development of student competencies and character, reduces content overload, increases the number of elective and integrated subjects, and promotes innovation in teaching and assessment methods. Textbook development follows a socialized approach, with multiple textbook sets approved and used across institutions.

1.8.2. Reform of Vocational Education

The structure of occupations in TVET admissions has been gradually adjusted to align with the labor market needs across sectors such as production, business, and services. New academic

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1   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Thong-tu-18-2021-TT-BGDDT-Quy-che-tuyen-sinh-va-dao-tao-trinh-do-tien-si-480305.aspx

programs have been introduced to align with labor market demands, support the transformation of the agricultural and rural economy, and promote job creation. In 1992, the training list comprised only 226 occupations. By 2015, the list had grown to 426 occupations at college level and 484 at intermediate level. By 2020, the number increased to 669 college-level and 897 intermediate-level occupations across 65 occupational groups in 23 fields, covering all sectors of the economy, including national defence and security.

MOLISA collaborated with relevant ministries, sectors, and localities to select and approve key occupations at national, regional (ASEAN), and international levels, as well as identify TVET institutions for focused investment during 2016–2020, with orientation towards 2025. As of now, public colleges and intermediate schools are offering training in 289 key occupations, including 62 international-level, 93 ASEAN-level, and 134 national-level occupations, across 411 institutions (250 colleges and 161 intermediate schools). These are distributed across the following regions: 65 in the Northern midlands and mountainous areas, 130 in the Red River Delta, 97 in the North Central and Central Coastal regions, 16 in the Central Highlands, 50 in the Southeast, and 53 in the Mekong Delta.

1.8.3. Reform of Higher Education

The HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) provides the legal framework for universities to exercise autonomy in governance, finance, training, and scientific research. By 2022, more than 30 universities had been approved by the government to pilot institutional autonomy, with many achieving positive results in improving educational quality, expanding international cooperation, and upgrading infrastructure. Since its pilot implementation began in 2014, 142 out of 232 universities in Vietnam are now eligible for institutional autonomy as defined by the amended Law on Higher Education (2018). Currently, 32.7% of universities are able to cover both their recurrent and investment expenditures, while 13.7% can cover recurrent expenditures alone. Reports from autonomous universities indicate a significant increase in total revenue. The average income has risen by 20.8% for academic staff and 18.7% for administrative staff. Notably, the proportion of lecturers earning over VND 200 million per year increased from 19.4% to 31.3%, and those earning over VND 300 million rose from 0.7% to 5.9% after three years of implementing autonomy.

This shift, driven by institutional autonomy reforms, aims to enhance universities' responsiveness, quality assurance, and competitiveness in the context of international integration. The impact of these reforms is being monitored through various mechanisms, including MOET's policy review processes, accreditation outcomes, and periodic institutional self-assessment reports. These monitoring efforts focus on how autonomy contributes to improving educational quality, expanding programme offerings, and increasing access to HE, especially in underrepresented regions and among disadvantaged groups. Importantly, institutional autonomy has begun to influence the way HEIs develop and level qualifications. Autonomy allows universities greater flexibility in designing LOs and aligning programs with national standards and VQF levels. It also supports innovation in credit structures, interdisciplinary offerings, and pathways for recognition of prior learning (RPL). As autonomy becomes more widespread, it is expected to play a pivotal role in driving both diversification and expansion of HE, thereby contributing to higher participation rates and better alignment with the labor market and AQRF's expectations.

1.8.4. Cross-Sector Reforms

Enhancement of Examination and Assessment Methods

The national high school graduation examination has been streamlined to reduce pressure on students and families while maintaining objectivity and transparency. Since 2020, the exam has served a dual purpose: certifying high school graduation and providing data for university admissions. Many universities have proactively adopted diverse admission methods, such as academic record-based admission, aptitude tests, and combined admissions, thereby enhancing flexibility and alignment with the specific needs of different academic programs.

Enhancement of ICT-based Educational Practices

Alongside government policies, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the adoption of information technology in teaching and learning. Institutions introduced online learning models using digital platforms and open educational resources. MOET issued guidelines and support policies to ensure the quality of online education and promoted digital transformation in education toward building a smart education ecosystem and fostering lifelong learning.

Ensurance of Fairness and Equality in Access to Education

The Vietnamese Government continues to implement supportive policies for disadvantaged students, particularly those in remote areas and ethnic minority communities, to ensure equal access to education for all. Measures such as tuition fee exemptions or reductions, scholarships, and financial aid are widely applied, contributing to increased age-appropriate school enrollment rates and a reduction in dropout rates.

To increase access to higher education after high school, Vietnam's Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) organizes a single national examination after 12th grade, known as the High School Graduation Examination. The results of this examination are also used for candidates to apply to universities based on their strengths.

In addition, MOET applies various other methods for students to gain university admission, including: using High School Graduation Examination results, using academic transcripts from three years of high school, using results from national and international exams, using international certificates, using results from aptitude assessment tests conducted by reputable universities, or allowing universities to organize their own separate entrance exams.

CRITERION
2

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL BASIS OF ALL RELEVANT NATIONAL BODIES INVOLVED IN THE REFERENCING PROCESS ARE CLEARLY DETERMINED AND PUBLISHED BY THE MAIN PUBLIC AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REFERENCING PROCESS

2.1. Agencies Involved in the Referencing Process
2.1.1. Overview

In Vietnam, the development of the Referencing Report between the VQF and the AQRF is coordinated by MOET, in collaboration with MOLISA, and with the active involvement of many relevant agencies. The key agencies and bodies directly involved in this process include the Department of HE, the Vietnam Quality Management Agency (QMA), the Directorate of TVET, higher education institutions (HEIs), accreditation agencies, representatives of employers, and representatives of learners.

All of these bodies play important roles in the development, appraisal, issuance, and QA of qualifications within the national education system. Their participation is intended to ensure that the referencing process is conducted comprehensively, accurately reflects current practice, and aligns with the AQRF criteria. Stakeholder consultations were carried out through the activities of the NAC for the development of the Referencing Report established by MOET, as well as through inter-ministerial meetings, thematic workshops, and surveys to collect feedback and build broad consensus.

To effectively implement the referencing process and meet the requirements of the AQRF, Vietnam undertook four key actions:

1. Clearly defined the roles and functions of all agencies involved in the development and implementation of the VQF–AQRF Referencing Report, in line with their management, technical, and inter-sectoral coordination mandates.

2. Established a comprehensive legal basis for the participation of each body through relevant laws, decrees, circulars, and decisions issued by the Government and ministries.

3. Publicised the responsibilities and legal basis of each agency through the Referencing Report, the official websites of relevant ministries and agencies, and formal documentation to ensure transparency for domestic and international stakeholders.

4. Ensured representation and consensus by developing an inter-agency consultation mechanism involving stakeholders from state management bodies, training institutions, professional organizations, enterprises, and learners.

2.1.2. Agencies and Representatives Directly and Indirectly Involved in the Referencing Process

Vietnam established the NAC for the development and review of the Referencing Report and organised expert roundtables and consultation meetings to gather feedback from relevant agencies. The NAC includes representatives of agencies directly involved in drafting the Referencing Report. Other relevant organizations contributed evaluations, comments, and recommendations during expert dialogues, consultations, or in written form, to ensure transparency and accountability.

Table 2.1. The role of agencies directly and indirectly participating in the development of referencing process

No.	Agency Name	Role in AQRF Reference	Functions related to VQF	Legal Basis/ Jurisdiction
AGENCIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE FORMULATION OF REFERENCING PROCESS				
1	**MOET**	The agency leading the AQRF reference process, developing the outline and content related to HE in the Referencing Report	Manages general education and HE; develops and issues academic programs; manages qualifications; recognises foreign qualifications	Education Law (2019); Decree No. 37/2025/ND-CP dated 26/02/2025; Decision 1982/QD-TTg (promulgated VQF)
1.1	**Department of HE**	As a unit under MOET, it is tasked with researching and establishing a network of experts to develop referencing process, responsible for the content of referencing process	Manages admissions and academic activities of HEIs; advises on policies to improve the overall quality of the HE system	Decision No. 552/QD-BGDDT dated March 3, 2025
1.2	**Department of Quality Management**	Develops regulations for evaluating program quality and institutional quality; coordinates international qualification recognition	Manages accreditation activities; recognises international qualifications	Circular 13/2021/TT - Board of Directors; Circular No. 26/2013/TT- BGDDT
1.3	**Department of International Cooperation**	Supports the search and collection of international resources for learning from global experiences in Referencing Report development; provides information on the mutual recognition of qualifications between Vietnam and other countries	Manages and coordinates international cooperation activities	
1.4	**Department of Secondary Education**	Supports the provision of information on general education		

No.	Agency Name	Role in AQRF Reference	Functions related to VQF	Legal Basis/ Jurisdiction
2	MOLISA	Responsible for developing the content on TVET in the Referencing Report	Manages TVET, accredits TVET quality, issues national occupational skill certificates	Law on Vocational Education (2014); Decree 15/2019/ND-CP
2.1	Direc-torate of TVET	Technical lead in developing TVET qualification standards and issuing certificates	Develops the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), accredits TVET quality, and issues diplomas and vocational certificates	Circular No. 34/2017/TT-BLDTBXH; Circular No. 27/2018/TT-BLDTBXH; Circular No. 34/2021/TT-BLDTBXH; Decision 1982/QD-TTg
3	Accred-itation Centers/ Bodies (VNU-CEA, VCEA...)	Conducts external evaluation of academic programs and HEIs	Ensures both IQA and EQA	HE Law amended in 2018; Circular No. 38/2013/TT- BGDDT
4	Univer-sities, colleges, vocational secondary schools	Design and implement academic/training programs; issue qualifications	Implement programs aligned with LOs compatible with the VQF; subject to accreditation	HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018); Law on Vocational Education
AGENCIES INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REFERENCING PROCESS				
1	Ministry of Home Affairs	Provides input on job positions and civil servant grades related to qualification levels	Establishes compatibility between qualifications and the job placement system	Law on Cadres and Civil Servants; De-cree No. 204/2004/ ND-CP
2	Ministry of Finance	Allocates, guides, inspects, and supervises the use of funding for implementing the referencing process in compliance with regulations	Provides financial support to ensure working conditions for the Advisory Council for the development and appraisal of the Referencing Report	Decision No. 1982/ QD-TTg dated Oct 18, 2016
3	Represen-tatives of the em-ployers	Provide feedback on LOs to ensure alignment with labor market needs	Link qualifications with practical competencies	Decree No. 48/2015/ ND-CP on business consultation
4	Learner Represen-tatives	Participate in surveys on responsiveness and program effectiveness	Assess LOs based on outcome-based standards	Results of the survey of students and stu-dents post-gradua-tion staff

The diagram below illustrates the roles and responsibilities of involved stakeholders in the referencing process.
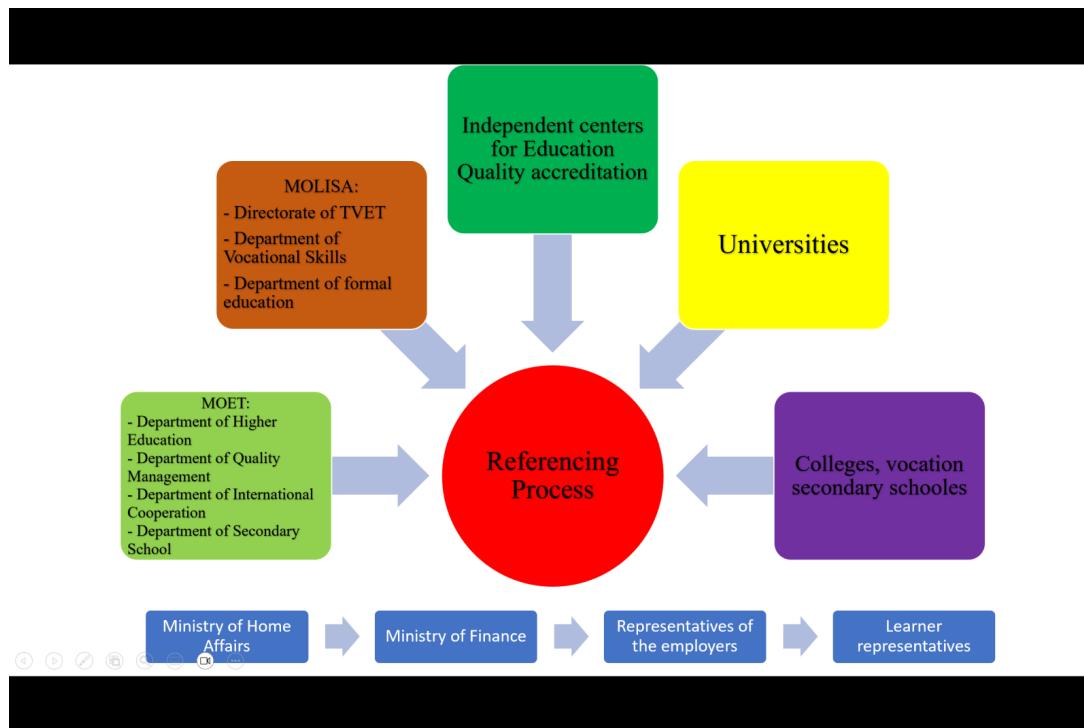
Figure 2.1. Roles and Responsbilibilties of involved stakeholders in referencing process

Because colleges were not directly managed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) represented these colleges in the Drafting Committee for the Reference Report. The process of gathering feedback from colleges was therefore conducted indirectly through MOLISA, in its role as the direct managing agency responsible for policies related to TVET.

Since 2020, MOET has convened monthly meetings with key stakeholders from agencies directly involved in the development of the referencing process to gather and update inputs for the report. After one year, a draft report was circulated to agencies and individuals indirectly involved in the process, inviting them to provide comments and feedback.

The consultation methods included direct discussions, written submissions via email, and verbal notes. The process and the draft were not publicly released in order to maintain confidentiality. In Vietnam, draft reports are not permitted to be published or disseminated until they have been formally approved and issued by the competent authorities.

Table 2.2. Role of principle agencies in processing qualifications

Agency	Role in Referencing/ VQF	Legal Mandate	Coordination Points
MOET (Ministry of Education and Training)	Oversees higher education, lifelong learning, continuing education; manages HE accreditation agencies.	Law on Higher Education (2012, amended 2018); Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg (2016) approving VQF.	Coordinates with MOLISA on QA and qualification levelling; works with accreditation agencies.

Agency	Role in Referencing/ VQF	Legal Mandate	Coordination Points
Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)	Oversees TVET and occupational skills standards; manages skills assessment and certification.	Law on Vocational Education (2014); Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg (2016).	Coordinates with MOET on credit transfer and qualification alignment; works with employer associations.
Ministry of Finance / Ministry of Health	Regulate qualifications in sectoral domains (e.g. finance, medicine, health professions).	Relevant sectoral laws and regulations.	Coordinate with MOET/MOLISA to align sectoral qualifications with VQF.
Accreditation Agencies	Conduct external QA of institutions and programmes in HE and TVET.	Authorised under MOET (HE) and MOLISA (TVET) regulations.	Report outcomes to respective ministries; provide public QA data.

2.2. Structure and Responsibilities of the National Advisory Council (NAC) for the Development and Appraisal of the Referencing Report

2.2.1. Composition and Role of the NAC in the Referencing Process

The NAC was established by MOET under Decision No. 1639/QĐ-BGDĐT dated May 28, 2021. The Council comprises four subcommittees: Standing Subcommittee, the Secretariat Subcommittee, the Referencing Report Development Subcommittee, and the Referencing Report Appraisal Subcommittee. The Council consists of 49 members, including officials from MOET and academic experts from domestic universities. It is tasked with organising and implementing the development of the Referencing Report between the VQF and AQRF, in alignment with regional integration processes and Vietnam's commitments within the ASEAN Community framework. In addition, MOET also established an Expert Advisory Group to support the development of the Referencing Report. The structure of the NAC ensures *inter-sectoral, inter-level, and cross-disciplinary* representation, including members from the following groups:

Table 2.3. Roles of Council members and the advisory expert group for the development of the referencing process

Member Group	Specific agencies/units	Role
Government Agencies	MOET – Department of Quality Management	Overall coordination, approval of the report content, and primary responsibility to the Government for the Referencing Report; responsible for the HE component.
	MOLISA – Directorate of TVET	Responsible for the TVET component of the referencing process; develops, manages, and implements the NSQF.

Member Group	Specific agencies/units	Role
Units under MOET directly involved	- Department of HE - Department of Secondary Education - Department of International Cooperation - Department of Science, Technology and Environment Department of Financial Planning	Develop the report outline and related content on training, finance, international cooperation, etc.; provide in-depth consultation, conduct benchmarking analysis, and draft level descriptors.
Professional Advice	- Representatives of universities - Representatives of accreditation organizations - Representative of Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences	Provide in-depth consultation, conduct comparative analysis, and draft level descriptors.
Non-state members	- Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges - Businesses, employers - Representatives of Learners	Provide recommendations on suitability for the labor market

Endorsement and Consensus-Building Process

The referencing process and the final Vietnam AQRF Referencing Report received formal endorsement from all principal stakeholders through inter-ministerial coordination and the oversight of the National Advisory Council (NAC). Institutional commitment and cooperation were formalized through official decisions, directives, and written endorsements issued by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). These formal declarations are provided in Appendix XII as evidence of institutional support and collective responsibility for the referencing outcome.

The process of reaching consensus among stakeholders was conducted through a series of technical workshops, inter-ministerial consultations, and iterative reviews coordinated by the NAC and the Referencing Working Group. During these sessions, feedback from participating ministries, quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, professional associations, and employer representatives was presented, discussed, and reconciled. Differing perspectives were addressed through evidence-based discussion and expert validation until a shared position was reached.

Endorsement from non-government stakeholders, including representatives of professional bodies, employers, and academic experts, was obtained through written feedback, consultation meetings, and participation in advisory and validation panels. This participatory process

ensured that the final referencing conclusions reflected broad consensus, inclusiveness, and professional credibility, consistent with the AQRF Referencing Guidelines (2020) and international good practice in qualifications framework referencing.

2.2.2. Responsibilities of the NAC in Developing and Appraising the Referencing Report

- MOET coordinated with MOLISA regarding the development of the Referencing Report. The NAC established by MOET participated in meetings with representatives and experts from MOLISA to further refine the VQF–AQRF Referencing Report.

- The NAC studied and clarified for relevant authorities the characteristics and objectives of the VQF and AQRF, as well as other related regional QRFs; the overall role of the VQF in improving the quality of education and training; and the key factors influencing the development and implementation of the VQF in Vietnam.

- It identified the relationship between the NQF and systems for skills development and certification; and the link between the NQF and other levels within the national education system.

- It provided a clear description of the VQF and its level-specific requirements, along with relevant quality criteria/standards for LOs and output standards; addressed issues of qualification recognition and QA for academic programs; and identified potential challenges in implementing the NQF in Vietnam.

- The NAC studied the experiences of selected countries—such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and ASEAN nations—in the development and implementation of NQFs, including: their approaches to designing and advancing NQFs, implementation models, governance structures, practical challenges and lessons learned, mechanisms and procedures for updating or revising NQFs (if applicable), and related legal and regulatory documents.

In addition, it examined real-life applications of NQF-related policies for adjusting, updating, and assuring the quality of training and education programs; state management practices and oversight mechanisms for enforcing NQF requirements in institutions; and experiences in referencing national frameworks to the AQRF - drawing lessons and implications for Vietnam.

The NAC also explored the relationship between the NQF and QA in education and school/university governance; clarified qualification governance issues in both HE and TVET; and analysed governance models linked to NQFs.

The NAC recommended expediting the implementation of the VQF and the urgent development of program standards across academic fields and disciplines at all HE levels, as required by Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT, dated 22th June 2021. In the near future, priority will be given to developing and issuing program standards in key areas such as: engineering and technology, architecture and construction, accounting and finance, agriculture–forestry–fisheries, law, education sciences and teacher training, and foreign languages.

The NAC monitors the implementation of the VQF across the education and training system, including the development of LOs standards in both HE and TVET. It assesses the

alignment of current training/education programs with VQF requirements and evaluates the impact of VQF implementation on education and training practices, as well as on education governance and management in both sectors. Based on this, the NAC proposed: directions for innovation and quality enhancement in training and education; appropriate measures for implementing the VQF, including necessary policies and mechanisms; governance structures and management models for the VQF; the issuance of relevant guidance and regulatory documents on the implementation and application of the VQF in both HE and TVET; and arrangements for the operation and governance of the VQF and the AQRF Referencing Committee.

2.2.3. Roles of Subcommittees within the NAC in Supporting the Referencing Report

Table 2.4. Responsibilities of the subcommittees within the NAC for the development and appraisal of the referencing report

SUBCOMMITTEE NAME	COMPOSITION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE	TASK
Standing subcommittee	The 11 members are leaders of MOET, leaders of units under MOET (Department of HE, Department of Education International Cooperation, Department of Quality Management department, Department of Planning and Finance), leaders of a number of national and regional universities, leaders of the Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges, leaders of the Institute of Vocational Education Studies, leaders of the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences.	- Sets the direction for the content of the Referencing Report; - Establishes working principles and assigns tasks to other sub-committees. - Monitors and ensures the quality of the Referencing Report; - Be the body that approves the content before submitting the Referencing Report to the AQRF committee.
Referencing Report development sub-committee	Includes 15 members, who are experts with in-depth expertise in academic program development, accreditation, and institutional management.	- Reviews and studies the regulations and guidelines of the AQRF Committee for developing the Referencing Report. - References the experience of others ASEAN countries in developing their Referencing Reports. - Develops the outline of the Referencing Report. - Finalizes the criteria within the Referencing Report. - Advises the standing sub-committee on the direction and content of the Referencing Report.

SUBCOMMITTEE NAME	COMPOSITION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE	TASK
Referencing Report appraisal sub-committee	Includes 12 members: leaders of units in MOET, leaders of units under MOLISA, experts in accreditation, academic program accreditation, representatives of employers (Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales)	- Appraises the content of the Referencing Report. - Solicits feedback from relevant agencies, organizations, and individuals; synthesizes the feedback; and provides recommendations for the Referencing Report. - Assesses the quality of the Referencing Report.
Expert advisory group for the development of the reference report	Comprises 10 members, including experts in curriculum development and accreditation, QA in education and training institutions, and university lecturers.	- The Expert Group is responsible for advising MOET in developing a high-quality, effective, and timely Referencing Report.
Secretariat sub-committee	Comprises 9 members: officers of different units under MOET	- Develops the work plans for the Subcommittees; - Ensures logistical, financial, and working conditions for the Subcommittees; - Coordinates administrative matters throughout the development of the Referencing Report.

Other information related to the working agenda of Sub-committee are provided in Criterion 10.

2.3. The Engagement of Observer(s) from Another ASEAN Member State and International Expertise in the Referencing Process

The AQRF Referencing Guidelines recommend that an observer from another ASEAN Member State be invited to participate in the national referencing process, in order to enhance transparency, comparability, and regional trust.

During the preparation of the Vietnam Referencing Report, the National AQRF Committee acknowledges that it was not able to secure the participation of such an observer. Vietnam was fully aware of this requirement; however, due to objective constraints—including limited time for coordination, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulties in aligning schedules with potential partner countries, and changes in personnel within the region—the participation of an ASEAN observer representative could not be secured during this referencing cycle.

Recognising this shortcoming, Vietnam took proactive steps to uphold the transparency and credibility of the process through alternative mechanisms:

• **Broad-based national consultations** were conducted, involving ministries, qualifications and quality assurance agencies, professional associations, higher education institutions, and TVET providers.

• **International, independent advisor:** Vietnam secured the expertise of Ms. Ngan-Ha Ngo, an education and quality assurance specialist with extensive experience in both Vietnam and New Zealand, including in the Quality Assurance Division of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). Ms. Ngo provided independent advice throughout the process, reviewed methodology, and ensured alignment with AQRF criteria and international best practice.

• **International, external reviewer:** On the recommendation of the AQRF Committee, Vietnam invited Professor Órla Barry, Head of Qualifications Information & Learning Opportunities, Quality and Qualifications Ireland to serve as an external reviewer of the draft report. Dr. Barry's expertise in qualifications frameworks and her direct experience supporting other ASEAN Member States provided Vietnam with a critical, independent assessment. Her written comments, particularly on evidence presentation, credit allocation, and readability, informed substantial revisions to strengthen transparency and comparability.

These measures ensured that the referencing methodology and outcomes were developed with full alignment to the AQRF criteria, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework, and international good practice.

Vietnam reaffirms its strong commitment to the AQRF process and to building regional trust. For the next scheduled update of this Referencing Report, Vietnam will ensure that at least one ASEAN Member State observer is formally invited to participate in the process. In addition, Vietnam will seek to expand bilateral and regional consultations to enhance mutual understanding and confidence in the outcomes of the referencing.

In light of the above, Vietnam respectfully requests the AQRF Committee to note these circumstances and to consider the present report for endorsement, on the basis of its technical quality, transparency, and demonstrated commitment to remedy this gap in the next cycle.

CRITERION
3

THE PROCEDURES FOR INCLUDING QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OR FOR DESCRIBING THE PLACE OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM ARE TRANSPARENT

3.1. Overview of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)
3.1.1. Objectives of the VQF

The Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) is an eight-level national framework approved by the Prime Minister in Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg on 18 Oct 2016. It applies system-wide across vocational education (TVET) and higher education (HE), as defined in the Law on Vocational Education and the Law on Higher Education. VQF levels (1–8) are expressed through outcome standards in three domains: *Knowledge* (factual/theoretical), *Skills* (cognitive/practical), and *Autonomy/Responsibility* (application). The Decision sets out level descriptors and requires that qualifications state expected learning outcomes (LOs) aligned to the appropriate descriptor. MOET's programme-standards circular makes VQF compliance mandatory for every programme, operationalising the framework at programme level for both programme approval and accreditation. As a core component of Vietnam's national quality assurance (QA) system, the VQF serves as the benchmark for curriculum design and assessment (internal QA) and for external evaluation (EQA/accreditation), meaning accredited institutions and programmes must evidence alignment of their LOs to the relevant VQF level. In 2025, the Government consolidated responsibility for vocational education under MOET (transfer from MOLISA)—a structural change expected to streamline VQF implementation across general, Technical and Vocational Education Traininng (TVET) , and Higher Education (HE).

The VQF is promulgated with the following objectives:

(1) To classify and standardize competencies, minimum learning volumes, and qualifications/certificates appropriate to the levels of TVET and HE in Vietnam, thereby contributing to the improvement of human resource training quality;

(2) To establish an effective mechanism linking employers' human resource requirements with the qualifications system through training, assessment, inspection, evaluation, and QA/accreditation activities.

(3) To provide a foundation for planning the network of education and training institutions, developing learning outcome standards across sectors and qualification levels, and formulating policies that ensure quality and enhance the effectiveness of human resource development. It also aims to establish linkages with qualifications frameworks of other countries through regional and international reference frameworks, thereby facilitating mutual recognition of

qualifications and improving the quality and competitiveness of the workforce. Furthermore, it supports the creation of articulation mechanisms between qualification levels, the development of a learning society, and the promotion of lifelong learning.

The VQF structure comprises: (1) Qualification levels; (2) Level descriptors; (3) Minimum learning volumes, expressed as the number of credits that learners must accumulate for each level; (4) Qualifications and certificates-documents issued by an education institution to a learner upon successful completion of an academic program that meets the institution's prescribed LOs.

The VQF is structured into eight levels as below:
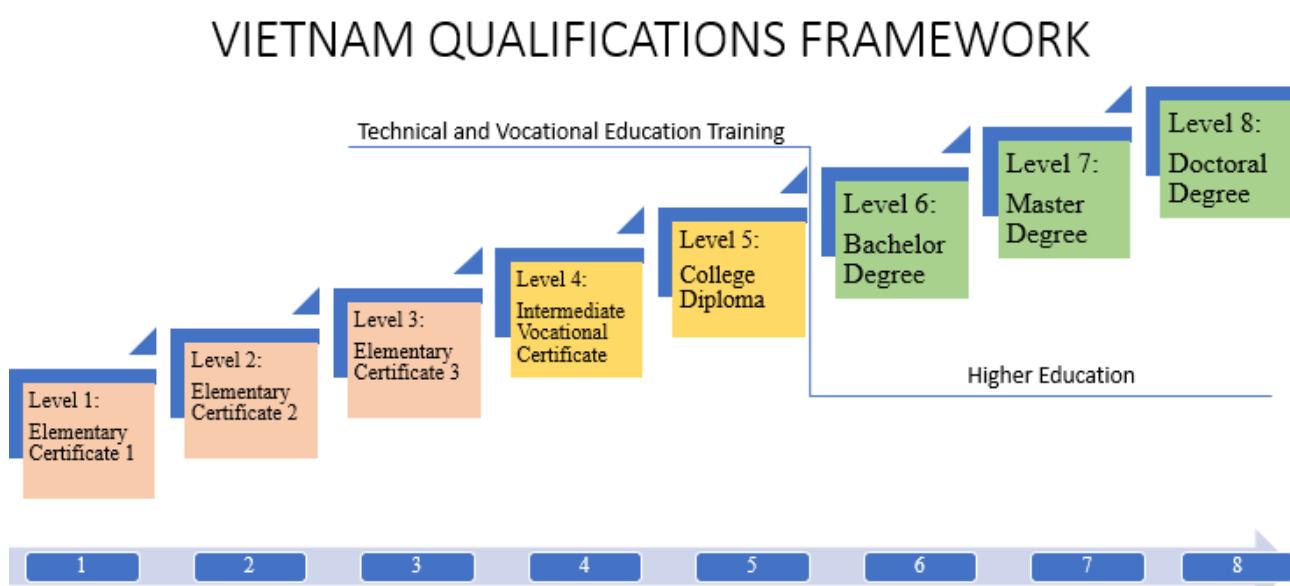
Figure 3.1. Levels, Sectors, and Qualification Types of VQF

Levels 1 to 5 correspond to the training levels within the TVET system, while Levels 6 to 8 align with the qualification levels of HE.

3.1.2. Development Process of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)

The development of the VQF involved multiple agencies, with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) serving as the lead agency, and the Government Office acting as the coordinating body for submission to the Prime Minister. To ensure transparency, the VQF development process followed the standardized legal procedures required for official documents approved by the Prime Minister. The process included the following steps:

Step 1: MOET established a Drafting Committee and Editorial Team for the VQF, reviewed legal documents and international practices, conducted impact forecasting, and organized surveys and stakeholder roundtables. A draft VQF was published on MOET's website to solicit public comments.

Step 2: After incorporating stakeholder feedback and finalizing the draft, MOET circulated it to the following for official feedback: 18 ministries and ministerial-level agencies, HEIs, colleges and professional and educational associations (e.g., Association of Universities and Colleges of Vietnam, Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations).

Step 3: The Government established the NAC to assess the feasibility, accuracy, and relevance of the VQF.

Step 4: Following the appraisal results, MOET responded to and addressed the NAC's feedback, revised the draft, and submitted the finalized VQF to the Government Office for official issuance by the Prime Minister. This entire process was transparent and published on the internal systems of the Government and MOET. All expert consultations and roundtable discussions were covered by public media outlets. The promulgated VQF was also published on the official websites of the Government, MOET, and legal information platforms to ensure public accessibility and usability.
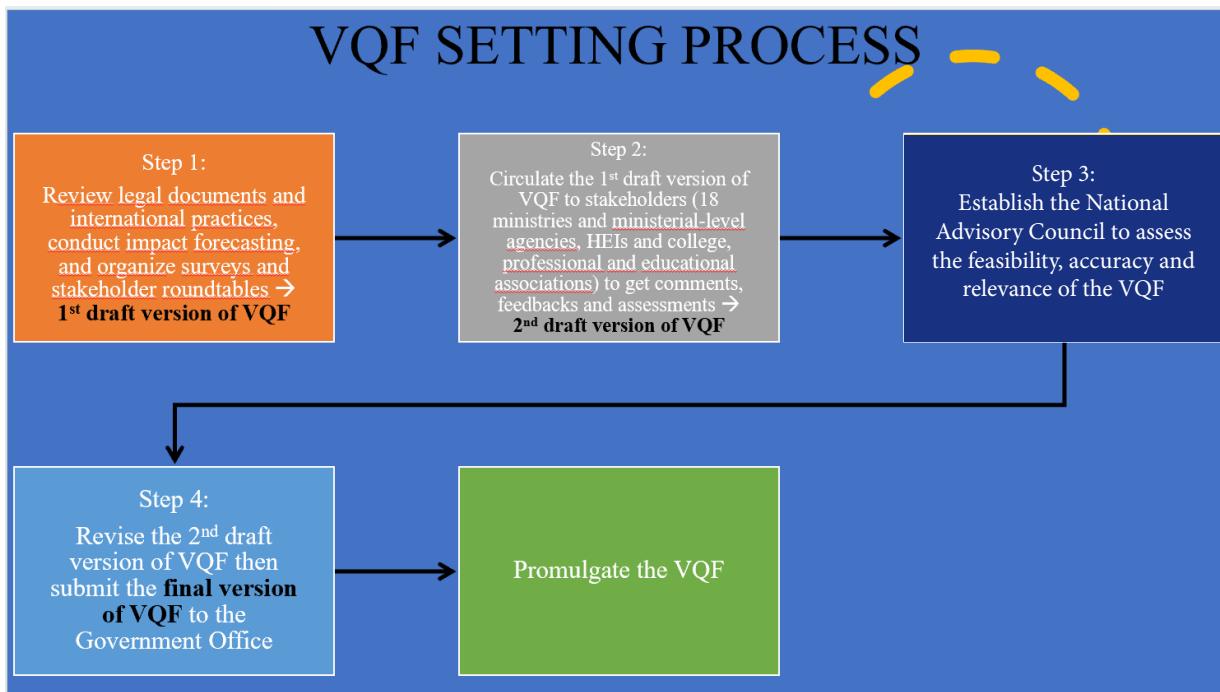
Figure 3.2. VQF setting process

3.1.3. Key Framework-Building Agencies and Legal Provisions

MOET was assigned to lead the development of the VQF in collaboration with MOLISA. MOET has issued clear and transparent regulations regarding the recognition and classification of qualifications within the VQF, which are publicly available on its official website.

The VQF includes general requirements for all qualification levels and specific standards for each level within the national education and training system. The process of assigning a qualification to the VQF or describing its place within the framework follows clearly defined procedures with legally and technically transparent guidelines.

To operationalize the VQF, guiding circulars were issued by MOET (for HE) and MOLISA (for TVET). These documents regulate the processes for designing, appraising, approving, and publishing academic programs for each level in the VQF. Programs must specify LOs, credit volumes, QA conditions, and requirements for independent accreditation.

3.1.4. Guiding Principles for Determining Qualification Levels under the VQF

The process of determining a qualification level within the VQF is foundational to building, describing, and systematizing the national education framework. This process is governed by several core principles to ensure transparency, consistency, international comparability, and practical relevance. These include:

* **QA and validity**: Each qualification level must be linked to the national QA system, regulated by state authorities, and grounded in legal provisions. Qualification levels are based on both theoretical and practical considerations, including educational practices and labor market demands. Each level must be defined according to clear quality criteria and legal standards. The VQF was officially approved under Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016, which outlines qualification levels from elementary certificates to doctoral degree and defines required credit volumes and expected competencies.

* **LOs as the central focus**: Each level is described through *the three main pillars of VQF,* including: (1) *knowledge*, (2) *skills*, and (3) *levels of autonomy and responsibility.* These are quantitative and qualitative criteria, employed to clearly distinguish between levels 1 to 8. This ensures that learners achieve the necessary competencies corresponding to their training level. Universities are required to establish general LO frameworks for each qualification level. In addition, for every academic program, institutions must develop specific outcomes standards that align with the overall qualifications framework.

Table 3.1. The LOs of an academic program

Outcomes standard content	Specific examples
Knowledge	Demonstrate mastery of grammar, vocabulary, linguistics, and English teaching methodologies appropriate for high school students.
Skill	Ability to use English at a minimum proficiency level equivalent to IELTS 6.5; ability to design lesson plans oriented toward competency-based education.
Autonomy – Responsibility	Demonstrate independent thinking and critical reflection in pedagogy; capable of self-directed learning and continuous professional development.

* **Principle of clear distinction and interconnection between levels**: The VQF is designed with eight levels, from elemental certificate to doctoral degrees, enabling clear differentiation between qualification levels while facilitating articulation within the education system. This supports learners in smoothly transitioning between levels of study. Each level must be constructed in a way that distinguishes it from others, yet still ensures both horizontal and vertical articulation within the education and training system. This promotes lifelong learning and mutual recognition across programs and types of training. This principle is outlined in Decision No. 18/2017/QĐ-TTg dated 31 May 2017 of the Prime Minister, which regulates articulation between intermediate, college, and university levels.

* **Publicity, transparency and accessibility:** Information about qualification levels in the VQF is publicly available, enabling all stakeholders—both domestic and international, including institutions, regulatory bodies, learners, and employers—to easily access and utilize it. To support institutions and learners in searching, understanding, and applying information on academic disciplines, MOET issued Circular No. 09/2022/TT-BGDĐT dated 6 June 2022. This circular provides a Statistical Classification of HE Disciplines, including detailed codes for all current academic disciplines categorized by qualification level in Vietnam.

* **Reference to regional and international qualification frameworks:**

In the process of defining qualification levels, the VQF takes into account compatibility with frameworks such as the AQRF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to

enhance the recognition of qualifications and international labor mobility. This principle ensures that qualifications in the VQF can:

- be compared, referenced, and recognised as equivalent to qualifications in other countries;

- facilitate academic and labor mobility across borders;

- fulfil international and regional commitments on education and employment.

* Other principles:

It is worth noting that, unlike some other countries in the world and within the region, Vietnam - due to the particular characteristics of its education system - does not have a specialised agency responsible for registering academic programs against qualification levels (such as the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) in New Zealand or the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) in Malaysia). In Vietnam, the management system is still designed to ensure quality and consistency in the determination and administration of qualification levels.

3.1.5. *Governance Roles and Operational Procedures for the Assessment and Classification of Qualifications within VQF Levels*

Role of MOET: MOET issues regulations on academic disciplines and program standards, including LOs and guidelines for program development processes from Level 6 to Level 8 of the VQF. Based on these regulations, HEIs independently develop their own academic programs. MOET is responsible for promulgating and managing the list of academic disciplines at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels, as well as for considering the approval of institutions proposals to offer specific academic programs. When a university intends to offer a new program in a specific discipline, it must prepare a proposal that demonstrates its institutional capacity and the social demand for human resources in the proposed field. For universities without sufficient autonomy, MOET appraises the proposal for program delivery and, if the proposal meets the regulatory requirements, issues a formal decision granting the university permission to enrol and train students in that discipline. For universities with full autonomy in academic and training matters, the institution prepares the proposal in accordance with regulations and reports it to MOET. MOET retains the responsibility for regularly inspecting and monitoring the opening and delivery of academic programs across all universities.

- In addition, the assessment and classification of qualifications within the levels of the VQF are conducted through a multi-tiered system of advisory and appraisal councils, supported by formal procedures, stakeholder representation, and ministerial ratification. These professional councils, comprising representatives from institutions, state management agencies, and independent experts, operationalize the assessment and classification of qualifications in higher education (HE) as follows:

Higher education

In higher education, the process of setting and assuring program/field standards involves both Advisory Councils (Hội đồng tư vấn khối ngành) and Appraisal Councils (Hội đồng thẩm định), established under *Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT on educational program standards of higher education qualifications*.

(i) Advisory Councils (sectoral councils):

- **Composition:** At least 9 members, including representatives of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the line ministries, the drafting body, universities, enterprises, professional associations, human resource management agencies, and quality assurance experts. Members must be respected specialists with appropriate qualifications and experience.

- **Structure:** The Council has a Chair, Vice-Chairs, members, and a Secretary, with sub-committees (specialised panels) formed for particular disciplines. These sub-committees may include additional independent experts to strengthen expertise.

- **Responsibilities:** Advisory Councils (i) identify needs for developing program standards in specific fields or sub-fields; (ii) draft and update the program standards for submission to MOET; (iii) participate in monitoring compliance of institutions with these standards; and (iv) assume accountability for the quality, relevance, and legal compliance of the standards. They must also report on progress and outcomes to MOET and the relevant line ministry.

- **Accountability:** They are legally responsible for the appropriateness, feasibility, and quality of the proposed standards and must provide explanations to state authorities, universities, and other stakeholders.

(ii) Appraisal Councils:

- Established by MOET to review the draft program standards developed by the Advisory Councils.

- Include at least 9 members drawn from MOET, line ministries, universities, enterprises, professional associations, and quality assurance experts.

- Operate under strict rules: all meetings are minuted; decisions must be formally voted on and signed by all members; conclusions must fall into one of three categories (approval; approval with revisions; rejection with reasons).

- The Council is explicitly accountable to state authorities and society and must provide justifications for its decisions.

(iii) Ministerial ratification:

- The Minister of Education and Training makes the final decision on the issuance of program standards for all higher education levels, based on the conclusions of the Appraisal Council.

- This final approval ensures uniformity and consistency across disciplines, as all professional and advisory inputs are filtered through a central ministerial decision.

- Together, this two-step process (advisory → appraisal → ministerial decision) serves as a moderation mechanism. The Advisory Councils provide technical depth and broad stakeholder input, while the Appraisal Councils ensure independent scrutiny and consistency across fields. Ministerial ratification secures national coherence.

Role of MOLISA: MOLISA is responsible for appraising and licensing TVET from Level 1 to Level 5. Circular No. 42/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 20 October 2015 (as revised by Circular No. 01/2024/TT-BLĐTBXH) issued by MOLISA specifying the minimum knowledge and competency requirements for graduates at the elementary level. Circular 04/2023/TT-BLĐTBXH amending Circular 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH on the minimum volume of

knowledge and competency requirements for learners upon graduation from intermediate and college levels. These sets of regulation ensure quality and consistency within the national TVET system. Besides, MOLISA is also responsible for the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF) and the National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC). However, as these are designed primarily for the labour market and fall under the non-formal/informal learning system, they are not included in this section but will be presented separately under Section 3.4.6.1.

Technical and Vocational Training (TVET)

In TVET, the establishment of programme standards in Vietnam (Levels 1–5 under the VQF) follows a structured process that combines expert consultation and formal appraisal to ensure quality, transparency, and alignment with national and sectoral needs. This process is stipulated in Circular No. 04/2023/TT-BLĐTBXH, which amends Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH issued by MOLISA, on the minimum volume of knowledge and competency requirements for learners upon graduation from intermediate and college levels, as outlined below:

(i) Development of draft programme standards

- Draft standards for each discipline or occupational group are first prepared, defining the minimum volume of knowledge and the competency requirements that learners must achieve upon graduation at each level (Elementary to College).

- The drafting process is guided by the *Advisory Councils for disciplinary clusters (Hội đồng tư vấn khối ngành),* which include representatives from MOET/MOLISA, line ministries, universities, vocational colleges, enterprises, professional associations, and quality assurance experts.

- The Advisory Councils ensure that programme standards are consistent with the VQF descriptors, labour market demands, and international benchmarks. They also recommend updates when necessary to reflect scientific, technological, and economic changes.

(ii) Appraisal of programme standards

Once draft standards are completed, they are submitted to an *Appraisal Council (Hội đồng thẩm định)* for review.

- **Establishment**: The Appraisal Council is established by decision of the MOLISA (now MOET) on the basis of nominations from ministries, agencies, local authorities, enterprises, and training institutions.

- **Composition**: Councils normally include 7 to 9 members, comprising a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and other members. Members are drawn from vocational education managers, teachers and lecturers, industry experts, and enterprise representatives.

- **Membership criteria**: Members must hold a university degree or higher, have at least five years' direct teaching or professional experience in the field, and be recognised for their expertise and reputation.

(iii) Roles and functions of the Appraisal Council

The Appraisal Council functions as a **professional advisory body** to the Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Its responsibilities include:

- Reviewing and evaluating the proposed programme standards (minimum knowledge requirements and competency outcomes at Elementary, Intermediate and College levels).

- Organising appraisal meetings to discuss and finalise assessments.

- Collecting written evaluations and ballots from each council member.

- Preparing a full appraisal report, including:

+ individual member evaluations,

+ minutes of meetings,

+ a consolidated appraisal report, and

+ a submission to the General Department of Vocational Education and Training (GDVET).

- The final dossier is then submitted to the Minister for official approval and promulgation.

(iv) Principles of operation

- The Appraisal Council operates under the leadership of its Chair.

- At least two-thirds of members must be present at meetings, including both the Chair and Secretary.

- Deliberations follow the principle of collective consultation and democratic decision-making: members review the draft, listen to explanations from the drafting body, discuss, and vote on the standards.

- The meeting minutes must be signed by all attending members, ensuring transparency and accountability.

(v) Assurance of continuous improvement

- Once promulgated, programme standards become the legal basis for curriculum design, programme accreditation, and quality assurance across vocational institutions nationwide.

- Both Advisory Councils and Appraisal Councils contribute to a cycle of development, validation, and revision, ensuring that vocational standards remain aligned with the VQF, labour market needs, and international frameworks.

All processes regardless of HE or TVET sectors are guided by the following principles:

- Transparency in publishing classification standards and criteria;

- Benchmarking the expected LOs of a qualification against the level descriptors of the VQF;

- Application of the "best-fit approach" in cases where qualifications show overlapping characteristics across multiple levels;

- Official documentation, including meeting minutes, council conclusions, and an approval decision issued by the competent authority.

These principles are applied during the development and operationalisation of the VQF.

However, they are not designed to assess or accredit individual academic programs. Rather, they serve as a guiding framework for determining and describing qualification levels in the national education system. Based on this framework, specific programs can be designed or adjusted to align with the appropriate VQF level.

3.1.6. Progress and Current Status of VQF Implementation

Progress by Stage:

2010–2016 (framework design & adoption): Multi-year development to formally establish the 8-level VQF.

Vietnam completed the development and official promulgation of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) through Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister dated 18 October 2016, which formally approved the eight-level VQF. This period focused on building the legal foundation and establishing the framework.

Status: completed.

2016–2020 (dissemination & capacity building; early pilots):

During this stage, the VQF was disseminated nationwide and capacity-building activities were organized for institutions and stakeholders. VQF principles were mainstreamed into MOET instruments for programme standards. The national quality assurance and accreditation network was consolidated, and universities began aligning programme learning outcomes with VQF levels.

Notably, accreditation was significantly strengthened: 200 out of 265 universities have been accredited domestically, 16 universities achieved international accreditation; 1,885 programmes were accredited domestically and 694 programmes achieved international accreditation. This means only about 40 universities have yet to achieve institutional accreditation. This is a critical step since, under current policy, a prerequisite for being granted academic autonomy is successful institutional accreditation.

Status: largely completed.

2021–2025 (consolidation; standardisation of curricula/PLOs; AQRF referencing groundwork):

- ***Programme standardisation*:** MOET promulgated standards for programme design and learning outcomes, requiring alignment with the VQF. All higher education programmes must articulate VQF-aligned LOs, strengthening the basis for accreditation and EQA. *Status*: *Ongoing.*

- ***Referencing preparation*:** A referencing mechanism for higher education was established through Decision No. 436/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister (2022), accompanied by communication and implementation plans.

Status: *Ongoing.*

- ***Training & communications:*** Training of evaluators and quality assurance personnel has been implemented. MOET and partners have run national-level trainings for >350 QA reviewers (May 2024) as part of implementation capacity.

In 2025, governance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is being restructured under the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to ensure unified implementation of the VQF.

As of October 2025 (current status):

Vietnam has established a comprehensive qualifications framework and legal instruments, including:

- Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg (2016): approval of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (eight-level structure, covering general, vocational and higher education);

- Decision No. 436/QĐ-TTg (2022): roadmap for referencing higher education qualifications to the AQRF;

- Circulars on programme standards and learning outcomes requiring alignment with the VQF.

The country is in the process of finalising its referencing to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), while simultaneously harmonising TVET after its transfer to MOET.

Challenges in the Implementation of the VQF:

Despite having a regulatory framework for qualification levels and articulation pathways (e.g., Decree No. 18), the practical implementation of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) still faces several notable challenges across both the TVET and higher education sectors:

Limited Articulation Between TVET and Higher Education

Although formal regulations permit progression from vocational education to higher education, articulation remains difficult in practice. Institutional acceptance of credits earned in vocational programmes is often limited, particularly due to differences in training objectives and programme structure.

Divergence in Curriculum Design and Training Objectives

Many vocational institutions continue to operate under traditional, year-based training models, while higher education institutions follow credit-based and academic frameworks. The disparity in expected learning outcomes—especially where vocational programmes have lower output standards—creates obstacles in recognising vocational learning for academic progression.

Mismatch Between Practical and Academic Learning Modes

TVET programmes are heavily practice-oriented, while higher education focuses on theoretical and academic development. As a result, credits from practical modules in TVET are rarely transferable to academic degree programmes, limiting learner mobility and recognition of prior learning.

Stringent Quality Assurance Requirements in Higher Education

Higher education institutions apply strict quality assurance criteria to ensure academic rigour. When students transition from vocational to academic pathways, they are often required to repeat theoretical coursework to meet university-level standards, even if they have already acquired relevant practical competencies.

These challenges highlight the structural and pedagogical gaps between the two subsystems. While efforts are underway to promote lifelong learning and mobility across the education system, full implementation of the VQF—particularly in facilitating vertical progression and credit recognition—requires ongoing reforms in programme design, institutional coordination, and quality assurance practices.

Actions taken to address these challenges

Vietnam has undertaken a number of reforms to gradually ease the bottlenecks in implementing the VQF within the TVET sector and improving articulation pathways:

Strengthening the Legal Framework for Articulation and Credit Recognition

- **Decree No. 18/2017/NĐ-CP** sets out clear regulations for credit recognition, transfer, and articulation between qualification levels, including from TVET to HE.

- **Circulars on Minimum Training Volumes (MTVET)** for TVET levels 1–5 were issued to standardise credit structures, making it easier to map and compare with HE qualifications.

- **Decision No. 436/QĐ-TTg (2020)** and related MOET decisions initiated national-level implementation of the VQF with articulation as a core goal.

Piloting and Expanding Articulation Pathways

- Pilot programmes have been developed to allow students completing college-level (level 5) TVET qualifications to enter relevant bachelor's degree programmes with partial credit transfer.

- These pathways are being mapped and formalised across specific sectors, such as tourism, ICT, and business administration, where curriculum and skill alignment is more feasible.

Enhancing Curriculum Compatibility

- Output-based curriculum reform has been carried out in both sectors to align programmes with VQF level descriptors (knowledge, skills, autonomy/responsibility).

- TVET institutions are revising training programmes to raise the standard of learning outcomes and better align with HE requirements.

Developing Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- The accreditation system now applies to both TVET and HE, ensuring programme quality and facilitating trust between sectors.

- Programme accreditation standards in both sectors explicitly require alignment with the VQF, encouraging coherence in curriculum design and assessment.

Promote articulation between VQF (Level 1-5) and NSCF

- Currently undertaking legal and structural reforms: The draft amended Law on Vocational Education and Training (2025)—to enable recognition and articulation between National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)-based certifications and VQF Levels 1–5.

Establishing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- Vietnam is developing legal frameworks and pilot models for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), especially for experienced workers in TVET sectors.

- This will support flexible pathways for learners who come through non-formal or informal learning to enter formal education or upgrade their qualifications.

Enhancing Institutional Capacity

- Training and workshops for curriculum developers, QA officers, and teaching staff have been organised to improve capacity in designing outcome-based programmes and mapping them to VQF levels.

- Institutions are supported to transition from input-based to outcome-based models, facilitating smoother alignment across the education system.

Communication and Dissemination

- Diagrams and public documents have been updated (e.g., VQF structural diagrams, articulation flowcharts) to clearly illustrate progression routes.

- Information campaigns have been conducted to raise awareness among learners, employers, and educators about how articulation and credit transfer work.

3.2. Procedures for Assigning Qualifications to VQF Levels

Procedures for determining a qualification in the VQF are established to ensure transparency and consistency with the AQRF.

Although there are unique characteristics in the classification and recognition of qualifications in the VQF compared to other qualification frameworks in the region, the assessment and inclusion processes in Vietnam's qualification framework still ensure reliability and relevance. Vietnam has developed clear QA policies, guidelines and practices to identify and recognise qualifications in the VQF, thereby helping to improve interoperability and mutual recognition in the ASEAN region.

The implementation of AQRF principles, especially those related to reliability and transparency in QA, further strengthens the recognition of Vietnam's qualifications in the region. This not only helps to enhance the value of the national level but also facilitates labor and study mobility within ASEAN.

3.2.1. Approaches to Level Inclusion within the VQF

Since the official promulgation of the VQF under Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg in 2016, Vietnam's education system has formally adopted an outcomes-based approach to qualification classification, aligning with the level descriptors of the VQF. This approach, nowadays widely adopted, involves analysing the knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility requirements that learners must meet, and mapping them against the characteristics of each qualification level. General education system (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels) is not included in the VQF.

The development of curriculum components, teaching methods, and assessment practices must all align with these learning outcomes (LOs).

Professional discussions are typically held among program developers, sector experts, and relevant stakeholders to determine the most appropriate level assignment. When a qualification does not fully align with a single level, the "best-fit" principle is applied to assign the level that most closely matches the intended outcomes. A detailed description of the LOs corresponding to all eight levels of the VQF follows.

3.2.2. Inclusion of Minimum Knowledge and Competency Requirements for TVET (MTVET) in TVET Qualifications (Levels 1–5)

The process of developing MTVET in TVET is briefly presented as follows: Figure 3.3. Process of developing MTVET in TVET
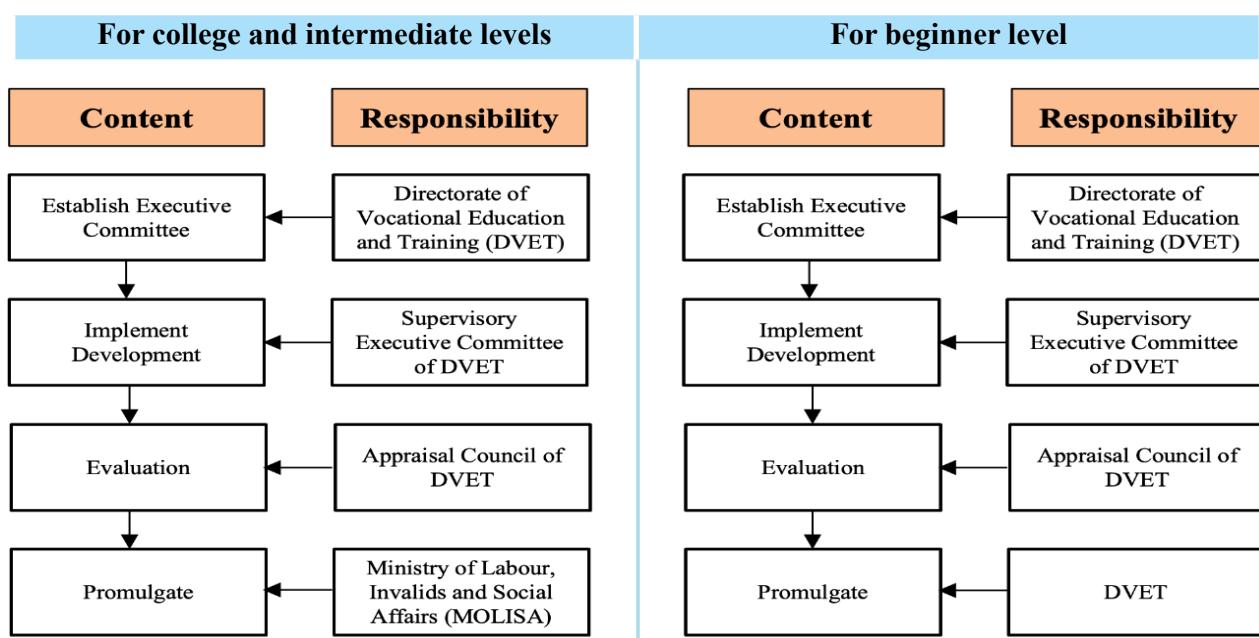
Figure 3.3. Process of developing MTVET in TVET

Table 3.2. Requirements for outcomes standards of TVET

Degree	Requirements for outcomes standards
Level 1	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with general and basic knowledge; basic operational skills to perform one or several simple, repetitive tasks of a defined occupation in an unchanging work environment, under the supervision of an instructor.
Level 2	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with practical and theoretical knowledge in a narrow scope of an occupation; general and basic knowledge of nature, culture, society, and law; professional practice skills based on standard techniques to perform several repetitive tasks in a minimally changing environment under the supervision of an instructor, with potential autonomy in certain specific activities.
Level 3	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with practical and theoretical knowledge in several areas within the scope of a trained occupation; general knowledge of nature, culture, society, and law; basic knowledge of information technology; cognitive skills, professional practice skills, and communication/interpersonal skills necessary to work independently in stable and familiar conditions.

Degree	Requirements for outcomes standards
Level 4	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge within the scope of a training field or occupation; basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law, and information technology; cognitive skills, professional practice skills, and communication/interpersonal skills required to carry out routine or complex tasks, work independently or in teams in predictable and changing conditions, with personal responsibility and responsibility for the group, capable of instructing and supervising others in performing predefined tasks
Level 5	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with practical knowledge and broad theoretical knowledge in a training field or occupation; basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law, and information technology; cognitive skills, professional practice skills, and communication/ interpersonal skills required to handle complex tasks or problems, work independently or in teams in changing work conditions, with personal responsibility, minimal guidance responsibility, and supervision and evaluation responsibilities for groups performing defined tasks.

3.2.3. Inclusion of LOs for HE Qualifications (Levels 6-8)

LOs refer to the required qualities and competencies that learners must attain upon completing an academic program. These include minimum requirements for knowledge, skills, autonomy, and responsibility expected of graduates.

The LOs of an academic program must satisfy the following requirements:

1. LOs must clearly and practically express the LOs graduates are expected to achieve in terms of general understanding and core competencies at the corresponding qualification level, along with specific requirements of the field or discipline.

2. LOs must be measurable and assessable across levels of cognitive development. They serve as a foundation for the design, implementation, and improvement of teaching content and methods, as well as for the assessment of LOs and awarding of qualifications.

3. LOs must align with the objectives of the academic program, clearly demonstrate their contributions, and reflect high-representative requirements from employers and other relevant stakeholders.

4. LOs must explicitly indicate the qualification level and satisfy the required standards for knowledge, skills, autonomy, responsibility, and competence as prescribed for that level under the VQF.

5. LOs must ensure progression toward the entry standards of higher-level qualifications (where applicable) and facilitate horizontal mobility among programs at the same qualification level—particularly those within the same disciplinary group or field.

6. LOs must be fully and clearly specified at the course/module level and within program components. Their implementation must be coherent and systematic through structured linkages between program elements.

7. LOs must be realistically achievable within the program's credit volume and duration, ensuring that most learners who meet the entry requirements can complete the program within the standard timeframe.

8. LOs must include the following components: Practical and theoretical knowledge; Cognitive skills, professional/practical skills, and communication and interpersonal skills;

The level of autonomy and personal responsibility in applying knowledge and skills to perform professional tasks.

Table 3.3. LOs of HE from Level 6-8

Degree	Requirements for outcomes standards
Level 6	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with solid practical knowledge and comprehensive, in-depth theoretical knowledge in a training field; basic knowledge of social sciences, politics, and law; cognitive skills involving critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis; professional practice skills and communication/interpersonal skills required to perform complex tasks; ability to work independently or in teams in changing work environments, with personal and group responsibility in guiding, disseminating, and popularising knowledge within the training field, and supervising others in task performance.
Level 7	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with practical knowledge and deep, broad theoretical knowledge at a level of mastery within the training field; critical thinking, analytical, synthesis, and data evaluation skills in a scientific and advanced manner; skills in research, innovation, and application of appropriate technologies in academic and professional contexts; skills in disseminating and popularising knowledge within professional domains, ability to self-orient and adapt to changing professional environments; ability to guide others in task performance, and capability to manage, evaluate, and improve professional effectiveness.
Level 8	Confirmation of the learner's qualification level with advanced, specialised theoretical and practical knowledge at the forefront of the training discipline; skills to synthesise and analyse information, identify and creatively solve problems; skills in independent, original thinking and research to create new knowledge; skills in disseminating and popularising knowledge, establishing national and international networks for managing and leading professional activities; demonstrating creative capacity, self-orientation, and leadership in professional expertise, with the ability to make expert scientific conclusions and recommendations.

3.3. Inclusion of Qualifications or Programs into the VQF
3.3.1. Procedures for The Inclusion of Qualifications or Programs in TVET

The development of training programs for TVET levels in Vietnam is based on the declared MTVET of each level, in accordance with the promulgated NOSC and established professional standards.

Heads of TVET establishments shall exercise autonomy and take full responsibility for organising, developing or selecting, and approving academic programs for VET levels. Foreign-invested TVET institutions shall also exercise autonomy and take full responsibility for developing and implementing academic programs in accordance with regulations. The determination of duration, volume of knowledge and skills, and content to be included in the academic program is based on occupational skills standards and MTVET corresponding to the level of the discipline or profession. The academic program is developed following the process illustrated in the figure below:

Content	Responsibility
Establish Executive Committee	Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET)
Develop based on National Occupational Skills Standards	Executive Committee supervised by Vocational Institution and Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
Evaluate	Appraisal Council, Vocational Institution
Promulgate	Principal of the Vocational Institution

Figure 3.4. Process of inclusion of qualification or program in TVET

3.3.2. Procedures for The Inclusion of Qualifications or Programmes in the HE System

MOET is the competent authority for managing the list of academic discipline codes and developing regulations on the licensing procedures for opening new academic programs across HEIs. This procedure has been established and applied since 2017 and has undergone multiple updates, revisions, and improvements to ensure alignment with practical realities and to guarantee the quality of educational delivery. A HEI is permitted to open a new academic program when it meets the following requirements:

a) General conditions for the proposed field of study and training level to be offered: Must align with the human resource needs for local, regional, national socio-economic development, and for the relevant field of training to ensure international integration; must be consistent with approved and publicly announced human resource development planning by ministries, sectors, or localities, or with official reports from competent state agencies (if any); must be aligned with the functions, tasks, and development strategy of the HEI; must be included in the Statistical List of Training Disciplines; must meet the requirements on academic staff and facilities. In addition, the academic program for the proposed discipline must be developed, appraised, and approved in accordance with MOET regulations. It must meet the program standards for the relevant field, discipline group, and training specialization, and be aligned with the VQF Specific conditions for opening undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs and also define requirements regarding the academic qualifications of lecturers and other level-specific requirements.

b) Procedures and regulations for inclusion of qualifications or programs at all levels of HE: Are specified in Chapter III of the Consolidated Document. Accordingly, the working group of the HEI must prepare a proposal on the intention to open the program, submit it to the institution's Scientific and Educational Council for review and conclusion. Based on this conclusion, the rector shall submit the proposal to the University Council for approval, or the

university president shall report to the University Council for approval in cases where the program involves multiple member units. Once the intention to open a new program is approved, the rector or university president (in case of multi-unit program delivery) shall direct and organise the development of the full program proposal, including all supporting evidence as per regulations. The Scientific and Educational Council shall appraise the program proposal and prepare the Dossier for Program Opening. This includes the proposal letter to open the program, the appraised program proposal, and the official approval document on the intention to open the program issued by the university).

c) Approval of the program proposal and the decision to assess or register a qualification or a program: As stipulated in Article 11, Chapter III of the Consolidated Document, as follows:

- For HEIs eligible for autonomy in program opening: The rector shall issue the decision to open the program.

- For HEIs that are subsidiary units or affiliated units of a university (collectively referred to as units) not yet eligible for autonomy in program opening: The university president shall issue the decision to open the program.

- For HEIs not yet eligible for autonomy in program opening (excluding university-affiliated units), or within a period during which they are not granted autonomy in program opening: MOET shall issue the decision to permit the opening of the academic program.

The regulations and procedures for introducing a new discipline/major of study are summarized in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5. Procedures and regulations for the inclusion of qualification or program at all levels of HE

3.4. Evaluation and Recognition of Qualifications

3.4.1. Qualification Descriptions by Credit Volume as an Indicator of Learning

Learning volume is measured by credits. The number of credits of a program does not determine the qualification level, but rather reflects the minimum required learning volume needed to meet the LOs. One credit is defined as equivalent to: 15 periods of theoretical instruction; or 30 to 45 periods of practical work, experiments, or discussions; or 45 to 90 hours of internship at a workplace; or 45 to 60 hours of writing essays, major assignments, or capstone projects/theses. One period is counted as 50 minutes. For both theoretical and practical/experimental modules, students must spend at least 30 hours of individual preparation to acquire one credit. There is difference in the way credit is calculated between the HE and TVET sectors regulated by MOET and MOLISA as in the table below.

Table 3.4. VQF Levels, Qualification Types, and Credit Allocations

VQF Level	Qualification Type	Entry condition	Minimum Training Duration / Credit Range	Qualification Description
1	Elementary Certificate I	No formal schooling required	5 credits	Learners have general and basic knowledge; basic manipulative skills to perform one or a few simple repetitive tasks of a defined profession in an unchanging work environment, with the supervision of an instructor.
2	Elementary Certificate II	Lower secondary graduates	15 credits	Learners have practical and theoretical knowledge of activities within the narrow scope of a profession, general and basic knowledge of nature, culture, society and law; professional practice skills based on standard techniques to perform a number of repetitive tasks in a very little changed environment under the supervision of an instructor, able to be autonomous in a few specific activities.
3	Elementary Certificate III	Lower secondary graduates	25 credits	Learners have practical and theoretical knowledge of a number of contents within the scope of a profession; general knowledge of nature, culture, society and law; basic knowledge of information technology; cognitive skills, professional practice skills, and communication skills necessary to be able to work independently in stable conditions and familiar environments.
4	Intermediate Vocational certificate (Trung cấp)	Lower or upper secondary graduates	35 credits	Learners have the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge within the scope of major/field of study or profession; basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law and information technology; cognitive skills, professional practice skills, communicative skills necessary to perform routine or complex tasks, work independently or in a team under

VQF Level	Qualification Type	Entry condition	Minimum Training Duration / Credit Range	Qualification Description
				known and changeable conditions, take personal responsibility, and take responsibility for the team, have the ability to guide and supervise others to perform predetermined tasks.
5	College Diploma (Cao đẳng nghề nâng cao)	Upper secondary or Intermediate holders	60 credits	Learners have practical knowledge, broad theoretical knowledge about a major/field of study or profession; basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law and information technology; have the cognitive skills, professional practice skills, and behavioral communication skills necessary to solve complex tasks or problems, work independently or in a team in changing working conditions, take individual responsibility, and have minimal instructional responsibility, supervise and evaluate the group performing the specified tasks.
6	Bachelor's Degree	Upper secondary graduates	120 credits	Learners have solid practical knowledge, comprehensive and in-depth theoretical knowledge of a major/field of study, basic knowledge of social sciences, politics and law; have cognitive skills related to criticism, analysis, and synthesis; professional practice skills, communication skills necessary to perform complex tasks; working independently or in groups under changing working conditions, taking personal responsibility and responsibility for the group in guiding, disseminating and disseminating knowledge, belonging to the training branch, and supervising others to perform their tasks.
7	Master's Degree	Bachelor's holders	60 credits	Learners have practical knowledge, deep and broad theoretical knowledge at the level of mastery of knowledge within the scope of the major/field of study; have the skills to criticize, analyze, synthesize and evaluate data and information in a scientific and advanced way; skills in research and development, innovation and use of appropriate technologies in the academic and professional fields; skill disseminate and disseminate knowledge in professional fields, have the ability to self-orient and adapt to the changing professional environment; have the ability to guide others to perform tasks and the ability to manage, evaluate and improve to improve the efficiency of professional activities.

VQF Level	Qualification Type	Entry condition	Minimum Training Duration / Credit Range	Qualification Description
8	Doctoral Degree	Master's or Bachelor's holders	90 credits (from Master); 120 credits (from Bachelor)	Learners have advanced and in-depth practical and theoretical knowledge in the leading position of the major/field of study; have skills in synthesizing, analyzing information, detecting and solving problems creatively; have independent and unique thinking and research skills, create new knowledge; have skills in disseminating and disseminating knowledge, establishing national and international cooperation networks in the management and administration of professional activities; demonstrate creative capacity, ability to self-orient and lead professionally, ability to make expert scientific conclusions and recommendations.

This table presents information from academic and vocational tracks under the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), covering Levels 1 to 8. It presents the qualification types, minimum credit requirements, and learner workload distinctions based on educational background (e.g., upper secondary vs. lower secondary graduates) where applicable. The aim is to clarify how credit volumes are calculated and applied across pathways to enhance transparency and support international recognition.

Additionally, Vietnam also has specialised undergraduate degrees officially recognised as equivalent to a bachelor's degree, including: Engineer's Degree, Architect's Degree, Medical Doctor (MD), Dental Doctor (DDS), Traditional Medicine Doctor, Veterinary Doctor, and Pharmacist Degree, among others. A specialised undergraduate degree is awarded to individuals who complete a HE's program with a minimum learning volume of 150 credits, achieving LOs equivalent to Level 7, and is officially recognised as a Level 7-equivalent qualification.

3.4.2. Illustrative Example of Credit Allocation and Workload in the VQF

To support greater transparency and comparability with international frameworks, the following example illustrates how credit volumes are translated into learner workload within the VQF, across both TVET and HE sectors.

According to Article 4, Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT (issued by MOET, for HE), and Article 3, Circular No. 10/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH (issued by MOLISA, for TVET), one credit is officially equivalent to **30** hours of learning with variations across sectors:

- *In HE:* 30 hours of learning encompasses a mix of contact time (lectures, seminars), self-study, and assessment-related activities. This typically includes 15 hours of theoretical instruction and 30 hours of individual preparation or activities such as practical work, experiments, discussions, or exercises, depending on the specific course requirements. In HE,

credit workload includes *a balance of contact hours and independent study*, aligned with academic rigor and programme outcomes, though regulated by the same credit-hour ratio.

- *In TVET*: according to Circular No. 09/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH (later replaced by Circular No. 10/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH) issued by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), one credit in vocational education is also defined as equivalent to 30 hours of learning. However, within this framework, 15 hours are allocated to theory-based instruction and 30 hours to practice or laboratory work. There is an accepted conversion ratio in which one hour of theory is considered equivalent to two hours of practice. In TVET, credit workload may place greater emphasis on *hands-on, practical training*, thus credit calculation often emphasises practical training, which may be more intensive in contact hours.

Table 3.5. Example of a Qualification Requiring 60 Credits (e.g. College Diploma)

Credit Volume	Hours per Credit	Total Learner Workload
60 credits	30 hours	**1,800 hours**

This total of 1,800 hours generally corresponds to **one full academic year of study** under full-time enrolment.

Typical Distribution of the 1,800 Hours May Include:

- **Contact time (theory/practice)**: ~600–750 hours

- **Self-study and assignments**: ~600 hours

- **Exams, projects, internships**: ~300–600 hours

This shared model supports **credit transfer and comparability** between programmes and pathways while allowing each sector to tailor learning experiences to its context.

The table that follows includes minimum credit allocation in the university-level.

Table 3.6. Program volume and workload

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION QUALIFICATION		
Elementary level		
PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Elementary certificate I		
Theory	25%	3 modules and 300 hours
Pratice	75%	
Total		**5**
Elementary certificate II		
Theory	25%	9 modules
Pratice	75%	
Total		**15**
Elementary certificate III		
Theory	25%	15 modules
Pratice	75%	

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Total		**25**

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

MINIMUM CREDITS: 35

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Foundational courses (fix)	31%	11
Theory	25% - 45%	8 - 15
Practice	55% - 75%	18 - 25
Total	**100%**	**35**

COLLEGE LEVEL

MINIMUM CREDITS: 60

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Foundational courses (fix)	31%	19
Theory	30% - 50%	19-20
Practice	50% - 70%	20-21
Total	**100%**	**60**

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION

BACHELOR DEGREE

MINIMUM CREDITS: 120

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Foundational courses	24%	29 – 42
Basic Major Courses	60-76%	16 – 37
Core Major Courses		44 – 62
Electives	13%	12 – 17
Practice and Internship	6%	7 – 15
Graduation	8%	10 – 12
Total	**100%**	**120 – 150**

MASTER DEGREE (Application-oriented program)

MINIMUM CREDITS: 60

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Core Component	38%	23
Specialized components	57%	34
Electives	33%	20
Internship	13%	6 – 9
Thesis/Graduation Project	15%	6 – 9
Total	**100%**	**60**

MASTER'S DEGREE (Research-oriented program)

MINIMUM CREDITS: 60

PROGRAM STRUCTURE	RATIO	CREDITS
Core Component	40-45%	24-27
Electives	15-20%	9-12
Scientific Research	40-50%	24-30
Total	**100%**	**60**

DOCTORAL LEVEL		
MINIMUM CREDITS: 90		
PROGRAM STRUCTURE	**RATIO**	**CREDITS**
Coursework	16%	14
Seminars / Specialized Studies	17%	16
Doctoral Dissertation	67%	60
Total	**100%**	**90**

3.4.3. Competent Authorities for Qualification Issuance and Management in Vietnam

The authorities responsible for managing and issuing qualifications and certificates in Vietnam include:

- Primary Level Certificates I, II, III issued by the Director of the Department of Education and Training or the Head of the institution;

- Teaching certificate from intermediate teacher training and college-level teacher training issued by the head of the teacher training institution or the head of the HEI that provides teacher training;

- Intermediate and college diplomas issued by the principals of intermediate schools and colleges;

- Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees issued by university presidents, rectors of universities, directors of academies, and heads of scientific research institutes authorised to offer and grant qualifications at the corresponding level.

MOET centrally manages qualifications and certificates; prescribes the essential information to be recorded on qualifications, the format of HE degrees and degree/diploma supplements; defines the formats of lower secondary, upper secondary, intermediate teacher training, and college-level teacher training diplomas, certificates within the national education system; and regulates the principles of printing templates, managing, issuing, revoking, and nullifying qualifications and certificates.

MOLISA centrally manages qualifications and certificates; prescribes the essential information to be recorded on TVET diplomas and diploma supplements; defines the formats of intermediate and college diplomas (excluding teacher training); and regulates the principles of printing templates, managing, issuing, revoking, and nullifying qualifications and certificates.

3.4.4. Evaluation and Recognition of International Qualifications

For qualifications and certificates issued by foreign institutions, learners must undergo a review and evaluation process conducted by MOET and MOLISA to determine equivalence with the corresponding levels of the VQF.

The recognition of international qualifications at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels equivalent to levels in the VQF is carried out publicly and transparently through the online application system at naric.edu.vn, and in accordance with Circular No. 13/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated 15 April 2021 issued by MOET, which regulates the conditions, procedures, authority, and process for recognition of foreign-issued qualifications for use in Vietnam.

The Vietnam NARIC (National Academic Recognition and Information Centre) under the Quality Management Department, MOET is the responsible authority for implementing this process.

The recognition of international qualifications at the intermediate and college levels equivalent to levels in the VQF is carried out under Circular No. 34/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 29 December 2017 issued by MOLISA, which provides regulations on the recognition of TVET qualifications and certificates issued by foreign TVET institutions. The DVET – MOLISA is responsible for the recognition of such international qualifications and certificates.

As of November 2023, the Department of Quality Management (Ministry of Education and Training) reported that from January 2017 to that time, a total of **37,436 applications** for recognition of foreign-issued diplomas and degrees were received. Of these, **35,662 applications were recognized**, accounting for 95.26%.

There were 1,774 unrecognized applications (4.74%) due to various reasons, including incomplete submissions or failure to meet the recognition standards and conditions.

The countries with the highest number of recognized diplomas and degrees include:

- United Kingdom: 3,908
- Australia: 3,662
- China: 3,754
- United States: 3,287
- Russian Federation: 2,878
- France: 2,324
- Japan: 1,927
- South Korea: 1,777
- Taiwan (China): 1,355
- Thailand: 1,152

The recognition of foreign diplomas and degrees in Vietnam is currently governed by Circular No. 13/2021/TT-BGDĐT issued by the Ministry of Education and Training.

3.4.5. Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with Other Countries

Vietnam has signed agreements on recognition of HE diploma equivalency with a number of countries including the Russian Federation, the French Republic, the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Austria.

Vietnam has also participated in ASEAN[1] Mutual Recognition Agreements covering 08 main occupational areas:

- Engineering Services (2005)
- Nursing Services (2006)
- Architectural Services (2007)

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1   ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs), available at:http://investasean.asean.org/index. php/page/view/asean-free-trade-area-agreements/view/757/newsid/868/asean- mutual-recognition-ar-rangements.html

- Surveying (2007)

- Dental Practitioners (2009)

- Medical Practitioners (2009)

- Tourism Professionals (2012)

- Accountancy Services (2014)

Through these agreements, qualified individuals in the eight designated fields are recognized by ASEAN member states and are permitted to practice without undergoing the process of re-obtaining professional certificates.

3.4.6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Transfer for Articulation Pathways
3.4.6.1. Definition and General Approach

In Vietnam, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is not yet fully institutionalised in the formal education system in the way commonly understood in international frameworks (i.e. recognising learning outcomes acquired through work experience, non-formal or informal settings). Instead, RPL in the Vietnamese context primarily refers to the recognition of formal learning previously undertaken in other institutions or through alternative modes of delivery, with the aim of credit transfer rather than certification or direct access.

However, increasing efforts have been made to promote the use of RPL results and accumulated knowledge and skills as a key mechanism to support lifelong learning, foster an open and flexible education system, and enhance articulation and learner mobility across the entire education and training system. This mechanism is currently being implemented in both TVET and HE, though its development remains at varying stages of maturity.

3.4.6.2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Technical and Vocational Training (TVET)

Vietnam has gradually developed regulations on recognition of prior learning (RPL) in vocational education, although the system remains fragmented between formal education pathways and labour market certification National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC). The recognition of knowledge and skills accumulated in vocational education is divided into two aspects: recognition of skills for participation in the labour market, and recognition of knowledge and skills for credit exemption in formal qualification programmes.

(i) RPL through pathways to higher education (formal qualifications aligned with VQF)

- **Decision No. 18/2017/QĐ-TTg (31 May 2017)** on articulation between intermediate, college, and university qualifications establishes the legal basis for recognising and transferring accumulated learning outcomes from lower-level qualifications into higher-level formal study programmes.

- Under this regulation, learners holding intermediate or college diplomas (or equivalent foreign qualifications duly recognised) may apply for articulation into university programmes.

- Universities are authorised to recognise and exempt equivalent modules/credits based on a comparison of learning outcomes, curriculum content, volume of study, assessment methods, and student results.

- This mechanism allows graduates of lower-level vocational programmes to continue in higher education within the VQF formal system.

(ii) RPL through the National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC)

- The **National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)**, defined in Article 5 of Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH, provides the classification of vocational skill levels from Level 1 to Level 5, serving as the foundation for developing the NOSC for each occupation.

- Accordingly, National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) refer to the specific skill standards developed for each occupation or job role. The recognition of occupational skills is carried out by competent authorities. For example, the Ministry of Construction issues skills certificates for construction occupations, and the Ministry of Finance issues skills certificates for Accounting and Auditing. Each standard is structured into five levels (Levels 1–5), based on the general guidelines of the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), while the content is determined by the relevant ministry according to sectoral requirements.

- Line ministries and occupational management bodies are responsible for developing NOSC for their respective sectors. For instance, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has developed NOSC for hospitality-related jobs, including the Housekeeping standard, which is one of nine occupational skill sets in the tourism sector. NOSC specifies the detailed competency requirements for performing specific jobs and serves as the foundation for curriculum development, training, and assessment in the TVET system.

- Workers with relevant trade skills may register to take the assessment at the corresponding occupational level. Those who meet the competency requirements are awarded a National Occupational Skills Certificate, formally recognising their ability to perform work at the required standard for that occupation and skill level. Holders are entitled to use this certificate to participate in the labour market. In cases where mutual recognition agreements exist between Vietnam and other countries, national occupational skills certificates issued in one country are valid in the other (Article 24, Law on Employment 2025).

- Prior learning/experience is used only to establish eligibility to sit the NOSC assessment and as evidence during assessment (stipulated under in Article 16 of Decree No. 31/2015/NĐ-CP). The certificate is issued only after the candidate passes the knowledge/practical assessments conducted by authorised centres. Workers may obtain National Occupational Skills Certificates (Chứng chỉ kỹ năng nghề quốc gia) at Levels 1–5 based on assessment of their accumulated work experience, skills, and competencies, even without holding formal qualifications.

- Under Decree 31/2015/NĐ-CP (Article 16), NOSC holders articulate within NSCF levels only; meaning credit exemption in either vocational education or higher education programmes is not applicable, and NOSC holders cannot transfer into the formal VQF (Intermediate/College) pathway.

- To date (2025), Vietnam has issued National Occupational Skills Certificates for nearly 200 occupations, along with corresponding assessment toolkits (examination sets), to support the organisation of assessments and the awarding of NOSC certificates to workers.

- The table below summarises the eligibility to sit NOSC assessment (Article 16) — where prior learning is recognised

Table 3.7. Eligibility to sit NOSC assessment

NSCF Level	Eligibility to Register for NOSC Assessment (Article 16)	How Prior Learning (RPL) Is Used
Level 1	Open to all workers who wish to be assessed for the occupation.	Entry point; no prior certificate required. Experience may inform assessment evidence.
Level 2	a) Hold a *Level 1 NOSC Certificate* or an equivalent certificate in the relevant occupation, and have at least *2 years of work experience* in the occupation since receiving that certificate; b) Have *completed a vocational secondary programme* (vocational secondary, professional secondary) in the relevant occupation; c) Have at least *3 years of continuous work experience* in the relevant occupation.	Prior experience/ learning satisfies **eligibility to sit** the test; **must pass** assessment to receive NOSC Level 2.
Level 3	a) Hold a *Level 2 NOSC Certificate* or a vocational secondary diploma (vocational secondary, professional secondary, or technical diploma) in the relevant occupation, and have at least *2 years of continuous work experience* in the occupation since receiving that certificate or graduating; b) Hold a *Level 1 NOSC Certificate* or an equivalent certificate in the relevant occupation, and have at least *5 years of continuous work experience* in the occupation since receiving that certificate. c) Have completed a *college-level programme* (vocational college) in the relevant occupation.	As above — RPL counts toward eligibility and evidence, **no automatic award**.
Level 4	a) Hold a *Level 3 NOSC Certificate* or a college diploma (vocational college) in the relevant occupation, and have at least *3 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate or diploma; b) Hold a *Level 2 NOSC Certificate* or a vocational/ professional secondary diploma (technical worker diploma, skilled worker qualification) in the relevant occupation, and have at least *6 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate or diploma; c) Hold a *Level 1 NOSC Certificate* or an elementary certificate in the relevant occupation, and have at least *9 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate; d) Have *completed a university programme* in the relevant occupation; e) Have at least *10 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation.	As above. Certification only after passing assessment.

NSCF Level	Eligibility to Register for NOSC Assessment (Article 16)	How Prior Learning (RPL) Is Used
Level 5	a) Hold a *Level 4 NOSC Certificate or a university degree* in the relevant occupation, and have at least *5 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate or degree; b) Hold a *Level 3 NOSC Certificate* or a college diploma (vocational college) in the relevant occupation, and have at least *9 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate or diploma; c) Hold a *Level 2 NOSC Certificate* or a vocational/ professional secondary diploma (technical worker diploma, skilled worker qualification) in the relevant occupation, and have at least *12 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate or diploma; d) Hold a *Level 1 NOSC Certificate* or an elementary certificate in the relevant occupation, and have at least *14 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the certificate; e) Hold a *university degree* in the relevant occupation and have at least *3 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation since receiving the degree; e) Have at least *15 years of continuous work experience* in that occupation.	As above. Experience enables access; **assessment success** determines award.

3.4.6.3. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education (HE)

In higher education, RPL is not used to recognise non-formal or informal learning for admission or credit exemption purposes. There is no formal mechanism or regulatory framework in place for recognising work experience or informal learning in lieu of academic qualifications.

However, Vietnam's HE system does offer multiple modes of formal study—including full-time (chính quy), part-time/in-service (tại chức), distance learning (đào tạo từ xa), and work-study blended formats (vừa học vừa làm, or VLVH). These are alternative forms of delivery for the same academic programmes and their qualifications awarded sit under the VQF.

Besides, RPL and equivalent credit transfer are implemented through institutional mechanisms allowing the recognition of credits accumulated from equivalent programs either within the same institution or from other institutions. Universities are required to establish regulations on credit exemption and recognition; define LOs for each program; align and compare academic programs to determine the number of credits eligible for exemption and the additional learning required for progression to higher levels.

Importantly:

- Each academic programme and field of study has only one unified curriculum and one set of LOs, regardless of the mode of delivery.

- The QA and graduation standards are the same across all formats.

- While the form of study (e.g. in-service, distance, blended) is not indicated on the qualification itself, it may be noted in the academic transcript or diploma supplement.

These flexible delivery formats aim to provide access to HE for working adults and lifelong learners. However, they do not constitute recognition of prior non-formal or informal learning, but rather, enable formal learning to be pursued in non-traditional formats.

Articulation/ credit transfer implemented from intermediate and college levels (e.g, TVET) to HE level is presented earlier under Section 1.7.

In short, Vietnam acknowledges that a comprehensive national framework for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has not yet been established, and the recognition of learning outcomes from informal and non-formal education remains absent from the current system. While certain forms of flexible learning—such as part-time, distance, and credit-transfer arrangements—provide limited recognition of prior study or experience, a formal and systematic RPL mechanism is still absent, particularly in higher education. In the TVET sector, RPL-related practices are implicitly embedded within the National Skills Certification Framework (NSCF), which allows individuals with relevant work experience or acquired competencies to become eligible for assessment. Those who successfully demonstrate the required competencies through this assessment process may then be awarded occupational certificates, even without having completed formal training. Recognising this as an important policy and implementation gap, Vietnam is committed to developing a coherent RPL framework aligned with the VQF and AQRF principles. The forthcoming Law on Vocational Education, expected to be approved by the National Assembly at the end of this year (2025), will provide the foundation for this development and guide the integration of non-formal and informal learning into formal qualifications during the 2025–2030 reform period.

CRITERION
4

A CLEAR AND DEMONSTRABLE CORRESPONDENCE EXISTS BETWEEN THE QUALIFICATION LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (VQF) OR SYSTEM AND THE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS OF THE AQRF

4.1. Mapping VQF Levels against AQRF Descriptors

Vietnam has developed a qualification system comprising degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, as well as specialized vocational qualifications, as clearly stipulated in the Amended HE Law (2018). These degrees are awarded based on the learner's achievement of program LOs as regulated by MOET, regardless of the mode or format of delivery. Notably, MOET is responsible for regulating the content of qualifications, their accompanying diploma supplements, and the principles and procedures for their issuance, revocation, and cancellation. These regulations have been designed in alignment with international practices to facilitate comparability and mutual recognition of qualifications between Vietnam and the AQRF, as well as with other national frameworks, contributing to regional integration and labor mobility.

To ensure effective referencing between the VQF and AQRF, it is essential to continue reviewing and enhancing regulations related to HE qualifications to better align them with international standards. MOET will continue implementing detailed regulations on diploma content, supplements, and the issuance/revocation procedures to support qualification recognition between Vietnam and ASEAN countries as well as internationally.

4.1.1. Scope and Content of the Level Comparison

This criterion aims to establish a credible, transparent, and evidence-based linkage between qualification levels of the VQF and the AQRF—thereby reinforcing trust among ASEAN Member States in the referencing outcomes and enhancing mutual recognition of qualifications.

The comparison between qualification levels was conducted using a dual approach:

- Technical analysis: Mapping the level descriptors of the VQF and AQRF across three domains. AQRF uses "Knowledge," "Skills," and "Application and Responsibility," while VQF uses "Knowledge," "Skills," and "Level of Autonomy and Responsibility."

- Social analysis: Engaging stakeholders to ensure compatibility between real-world interpretations and the formal framework descriptors.

The referencing process applies the best-fit principle, allowing flexibility to accommodate structural differences between the two frameworks.

4.1.2. Methodology for Benchmarking VQF against AQRF

This section presents the approach used to match the levels in VQF and the corresponding levels in AQRF. This comparison aims to determine the degree of similarity and consistency between the level descriptions in the two frameworks, based on three main components: Knowledge, Skills, and Application and Responsibility.

Justification for Method Selection

The selected method builds upon the principles adopted in the referencing processes of other ASEAN Member States and draws on the detailed approach used in Luxembourg's referencing process with the European Qualifications Framework. Specifically, this approach allows for systematic and logical analysis of level descriptors at each level, according to the three pillars mentioned above. The descriptions in VQF and AQRF are placed side by side to compare the content, structure and language of expression, thereby drawing the level of similarity, difference in scope, coverage and level of detail between the two frames.

Comparative Methodology

- **Identification of Comparative Pillars:** The level descriptions in both the VQF and AQRF are structured around LOs, encompassing three elements: Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility. These shared domains serve as the primary criteria for comparing and aligning qualification levels across the two frameworks.

- **Side-by-Side Level Description:** A detailed, level-by-level comparison is conducted, with descriptors from the VQF and AQRF presented side by side. Each level is examined through the lens of the three LO elements (Knowledge, Skills, and Autonomy and Responsibility), forming the basis for systematic comparison.

- **Content analysis:** For each element at every level, a qualitative analysis is carried out to examine: the scope of coverage (e.g., "general knowledge" vs. "specialized knowledge"), the explicitness of the descriptors, and the level of demand or complexity.

This analysis clarifies similarities and differences between VQF and AQRF descriptors, grounded in the context of Vietnam's evolving education and training system.

Compatibility assessment: Based on the content analysis, a compatibility judgment is made for each level. Where discrepancies exist, the analysis distinguishes whether these are due to differences in *terminology or form* (wording) or *substance* (actual LOs required). The implications of such differences for referencing are assessed in terms of their impact on transparency, comparability, and trust.

Contextualization within National Developments: The analysis is also contextualized within Vietnam's broader policy landscape, including the development of the VQF in line with the ongoing curriculum reform, the shift toward outcomes-based education, and the intention to increase recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

Presentation of Results: Findings are presented in a level-by-level comparison table. Each table includes three main columns aligned with the core elements of the AQRF (Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy and Responsibility), accompanied by a fourth column for summary commentary on the alignment and reference ability at that level.

4.2. Comparative Analysis of VQF and AQRF

4.2.1. Similarities and Differences Between VQF and AQRF

The VQF is founded on the following core principles: (1) Compliance with current Vietnamese legislation, including the Education Law (2019), the Law on Vocational Education (2014), and the HE Law (2012; amended in 2018); (2) Alignment with the AQRF, the EQF, and the qualifications frameworks of other countries in the region and beyond; (3) Selective adaptation of international qualification frameworks suited to the Vietnamese context; (4) Reflection of representative and existing qualifications within Vietnam; (5) Coherent structuring of levels, ensuring continuity without gaps or overlaps.

During the development of the VQF, Vietnam received substantial support from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and ASEAN Member States. The VQF development working group has also studied international experiences and drawn upon the practice of the EQF, the AQRF, and various national qualifications frameworks from around the world. As a result, the VQF shares many structural similarities with the AQRF. Both frameworks consist of eight levels; however, they differ in terms of function and level descriptors. The key similarities and differences between the VQF and AQRF are outlined as bellow.

4.2.2. Referencing Principles and Procedures

The alignment between the VQF and AQRF levels is assessed through a comparison of the fundamental concepts and terminology used in both frameworks, accompanied by a detailed analysis of their level descriptors.

Table 4.1. Comparison of the general LOs of the AQRF and the VQF

AQRF		VQF	
Knowledge	Different types of knowledge (practice and theories),	**Knowledge**	Practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge
	Skills (practical skills, cognitive skills)	**Skill**	Cognitive skills, professional practice skills and communication and behavior skills
Application and Responsibility	Knowledge and skills are used in real-world contexts. The degree of autonomy, including the ability to make decisions and responsibility for oneself and others.	**Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**	The level of autonomy and personal responsibility in applying knowledge and skills to perform professional tasks

Rationale for "Autonomy and Responsibility" in Vietnam's context:

- The adoption of *"Autonomy and Responsibility"* instead of *"Autonomy and Application"* under the AQRF's referencing guidelines reflects Vietnam's deliberate effort to contextualize the AQRF's learning outcome domains to fit the national education and labour environment.

- When the VQF was promulgated in 2016 (Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg), Vietnam's intention was to ensure that the framework accurately reflected the behavioral and professional

competencies expected of graduates within the national education and labour context. The terminology "Autonomy and Responsibility" was chosen to align with Vietnam's existing higher education and quality assurance standards, which already assess learning outcomes through *"mức độ tự chủ"* (autonomy/independence) and *"trách nhiệm"* (responsibility/ accountability). In fact, in Vietnam's higher education and vocational systems, graduate attributes and quality assurance standards consistently emphasize a learner's independence, decision-making capacity, accountability, and leadership in performing tasks and managing professional activities. The term "Autonomy" (Tự chủ) therefore captures not only the ability to apply knowledge and skills in context, but also the degree of independence and self-direction expected of graduates in their professional or academic roles. Furthermore, this wording is also intuitively understood by Vietnamese universities, training institutions, and employers, as it reflects key expectations such as independent work, leadership, supervision, and accountability for outcomes.

- In contrast, the AQRF's term "Application" focuses on how knowledge and skills are used in different contexts, whereas the VQF emphasizes how independently and responsibly learners perform and apply what they know. This framing better suits Vietnam's policy and professional environment, which values self-directed performance, decision-making capacity, and responsibility for both individual and collective results. In essence, while "Application and Responsibility" and "Autonomy and Responsibility" express the same overarching concept of how knowledge and skills are exercised, Vietnam's terminology highlights the independence, leadership, and accountability dimensions that are central to national qualification and quality assurance standards. Thus, the difference is terminological rather than conceptual, reflecting local relevance while maintaining full compatibility with the AQRF domains.

4.3. Reference Outcomes

4.3.1. VQF Level 1 corresponds to AQRF Level 1

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are mostly aligned in their requirements for basic knowledge. However, there are differences in how general knowledge is described in the AQRF compared to the practical knowledge and understanding within a narrow scope of specific tasks in a defined occupation as outlined in the VQF. The VQF also provides more detailed requirements, including practical knowledge and understanding within a narrow scope of specific tasks in a defined occupation; basic knowledge of natural sciences, culture, society and law to support daily life, further learning, and career preparation.

Similarities:

Both frameworks define knowledge at an introductory level, emphasizing general and foundational understanding that does not require specialization.

This level of knowledge is sufficient to enable learners to engage with simple, routine activities in a structured and predictable context.

The emphasis on non-complex, broad knowledge reflects a shared intent to prepare individuals for initial learning or entry-level training.

Differences:

AQRF provides a succinct, high-level descriptor, without specifying the domain or source of knowledge.

VQF links the knowledge to general education relevant to a specific occupational context, indicating an alignment with vocational education and training (TVET).

VQF also specifies that this knowledge leads to a formal qualification (chứng chỉ sơ cấp I), while AQRF, as a regional referencing tool, does not link descriptors to qualification types.

- **Skills**: The AQRF's requirement for adaptive skills closely corresponds to the basic practical skills, manual labor, and direct work skills, as well as basic communication skills in familiar settings—these are made more explicit in the VQF.

Similarities:

Both frameworks describe basic-level practical skills used to complete repetitive and clearly defined tasks.

The focus is on routine, non-complex procedures requiring basic technique or manipulation, without the need for decision-making or autonomy.

Skills at this level are suitable for use in highly structured environments, with minimal variation in task execution.

Differences:

VQF provides more specific operational context, indicating that these skills are applied within a defined occupation ("một nghề xác định").

The VQF also introduces quantitative scope (e.g., "one or several tasks") and includes reference to manipulative techniques, giving it a more task-oriented framing.

AQRF uses more abstract phrasing, consistent with its function as a regional reference tool not tied to national curricula.

The essential function of skills at this level is identical: to perform basic, routine activities under close supervision. VQF adds more vocational detail, while AQRF remains system-neutral. These distinctions reflect different levels of granularity, not conceptual divergence.

- **Application and Responsibility/ Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in requiring the application of routine processes with close support and supervision. The VQF adds further specificity through requirements such as following instructions or templates, self-assessment, and performance evaluation.

Similarities:

Both frameworks require learners to operate within clearly defined, routine environments, under continuous supervision.

There is no expectation of independent responsibility; instead, the emphasis is on following processes under close guidance.

The purpose in both is to ensure learners are safe and effective in performing repetitive tasks.

Differences:

AQRF emphasizes structured process flows, reflecting a system-oriented approach to how tasks are carried out.

VQF emphasizes the workplace setting and explicitly names the presence of a training supervisor or guide, placing the learner within a TVET-style learning environment.

VQF makes the unchanging nature of the work environment explicit, while AQRF implies structure through the idea of routine.

Despite slight differences in emphasis, both frameworks communicate the same level of learner dependency and limited autonomy. The VQF descriptor provides a more concrete, practice-based context, whereas AQRF maintains abstraction for regional applicability. The core outcome—task execution under direct oversight—is consistent across both.

At Level 1, AQRF and VQF are closely aligned in purpose and progression. Both emphasize:

- *Foundational knowledge* appropriate for non-specialized roles,

- *Basic skills* for simple, repetitive tasks, and

- *Task performance under close supervision* in structured settings.

The key differences lie in the level of contextual detail:

- VQF ties descriptors to specific occupational settings, qualification types, and TVET pathways;

- AQRF remains more general and system-neutral, appropriate to its function as a referencing framework.

These differences are transparent and expected. These are semantic differences in task description detail, not in expected skill complexity or level of responsibility. VQF's formulation supports national TVET curriculum development, while AQRF remains high-level and general. Both support a best-fit match at Level 1. They reflect national implementation choices, not misalignment. The referencing panel applied the best-fit principle, confirming that VQF Level 1 fully aligns with the descriptors and learning intent of AQRF Level 1.

Table 4.2. Summary of Level 1 Comparison

Aspect	AQRF Level 1	VQF Level 1	Key Differences Identified
Knowledge	General and foundational knowledge, without specialization.	Practical and basic knowledge and understanding within a narrow scope of specific tasks in a defined occupation; includes general knowledge of natural sciences, culture, society, and law to support daily life, further learning, and career preparation.	VQF provides greater contextual detail by linking basic knowledge to specific occupational and TVET settings, while AQRF remains more general and system-neutral.
Skills	Basic practical skills to perform simple, repetitive tasks following set procedures.	Basic operational skills to perform one or several simple, repetitive tasks within a defined occupation using standard techniques; includes basic communication in familiar contexts.	VQF specifies the occupational and procedural context ("within a defined occupation") and introduces measurable scope ("one or several tasks"), making the description more detailed and vocationally oriented.

Aspect	AQRF Level 1	VQF Level 1	Key Differences Identified
Application / Autonomy and Responsibility	Performs routine tasks in structured processes under direct supervision.	Works under close supervision in an unchanging work environment, following instructions, templates, and assessment criteria; minimal autonomy, with focus on task safety and consistency.	Both emphasize dependency and supervision, but VQF explicitly situates the learner within a workplace or training environment and highlights TVET-based supervision.

4.3.2. VQF Level 2 Corresponds to AQRF Level 2

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in terms of the requirements for general and applied (practical) knowledge. The VQF, however, provides a more detailed specification of this requirement, stating that learners should possess both theoretical and practical knowledge related to activities within a narrow scope of a specific occupation. Additionally, the VQF includes requirements for general knowledge in natural sciences, culture, society, and law, to support daily life, vocational work, and further learning.

Similarities:

Both frameworks describe knowledge that is basic, applied, and non-specialised, moving beyond foundational generality but remaining within introductory-level expectations.

The emphasis on practical application is evident in both: AQRF's "factual" knowledge aligns with VQF's "thực tế" (practical) component.

Each framework introduces a balance of practical and conceptual awareness, suitable for performing standard tasks in known contexts.

Differences:

AQRF maintains a *broad, system-neutral description*, while VQF provides *detailed specification*, identifying both occupational scope ("một nghề") and foundational courses domains (natural sciences, law, culture).

VQF integrates both theoretical and applied elements, whereas AQRF highlights "factual" content without distinguishing types.

Both frameworks share the intent of equipping learners with basic, real-world knowledge suitable for structured work or training environments. VQF embeds national priorities (TVET and civic literacy), while AQRF maintains generality to enable cross-system referencing. These differences reflect granularity and framing, not conceptual misalignment. The core level of complexity and intent is consistent, and the difference is assessed as semantic and structural, not substantive. Alignment is valid under a best-fit judgment.

- **Skills**: The AQRF requirement for the ability to perform standard actions is reflected in the VQF through the inclusion of cognitive and practical skills to apply appropriate methods, tools, materials, and available information, as well as communication skills to present outcomes or report on one's work.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect the learner to carry out routine, repeatable tasks using standardised procedures.

Skill execution is procedural and predictable rather than creative, and learners are expected to operate under guidance within predictable task cycles.

The reference to standardisation—either in actions (AQRF) or techniques (VQF)—indicates shared expectations around competence and consistency at this level.

Differences:

AQRF uses generic phrasing ("standard actions"), appropriate for a multi-country referencing tool.

VQF explicitly anchors skills within a vocational setting, referring to job-specific execution ("thực hành nghề nghiệp") and identifying repetitive work contexts.

The core level of skill complexity is consistent across both frameworks. VQF adds vocational specificity, demonstrating how these skills are situated in concrete occupations. AQRF intentionally avoids such contextual markers to ensure broad applicability. Thus, the difference is in practical framing, not conceptual intent.

- **Application and Responsibility / Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**: The AQRF's requirement regarding structured processes is closely aligned and consistent with the VQF's description, which specifies the ability to perform routine tasks with a certain level of autonomy in familiar environments. The AQRF's reference to supervision and some awareness of evaluation in solving familiar problems is fully consistent with the VQF's requirement for self-assessment and evaluation of assigned tasks. In addition, the VQF includes further requirements related to working in unfamiliar environments under the guidance of a supervisor.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to work within structured, predictable environments where external supervision is the norm.

Each allows for a small degree of autonomy, with learners beginning to exercise limited judgment in familiar situations.

The shared expectation is that full independence is not yet developed, but the learner can perform some functions with minimal guidance.

Differences:

AQRF introduces **"discretion for judgment"** more broadly, suggesting emerging independent decision-making across a wider range of tasks.

VQF frames autonomy narrowly and contextually, limiting it to "specific activities" and emphasizing the unchanging nature of the work environment.

VQF references the presence of a guide or instructor, reinforcing its TVET-oriented context.

Both frameworks convey a similar stage of learner development—moving from full supervision to limited autonomy. VQF frames this progression more conservatively, reflecting Vietnam's structured approach to vocational education. AQRF's phrasing supports a wider range of national interpretations and allows for interpretive flexibility, which enhances comparability but lacks the implementation detail of VQF. The learner profile and progression remain aligned, and the differences are deemed semantic under AQRF's referencing criteria.

Table 4.3. Summary of Level 2 Comparison

Aspect	AQRF Level 2	VQF Level 2	Key Differences Identified
Knowledge	General and factual	Practical and theoretical; includes basic education & civics	VQF provides greater scope and detail
Skills	Use of standard actions	Job-specific skills using standard techniques for repetitive tasks	VQF situates skills in vocational context
Application	Structured process; supervised with limited judgment	Stable work environment; guided with limited autonomy in specific activities	VQF adopts a more cautious and defined framing

At Level 2, AQRF and VQF share a common developmental intent—supporting learners to operate in structured environments, using standardised knowledge and skills, with limited but growing autonomy.

The VQF differs by offering more:

- *Contextual detail* (occupational domain and specific tasks),

- *Integration of basic education*, and

- *Clearer boundaries around supervision and independence*.

These are not contradictions, but natural distinctions between a meta-framework designed for cross-country referencing/ a general reference tool (AQRF) and a context-bound, national framework designed for programme delivery and qualification awards (VQF). As such, the alignment remains strong, and the differences enhance rather than undermine transparency. This supports a valid best-fit principle and confirmed that VQF Level 2 aligns appropriately with AQRF Level 2, based on both textual analysis and national expert validation under Criterion 4.

4.3.3. VQF Level 3 Corresponds to AQRF Level 3

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in their requirements for general principles and some conceptual knowledge. In addition, the VQF includes requirements for general knowledge in natural sciences, culture, society, and law to support daily life, occupational activities, and further learning. It also specifies foundational knowledge of information technology relevant to certain professional fields.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to grasp basic theoretical and conceptual knowledge, reflecting a transition from factual understanding to structured principles.

AQRF's "general principles and some conceptual aspects" aligns well with VQF's mix of theoretical and practical knowledge ("lý thuyết và thực tế") in a defined content area.

Both signal a level of conceptual engagement appropriate for standard vocational training. Each reflects a shift from foundational to structured, principle-based knowledge.

Differences:

AQRF provides a high-level formulation, a domain-neutral descriptor without specifying domains, whereas VQF contextualizes knowledge within a specific occupation.

VQF explicitly integrates foundational knowledge (e.g., natural sciences, culture, law, IT), broadening its application across both workplace and societal participation.

VQF includes digital literacy (basic ICT knowledge), not mentioned in AQRF.

Both frameworks view this level as one of emerging conceptual understanding, but VQF broadens its reach to include civic, social, and technological readiness. VQF's knowledge domain is intentionally broadened to align with national development goals and ensure learners are digitally and civically competent. AQRF leaves space for such inclusion but does not mandate it. Both frameworks remain aligned in complexity and level, and the difference is consistent with AQRF's flexible referencing purpose. Best-fit alignment is justified.

- **Skills**: AQRF's requirements for the ability to select and apply basic methods, tools, materials and information that closely corresponds to the VQF's specification of cognitive and practical skills to work or solve tasks independently. The requirement for using technical terminology effectively in workplace communication is clearly articulated in the VQF.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to demonstrate competence in applied methods, with AQRF referencing tool and technique selection, and VQF framing these as practical vocational skills.

There is a shared emphasis on action-oriented execution, requiring learners to move beyond rote operations into adaptive skill application.

Both approaches assume that learners are developing functional skills for predictable contexts, with some judgment in tool selection.

Differences:

VQF provides explicit categorization of skill types—cognitive, practical, and communication—while AQRF presents skills as a unified set of technical applications.

VQF includes interpersonal skills and workplace behavior, indicating preparation for social dynamics in employment settings.

VQF foregrounds cognitive skill development, whereas AQRF implies this indirectly.

This difference is structural and policy-based. VQF's explicit skill categorization reflects Vietnam's commitment to holistic competency development, particularly for TVET and workforce readiness. AQRF accommodates such interpretations implicitly. The intended outcomes are comparable, and the difference enhances—rather than limits—alignment at this level.

- **Application and Responsibility/ Autonomy and Responsibility**: The AQRF's requirements for stability are similar to VQF's requirements for working independently in stable conditions and familiar environments. However, the AQRF additionally emphasizes the capacity to manage change. The AQRF's expectations for judgment and independent

problem-solving are also strongly reflected in the VQF through its emphasis on cognitive and practical skills for working and solving tasks independently. The VQF further requires individuals to perform assigned tasks, self-assess outcomes based on predetermined criteria, and participate in group or team-based work, taking partial responsibility for the outcomes.

Similarities:

Both frameworks place learners in predictable and structured environments, with some level of independence.

AQRF's reference to judgment and planning under guidance is reflected in VQF's independent work in familiar settings, where tasks are well-understood.

This level in both frameworks marks a transition from full supervision to partial autonomy.

Differences:

VQF emphasizes independent work outright, whereas AQRF presents autonomy as emerging through guided problem-solving.

AQRF introduces the possibility of variation in tasks or context, while VQF emphasizes stable environments.

AQRF mentions resolving issues, indicating a stronger emphasis on cognitive engagement, while VQF focuses on task execution within known parameters.

This is a substantive difference in framing, though not in intent. VQF supports independent performance within stable tasks; AQRF allows for emerging problem-solving under guidance. These reflect national decisions on learner autonomy pace. The alignment holds under the best-fit principle, particularly as VQF learners are expected to perform tasks independently, even if not fully problem-solve them. These differences reflect national decisions on the pace of learner autonomy and the emphasis placed on predictability vs. adaptability.

Table 4.4. Summary of Level 3 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 3	VQF Level 3	Substantive Differences
Knowledge	General principles and concepts; abstract scope	Vocationally contextualized; includes foundational courses and basic IT	Yes – VQF broader and more applied
Skills	Selecting/applying methods and tools	Categorized into cognitive, practical, and communication skills	Yes – VQF more explicit and holistic
Application	Guided autonomy; some independent planning in semi-stable contexts	Independent work in stable, familiar environments	Yes – framing of autonomy differs

At Level 3, AQRF and VQF are well-aligned in terms of progression, learner autonomy, and skill integration. Both define this level as:

- The start of independent functioning in structured environments,

- A transition from factual knowledge to conceptual and applied understanding, and

- The use of procedural, judgment-based skills relevant to defined roles.

VQF enhances this level by specifying civic, digital, and communication dimensions, which are implied but not detailed in AQRF. These distinctions are not contradictions but demonstrate Vietnam's policy emphasis on holistic learner preparation, ensuring the VQF meets both workforce and social integration objectives.

These refinements help clarify the best-fit alignment under AQRF Criterion 4, with a transparent explanation of implementation-level differences that are substantive but complementary.

4.3.4. VQF Level 4 Corresponds to AQRF Level 4

- **Knowledge**: There is full alignment between the VQF and AQRF in terms of technical and theoretical knowledge covering a general field. Additionally, the VQF requires foundational knowledge in politics, culture, society, and law, as well as knowledge of information technology.

Similarities:

Both frameworks include a blend of theoretical and applied/technical knowledge relevant to professional fields.

The AQRF's reference to "adapting processes" corresponds to VQF's requirement that learners apply knowledge to both routine and moderately complex tasks.

Each positions the learner to operate across a field or occupational area with an understanding that goes beyond basic execution.

Differences:

Scope and Contextualization: AQRF refers to a general "field," while VQF explicitly anchors learning to a defined occupational sector (ngành, nghề đào tạo).

Breadth of Knowledge Domains: VQF integrates civic, legal, cultural, and digital literacy, which are not explicitly present in AQRF.

Framework Role: AQRF maintains system-neutral language appropriate for a regional reference; VQF prescribes specific foundational knowledge as part of national education and employment policy.

Both frameworks indicate that learners must operate with a broad, adaptive understanding of theoretical and technical knowledge, but VQF expands the knowledge base to include cross-cutting basic education aligned with national workforce and civic development goals. These differences are substantive in content breadth, but not in level complexity. VQF's inclusion of cross-cutting basic education reflects Vietnam's integrated qualifications model. AQRF enables, but does not require, such domains. Thus, while VQF is more contextually detailed, both frameworks are aligned in intent and learning demands, supporting a best-fit referencing.

- **Skills**: The AQRF's requirement for adaptive skills closely corresponds to the VQF's expectations for cognitive and occupational skills, the ability to use technical terminology, apply alternative solutions, and assess the quality of work and outcomes—these are more

explicitly articulated in the VQF. In addition, the VQF includes a requirement for foreign language proficiency at Level 1 of the Vietnamese Six-Level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to perform tasks of moderate complexity, involving both routine and more advanced functions.

Each includes expectations for some autonomy and coordination, with AQRF referencing "self-direction" and VQF expecting independent or team-based work.

There is mutual recognition of the need for learners to operate with increasing skill flexibility and depth.

Differences:

Skill Typology: VQF categorizes skills into cognitive, technical, and interpersonal, providing a fuller picture of workplace readiness; AQRF does not disaggregate skill types.

Task Complexity Framing: AQRF includes "unfamiliar issues," suggesting learners navigate change and unpredictability; VQF emphasizes frequent or complex tasks that are predefined, implying controlled settings.

Adaptability Expectation: AQRF implies problem-solving in evolving contexts; VQF suggests learners perform reliably in known but dynamic situations.

While both frameworks expect competence in moderately complex environments, AQRF leans more heavily on adaptability and judgment. The VQF provides a more structured typology of skills for workplace readiness; AQRF promotes adaptability across systems. These are substantive in framing but not in competence level. The VQF emphasis on interpersonal and cognitive maturity complements AQRF's flexibility focus, ensuring both support learners at the same qualification level. This is justifiable within a national qualifications framework that must balance domestic priorities—such as employability—with the broader goals of regional integration. Alignment remains valid.

- **Application and Responsibility/ Level of Autonomy and Accountability**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in requiring the ability to operate in predictable but potentially changing environments. Both frameworks share similar expectations regarding guidance and supervision. However, they differ in how guidance is interpreted—AQRF refers to guidance in unfamiliar situations, while the VQF refers more narrowly to guidance in performing predefined tasks. The VQF also includes additional requirements related to responsibility and the evaluation of task performance.

Similarities:

Both frameworks require increasing learner autonomy and the ability to coordinate or guide others.

AQRF's "self-direction and coordination" parallels VQF's "làm việc độc lập hay theo nhóm" (work independently or in teams).

Each introduces the idea of accountability and leadership, whether through supervision (VQF) or broad guidance (AQRF).

Differences:

Contextual Framing: AQRF uses "unfamiliar issues," emphasizing novel problem-solving; VQF situates the learner in a predictable, partially variable environment, implying structured autonomy.

Responsibility Depth: VQF articulates explicit personal and group accountability, including the ability to supervise others performing defined tasks; AQRF is less specific about these responsibilities.

Task Novelty: AQRF assumes the learner may need to respond to new and unfamiliar challenges; VQF assumes task familiarity, even for those being supervised. AQRF also encourages problem resolution in new contexts; VQF focuses on task management and accountability in structured settings.

The distinction is between structured leadership within familiar parameters (VQF) and emerging leadership in changing or uncertain contexts (AQRF). Both pathways develop learner responsibility, but VQF embeds this within practical employment readiness, while AQRF supports transferrable leadership potential in more fluid regional contexts. These differences are substantive in context, not in level of demand. VQF emphasizes structured leadership and accountability, while AQRF stresses problem-solving and adaptability. Each reflects appropriate expectations for learners operating with partial autonomy and increasing responsibility, affirming a best-fit relationship.

Table 4.5. Summary of Level 4 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 4	VQF Level 4	Key Differences
Knowledge	General theoretical and technical in a field	Applied and theoretical knowledge in an occupational domain; includes civic and digital literacy	VQF is more contextually rich and broader in knowledge domains
Skills	Broad guidance, self-direction, and problem-solving in changing contexts	Categorized cognitive, technical, and interpersonal skills for structured tasks	VQF specifies skill types; AQRF emphasizes adaptability and unfamiliar challenges
Application & Responsibility	Coordination, emerging autonomy, unfamiliar issue resolution	Independent or team work; supervision of others in predictable settings	VQF emphasizes structured leadership and accountability; AQRF stresses adaptability

At Level 4, both AQRF and VQF recognize the learner's:

- *Increased autonomy and ability to work with or guide others*,

- *Capacity to operate in moderately complex work context*s, and

- *Emerging readiness for leadership and judgment-based tasks.*

VQF Level 4 expands the scope by integrating:

- Basic education competencies (e.g., digital, civic, legal),

- Explicit supervision roles, and

- Structured task environments.

AQRF Level 4 emphasizes:

- Transferability and adaptability, particularly in responding to unfamiliar problems.

These are not contradictions, but strategic differences in implementation. They reflect the functional roles of each framework—AQRF as a referencing mechanism, VQF as a qualification and program design tool.

The referencing committee considered both textual comparison and expert validation and confirmed a best-fit alignment between VQF Level 4 and AQRF Level 4, in line with AQRF Referencing Guidelines (Section 5.2).

4.3.5. VQF Level 5 Corresponds to AQRF Level 5

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in requiring technical and theoretical knowledge within a specific field. In addition, the VQF includes broader requirements for general knowledge in politics, culture and society, information technology, and administration.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to master technical and theoretical knowledge relevant to a professional domain.

The requirement for analytical engagement is present in both, whether stated directly (AQRF) or implied through the breadth of theoretical understanding (VQF).

Each reflects an expectation that learners can engage with complex subject matter in preparation for autonomous performance.

Differences:

Scope and Specificity: AQRF uses the broader phrase "a general field," while VQF explicitly refers to "a specific sector or occupation" (ngành, nghề đào tạo), grounding knowledge in applied contexts.

Breadth of Domains: VQF integrates civic, legal, cultural, and ICT knowledge, positioning graduates as socially literate citizens as well as professionals.

Practical Knowledge: VQF includes practical (thực tế) knowledge, not explicitly mentioned in AQRF, reflecting Vietnam's dual emphasis on theory and applied competence.

VQF Level 5 provides a more holistic and integrated knowledge base, combining theoretical depth with workplace and societal preparedness. AQRF's abstraction supports multi-country comparability but omits certain civic or digital content by design. This difference is substantive in domain scope, not in qualification level. VQF provides a holistic, socially integrated knowledge base tailored to national priorities. AQRF's abstraction serves cross-country referencing needs, which reflect implementation orientation vs. framework neutrality, not inconsistency. These are complementary differences that support a best-fit alignment.

- **Skills**: The AQRF's requirement for analytical thinking skills is fully aligned with the VQF's emphasis on cognitive and creative thinking skills for identifying, analyzing, and evaluating information. The VQF, however, extends its scope by additionally requiring a broader range of practical occupational skills, communication skills, and foreign language proficiency.

Similarities:

Both frameworks emphasize the ability to resolve complex problems, marking a progression toward higher-level autonomy.

AQRF's "independent evaluation" aligns with VQF's expectation that learners will apply cognitive and practical reasoning to real-world issues.

There is mutual recognition that learners must go beyond routine tasks and engage in more sophisticated challenges.

Differences:

Skill Typology: VQF clearly separates cognitive, technical, and interpersonal skills, offering greater specificity; AQRF groups skills under a general capability.

Problem Type: AQRF includes both complex and abstract issues; VQF focuses on complex but concrete work tasks, reflecting practical application.

Analytical Framing: AQRF's phrasing centers on independent evaluation, signaling stronger emphasis on self-judgment; VQF emphasizes task execution and problem-solving more than formal evaluation.

Both frameworks promote independent, multi-dimensional problem-solving, but VQF organizes this around occupational performance, while AQRF encourages a meta-cognitive orientation. The difference lies in whether skills are defined primarily for practical execution (VQF) or analytical reflection (AQRF). This distinction is semantic and philosophical rather than a difference in level. VQF promotes workplace-oriented execution; AQRF promotes analytical independence. Both equip learners with comparable competencies. Alignment is supported through the best-fit principle.

   - **Application and Responsibility / Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in requiring independent judgment to address complex and frequently changing problems. The VQF further specifies the need for the ability to provide guidance and supervision during task implementation, as well as individual responsibility and accountability for group outcomes.

Similarities:

Both frameworks assign learners responsibility for individual and group performance, often in changing environments.

AQRF's reference to independent evaluation aligns with VQF's expectation of minimal guidance and supervision of others.

Each indicates a movement into early-stage leadership or coordination roles, with increasing accountability.

Differences:

Responsibility Depth: VQF describes specific responsibilities, including personal accountability, minimal guidance, supervision, and performance evaluation of others; AQRF refers only to "evaluation" more generally.

Task Framing: AQRF allows for the learner to evaluate any activity, abstract or complex; VQF anchors responsibility in overseeing known, predefined tasks.

Contextual Clarity: AQRF references change and unpredictability in task environments; VQF assumes defined yet dynamic work settings, maintaining stronger environmental boundaries.

This is a substantive difference in leadership framing, but not in cognitive or procedural demand. VQF promotes structured team leadership within known parameters; AQRF encourages independent evaluative capacity in evolving settings. These differences reflect national versus regional referencing functions, not misalignment.

Table 4.6. Summary of Level 5 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 5	VQF Level 5	Key Differences
Knowledge	Detailed technical/ theoretical knowledge in a general field	Broad theoretical and practical knowledge in a defined occupation; includes civic and ICT knowledge	VQF more domain-specific and socially integrative
Skills	Independent evaluation; address complex/abstract issues	Cognitive, practical, and interpersonal skills for resolving complex work issues	VQF skill typology is more explicit; AQRF focuses more on abstraction
Application & Responsibility	Evaluation in changing contexts; some leadership	Perform independently/ in teams; supervise, guide, and assess defined group tasks	VQF provides structured team-oriented leadership; AQRF prioritizes self-judgment

Thereby, Level 5, both AQRF and VQF reflect a significant transition in learner capabilities, characterized by:

- *Autonomy and evaluative judgment*,

- *Engagement with complex problem-solving*, and

- *Emergent leadership and coordination roles*.

VQF Level 5 emphasizes:

- Structured application within defined professional settings,

- Clear team supervision and group responsibility, and

- Workplace-ready social and digital competencies.

AQRF Level 5 promotes:

- Flexible application across diverse and changing contexts,

- Analytical and independent evaluation, and

- A focus on abstract and transferable leadership capacity.

These distinctions are not contradictions, but systemic expressions of framework purpose: AQRF as a regionally portable meta-framework; VQF as a nationally grounded qualification framework. The referencing panel applied a best-fit judgment, confirming strong alignment in level complexity and intent.

This level is therefore deemed an appropriate and defensible match under AQRF Criterion 4.

4.3.6. VQF Level 6 Corresponds to AQRF Level 6

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in their requirements for specialised knowledge and theoretical understanding within a specific field. The VQF further elaborates on related knowledge areas, including social sciences, information technology, and managerial and administrative knowledge.

Similarities:

Both frameworks describe advanced, specialized knowledge that goes beyond application to include analysis and evaluation.

AQRF and VQF expect learners to have command of a full disciplinary field, incorporating conceptual depth and critical engagement.

The inclusion of analytical verbs ("evaluation," "comparison," "critical analysis") aligns with VQF's comprehensive, specialised knowledge base.

Differences:

Knowledge Breadth: VQF integrates basic education in law, politics, and social sciences, reflecting a civic and interdisciplinary orientation beyond the technical domain.

Disciplinary framing: AQRF speaks of "a field" generally; VQF identifies "a discipline or training sector", grounding the descriptor in the national occupational context.

Depth: VQF explicitly requires comprehensive and in-depth theoretical mastery ("toàn diện, chuyên sâu"), whereas AQRF frames knowledge as "specialised."

Practical Component: VQF includes solid applied knowledge ("kiến thức thực tế vững chắc"), indicating dual academic and applied emphasis, whereas AQRF does not explicitly address applied/practical learning.

While both descriptors reflect advanced disciplinary knowledge, VQF broadens the scope to include social, legal, and applied knowledge, aligning with the role of Level 6 as Vietnam's undergraduate qualification. AQRF remains appropriately high-level and meta-framework neutral, suitable for regional comparability but less directive in terms of content breadth. These are substantive but complementary differences. VQF integrates technical knowledge with social awareness, while AQRF stays system-neutral. VQF's practical and civic extensions reflect national policy; AQRF's abstraction supports regional adaptability. The cognitive level is clearly equivalent, supporting a best-fit alignment.

- **Skills**: AQRF and VQF have exact similarities in critical thinking skills; The specialized and analytical skills required by AQRF are demonstrated by VQF through the skills to use alternative solutions in uncertain or changing environmental conditions, complex problem-solving skills, and assessment skills; VQF also sets out more specific requirements for leadership skills, entrepreneurship, communication skills and foreign language skills.

Similarities:

Both expect learners to manage complex, evolving tasks, plan and improve processes, and make informed judgments with reduced supervision, requiring flexibility and judgment.

AQRF's "advanced skills" correspond to VQF's emphasis on analysis, synthesis, and reflection, especially through its inclusion of critical cognitive skills.

Each recognizes the need for learners to operate across multiple skill dimensions in dynamic settings, requiring integrated skill use.

Differences:

Skill Typology: VQF categorizes skills into *cognitive* (phản biện, phân tích), *technical* (thực hành), and *interpersonal* (giao tiếp). AQRF does not explicitly differentiate skill types.

Task Framing: AQRF emphasizes the ability to develop strategies and solve abstract issues, while VQF focuses on task execution and completion, often within specific occupations.

Problem Orientation: AQRF leans toward strategic, conceptual problem-solving, while VQF centers on performative competencies.

The differences are largely semantic. Both frameworks require advanced autonomy and multi-dimensional skill deployment. VQF expresses this through structured skill categories aligned with TVET competencies; AQRF maintains a holistic skill description suitable for regional referencing. The level of complexity is shared. Both frameworks recognize the need for adaptive, high-level skills, but VQF provides a structured breakdown linked to occupational roles, while AQRF encourages cross-sector adaptability. The distinction reflects applied vs. meta-competence orientation, not contradiction.

- **Application and Responsibility / Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**: The AQRF's emphasis on working in changing conditions aligns closely with the VQF's requirement for functioning in dynamic environments. The AQRF's focus on initiative is also strongly reflected in the VQF, which specifies the ability to work independently and self-direct one's actions. The AQRF's requirement for strategic approaches to improving performance is fully aligned with the VQF, which further details expectations for planning, coordinating, managing resources, evaluating, and enhancing operational effectiveness.

Similarities:

Both frameworks emphasize independence, adaptability, and responsibility and also position learners to manage complexity, exercise professional judgment, and lead others in varied work settings.

AQRF's reference to strategy and improvement maps closely to VQF's expectation for self-directed performance and contribution to group outcomes. AQRF's reference to unpredictable conditions also aligns with VQF's expectation that learners work in dynamic environments.

Each introduces a leadership component, either via improvement strategies (AQRF) or supervision and knowledge dissemination (VQF).

Differences:

Scope of responsibility: VQF elaborates on duties such as knowledge dissemination, peer supervision, and communication, giving tangible indicators of leadership, which is not explicitly required in AQRF.

Supervision: VQF formalizes supervisory roles, including monitoring others, guidance and knowledge sharing in performing assigned tasks; AQRF mentions leadership implicitly via "strategies."

Decision-making emphasis: AQRF stresses independent decisions in unpredictable scenarios; VQF emphasizes structured leadership within a known professional domain.

These differences reflect framework function, not misalignment. AQRF favors portable learning outcomes across systems; VQF articulates how those outcomes are applied in practice, particularly in workplace learning. The autonomy, leadership, and problem-solving demands are aligned in complexity, affirming a best-fit match.

While the AQRF highlights complexity, adaptability, and the ability to address abstract and complex issues (under the "Skills" descriptor), these aspects are articulated throughout the VQF. The VQF also includes additional requirements such as teamwork, guidance and supervision of others, making professional judgments, and defending personal viewpoints.

Table 4.7. Summary of Level 6 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 6	VQF Level 6	Key Differences
Knowledge	Specialized technical and theoretical knowledge in a field	Deep, comprehensive theoretical and applied knowledge; includes social sciences, law, politics	VQF more holistic, interdisciplinary, and civic-minded
Skills	Complex, changing contexts; strategies; abstract problem-solving	Categorized cognitive, technical, and communication skills; task-focused problem-solving	VQF explicitly structured by skill type and task setting
Application & Responsibility	Initiative, adaptability, and problem-solving to improve systems	Independent and team work; knowledge dissemination; supervision and accountability	VQF emphasizes structured leadership and public knowledge transfer

Both AQRF Level 6 and VQF Level 6 position learners for:

- *Independent and adaptable performance*,

- *Complex problem-solving*, and

- *Emerging leadership* in dynamic settings.

However, VQF Level 6 provides:

- A structured model of applied leadership and communication,

- Integrated expectations for civic knowledge and group responsibility, and

- Greater clarity around skill types and their use in real-world settings.

AQRF Level 6 emphasizes:

- Transferable outcomes, including abstract decision-making and adaptability,

- A broader scope of responsibility suited for regional flexibility.

These differences are substantive in emphasis, not in level. They reflect framework purpose—national application (VQF) vs. cross-national referencing (AQRF). The referencing committee, informed by expert consensus, found the cognitive, technical, and autonomy expectations at this level to be equivalent.

Therefore, the alignment of VQF Level 6 with AQRF Level 6 is supported under the best-fit principle, fulfilling the requirements of Criterion 4.

4.3.7. VQF Level 7 Corresponds to AQRF Level 7

- **Knowledge**: The AQRF and VQF are fully aligned in requiring mastery of a substantial body of knowledge. The VQF provides further clarification and detail, specifying advanced, broad, and in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge, with a strong grasp of fundamental principles and theories in the field of study aligned with the learner's discipline. The VQF also articulates a requirement—closely aligned with the AQRF—for relevant interdisciplinary knowledge, and further expands upon AQRF expectations by including broader general knowledge in areas such as governance and management.

Similarities:

Both frameworks require learners to demonstrate mastery of a body of knowledge and operate at the forefront of a field.

AQRF's "mastery" and VQF's "làm chủ kiến thức" denote equivalent levels of academic depth and intellectual autonomy.

Each framework positions the learner to engage critically and independently with their field.

Differences:

Innovation orientation: AQRF expects learners to extend or redefine knowledge or practice, signaling a research-generative role; VQF does not explicitly require knowledge creation.

Practical dimension: VQF includes practical knowledge as part of mastery; AQRF emphasizes theoretical leadership without referencing application.

Scope framing: AQRF may imply broader, cross-sectoral relevance; VQF confines mastery to the disciplinary scope of the academic programme.

While both frameworks converge on advanced knowledge mastery, AQRF emphasizes transformational and research-oriented engagement, whereas VQF prioritizes disciplinary depth and practical relevance. This is a substantive difference in focus, not level. VQF aligns with Vietnam's professionalised Master's model, whereas AQRF anticipates research-based innovation that is transferable across sectors. Both reflect advanced, independent learning outcomes. The referencing panel judged these expressions to be compatible in level, justifying a best-fit alignment. This also reflects AQRF's emphasis on meta-competency for regional recognition, and VQF's role in professional academic specialization.

- **Skills**: The AQRF's requirement for critical and independent thinking as a basis for research to expand or redefine knowledge or practice is fully consistent with the VQF. The VQF elaborates on this through specific requirements for skills in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation to formulate scientifically grounded solutions, as well as the ability to communicate knowledge and engage in professional and academic discourse. The VQF expands beyond the AQRF by including skills in research, technology development and application, and foreign language proficiency. It also introduces an additional requirement for organizational, managerial, and administrative skills at Level 7.

Similarities:

Both frameworks expect learners to operate in complex, variable environments requiring original, evidence-based solutions.

AQRF's focus on testing innovation (đổi mới) aligns with VQF's emphasis on research, development, and technological competence.

Both imply that learners operate with advanced cognitive and investigative skills to support innovation in professional or academic contexts.

Differences:

Technological integration: VQF explicitly includes the use of appropriate technology, underscoring applied research; AQRF remains technology-neutral.

Skill structure: VQF disaggregates skill sets (critical thinking, synthesis, evaluation) into distinct types (e.g., critical analysis, synthesis, tech use); AQRF uses a general formulation for innovation.

Transferability vs. specialization: VQF's skills are tightly linked to academic and occupational roles; AQRF encourages transferable, sector-neutral adaptability.

Both frameworks describe research-based innovation, but VQF locates this in professional and technological domains, while AQRF projects it in conceptual or cross-sectoral spaces. These differences are semantic and functional, not hierarchical. VQF reflects a TVET-informed national model with applied research and professional integration. AQRF ensures regional comparability. These distinctions reflect the different audiences each framework serves: national professional qualifications (VQF) versus regional comparability and mobility (AQRF). Both frameworks describe graduate-level innovation, fulfilling Criterion 4 expectations.

- **Application and responsibility/Level of autonomy and responsibility**: The AQRF's requirements for complexity and the development of innovative solutions are aligned with the VQF's requirements for conducting research and developing significant initiatives. The AQRF's emphasis on professional judgment and responsibility for expertise, practice, and management is fully reflected in the VQF's detailed requirements for making expert decisions within a field of specialization, as well as for managing, evaluating, and improving professional activities. Additionally, the VQF expands further by including requirements for adaptability, self-direction, and the ability to mentor others.

Similarities:

Both frameworks recognize the learner's capacity for expert-level responsibility, autonomy, and professional leadership.

AQRF's "significant responsibility" matches VQF's explicit management, evaluation, and improvement expectations.

Self-direction and adaptability are shared expectations, marking learners as advanced professionals.

Differences:

Responsibility framing: VQF emphasizes practical leadership and team guidance, including performance improvement. AQRF frames leadership more broadly via expert oversight with abstract sectoral responsibility.

Leadership scope: VQF is practice-based, focusing on improving efficiency; AQRF prioritizes knowledge and practice oversight.

Autonomy orientation: VQF highlights adaptability to a changing work environment; AQRF stresses judgment in managing knowledge and practice.

The AQRF model emphasizes strategic, sector-agnostic responsibility, while VQF highlights field-specific leadership and accountability. This is a substantive but compatible difference. AQRF reflects a strategic, transferable leadership vision, while VQF defines applied leadership within a profession. Both serve graduate-level outcomes. The referencing panel viewed these as parallel expressions of the same complexity level. Both support high-level autonomy, but their different emphases reflect national and regional priorities in professional development.

Table 4.8. Summary of Level 7 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 7	VQF Level 7	Key Differences
Knowledge	Mastery at the forefront of a field; extend/redefine knowledge	Deep theoretical & practical mastery in a defined field; no explicit requirement for redefining knowledge	AQRF more research-focused; VQF more professional/ practical
Skills	Develop/test innovative solutions in complex/ unpredictable situations	Categorized cognitive, research, evaluative, and technological skills for academic/professional development	VQF more granular and applied; AQRF more cross-context adaptable
Application & Responsibility	Expert judgment; significant responsibility for knowledge, practice, and management	Self-direction, adaptability, task leadership, team evaluation, performance improvement	VQF emphasizes operational leadership; AQRF emphasizes strategic knowledge roles

Both VQF and AQRF recognize Level 7 as a graduate-level qualification with:

- *Advanced theoretical and applied knowledge*,

- *Autonomous and innovative engagement*, and

- *Significant leadership responsibility*.

VQF Level 7:

- Supports a professionalized Master's graduate, focused on team leadership, evaluation, and disciplinary development.

- Emphasizes technological fluency, workplace adaptability, and structured accountability.

AQRF Level 7:

- Emphasizes research leadership, sector-neutral expertise, and strategic innovation.

- Supports academic progression and regional portability.

These differences are substantive in implementation, not in level. They reflect national vs. regional referencing priorities. In line with Sections 5.1.2 and 5.2.1 of the AQRF Referencing Guidelines, the referencing panel applied a best-fit judgment, combining textual comparison and stakeholder validation.

The conclusion affirms: VQF Level 7 aligns appropriately with AQRF Level 7, fulfilling the intent and learning outcomes of Criterion 4.

These distinctions reflect legitimate national adaptations to a shared qualifications philosophy. Explicitly incorporating them in the referencing narrative strengthened transparency and best-fit credibility under AQRF Criterion 4.

4.3.8. VQF Level 8 Corresponds to AQRF Level 8

- **Knowledge**: There is a complete similarity between AQRF and VQF in terms of knowledge at the highest and most in-depth level, at the top of a field; VQF has broader requirements than AQRF, as reflected in its inclusion of knowledge of scientific research and new technology development as well as knowledge of organizational governance; The core knowledge component, forming the foundation in the field of the training specialty, is actually a prerequisite for achieving the highest and most in-depth level of knowledge, as articulated in the AQRF description.

Similarities:

Both frameworks recognize this level as the pinnacle of intellectual and disciplinary development, requiring mastery at the frontier of knowledge.

AQRF's emphasis on knowledge creation resonates with VQF's framing of the learner being at the top level ("vị trí hàng đầu") of a specialized domain, implying authoritative expertise and innovation.

Each reflects doctoral-level expectations of originality, specialization, and advanced theoretical engagement.

Differences:

Knowledge creation: AQRF explicitly requires the generation of new knowledge or practice; VQF implies expertise and innovation but does not require knowledge creation as a defined outcome.

Practical integration: VQF includes applied, practical knowledge alongside theory; AQRF remains focused on specialized theoretical advancement.

Scope framing: AQRF's "field" may include broader or interdisciplinary sectors; VQF remains within discipline-bound training structures (e.g., ngành đào tạo).

Both descriptors support advanced intellectual contribution, but AQRF leans toward research innovation, while VQF emphasizes professional authority and sectoral expertise. This represents a substantive difference in expression, not in level. VQF reflects Vietnam's national focus on professional doctorates and applied research, while AQRF is structured for cross-system comparability and research innovation. The best-fit principle is justified through

stakeholder validation and textual analysis. This reflects Vietnam's national focus on applied doctoral training with global relevance, while AQRF maintains framework neutrality for regional recognition.

- **Skills**: AQRF's requirements for skills that lead to the creation of new knowledge or practices are completely similar to the skills for synthesizing, enriching and supplementing professional knowledge as defined in the VQF. The requirements for independent and original thinking and research in AQRF correspond broadly to the LOs for mastering scientific theories, methods and tools for research and development, and the skills of reasoning and analyzing scientific problems and proposing creative and unique solutions.The VQF sets a broader broader scope of requirement than the AQRF, as reflected in its inclusion of professional management and management skills in research and development, participation in national and international academic discussions,and dissemination of research outcomes.

Similarities:

Both frameworks require highly complex, independent research skills leading to original contributions to knowledge or practice.

AQRF's "testing of new theories" is conceptually aligned with VQF's "sáng tạo tri thức mới" (create new knowledge).

Each describes a capacity for advanced inquiry, conceptual thinking, and innovation.

Differences:

Skill granularity: VQF lists specific components—analysis, synthesis, problem identification, creativity—whereas AQRF maintains a higher-level formulation/ conceptual abstraction.

Creativity framing: VQF emphasizes original and creative thinking methods ("tư duy độc đáo"), offering insight into how learners are expected to innovate; AQRF leaves this more implicit.

International engagement: VQF explicitly includes skills for cross-border cooperation and communication, such as building national/international networks, which are not part of AQRF's scope.

VQF articulates a comprehensive doctoral skillset, combining analytical depth with creativity, research independence, and global collaboration. AQRF focuses on innovation and theory-building, appropriate for benchmarking research-led qualifications. These are both substantive and strategic differences. VQF embeds both academic excellence and global engagement; AQRF remains framework-neutral to accommodate regional diversity. The complexity and originality required at this level are equivalent across both frameworks. These distinctions also show how VQF embeds both academic excellence and global engagement into Level 8 learning outcomes.

- **Application and Responsibility / Level of Autonomy and Responsibility**: All contents in VQF are completely similar to those in AQRF with key phrases such as: high responsibility in management, professionalism, self-orientation and leadership, and the provision of new solutions to solve complex and abstract problems, including the creation of new knowledge.

Similarities:

Both frameworks describe the graduate as an authoritative leader (expert judgment) with expert-level/ leadership responsibility for managing research and advancing professional or disciplinary knowledge. AQRF's "significant responsibility" parallels VQF's responsibility for expert recommendation, professional guidance, and knowledge transfer.

Both highlight the learner's role in decision-making, innovation, and shaping the direction of a field or organization. The expected learner role is that of a disciplinary leader and agent of transformation.

Differences:

Leadership scope: AQRF emphasizes organizational and research management; VQF adds strategic transnational collaboration, leadership, policy engagement, and knowledge dissemination across national/international networks.

Knowledge impact: VQF graduates are expected to influence systems and policy; AQRF emphasizes internal disciplinary advancement.

Operational focus: AQRF is strategically neutral, focusing on process creation and expert judgment; VQF explicitly promotes professional knowledge transfer and system-level improvements via communication and collaboration with global visibility and societal impact.

These are complementary expressions of advanced responsibility. VQF Level 8 goes beyond internal academic leadership to emphasize knowledge diplomacy, professional influence, and cross-border engagement. AQRF centers on the creation and stewardship of knowledge or systems. VQF reflects Vietnam's strategic aim to position doctoral graduates as globally engaged, policy-relevant leaders. AQRF provides the benchmarks for highest-level academic and research-oriented practice. These reflect different strategic goals: national capacity-building and global visibility (VQF) vs. meta-level regional benchmarking (AQRF).

Table 4.9. Summary of Level 8 comparison

Domain	AQRF Level 8	VQF Level 8	Key Differences
Knowledge	Advanced, specialized, at frontier; new knowledge creation	Advanced theoretical and practical knowledge at expert level in discipline	AQRF requires creation; VQF emphasizes positioning and applied mastery
Skills	Independent research; test theories; solve abstract problems	Detailed analytical, creative, and research skills; international collaboration and dissemination	VQF more specific and includes global engagement
Application & Responsibility	Manage research/ organizations; extend knowledge; create new ideas	Self-directed leadership; build global networks; formulate expert conclusions and recommendations	VQF includes policy engagement, networks, and knowledge advocacy

Both frameworks align on core doctoral-level expectations:

- *Intellectual mastery*,
- *Original and independent research research*, and

- *Leadership in complex environments, knowledge-intensive contexts*.

However, they diverge in intent and emphasis:

AQRF Level 8:

- Serves as a meta-framework, focusing on theoretical innovation, knowledge creation, and cross-sectoral judgment.

- Prioritizes regional comparability, especially for research-led doctorates.

VQF Level 8:

- Grounds doctoral training in professional practice, policy contribution, and international engagement.

- Reflects Vietnam's ambition for applied research leadership with regional and global visibility.

These differences are substantive in scope, but not in level complexity. The referencing panel, drawing from textual analysis and national stakeholder consensus, confirmed that VQF Level 8 meets the intent and outcome expectations of AQRF Level 8. The differences serve complementary purposes and enhance the robustness and transparency of Vietnam's qualifications system.

At Level 8 (Doctoral), the VQF descriptor for Autonomy and Responsibility requires that graduates are able to:

- Conduct independent research and create new knowledge of international standard.

- Lead and manage advanced professional or academic activities with full autonomy.

- Take primary responsibility for developing strategies, policies, or innovations in complex and unpredictable contexts.

- Demonstrate the highest level of responsibility for professional ethics, knowledge advancement, and societal development.

This descriptor shows how Vietnam expects doctoral graduates not only to apply knowledge but also to exercise leadership, innovation, and accountability in shaping academic, professional, and social outcomes.

Thus, the best-fit alignment under AQRF Criterion 4 across the eight levels is both defensible and credible. Table 4.10 below captures a summary of the outcomes of the AQRF–VQF referencing process across all eight levels.

Table 4.10. VQF and AQRF comparison

| Level | Knowledge | | Skills | | Autonomy & Responsibility | | Credit | Qualification |
	VQF	AQRF	VQF	AQRF	VQF	AQRF	VQF	
Level 1	Basic vocational knowledge to perform simple tasks under guidance.	Basic and general; involves simple, straightforward and routine actions.	Perform basic, repetitive tasks under close supervision.	Simple, straightforward and routine actions.	Work under supervision in structured contexts.	Structured routine processes; close supervision.	5 credits (<= 3 months)	Elementary Certificate Level I
Level 2	Foundational knowledge to perform routine tasks with limited supervision.	General and factual; use of standard actions.	Apply known solutions to routine problems using basic tools.	Use of standard actions.	Carry out tasks with limited autonomy.	Structured processes; some discretion for judgement.	15 credits (<= 6 months)	Elementary Certificate Level II
Level 3	Technical knowledge with some theoretical foundation in a specific field.	Includes general principles and some conceptual aspects.	Use a variety of tools and techniques for problem-solving in familiar contexts.	Selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information.	Work independently in defined contexts; may supervise limited activities.	General guidance; judgement and planning to solve some issues.	25 credits (<= 12 months)	Elementary Certificate Level III
Level 4	Broad and specialised knowledge in a technical or applied field.	Technical and theoretical with general coverage of a field; adapting processes.	Apply specialised skills and techniques in varied contexts with limited supervision	Adapting processes.	Take responsibility for outputs; may supervise a team.	Broad guidance; some self-direction and coordination.	35 credits for high school, 50 credits for secondary school diploma holders (1–2 years)	Intermediate Diploma
Level 5	Comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge in a discipline.	Detailed technical and theoretical knowledge of a general field; analytical thinking.	Exercise independent judgement in solving complex technical problems.	Analytical thinking; resolving abstract issues.	Work independently and take responsibility for outcomes and team leadership.	Independent evaluation of activities; resolving complex and abstract issues.	60 credits (2–3 years)	College Diploma
Level 6	Advanced knowledge to solve complex problems in a professional field.	Specialised technical and theoretical within a specific field; critical thinking.	Plan, evaluate, and solve unfamiliar problems in a professional setting.	Critical and analytical thinking; solving complex issues.	Lead project activities; be accountable for decisions and outcomes.	Initiative and adaptability; solve complex and changing issues.	120–180 credits (3–5 years)	Bachelor Degree

Level	Knowledge		Skills		Autonomy & Responsibility		Credit	Qualification
	VQF	AQRF	VQF	AQRF	VQF	AQRF	VQF	
Level 7	Specialised theoretical and methodological knowledge in a specific field.	At the forefront of a field; mastery of a body of knowledge.	Use advanced research skills and professional judgement in complex situations.	Critical and independent thinking; research as basis for redefining knowledge.	Take significant responsibility for research and development within field.	Expert judgement; responsibility for practice and management.	>= 60 credits (1–2 years)	Master's Degree
Level 8	Systematic, original knowledge at the frontier of a discipline.	Most advanced and specialised level; creation of new knowledge through research.	Generate new knowledge and methodologies through independent research	Independent and original thinking; creation of new knowledge or practice.	Lead innovation and knowledge creation in unpredictable and complex settings.	Authoritative judgement; lead research or organisations; extend knowledge.	90–120 credits (3–4 years)	PhD (Doctoral Degree)

CRITERION
5

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS UNDERPINNING THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

To ensure the quality of qualifications and degrees in TVET and HE, Vietnam has issued standardised regulatory policies to control and assure the quality of input, training process, and output corresponding to each training level in both sectors. These are reflected in a relatively comprehensive system of legal documents, including the Education Law (2019), the HE Law (2012; amended in 2018), the Law on Vocational Education (2014), and related regulatory documents issued by MOET, as well as other relevant stakeholders. These standards and policies relate to the levels/qualifications in TVET and HE and competency standards. They help ensure the transparency of qualifications and serve as quality benchmarks for degrees and diplomas. The development and promulgation of these standards and policies have been progressively enhanced to meet the demands of international integration and to align with global norms and standards in TVET and HE qualifications.

5.1. Standards Defined in TVET
5.1.1. Basis for Defining Minimum Knowledge and Competency Requirements for TVET (MTVET)

The levels of TVET (Primary, Intermediate, and College) are managed by MOLISA. The standards of TVET are developed based on the principle of assessing Minimum Knowledge and Competency. The specific objectives for each TVET level are defined as follows:

- Primary level aims to equip learners with the ability to perform simple tasks in a specific occupation;

- Intermediate level aims to equip learners with the ability to perform tasks at the primary level and handle some complex tasks of the specialised field or occupation; with the ability to apply techniques and technology in work, work independently, and collaborate in teams;

- College level aims to equip learners with the ability to perform tasks at the intermediate level and resolve complex tasks of the specialised field or occupation; with the capacity for creativity, application of modern techniques and technologies in work, and the ability to guide and supervise others in group work.

- The objectives of developing Requirements for TVET (MTVET) for graduates at the Intermediate and College levels include:

(i) developing and issuing regulations on the minimum required learning volume and competency requirements that learners must achieve upon graduation at the Intermediate and College levels for each discipline or occupation, in order to publicly inform society, learners, and employers about the standards of occupational competency, professional knowledge, practical skills, cognitive abilities, problem-solving capacity, and types of jobs that learners can undertake after completing each qualification level by discipline or occupation;

(ii) strengthening cooperation and linkage between training institutions and enterprises in training and employment, to meet the needs of businesses and the labor market;

(iii) providing a basis for institutions to develop, revise, and supplement academic programs in accordance with the regulations on minimum learning volume and competency requirements that learners must achieve upon graduation at the Intermediate and College levels for each discipline or occupation.

5.1.2. Program Standards for TVET

The regulations for TVET programs have been standardized. Institutions must apply a unified set of regulations when developing academic programs, specifically as follows:

Table 5.1. Standards for TVET programs

	Curriculum Intermediate	Academic programs College Level
Number of credits for the whole course	Minimum 35 credits for learners holding an upper secondary school graduation diploma (high school diploma) Minimum of 50 credits for learners holding a lower secondary school graduation diploma (junior secondary school diploma)	Minimum 60 credits
Duration of study theory	25% - 45%	30% - 50%

Note:

- One credit consists of 15 hours of theoretical instruction, or 30 hours of practical training, or 45 hours of internship.

- One period of theoretical instruction equals 45 minutes, while one hour of a practical training/internship equals 60 minutes.

5.1.3. Standard Criteria for Personnel Involved in TVET Curriculum Development

The head of an intermediate school or college may either adopt an academic program developed by another institution (domestic or international) or autonomously develop an academic program by establishing a *Program Development Team* and a *Program Advisory Council*.

Table 5.2. Standardized regulations on the criteria of individuals involved in developing academic programs

	Establishment of the Program Drafting Committee	Establishment of the Program Advisory Council
Component structure	Determined by the head of the intermediate school or college.	a) The number of Council members must be an odd number, including: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, and other members; among whom there must be at least one external reviewer from another institution and one representative acting as an employer.
		b) The composition of the Appraisal Council includes: educators, training management personnel, and technical staff from enterprises. Members of the Appraisal Council must not be members of the Program Development Team or Editorial Committee. The Council must include at least one-third of its members being current teachers teaching at the corresponding qualification level and in the relevant discipline or occupation.
Criteria	a) Must hold a university degree or higher, have understanding and experience in curriculum development; have at least 3 years of experience in direct teaching or in production, business, or management activities in the field of the discipline or occupation involved in the curriculum development. b) Must include representatives of employees/employers in the relevant professional field, with a clear understanding of occupational competency requirements and job positions within the discipline or occupation.	Members must hold a university degree or higher, with at least 5 years of experience in teaching or participating in production, business, or management activities in the field of the discipline or occupation being appraised. Participation of teachers or lecturers from foreign training institutions in the Advisory Council is encouraged.

5.1.4. Standard Procedures for TVET Program Development

Step 1: Define the objectives, duration, learning volume, competency requirements, and content to be included in the training program based on the occupational skills standards and the regulations on minimum required learning volume and competency outcomes for the specific discipline or occupation. For disciplines or occupations where no occupational skills standards or minimum required learning volume and competency outcomes have been issued, a process of occupational analysis, job analysis, and employer surveys must be conducted to identify the necessary competencies of that field/occupation.

Step 2: Design the structure of the training program, including the identification of required and elective subjects/modules, duration, and time allocation.

Step 3: Design the detailed syllabi for the compulsory and elective subjects/modules as defined in the academic program.

Step 4: Design the content and methods for assessing MTVET, based on the required competencies that learners must achieve for each component and qualification level.

Step 5: Organise the development of the training program and detailed syllabi for each subject/module.

Step 6: Collect feedback from experts, lecturers, managers, scientists, and employers on the structure and content of the training program.

Step 7: Finalise the draft training program based on the incorporation of feedback received.

Quality assurance in Vietnam's TVET system is designed to foster continuous improvement through a structured and cyclical process of self-assessment, external evaluation, and accreditation. Managed by the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) under MOLISA, this system requires all TVET institutions and programmes to undergo periodic quality reviews every five years. Accredited institutions must maintain and enhance their quality through internal monitoring, feedback from employers, and corrective actions based on inspection and evaluation outcomes. The revised 2024 accreditation standards emphasize a principle-based and outcomes-oriented approach, promoting flexibility, responsiveness to labour market needs, and the ongoing enhancement of training quality across the TVET sector. Details of the quality assurance system for TVET are presented in Section 6.2 under Criterion 6.

5.2. Standards in HE
5.2.1. Basis for Determining LOs in HE

The development of program standards for HE qualifications is a crucial element in the implementation of the VQF. MOET began developing program standards for HE qualifications in 2021. A program standard for a HE qualification sets out the common and minimum requirements applicable to all academic programs in relevant disciplines (or discipline groups, fields) at that level. These include requirements for: training objectives, LOs (or output requirements), entry requirements (or input standards), minimum learning volume, structure and content, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods, and implementation conditions to ensure training quality.

The requirements cover LOs, program content, and other necessary resources to fulfil the LOs of undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The LOs of a program are clearly defined, encompassing both general and specific requirements that learners must achieve upon completing the program. These LOs reflect stakeholder expectations, are reviewed and updated periodically, and are made publicly available. Program design and implementation are based on the principle of systematic alignment, aiming to support learners in successfully achieving the LOs.

5.2.2. Program Standards for HE

Table 5.3. Standardized regulations for HE academic programs

Academic programs	Undergraduate level programs	Master's level program	Doctoral level program
Total number of credits for the entire program	Minimum 120 credits	A minimum of 60 credits for those who hold a Bachelor's degree in the same group of majors.	A minimum of 90 credits for those who hold a Master's degree in the same group of majors. A minimum of 120 credits for those who hold a Bachelor's degree in the same group of majors.
Mode	Full-time and part-time	Research-oriented and practice-oriented	Research-oriented only

5.2.3. Development of Standards for Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral Programs

MOET is the competent authority responsible for developing the program standards for HE qualifications. The development process begins with the establishment of two councils: the Sectoral Advisory Council and the Program Standards Appraisal Council. Members of the Appraisal Council must be distinct from those serving on the Sectoral Advisory Council. The structure, composition, responsibilities, and functions of these councils are standardized and presented as bellow:

Table 5.4. Structure, composition, responsibilities and tasks of the councils for program standard development

	Sectoral Advisory Council	Program Standards Appraisal Council
Composition and Structure	A minimum of 09 members, including: representatives from MOET; representatives of the line ministry; representatives of the organization responsible for developing the program standard; representatives from several HEIs; representatives from enterprises, associations, professional organizations, and agencies managing human resources; and experts in curriculum development, program design, and QA.	A minimum of 09 members, including: representatives of MOET; representatives of the line ministry; representatives from several HEIs; representatives from enterprises, associations, professional organizations, and agencies managing human resources; and experts in curriculum development, program design, and QA.

	Sectoral Advisory Council	Program Standards Appraisal Council
Responsibility	a) Responsible for the content and quality of the program standards for the discipline group; its relevance to real-world needs; its alignment with program standards at university levels; its consistency with current regulations and assurance of institutional autonomy. b) Accountable to competent state management agencies, training institutions, and other stakeholders regarding matters related to the program standards of the discipline group.	Appraise the program standards of the discipline group in order to assess quality and provide advisory input to MOET for the official promulgation of the program standards.
Tasks	a) Define whether to develop program standards by field or discipline group, and determine the list of related disciplines; determine the necessity of setting specific requirements for each discipline. b) Develop and update program standards for the discipline group to ensure alignment with the corresponding level standards as regulated in Article 12 of this Circular, for submission to MOET for appraisal and promulgation. c) Participate in the inspection, monitoring, and evaluation of institutions' compliance with program standards in accordance with legal regulations.	

5.2.4. Standard Procedures for Developing Program Standards at all HE Levels

Step 1: Analyse international experience in the relevant discipline and human resource needs; compare with the corresponding discipline in Vietnam and identify similarities and differences.

Step 2: Compile and agree on the list of service groups, activities, and job types for the workforce in the relevant discipline.

Step 3: Survey and gather feedback, opinions and perspectives from stakeholders (managers, professionals, institutions, and employers) regarding the list of job groups in the relevant discipline, and prepare a report.

Step 4: Develop a draft program standard (based on the regulations on program standards by discipline, field, and level, and on occupational competencies by discipline);

Develop survey forms on the program standard and the feasibility of applying the program standard to curriculum development for the workforce in the relevant discipline in Vietnam, based on findings from surveys and interviews.

Step 5: Collect feedback from stakeholders (managers, professionals, institutions, employers, and individuals in the relevant workforce) on the draft program standard and its applicability to the workforce in the discipline in Vietnam.

Step 6: Appraise the draft program standard and its applicability to the workforce in the discipline in Vietnam based on survey findings.

Step 7: Finalise the draft program standard and report the results of review, research, and analysis of competency needs for the workforce in the relevant discipline in Vietnam.

Step 8: MOET issues the official program standard.

Based on the program standards issued by MOET, HEIs will develop their academic programs, with flexibility to expand and enrich them to create distinct institutional profiles.

From 2021 to 2024, MOET established 10 Advisory Councils for developing program standards and assigned universities to collaborate in the development of program standards at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for the following discipline groups: Teacher education; Architecture and construction; Engineering – Technology; Computer science and Information technology; Environment and environmental protection; Foreign languages, literature and culture; Agriculture, forestry and fisheries; Mathematics and statistics; Law; Finance – Accounting; and Manufacturing and processing.

In addition to the program standards for the above-mentioned disciplines, other program standards are developed by line ministries, including: Program standards for Health Sciences developed by the Ministry of Health; Program standards for Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, Sports and Personal Services; and Social Services developed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Program standards for Security developed by the Ministry of Public Security; and Program standards for National Defence developed by the Ministry of National Defence.

It is noteworthy that the development and implementation of these programme standards in Vietnam are closely linked to the national quality assurance framework, which embeds mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement across all levels of higher education. At the programme level, mechanisms for continuous quality enhancement are embedded within the regulatory framework governing programme standards and development. Circular No. 04/2025/TT-BGDĐT (dated 17 February 2025) issued by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) establishes a five-year quality assurance cycle for accredited higher education programmes, ensuring that each programme undergoes periodic review to maintain and improve its quality. Programmes assessed as "conditionally met" are required to implement improvement measures within two years, while those demonstrating measurable enhancement and effectively addressing previous weaknesses may have their accreditation cycle extended to seven years. This cyclical review process embeds continuous improvement as an integral component of programme design, implementation, and outcomes assessment.

At the institutional level, Article 29 of Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT similarly stipulates a five-year accreditation cycle for higher education institutions. This requirement reinforces a system-wide culture of quality assurance based on self-assessment, external evaluation, and recognition of compliance with national quality standards. Together, these regulations ensure that the development and operation of higher education programmes are not static but part of a continuous improvement loop—linking programme standards, evaluation outcomes, and

institutional accountability within Vietnam's broader quality assurance framework. Details of the quality assurance system for HE are presented in Section 6.1 under Criterion 6.

5.3. Alignment of VQF with Standardization in TVET and HE
5.3.1. Standardized Content for TVET Qualification Levels

The components of the NOSC, the MTVET standards, and the training program content used for developing TVET programs are illustrated in the diagram below.
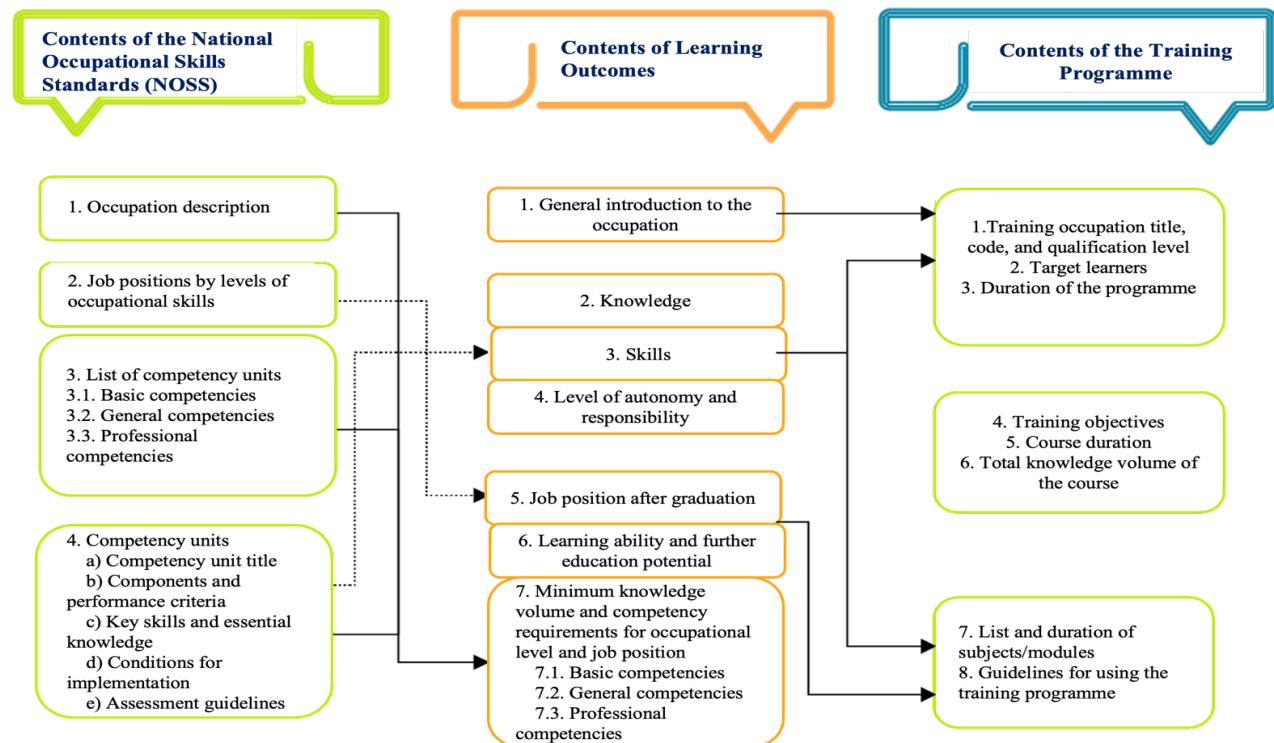
Figure 5.1. Key criteria informing the development of TVET programs

5.3.2. The Role of VQF in Governing and Assuring the Quality of HE Qualifications

The VQF provides specific competency standards for each level of HE and sets the required credit-based learning volumes: Level 6 (Bachelor's level) requires a minimum of 120 credits; Level 7 (Master's level) requires a minimum of 60 credits for learners with a Bachelor's degree; and Level 8 (Doctoral level) requires a minimum of 90 credits for learners with a Master's degree and 120 credits for those with a Bachelor's degree. The table below described the situation:

Table 5.5. Number of credits for each level in higher education

Level	Credits	Graduation
Level 6	120	Bachelor degree
Level 7	60	Master degree
Level 8	90 For learners having Master degree	Doctoral degree
	120 For learners having Bachelor degree	

Each qualification level includes detailed LOs in three domains: (1) Knowledge, (2) Skills, and (3) Level of Autonomy and Responsibility.

The implementation of the VQF contributes to reforming educational and training activities linked to assuring and improving the quality of HE in Vietnam, establishing relationships with other national and regional qualifications frameworks, creating a mechanism for articulation between qualification levels, and fostering lifelong learning. It also establishes a mechanism to standardize the national certification system to ensure the credibility of qualifications, thereby building trust among employers and society in such credentials. This implementation is closely connected to the ongoing development and approval of program standards for academic disciplines in HE.

As of Q4 2024, two key components of this plan have been implemented:

(1) The development and promulgation of regulations on the standard framework for undergraduate academic programs;

(2) The development and issuance of official directives and guidance for the NAC responsible for developing program standards for academic disciplines and fields in HE, led by MOET in coordination with relevant ministries, industries, enterprises, and associations.

Accordingly:

(3) A system of guiding documents has been issued by MOET to help HEIs review the structure, content, and delivery methods of academic programs to ensure alignment with the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and with the expectations of employers;

(4) MOET takes the lead in coordinating with relevant agencies to research, review, revise, or issue new QA and accreditation regulations to align them with the program standards stipulated under the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and the VQF.

To ensure that academic programs are implemented in accordance with the VQF:

(5) MOET directs and guides HEIs in implementing capacity-building activities for managers and lecturers;

(6) HEIs review and revise the structure, content, and implementation methods of academic programs; develop detailed syllabi, modules, and textbooks; and deliver education based on updated programs aligned with the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and employer requirements;

(7) HEIs enhance the capacity of lecturers and program developers in accordance with the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018);

(8) Departments of Education and Training (DOETs) in each city and province take the lead, in coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, in monitoring and supervising the implementation of the VQF at HEIs.

5.3.3. *The Vietnam Qualification Framework (VQF): Current alignment status*

The Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) serves as the legally mandated reference point for the formulation of learning outcomes, credit volumes, and competency requirements across all qualification levels. Its application is systematically embedded within programme development, accreditation processes, and quality assurance mechanisms in both the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and higher education (HE) sectors.

In higher education, all programme learning outcomes are required to align with the VQF. This alignment is operationalised through two key mechanisms. First, diploma supplements accompanying awarded qualifications must clearly state the corresponding VQF level. Second, national accreditation regulations mandate that all higher education programmes define their learning outcomes with explicit reference to the VQF descriptors. As of 2024, progress in this area has been substantial: 200 out of 240 higher education institutions have achieved domestic accreditation, and 16 institutions hold international accreditation. At the programme level, 1,885 programmes have been accredited domestically, and 694 internationally. Fewer than 40 institutions remain unaccredited at the institutional level.

Quality assurance for higher education is conducted by legally recognised, independent accreditation agencies applying a unified set of standards issued by MOET (see further elaboration under Criterion 6). Two key institutional standards are currently enforced: (i) the *minimum institutional quality standards* (as outlined in Circular No. 01/2024), applicable to all higher education institutions, and (ii) a more rigorous set of *institutional accreditation standards*, which reflect higher performance benchmarks. The Government of Vietnam has articulated a clear policy objective for 100% of higher education institutions to meet the enhanced accreditation standard by 2030.

At the programme level, a comparable two-tier quality assurance framework is in place: (i) minimum standards for programme approval and (ii) programme accreditation standards. Three of the four programme standards have already been finalised and implemented; the remaining standard is under development and is expected to be formally issued in 2025. Nonetheless, institutions have already begun designing new programmes in alignment with the draft standards and VQF descriptors.

In the TVET sector, qualifications from Levels 1 to 5 of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) are developed based on the Minimum Knowledge and Competency Requirements for TVET, which sets out minimum credit requirements and corresponding learning outcomes at each level. Unlike the National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC), which primarily function as labour market instruments for certifying practical competencies, the MTVET establishes academic qualification requirements aligned directly with the VQF. Accordingly, all formal TVET programmes must demonstrate compliance with VQF level descriptors across the three domains of knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility.

Quality assurance in the TVET sector is overseen by the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) and other competent authorities, ensuring that institutions adhere to national standards. In parallel, the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF)—governed by Circular No. 56/2015/TT-BLĐTBXH (Article 5)—provides a competency-based framework for the National Occupation Skill Standards (NOSC). These occupational standards serve as the basis for assessing competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning pathways. However, the NSCF is not currently integrated with the VQF. It remains a parallel system, primarily designed for employment recognition rather than academic progression, and does not allow for articulation into VQF-based qualifications.

To address this gap and promote lifelong learning and learner mobility, reforms are currently underway. The draft amended Law on Vocational Education and Training (2025) proposes mechanisms to enable the recognition and transfer of skills and qualifications between the NSCF and the VQF. This will support the development of more flexible learning pathways

and allow for the integration of informal and non-formal learning into the national qualifications system (see Section 1.5 for further details of the reform).

In summary, the alignment of qualifications with the VQF is now broadly institutionalised and underpinned by robust regulatory and quality assurance systems. While some operational gaps persist, the majority of institutions and programmes already function under frameworks that explicitly reference the VQF. The current trajectory of national policy and ongoing quality assurance reforms reinforces the expectation that full system-wide alignment with the VQF will be achieved by 2030.

CRITERION
6

THE NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) SYSTEM FOR HE AND TVET IN VIETNAM

The Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) serves as the legally mandated foundation for developing learning outcomes, credit volumes, and competency requirements across all levels of education and training. Since its official adoption in 2016, implementation has progressed through three main phases: initial legal establishment, nationwide dissemination and early application, and, more recently, consolidation and preparation for referencing to the AQRF. While significant progress has been made—particularly in aligning higher education programmes with VQF descriptors through accreditation and curriculum standards—challenges remain. These include limited articulation between TVET and higher education, curriculum mismatches, and inconsistent recognition of practical competencies. To address these, Vietnam has undertaken reforms such as issuing new programme standards, piloting articulation pathways, developing mechanisms for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and enhancing quality assurance frameworks. A revised legal framework is also underway to enable greater alignment between the VQF and the National Skills Competency Framework (NSCF), particularly at Levels 1–5. (See also Section 3.1.5 under Criterion 3 for further detail on implementation progress.)

Building on the VQF as the overarching reference point for qualifications, Vietnam has also developed a comprehensive quality assurance and accreditation system to ensure its consistent application across both TVET and HE. The quality assurance (QA) system has been continuously strengthened by drawing on the experiences of European, North American, and particularly Asia-Pacific countries. Insights from international QA and accreditation organisations, together with models from well-established systems, have served as important references in shaping Vietnam's quality management framework for education and training. According to Vietnam's Education Law (2019), the governance of the education system is decentralized between two ministries: MOET and MOLISA. MOET is responsible for state management of early childhood education, primary education, general secondary education, and HE. It also oversees pedagogical colleges and college-level teacher academic programs. MOLISA is responsible for managing the TVET system, which encompasses the elementary and intermediate certificates, and college diploma.

Given their respective mandates, both MOET and MOLISA have each established their own system of quality management agencies. These systems are introduced in the sections below. The three main actors involved in QA are illustrated in Figure 6.1.
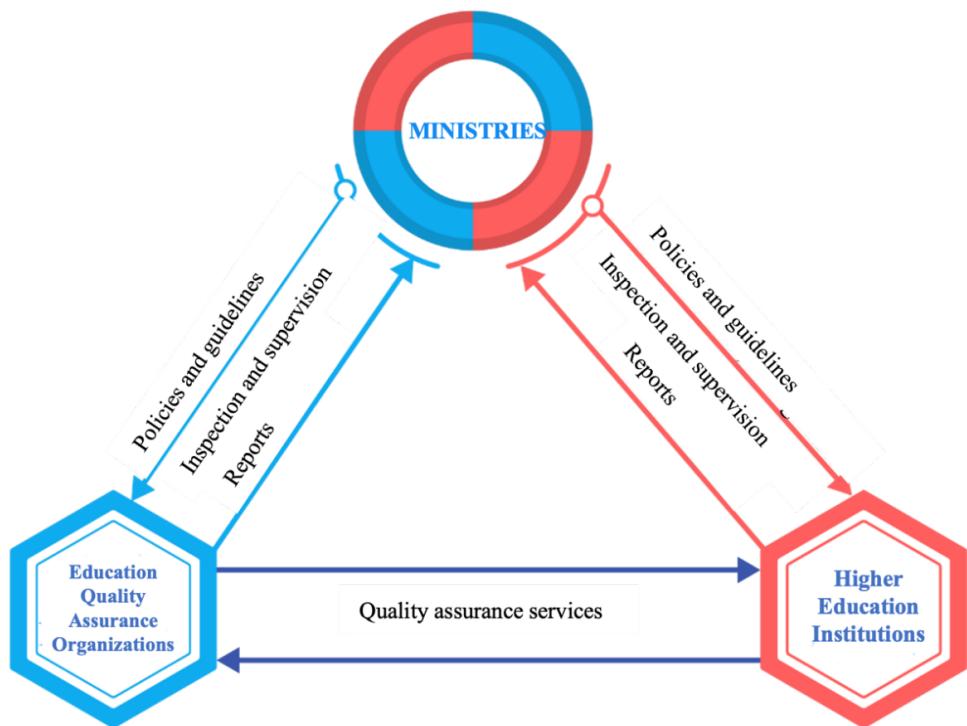
**Figure 6.1. The QA relationship between MOET/MOLISA –
Education Accreditation Bodies – HEIs**

In addition, other relevant Ministries and sectors have also established their own quality management systems to ensure the quality of HEIs and academic programs under their respective jurisdictions. The Ministry of National Defence operates through the Department of Military Schools, the Ministry of Public Security through the Department of Training, and the Ministry of Health through the Administration of Science, Technology and Training — each serving as the designated agency for QA and accreditation in their respective areas of education. Other Ministries also have dedicated units in charge of training management and QA of their affiliated institutions.

6.1. QA system for HE
6.1.1. QA Mechanisms for HE Qualifications

Pursuant to the HE Law No. 08/2012/QH13 and its Amended Law No. 34/2018/QH14 (hereinafter collectively referred to as the HE Law), qualifications at various levels of HE may be awarded through multiple modes of delivery, including full-time, part-time, and distance learning.

- ***Undergraduate Education*** aims to equip students with comprehensive specialized knowledge, a solid understanding of natural and social principles and laws, fundamental practical skills, and the capacity for independent work, creativity, and problem-solving within their field of study.

- ***Master's Education*** is designed to provide learners with foundational scientific knowledge and advanced professional skills necessary for effective practice or specialized research. Graduates are expected to work independently, demonstrate creativity, and possess the ability to identify and resolve complex issues within their area of specialization.

- ***Doctoral Education*** focuses on developing candidates' theoretical and applied competencies at the highest level. Doctoral candidates are expected to conduct independent, original research that generates new knowledge, explores fundamental principles and laws of nature and society, and addresses emerging scientific and technological challenges. They should also be capable of supervising research and contributing meaningfully to professional practice.

Upon successful completion of a study program, fulfilment of the required LOs for the respective qualification level, and satisfaction of all learner obligations, the HEIs shall award the corresponding degree in accordance with applicable regulation. Specifically:

Bachelor's degree: Awarded to graduates of bachelor-level academic programs who meet the LOs of Level 6 of the VQF and comply with institutional regulations, as stipulated in Clause 12, Article 14 of the HE Law. Degrees for specialized fields within the HE system include Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Dentistry, Doctor of Traditional Medicine, Pharmacist, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Engineer, Architect, and other designations as stipulated by the Government. These degrees are awarded upon completion of academic programs specified in Article 15 of Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP, dated 30 December 2019. Undergraduate programs leading to a Vietnamese bachelor's degree correspond to Level 6 of ISCED 2011. Programs leading to professional degrees such as engineering or medicine may correspond to Level 7 of ISCED 2011.

- Master's degree: Awarded to graduates of master's level academic programs who meet the Level 7 LOs of the VQF and fulfill the specific legal and institutional requirements. Vietnamese master's programs correspond to Level 7 of ISCED 2011.

- Doctoral degree: Awarded to graduates of doctoral programs who meet the Level 8 LOs of the VQF and satisfy the relevant legal and institutional requirements. Vietnamese doctoral programs correspond to Level 8 of ISCED 2011.

Degree Issuance and Management Authority:

The Government of Vietnam is the competent authority responsible for establishing the national framework for HE qualifications and for regulating the issuance and recognition of qualifications and certificates, particularly in specialized professional fields.

The Minister of MOET is authorised to negotiate and sign, or to propose that competent authorities negotiate and sign, international agreements on the mutual recognition of qualifications with foreign governments, international organizations, and other relevant entities. The Minister is also responsible for prescribing the specific content to be included on degrees, certificates and their accompanying diploma supplements; the principles governing the printing, management, issuance, revocation, and annulment of HE qualifications; the authority and responsibilities of Vietnamese HEIs in awarding degrees when engaged in joint or transnational programs in partnership with foreign institutions; and the obligations of foreign-invested HEIs operating in Vietnam regarding the awarding of degrees. In addition, MOET regulates the conditions, procedures, and processes for the recognition of HE qualifications issued by foreign institutions.

HEIs are responsible for designing degree templates, printing blank qualification, issuing qualifications to learners, and managing qualifications and certificates in accordance with legal regulations. Institutions are also required to publicly disclose degree templates and all related information concerning the issuance of qualifications on their official websites.

a) QA of HE and HE degrees

To assure educational quality, HEIs are required to establish and develop an IQA system that is consistent with its mission, objectives, and operational context. In addition, HEIs must formulate QA policies and implementation plans. Institutions are obligated to conduct regular self-assessment activities and implement continuous quality improvement measures. They are also required to periodically undergo program-level and institutional-level external accreditation.

In cases where an HEI fails to complete program accreditation within the prescribed cycle or receives an unsatisfactory accreditation result, it must implement corrective actions to enhance the quality of training, ensuring that learners are able to meet the intended LOs of the academic program. If, within two years from the expiration of the accreditation certificate or from the date of an unsatisfactory accreditation result, the program has not been re-accredited or the re-accreditation outcome remains unsatisfactory, the HEI must suspend new admissions to that program and implement measures to safeguard the rights of its currently enrolled learners.

Table 6.1. Stakeholders involved in the development of policies and management documents for QA of HE

Targets	Responsible Agency	QA Implementation Content
Ensuring Input Quality		
1. QA of new openings and adjustments to investment programs	- MOET issues regulations on the conditions, procedures, and processes for opening new academic disciplines, and suspending training activities at Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels (Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BGDĐT and Circular No. 12/2024/TT-BGDĐT). - The Government promulgates the classification of education and training fields (Decision No. 01/2017/QĐ-TTg: Issuing the national education and training classification). MOET issues the 4-digit classification of academic disciplines (Circular No. 09/2022/TT-BGDĐT). - The Government issues regulations on articulation from intermediate and college levels to university (Decision No. 18/2017/QĐ-TTg).	HEIs detail and implement regulations on conditions, order and procedures for opening new academic disciplines for Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees
2. QA of student admissions	MOET issues the regulations on student admissions at undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels (Circulars No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT; 18/2021/TT-BGDĐT; 21/2021/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the admissions regulations for the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

Targets	Responsible Agency	QA Implementation Content
3. QA of academic staff and lecturer standards	- The National Assembly promulgates the Law on Public Employees - MOET issues: + Regulations on working regimes for HEI lecturers (Circular No. 20/2022/TT-BGDĐT). + Regulations on working regimes for lecturers at teacher training colleges (Circular No. 36/2020/TT-BGDĐT). + Regulations on codes, professional titles, appointment, and salary scales for lecturers in public HEIs (Circular No. 40/2020/TT-BGDĐT). + Regulations on conditions for institutions to conduct training and issue certificates on professional titles for lecturers in public institutions (Circular No. 13/2017/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the regulations for its staff and lecturers.
4. Regulations on training program standards	- MOET issues the standards for academic programs; develops, appraises, and issues academic programs for all HE levels (Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the regulations on the development, appraisal, and issuance of academic programs for HE levels.
5. QA of infrastructure and facilities	- The National Assembly promulgates: + HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), including infrastructure and financial requirements for HEIs. + Law on Libraries regulating university libraries. + Government issues guiding decrees (e.g., Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP). - MOET issues: + Regulations on compiling, selecting, appraising, approving, and using textbooks and teaching materials in HE (Circular No. 35/2021/TT-BGDĐT). + Detailed guidelines on standards for facilities and infrastructure in education (Circular No. 03/2020/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the regulations on: ensuring the conditions of facilities and equipment to serve training, scientific research, and community service.

Targets	Responsible Agency	QA Implementation Content
6. Establishment and Opening of Universities	- The National Assembly promulgates the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) - The Government issues regulations on the conditions for founding public and private universities(Decree No. 125/2024/ND-CP of the Government regulations on conditions for investment and operation in the field of education).	Individuals and organizations implement the regulations on establishing universities.
7. Regulations on standards for institutions	MOET issues the Regulation on standards for HEIs (Circular No. 01/2024/TT-BG-DĐT).	HEIs implement the requirements of the standards for HEIs.
Ensuring Process Quality		
8. Regulations for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels	- MOET issues regulations for the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels (Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT, Circular No. 23/2021/TT-BGDĐT, and Circular No. 18/2021/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the regulations on the training regulations for the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.
9. Regulations on inspection and supervision of academic programs and institutions	- MOET issues the Regulation on Program Standards (Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT), which serves as the basis for the inspection and examination of academic programs, QA of programs, and supervision of training activities and outcomes.	Institutions implement the regulations on inspection and supervision of its programs and the institution itself.
10. Regulations on qualifications and recognition of degrees	MOET issues: - Regulations on the management of qualifications and certificates in the national education system (Circular No. 21/2019/TT-BGDĐT). - Circular on the conditions, procedures, and authority for recognition of foreign-issued HE qualifications for use in Vietnam (Circular No. 13/2021/TT-BGDĐT).	HEIs detail and implement the regulations on degrees and certificates in the national education system.
Ensuring Outcomes Quality		
11. Regulations on public disclosure	The Government issues: + Financial disclosure regulations for budgetary levels and units (Decision No. 192/2004/QĐ-TTg); + Disclosure regulations in Decree No. 99/2019/NĐ-CP. + Regulations on public disclosure for HEIs (Circular No. 09/2024/TT-BGDĐT). - MOET promulgates the Regulation on public implementation of education and training institutions in the national education system (Circular No. 09/2024/TT-BGDĐT).	Institutions develop and implement regulations on transparency and information and disclosure in education.

Targets	Responsible Agency	QA Implementation Content
12. Regulations and processes for QA, accreditation of HEIs and others	MOET promulgates the following regulations: - Regulations on the procedures and cycles for institutional accreditation applicable to teacher training colleges and HEIs; - Regulations on the procedures and cycles for program accreditation, along with quality assessment standards for: + HE programs at all qualification levels; + Distance education programs; + Undergraduate nursing programs; + Undergraduate technical and industrial teacher training programs; + Programs for training teachers at the college and intermediate levels (teacher training colleges and secondary teacher training institutions); + Upper-secondary teacher training programs at the undergraduate level.	HEIs detail the implementation of self-assessment for the institution and its academic programs and implement the regulations on the accreditation process for the institution and its academic programs.

According to Article 50 of Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT issued by MOET on the accreditation of HEIs, accreditation organizations are required to publicly disclose the results of external evaluations, the contents of the resolution, and the recommendations of the QA Council on their official websites at least 15 days prior to issuing the Certificate of Accreditation. However, this regulation does not apply to institutions whose information must be kept confidential in accordance with State regulations.

Additionally, the accreditation organization must publicly disclose the Certificate of Accreditation for each institution on their website no later than 5 working days after issuing the certificate, and must retain this information on the website for a minimum of five years. They are also required to maintain a public list of all institutions that have been granted Certificates of Accreditation.

Furthermore, accreditation organizations are required to conduct mid-cycle reviews of accredited institutions 2.5 years after the institution has been recognised as meeting quality standards. In accordance with Article 48 of the Circular, the accreditation organization is obligated to revoke the Certificate of Accreditation upon request from the competent State education authority.

b) Integration of VQF Requirements into IQA and EQA in HE

The QA process for HE levels begins with the VQF for HE, in compliance with the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018). The integration of internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) with the LOs defined by the national qualifications framework (NQF) is reflected through a system of regulations, including program standards, IQA frameworks, and national and international accreditation standards.The LOs for each level in the NQF are embedded within program quality assessment standards, and are

operationalized through indicators such as learner quality, teaching and learning methods, training process organization, and stakeholder engagement. HEIs are required to implement these standards and produce evaluation reports to support continuous quality improvement. With the implementation of the NQF, the QA standards for academic programs at all HE levels have been elevated across all levels of HE.

In 2022, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 78/QĐ-TTg, approving the Program on the Development of the QA and Accreditation System for HE and Teacher Training Colleges for the 2022–2030 period, under which the QA and accreditation system for HE and teacher training colleges will be developed to align with international QA standards.

6.1.2. Accreditation and External Quality Assurance (EQA) for HE

QA in HE is a continuous and systematic process involving policies, mechanisms, standards, procedures, and measures to maintain and improve the quality of HE. The QA system in HE includes IQA and EQA through accreditation mechanisms (Clauses 1 and 2, Article 49 of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018)).

MOET is responsible for issuing standards for academic programs at each HE level, setting minimum requirements for their implementation, and defining quality assessment standards, accreditation procedures, and accreditation cycles for HEIs and programs.

QA in HE is addressed through the assurance of inputs, processes, and outputs. MOET and its Quality Management Agency issue regulations and provide guidance to support QA implementation across the education sector.
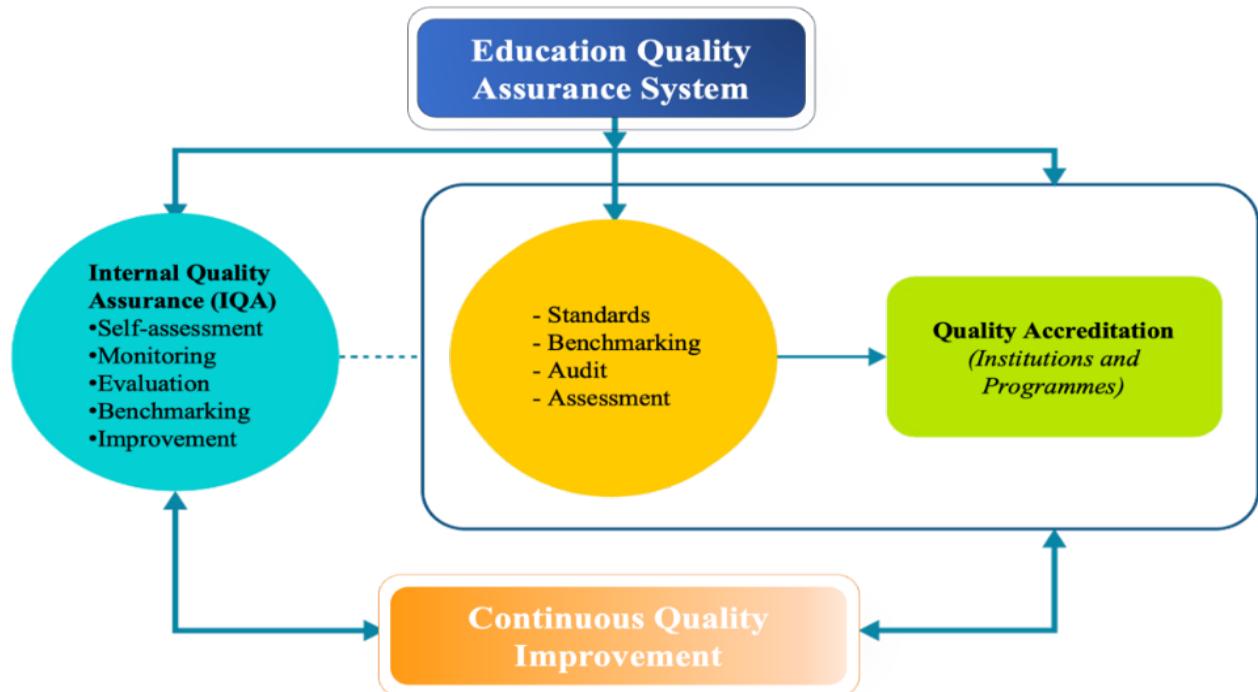
Figure 6.2. QA System in education

a) IQA system within HEIs

QA in HE is understood as an integrated system of guidelines, policies, goals, management mechanisms, activities, resources, and other measures aimed at maintaining and improving

education quality to meet intended objectives. Law No. 34/2018/QH14, which amends and supplements several articles of the HE Law No. 08/2012/QH13, stipulates: "The HE QA system includes both IQA and EQA systems, implemented through an accreditation mechanism" (Clause 26, Article 1 about amending Clause 2, Article 49 of the 2012 HE Law). The implementation of QA and EQA in HE is carried out under the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), which defines QA as a continuous, systematic process involving policies, mechanisms, standards, procedures, and measures to maintain and enhance the quality of HE.

HEIs are required to establish and operate IQA systems in compliance with Law No. 34, which sets out detailed responsibilities of HEIs in QA and their rights and obligations related to accreditation. Accordingly, HEIs must establish specialized QA units with qualified personnel to conduct IQA activities. The law also clearly defines the role and responsibilities of HEIs in developing QA policies and establishing appropriate models for institutional IQA systems.

MOET, as the state authority for HE, is responsible for overseeing QA and accreditation of HEIs and teacher training colleges. To support this mandate, MOET established the Department of Quality Assurance and the Vietnam Education Quality Management Agency (Phòng khảo thí và đánh giá chất lượng giáo dục) in 2003. The QMA acts as an advisory body to the Minister, responsible for issuing legal documents, providing guidance, and developing implementation plans that form the legal framework for QA and accreditation activities in HEIs and teacher training colleges in Vietnam.

b) Institutional QA in HE

To implement IQA activities, a system of specialized IQA units within HEIs has been formed and developed to meet the requirements outlined in the institutional quality assessment standards. The first legal foundation for this was laid with the issuance of a provisional regulation on education accreditation by MOET in 2024, which required universities to establish dedicated QA units or departments. This regulation marked a significant milestone in the development of institutional QA structures in HEIs.

Article 5 of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) defines the responsibilities of HEIs regarding QA. These include: developing and operating an IQA system consistent with the HEI's mission, objectives, and practical conditions; formulating QA policies and implementation plans; conducting regular self-assessment, undertaking continuous improvement efforts to enhance training quality; and periodically registering for both program-level and institutional-level accreditation. If an HEI fails to undergo program accreditation within the required cycle or receives an unsatisfactory result, it must improve the training quality to ensure that learners meet the LOs. If, after two years from the expiration of the previous accreditation certificate or from the date of an unsatisfactory result, the program is not reaccredited or still fails to meet standards, the HEI must suspend student enrolment for that program.

Two years after the expiration date of the accreditation certificate or from the date of an unsatisfactory accreditation result, if the program has not been re-accredited or if the re-accreditation result is still unsatisfactory, the HEI must halt new admissions for that academic program. HEIs are also responsible for maintaining and developing the necessary conditions for ensuring training quality. These include qualified faculty, managers, and staff; academic

programs, curricula, and teaching/learning materials; physical infrastructure such as classrooms, offices, laboratories, libraries, IT systems, as well as practical training facilities; financial resources, dormitories, and other support services.

Annually, HEIs are required to report on the implementation of their quality objectives as outlined in their QA plans. They must publicly disclose the conditions for assuring training quality, student LOs, scientific research and community engagement results, and accreditation findings via the MOET website, the institution's own website, and other mass media channels.

Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of HEIs in the accreditation are clearly defined. HEIs are required to undergo accreditation when requested by a MOET-designated accreditation body. They are also responsible for providing accurate and complete information and reporting the outcomes of the accreditation process. HEIs reserve the right to select from among MOET-recognized accreditation agencies for both institutional and program-level accreditation. Furthermore, HEIs are entitled to file complaints or denunciations with competent authorities if they believe that accreditation decisions, conclusions, or related actions by organizations or individuals violate legal regulations.
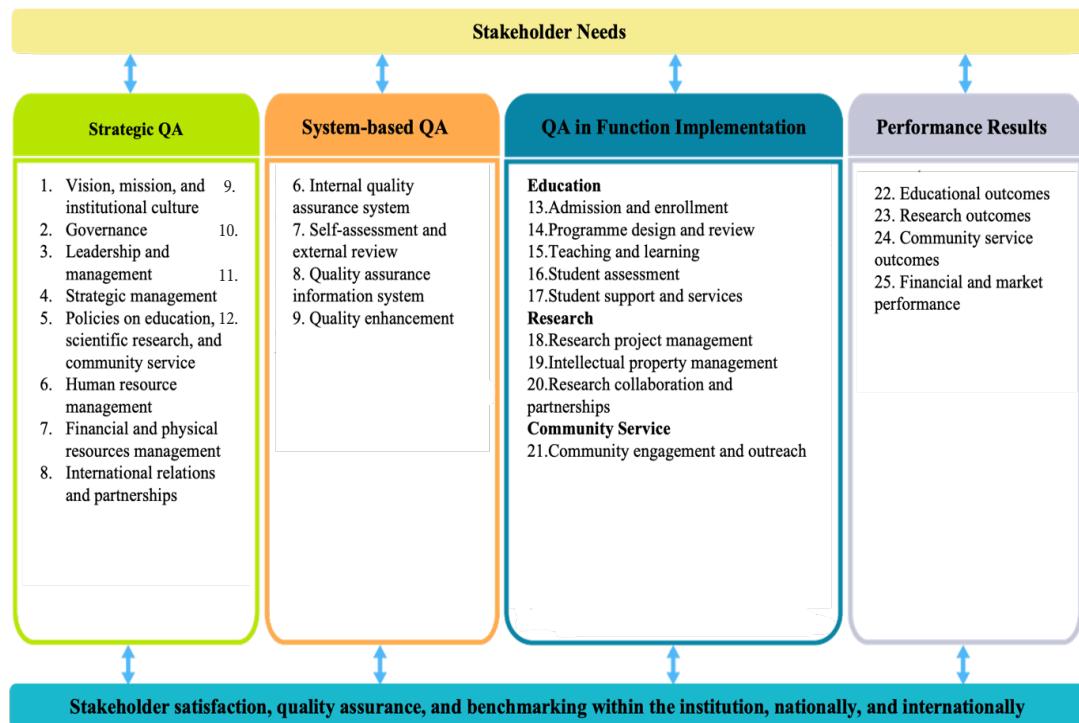
Figure 6.3. Institutional QA under Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT

The QA model for HEIs in Vietnam is fundamentally referenced from the model of the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA). It is implemented in alignment with the AUN-QA's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for HEIs, which comprises three key components: strategic QA, systemic QA, and functional QA.

HEIs establish their IQA system models based on the model presented below. The institutional quality assessment criteria are also closely aligned with this model, serving as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness and quality of an HEI's IQA system.
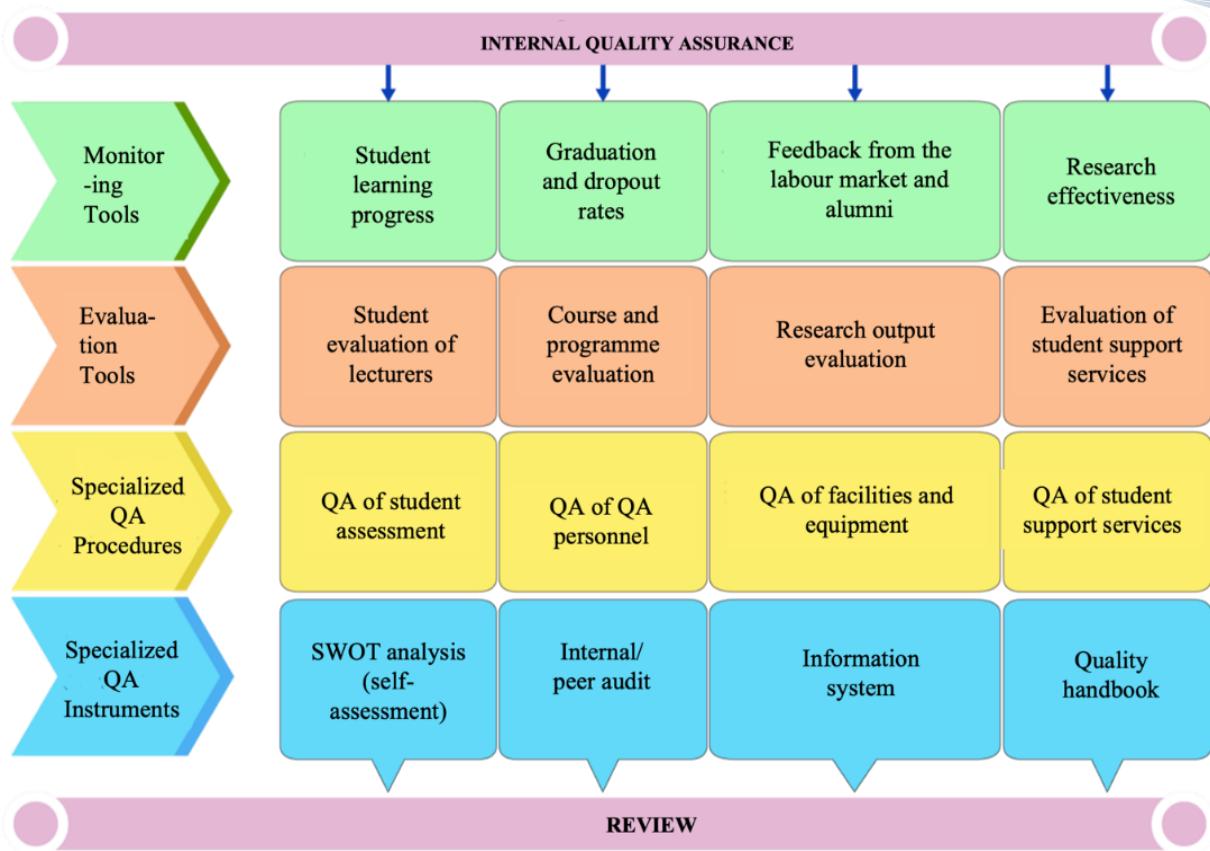
Figure 6.4. IQA system in HEIs

Within each HEI, management functions are presented in a unified and interrelated manner and are clearly reflected in the institution's operational activities. These functions follow the basic principles of the Plan – Do – Check – Act cycle.

The effective operation of an IQA system within an HEI requires: establishing a dedicated QA unit with clearly defined roles and responsibilities; clearly distinguishing QA functions from those of inspection and testing; creating a well-structured system of coordination between the QA unit and all other units within the institution; implementing policies for ongoing training and professional development to enhance the capacity of QA personnel in advising on policies, procedures, and implementation methods; and allocating sufficient resources to support and sustain QA activities.

c) QA of Bachelor's programs

The QA model for academic programs in HEIs in Vietnam is standardized based on the AUN-QA model. It is implemented in accordance with the AUN-QA's QA framework for academic programs, which emphasizes three core dimensions of training quality: the quality of inputs, the quality of the process, and the quality of outputs. In terms of management responsibilities and components of an academic program, the key tasks are typically categorized as follows: Management of program content (curriculum design and development); Management of teaching and learning activities; Management of lecturers and support staff; Management of learners; Management of facilities and training equipment; and Internal quality assessment of academic programs and implementation of post-assessment quality improvements.
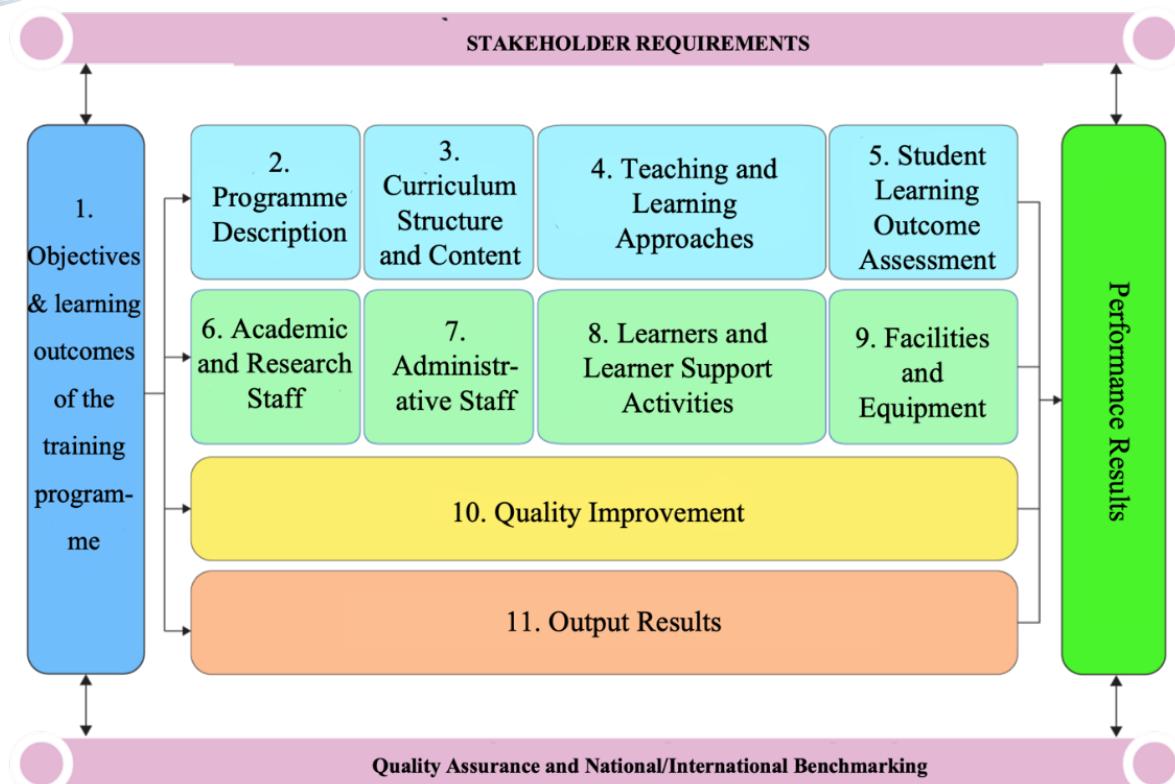
Figure 6.5. The QA framework for academic programs

MOET has issued 06 sets of quality assessment standards for its academic programs. These include: a general set of standards for assessing the quality of academic programs at all HE levels, a set of standards for College-level primary school teacher education programs, a set for Bachelor's-level upper secondary school teacher education programs, a set for Bachelor's-level industrial technical pedagogy programs, and a set for both Bachelor's and college-level nursing education programs.

In 2016, MOET issued a general set of quality assessment standards for academic programs at all HE levels, comprising 11 standards and 50 criteria. This is the most widely applied set of standards for program-level accreditation in Vietnam nowadays. It covers fundamental aspects of academic programs, including program objectives, LOs, program specifications, curriculum structure and content, teaching and learning activities, student support services, infrastructure and facilities, continuous quality improvement, and graduate outcomes. In 2020, MOET introduced a specialized set of standards for assessing teacher education programs at the college and intermediate levels of pedagogy, comprising 10 standards and 44 criteria.

6.1.3. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) System within Vietnamese HE Institutions (HEIs)

In 2001, Vietnam introduced the *Master Plan for the Network of Universities and Colleges for the 2001-2010 Period* which marked the first official mention of accreditation in HE. Specifically, the Plan called for *"developing a system of criteria and training standards for various types of institutions and forms of training, and implementing accreditation across the entire system of universities and colleges."*

Subsequently, the concepts of QA and accreditation were formally introduced in 2004 in Decision No. 38/2004/QD-BGDDT dated December 2, 2004, which established regulations on institutional accreditation. This decision defined QA in higher education as *"the entirety of guidelines, policies, objectives, management mechanisms, activities, resource conditions, and other measures aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of education to meet established goals."* It further defined university accreditation as *"an external evaluation activity aimed at recognizing that a university meets its stated training objectives."*

To carry out HE accreditation activities, Vietnam recognizes three types of accreditation organizations, as stipulated in Article 112 of Education Law No. 43/2019/QH14: a) State-established accreditation organizations; b) Accreditation organizations founded by domestic or foreign entities; and c) Foreign accreditation organizations. These organizations possess legal entity status, are structurally independent from state management agencies and HEIs, and are legally accountable for their accreditation activities and results (as stipulated in Law No. 34).

Vietnam's Education Law (2019) clearly defines accreditation as the process of assessing and recognizing whether an educational institution or an academic program meets the standards issued by a competent agency or organization. This process involves institutional self-monitoring and quality assessment based on educational standards for each level and type of institution. The overarching goal is to enhance quality and assure stakeholders and the public that institutions meet defined standards and fulfill their educational missions. Accreditation plays a crucial role in advancing institutional autonomy in Vietnam. It supports the dual objectives of assuring and improving the quality of HE while confirming the extent to which an institution or academic program achieves its educational goals over a defined period. It also provides a foundation for HEIs to demonstrate accountability to both state authorities and society, supports learner decision-making in choosing institutions and programs, and informs employers in the recruitment process. Accreditation, and the use of its outcomes, is central to the exercise of institutional autonomy and self-responsibility in HE. Under the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), accreditation is mandatory for all HEIs and academic programs. The accreditation process consists of three fundamental steps: (i) Self-assessment: The process by which the institution conducts an internal review based on accreditation standards, assessing its training and research effectiveness, human resources, facilities, and other factors. The goal is to identify areas for improvement and ensure alignment with quality standards. (ii) External assessment: The process which is conducted by an independent accreditation agency; this step involves site visits and evaluation based on established criteria to determine how well the institution meets those standards. (iii) Appraisal and recognition of education quality: An activity carried out by the Accreditation Council and the accreditation organization to recognize the quality of an academic program or an HEI.

The accreditation cycle for both HEIs and academic programs is 05 years.

6.1.4. Governance and Oversight of QA Activities in HE

a) HE quality management agencies

The Government is the body responsible for the unified state management of HE in general. MOET serves as the central agency assisting the Government in exercising state management of HE. MOET's responsibilities include regulating HE standards, such as those for HEIs, academic programs, lecturers, and managers, among others—as well as overseeing the

development, appraisal, and issuance of HE-level curricula. MOET also issues the official classification of academic disciplines, and regulates admission, teaching, assessment, and the issuance of degrees and certificates within the national education system. In addition, MOET manages QA and accreditation activities in HE; maintains the national HE database; accredits, evaluates, supervises, and provides information to relevant stakeholders; and conducts inspections, investigations, complaint resolution, and enforcement of legal compliance within the HE sector. MOET's specific role in QA and accreditation encompasses management of QA for HEIs, pedagogical colleges, and institutions delivering early childhood, general, and continuing education.

The content of state management of accreditation activities includes: 1) Issuing regulations on assessment standards; the process and cycle of accreditation for each educational level and training qualification; and the operating principles, conditions, and standards for organizations and individuals involved in accreditation activities; licensing accreditation activities; and issuing and revoking certificates of accreditation. 2) Managing the accreditation of academic programs and institutions. 3) Guiding organizations, individuals, and institutions in implementing quality assessment and accreditation. 4) Inspecting and evaluating the implementation of regulations on accreditation.

To organize the implementation of accreditation, the Government of Vietnam stipulates the conditions and procedures for the establishment, permission to operate, suspension, and dissolution of accreditation agencies; and regulates the conditions and procedures for foreign accreditation bodies to be recognized to operate in Vietnam. Accordingly, MOET decides on the establishment or permission for establishment, permission to operate, suspension of operation, and dissolution of accreditation bodies, and regulates the responsibilities and powers of accreditation agencies for early childhood, general, and continuing education. The Minister also decides on the recognition and revocation of recognition for foreign accreditation organizations operating in Vietnam, and regulates the supervision and evaluation of accreditation bodies.

The QMA is the advisory body that assists MOET in issuing the system of legal documents that form the legal framework for implementing QA and accreditation activities for HEIs and pedagogical colleges in Vietnam. This system of management documents covers all activities related to building and developing the QA and accreditation system. It includes regulations on quality assessment standards for universities, quality assessment standards for academic programs at all HE levels, the process and cycle of HEI accreditation, the establishment and permission to operate for domestic accreditation bodies, regulations on the training of HE quality accreditors, and guidelines for implementing HE accreditation.

The HE accreditation system in Vietnam can be divided into three main, interdependent components: 1) the state management system, which includes legal documents on accreditation issued by the State and MOET; 2) the system of accreditation organizations; and 3) the team of personnel who carry out accreditation activities. In addition to the documents issued by the Government to perform state management functions for accreditation, MOET has issued legal documents on HE QA and accreditation to implement accreditation activities, including self-assessment, external assessment, and the appraisal and recognition of quality for HEIs, pedagogical colleges, and academic programs at the Bachelor's and pedagogical college levels.

b) Accreditation agencies

An accreditation agency possesses legal entity status, operates independently from state management agencies and HEIs, and is fully accountable and legally responsible for its accreditation activities and outcomes. Its core mandate is to evaluate and certify HEIs and academic programs that meet established HE quality assessment standards.

For foreign accreditation agencies operating in Vietnam, the Government stipulates the conditions and procedures for their establishment, permission to operate, and dissolution; their responsibilities and powers; and the conditions and procedures for these organizations to be recognized to operate in Vietnam. MOET decides on the establishment or permission for establishment of accreditation bodies; decides on the permission to operate, suspension of operation, and dissolution of these organizations; decides on the recognition and revocation of recognition for the activities of foreign accreditation bodies in Vietnam; and regulates the supervision and evaluation of accreditation bodies.

In Vietnam, higher education institutions (HEIs) may choose either domestic or foreign accreditation agencies for programme and institutional accreditation. This flexibility is intended to encourage international benchmarking and continuous improvement of quality standards. The use of foreign accreditation does not result in dual compliance or conflict with national requirements, as all accreditation bodies—whether local or international—must operate in accordance with Vietnam's laws, regulations, and quality assurance frameworks. Foreign accreditation bodies are permitted to operate in Vietnam only after formal registration and approval by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Once authorised, they must ensure that their procedures and evaluation criteria comply with Vietnamese standards, including cultural, contextual, and regulatory requirements, as well as alignment with the learning outcome descriptors of the VQF.

Accreditation or recognition by respected international agencies (such as Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET, USA), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB, USA), or the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA, Germany) is highly valued, as it supports global benchmarking, enhances programme reputation, and—importantly—contributes to the supervision and transparency of academic standards in Vietnam. These schemes are regarded as complementary to the national quality assurance system, providing added value by promoting international comparability and fostering a culture of continuous quality enhancement.

Nevertheless, VQF compliance remains a national requirement for all qualifications awarded in Vietnam. Regardless of the accreditation agency selected, all programmes must undergo approval, levelling, and quality monitoring by MOET (for higher education) or MOLISA (for TVET) to ensure full compliance with Vietnamese regulations on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, autonomy/responsibility), credit-hour standards, and assessment procedures. This ensures national consistency, comparability, and transparency across all qualifications.

Currently, Vietnam has 08 domestic accreditation centers/bodies that have been established and licensed to operate by MOET, including:

- Center for Education Accreditation - Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU-CEA).

- Center for Education Accreditation - Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM CEA).

- Center for Education Accreditation - The University of Da Nang (CEA-UD).

- Center for Education Accreditation - Vinh University (VU-CEA).

- Center for Education Accreditation - Association of Vietnam Universities and Colleges (CEA-AVU&C).

- 02 private accreditation centers: Thang Long Accreditation Center (CEA Thang Long) and Saigon Accreditation Center (CEA-SAIGON).

- Center for Education Accreditation Dong A (since September 2025)

Table 6.2. Accreditation Bodies for HE in Vietnam

No.	Name of the organization	Founding Entity	Year Established	Direct management agency
1	Center for Education Quality Accreditation - Vietnam National University, Hanoi	MOET	2013	Hanoi National University
2	Center for Education Quality Accreditation - Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City	MOET	2013	Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City
3	Center for Education Quality Accreditation - University of Da Nang	MOET	2015	University of Da Nang
4	The Center for Education Quality Accreditation is affiliated to the Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges	Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges	2016	Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges
5	Center for Education Quality Accreditation - Vinh University	MOET	2017	Vinh University
6	Thang Long Education Quality Accreditation Center	Hanoi Education Service Investment Joint Stock Company	2021	Hanoi Education Service Investment Joint Stock Company
7	Saigon Education Quality Accreditation Center	Ho Chi Minh City Education Investment Joint Stock Company	2021	Ho Chi Minh City Education Investment Joint Stock Company

No.	Name of the organization	Founding Entity	Year Established	Direct management agency
8	Center for Education Accreditation Dong A	Independent	2025	Independent

In addition, 10 foreign accreditation bodies, including FIBAA, AQAS, ASIIN, HCERES, QAA, AUN-QA, THE-ICE, ABET, ACQUIN, and ACBSP, are also recognized by MOET to operate in Vietnam.

c) Resources and Tools for HE accreditation

Regarding human resources, personnel involved in implementing HE accreditation include: staff working directly at accreditation bodies; personnel within IQA units at HEIs; and the team of accreditors —typically lecturers and staff from HEIs that meet the required standards and have either completed an accredited training program or hold an official accreditor card. Within HEIs, dedicated IQA units/departments are responsible for advising on and carrying out self-assessment activities in preparation for accreditation.

To build human capacity for accreditation, MOET has issued official regulations governing accreditors, and the training programs required for both HE and professional secondary accreditors. Three higher education institutions have been assigned by MOET to deliver these training programs: Vietnam National University, Hanoi; Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City; and The University of Da Nang. MOET is responsible for administering the examinations and issuing accreditor cards. By the end of 2024, over 3,000 individuals nationwide had completed training as professional secondary education quality accreditors for HE and professional secondary education, with more than 500 certified through official examinations and issued accreditor cards. The primary tools used to accredit HEIs or academic programs are the sets of quality assessment standards for HEIs or academic programs issued by MOET. These standards define the minimum requirements for evaluating the extent to which HEIs or academic programs achieve their objectives across input, process, and output dimensions— serving as a foundation for ensuring educational quality and public accountability.

(i) Quality assessment standards for HEIs

To assess the quality of HEIs, MOET has issued a comprehensive set of standards comprising 25 standards and 111 criteria , outlined in Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT. This framework is modeled after the AUN-QA institutional assessment standards and employs a 7-level rating scale. It is structured around the assurance of inputs, processes, and outputs, and is aligned with the Plan – Do – Check - Act cycle. The framework also integrates key requirements from the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). HEIs use this set of standards to conduct self-assessment and to establish and strengthen their IQA systems.

(ii) Quality assessment standards for HE academic programs

MOET has issued 06 sets of quality assessment standards for academic programs in HE, each tailored to specific fields or delivery modes. These include: a set of standards for assessing

the quality of Bachelor's-level upper secondary school teacher education programs (7 standards, 40 criteria); a set of standards for Bachelor's-level industrial technical pedagogy programs (7 standards, 40 criteria); a set for Bachelor's and college-level nursing programs (8 standards, 42 criteria); a set for teacher education programs at the pedagogical college and intermediate levels (10 standards, 43 criteria); a set for distance education programs (11 standards, 55 criteria); a general set of standards for academic programs at all HE levels (11 standards, 50 criteria). The general set of quality assessment standards for academic programs at all HE levels is the most widely used framework for program-level accreditation in Vietnam. This set draws on the structure and assessment criteria assessment of the AUN-QA. It evaluates fundamental components of an academic program, including program objectives, LOs, program specifications, curriculum structure, teaching and learning activities, learner support services, facilities, program quality enhancement processes, and graduate outcomes.

MOET is in the process of revising and updating the set of assessment standards and the general set of program-level assessment standards, with the updated versions expected to be issued in 2025.

d) Use of accreditation outcomes

Accreditation results serve as a foundational basis for determining the quality of HE, as well as the status and prestige of HEIs. These outcomes are also essential for supporting institutional autonomy and accountability. Moreover, accreditation results are used by competent authorities to inform decisions regarding investment, task assignment, institutional classification and ranking, the granting of autonomy, and the restructuring of the national network of HEIs.

HEIs that participate in accreditation as required and are recognized as meeting quality standards are given priority by competent authorities for investment and development and are granted a higher degree of autonomy. Credits that learners accumulate at an accredited HEI are recognized and transferable.

A HEI that participates in accreditation but is not yet recognized as meeting quality standards will have its autonomy restricted. If, after three consecutive years, it still fails to make quality improvements to be recognized as meeting the quality standards, sanctions such as restricting or suspending admissions will be applied.

The accreditation results of institutions and academic programs at all HE levels are made public on the websites of the accreditation bodies and the HEIs. Concurrently, they are updated monthly by MOET on its official web portal at: https://moet.gov.vn/giaoducquocdan/khao-thi-va-kiem-dinh-chat-luong-giao-duc/Pages/Default.aspx.

e) Inspection and supervision of HE institution activities

According to the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), the inspection of HE activities includes: inspecting the implementation of laws and policies on HE; detecting, preventing, and handling, within one's authority, or proposing that a competent state agency handle, legal violations in HE; and verifying and proposing that a competent state agency resolve complaints and denunciations regarding HE.

MOET Inspectorate carries out the duties and powers of administrative inspection and specialized inspection in HE.

MOET also leads, guides, and organizes inspections and examination activities across the HE sector. Other ministries, ministry-level agencies, and provincial-level People's Committees coordinate with MOET to implement these tasks in accordance with the Government's delegation and decentralization of responsibilities.

HEIs conduct self-inspection and self-examination in accordance with the law. The head of the HEI is responsible for organizing internal inspection and examination activities within the institution.

6.1.5. Evaluation and Monitoring of Accreditation Bodies

Accreditation bodies are responsible for assessing and recognizing that institutions meet education quality standards; reporting to MOET; and publicly disclosing information and the accreditation outcomes in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. According to the Education Law (2019), accreditation organizations for universities must adhere to a mechanism of regular and periodic reporting to MOET, and are also subject to unannounced or thematic inspections by MOET.

Currently, MOET has issued regulations on the supervision and evaluation of domestic and foreign accreditation organizations. Domestic accreditation organizations are subject to supervision and evaluation by MOET; foreign organizations are subject to supervision by MOET. Accreditation bodies must ensure honesty in their assessment, appraisal, and recognition of meeting education quality standards. They must publicly and transparently post on their websites their education accreditation operating license, their organizational and operational regulations, the list of their accreditation council members, the list of their accreditors, and the results of their accreditation activities.

The supervision and evaluation of accreditation bodies must comply with the law; ensure accuracy, objectivity, and transparency; not overlap in content, subjects, or timing with inspection and auditing work; and not obstruct the normal activities of the supervised and evaluated entities. The content of supervision for domestic accreditation bodies includes monitoring their fulfilment and maintenance of the conditions for establishment and operation, and their compliance with regulations on operating principles, responsibilities, and powers. For foreign accreditation organizations, the supervision focuses on their implementation of accreditation activities in Vietnam.

6.2. QA System for TVET

6.2.1. Overview of the QA System for Vietnam's TVET

The QA of TVET in Vietnam is the responsibility of MOLISA, with the Directorate of TVET serving as the direct advisory body to MOLISA.

The TVET QA system in Vietnam operates based on the following principles: (1) Transparency, (2) Accountability, and (3) Continuous Improvement, following the guidance in the ASEAN Guiding Principles for QA and Recognition of Competency Certification Systems (AGP).

According to the Law on Vocational Education (2014), IQA is the responsibility of TVET institutions. The EQA system is implemented in accordance with multiple laws, including the

Education Law (2019), the Law on Vocational Education (2014), the Labor Code, the Law on Employment, and other specialized laws. The EQA system includes: TVET accreditation (institutional and program accreditation), assessment and issuance of National Occupational Skill Certificates (NOSC), inspection and examination, skills competitions for workers, and a system of related policies, procedures, and regulations (e.g., VQF, national occupational skill standards, LOs for TVET training levels, conditions for ensuring TVET activities, etc.), as described in Figure 6.6.

	Internal Quality Assurance System (IQA)		External Quality Assurance System (EQA)
Entities Responsible	Vocational education institutions		Organizations outside of vocational institutions
Implementation Content	Implemented under the regulations of: - MOLISA, DVET, and other regulatory bodies - Regulations of the vocational education institutions		Organizations, institutions, and individuals outside vocational education institutions - Regulation and standards development bodies - Inspection and evaluation bodies for vocational institutions

Figure 6.6. TVET's QA system

6.2.2. Internal Quality Assurance System within TVET Institutions

MOLISA provides detailed guidance for TVET institutions on building and operating their IQA systems. This guidance specifies the principles, requirements, and procedures for developing, implementing, evaluating, and continuously improving the QA system. It defines mandatory areas of management for which institutions must develop corresponding processes and tools, the structure and functions of institutional QA information systems, mechanisms for supervision and evaluation, and the requirements and procedures for conducting institutional quality self-assessment.

In practice, the development of a robust QA system has become a key priority for TVET institutions to ensure their operations are stable and effective. Many TVET institutions have established specialized units for QA and accreditation while also applying quality management models such as the ISO 9001:2008 standard, yielding positive initial outcomes. Additionally, several institutions are also implementing QA systems in collaboration with international partners such as the British Council and GIZ, using management and QA models adapted through international cooperation and technical support. Figure 6.7 describes the IQA system of a TVET institution.
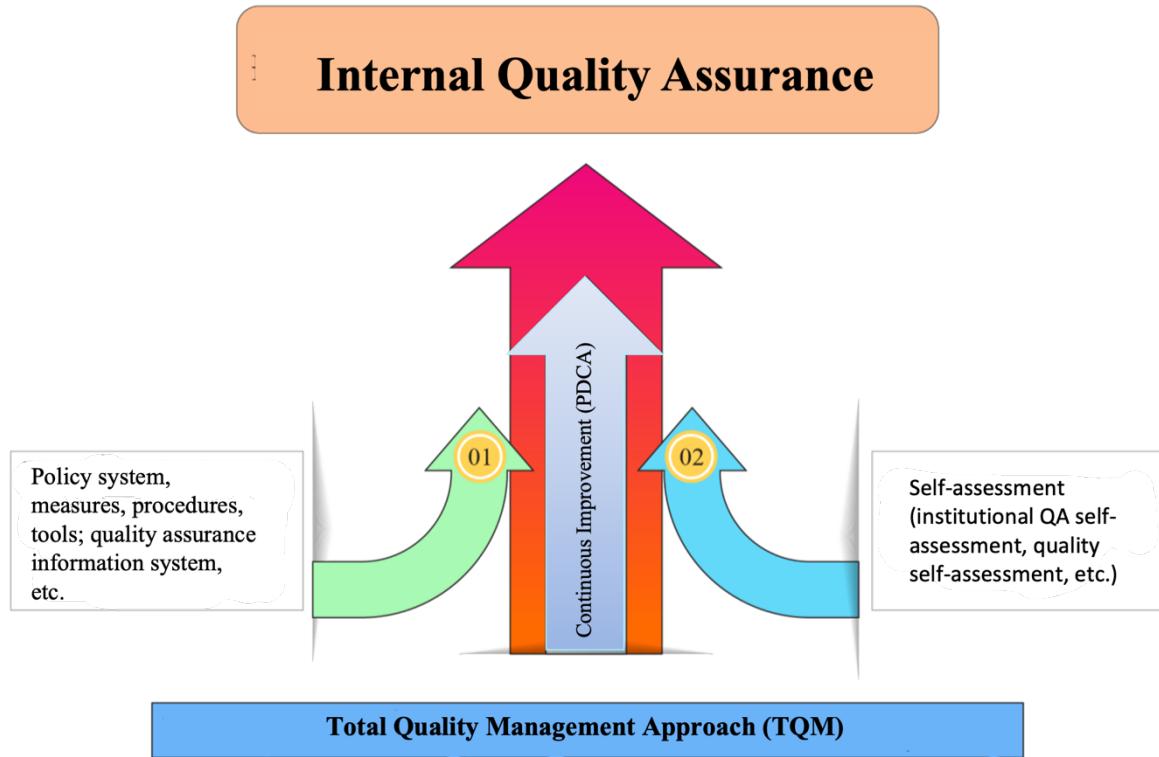
Figure 6.7. The IQA system within TVET institutions

Annually, TVET institutions self-assess their quality based on the system of criteria, standards, report templates, and submission deadlines prescribed by MOLISA. They then report to the Directorate of TVET, the provincial Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, and their direct management body. In addition, TVET institutions develop their own quality self-assessment systems based on their internal standards to improve and enhance training quality.

The criteria issued by MOLISA for the accreditation of academic programs include 7 criteria:

- Criterion 1 - Objectives, Management, and Finance

- Criterion 2 - Training Activities

- Criterion 3 - Teachers, Managers, and Staff

- Criterion 4 - Programs and Curricula

- Criterion 5 - Facilities, Training Equipment, and Library

- Criterion 6 - Learner Services

- Criterion 7 - Quality Monitoring and Evaluation

The criteria issued by MOLISA for the accreditation of TVET institutions include 9 criteria:

- Criterion 1 - Objectives, Mission, Organization, and Management

- Criterion 2 - Educational Activities

- Criterion 3 - Faculties, Managers, Officials, and Employees

- Criterion 4 - Programs and Curriculum

- Criterion 5 - Facilities, Training Equipment, and Library

- Criterion 6 - Scientific Research, Technology Transfer, and International Cooperation

- Criterion 7 - Financial Management

- Criterion 8 - Learner Services

- Criterion 9 - Quality Monitoring and Evaluation

These criteria are specified by 100 standards for TVET institutions and 50 standards for academic programs.

According to regulations, institutions must have personnel/a unit in charge of QA work in place and must establish a quality self-assessment council composed of staff, managers, and teachers, with a mandatory minimum of 2 representatives from enterprises.

Annually, the institution must conduct a quality self-assessment, have it approved by the council, and publicly disclose it to the entire institution, while also submitting the quality self-assessment report to the DVET. When an external assessment is needed or when accreditation is required by a state management agency, TVET institutions must send their quality self-assessment report to the accreditation organization to serve as a basis for the assessment.

Since 2018, TVET institutions have been conducting quality self-assessment of their programs following the guidance in Circular No. 15/2017/TT-BLDTBXH dated June 8, 2017, which regulates the criteria and standards for TVET accreditation.

As of October 10, 2024, 138 TVET institutions (including 125 colleges, 12 intermediate schools, and 01 TVET center) have undergone accreditation and met TVET accreditation standards. Additionally, 223 academic programs (including 200 at the college level and 23 at the intermediate level) have undergone accreditation and met TVET accreditation standards.
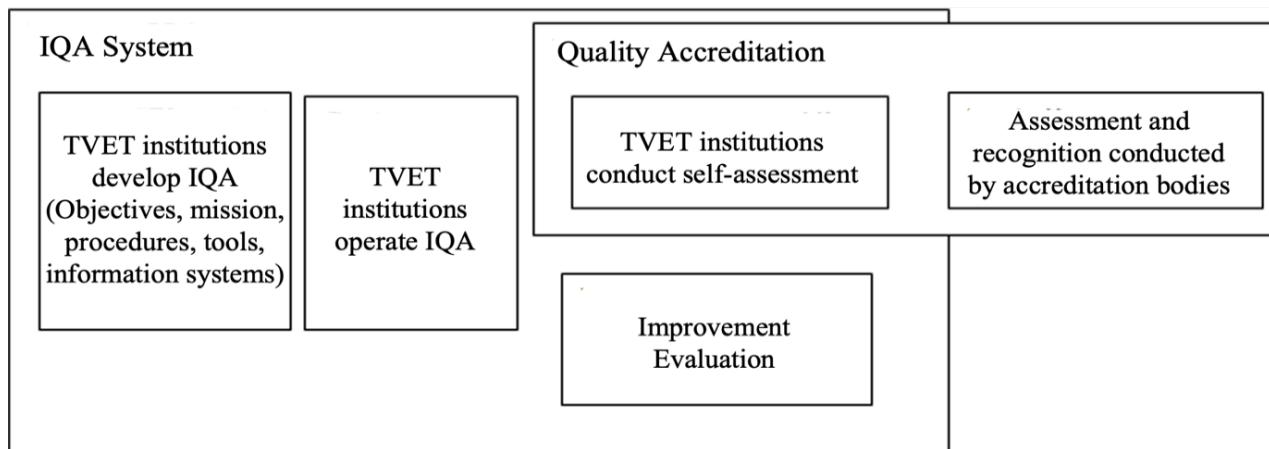
Figure 6.8. Relationship between IQA and TVET QA

6.2.3. Governance and Oversight of Quality Assurance Activities in TVET

a) TVET's quality management agencies

The Directorate of TVET, under MOLISA, is responsible for managing QA and accreditation for VET institutions, including colleges, intermediate schools, and TVET centers. To implement accreditation activities, the Government of Vietnam will regulate the conditions for the operation, suspension, and dissolution of accreditation organizations, as well as the conditions and procedures for foreign accreditation organizations to be recognized to operate

in Vietnam. Subsequently, the Directorate of TVET is assigned the responsibility of managing the issuance of Certificates of Eligibility for TVET accreditation activities, and the suspension and dissolution of accreditation organizations in Vietnam. It is also responsible for inspecting and supervising the assessment and quality recognition activities of these accreditation organizations.

The Department of TVET Accreditation is the agency that makes proposals to the Directorate of TVET, which in turn advises MOLISA on issuing a system of legal documents that form the legal framework for implementing QA and accreditation activities for TVET. This system of management documents covers all activities related to building and developing the QA and education accreditation system, and includes regulations on quality assessment standards for TVET institutions and its academic programs.

b) Inspection and supervision of TVET institutional activities

Annually, DVET conducts inspections according to a plan approved by MOLISA, which may be periodic or thematic inspections regarding the compliance of TVET institutions with regulations. After an inspection, the inspection conclusion is issued by the Directorate of TVET and sent to the inspected TVET institution and relevant management agencies. The inspected TVET institutions and relevant agencies must implement the inspection conclusions.

c) TVET's accreditation agencies

According to the Law on Vocational Education (2014), TVET accreditation is carried out by independent accreditation organizations based on criteria, standards, and procedures issued by MOLISA. The Directorate of TVET primarily guides TVET institutions in conducting TVET quality self-assessment. QA in TVET refers to the process of assessing and monitoring quality in accordance with established standards for each level and type of institution. This process is governed by internal control mechanisms developed and maintained by the institutions themselves. The primary purpose of QA in TVET is to foster continuous improvement and build stakeholder and public confidence that TVET institutions are capable of delivering training that meets national standards and achieves the intended LOs and objectives of each qualification level.

Table 6.3. List of TVET's accreditation organizations in Vietnam

No.	Name of the education zone	Founding entity	Year established	Direct management agency
1	Vietnam Education Accreditation and Consulting Joint Stock Company	Established under the Law on Enterprises	2018	Department of Planning and Investment of Ho Chi Minh City
2	Community Human Resource Development and Training Consultancy Support Center	Vietnam Community Trade Union Association	2019	Vietnam Community Trade Union Association

No.	Name of the education zone	Founding entity	Year established	Direct management agency
3	Work Company LIMIT-ED Saigon ACADEMY	Established under the Law on Enterprises	2019	Department of Planning and Investment of Ho Chi Minh City
4	Institute of Human Resource Training and Development	Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations	2018	Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations.

Vietnam's Vocational Education Law (2014) stipulates that a TVET accreditation organization has the duty to assess and recognize that a TVET institution and its programs meet TVET quality standards. In 2018, the Government issued Decree No. 49/2018/ND-CP regulating TVET accreditation. In 2019, MOLISA issued Consolidated Document No. 1313/VBHN-BLDTBXH dated April 5, 2019, regulating TVET accreditation. The conditions, procedures, and authority for issuing, reissuing, and revoking the Certificate of Eligibility for TVET accreditation activities; the suspension of TVET accreditation activities; and the functions, duties, responsibilities, and powers of a TVET accreditation organization are also specifically regulated by the Government in relevant documents.

The accreditation criteria for academic programs at the elementary, intermediate and advanced certificates and diploma for college levels consist of 7 criteria. For intermediate and college level programs, these include: (i) Objectives, Management, and Finance; (ii) Training Activities; (iii) Teachers, Managers, and Staff; (iv) Programs and Curricula; (v) Facilities, Training Equipment, and Library; (vi) Learner Services; and (vii) Quality Monitoring and Evaluation. (For elementary level programs, criterion (i) is "Objectives and Finance" and criterion (v) is "Facilities and Training Equipment"). In 2024, the regulations on TVET 's accreditation criteria and standards were amended with several improvements, including: shifting from a "rule-based" assessment approach to a "principle-based" one; updating and supplementing assessment standards for distance and online training methods; and reducing the number of standards to ensure they are not spread too thin and do not repeat content already stipulated in other legal documents.
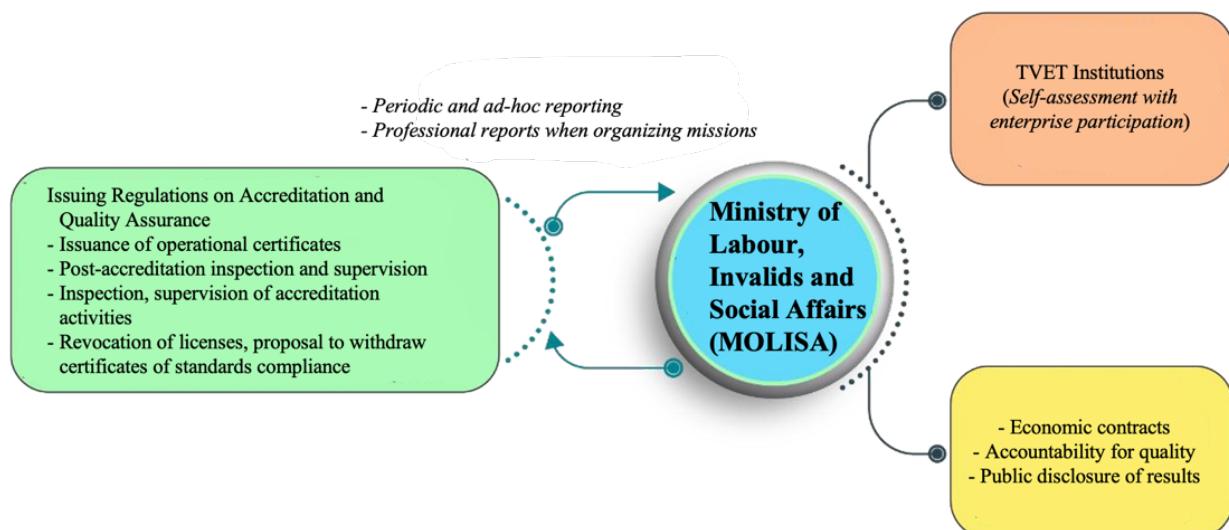
Figure 6.9. QA model of Vietnam's TVET

The TVET accreditation process includes: (i) Self-assessment conducted by the TVET institution or training provider; (ii) External assessment by an accreditation organization carried out by an independent accreditation organization; and; (iii) The accreditation cycle lasts for five years and applies to both TVET institutions and individual academic programs that satisfy the prescribed standards. TVET accreditation is carried out exclusively by authorized accreditation organizations.

d) Evaluation and supervision of TVET accreditation agencies

MOLISA is responsible for developing a qualified team of TVET quality accreditors through initial training, professional development, and organizing the assessment and issuance of TVET quality accreditor cards to individuals who pass the assessment process.

Organizations are granted a certificate of eligibility for TVET accreditation when they meet the following conditions:

+ Possess legal entity status.

+ Have designated headquarters and adequate working facilities.

+ Appoint a qualified individual directly responsible for TVET accreditation activities.

+ Employ a sufficient number of full-time accreditors under a labor or employment contract with a minimum of 12 months.

+ Maintain an official website that includes required service-related content and an accessible database.

MOLISA (through the Directorate of TVET) oversees these organizations via examinations and inspections. Public oversight is ensured through the publication of relevant information on the websites of the accreditation organization, MOLISA, and the Directorate of TVET. Direct inspection and supervision take place at the accreditation organizations and at TVET institutions. In case of violations, MOLISA (through DVET) may suspend the organization's activities or revoke its certificate of eligibility, depending on the nature and severity of the infraction.

CRITERION
7

THE REFERENCING PROCESS HAS BEEN INITIATED BY COMPETENT STATE AUTHORITIES AND CONFIRMED BY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE QUALIFICATIONS/DEGREES SYSTEM

The responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders in the process of implementing the VQF and referencing the VQF against the AQRF were defined in the decision that enacted the VQF. Specifically:

MOET: (a) To lead the management and implementation of the VQF for HE levels; to develop plans, roadmaps, and the necessary conditions to implement the VQF and submit them to the Prime Minister for review and approval.

(b) To lead and coordinate with relevant ministries and sectors to organize the referencing of VQF's HE qualifications against the AQRF and other national qualification frameworks.

MOLISA: (a) To lead the management and implementation of the VQF for TVET levels; to develop plans, roadmaps, and the necessary conditions to implement the VQF and submit them to the Prime Minister for review and approval.

(b) To lead and coordinate with relevant ministries and sectors to organize the referencing of VQF's TVET qualifications against the AQRF and other national qualification frameworks.

The implementation of the VQF gained momentum following the enactment and enforcement of the Amended Education Law and the Amended Higher Education Law in 2019. The roles and responsibilities of the units in implementing the VQF are defined as follows: "MOET is responsible for acting as the focal point, leading and coordinating with MOLISA to synthesize and submit the VQF Referencing Report against the AQRF to the ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Committee." Thus, MOET is not only the focal point for developing the Referencing Report for HE qualifications but is also Vietnam's overall focal point for developing the VQF Referencing Report against the AQRF.

To specify the VQF implementation plan, the Prime Minister issued two specific plans: Decision No. 436/QD-TTg dated March 30, 2020, on the issuance of the Plan to implement the VQF for HE levels for the 2020–2025 period; and Decision No. 1232/QD-TTg dated July 15, 2021, on the Plan to implement the VQF for TVET levels for the 2021–2025 period.

Decision No. 436/QD-TTg outlines 4 groups of tasks and assigns specific responsibilities to ministries and sectors:

Task 1. Develop and issue documents and materials to implement the VQF for HE levels:

a) MOET is to develop and issue regulations on program standards for HE levels in accordance with the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), to be completed in Q3 2020.

b) MOET is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, localities, enterprises, and associations to develop and issue regulations and documents to direct and guide the sectoral advisory councils in developing program standards for majors and groups of majors in each field of HE, to be completed in Q4 2020.

c) MOET is to develop and issue a system of directive documents and guidance materials for HEIs to review and adjust the structure, content, and implementation methods of their academic programs to ensure compliance with the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and to align with employer requirements, to be completed in Q4 2020.

d) MOET is to lead and coordinate with relevant agencies to research, review, amend, or issue new regulations on QA and accreditation, ensuring alignment with program standards as stipulated by the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and the VQF, to be completed in Q4 2021.

Task 2. Develop and promulgate program standards for each for each discipline and major in HE

a) Ministries were to establish Sectoral Advisory Councils comprising leading experts from HEIs, research institutes, HE managers, and representatives from business, industry, and human resource management agencies. This was to be completed in Q4 2020. These councils are tasked with developing program standards for majors and groups of majors in each field of HE and submitting them to MOET for appraisal and issuance, to be completed in Q4 2022, as follows:

- MOET is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, localities, enterprises, and associations to establish SACs for the following fields: Education Science and Teachers' Training; Business and Management; Law; Life sciences; Natural sciences; Mathematics and Statistics; Computer Science and Information Technology; Engineering Technology; Engineering; Production and Processing; Architecture and Construction; Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; Veterinary Medicine; Humanities; Social and Behavioral sciences; Journalism and Information; Transport Services; and Environment and Environmental Protection.

- The Ministry of Health is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, localities, enterprises, and associations to establish the Sectoral Advisory Council (SAC) for the Health Sciences sector;

- The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, localities, enterprises, and associations to establish SAC for the following fields: Arts; Tourism, hospitality, sports, and personal services; and Social services;

- The Ministry of Public Security is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, and localities to establish the SAC for the Security sector;

- The Ministry of National Defence is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, and localities to establish the SAC for the National Defence sector.

b) MOET is to establish appraisal councils to appraise and issue program standards for majors and groups of majors in each field of HE, to be completed in 2023.

Task 3. Review, update, and develop HE academic programs to implement the VQF

a) MOET is to direct and guide HEIs in implementing capacity-building training for managers and lecturers to implement the VQF for HE levels, to have been completed in Q4 2021.

b) HEIs are to review and adjust the structure, content, and implementation methods of their academic programs; compile detailed syllabi for subjects and modules; develop textbooks; and implement training based on the updated and developed academic programs, ensuring compliance with the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018) and alignment with employer requirements. This process is to be completed in Q4 2024.

c) HEIs are to enhance the capacity of their faculty and program development staff and ensure training quality and carry out accreditation in accordance with the Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), to have been completed in Q1 2025.

Task 4. Develop the VQF Referencing Report for HE levels against the AQRF

a) MOET was to establish the NAC for developing the Referencing Report for HE levels of the VQF against the AQRF, to have been completed in Q3 2020.

b) The NAC for developing the VQF Referencing Report for HE levels against the AQRF is to develop the Referencing Report, submit it to MOET for approval, and coordinate with MOLISA to send the report to the ASEAN Qualifications Referencing Committee, to be completed in Q2 2025.

Task 5. Promote communication and collaboration in implementing the VQF for HE levels

a) MOET is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, and localities to develop and implement a communication plan on VQF implementation according to the state management decentralization for HE, to be completed according to the annual plan.

b) HEIs are to develop and organize communication plans on VQF implementation at each institution, to be completed according to the annual plan.

Task 6. Inspect and supervise the implementation of the VQF for HE levels

Annually, MOET is to lead and coordinate with relevant ministries, sectors, localities, and organizations to inspect and supervise the implementation of the VQF at HEIs.

Decision No. 1232/QD-TTg clearly defines 5 groups of tasks:

Task 1. Develop and issue documents and materials to implement the VQF for TVET levels

a) Develop and finalize documents and guidelines on LOs and minimum learning volume by credits for TVET levels, from Q3 2021 to Q4 2022.

b) Develop and issue a system of directive documents and guidance materials for TVET institutions to review and adjust the structure, content, and implementation methods of their academic programs according to LOs and the Law on Vocational Education, ensuring alignment with employer requirements, from Q3 2021 to Q2 2022.

c) Research and finalize regulations on QA for TVET levels, including the quality of distance and online training, and amend and supplement the criteria and standards for TVET accreditation, from Q4 2021 to Q4 2023.

d) Research and establish the relationship between occupational competency standards, national occupational skill standards, and VQF training levels, from Q1 2022 to Q4 2022.

e) Research, develop, and issue regulations on the issuance and management of degrees and certificates with a focus on digitalization, from Q1 2022 to Q3 2023.

Task 2. Implement, update, and develop TVET programs according to the VQF

a) Continue to guide and develop LOs for occupations at VET levels, ensuring compliance with the Law on Vocational Education (2014) and its guidelines, from Q3 2021 to Q3 2025.

b) Implement capacity-building training for TVET managers and teachers on developing and implementing academic programs for each occupation based on LOs, to be completed according to the annual plan.

c) Guide the adjustment of the structure, content, and implementation methods of academic programs; compile detailed syllabi for modules, subjects, and credits, as well as textbooks and training plans based on updated and developed academic programs, ensuring compliance with the Law on Vocational Education (2014) and its guidelines, and meeting practical demands, from Q1 2022 to Q4 2023.

d) Guide the implementation of QA and accreditation of training programs based on evidence identified from committed LOs and the QA conditions of TVET institutions, from Q1 2022 to Q4 2023.

Task 3. Implement activities in the process of referencing the VQF (for TVET levels) against the AQRF and other NQFs

a) Develop the VQF Referencing Report for TVET levels against the AQRF, to be completed in Q4 2023.

b) Coordinate participation in regional activities within the AQRF process, according to the annual plan.

c) Implement the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills between Vietnam and other countries around the world, especially those in the ASEAN region, from Q4 2021 to Q4 2025.

Task 4. Promote communication, enterprise participation, and international cooperation in implementing the VQF for TVET levels

a) Develop and implement a communication plan on VQF implementation according to the state management decentralization for TVET, to be completed according to the annual plan.

b) Strengthen the participation of the business community, professional associations, and social-professional organizations in the VQF implementation process, to be completed according to the annual plan.

c) Expand and strengthen effective cooperation with international and foreign organizations, especially within the ASEAN region, in implementing the VQF and in referencing and mutually recognizing qualifications and skills, to be completed according to the annual plan.

Task 5. Inspect, supervise, and evaluate the implementation of the VQF for TVET levels

Periodically (annually, mid-term, and at the end of the Plan), organize inspections, supervision, and evaluations of the VQF implementation for TVET levels.

Decision No. 1232/QD-TTg assigns specific responsibilities to ministries and sectors to perform 5 tasks of VQF implementation for TVET levels:

1. MOLISA

a) To lead and coordinate with relevant agencies to implement the tasks and solutions.

b) To lead and coordinate with ministries, sectors, localities, and relevant stakeholders to implement the tasks and solutions.

c) To periodically report to the Government and the Prime Minister on the implementation status of the Plan and to propose necessary measures to ensure the Plan is implemented synchronously and effectively.

d) To coordinate with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor in implementing the VQF for vocational education levels according to the functions and duties of each agency and unit.

2. MOET

To lead and coordinate with ministries and sectors to monitor, urge, inspect, and supervise the implementation of the Plan for pedagogical colleges; to coordinate with the MOLISA in developing the VQF Referencing Report for vocational education levels against the AQRF.

3. Ministry of Finance

To lead and coordinate with MOLISA in the allocation, guidance, inspection, and supervision of expenditure related to the implementation of the VQF for vocational education levels in accordance with current legal regulations.

4. Ministers, Heads of Ministry-level agencies, Heads of Government-attached agencies, and Chairpersons of provincial/centrally run municipal People's Committees

To coordinate with MOLISA in directing, inspecting, urging, and allocating resources for the implementation of the Prime Minister's Plan according to the content relevant to their respective ministries, agencies, and localities.

5. Professional associations, enterprises, social-professional organizations, and relevant stakeholders

Based on the functions and duties of each agency and unit, to participate in implementing the VQF for TVET levels under the direction and request of the central and local agencies assigned to lead and organize the implementation.

Following the Prime Minister's direction, various ministries have also issued specific guidance and implementation plans:

On September 18, 2020, the Ministry of Health issued Decision No. 4018/QD-BYT to implement Decision No. 436/QD-TTg, implementing the VQF for HE levels in the health sciences sector for the 2020–2025 period. On January 6, 2021, the Ministry of Construction issued Decision No. 05/QD-BXD on the issuance of the Ministry of Construction's Plan to implement the VQF for HE levels in the field of architecture and construction for the 2020-2025 period. On May 11, 2022, the Ministry of Finance issued Circular No. 26/2022/TT-BTC

guiding the financial mechanism for implementing the VQF for HE levels for the 2020-2025 period.

Besides, the referencing process has also been characterised by extensive engagement with non-government stakeholders to ensure inclusiveness, transparency, and shared ownership. Beyond the participation of government agencies, the process actively involved representatives from the wider education and employment sectors, including:

- ***Professional associations***, such as the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the Association of Vietnam universities and colleges (AVU&C), which contributed perspectives on workforce competency requirements and the relevance of qualifications to sectoral needs;

- ***Industry representatives and large enterprises*** in key economic sectors such as tourism, construction, information and communication technology (ICT), and finance, which provided input on occupational standards, skills gaps, and emerging qualification demands;

- ***Higher education institutions and TVET providers***, which shared institutional experiences in developing learning outcomes, designing curricula, and implementing quality assurance aligned with the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF);

- ***Trade unions and employer organisations***, which ensured that labour market perspectives and worker development priorities were reflected in the referencing analysis; and

- ***Students and learners***, particularly those from higher education and vocational institutions, whose feedback on programme relevance, learning outcomes, and pathways between qualification levels helped validate the practical applicability of the framework.

Engagement was conducted through a series of technical workshops, national consultation seminars, and written feedback rounds during different stages of drafting the referencing report. These consultations allowed non-government stakeholders to review and comment on draft level descriptors, qualification classifications, and proposed articulation pathways.

Key outcomes of these engagements included:

- **Consensus** on the overall comparability between VQF level descriptors and those of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF);

- **Agreement** on the importance of strengthening mechanisms for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and integrating occupational standards into formal education pathways;

- **Validation** of the draft report structure, ensuring it accurately reflected the interaction between policy frameworks and operational practices; and

- **Sector-specific and learner-driven contributions**, particularly from the tourism and construction industries and from students' feedback on employability, which informed the referencing of occupational qualifications against labour market requirements.

Through this broad-based consultative approach, the referencing process captured the perspectives of employers, training providers, learners, and professional communities. This inclusive participation not only fulfilled the AQRF's expectation for stakeholder involvement but also reinforced the legitimacy, national ownership, and regional credibility of Vietnam's referencing outcomes.

CRITERION
8

INVOLVEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS IN THE REFERENCING PROCESS

Purpose: To enhance the transparency of the referencing process and the development of the report on learning outcomes through the involvement of international experts.

The development of this Referencing Report was carried out with the support of some foreign experts. Specifically:

1. A New Zealand-based Specialist in Education and Quality Assurance as the International Expert Advisor

Ha-Ngan Ngo is a multilingual education professional with a strong background in policy, quality assurance, and international qualifications recognition. With over a decade of experience across educational settings in New Zealand, Vietnam, and internationally, she has held various professional roles in applied research, evaluation, policy development and implementation, regulatory compliance, intergovernmental collaboration, university lecturing, and international student support. Ms. Ngo has worked with several notable organizations, including the Quality Assurance Division, New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Victoria University of Wellington and previously served as a researcher on a national project funded by Vietnam's National Foundation for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED), etc.

Currently based in Wellington, Ms. Ngo serves as Co-Convenor of the Adult and Higher Education Special Interest Group within the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE). As a multilingual researcher, her academic insights—reflected in publications in high-ranking international journals indexed in Scopus Q1 and in book chapters published by Springer Nature—enrich her contributions to policy-making, particularly in navigating the complexities of cross-border quality assurance. She is also an active reviewer for various prestigious international journals and has presented at major conferences hosted by the New Zealand Association for Research in Education (NZARE), the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES), and Education New Zealand (ENZ).

Ms. Ngo's role in this referencing process was to enhance the international readability, conceptual transparency, and referencing logic of the report. Although she has experience with the Vietnamese education system, her professional base and qualifications expertise are rooted in New Zealand—an AQRF-referenced country with a mature qualifications framework. At the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), she worked within the Quality Assurance Division, specifically in Qualifications Recognition Services (QRS), where she

was responsible for evaluating foreign qualifications against the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF), translating complex national systems into internationally comparable frameworks, and applying meta-frameworks such as the European Qualification Frameworks (EQF), Pacific Qualifications Framework, and, by extension, the AQRF. Through this work, Ms. Ngo developed strong grounding in international referencing standards, equipping her to critically assess the readability, clarity, and comparability of referencing reports from the perspective of an external, non-national reader. Such insights helped ensure the report would be accessible and meaningful to both ASEAN and non-ASEAN audiences. This perspective is particularly valuable in the context of cross-border qualifications recognition, where a deep understanding of national systems must be balanced with objectivity and alignment with regional and international standards of transparency and trust.

The international expert advisor was identified by the Vietnam National Advisory Council (NAC) based on her strong professional record and recognised expertise in qualifications and quality assurance. The recruitment process was conducted formally by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), which issued an official invitation for Ms. Ngo to serve as an independent international expert. A comprehensive curriculum vitae was requested and reviewed by the Drafting Sub-Committee to verify her credentials, technical competence, and relevant experience before engagement. This process ensured that her selection was transparent, evidence-based, and aligned with the technical requirements outlined in the AQRF Referencing Guidelines (2020). To uphold safeguards for independence, it is noted that while Ms. Ngo is familiar with the Vietnamese education system, her professional base in New Zealand and independent career trajectory ensured objectivity. She was not employed by either MOET or MOLISA during the referencing process, and her role was limited strictly to providing external technical advice. All her recommendations were documented separately and reviewed by the National Advisory Council (NAC), which collectively decided on their inclusion. This process ensured that the engagement of the international expert was conducted with full transparency, professional integrity, and adherence to the principles of impartiality and accountability.

Her contributions included:

- Provided ongoing written and verbal advice to the NAC team on the preparation and drafting of report content across multiple criteria, including structure, articulation of level descriptors, and application of the learning outcomes and best-fit principles.

- Reviewed and edited successive drafts of the referencing report, offering critical feedback on the clarity, coherence, and referencing methodology—particularly the alignment between VQF and AQRF levels.

- Prepared the English version of the full report to ensure readability, conceptual accuracy, and consistency with AQRF terminology and international expectations.

- Participated in technical consultations as a "critical friend," helping the team strengthen the defensibility of their arguments and improve the transparency and accessibility of the report for external readers.

- Contributed to the formal response to the international reviewer's comments, advising on revisions and refinements needed to address feedback and uphold the credibility of the referencing outcome.

A sample of Ms. Ngo's critical feedback on Criterion 3 is provided in Appendix X-A of this report.

These contributions focused on ensuring that the report met the transparency and comparability standards expected in AQRF referencing. This aligns closely with Criterion 8's emphasis on involving international experts who enhance the report's accessibility and trustworthiness for regional and global audiences.

2. An International Expert from Ireland as the Independent International Reviewer

According to the procedural requirements of the AQRF Referencing Guidelines, the Vietnamese Referencing Report was submitted to an international expert for independent review to ensure the transparency, robustness, and credibility of both the referencing process and its outcomes. Following these requirements, the VQF agency invited Professor Órla Barry, Head of Qualifications Information and Learning Opportunities, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), to act as the international expert reviewer.

The selection of Professor Barry was based on the AQRF Guideline's recommended criteria for choosing international experts, which emphasise expertise in qualifications systems, familiarity with regional or international qualifications frameworks, experience in referencing processes, and the ability to provide constructive, evidence-based feedback as a "critical friend". According to the Guideline, Member States should consider whether the expert:

- has experience with qualifications frameworks (national or regional);
- is familiar with learning-outcomes-based systems;
- has relevant expertise in general, VET, or higher education sectors;
- has experience working internationally on NQF/QF referencing;
- can provide independent and constructive professional judgement.

Professor Barry meets these requirements as she has extensive experience in the development, implementation, and referencing of the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and her organisation (QQI) is responsible for Ireland's referencing processes to both the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) frameworks. Her expertise directly aligns with the specific needs of the AQRF Committee for reviewing the comparability and methodological soundness of the VQF–AQRF alignment.

Her involvement strengthens Vietnam's referencing process by providing an independent external evaluation, consistent with AQRF expectations that "people from other countries experienced in the field of qualifications are involved in the referencing process and its reporting" (Criterion 8).

An International Governance and Qualifications Specialist from Ireland

Professor Órla Barry is an experienced Irish public servant and Chartered Governance Professional (ACG) with a distinguished career spanning corporate governance, education regulation, public policy, and quality assurance. With senior roles across higher education, non-executive governance, and regulatory compliance, Prof. Barry brings a seasoned

understanding of decision-making processes, institutional accountability, and system-level oversight—expertise that is particularly valuable in the context of qualifications frameworks and cross-border comparability.

Across her career in Ireland, Ms. Barry has influenced the governance and oversight of education organisations, contributed to quality improvement across public bodies, and supported capacity-building for high-performance teams. Her professional trajectory—grounded in public service values, regulatory integrity, and evidence-based governance—positions her well to examine whether referencing reports meet regional expectations for transparency, consistency, and trustworthiness.

Role as an Independent International Reviewer

Invited by the Vietnam National AQRF Committee (NAC) and the Vietnam's MOET through the recommendation of the AQRF Committee, Prof. Barry served as an independent reviewer for the Vietnam AQRF Referencing Report. Her selection was based on her strong governance credentials, her extensive experience working with regulatory and education-related bodies in Ireland, and her recognised expertise in organisational accountability and quality assurance.

Prof. Barry's fully independent review of the entire referencing report significantly strengthened its overall alignment with AQRF's criteria. Her scrutiny provided an added layer of credibility and objectivity, ensuring that Vietnam's referencing process met ASEAN standards for transparency, methodological rigour, and international comparability. Her detailed analysis improved the report's coherence, its technical accuracy, and its ability to clearly present Vietnam's qualifications system to regional and global audiences.

We received the feedbacks and reviews from Professor Orla Barry on 1st July 2025 with many recommendations so that we have made many changes and modications in the Report.

To ensure full transparency of the referencing process, Professor Órla Barry's independent review report and Vietnam's detailed point-by-point responses to her feedback are presented in Appendix X-B.

CRITERION
9

TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE REFERENCING REPORT

Vietnam's AQRF Referencing Report was developed by the Subcommittee for Referencing the VQF to the AQRF. The report was subsequently reviewed by the NAC and officially endorsed by MOET, Vietnam. Once the final report is indorsed by the AQRFC, it will be published in both Vietnamese and English (hard copy) and made available on the official websites of MOET's (https://moet.gov.vn/). The MOET will organize an Announcement Ceremony of launching the National Report and invite stakeholders, international experts and representatives of AMS to join this event.

Vietnam's Referencing Report provides comprehensive and detailed information on the country's qualifications, occupational standards, levels of qualification, responsible authorities, the development of the VQF, and the AQRF referencing process. The report serves as a resource for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the VQF, as well as a reference tool for qualification comparison with ASEAN Member States (AMS). In the future, an implementation manual for the VQF and a referencing guide aligned with the AQRF and AMS will be issued to ensure quality and consistency in implementation.

CRITERION 10

PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF REFERENCING OUTCOMES BY ASEAN SECRETARIAT AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES

In accordance with Decision No. 436/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on 30 March 2020 regarding the Implementation Plan for the VQF for HE qualifications (Levels 6, 7, and 8) during the 2020–2025 period, the Minister of MOET issued Decision No. 1596/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 21 May 2021, approving the Plan for Developing the VQF Referencing Report to the AQRF (the Plan).

The Plan outlines that the referencing process is to be carried out from June 2021 to December 2025, with the participation of key agencies (such as the HE Department, the NAC, subcommittees, and the Education Communications Centre), along with cooperation from other ministries, QA bodies, education and training HE and TVET institutions, and stakeholder groups. A series of workshops, roundtable discussions, and consultations with domestic and international experts, scholars, HEIs, TVET institutions,and other relevant stakeholders were conducted to revise and finalise the Referencing Report drafts in line with the requirements of the AQRF Committee.

As part of its long-term vision, the Plan also aims to establish a centralised repository of resources to enhance the accessibility, visibility, and usability of referencing outcomes for a broader audience. This includes learners, training providers, employers, policy makers, and the general public across all education and training sectors. Information will be made available through official platforms to support transparency, mobility, and cross-border recognition within the ASEAN region.

Following the formal endorsement of the Referencing Report by the AQRF Committee, Vietnam plans to organise a national launch event to publicly announce the outcomes of the referencing process. This event will serve as a platform to raise awareness, promote the integration of referencing results into national and institutional QA practices, and engage key stakeholders from education, industry, and government. The Referencing Report will then be published both in print and digital formats (with ISBN registration) and disseminated widely via the official website of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), relevant portals, and through communication activities targeting domestic and regional audiences.

These steps aim to ensure not only the formal recognition of referencing outcomes but also their effective communication and uptake across Vietnam's education and training ecosystem.

Plans and Strategies for the Development and Implementation of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) and AQRF Report

Besides, Vietnam also recognizes the VQF as a dynamic framework that must evolve in response to national socio-economic priorities, technological change, and regional integration

within ASEAN. The implementation plan for the next five years (2026–2030) focuses on continuous improvement, monitoring, and alignment with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF).

i. *Periodic Review and Updating of the VQF and AQRF Referencing Report*

A five-year review cycle will be established to evaluate the relevance, coherence, and implementation of the VQF across all education and training sub-sectors. This review will include:

• Updating level descriptors and qualification typologies to reflect labour market developments, digital skills, and emerging occupational standards;
• Reviewing the referencing outcomes with the AQRF, ensuring sustained comparability and consistency with regional developments; and
• Issuing an updated version of the AQRF Referencing Report to incorporate new policy directions, statistical data, and quality assurance arrangements.

ii. *Anticipated Challenges and Strategic Responses*

Vietnam anticipates several challenges in the continued development and implementation of the VQF, including:

• Ensuring cross-sectoral coordination and data integration between MOET and MOLISA following the transfer of TVET management to MOET;
• Enhancing institutional capacity to implement learning outcomes-based curriculum design and assessment; and
• Strengthening the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to widen access to qualifications.

To address these challenges, strategies will focus on capacity building, regulatory harmonization, and digital transformation, including the development of an integrated national qualifications database to support evidence-based monitoring.

iii. *Expected Impact of Referencing the AQRF*

Referencing the VQF to the AQRF is expected to:

• Enhance the regional and international recognition of Vietnamese qualifications, promoting learner and labour mobility;
• Facilitate the mutual understanding of qualification levels among ASEAN Member States;
• Encourage institutions and employers to adopt learning outcomes-based approaches to curriculum design and human resource development; and
• Strengthen Vietnam's credibility as an active member of the ASEAN education and training community.

iv. *Communication and Awareness Plans*

A structured communication strategy will be implemented to raise awareness of the VQF and its linkage with the AQRF, including:

• National and regional workshops to disseminate information to education providers, employers, and professional bodies;

• Capacity-building seminars for QA agencies and institutions on learning outcomes, qualification design, and assessment standards; and

• The development of information materials and online tools to support the use of the VQF among learners, employers, and the general public.

v. *Review of Quality Assurance Arrangements*

Over the next five years, Vietnam plans to review and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms in higher education, TVET, and professional sectors to ensure consistent alignment with VQF principles. This includes:

• Updating accreditation criteria to reinforce outcome-based assessment;

• Reviewing cross-sectoral QA frameworks to enhance coherence and mutual recognition; and

• Expanding the use of external evaluation and peer review processes to maintain transparency and accountability.

Together, these strategies will ensure that the VQF remains a living framework—relevant, transparent, and internationally recognized—while supporting lifelong learning and human capital development aligned with ASEAN and global standards.

Table 10.1. Agenda of Sub-committee

No.	Work Content	Task Assignment (Lead)	Task Assignment (Coordination)	Expected Product	Completion Time
1	Establish the Advisory Council and promulgate the Plan for developing a VQF referencing report with the AQRF	Department of Higher Education	Ministry Leadership and relevant units	Decision on establishing the Advisory Council and Decision on promulgating the Plan	June 2021
2	Research, survey; organize workshops, seminars to gather feedback from experts, scientists, and other stakeholders on the compatibility of training programs in Vietnamese HEIs with the qualifications framework of some ASEAN countries	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council and relevant units	Report; seminar and workshop minutes	July 2021

No.	Work Content	Task Assignment (Lead)	Task Assignment (Coordination)	Expected Product	Completion Time
3	Develop the Outline of the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for higher education qualifications	Report Drafting Subcommittee	Department of Higher Education and relevant units	Draft Outlines of the report according to ASEAN criteria	July 2021 and July 2022
4	Organize workshops, seminars, and gather feedback from domestic and foreign experts, scientists, HEIs, and other stakeholders to revise and complete the draft referencing outlines as required by the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council and relevant units	Draft reports according to ASEAN criteria; minutes of meetings, workshops, seminars; reports.	1st Quarter and 2nd Quarter of years from 2021-2024
5	Develop the Draft VQF referencing report with the AQRF for higher education qualifications	Report Drafting Subcommittee	Department of Higher Education and relevant units	Draft reports according to ASEAN criteria	2nd Quarter of years from 2021-2023
6	Organize workshops, seminars, and gather feedback from domestic and foreign experts, scientists, HEIs, and other stakeholders to revise and complete the referencing reports as required by the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council and relevant units	Draft reports according to ASEAN criteria; minutes of meetings, workshops, seminars; reports.	2nd Quarter and 3rd Quarter of years from 2021-2024
7	Revise and complete the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for higher education qualifications	Report Drafting Subcommittee	Advisory Council and relevant units	Revised Draft; Report on revising and completing drafts	3rd Quarter of years 2021-2024

No.	Work Content	Task Assignment (Lead)	Task Assignment (Coordination)	Expected Product	Completion Time
8	Organize the appraisal of the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for higher education qualifications	Appraisal Subcommittee	Advisory Council and relevant units	Appraisal opinions and Appraisal minutes	3rd Quarter of years 2021-2024
9	Submit to the Chairman and Standing Committee of the Council for acceptance of the referencing report for university qualifications	Advisory Council	Relevant units	Decision approving the report	3rd Quarter of years 2021-2024
10	Participate in annual meetings as required by the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee to report and seek feedback from ASEAN countries on the draft VQF referencing report with the AQRF	Standing Committee of the Council	Advisory Council	Meeting documents	According to Committee meeting schedule
11	Report and seek feedback from ASEAN countries on the draft VQF referencing report with the AQRF	Department of Higher Education	Advisory Council	Reference report; feedback; meeting minutes	3rd Quarter of years 2021-2024
12	Revise and complete the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for higher education qualifications based on feedback from ASEAN countries	Report Drafting Subcommittee	Advisory Council	Revised Draft; Report on revising and completing drafts	4th Quarter of years from 2021-2024
13	Coordinate with the Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs to revise the VQF referencing report with the AQRF	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council	Reference report; feedback; meeting minutes	July of years from 2021-2024

No.	Work Content	Task Assignment (Lead)	Task Assignment (Coordination)	Expected Product	Completion Time
14	Submit the referencing report dossier to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee for review, feedback, and approval	Advisory Council	Department of International Cooperation, Department of Higher Education	Approved report	August of years from 2021-2024
15	Supplement, amend, and complete the VQF referencing reports with the AQRF for higher education qualifications as per the requirements and feedback of the AQRF Committee	Ministry Inspectorate	Department of Higher Education, Steering Committee	Inspection and examination results report	October of years 2021-2024
16	Develop a plan and implement communication activities for the Plan for Developing the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for the 2021-2025 period	Education Communication Center	Department of Higher Education and relevant units	Handouts, videos, articles, reports, etc.	Quarterly annually from 2021-2025
17	Evaluate the results of implementing the Plan for Developing the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for the 2021-2023 period	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council	Evaluation report; seminar and workshop minutes for feedback on the report	October 2023
18	Organize a preliminary review conference for the implementation of the Plan for Developing the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for the 2021-2023 period	Advisory Council	Relevant units	Conference Report	December 2023

No.	Work Content	Task Assignment (Lead)	Task Assignment (Coordination)	Expected Product	Completion Time
19	Evaluate the results of implementing the Plan for Developing the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for the 2021-2025 period	Secretariat Subcommittee	Advisory Council	Evaluation report; seminar and workshop minutes for feedback on the evaluation report	October 2025
20	Organize a concluding conference for the implementation of the Plan for Developing the VQF referencing report with the AQRF for the 2021-2025 period	Advisory Council	Relevant units	Conference Report	December 2025

The group of experts on the development of the referencing process has agreed on the framework (expected) of the work of the AQRF referencing process for the period from December 2022 to June 2025 as presented in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2. Work Plan of the AQRF referencing process

Time	Job Description	Notes
In 2022 19-25 Dec 2022	Consult departments, departments, HEIs and experts on the draft report (Draft 1)	Held directly in Hanoi and online throughout the country (Document No. 6573/BGDDT-GDĐH dated 14 Dec 2022 inviting participants to attend the in-person and online seminar to comment on the draft VQF Report with AQRF)
26 Dec 2022 - 01 Jan 2023	Finalize Draft 1 based on feedback from ministries, departments, HEIs, and experts at the seminar	
In 2023 02-15 Jan 2023	Submit the draft Report (Draft 2) for comments from ministries, sectors and HEIs	
30 Jan - Jun 2023	Incorporate feedback from ministries and HEIs to complete Draft 2	

Time	Job Description	Notes
Jun 2023 - Jun 2024	Submit Draft 3 of the Referencing Report to members of the NAC for review and appraisal of the VQF–AQRF referencing process.	The Council was established under Decision No. 1639/QD-BGDDT dated May 28, 2021; The Council's working regulations and task assignment are issued under Decision No. 2762/QD-BGDDT dated 01 Sep 2021
Jun 2024 until May 2025	Ongoing work on refining the draft report	
Jul 2025	Submit AQRF Report to AQRF Committee	

Alongside the development of the referencing process, communication activities are also implemented to raise awareness of the process and its outcomes among stakeholders and the wider public. Specifically:

Article 1: Referencing Qualifications Frameworks Toward Labor Mobility in ASEAN. Published: 20/12/2022

Link: https://moet.gov.vn/tintuc/Pages/tin-hoat-dong-cua-bo.aspx ? ItemID=8347

Lesson 2: A 'Push' to Change in Management and Training Mindset Announcement: 25/12/2022

Link: https://giaoducthudo.giaoducthoidai.vn/cu-hich-thay-doi-ve-tu-duy-quan-ly-va-dao-tao-23866.html;

Article 3: Referencing the VQF: Transparent Procedures are essential. Published: 26/12/2022

Link: https://daibieunhandan.vn/giao-duc--y-te1/tham-chieu-khung-trinh-do-quoc-gia-viet-nam-can-co-nhung-quy-trinh-minh-bach-i312581/ https://daibieunhandan.vn/giao-duc--y-te1/tham-chieu-khung-trinh-do-quoc-gia-viet-nam-can-co-nhung-quy-trinh-minh-bach-i312581/

Regarding qualifications in vocational education and training (Levels 1 to 5), which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), implementation will follow Decision No. 1232/QĐ-TTg issued by the Prime Minister on July 15, 2021, approving the Implementation Plan of the VQF for vocational education qualifications during the 2021–2025 period.

CRITERION
11

CERTIFICATION AND ISSUANCE OF QUALIFICATIONS REFERENCED TO AQRF LEVELS

In line with the roadmap for strengthening the VQF and AQRF, the issuance of new qualifications in Vietnam must comply with both the national and regional frameworks. Accordingly, all qualification-awarding bodies are encouraged to integrate VQF-related information into their certification processes and, where appropriate, indicate the corresponding AQRF level. These bodies will also be responsible for coordinating and supporting the ASEAN Member States (AMS) referencing process.

The VQF will be periodically reviewed and revised, as necessary, to reflect evolving labor market demands.

Incorporating VQF and AQRF information on qualifications will support AMS reporting, facilitate the sharing of new qualifications and learning pathways, and promote transparency through online communication platforms. This process enhances the referencing mechanism and improves accessibility and usability for learners and workers, serving as an effective tool for labor mobility within the region.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE NAC ENGAGED IN THE VQF-AQRF REFERENCING REPORT

NO	FULL NAME	POSITIONS AND AGENCIES	ROLE IN THE COUNCIL
1	Hoang Minh Son	Deputy Minister of Education and Training	Chairman of the Council
2	Nguyen Thu Thuy	Director of the Department of HE, MOET	Vice Chairman of the Council
Standing Subcommittee			
3	Pham Quang Hung	Director of the Department of International Cooperation, MOET	Member
4	Le Anh Vinh	Director of the Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, MOET	Member
5	Tran Tu Khanh	Director of the Department of Planning and Finance, MOET	Member
6	Le My Phong	Deputy Director of the Quality Management Department, MOET	Member
7	Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy	Deputy Director of the Department of HE, MOET	Member
8	Nguyen Dinh Duc	Head of Training Department, Hanoi National University	Member
9	Nguyen Quoc Chinh	Director of the Center for Testing and Evaluation of Training Quality, Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City	Member
10	Pham Hong Quang	Director of Thai Nguyen University	Member
11	Huynh Van Chuong	Chairman of the Council of Hue University	Member
12	Vo Thanh Binh	Head of the Organization Committee, Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges	Member
13	Nguyen Quang Viet	Director of the Institute of Vocational Education Sciences, Directorate of Vocational Education, Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs	Member

NO	FULL NAME	POSITIONS AND AGENCIES	ROLE IN THE COUNCIL
		Subcommittee of the Secretariat	
14	Tran Sam	Principal Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
15	Nguyen Anh Dung	Senior Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
16	Hoang Hoa Cuong	Senior Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
17	Phan The Hung	Principal Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
18	Phung Thi Hong Van	Deputy Head of Department, Department of International Education, Department of International Cooperation, MOET	Member
19	Hoang Thi Thu Ha	Principal Specialist, Quality Management Department, MOET	Member
20	Vu Ngoc Ha	Principal Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
21	Pham Thi Hoa	Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
22	Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep	Specialist, Department of HE, MOET	Member
		Subcommittee on the development of the Referencing Report	
23	Nguyen Dac Trung	Head of Training Department, Hanoi University of Science and Technology	Member
24	Pham Van Tuan	Head of Testing and Training Quality Assessment Department, University of Science and Technology – University of Da Nang	Member
25	Le Dong Phuong	Director of the Center for HE Research, Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences	Member
26	Tran Ba Trinh	Deputy Director of Training Department, Hanoi University of Education	Member
27	Nguyen Thi Hao	Acting Head of the University Department, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	Member
28	Ta Thi Thu Hien	Director of the Center for Education Accreditation, Hanoi National University	Member
29	Nguyen Danh Nam	Deputy Head of the Training Department, Thai Nguyen University	Member
30	Dinh Phan Khoi	Head of Department, Graduate Training Department, Vinh University	Member
31	Bui My Hanh	Head of Scientific Research Unit – International Cooperation, Hanoi Medical University	Member
32	Phan Thi Vietnam	Vice Rector of Hoa Sen University	Member
33	Tran Mai Dong	Ho Chi Minh City University of Economics	Member
34	Doan Thi Minh Trinh	Assessor, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City	Member

NO	FULL NAME	POSITIONS AND AGENCIES	ROLE IN THE COUNCIL
35	Pham Thi Tuyet Nhung	Lecturer, University of Foreign Languages, Hue University	Member
36	Dao Phong Lam	Deputy Head of QA Department, Can Tho University	Member
37	Nguyen Kieu Oanh	Specialist of the Training Department, Hanoi National University	Member
	Group of officials to complete and finalize the referencing process		
38	Dang Van Huan	Deputy Director of the Department of HE, MOET	
39	Nguyen Thao Huong	Principal Specialist of the Department of HE, MOET	

APPENDIX II

LIST OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM STANDARDS IN VIETNAM

STT	Task Name	Year of promulgation
1	Security and Social Order	Expected to be issued in 2026
2	National Defence	Expected to be issued in 2026
3	Health Sciences	Expected to be issued in 2026
4	Art	Expected to be issued in 2026
5	Travel, Hospitality, Sports and Personal Services	Expected to be issued in 2026
6	Social Services	Expected to be issued in 2026
7	Engineering - Technology	Expected to be issued in 2026
8	Computers and Information Technology	Expected to be issued in 2026
9	Finance - Accounting	Expected to be issued in 2026
10	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	Expected to be issued in 2026
11	Architecture and Construction	Expected to be issued in 2026
12	Environment and Environmental Protection	**Issued in August 2025**
13	Teacher Training	Expected to be issued in 2026
14	Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures	Expected to be issued in 2026
15	Law	**Issued in March 2025**
16	Math and Statistics	Expected to be issued in 2026
17	Press and Information	Expected to be issued in 2026
18	Production and Processing	Expected to be issued in 2026
19	Natural Sciences	Expected to be issued in 2026
20	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Expected to be issued in 2026
21	Business, Administration-Management (Business and Management)	Expected to be issued in 2026
22	Life Sciences	Expected to be issued in 2026
23	Transportation Services	Expected to be issued in 2026
24	Humanities (except Languages, Literature and Culture Foreign)	Expected to be issued in 2026
25	Veterinary Medicine	Expected to be issued in 2026

APPENDIX III

EXAMPLE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES FROM A HE MODULE

MODULE TITLE: PHYSICS AND ENGINEERING 1

Field of Study: Architecture – Construction

Outcome Benchmark Information

Table 1.1. Module LO Standards

Course LOs	Describe the LOs of the module	Proportion of credit points
LO.1	**Demonstrate** and **explain** foundational knowledge of Physics, focusing on the *Mechanics and Electromagnetism* components relevant to engineering students.	50%
LO.2	**Apply** systems thinking skills to **analyze** and **explain** the working principles of mechanical systems and electromagnetic systems in engineering contexts.	50%

Table 1.2. Component Weight of Assessments

No.	Assessment Tasks	Weighting of the Assessment Task in the Overall Module Grade	Evaluation Components	
			Weighting of Continuous Assessment in the Overall Module Grade	Weighting of Final Assessment in the Overall Module Grade
1	Assessment Task 1	25	25	
2	Assessment Task 2	25	25	
3	Assessment Task 3	20		20
4	Assessment Task 4	30		30
	Total	100%	50%	50%

Rubric Review Criteria

Table 2.1. Assessment Rubric 1

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 –7,9)	D (4 – 5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
LO.1	Ability to memorize and present fundamental knowledge of Mechanics	50	Memorize and present 90% - 100% of fundamental mechanics knowledge	Memorize and present 80% - 89% of fundamental mechanics knowledge	Memorize and present 60% - 79% of fundamental mechanics knowledge	Memorize and present 40% - 59% of fundamental mechanics knowledge	Memorize and present less than 40% of the fundamental mechanics knowledge
	Ability to identify and solve mechanics problems using mathematical language and tools	50	Able to identify and solve 90%–100% of problems using mathematical language and tools	Able to identify and solve 80%–89% of mechanics problems using mathematical language and tools	Able to identify and solve 60%–79% of mechanics problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to identify and solve 40%–59% of mechanics problems using mathematical language and tools.	Only able to identify and solve less than 40% of mechanics problems using mathematical language and tools.
LO.2	Ability to identify, describe, and analyze components and operating principles of systems	50	- Identify and describe all components and principles of system operation. - Analyze 90%–100% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 80%–89% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and fully describe all components and the operating principles of the system - Analyze 60%–79% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system incompletely. - Analyze 40%–59% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system incompletely. - Analyze less than 40% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principle of the system

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 –7,9)	D (4 – 5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
	Ability to identify and describe external factors affecting the operation of a simple mechanical system	50	Identify and describe 90%–100% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 80%–89% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 60%–79% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 40%–59% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	- Identify less than 40% of the external factors that affect the operation of the system.

Table 2.2. Assessment Rubric 2

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 – 7,9)	D (4 –5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
	Ability to memorize fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism	50	Memorize and present 90%–100% of the fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism	Memorize and present 80%–89% of the fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism	Memorize and present 60%–79% of the fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism	Memorize and present 40%–59% of the fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism	Memorize and present below 40% of the fundamental knowledge of Electromagnetism
LO.1	**Ability to formulate and solve Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools**	50	Able to formulate and solve 90%–100% of Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 80%–89% of Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 60%–79% of Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 40%–59% of Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve less than 40% of Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 – 7,9)	D (4 –5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
LO.2	Ability to identify, describe, and analyze the components and operating principles of a simple Electromagnetic system	50	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 90%–100% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principles.	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 80%–89% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principles.	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 60%–79% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system incompletely. - Analyze 40%–59% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principles	- Identify and describe incomplete components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze less than 40% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principles
	Ability to identify and describe external factors affecting the operation of a simple Electromagnetic system	50	Identify and describe 90%–100% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 80%–89% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 60%–79% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 40%–59% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	- Identify less than 40% of external factors that affect the operation of the system.

Table 2.3. Rubric of GM 3

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 – 7,9)	D (4 –5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
	Ability to memorize and present fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism	50	Memorize and present 90% - 100% of the fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism.	Memorize and present 80% - 89% of the fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism.	Memorize and present 60% - 79% of the fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism	Memorize and present 40% - 59% of the fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism.	Memorize and present less than 40% of the fundamental knowledge of Mechanics and Electromagnetism.
LO.1	Ability to formulate and solve problems in Mechanics and Electromagnetism using mathematical language and tools	50	Able to formulate and solve 90%–100% of Mechanics and Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 80%–89% of Mechanics and Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 60%–79% of Mechanics and Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Able to formulate and solve 40%–59% of Mechanics and Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.	Only able to formulate and solve less than 40% of Mechanics and Electromagnetism problems using mathematical language and tools.

Table 2.4. Rubric of GM 4

Course LOs	Assessment Criteria	Weight %	A (9 - 10)	B (8 – 8,9)	C (6 – 7,9)	D (4 –5,9)	F (0 -3,9)
LO.2	Ability to identify, describe, and analyze the components and operating principles of basic Mechanical and Electromagnetic systems	50	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 90%–100% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 80%–89% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and fully describe the components and operating principles of the system. - Analyze 60%–79% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system incompletely. - Analyze 40%–59% of the influence of boundary conditions on the system's operating principles.	- Identify and describe the components and operating principles of the system incompletely. - Analyze less than 40% of the influence of boundary conditions on the operating principle of the system
	Ability to identify and describe external factors affecting the operation of basic Mechanical and Electromagnetic systems	50	Identify and describe 90%–100% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 80%–89% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 60%–79% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	Identify and describe 40%–59% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.	- Identify less than 40% of the external factors affecting the operation of the system.

APPENDIX IV

REQUIREMENTS FOR HE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Program Objectives

The expectations of HEIs regarding the competencies and career prospects of graduates from the academic program must be clearly stated.

The program must clearly demonstrate its learning orientation—whether research-oriented, application-oriented or career-oriented; to ensure alignment with the needs of employers and other stakeholders.

These expectations must be consistent with and aligned to the institution's mission, vision and development strategy, as well as the needs of society. They must also comply with the objectives of HE as prescribed in the HE Law (2012, amended in 2018) and articulate qualifications in accordance with the VQF.

Program Learning Outcomes

They must be clear, practical, and explicitly describe the learning achievements that graduates are expected to attain in terms of general knowledge and core competencies appropriate to the training level, as well as the specific requirements of the discipline and field of study .

They must be measurable and accessible across cognitive levels, serving as a foundation for the design, implementation, and enhancement of teaching content and methods, as well as for the assessment of LOs and the issuance of qualifications.

They must be consistent with the academic program's goals, demonstrate a clear linkage to intended outcomes, and reflect key expectations of employers and relevant stakeholders.

Qualification levels must be explicitly defined and must meet the LOs of knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibilities and competencies as prescribed for the corresponding level of qualifications according to the VQF.

It is necessary to ensure vertical alignment with the entry requirements of higher training levels (if applicable), and simultaneously enable horizontal articulation at the same training level, especially those within the same disciplinary cluster or field of study.

LOs must be clearly and comprehensively specified at the module and course component level,and must be systematically implemented through logical integration and coherence among components.

It is essential to ensure the feasibility and appropriateness of the program's volume so that the majority of learners who meet entry requirements are able to complete the academic program within the prescribed duration.

Entry Requirements

The entry requirements of the academic program must clearly define the minimum standards for qualifications, competencies and relevant experience, appropriate to each training level, discipline and learning orientation, that learners must meet to be able to successfully engage in and complete the academic program.

Entry requirements for undergraduate and level-7 intensive academic programs: Learners must have completed upper secondary education or an equivalent qualification. Entry requirements for master's academic program: Learners must have obtained a bachelor's degree (or equivalent level or higher qualification) in a relevant discipline; possess foreign language proficiency at Level 3 of the six-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam (or an equivalent level). For research-oriented master's programs, learners must either have graduated with at least a "Good" grade at the undergraduate level or possess a scientific publication relevant to the intended field of study.

Entry requirements for doctoral academic programs: Learners must have completed a master's degree or a designated intensive academic program at level 7 in a relevant discipline, or must have graduated with at least a "Good" grade at the undergraduate level (or equivalent level or higher qualification) in a relevant discipline. They must also demonstrate foreign language proficiency Level 4 of the six-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework for Vietnam (or an equivalent or higher level), and have proven research capacity and experience.

Credit Volume

The learning workload of the academic program —whether at the level of the entire program, each component, or each individual module—is determined by the number of credits:

- One credit is equivalent to 50 hours of learner's normative learning, including time spent on attending lectures, participating in guided learning activities, self-study, research, practical experience and taking tests and assessments;

- For classroom-based learning activities, one credit requires a minimum of 15 hours of instruction or 30 hours of practice, experimentation, or discussion, in which one classroom hour is equivalent to 50 minutes.

The minimum credit volume of an academic program must conform to the requirements of the VQF, specifically as follows:

- Undergraduate programs: Minimum of 120 credits, plus the volume of physical education, defense and security education according to current regulations;

- Specific intensive academic program at level 7: Minimum of 150 credits, plus credit hours for physical education, defense-security education as required; or 30 credits for learners who already hold an university degrees in a related discipline group;

- Master's academic program: Minimum of 60 credits for learners with a university degree in the same discipline group;

- Doctoral academic program: Minimum of 90 credits for master's degree holders, 120 credits for learners with a university degree in the same discipline group.

For dual-discipline academic programs, an additional 30 credits must be added. For major–minor academic programs, an additional 15 credits must be added compared to the corresponding single-discipline academic program.

Program Structure and Content

1. Structure and Content of the Academic Programs

The program must clearly demonstrate the role of each component and modules, including their logical interconnections and complementary relationships, to ensure the effective implementation of the program's overall objectives and requirements.

a) The structure must clearly reflect the general characteristics and professional requirements of the relevant field and discipline group at the training level. This should facilitate interdisciplinary and cross-level articulation, while also highlighting the distinctive features and specialized requirements of the specific training discipline.

b) The program must include core and compulsory components applicable to all learners, while also providing supplementary and elective components that allow learners to select study options aligned with their individual career orientations. The structure should support learner orientation and, at the same time, enable students to develop personalized learning pathways that align with their progress, abilities, and individual circumstances.

2. Requirements for Each Program Component and Module

Each component and module of the academic program must specify its objectives, entry requirements, LOs, credit volume, and professional content and features. These elements must clearly contribute to the fulfillment of the program's overall objectives and LOs.

3. Requirements for Undergraduate Programs and Level 7 Intensive Academic Programs:

a) Compulsory basic education includes political theory, law, physical education, defense and security education according to current regulations.

b) In dual-discipline programs and major–minor combinations, the structure must clearly differentiate common components and discipline-specific modules.

c) For the intensive academic program at level 7, a minimum internship volume of 8 credits is required.

4. Requirements for Master's Programs:

a) Research-oriented programs must allocate 24 to 30 credits to scientific research, including 12 to 15 credits for the thesis, and 12 to 15 credits for additional research-related activities (e.g., projects, assignments, or thematic studies).

b) Application-oriented programs must include an internship of 6 to 9 credits, and graduation components of 6 to 9 credits implemented through practical schemes, projects, or applied research work.

5. Requirements for Doctoral Programs:

a) At least 80% of the total credit volume must be dedicated to scientific research and the doctoral dissertations;

b) For candidates entering from a master's degree, a maximum of 16 credits may be allocated to compulsory or elective coursework.

c) For candidates entering from a bachelor's degree, at least 30 credits must be allocated to compulsory or elective coursework.

Teaching and Assessment of LOs

Teaching methods must be designed using a learner-centered and subject-integrated approach, placing the learner at the heart of the training process. These methods should actively engage and motivate learners, encouraging them to take initiative and participate meaningfully in learning activities. Teaching must also effectively guide learners toward achieving the intended LOs of each module, component, and the academic program as a whole.

Assessment of learners' LOs must be based on the expected outcomes standards, and must clearly identify the level of learner achievement according to the cognitive levels defined in the LOs of each module, each component, and the entire program.

The assessment process must incorporate both formative (process-based) and summative evaluations, serving as a foundation for: timely adjustments to teaching and learning strategies, encouraging learner effort and supporting individual progress, improving the academic program, and ensuring effective implementation of the program structure and content.

Requirements for Faculty and support staff

The program standards must stipulate the minimum requirements on the number, structure, qualifications, capacity and experience of lecturers and support personnel to organize teaching and support learners in order to achieve the LOs of the academic program.

1. Requirements for Lecturers Teaching University Programs and Intensive Academic Programs Specific to Level 7:

- Lecturers must hold a master's degree or higher; teaching assistants must hold at least a bachelor's degree.

- The institution must have at least one qualified doctorate-level full-time lecturer responsible for leading the development and implementation of the academic program. There must be at least 05 doctorate-level full-time lecturers with appropriate expertise responsible for program instruction. Each program component must be led by a lecturer with expertise relevant to that component.

The number of lecturers must be sufficient to ensure that the student-to-lecturer ratio does not exceed the maximum limit prescribed for each discipline, field, or group of disciplines.

2. Requirements for Lecturers in Master's Programs:

- All lecturers must hold doctoral degrees.

- There must be at least five full-time lecturers with appropriate doctoral qualifications, including at least one professor or associate professor who is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the academic program;

Each subject and module must be taught by a full-time lecturer with relevant expertise. The number of instructors must ensure a maximum ratio of five students per instructor.

3. Requirements for Lecturers in Doctoral Programs:

- Lecturers must either hold the academic title of professor or associate professor, or possess a doctoral degree with demonstrated research competence;

- The institution must have at least one professor (or two associate professors) and three full-time doctorate-level lecturers in relevant disciplines. Supervision ratios must not exceed: 07 PhD students per professors, 05 PhD students per associate professors and 03 PhD students per PhD holder (without academic title).

The program standards for each field or discipline group must specify requirements for teaching staff that are not lower than those outlined above, including: specific student–faculty ratios, additional requirements for training support staff, if necessary, all tailored to the nature and characteristics of the field or discipline. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

The curriculum standards for each discipline and discipline group must stipulate the minimum requirements for infrastructure, including practical equipment, laboratories, information technology systems, libraries, learning materials, learning management systems, and training administration systems.These resources must be sufficient to enable learners achieve the intended LOs of the academic program and must be appropriate to the specific characteristics of the discipline, discipline group, or field of study.

APPENDIX V

EXAMPLE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM STANDARDS – LAW DISCIPLINE

STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF LAW AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

(issued together with Decision No. 678/QD-BGDDT dated March 14, 2025 of the Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam)

OVERVIEW

1.1. Introduction

The standards for academic programs in the field of Law at the university level define the minimum general requirements applicable to all academic programs within this discipline (Level 6 of the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework, as stipulated in the Prime Minister's Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated October 18, 2016, approving the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework). These standards include requirements related to program objectives, learning outcome standards, input criteria, minimum credit volume, curriculum structure and content, teaching methods, assessment of LOs, and conditions for program implementation to ensure training quality.

The primary purpose of issuing these standards is to ensure consistency amid diversity, promote alignment and articulation across programs, and enhance the capacity of higher education institutions to support international integration of law-related academic programs at the university level in Vietnam.

These standards have been developed in accordance with Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT dated June 22, 2021, issued by MOET, which provides regulations on academic program standards and the processes for developing, appraising, and promulgating academic programs at higher education levels.

The standard academic program in the field of Law at the university level serves as a foundational reference for institutions to develop and implement their own academic programs in the Law discipline (Code 738), as specified in Circular No. 09/2022/TT-BGDĐT dated June 6, 2022, which promulgates the official statistical list of higher education disciplines. It also provides the basis for designing and delivering academic programs in pilot disciplines, sub-disciplines, double-degree programs, and other specialized areas within the broader field of Law.

Based on these standards, HEIs are responsible for designing, reviewing, developing, appraising, and issuing academic programs that are tailored to the specific characteristics and training needs of their respective law-related disciplines.

1.2. Discipline Classification Codes

The statistical list of branches in the field of Law according to current regulations (as specified in Circular No. 09/2022/TT-BGDĐT dated June 6, 2022, issued by the Ministry of Education and Training) includes the following:

Discipline Code	Major Name
7380101	Law
7380102	Constitutional Law and Administrative Law
7380103	Civil Law and Civil Procedure
7380104	Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure
7380107	Economic Law
7380108	International Law

In addition to the training disciplines specified in this list, any disciplines approved by MOET for piloting or added as supplements to the list of university-level training programs in the field of Law must also comply with the provisions of this academic program standard.

1.3. Awarded Qualification

Graduates of academic programs in the field of Law at the university level are granted Bachelor's degrees.

PROGRAM STANDARDS IN LAW

2.1. Program Objectives

The objective of academic programs in the field of law at the university level is to possess strong political and ethical values, good health, and comprehensive, systematic legal knowledge. Graduates are expected to master fundamental principles and legal systems related to law, demonstrate foundational professional skills in legal practice, work independently and creatively, solve legal problems effectively, adapt to diverse work environments, and uphold a sense of public service and civic responsibility.

2.2. Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of university-level law programs are expected to meet the learning outcome requirements set forth in the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework (VQF), as well as the following minimum competency requirements:

2.2.1. Knowledge

- Apply comprehensive theoretical knowledge and foundational practical knowledge in the field of law, including: theory of state and law, political and legal theories; political and

legal theories; legal profession and legal ethics, legal argumentation and writing, administrative law, economic law, international law, civil law, criminal law.

- Apply basic knowledge of politics, society, history, culture and national traditions.

2.2.2. Skills

- Communicate and interact in a respectful, effective, and professional manner.

- Summarize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data, information, and legal regulations.

- Demonstrate critical thinking skills.

- Apply basic legal practice skills, including problem identification and legal problem-solving.

- Express and present professional knowledge, arguments, viewpoints, and legal solutions clearly in both oral and written forms; demonstrate the ability to draft legal documents.

- Possess foreign language proficiency at Level 3 or above according to Vietnam's 6-level Foreign Language Proficiency Framework; effectively apply information technology in professional contexts, including legal research and digital competency in accordance with current regulations.

2.2.3. Autonomy and Responsibility:

- Demonstrate loyalty to the nation, strong political and ideological awareness, and respect for the rule of law; promote innovation, protect justice and human rights, and serve the public and national interests.

- Uphold values of honesty, integrity, prudence, inquisitiveness, and legal ethics.

- Work independently or collaboratively; demonstrate creativity and the ability to apply knowledge and skills with autonomy and responsibility in legal practice; adapt to professional demands in dynamic and changing legal environments.

- Take personal and collective responsibility; demonstrate the ability to guide and supervise others in fulfilling assigned tasks.

2.3. Entry Requirements

Learners enrolling in undergraduate academic programs in the field of Law must meet the following requirements:

- Have completed upper secondary education or an equivalent qualification;

- Achieve a minimum total admission score equal to at least 60% of the maximum possible score on the applicable assessment scale.

HEIs offering the program shall prescribe entry standards based on examinations, admissions and other forms of assessment, or specific requirements on knowledge, capacity, quality and experience for learners of each academic program, but must ensure the assessment of knowledge of Mathematics and Literature, or Mathematics, or Literature and achieve a minimum of 60% of the maximum assessment score of the scale.

All applicants for undergraduate programs in Law, regardless of the form of study, must meet the above conditions, except for those who have obtained a university degree and are exempt from these entry requirements.

2.4. Credit Volume

The undergraduate academic program in the field of Law at the university level must comprise a minimum learning volume of 120 credits (excluding credits for physical education, defense-security education as prescribed by current regulations). Within this total, the political theory component must be implemented in accordance with the regulations of MOET. The basic and core disciplinary components—which constitute the foundation and core of the legal training content—must not exceed 65% of the total remaining credit volume.

2.5. Structure and Content

2.5.1. Components of the academic program

The academic program is designed to be single-major, dual majors or majors - sub-majors, including basic education components, disciplinary foundation and core, internship and practical experience components. Each component consists of a combination of compulsory and elective courses.

a) Components of basic education

The basic education component equips learners with foundational knowledge in politics, society, history, culture, psychology, and essential theoretical and practical understanding, along with skills in information technology and foreign languages. This foundation supports the acquisition, research, and development of knowledge related to the state and law, while also fostering logical reasoning and analytical thinking. The compulsory knowledge within the basic education component includes political theory, physical education, and national defense and security education as prescribed by current regulations; social sciences; information technology; and foreign languages. This component places particular emphasis on ideological and political education, cultural and historical awareness, national traditions, and a sense of civic responsibility toward protecting national interests. Depending on their institutional mission, strategic goals, and learning orientation, institutions may supplement additional compulsory subjects within the basic education component.

b) Disciplinary Foundation and Core Component

The disciplinary foundation and core components equip learners with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, professional attitudes, and the capacity for autonomy and personal responsibility, enabling them to meet career development goals. This component supports learners in achieving the LOs related to: theoretical and practical knowledge of the legal field; lifelong learning methods; basic skills required for practicing the legal profession; a high degree of independence and accountability in applying knowledge and skills to perform professional tasks effectively.

The disciplinary foundation and core components include both compulsory and elective knowledge, specifically as follows:

- Compulsory Knowledge:

+ Compulsory knowledge within the disciplinary foundation component must comprise a minimum of 16 credits, covering fundamental and foundational topics such as: Legal theory, history of the state and law; political–legal doctrines; the legal profession and legal ethics; legal reasoning and legal writing skills.

+ Compulsory knowledge within the core disciplinary component must comprise a minimum of 44 credits, offering both comprehensive and systematic theoretical knowledge and practical foundational knowledge. It must cover five (05) key subject groups: (i) Constitutional law and administrative law; (ii) Criminal law and criminal procedure; (iii) Knowledge of civil law and civil procedure; (iv) Knowledge of economic law; (v) Civil law and civil procedure; economic law, international law. The compulsory knowledge within the core disciplinary component ensures the inclusion of the following subjects: administrative law and administrative procedure; criminal law and criminal procedure; civil law and civil procedure; commercial law; public international law; private international law; anti-corruption law; marriage and family law; intellectual property law; criminology; labor law; financial law; land law; international trade law; ASEAN law; and legal document drafting.

+ Each compulsory module in the core component of the discipline encompasses a minimum volume of 02 credits.

+ HEIs supplement additional compulsory knowledge reflecting the specialized characteristics of the legal discipline and aligned with the institution's educational philosophy and strategic orientation.

- Elective Knowledge:

Elective knowledge includes basic and core disciplinary content, graduation thesis or its alternative skill-based modules.

These electives are intended to provide learners with supplementary theoretical knowledge, practical skills, professional attitudes, and competencies that align with their future career pathways in the legal field and enhance their ability to adapt to evolving professional environments. The graduation thesis or alternative modules may carry a maximum of 10 credits.

c) Internship and Practical Experience

The internship and practical experience component is mandatory, with a credit volume ranging from a minimum of 7 credits to a maximum of 15 credits.

d) Institutional Flexibility in Program Design

Depending on its mission, strategy and orientation (research, application, career), the training institution can actively allocate the ratio between the basic knowledge of the discipline, the core of the discipline, internships and experiences in an appropriate way, provided that:

- Basic knowledge of the Law branch (branch code 7380101) has basic knowledge of all other branches in the field of Law (branch codes: 7380102, 7380103, 7380104, 7380107, 7380108) but must ensure that the number of credits of each branch does not exceed 20% of the total number of basic credits of the branch;

- The core knowledge of the Law discipline (branch code 7380101) has the core knowledge of all other disciplines in the field of Law (branch codes: 7380102, 7380103, 7380104, 7380107, 7380108) but must ensure that the number of credits of each discipline does not exceed 20% of the total number of core credits of the branch;

- Basic knowledge of other Law disciplines (discipline codes: 7380102, 7380103, 7380104, 7380107, 7380108) can choose the basic knowledge of the other law disciplines, but must ensure that the proportion of the total number of credits of basic knowledge of all

other law disciplines does not exceed 30% of the total number of credits of basic knowledge of the branch.

- Core knowledge of other law disciplines (discipline codes: 7380102, 7380103, 7380104, 7380107, 7380108) may choose the core knowledge of other law disciplines but must ensure that the proportion of the total number of credits of core knowledge of all other law disciplines does not exceed 30% of the total number of credits of core knowledge of the discipline.

2.5.2. Other requirements for the structure and content of the academic program

In addition to the above provisions, the structure and content of the academic program in the field of Law meet the following requirements:

- Each component and module of the academic program must specify the objectives, input and outcomes requirements, the number of credits and professional contents and characteristics; make a clear contribution to the implementation of the objectives and LOs of the academic program. The LOs of the modules fully and clearly concretize the LOs of the corresponding academic programs.

- Modules on content law are studied before the corresponding modules on formal law (procedural law).

- Practical knowledge is reasonably distributed throughout the entire period to provide groups of discipline foundational and core discipline knowledge, ensuring learners are guided and practiced directly.

The skills training is carried out in the form of separate skills training modules and integrated in the teaching of modules on legal knowledge.

2.5.3. For academic programs in major - minor disciplines, dual degrees

Academic programs that follow a major–minor structure or offer dual degrees must ensure inclusion of at least the compulsory knowledge groups from both the disciplinary foundation and core components of the primary (major) field, as stipulated in Section 2.5.1.

2.6. Teaching and Assessment
2.6.1. Teaching Methods

a) The teaching methods must be aligned with the course objectives, content, and intended LOs. They should integrate theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and skills development; enhance practical relevance; and be effectively structured to support learners in achieving the intended course outcomes.

b) In the design and implementation of teaching and learning activities, the following teaching methods should be applied appropriately and in combination:

- Lecture-based instruction;

- Group discussion;

- Debate;

- Case-based learning;

- Role-play (mock trials, mediation, negotiation, etc.);

- Teamwork and collaborative learning;

- Experiential and practice-based learning;

- Other contextually appropriate methods, aligned with the objectives and structure of the academic program.

c) Modules focusing on legal procedures and skills should incorporate methods such as: debate; case analysis; role-playing exercises, including mock court hearings, arbitration sessions, mediation, and negotiation, legal reasoning and judgment commentary exercises.

2.6.2. Assessment of LOs

a) The assessment of learners' LOs is designed in accordance with the level of achievement of the LOs of each module and academic program as a whole. Assessment should be based on defined learning outcome standards, and must determine the extent to which learners achieve the expected knowledge, skills, practical competencies, and professional attitudes.

b) Both formative (process-based) and summative (end-of-module) assessments must be employed, providing a basis for: adjusting teaching and learning activities, recognizing and supporting the learner progress, improving academic program implementation and QA.

c) Assessment methods must be consistent with the intended LOs, the nature of each module, and the corresponding teaching methods. Methods must ensure variety, reliability, and fairness.

d) Assessment components must be transparent and appropriately weighted, incorporating both continuous assessment and summative assessments. Institutions may also introduce innovative assessment methods where appropriate. Learners are encouraged to engage in independent research, and a portion of scientific work may be converted into bonus points for relevant courses. Assessment components typically include:

- Process assessment: can be in the form of an assessment of learning awareness (attendance, study attitude), individual assignment assessment, group assignment or mid-term examination.

- Summative assessment: May take the form of a final exam or other end-of-module assessment formats.

- The weighting of process and summative assessments, including attendance, coursework, and final evaluations, shall be determined by the training institution, ensuring alignment with the LOs and nature of each module.

2.7. Faculty and Support Staff

Requirements for lecturers and support personnel at HEIs implementing academic programs in the field of Law at the university level are as follows:

- Lecturers participating in teaching academic programs must hold at least a master's degree in a discipline relevant to the teaching module; teaching assistants must hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

- Each lecturer must publish at least one (01) scientific work annually. Lecturers teaching legal modules must also have practical experience in the legal field as required by regulations. Within five years (60 months) prior to being assigned to teach, law lecturers must meet at least one of the following criteria:

(i) have at least 02 (two) articles and scientific reports in domestic journals (with a score of 0.5 or higher) or in international journals recognized by the State Council for Professorship in Law;

(ii) be the author or co-author of 01 (one) monograph or 01 (one) book chapter published by a domestic or foreign publisher.

- The institution must have at least one (01) doctorate holder in an appropriate discipline, working as a full-time lecturer with a minimum of five (05) years' experience in training management and university-level teaching, responsible for leading the development and implementation of the academic program. The appropriate discipline is defined as the one stated on the doctoral degree and must match or be broader than the program's disciplinary scope.

- There must be at least one (01) PhD-level full-time lecturer in Law for each group of compulsory knowledge within the core component of the program, with relevant expertise and at least three (03) years of experience in the legal field.

- The appropriate professional expertise for leading a subject area is determined as follows: The discipline listed on the lecturer's doctoral degree or degree supplement, or or if the doctoral degree is in a related Law field, the lecturer must have at least ten (10) years of working experience in that area of expertise.

- The institution must have a sufficient number of full-time lecturers to deliver at least 70% of the total teaching volume in the academic program.

- Each academic program must engage at least three (03) visiting lecturers who are actively working in the legal field, with a minimum of five (05) years of in-depth practical experience, to deliver content related to practical knowledge and legal skills. Visiting lecturers may teach up to 30% of the content within each program component per academic year, but must not be assigned full responsibility for entire modules, except in skills training modules.

- The institution must ensure a learner-to-lecturer ratio that complies with current regulatory standards.

- A team of support staff must be available in sufficient numbers, with appropriate qualifications and experience to assist with: teaching operations in lecture halls, library and learning resource center services, computer labs, self-study areas, and research spaces.

- The institution must provide a team of academic advisors who actively and effectively support learners, particularly in selecting elective modules aligned with career goals.

- HEIs are encouraged to appoint at least one (01) psychological counselor to support both learners and teaching staff.

2.8. Infrastructure and Resources

The institution must meet the minimum requirements on facilities, technology and learning resources in compliance with current regulations and the following additional conditions:

- A dedicated system of administrative offices must be equipped with the necessary infrastructure and software to effectively support training management.

- A sufficient number of lecture halls must be available, equipped to support theoretical instruction and group discussions, and must have internet and Wi-Fi connectivity.

- A library system (including a digital library): must support the teaching, learning, and research needs of the academic program. The library must: provide sufficient copies of textbooks for each course in the curriculum, available for borrowing and on-site use; maintain reference materials such as books, journals, scientific research projects, theses, legal case files, and court judgments; ensure materials are regularly updated, managed by professionally trained library staff, with a sufficient number of personnel to provide basic information services.

- The institution must have computer labs for information technology instruction and classrooms suitable for foreign language teaching, if such modules are part of the program.

- There must be a mock courtroom equipped with tools and materials to support trial simulations, as well as a law practice office or legal consultancy center designed in alignment with the academic program.

- An online training platform must be in place, in accordance with MOET regulations on IT application in online HE, and a learning management system (LMS) that: connects learners and lecturers, provides learning materials and course outlines, facilitates learning and interactive activities.

- The institution must have access to and rights for using legal software that allows for the provision and updating of Vietnamese legal documents, as well as connectivity to at least one international legal research database.

- A training and learning management system must be maintained and regularly updated. The institution must maintain cooperation agreements with legal practice institutions, enabling learners to undertake internships, practical training, and experiential learning activities.

APPENDIX VI-A

MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE VOLUME AND COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS TO BE ACHIEVED BY LEARNERS UPON GRADUATION AT THE INTERMEDIATE AND COLLEGE LEVELS FOR OCCUPATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, AND LAW

(Issued together with Circular No. 20/2019/TT-BLĐTBXH dated December 23, 2019, of the Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs)

**Minimum Knowledge Volume and Competency Requirements to be Achieved by Learners upon Graduation at the Intermediate and College Levels
Occupation: Finance – Banking**

A. COLLEGE LEVEL

1. General introduction to the occupation

Finance–Banking is a field involving monetary transactions and circulation via banks, credit institutions, and bank-issued financial instruments, domestically and internationally; and the finance function within enterprises.

The Finance–Banking occupation covers: capital mobilization operations; credit operations (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, import financing, export financing); payment operations; commercial bank accounting; treasury/vault operations; credit risk handling; asset and enterprise valuation; financial analysis and management; and securities brokerage.

Main tasks of the occupation:

- Finance roles track a company's capital and cash flows, make decisions on borrowing or negotiating financial contracts, and interface with nearly all areas of a company.

- Finance–Banking roles perform capital mobilization; credit operations (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, trade finance); payment operations (personal, corporate, domestic, and international payments); financial investment operations; and other activities as prescribed by law.

The circulation of money in the economy and the use of finance in enterprises function like the body's circulatory system—supporting the operation of the entire economic system.

Therefore, whether the economy grows or faces downturns, employment prospects in this field remain broad. With the knowledge and skills acquired in the college-level Finance–Banking program, graduates can work at organizations such as:

- Commercial banks, securities companies, and non-bank credit institutions;

- State regulatory bodies for finance and banking and other types of enterprises; financial institutions; investment funds; stock exchanges;

- Insurance companies, finance companies, credit funds; or as accounting staff in companies;

- Finance departments of companies and corporations.

The college-level Finance–Banking occupation requires soft skills to meet job demands—customer communication, product presentation, persuasion, foreign languages, IT skills, time management, critical thinking, analytical skills, teamwork—to suit specific roles and perform in a dynamic, competitive, globalized environment. Learners should also continuously improve foreign-language communication, broaden social knowledge, cultivate carefulness, detail, and clarity, and develop professional identity and passion.

To practice in this field, workers need good health, sound professional ethics, and sufficient professional knowledge and skills for their positions. They should continually study to improve foreign-language communication, broaden social knowledge, cultivate carefulness, detail, and clarity, and build professional identity and passion.

Graduates of the college-level Finance–Banking program must meet Level 5 requirements of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework.

Minimum knowledge volume: 1,740 hours (equivalent to 80 credits).

2. Knowledge

• **Basic education knowledge:**

- Present basic knowledge of political theory, military education, and health training;

- Present knowledge of politics, economics, and society to solve life problems and approach issues in Finance–Banking.

• **Foundational disciplinary knowledge:**

- Present basic concepts of finance–money, credit, banking, management, and accounting;

- Present concepts and formulas in financial mathematics;

- Present basic foreign-language knowledge at level 2/6 per the Vietnamese Foreign Language Proficiency Framework;

- Present IT knowledge for Finance–Banking work, meeting the basic IT skills standard;

- Foundational knowledge forms the basis for studying advanced, specialized knowledge.

• **Specialized knowledge:**

- List and describe bank forms and documents related to capital mobilization, payment operations, credit operations (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, trade finance), treasury/vault, credit appraisal, debt handling, and accounting;

- List the procedures for capital mobilization, payments, credit operations (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, trade finance), treasury/vault, credit appraisal, and debt handling;

- Present knowledge and operations in enterprise accounting and bank accounting;

- List risks in banking credit activities and present the steps in credit risk handling;

- Present how to perform operations in securities business;

- Present financial indicators used to assess the economy, banking sector, and financial markets;

- Present and analyze financial indicators for enterprise asset valuation, asset appraisal, and financial management.

Also present basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law, national defense and security, and physical education as prescribed.

3. Skills

• **Cognitive skills:**

- Apply thinking, creativity, communication, reasoning, presentation, critique, and teamwork while performing tasks;

- Apply professional knowledge and skills to practice and progressively develop professional capacity;

- Reason, research, compute and analyze data, handle situations, and solve problems at work;

- Apply basic IT in professional tasks;

- Develop plans, organize, and execute work according to plan;

- Use a basic foreign language at level 2/6 per the Vietnamese Foreign Language Proficiency Framework and apply it to certain professional tasks.

• **Practical vocational skills:**

- Prepare, classify, check, and process documents related to capital mobilization, payment operations, credit operations (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, trade finance), treasury/vault, credit appraisal, debt handling, financial management, and securities brokerage;

- Perform tasks step by step according to procedures for capital mobilization, payment operations, credit (lending, discounting, guarantees, factoring, etc.), treasury/vault, credit appraisal, financial management, asset appraisal, and securities brokerage;

- Record accounting transactions and prepare reports as prescribed by law;

- Forecast and detect credit risks and propose measures to mitigate them;

- Carry out steps to handle credit risk;

- Apply methods and formulas to conduct financial analysis;

- Compute and analyze financial indicators to value enterprises and assets and to manage finance;

- Carry out new product development in financial–banking services;

- Apply theory to research and practice, and solve issues related to Finance–Banking;

- Use basic IT as prescribed and apply it in some professional tasks;

- Use a basic foreign language at level 2/6 and apply it to some professional tasks.

4. Autonomy and responsibility

- Comply with laws and State policies;

- Be diligent, persistent, creative, and progressive at work;

- Take responsibility for personal and team outcomes to leaders and the organization;

- Undertake research and professional development to enhance competence;

- Be united, cooperative, and willing to share experience with colleagues;

- Work methodically and with discipline;

- Be confident and proactive in defining goals, requirements, and methods for tasks;

- Analyze and solve problems, draw lessons, and improve assigned work;

- Self-evaluate personal and team work outcomes;

- Adapt to and handle complex issues and changing work conditions;

- Withstand work pressure;

- Be environmentally responsible and participate voluntarily in environmental protection activities.

5. Employment positions after graduation

Graduates are able to meet requirements for roles such as:

- Transactions and payments;

- Treasury/vault;

- Credit;

- Debt handling;

- Asset appraisal;

- Securities brokerage;

- Financial management;

- Accounting.

6. Learning and progression opportunities

- The minimum knowledge volume and competency requirements achieved upon graduation in the college-level Finance–Banking occupation can be further developed at higher levels;

- After graduation, learners can self-study and update scientific and technological advances within the field to upskill or articulate to higher levels in the same occupation, related occupational groups, or the same training field.

B. INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

Occupation: Finance – Banking

1. General introduction

Finance–Banking is a field involving monetary transactions and circulation through banks, credit institutions, and financial instruments issued by banks domestically and internationally.

The Finance–Banking occupation performs operations including capital mobilization, credit services, international payments, commercial bank accounting, treasury management, credit risk handling, and securities brokerage.

The main function of this occupation is to maintain the continuous circulation of money, which, like the bloodstream in the human body, sustains the functioning of the entire economic system. Therefore, whether the economy grows or faces challenges, employment prospects in this field remain broad. With the knowledge and skills obtained from the intermediate-level Finance–Banking program, graduates can work in:

- Commercial banks, securities companies, non-bank credit institutions;

- State management agencies in finance and banking, financial organizations, and various enterprises;

- Insurance companies, finance companies, credit funds, stock exchanges; or as accounting staff in enterprises.

The Finance–Banking profession requires essential soft skills such as customer communication, product presentation, persuasion, foreign language ability, IT skills, time management, critical thinking, analytical ability, and teamwork, to perform effectively in dynamic, competitive, and globalized environments. Learners are also expected to continuously improve their foreign language communication skills, broaden social knowledge, cultivate precision and professionalism, and develop professional identity and passion.

To practice, professionals must have good health, strong professional ethics, and sufficient specialized knowledge and skills. Continuous learning is also essential for improving communication, expanding general knowledge, and maintaining carefulness and attention to detail.

Graduates of the intermediate-level Finance–Banking program must meet **Level 4 requirements** of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework.

Minimum knowledge volume: 1,108 hours (equivalent to 50 credits). **Minimum duration:** 1.5 years (year-based training system).

2. Knowledge

• **Basic education knowledge:**

- Present basic knowledge of political theory, military education, and physical training;

- Present basic knowledge of economics, society, and mathematics for problem-solving and for approaching sectoral issues.

• **Foundational disciplinary knowledge:**

- Present basic concepts of finance–money, credit, banking, taxation, and insurance;

- Present basic concepts and formulas in financial mathematics;

- Present basic foreign language knowledge at level 1/6 per the Vietnamese Foreign Language Proficiency Framework;

- Present basic IT knowledge for Finance–Banking operations meeting the national standard of basic IT skills.

• **Specialized knowledge:**

- Present knowledge of commercial banking operations;

- List and describe bank documents and forms related to capital mobilization, payment, credit, treasury, debt management, and securities brokerage;

- Present the processes of capital mobilization, payment, credit operations, customer relations, credit support, treasury, debt management, and accounting in securities brokerage;

- Identify common credit risks and describe the steps in the credit risk management process;

- Also present basic knowledge of politics, culture, society, law, national defense, and physical education as required.

3. Skills

• **Cognitive skills:**

- Apply thinking, creativity, communication, presentation, critique, and teamwork skills;

- Apply professional knowledge and skills in practice and progressively develop occupational capacity;

- Compute, handle situations, and solve work-related problems;

- Execute work tasks according to plan.

• **Practical vocational skills:**

- Prepare, classify, verify, and process documents related to capital mobilization, payment, credit, treasury, debt handling, and securities brokerage;

- Perform step-by-step procedures in capital mobilization, international payment, credit, treasury, debt management, and securities brokerage;

- Detect credit risks and apply measures to prevent and mitigate them;

- Apply financial formulas and methods to calculate basic financial indicators;

- Develop new products in the Finance–Banking service sector;

- Apply theory to research, practice, and solve relevant occupational problems;

- Use basic IT applications as prescribed;

- Use a basic foreign language at level 1/6, applying it to some occupational tasks.

4. Autonomy and responsibility

- Comply with laws and State policies;

- Be diligent, careful, creative, and responsible in work;

- Take responsibility for personal and team outcomes to leadership and the organization;

- Conduct self-study and professional development to improve competence;

- Work methodically and with discipline;

- Be confident and proactive in setting objectives and planning work;

- Analyze and solve problems, draw lessons, and improve work quality;

- Self-evaluate individual and team performance;

- Adapt to complex situations and changing work environments;

- Be environmentally aware and participate in environmental protection.

5. Employment positions after graduation

Graduates can work in positions such as:

- Transactions and payments;

- Treasury/vault;

- Customer relations;

- Credit support;

- Accounting;

- Securities brokerage.

6. Learning and progression opportunities

- The minimum knowledge volume and competency requirements achieved upon graduation can be further developed at higher levels;

- Graduates can self-learn and update scientific and technological advances to enhance professional qualifications or pursue higher-level studies within the same or related disciplines.

APPENDIX VI-B

FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Qualification level: Intermediate

Discipline: Finance & Banking

Program code: [blank]

Admission requirement: High School graduation certificate

Training duration: 2 years

(Promulgated together with Circular No. 43/2014/TT-BGDĐT dated December 05, 2014 of the Minister of Education and Training)

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The framework curriculum for the professional secondary program in Banking is designed to train professional secondary-level bank staff who possess professional ethics and conscience, cooperate with colleagues, respect the law and workplace regulations, and have the health required for work. In terms of professional capacity, graduates will have sufficient knowledge and skills to obtain employment, as well as the ability to self-study and conduct independent inquiry to absorb advances in science and technology or articulate to higher levels of study, thereby meeting their own development needs and those of science, technology, and the socio-economy.

The course content covers fundamental and systematic knowledge and skills in business economics, economic law, finance, corporate accounting, and the securities market; and in-depth knowledge of banking operations, especially bank credit operations, treasury/vault operations, transaction accounting, and banking transaction skills. Learners are also equipped with knowledge of information technology, foreign languages, physical education, politics, law, and national defense–security.

Upon graduation, learners are awarded the Professional Secondary Diploma in Banking and may perform tasks related to commercial banking operations, people's credit funds, and micro-finance organizations in positions such as teller, credit officer, treasurer, storekeeper, accountant, audit support staff, or roles related to financial management.

II. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the program, learners will be able to:

1. Knowledge

- Present fundamental knowledge of economics and law;

- Present basic principles of finance and banking operations;

- Apply learned knowledge to perform basic tasks in enterprises, banks, state agencies, and social organizations.

2. Skills

- Communicate effectively with customers and use a foreign language for routine communication;

- Collect and process data and draft reports appropriate to assigned duties;

- Master basic operations of a bank in positions such as vault/treasury staff, teller, and bank accountant;

- Engage in self-study, self-discipline, and self-improvement to enhance professional qualifications; work independently and in teams;

- Proficiently use IT applications and software solutions in performing professional tasks.

3. Attitudes

Possess good moral character; cooperate with colleagues; respect the law and workplace regulations; be honest, highly disciplined, meticulous, accurate; maintain confidentiality; be courteous and tactful; be diligent and upright; show initiative and willingness to act; oppose negative practices; and be ready to undertake assigned tasks in any workplace.

III. TRAINING FRAMEWORK

1. Structure of the program's knowledge and skills

No.	Content	Credits (Units)
1	General subjects	22
2	Basic professional subjects	40
3	Specialized subjects	18
4	Professional internship	6
5	Graduation internship	16
Total credits of the program		**102**

2. Subjects and Duration

No.	Course Title	Periods	Credits (Units)	Theory	Practice / Internship
I	**General Subjects**	**420**	**22**	**18**	**4**
Compulsory Subjects		**390**	**20**	**16**	**4**
1	National Defense and Security Education	75	3	2	1
2	Political Education	75	5	5	-
3	Physical Education	60	2	1	1
4	Informatics	60	3	2	1

No.	Course Title	Periods	Credits (Units)	Theory	Practice / Internship
5	Foreign Language	90	5	4	1
6	Law	30	2	2	-
Elective Subjects (choose 1 of 3)		30	2	2	-
7	Entrepreneurship	30	2	2	-
8	Education on Efficient Energy Use and Savings	30	2	2	-
9	Communication Skills	30	2	2	-
II	**Basic Professional Subjects**	495	28	23	5
Compulsory Subjects		465	26	21	5
10	Microeconomics	45	2	2	-
11	Principles of Accounting	45	3	3	-
12	Monetary and Banking Theory	45	3	3	-
13	Financial Mathematics	45	3	3	-
14	Finance	45	3	3	-
15	Principles of Statistics	45	3	3	-
16	Business Administration	45	3	3	-
17	Business Law	45	3	3	-
Elective Subjects (choose 1 of 3)		45	2	1	1
21	Document Drafting	45	2	1	1
22	Business Culture	45	2	1	1
23	Teamwork Skills	45	2	1	1
III	**Specialized Subjects**	**345**	**18**	**13**	**5**
24	Commercial Banking Operations	60	4	4	-
25	Credit Operations in Banking	75	4	3	1
26	Accounting for Bank Transactions	105	5	3	2
27	Treasury Operations	60	3	2	1
28	Banking Transaction Skills	45	2	1	1
IV	**Professional Internship**	**270 hours**	**6**	**-**	**6**
29	Accounting for Bank Transactions		4	-	4
30	Banking Credit Operations		2	-	2
V	**Graduation Internship**	**720 hours**	**16**	**-**	**16**
Total			**102**	**67**	**35**

IV. GRADUATION EXAMINATION CONTENT

No.	Content
1	**Politics** — Political Education module
2	**Specialized knowledge:** Choose one of the following two modules: – Accounting for Bank Transactions – Banking Credit Operations
3	**Internship:** – Accounting for Bank Transactions – Banking Credit Operations

V. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

1. National Defense and Security Education

This course provides fundamental knowledge of national defense and security work. The content includes the Party's and State's viewpoints and policies on national defense and security education; political and military aspects of the militia and self-defense forces; basic military techniques and tactics; and the handling of conventional weapons.

After completing this course, students can present key content regarding national defense and security, understand the structure, principles, and use of some basic infantry weapons, perform military drills proficiently, and apply learned knowledge to cultivate discipline, orderliness, and alertness. They are expected to develop a sense of responsibility in contributing to the building and defense of the Fatherland and readiness to fulfill assigned tasks.

Prerequisite: None

2. Political Education

This course provides students with basic knowledge of dialectical materialism concerning nature, society, and human beings; fundamental principles of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Party's policies during the transition to socialism; and the ideology of Ho Chi Minh.

Upon completion, learners can explain core concepts of Marxism–Leninism concerning nature, society, and human beings; the Communist Party of Vietnam; and Ho Chi Minh Thought. They will develop a scientific and objective worldview of social and human issues, be able to analyze and evaluate political and social matters, and live harmoniously within their community and environment. Learners will also have confidence in the Party's and State's correct policies and directions.

Prerequisite: None

3. Physical Education

This course provides students with basic knowledge of physical education. Content includes the significance and effects of physical training and sports on bodily development; morning exercise routines; long-distance and sprint running; and high-jump techniques. The program may also include sports such as football, volleyball, table tennis, badminton, and swimming.

After completing the course, students can practice physical exercises independently, develop a healthy lifestyle, and actively participate in sports activities at their institutions.

Prerequisite: None

4. Informatics

This course provides students with fundamental knowledge of computer science. Content includes basic issues in information and communication technology; computer use and file management in Windows; word processing; electronic spreadsheets; PowerPoint presentations; and Internet applications.

Upon completion, students will be able to use computers for word processing, presentation creation, and statistical calculations with spreadsheets; access and utilize Internet services; and develop a disciplined, logical, and creative working style suited to the digital age.

Prerequisite: None

5. Foreign Language

This course provides learners with foundational knowledge and basic skills in foreign language use. Content covers essential linguistic concepts, grammar structures, and vocabulary.

After completing the course, learners will understand basic grammatical structures and apply essential vocabulary to develop minimum competence in listening, speaking, reading, and writing for everyday communication. They will be able to read and comprehend materials with the help of a dictionary and build a foundation for accessing scientific and technical knowledge, studying specialized topics, and appreciating cultural differences in communication and collaboration.

Prerequisite: None

6. Law

This course provides students with fundamental knowledge of the State and law. Content includes key concepts regarding the State, legal systems, and major legal branches in Vietnam.

After completing the course, students can explain fundamental issues regarding the State and law, identify key areas of Vietnamese law, and apply legal knowledge to handle issues at work or in the community. The course fosters a sense of respect for the law and encourages lawful conduct, self-discipline, and autonomy in professional and daily activities.

Prerequisite: None

7. Entrepreneurship

This course equips learners with basic knowledge of enterprises, products, and markets; business concepts and career orientation; and the steps for developing and implementing a business plan.

After completing this course, students can explain basic concepts of enterprise and business, prepare business plans, and develop action plans for starting a business in a chosen economic field.

Prerequisite: None

8. Education on Energy Efficiency and Conservation

This course provides learners with fundamental knowledge about energy, current energy use, fuels, and resources; national and international energy-use policies; and methods for

saving, efficiently using, and safely handling common forms of energy such as electricity, gas, and petroleum. It also emphasizes the importance of energy conservation.

After completing the course, learners can define and explain key energy-related terms and concepts, describe energy conservation issues, identify new energy sources, and understand national and international policies on energy use and electricity production, transmission, and distribution. The course also helps learners develop attitudes and habits that promote energy-saving and efficient practices and enables them to educate others on the importance of safe and economical energy use.

Prerequisite: None

9. Communication Skills

This course provides learners with general knowledge and essential skills for communication in school, daily life, and work environments. Content includes elements of the communication process; interpersonal communication etiquette; methods for organizing meetings; job interview skills; and techniques for writing professional correspondence and reports. After completing the course, students will understand the importance and necessity of communication, analyze factors affecting communication effectiveness, perform everyday interactions effectively through speech and writing, maintain friendly communication at the workplace, organize productive meetings, and demonstrate effective interview techniques.

Prerequisite: None

10. Microeconomics

This course provides learners with fundamental knowledge of microeconomics, including the operation of goods and service markets, consumer and business choices, differences between perfect competition and monopoly, and the government's role in market regulation.

Upon completion, learners can understand and explain basic concepts of markets, consumer and firm behavior, and government interventions. They can also interpret simple market fluctuations in goods and services.

Prerequisite: None

11. Principles of Accounting

This course provides learners with basic knowledge of business accounting, including the nature, subject, and methods of accounting used to collect, process, verify, and report financial information.

After completing this course, learners will understand the subjects and methods of accounting; describe the four main accounting principles (documentation, double-entry accounting, balance-sheet preparation, and valuation); recognize account symbols; and record and post transactions in business operations. They will also be able to prepare accounting documents, draw up balance sheets, and enter data into accounting books.

Prerequisite: None

12. Money and Banking

This course provides learners with foundational knowledge of money, money supply and demand, inflation, financial markets, interest rates, and the financial system, forming a basis for further professional subjects.

After completing the course, learners can explain the origins and nature of money, banking, markets, and financial intermediaries; distinguish among different types of banks and non-bank financial institutions; and understand interest rate, exchange rate, and foreign exchange concepts.

Prerequisite: None

13. Finance

This course provides learners with basic knowledge of finance, including an overview of the national financial system, main financial instruments, and key financial fields such as public finance, corporate finance, financial intermediation, and international finance.

After completing the course, learners can describe Vietnam's financial system, explain the functions of each component, and analyze the relationships between them.

Prerequisite: None

14. Economic Law

This course provides learners with essential knowledge of economic law; identification of economic disputes in business activities; and the application of sanctions and legal measures to address violations of economic law and contract law.

After completing this course, learners can present fundamental concepts of economic law such as business behavior and methods of conducting business activities; understand procedures for business establishment and dissolution; draft basic commercial contracts; and resolve business disputes.

Prerequisite: Completion of Political Education and Law courses.

15. Principles of Statistics

This course equips learners with statistical methodology and concrete research methods such as surveys, sampling, statistical classification, absolute numbers, relative numbers, averages, index numbers, and time series, enabling analysis to identify the nature and regularities of socio-economic phenomena.

After completing the course, learners can prepare statistical tables on raw-material consumption and labor productivity in enterprises, compute relative and absolute numbers, and develop statistical plans.

Prerequisite: None

16. Enterprise Economics

This course provides basic knowledge on economic issues, organization and management, scientific and technological advancement, and the management of production factors in material-production sectors.

After completing the course, learners understand fundamentals of trade and service economics, current economic issues in Vietnam's trade–service activities, and State trade policies.

Prerequisite: None

17. Corporate Finance

This course provides systematic, foundational knowledge on corporate financial organization; the inflows and outflows of corporate cash in specific periods; fixed and working capital; methods for product sales planning; profit; and financial planning in enterprises.

After completing the course, learners can explain core issues in corporate finance, principles and contents of corporate financial management, and assess and address corporate finance problems.

Prerequisite: Completion of Finance and Principles of Accounting.

18. Business (Enterprise) Accounting

This course covers basic accounting principles for production, trade, and service operations, and knowledge on organizing accounting work in Vietnamese enterprises.

After completing the course, learners can proficiently handle principal accounting cases in production, trade, and services at the basic economic unit; collect and process information to prepare financial statements within the framework of accounting organization in Vietnamese enterprises.

Prerequisite: Completion of Principles of Accounting and Corporate Finance.

19. Taxation

This course introduces fundamental tax knowledge and current Vietnamese tax policies, including VAT, excise tax, export–import duties, corporate income tax, personal income tax, and certain property taxes.

After completing the course, learners understand the system of tax policies and current tax laws in Vietnam, forming a basis for tax compliance and sound investment decision-making.

Prerequisite: Completion of Principles of Accounting and Corporate Finance.

20. Securities Market

This course provides knowledge on the organization and operation mechanisms of the securities market, including primary and secondary markets.

After completing the course, learners can explain basic theories of securities and the securities market, principles of organizing and operating primary and secondary markets, and the current state of Vietnam's securities market.

Prerequisite: Completion of Money and Banking.

21. Document Drafting

This course provides basic knowledge of the system of document types; the components that constitute an official document under current legal regulations; and the processes for drafting, promulgating, and managing documents in agencies and organizations.

After completing the course, learners can draft common practical documents in accordance with the law—reports, submissions, decisions, minutes, proposals, official letters, and other administrative documents used in agencies and organizations.

Prerequisite: None

22. Business Culture

This course offers practical knowledge to approach issues related to entrepreneurial culture; business ethics and corporate social responsibility; cultural change in enterprises; and building Vietnamese corporate culture in a global economy.

After completing the course, learners understand how cultural values influence enterprise operations, can integrate into different corporate environments, and contribute effectively to maintaining and developing organizational culture.

Prerequisite: Completion of Enterprise Economics

23. Teamwork Skills

This course covers general knowledge about teams (concepts, benefits, principles, types of teams), builds core teamwork skills (listening, presenting, information sharing, cooperation), and sets requirements for team leaders.

After completing the course, learners can organize a work team; understand and share team members' views; participate effectively in team settings; work enthusiastically, responsibly, and with discipline; and recognize effectiveness in team processes.

Prerequisite: None

24. Commercial Banking Operations

This course provides fundamental and comprehensive knowledge about commercial banks in a market economy, including funding operations, lending, bank guarantees, and other commercial bank products.

After completing the course, learners understand commercial banks' operating mechanisms, business operations, and core product lines.

Prerequisite: Completion of Money and Banking and Principles of Accounting.

25. Banking Credit

This course provides basic knowledge of bank credit, lending to farm households and consumers, and recognition of traditional and modern credit products in commercial banks and people's credit funds.

After completing the course, learners can perform credit procedures and introduce suitable credit products for retail customers.

Prerequisite: Completion of Commercial Banking Operations.

26. Accounting for Bank Transactions

This course gives an overview of bank accounting, basic principles for organizing accounting work in banks, and the organization of accounting for transactions in commercial banks.

After completing the course, learners can apply accounting methods to record transactions at the branch level of a commercial bank, such as funding, credit extension, spot foreign-exchange trading, non-cash payments, and interbank settlements within a branch.

Prerequisite: Completion of Principles of Accounting and Business Accounting.

27. Treasury (Vault) Operations

This course provides basic knowledge of treasury/vault operations in the banking sector as a basis for practice in the vault department of credit institutions and the State Bank, as well as in enterprises.

After completing the course, learners can organize systems of cash funds and bank vaults; manage vault and fund control regimes; organize cash receipt and payment with customers; coordinate cash transfers among vaults and funds; and inspect vault/fund management in the banking sector.

Prerequisite: Completion of Principles of Accounting and Principles of Statistics.

28. Banking Transaction Skills

This course provides knowledge and skills necessary for banking transactions, including establishing customer relationships, transaction procedures, customer-care skills, presentation and consulting skills, and negotiation and persuasion skills.

After completing the course, learners understand transaction procedures, can establish and maintain good customer relations, and advise on and cross-sell appropriate products to different customer segments.

Prerequisite: Completion of Commercial Banking Operations.

29. Practicum: Accounting for Bank Transactions

This practicum consolidates course knowledge to meet the vocational training objectives at the intermediate level; familiarizes learners with enterprises and banks; and provides hands-on practice with bank accounting procedures using current core-banking software.

After completing the practicum, learners are proficient in major accounting operations and procedures in commercial banks; skilled in preparing and processing bank accounting vouchers; familiar with accounting workflows; and able to prepare accounting ledgers and summary reports.

Prerequisite: Completion of Bank Accounting (Accounting for Bank Transactions).

30. Practicum: Banking Credit

This practicum consolidates course knowledge to meet vocational training objectives at the professional secondary level and provides hands-on practice in bank credit operations based on learned theory.

After completing the practicum, learners are proficient in practical skills for bank credit through real-world scenarios.

Prerequisite: Completion of Banking Credit.

31. Graduation Internship

After completing the coursework, learners must undertake an internship at banks or people's credit funds. Learners are required to complete a capstone report under faculty supervision. A score of 5 or higher is required to pass.

Upon completion, learners gain an overall understanding of positions such as teller, credit officer, or accountant at commercial banks and people's credit funds, and demonstrate ethics, professional demeanor, and discipline in credit and bank accounting work.

Prerequisite: Completion of specialized courses.

VI. CONDITIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

1. Teaching Staff

To ensure quality and effectiveness, the training institution must have a sufficient number of qualified teachers.

• Faculty must meet standards prescribed by the Law on Education and the current Charter on Professional Secondary Schools.

• The number of teachers must ensure a student–teacher ratio compliant with regulations; full-time faculty in departments must cover at least 70% of the program's workload.

• Instructors should possess IT and foreign-language competence and practical experience in their specialties to support teaching and research.

2. Facilities and Equipment

To deliver quality training—beyond common facilities used across programs—the institution must prepare practice rooms with appropriate equipment:

• Classrooms with adequate area, acoustics, and lighting (per Ministry of Education and Training standards).

• Computer labs with Internet connectivity and modern software; language classrooms.

• Library with sufficient textbooks for all courses.

• The institution should establish partnerships with banks to organize and supervise learners' practical internships.

VII. GUIDANCE ON USING THE FRAMEWORK CURRICULUM TO DEVELOP SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAMS

1. The framework curriculum for the Professional Secondary program in Banking specifies content, volume of knowledge and skills, and the proportions of theory, practice, and internship for the 2-year training of Banking technicians. The curriculum is structured as a coherent system with a reasonable time distribution, compliant with the Law on Education, to meet training objectives and quality requirements. The curriculum comprises general courses, foundational courses, specialized courses, professional practicum, and graduation internship; it allocates time for each course and for theory, practice, and internship across the program. It includes a course list and descriptions, identifies prerequisites, and defines graduation-exam content to ensure a scientific study schedule. The listed courses and the specified knowledge and skills represent minimum requirements, including compulsory and elective courses. Compulsory courses contain the core content that all students must accumulate. Electives provide necessary content that students may choose to diversify specialization and professional skills to accumulate the required credit units. In this program, 1 credit unit equals 15 periods of theory; 30–45 periods of practice/experiments/discussion/field trips/assignments; or 45–60 internship hours. One period is 45 minutes; one internship hour is 60 minutes.

2. The curriculum is designed to facilitate the development of specific institutional programs. Elective courses in foundational and specialized groups may be reconfigured to suit each school's training plan and may be developed into programs for related disciplines. Specialized training accounts for 30% of total knowledge and skills, allocated to specialized courses, professional practicum, and graduation internship. Articulation programs from professional secondary to college or university may be designed by adding missing content compared with the higher-level curricula.

3. Based on this framework and considering objectives, target entrants, training duration, labor-market needs, and specific conditions, schools shall develop their own programs, draw up a whole-program plan and annual plans for implementation. Program design should involve reputable administrators and lecturers specializing in finance–banking, as well as practitioners from the banking system and credit institutions. Specific programs must undergo appraisal in accordance with the Regulation on Appraisal of Professional Secondary Education Programs issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

4. Training objectives must be concretized from the framework based on learning outcomes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as expected positions and tasks in the workplace. The structure of knowledge and skills must align with training objectives. Practicum (professional and graduation internships) is compulsory; its objectives and contents must be clearly defined, and internship plans must be strictly managed and conducted at the school or at banks.

5. Assessment of learners during training and upon completion shall follow the Regulation on Professional Secondary Education Training issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

APPENDIX VII

QUALITY ASSURANCE CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

The set of standards used to accredit an academic program includes 8 standards and 52 criteria officially issued by MOET in 2016, revised in 2025. These standards are developed based on the quality guidelines by the ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance (AUN-QA). The following are the latest standards and criteria applied from 2025:

Standard 1: Program Objectives and LOs

Criterion 1.1: The objectives of the academic program are clearly defined, appropriate and associated with the mission, vision and development strategy of the training institution; in accordance with the objectives of HE as prescribed in the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018)[1]

Criterion 1.2: The LOs of the academic program are clearly formulated; in line with the mission, vision and strategic goals of the training institution and disseminated to stakeholders.

Criterion 1.3: The LOs of the academic program are in line with the Vietnam National Qualification Framework and the standards of the discipline group academic program, including general LOs and specialized outcomes standards.

Criterion 1.4: The LOs of all modules developed must be consistent and compatible with the LOs of the published academic program.

Criterion 1.5: The LOs of the academic program clearly reflect the requirements of stakeholders, especially external stakeholders.

Criterion 1.6: The LOs of the academic program are measured and evaluated at the time of learners' graduation.

Standard 2: Program Structure and Content

Criterion 2.1: The academic program description and syllabus of the modules are sufficiently informative, updated, approved and publicly published for easy access by stakeholders.

Criterion 2.2: The structure and content of the academic program are designed and developed to ensure that learners meet the LOs and have a learning volume in accordance with regulations.

Criterion 2.3: The structure and content of the academic program are designed and developed based on the feedback and needs of stakeholders, especially external stakeholders.

Criterion 2.4: The contribution of each module in achieving the LOs of the academic program is clear.

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1   https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Giao-duc/Luat-Giao-duc-dai-hoc-2012-142762.aspx.

Criterion 2.5: The academic program has a logical structure, reasonable sequence, flexibility and integration.

Criterion 2.6: The structure and content of the academic program clearly show the compulsory, elective, theoretical, practical, experiential, scientific research, key and complementary components; allowing learners to choose according to their career orientation.

Criterion 2.7: The structure and content of the academic program are reviewed, evaluated and quality improved according to the process and regulations; ensuring up-to-date and meeting the requirements of the labor market.

Standard 3: Teaching and Learning Activities

Criterion 3.1: The educational philosophy of the training institution is clearly stated, disseminated to stakeholders and transmitted into teaching and learning activities.

Criterion 3.2: Teaching and learning activities are designed to be compatible with the LOs of the academic program.

Criterion 3.3: Teaching and learning activities demonstrate active learning, promote learning, form and develop learning methods and lifelong learning abilities of learners.

Criterion 3.4: Teaching and learning activities motivate learners to come up with new ideas, initiatives, innovations and entrepreneurship.

Criterion 3.5: The teaching and learning process is regularly improved to meet the requirements of the labor market and promote learning, meeting the LOs of the academic program.

Standard 4: Assessment of LOs

Criterion 4.1: Methods of evaluating learners' LOs are diverse, compatible with the LOs of the academic program.

Criterion 4.2: There are clear regulations on the evaluation of learning results, the review process, disseminated to learners and implemented consistently.

Criterion 4.3: Standards and processes for evaluating LOs, considering recognition of LOs, and considering graduation are disseminated to learners and implemented consistently.

Criterion 4.4: Methods for assessing LOs are expressed through matrices, assessment criteria and levels, answers, detailed scales, assessment plans and specific regulations to ensure value, reliability and fairness.

Criterion 4.5: LOs assessment methods ensure to measure the level of achievement of the LOs of each module and the LOs of the academic program.

Criterion 4.6: Assessment results are promptly feedback to learners so that learners can improve their learning, learning methods and LOs.

Criterion 4.7: The assessment of LOs and regulations on assessment of LOs shall be periodically reviewed and improved to ensure that the LOs of the academic program are measured and meet the needs of stakeholders.

Standard 5: Faculty and Research Staff

Criterion 5.1: The plan to develop the contingent of lecturers and researchers participating in the academic program is implemented to ensure the quantity and quality to meet the requirements of training, scientific research and community service.

Criterion 5.2: The number and quality of lecturers and researchers meet the requirements for the implementation of the academic program as prescribed; the workload of lecturers and researchers is measured and monitored to improve the quality of training, scientific research and connection to serve the community.

Criterion 5.3: The capacity of lecturers and researchers is determined, evaluated and informed to directly relevant parties.

Criterion 5.4: Lecturers and researchers are assigned tasks in accordance with their qualifications, capacity and experience.

Criterion 5.5: The appointment/promotion of lecturers and researchers is based on the system of assessing their competence, teaching results, performing scientific research tasks and connecting to serve the community.

Criterion 5.6: The responsibilities, powers and obligations of lecturers and researchers are clearly defined according to regulations and disseminated for all lecturers and researchers to understand and implement.

Criterion 5.7: The needs for training, fostering and professional development of lecturers and researchers are determined systematically; training and retraining activities are implemented to meet the needs.

Criterion 5.8: The management to evaluate the quality of teaching, scientific research and community service of lecturers and researchers, including commendation and recognition, is implemented according to specific regulations and processes.

Standard 6: Learner Support Services

Criterion 6.1: Enrollment policies, criteria and processes are clearly defined according to the requirements of the academic program; are publicly announced and updated.

Criterion 6.2: The capacity of the support team is clearly defined in the criteria of the job position, recruitment criteria, in the assignment of tasks and is evaluated to ensure that it is suitable for the needs of stakeholders.

Criterion 6.3: Short-term and long-term plans for learner support services (academic and non-academic) shall be developed and implemented to ensure adequate and quality support services for training, scientific research and community service.

Criterion 6.4: There is an appropriate training management system to monitor and record the progress, learning results and learning volume of learners; feedback to learners and inadequacy remediation activities are implemented in a timely manner and help learners improve their learning.

Criterion 6.5: Academic counselling, extracurricular activities, competitions and other support services to help improve learning and increase learners' employability.

Criterion 6.6: Learner support services are periodically evaluated, matched and improved.

Standard 7: Infrastructure and Equipment

Criterion 7.1: A system of offices, classrooms and functional rooms with appropriate facilities must be in place to support the effective implementation of academic programs, including teaching and learning activities, scientific research and community engagement.

Criterion 7.2: Laboratories, practice rooms and equipment are adequately provided as required by the academic program, regularly updated and used effectively to meet the

requirements of learners, lecturers and researchers.

Criterion 7.3: Libraries, digital libraries and continuously updated learning resources must be in place to meet the needs of training and scientific research, along with access to advances in information and communication technology.

Criterion 7.4: An information technology system, network infrastructure and computers that are readily accessible and effectively utilized, meeting the needs of learners, lecturers, researchers, management teams for teaching, research, community engagement, and institutional operations.

Criterion 7.5: The psychological, social environment and natural landscape facilitate training activities, scientific research and learner well-being.

Criterion 7.6: Environmental, health, and safety standards are clearly defined and implemented, taking-into-account the specific needs of diverse and specialized learner groups (if any).

Criterion 7.7: The capacity of the support staff responsible for facilities and equipment is clearly defined and regularly and assessed to ensure responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Criterion 7.8: The quality of facilities for academic programs is periodically evaluated and continuously improved.

Standard 8: Program Results and Impacts

Criterion 8.1: The graduation, dropout rate and average graduation time of learners are established, monitored and benchmarked to improve quality.

Criterion 8.2: The employment rate including self-employment, entrepreneurship and learning to improve the qualifications of graduates is established, monitored and benchmarked to improve quality.

Criterion 8.3: Scientific research activities and creative products and inventions of learners, lecturers and researchers are established, supervised and benchmarked to improve quality.

Criterion 8.4: Data on the level of learners meeting the LOs of the academic program are established and monitored to improve quality.

Criterion 8.5: The level of satisfaction of stakeholders is established, monitored and benchmarked to improve quality.

APPENDIX VIII

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF AQRF AND VQF LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Level 1

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess limited practical knowledge of a few simple activities in an occupation.	Basic understanding of the concept, simple process.	Both frameworks describe introductory knowledge used for simple, familiar tasks. For example, knowing basic hygiene rules in a food service setting. Alignment is evident in intent and complexity.
Skill	Basic skills, ability to follow instructions to perform simple tasks.	Perform simple repetitive work under direct supervision.	Alignment is demonstrated through shared expectations for repetitive, supervised skills. For instance, operating a basic machine or sorting items under guidance.
Autonomy & Responsibility	Perform tasks under close supervision.	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured environment.	Compatibility lies in learners being guided closely in structured settings, without decision-making authority. Both frameworks expect a dependent learner role.

Level 2

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess practical and theoretical knowledge limited to certain occupational or learning activities, aimed at completing assigned tasks under supervision.	Basic understanding of principles and processes in a specific learning or work context.	Both frameworks emphasize basic knowledge for familiar tasks in routine contexts. For example, a learner may understand how to operate a basic piece of machinery with guidance. The intent and complexity are consistent—AQRF is broader in scope, while VQF includes TVET-specific application.

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Skill	Possess basic practical skills and the ability to apply simple processes to complete tasks under familiar settings.	Use basic cognitive and practical skills to perform tasks and solve routine problems using tools and simple procedures.	Both frameworks require learners to apply basic skills to predictable problems, with VQF leaning toward technical execution (e.g., assembling or repairing basic equipment), while AQRF highlights problem-solving logic. Alignment lies in the shared requirement for routine performance using simple techniques.
Autonomy & Responsibility	Perform tasks under supervision, be able to collaborate with peers, and comply with established procedures.	Work or study with limited autonomy under routine supervision in structured environments.	Both frameworks reflect emerging autonomy within structured settings. Learners are still supervised but begin to follow procedures with some peer collaboration. For instance, a learner assisting in a basic workshop task while following team guidelines demonstrates this shared intent.

Level 3

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess practical and general theoretical knowledge in a specific vocational or academic field; understand basic concepts and related technical principles.	Understand facts, principles, processes, and general concepts in a field of work or study.	Both frameworks describe broad conceptual understanding, suitable for semi-skilled occupations or academic bridging. VQF's emphasis on technical principles aligns with AQRF's general conceptual base. For example, a student in a technical high school program or an early-stage vocational course would meet this level.
Skill	Possess practical and cognitive skills to perform tasks requiring technical expertise; able to select and apply appropriate methods to solve routine problems.	Apply a range of cognitive and practical skills to complete tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials, and information.	Both frameworks focus on problem-solving through method selection. While AQRF is broader, it matches the VQF's emphasis on applied techniques in routine contexts. Example: a junior technician diagnosing and fixing standard equipment issues.

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Autonomy & Responsibility	Work independently with a certain degree of autonomy; be able to collaborate in a team, take responsibility for the quality of personal work, and support colleagues.	Take responsibility for completing tasks and adjusting one's behavior based on guidance; work independently with defined autonomy in guided learning or working contexts.	Both frameworks describe learners beginning to operate independently while still under some guidance. VQF emphasizes teamwork and support roles; AQRF focuses on behavioral responsibility. This level suits roles like apprentice team members or technical assistants.

Level 4

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess theoretical and practical knowledge in the area of specialization; ability to understand and analyse relevant processes, technical standards, legal and ethical principles.	Practical and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work and study.	The knowledge scope in both frameworks is comparable. VQF adds depth by incorporating legal and ethical analysis, but this is still aligned with AQRF's broader field-based knowledge scope. For example, a technician supervising field tasks must apply both standards and ethical judgment.
Skill	Possess the professional skills to solve technical problems and manage routine tasks in an environment with changing factors; have the ability to guide others.	Apply a range of cognitive and practical skills to develop solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.	Both frameworks highlight problem-solving in dynamic contexts. VQF further emphasizes leadership through task supervision, aligning well with AQRF's intention of developing contextualized problem solvers. Example: a shift supervisor troubleshooting line breakdowns.
Autonomy & Responsibility	Autonomy at work; responsible for evaluating and improving the quality of individual work and supporting others in a team.	Manage oneself in work/study contexts that are often predictable but subject to change; supervise the usual work of others, be responsible for evaluating and improving operations.	Clear alignment. Both frameworks describe learners who work autonomously, support teams, and contribute to quality improvement. Example: junior team leads or skilled workers mentoring peers in vocational roles.

Level 5

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess theoretical and practical knowledge in a specific field; understand advanced concepts, professional standards, and interdisciplinary contexts.	In-depth, practical, and theoretical knowledge in a field of study or work, with an awareness of the boundaries of knowledge within that field.	Strong compatibility: Both frameworks emphasize advanced and applied knowledge. VQF goes further with interdisciplinary contexts, while AQRF highlights awareness of knowledge boundaries. Together, they support roles like team leads or supervisors in technical sectors.
Skill	Critical thinking, technical and communication skills to solve complex problems; adaptable and able to transfer skills across contexts.	Cognitive and practical skills to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.	Both frameworks support complex problem-solving and creative thinking. VQF's addition of communication and transferability strengthens applicability across varied settings, e.g., in managing projects across departments.
Autonomy & Responsibility	Work independently, manage teams or concurrent tasks/ projects; be accountable for personal and others' performance; self-assess and improve professional capabilities.	Supervise study/ work activities in unpredictable settings; evaluate and improve personal/team performance.	Both emphasize leadership, accountability, and adaptability in unpredictable environments. VQF is more explicit in covering project/task management and self-development, aligning strongly with AQRF's performance and evaluation expectations.

Level 6

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess advanced knowledge in a specific professional or academic field; have systematic understanding and the ability to analyze complex issues.	Advanced knowledge in a field of study or work, including critical understanding of theories and principles.	Clear alignment: Both frameworks demand advanced, analytical knowledge. VQF highlights systematic thinking and interdisciplinary analysis, which supports AQRF's emphasis on critical understanding—suitable for professional degree holders.
Skill	Possess deep specialized skills in design, evaluation, and implementation of solutions; communicate effectively with both expert and non-expert groups.	Advanced skills demonstrating mastery and innovation required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field.	Both focus on mastery and innovation in solving problems. VQF's emphasis on design and communication with varied audiences adds practical depth, aligning with AQRF's demand for solution-driven expertise.

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Autonomy & Responsibility	Autonomy in managing projects/tasks across broad work areas; lead teams and make decisions in uncertain conditions; pursue continuous professional development.	Manage complex technical/professional activities, take responsibility for decision-making and development of self and team.	Strong consistency: Both highlight decision-making, leadership, and career growth. VQF's broader framing of team leadership and professional growth complements AQRF's focus on responsibility for outcomes in complex environments.

Level 7

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess in-depth knowledge at an advanced level in the field of research or professional practice; understand interdisciplinary relationships and the complexity of knowledge.	Specialized knowledge at the forefront of the field: a foundation for original thinking or research.	Both frameworks focus on knowledge generation and interdisciplinary understanding. VQF emphasizes the complexity of advanced professional/ research knowledge, aligning with AQRF's requirement for original thinking. For instance, a *senior researcher* designing an interdisciplinary policy study would meet both descriptors.
Skill	Critical thinking, research and innovation skills to develop new knowledge; ability to synthesize and communicate information to diverse audiences.	Specialized problem-solving and research skills for knowledge creation and integration across fields.	Both frameworks highlight advanced research and innovation skills. VQF adds a stronger emphasis on knowledge communication and audience engagement, which complements AQRF's integration-oriented approach. Example: Developing and presenting a national education innovation strategy.
Autonomy & Responsibility	High-level autonomy in professional or academic development; strategic leadership and accountability within organizations; contribute to policy or practice development.	Manage and transform the complex and unpredictable work/ study; contribute to professional knowledge or practice through strategic evaluation.	Strong alignment in strategic autonomy and contribution to knowledge. AQRF focuses on adaptability and transformation, while VQF prioritizes policy impact and organizational leadership. Example: Leading institutional reforms in higher education based on applied research.

Level 8

Domain Description	VQF	AQRF	"Best-fit" verdict
Knowledge	Possess advanced, creative, and cutting-edge knowledge in research or professional practice; contribute to expanding the boundaries of knowledge or deep application.	Knowledge at the most advanced level of a field or intersection between fields.	Both frameworks converge on advanced, frontier-level knowledge generation. VQF emphasizes creativity and knowledge expansion in both academic and professional spheres, aligning with AQRF's focus on interdisciplinary and field-transcending knowledge. Example: Developing a new theory in AI ethics or creating national healthcare innovation strategies.
Skill	Complete autonomy in developing academic or professional fields; thought leadership in the field; make decisions in dynamic environments with significant impact.	Advanced and specialized skills, including synthesis, evaluation ment, , and solving critical problems and expanding knowledge or practice.	Advanced-level research, evaluation, and decision-making are present in both. VQF underscores thought leadership and influence; AQRF stresses analytical depth and knowledge expansion. Example: Leading an international research consortium or designing cross-sector reforms with global impact.
Autonomy & Responsibility	Complete autonomy in academic or professional development; thought leadership in the field; decision-making in a drastic and high-impact environment.	Demonstrate academic/professional authority, creativity, autonomy, and full responsibility in advancing knowledge or leading practice.	Highest-level alignment: both emphasize full professional authority, leadership, and ethical responsibility in complex, high-stakes environments. For example, chairing a national policy advisory board or serving as the principal investigator in pioneering scientific work.

APPENDIX IX

VQF'S GRID FOR LEVEL OF INDICATORS

VQF Level	Qualification Type	Knowledge	Skills	Autonomy and Responsibility
1	Elementary (Short-term vocational certificate)	Basic vocational knowledge to perform simple tasks under guidance	Perform basic, repetitive tasks under close supervision	Work under supervision in structured contexts
2	Intermediate (Vocational Secondary Certificate)	Foundational knowledge to perform routine tasks with limited supervision	Apply known solutions to routine problems using basic tools	Carry out tasks with limited autonomy
3	College Diploma	Technical knowledge with some theoretical foundation in a specific field	Use a variety of tools and techniques for problem-solving in familiar contexts	Work independently in defined contexts; may supervise limited activities
4	Advanced Diploma / Applied Bachelor	Broad and specialised knowledge in a technical or applied field	Apply specialised skills and techniques in varied contexts with limited supervision	Take responsibility for outputs; may supervise a team
5	Bachelor's Degree	Comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge in a discipline	Exercise independent judgement in solving complex technical problems	Work independently and take responsibility for outcomes and team leadership
6	Master's Degree	Advanced knowledge to solve complex problems in a professional field	Plan, evaluate, and solve unfamiliar problems in a professional setting	Lead project activities; be accountable for decisions and outcomes
7	Specialist / Research Master's	Specialised theoretical and methodological knowledge in a specific field	Use advanced research skills and professional judgement in complex situations	Take significant responsibility for research and development within field
8	Doctoral Degree	Systematic, original knowledge at the frontier of a discipline	Generate new knowledge and methodologies through independent research	Lead innovation and knowledge creation in unpredictable and complex settings

APPENDIX
X-A

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT FEEDBACK AND VIETNAM'S RESPONSES

Feedback from Ms. Ngan-Ha Ngo

During the preparation of the Vietnam Referencing Report, Ms. Ha-Ngan Ngo, the international expert, provided detailed recommendations on successive drafts to strengthen methodological rigor and alignment with AQRF principles. To ensure transparency and credibility, each recommendation was systematically documented and reviewed by the Drafting Sub-Committee and the National Advisory Council (NAC). Following review, the recommendations were either adopted, modified, or set aside, with clear justification recorded for each decision.

The table below presents a sample of Ms. Ngo's feedback, summarising the key recommendations, the actions taken by Vietnam, and the resulting outcomes incorporated into the final version of the report.

Expert Recommendation	Action Taken	Outcome
Move key evidence from appendices into the main body of the report for visibility.	Tables and figures (e.g., Table 3.3 on VQF levels, Figure 3.1 on VQF overview) were relocated from appendices to core sections; stronger cross-referencing added.	Improved readability and ensured critical evidence is immediately visible to readers.
Provide more visual presentations (tables, diagrams) to simplify complex areas such as credit allocation and articulation pathways.	Added new illustrative diagrams (e.g., NFIL pathways in Criterion 3; TVET–HE articulation in Section 1.7) and a worked example of credit-to-hours conversion (Section 3.4.1).	Enhanced transparency for international readers and clarified progression routes.
Clarify application of the best-fit principle and how technical/social evidence were combined.	Criterion 4 revised to explain the use of best-fit, with explicit mention of combining descriptor analysis, stakeholder consultation, and expert judgment.	Demonstrated transparency in level-to-level referencing; confirmed no unresolved issues.
Simplify explanations of higher education structures and progression routes.	Narrative streamlined and reorganised; new Section 1.7 added to show articulation from TVET to HE, including policy provisions and credit transfer rules.	Improved accessibility for international readers; clearer understanding of learner progression.
Include a dissemination and publication plan for the referencing report.	Criterion 10 revised to set out publication strategy (MOET/MOLISA websites, bilingual versions, distribution to institutions, stakeholder workshops).	Ensured transparency and demonstrated commitment to national and regional visibility.
Highlight breadth of stakeholder consultations and how input shaped the report.	Criterion 2 expanded with details of stakeholder involvement; Table 2.1 updated; cross-references added to show influence on final content.	Strengthened credibility of the referencing process and showed inclusiveness.

Excerpt: Evaluation and Detailed Feedback on Vietnam's Referencing Against AQRF Criterion 3 (by Ms. Ha-Ngan Ngo)

Dear Members of Vietnam's National Referencing Committee,

Thank you sincerely for the opportunity to review your revised AQRF Referencing Report and, in particular, for the continued dedication in strengthening the clarity, coherence, and technical robustness of this important national document and the thoughtful effort you have put into addressing earlier comments to strengthen the structure and evidence across criteria. It has been a privilege to engage with your work, and I deeply appreciate the openness, professionalism, and commitment with which you have approached this complex national undertaking.

I would also like to acknowledge the considerable progress Vietnam has made in Criteria 1 and 2. The revisions provided stronger articulation of Vietnam's education system structure, clearer presentation of legal foundations for the VQF, and improved explanation of institutional responsibilities. The additional clarification about MOET's expanded governance functions, as well as the strengthened narrative around the development and approval processes for qualification types, demonstrates a meaningful effort to enhance transparency and alignment with AQRF expectations.

As Vietnam continues to refine Criterion 3, I offer the following detailed feedback to strengthen coherence, demonstrate system-wide implementation of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), and ensure that the referencing process adheres closely to AQRF principles.

Criterion 3 asks Vietnam to demonstrate not only the existence of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) but also the extent to which it is *actively functioning* as a coherent, system-wide structure. In my understanding, this criterion is about showing that the VQF is:

- clearly situated within the broader national education and training system,

- implemented through transparent and reliable procedures,

- supported by evidence, quality assurance, and moderation processes, and

- operating consistently across all subsystems.

With this in mind, the following reflections are offered in the spirit of support and constructive guidance, based on my reading of the revised report.

1. System coverage of the VQF

As I reviewed the revised narrative, I noticed that Vietnam has provided rich and detailed descriptions of each subsystem—TVET, higher education, occupational standards, and programme accreditation. However, I found myself still unsure whether the VQF is intended to apply across *all* qualification types in the national education system.

Although Figure 1.1 describes the structure of Vietnam's education system, the report does not yet explicitly confirm that each component in this structure is governed by, and ultimately aligned to, the VQF. This leaves some room for interpretation about whether the VQF is conceptualized as:

- a unified, system-wide framework (which is the AQRF expectation), or

- a structure covering mainly higher education and certain TVET qualifications.

From my perspective, making this explicit would greatly strengthen the coherence and transparency of Criterion 3.

My understanding of the AQRF is that it expects the national framework to serve as the central reference point for all national qualifications. Without clearly affirming that the VQF covers the full system, reviewers may interpret the VQF as only partially implemented, or limited to specific sectors. That is of course not Vietnam's intention, but the current draft leaves space for such a reading.

In the spirit of strengthening the clarity of Criterion 3, Vietnam might consider explicitly stating:

1. That the VQF applies across the entire national education and training system, including general education, vocational education and training, and higher education.

2. That all formal qualifications are—or will be—assigned to VQF levels as part of system-wide implementation.

3. That TVET qualifications governed under the NQSF also fall within the scope of the VQF, and that an integrated process links the two.

4. That all qualification types ultimately lead to learning outcomes referenced to VQF level descriptors.

In addition, I believe it would be very helpful to include a visual representation showing:

- the Vietnam Education System,

- the different qualification types within it,

- how each is mapped to VQF levels, and

- how pathways across subsystems align with the VQF structure.

A diagram would greatly assist reviewers in understanding VQF's breadth and coherence.

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Required Clarifications on System Coverage

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Area Needing Clarification	Status in Current Report	AQRF Expectation	Recommended Revision for Vietnam
Whether VQF covers all qualification types	Not explicitly stated	Full coverage required	State clearly that the VQF covers all formal qualifications
Mapping of qualification types to levels	Fragmented	System-wide mapping	Provide a single integrated map in the report
Relationship between NQSF (TVET) and VQF	Ambiguous	Unified NQF expected	Clarify how TVET qualifications are located in VQF
Narrative linking education-system structure (Fig 1.1) to VQF	Weak	Must be explicit	Add text linking Figure 1.1 to VQF design

2. Coherence across frameworks — VQF versus NQSF misalignment

Furthermore, in my observation, one of the most significant challenges arises from the continued coexistence of two sets of level descriptors—the NQSF descriptors used for TVET, and the VQF descriptors used for AQRF referencing. Because these are not yet aligned, my impression is that reviewers may find it difficult to see how TVET qualifications can be positioned coherently within the VQF. This could create uncertainty about the internal consistency of the national framework.

And this creates multiple concerns:

- **Two parallel frameworks appear to be operating.**

- It is unclear whether Vietnam intends to harmonize or merge these frameworks under MOET's leadership.

- It is unclear which set of descriptors governs qualification placement for TVET awards.

The AQRF requires **one coherent national framework** with one set of level descriptors used for referencing. Misalignment weakens the credibility of referencing and raises questions about internal consistency.

To strengthen the alignment between the NQSF and the VQF, Vietnam may wish to consider a few additional clarifications. From my perspective as an external reviewer, it would be helpful to understand:

(a) whether there is an intention to gradually reconcile the NQSF and VQF descriptors, so that over time the system moves toward a more unified set of descriptors;

(b) how Vietnam plans to manage this transition now that TVET governance has moved to MOET, including any interim arrangements or timelines that are being considered;

(c) which set of descriptors is currently regarded as authoritative when assigning TVET qualifications to VQF levels, particularly during this period where two frameworks appear to coexist; and

(d) how the two descriptor sets relate to one another in practice—perhaps through a simple crosswalk or comparison table showing points of alignment, divergence, and areas where future revisions are anticipated.

My sense is that making these aspects more explicit would greatly help readers understand the logic of the system during this transitional stage.

I suggest the table below to better aid the alignment of the two frameworks:

NQSF–VQF Descriptor Misalignment

Descriptor Dimension	NQSF Approach	VQF Approach	Nature of Misalignment	Implications for AQRF Referencing
Knowledge	Occupational skills focus	Academic + applied LO	Different emphasis	TVET qualifications cannot be consistently placed in VQF
Skills	Competency-based (NOSS)	Learning outcomes-based	Different terminology	AQRF reviewers see lack of coherence

Descriptor Dimension	NQSF Approach	VQF Approach	Nature of Misalignment	Implications for AQRF Referencing
Application / Autonomy	Work-context oriented	Broad field-based	Structural mismatch	Risks inconsistency in level determination
Structure	NOSS-driven	VQF-driven	Two sources of authority	Weakens evidence for Criterion 4

3. TVET governance transition and the need to transitional clarity

The report notes that **TVET governance shifted from MOLISA to MOET in March 2025**, but in my observation it does not:

- Clarify whether the procedures described in the report are officially MOET-endorsed;

- Identify any transitional arrangements;

- Explain which legal documents are currently in force;

- Explain whether qualification approval and classification procedures have changed.

Criterion 3 examines the internal consistency of the NQF. Unclear governance risks giving the impression that the system is in flux, and therefore unstable for referencing.

Vietnam may find it helpful to include a few words that explicitly addresses the transition in TVET governance, perhaps titled something along the lines of:

From my perspective, such details would give readers a clearer sense of continuity and stability during this period of administrative change. In particular, it could briefly outline:

(a) which MOLISA procedures remain in effect for the time being;

(b) whether MOET has issued any temporary circulars, notifications, or guidance to support the transition;

(c) any planned updates or reforms intended to better align TVET governance with the implementation of the VQF; and

(d) an indicative timeline or roadmap for achieving full harmonization under MOET's oversight.

Including this information would, in my view, provide reassurance that the system continues to operate smoothly despite undergoing structural adjustment.

4. Subsystem strengths not yet integrated into a holistic VQF

As I read through the revised report, I could clearly see that Vietnam has made meaningful progress within each individual subsystem. The higher education sector has developed strong Learning Outcomes (LOs), the use of credit systems is increasingly aligned with the AUN-ACTS framework, TVET continues to refine its National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) and proficiency levels, and programme registration and accreditation mechanisms across sectors appear to be maturing steadily.

However, I found myself viewing these achievements as *parallel developments* rather than components of a unified VQF architecture. Each subsystem appears strong on its own terms, but the report does not yet fully illustrate how these components work together to form a cohesive national qualifications framework.

My concern here is not about the quality of the subsystems themselves — which is evidently high, but about the visibility of the integrative logic that ties them together. Without this connection being explicitly articulated, reviewers may come away with the impression that Vietnam has several well-developed subsystems, but not yet a fully operational national framework.

Criterion 3 is fundamentally about integration, both vertical (across levels) and horizontal (across sectors). In my experience, an NQF becomes operational not when subsystems are well defined individually, but when the framework demonstrates clear coherence and consistency across all sectors.

Other ASEAN Member States (e.g, Malaysia and the Philippines if you have looked at their reports) have strengthened their referencing narratives by illustrating how various components of the system converge under one national framework. Vietnam has the opportunity to do the same by making its integrative mechanisms more explicit.

To help clarify how subsystem strengths contribute to the overall coherence of the VQF, Vietnam might consider:

(a) providing a short narrative that shows how mechanisms such as LOs, NOSS, and credit systems collectively support consistent qualification placement across VQF levels;

(b) offering some sample crosswalks or illustrations that demonstrate how learning outcomes from different sectors relate to VQF level descriptors;

(c) briefly explaining where ongoing harmonization work is taking place, particularly in light of the recent shift of TVET governance to MOET; and

(d) sharing concrete examples showing how qualifications from different sectors (HE, TVET, general education) are treated according to the same guiding principles in level-allocation decisions.

In my view, making these connections more visible would help convey the message that the VQF is not merely a conceptual structure but an emerging national system that is steadily moving toward full coherence and operational maturity.

5. Application of the best-fit principle could be enhanced as it is not yet evident in practice

As I reviewed Section 3.1.4, I appreciated that Vietnam has articulated a set of guiding principles for determining VQF levels. This shows a clear understanding of the theoretical basis of the best-fit approach. However, I found myself still uncertain about *how* these principles are applied in real decision-making situations.

In particular, I did not yet see:

- concrete operational examples,

- a step-by-step explanation of how decisions are made, or

- any description of how different forms of evidence (learning outcomes, occupational requirements, programme descriptors) are weighed when they do not align perfectly.

Because the best-fit principle relies on professional judgement and evidence balancing, the

absence of practical examples makes it difficult for reviewers to understand how classification decisions are reached in Vietnam.

From my experience, the AQRF places strong importance on:

- transparency in how levels are assigned,

- clarity in how evidence is interpreted, and

- consistency in how decisions are made across different qualification types.

Without illustrative examples, external reviewers may find it challenging to determine whether Vietnam is applying the best-fit principle in ways that align with international expectations. The principle itself is sound — it is the *demonstration* of its use that would greatly benefit the referencing narrative.

To make the application of the best-fit principle more visible, Vietnam might consider:

(a) including two or three worked examples from different sectors that walk readers through the full decision-making process — showing how learning outcomes, occupational standards, programme descriptors, assessment evidence, and stakeholder inputs were all taken into account to justify a specific VQF level;

(b) illustrating how any differences between subsystems (for example, academic learning outcomes vs. occupational competency requirements) are reconciled when determining a final VQF level; and

(c) sharing any internal tools, templates, or evaluation rubrics that professional councils or technical teams use to support level-allocation decisions.

My sense is that adding these examples would bring the VQF to life and provide reviewers with a much clearer picture of how Vietnam applies the best-fit principle in practice.

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Evidence Required to Demonstrate Best-Fit Application

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Required Evidence	Currently Presented	Missing	Action Needed
Worked examples	1 law degree example only	Multiple sectors	Add cross-sector cases
Decision-making logic	Not shown	Decision pathways	Describe process flow
Handling conflicting data	Not shown	Triangulation method	Provide explanatory note
Template/tools used	Not included	Evaluation rubrics	Add sample templates

6. Moderation and Quality Assurance Procedures – unspecified and high-risk and a lack of a publicly accessible qualifications register

As I read the sections relating to the role of professional councils, I could see that Vietnam has established important bodies responsible for reviewing qualifications and contributing to level-placement decisions. However, I found that several aspects of their work remain unclear in the current draft.

In particular, I was not able to find information about:

- how these councils are composed,

- what moderation procedures they follow to validate or check decisions,

- what mechanisms ensure consistency across different councils or sectors, and

- whether there are examples of how quality assurance processes operate in practice.

From my perspective, this lack of detail creates some difficulty for external reviewers, because without understanding how decisions are moderated and quality-assured, it is hard to assess whether Vietnam's level-classification processes are reliable, defensible, and repeatable. Moderation is often the backbone of consistency in a national qualifications framework, so greater visibility here would significantly strengthen Criterion 3.

If Vietnam can expand on these elements — even briefly — I believe it would help convey a stronger sense of robustness in the VQF's implementation.

Furthermore, in reviewing the evidence, I noted that Vietnam has several discipline catalogues and accreditation lists, which are very useful. Nonetheless, I could not identify a single, unified qualifications register that shows all nationally approved qualifications together with their assigned VQF levels. In my experience, such a register is essential for demonstrating that an NQF is fully operational. Its absence may create the impression that level classification is not yet systematically implemented.

In summary,

Over the course of my review of Criterion 3, I have come to appreciate the significant progress Vietnam has made in modernizing its education and training system. The report reflects a country in the midst of meaningful system-wide reforms, and I can see the dedication behind each improvement — from the development of learning outcomes, to the refinement of qualification types, to the strengthening of programme accreditation and quality assurance processes. These efforts provide a strong foundation for building a coherent national qualifications framework that supports transparency, trust, and mobility across ASEAN.

As you continue refining the report, I hope you will find these reflections helpful. Please know that my intention is to support Vietnam in presenting the clearest, strongest, and most coherent narrative possible to the AQRF Committee. Your transparency, responsiveness, and dedication to quality are evident throughout the document, and I remain confident that Vietnam is well positioned to finalize a report that reflects both your progress and your ongoing commitment to the region's shared goals of mutual trust and recognition.

Thank you once again for your hard work and for the collaborative spirit you have brought to this process. I look forward to continued engagement as you move toward finalizing the referencing report.

Yours faithfully,

Ha-Ngan Ngo

APPENDIX
X-B

INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT, EXTERNAL REVIEW AND VIETNAM'S RESPONSES

Feedback from Ms. Orla Barry

Contact

www.linkedin.com/in/órla-barry-04477533 (LinkedIn)

Top Skills

Professional Development
Education
Professional Regulation

Languages

English (Native or Bilingual)
German (Elementary)

Certifications

Train the Trainer (Level 6 NFQ)
Associate (ACG)
Certificate in Corporate Governance

Órla Barry

Experienced Senior Public Servant | Chartered Governance Professional (ACG)| Non-Executive Director | Significant Experience of Working in Higher Education, Regulation, Public Policy and Governance

Greater Dublin

Summary

A Chartered Governance Professional holding Associate membership with the Chartered Governance Institute UK and Ireland. A capable manager with significant experience in corporate governance, regulation and higher education. Comfortable working with senior managers, boards and committees and skilled at influencing and facilitating decision making in complex environments. Has a keen focus on developing and coaching high performance teams and uses an outcomes focused mentality to deliver through people and build capacity. Strong commitment to ongoing personal and professional development.

Introduction

Firstly, I would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) for the invitation to act as international expert in the review of the AQRF Referencing Report of Vietnam. This was a unique and rewarding exercise which provided me the opportunity to learn more about the Vietnamese education system, the Vietnamese National Qualifications Framework (VQF) and a more detailed understanding of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). I wish to commend colleagues from Vietnam on the production of a comprehensive report which supported me in the discharge of my duties to provide an expert opinion on the content of the report and the evidence of meeting the referencing criteria.

For clarity, this assessment is based on the Referencing Report issued to me on Monday 16 June 2025. An updated referencing report was issued on Monday 23 June 2025 but as I had already commenced my review and dedicated significant time to reading the first report, it was not possible for me to robustly consider the changes and updates made to the second report.

Where I felt the first report had deficiencies, I did conduct a cursory review of the updated report to understand if this had been resolved. This resulted in minor updates to feedback on Criterion 4.

However, most of the report has been informed by the first version of the referencing report provided to me. The second version may already have addressed some of the feedback provided and it is appropriate for colleagues from Vietnam to outline where this is the case.

General Observations

Overall, the report provides significant volumes of information and presents a concerted effort to explain the VQF and to meet the criteria. The report would be improved by including more evidence to support statements and would benefit from the inclusion of hyperlinks or cross-referencing to other sections of the report, appendices or other supporting documentation.

There is a risk that fundamental information is hidden in appendices in an effort to streamline the report, limiting the presentation of important evidence. The report would also benefit from more visual presentations of information such as graphics, tables and figures as some aspects of the Vietnamese system are complex, and the reader requires more support to understand.

The report should be viewed as being multi-purpose. It is, of course, necessary for the referencing to AQRF, but the report should also have a role in building national understanding of the VQF and its relationship to the AQRF. The report should also be viewed as essential to support the international recognition of Vietnamese qualifications globally and every effort should be made to clearly and succinctly communicate the fundamental building blocks of qualifications. The VQF is rooted in both quality assurance and learning outcomes and there are clear descriptors of knowledge, skill and autonomy at each level, which is a strength of the system. However, the allocation of credit is complicated and difficult to understand. It is not clear how, for example, 60 credits in the VQF could be understood in terms of workload, usually expressed in terms of hours in other jurisdictions. A clear presentation of the workload of 60 credits, as an illustrative example would be helpful. It would also be useful to understand if the same workload models for credit purposes apply across VET and HE.

The referencing process was comprehensive, structured and supported by a detailed management approach. However, more information about the working methods of the referencing process, including timelines and interactions between sub-committees, would be welcome. Greater detail is also needed about involvement of stakeholders and the role consultation and the international expert played in the referencing process and how the report was informed by their perspectives.

I have provided examples of approaches to information provision and the referencing process from the Irish context, and this is for illustration purposes only. There are examples available from other jurisdictions, but I am most familiar with the Irish context and this is the reason I have pointed to these examples.

Summary

The report broadly evidences the achievement of the criteria. However, the procedures for inclusion of or levelling of qualifications are not sufficiently transparent. I think a re-structure of the report to focus first on VET and then HE, will sufficiently address the deficit. Some information included in the appendices might be better presented in the main section of the report, or sufficiently cross referenced. A clearer explanation of the relationship between the NSQF and VQF may also aid understanding of the levelling process.

Some aspects of the report, particularly as it relates to HE, are complicated and difficult to comprehend. I would encourage colleagues to simplify explanations as much as possible to improve the transparency of the referencing to the AQRF.

The section outlining the structure of the education and training system is particularly strong and sets a firm foundation for the remainder of the report. This would be strengthened by clearer information about how learners transfer and progress from VET to HE systems and clear understanding of the ease of such a transfer.

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DETAIlED ANALYSIS

CRETERION 1:

THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IS DESCRIBED

</div>

A detailed and comprehensive overview of the education and training system is provided. The graphic provided in Figure 1.1 is particularly helpful for explaining the system. This graphic suggests that there is transfer options from the VET to HE system which is welcome and that there are no 'dead ends' for learners. The progression options are clear in this diagram. There are two tracks at secondary level in the diagram indicating upper secondary school and vocational secondary school, but only the upper secondary school is described. It would be helpful to understand the difference between the two types of secondary schools, the relevant VQF levels and the transition between the system. The transfer from Level 5 TVET to HE could be described in more detail including if there are assessments required to support such a transfer.

This section of the report could be strengthened by providing hyperlinks to relevant resources such as legislation and policies. I understand that these are likely to be in Vietnamese and not that relevant to the international reader, but it could still be useful as some websites provide translation.

Participation rates are provided in terms of overall numbers, but it would be helpful if this was described in terms of percentages of the population. It is difficult to understand the rates of participation at every level of the education system. Primary level education is compulsory and there is an ambition to make lower secondary level education universal. I understand this to mean that all other levels of education are voluntary, including upper secondary. I am not clear to which level of schooling does VQF Level 1 apply so it would be good to clarify the education pathways in terms of VQF Levels. It would be useful to understand what volume of eligible learner's progress to each level of the education system including taking VET and HE pathways.

It is mentioned that recognition of prior learning of non-formal and informal learning is used in TVET which is a clear strength of this system. It is described as used for certification, which is welcome, but it would be useful to know if RPL is also used for access to programmes. Later in the report, it confirms that RPL of non-formal and informal learning is not used in higher education, but it would be good to make this clear in this section too. In the absence of RPL in higher education, it would be useful to understand the pathway for a learner to access HE.

Credit is mentioned occasionally in this section and credit transfer is available for Level 5 in the TVET system. However, these programmes are not described in this section

in terms of credit. It would be useful to understand if credit is used in TVET, or if only available when utilising credit transfer. If credit transfer is used, how is this calculated and how is transparency and fairness ensured? Credit is also mentioned in terms of higher education programmes. It would be useful to understand how credit is calculated. The minimum learning volume of a bachelor's degree is reported as being 120 credits achieved in a minimum of three years, while the credit volume for a master's degree is 60 credits achieved in a minimum of one year. As such, the calculation of credit is unclear, and it would aid transparency to explain how credit is calculated. This is addressed again in later sections of the report but continues to be unclear to the reader.

The reported reforms are positive, and the promotion of university autonomy is particularly welcome. It would be useful for the report to outline how the impact of these reforms is planned to be monitored and the expected role these reforms will play in the achievement of higher rates of participation in higher education. As the reforms are relatively recent and only some HEIs are piloting institutional autonomy, it would be helpful to explain if there is any impact of this new autonomy on the approaches outlined to developing and levelling qualifications.

Later in the report, there is mention of the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and the National Occupational Skills Certificates (NOSC) but the relationship between the NSQF, underpinned by the NOSC, and the VQF is not clear. It would be useful if this were explained in more detail in this section of the report.

CRITERION 2:

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL BASIS OF ALL RELEVANT NATIONAL BODIES INVOVLED IN THE REFERENCING PROCESS ARE CLEARLY DETERMINED AND PUBLISHED BY THE MAIN PUBLIC AUTHORITY RESPONSEIBLE FOR THE REFERENCING PROCESS

The report outlines a comprehensive structure for the referencing process. However, I note that while higher education institutions are represented in the Advisory Council, TVET institutions are not. This is a potential weakness in the approach used. I also note that international experts were not included in this description of the referencing process, but an international expert is later referenced in Criterion 8. It would be useful to briefly describe here the role played by the international expert in the referencing process.

The structure of the council and sub-committees is clearly described and the responsibilities of each are clear. The report clearly outlines the legal basis for the inclusion of various agencies and departments. However, it is not clear how these sub-committees worked together to develop, refine and approve the final referencing report. A flow chart might be a useful way of providing this information. A timeline of meetings for each of the committees would also be useful so the reader can better understand the role each of the committees played in the development of the report. This could be provided in the Appendices.

This section would be strengthened by giving more information about the stakeholder consultations, thematic workshops and surveys which are mentioned in the overview. There is no evidence provided outlining how the referencing report was informed and improved by the wide stakeholder consultation which is reported as being undertaken. I think it is particularly important to ensure that the voices of end users of qualifications, including learners, are clearly incorporated into the referencing process.

CRITERION 3:

THE PROCEDURES FOR INCLUSION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OR FOR DESCRIBING THE PLACE OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM ARE TRANSPARENT

The section introducing the VQF would be strengthened by a diagram or graphic presenting the NQF in terms of levels, sector and typical qualification types and titles. It appears later in this section but would benefit from earlier presentation. Figure 1.1 could be presented again in this section of the report, but to include VQF Levels so it is clear where the VQF begins. I am unclear if upper secondary and vocational secondary are Level 1 in the VQF.

Furthermore, the report frequently presents Levels 1-5 separately to Levels 6-8. It would be useful to clearly explain if the VQF combines two distinct frameworks that combine to make the VQF, or if the VQF is a single, integrated framework of lifelong learning. It would also be useful to understand clearly if NOSC and NSQF relate to all levels of the VQF or just Levels 1-5.

The emphasis on learning outcomes and quality assurance arrangements for all programmes leading to qualifications is good and it is clear that knowledge, skill and autonomy/responsibility are used for outcome descriptors. APPENDIX VIII provides a comparison of the AQRF and VQF, but it would be useful if a table of just the domain descriptions for each VQF level were presented in this section. It was challenging to understand the VQF in its entirety without such a table. An example of the Irish grid of level indicators which presents similar information is available here.

The explanation of the role of agencies in registering qualifications is useful and it is helpful to explain how it differs from other countries.

Section 3.2 is confusing to the reader that is unfamiliar with the Vietnamese education system, and it is difficult to understand how VQF levels are allocated. I would suggest that it would be better to deal with VET from beginning to end (ie) approach for determining level, responsible organisations, process of developing learning outcomes, etc; and then repeat with HE. A successful example of this approach is evident in Criterion 6 when dealing with QA in HE and TVET and each sector is dealt with separately.

A simple table (an example suggested below noting that my inference of the approach might not be accurate) outlining the roles and responsibilities would be helpful.

Qualification Type	VQF Levels	Competent Authority	Role
TVET	1–5	MOLISA	Approves and assigns levels based c occupational standards
Higher Education	6–8	MOET	Approves and verifies level alignmen on ELOs
Both	1–8	Institutions	Propose and implement programs al

As per the current description, I cannot sufficiently understand the procedures for including qualifications or allocating levels. It is not clear if any of the schools qualifications are included in the VQF, and if so, how is a level allocated.

Table 3.3 [corrected; Relationship between levels and the corresponding number of credits and diplomas] presents the VQF Levels, qualification description and minimum learning load, presented in terms of credits. The allocation of credits, as described, is confusing and overly complex. In the interest of transparency, credits should have a simple underlying principle for their calculation, and I would urge Vietnamese colleagues to find a simpler way to explain the allocation of learner effort (usually in the form of hours) to justify credit volumes. This will be especially relevant for the international recognition of Vietnamese qualifications in other jurisdictions and this report should inform international colleagues of the underpinning principles to support recognition, where possible. There are different minimum learning loads for qualifications depending on the path that a learner has taken. This might be usefully articulated by outlining the different pathways available to learners and the associated credit workload dependent on the pathway taken. The table in APPENDIX VIII would be better included in this section. A similar table for VET would be welcome and aid the transparency of credit allocations for qualifications.

Furthermore, the heading in Section 3.2.3 the process of developing LOs in HE says this is conducted from levels 5 to 8. I was under the impression that HE was conducted at Levels 6-8. This may be a simple typographical error, but it requires clarification.

The process for the recognition of international qualifications is sufficiently described. It might be useful to understand the volume of international qualification recognition required in Vietnam and the common subject/occupational areas, VQF levels and origin countries, if available. It would be useful to understand is it primarily Vietnamese nationals returning from study abroad with international qualifications, or inward migration. It would be useful to point to the resources available to support individuals seeking qualification recognition.

CRITERION 4

THERE IS A CLEAR AND DEMONSTRABLE LINK BETWEEN THE QUALIFICATIONS LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OR SYSTEM AND THE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS OF THE AQRF

The report clearly describes the process of assessing the compatibility of the qualification levels in the AQRF and the VQF and presents the findings clearly.

It is fair to say that the VQF broadly corresponds with the AQRF but there are levels where the complexity of knowledge, skill and responsibility falls below that outlined in the AQRF. This is particularly evident in:

- Level 3, where the AQRF requires an ability to work in potentially changing environments while the VQF specifies familiar environments.

- Level 4 of the AQRF also introduces the concept of unfamiliar problems, while the VQF focuses on predetermined tasks.

- Level 5 of the AQRF requires the capability of addressing some abstract issues, while the VQF requires the performance of defined tasks.

- Level 7 of the AQRF requires the learner to be at the forefront of the field.

- Level 8 of the AQRF requires the generation of new knowledge.

Overall, the narrative supporting the tables, which present the similarities and differences, focuses mostly on the similarities and rarely addresses the differences. In some cases, it describes how there is no difference, despite having highlighted the differences in the table. In this way, the tables and the narrative reflect a different analysis. It is possible that the differences identified in the table reflect a semantic language assessment rather than a deep analysis of the content. However, for transparency, the report needs to resolve the disconnect between the tables analysing each level and the associated narrative explanation.

CRITERION 5:

DESCRIPTION OF THE BASIS AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND DEGREES SYSTEM

This section provides clear and detailed descriptions of the development of standards in the national qualifications and degree systems. There is a clear approach to developing both TVET and HE programmes, though I note that neither approach includes learners in the advisory councils. Learner voice in education and training is an important component of quality assurance and qualifications, and I would encourage colleagues in Vietnam to consider this in the future.

This section again introduces the different approaches to allocating credit where one credit is equal to different workloads depending on whether it is theoretical instruction, practical training or internship. It would be useful to provide a rationale for this approach and to provide information about how the underpinning workload is communicated to end users. There is the chance that 60 credits of learning are made up of quite different learner input depending on the design of a programme.

Section 5.3 presents the relationships between the VQF and standardised regulations between TVET and HE, but I note that the presentation of TVET does not point to the VQF specifically. I suspect that the orange column in Figure 5.1 labelled 'contents of learning outcomes' relates to the level descriptors (ie) knowledge, skills, autonomy but this is not clear. As raised earlier, it would be helpful to more clearly understand the relationship between the NOSC, NSQF and VQF.

Section 5.4 refers to recognition of non-formal and informal learning and it emphasises that this is not available in HE. However, it mentions that in-service training and distance education both lead to the award of qualifications, and it would be useful to understand if the preceding sections about the development of standards and levelling of qualifications applies to these types of learning. Earlier in the report it states that RPL of non-formal and informal learning is available in TVET and in the interest of transparency, it would be useful if this were addressed in this section with more detail about the process involved and how this ensures standards are met and the appropriate levelling of the qualification.

CRITERION 6:

THE NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR HE AND TVET IN VIETNAM

This section provides a detailed overview of the legal system underpinning quality assurance in Vietnam and the different actors.

It sufficiently describes the internal quality assurance system of the HE sector, and the graphics are particularly useful. However, the description of the external quality assurance system is high level and focuses on responsibility, rather than the details of the standards against which quality is measured. The report would be strengthened by explaining what aspects of institutional systems and structures are considered as part of the external quality assurance assessments, and what methods are used by accreditation agencies. Programme level QA and institutional level QA are not sufficiently differentiated and it would be helpful to understand the role of external QA at institutional level. As outlined before, it is not clear what role the learner voice places in both internal and external quality assurance.

The QA system for TVET is presented more clearly and succinctly and is easily understood. I would suggest that a similar approach be used for the HE section to improve its readability.

CRITERION 7:

THE REFERENCING PROCESS HAS BEEN INITIATED BY COMPETENT STATE AUTHORITIES AND CONFIRMED BY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE QUALIFICATIONS/DEGREES SYSTEM

This section represents a detailed description of competent authorities involved in the referencing process. The various tasks and timelines might be better presented in a table or other visual format and is more related to Criterion 2.

This section would be strengthened by including endorsements from the relevant competent authorities and relevant stakeholders to confirm the accuracy of the referencing report and the transparency of the referencing process. This would give international readers additional assurances of the collaboration, cooperation and support of all the actors in the qualifications and education system of the accuracy of the report. An example of such an approach is available in the Irish referencing report to the EQF.

CRITERION 8:

INVOLVEMENT OF EXPERIENCED FOREIGN EXPERTS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE REFERENCING REPORT

The report introduces an international expert Ha-Ngan Ngo but does not sufficiently detail her involvement in the development of the referencing report. This section would be strengthened by describing how the international expert was involved, how frequently and how her contribution informed the report. It would also be useful to include a summary of her involvement, experience and a summary from her perspective of the referencing process.

Furthermore, it mentions that she has experience of the Vietnamese education system. The role of the international expert is often to be an objective reader improving the readability and

explanations included in the report. An expert with familiarity with the Vietnamese system may not be able to provide this advice as they understand the system and I would suggest this is taken into consideration for future reports.

Criteria 9, 10 and 11:

CRITERION 9: DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION OF THE REFERENCING REPORT

CRITERION 10: REFERENCING OUTCOMES ARE PUBLICLY DISSEMINATED BY THE ASEAN SECRETARIAT AND THE COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE VQF–AQRF REFERENCING PROCESS

CRITERION 11: CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REFERENCING PROCESS

These criteria are sufficiently met by the descriptions provided. The MOET should endeavour to use publication of the referencing report, the outcome of referencing process and the certification of qualifications as opportunities to engage with end users of qualifications about the VQF and AQRF and promote the value and reputation of the VQF widely.

Conclusion

As an international expert invited to contribute to the referencing of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF), I commend the rigorous and comprehensive approach adopted by Vietnam throughout this process. The detailed analysis and commitment to regional cooperation underscore Vietnam's dedication to enhancing the comparability and quality of its qualifications. This referencing process represents an important step toward fostering mutual understanding, supporting learner and worker mobility, and contributing to the broader goals of regional integration within ASEAN.

RESPONSES FROM VIETNAM TO ADDRESS REVIEWER'S FEEDBACK[1]

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
General Observations	

1 The report would be improved by including more evidence to support statements and would benefit from the inclusion of hyperlinks or cross referencing to other sections of the report, appendices or other supporting documentation. There is a risk that fundamental information is hidden in appendices in an effort to streamline the report, limiting the presentation of important evidence.	We thank the reviewer for this valuable recommendation. In response, we have taken several measures to ensure that **key evidence is more clearly presented and easily accessible**, both within the body of the report and through cross-referencing:
	
	1. **New tables and figures** have been added directly within relevant sections to foreground core information previously located in appendices. To name just a few:
	
	   o **Table 3.3 – Relationship between VQF Levels, Qualification Types, and Credit Allocations**: now integrates both VET and HE tracks and was previously part of Appendix VIII.
	
	   o **Figure 3.1 – Vietnam Qualifications Framework Overview**: presenting levels, sectors, and typical qualifications in a visual format to enhance early understanding.
	
	   o **Illustrative Example of Credit Allocation (Section 3.4.1)**: added to demonstrate how learner workload translates into credits using Vietnam's national model.

2 The report would also benefit from more visual presentations of information such as graphics, tables and figures as some aspects of the Vietnamese system are complex, and the reader requires more support to understand.	2. Where supporting detail remains in the appendices, we have introduced clear in- text references directing the reader to those materials—for example, stakeholder consultation records, subcommittee structures, and workshop reports now include reference points in the main text. 3. Cross-references between **sections and criteria** have been strengthened throughout the report to minimise fragmentation and to support a more coherent reading experience. 4. While hyperlinks are limited in printed formats, we are exploring options for including digital versions with embedded links for online dissemination. We trust these improvements address the concern and enhance the report's usability for both domestic and international audiences.

1   These responses refer to the first version of the Report sent to the international expert. Since the Report has undergone substantial revisions, some responses may no longer align fully with the current version. The original responses are preserved to maintain transparency and an auditable record of the referencing process.

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
3 The report should be viewed as being multi-purpose. It is, of course, necessary for the referencing to AQRF, but the report should also have a role in building national understanding of the VQF and its relationship to the AQRF	We fully acknowledge and appreciate the reviewer's comment regarding the multi- purpose nature of the referencing report. Indeed, as emphasized by the AQRF Referencing Guidelines (2020), the report is not only a technical document for benchmarking the national qualifications framework to AQRF, but also a strategic tool to promote understanding, trust, and transparency in the national framework within and beyond ASEAN. In fact, we would like to highlight the following attempts we've made to realize this goal: **1. Alignment with national intent and actions:** This broader purpose has been central to the approach taken by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) throughout the referencing process. The report clearly states in the *Preface* of the report (pages 8-9) that raising public awareness and promoting understanding of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)—its structure, functions, and alignment with AQRF—are integral to the objectives of this exercise. MOET has made every effort to leverage the referencing process as an opportunity to: • enhance national comprehension of the VQF; • engage systematically with stakeholders and end users of qualifications; • advocate for the recognition and reputation of Vietnamese qualifications across ASEAN; • encourage alignment of qualification documentation with AQRF levels (Criterion 11); • and ultimately, foster a shared national and regional language of qualifications and learning outcomes. **2. Specific criteria and report sections that reflect this effort:** The intention and actions toward this multi-purpose goal are evident in: • **Criterion 9**, which describes the strategy to publish and disseminate the full referencing report as a national communication tool; • **Criterion 10**, which commits to dual publication at the ASEAN and national level to support visibility and accessibility;

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
	• **Criterion 11**, which encourages certification and awarding bodies to reflect AQRF levels on qualifications issued, enhancing both transparency and user understanding. **3. Strengthening the communication of this purpose in the report:** While these intentions were embedded throughout the document, we appreciate the opportunity to make this more explicit. Accordingly, we have revised the final paragraph of the Preface (highlighted in red on page 9) to reinforce the multi-fold purpose of the referencing process—emphasizing both its technical function and its role in strengthening national awareness, stakeholder engagement, and public understanding of the VQF and its place in the broader ASEAN qualifications ecosystem. **4. Additional clarification for future readers (if needed):** The NAC has found the abovementioned ground sufficient, However, if further clarification is deemed useful and requested by the AQRF Committee, we are willing to include a short introductory section before Criterion 1 or as an annexed reflection note, summarizing how the referencing process has already contributed to building national capacity and understanding. This could also serve to share Vietnam's experience with other ASEAN Member States undertaking or preparing for referencing.
4	The **allocation of credit** is complicated and difficult to understand. It is not clear how, for example, 60 credits in the VQF could be understood in terms of workload, usually expressed in terms of hours in other jurisdictions.	We thank the reviewer for this important observation. In response, we have **revised and updated Section 3.4.1** to clarify how credits under the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) correspond to learner workload. A newly added **illustrative example** now explains how a qualification requiring **60 credits translates to 1,800 hours of total learner effort**, using the national standard of **1 credit = 30 hours of learning**. The section also explains how this workload includes a combination of contact hours (theory and practice), self-study, and assessment activities. Additionally, we confirm that
5	A clear presentation of the workload of 60 credits, as an illustrative example would be helpful. It would also be useful to understand if the same workload models for credit purposes apply across VET and HE.	**both TVET and HE in Vietnam use the same national credit-hour model**—that is, one credit equals 30 hours of learning—as stipulated in: • **Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT** for higher education (MOET), and • **Circular No. 10/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH** for vocational education and training (MOLISA).

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
	While the underlying formula is consistent, the **distribution of hours** (e.g., emphasis on practical vs. theoretical components) may vary depending on the sector and nature of the programme. This harmonised approach supports credit transfer and enhances transparency, especially for the purposes of international recognition. Please refer to **Point 25** in this letter and the detailed explanation provided in **Section 3.4.1** of the report for the full example and supporting references.
6 More information about the working methods of the referencing process, including timelines and interactions between sub-committees, would be welcome. Greater detail is also needed about involvement of stakeholders and the role consultation and the international expert played in the referencing process and how the report was informed by their perspectives.	Please refer **to Point 20** in this letter where justification and information about updates have been provided regarding this matter.
Summary	
7 The procedures for inclusion of or levelling of qualifications are not sufficiently transparent. I think a re- structure of the report to focus first on VET and then HE, will sufficiently address the deficit. Some information included in the appendices might be better presented in the main section of the report, or sufficiently cross referenced.	We thank the reviewer for this valuable comment and acknowledge the importance of ensuring transparency in the levelling and inclusion procedures of qualifications within the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF). The current structure of the report was designed to present the overarching procedures and principles first, followed by sector-specific practices (TVET and HE), to reflect the **integrated and unified nature of the VQF**—which spans Levels 1 to 8 across both sectors. This structure aligns with the **intent and requirements of the AQRF Referencing Guidelines**, which encourage referencing reports to describe the coherence of the qualifications system as a whole, rather than presenting sectors in isolation. While we appreciate the suggestion to re-structure the report by sector, we believe the current organisation supports a more holistic understanding of how qualifications are assigned levels under a common national framework. Instead of restructuring, we have made several enhancements to improve transparency and ease of reference:

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
	• **Additional cross-references** have been inserted throughout Section 3.2 and Criterion 3 to guide readers more clearly between overarching procedures and sector-specific examples; • An **integrated table on VQF levels, qualification types, and minimum learning volume (Table 3.3)** has now been added to strengthen clarity and consolidate information previously located in appendices; • Clarifications regarding sectoral procedures for assigning qualifications (including curriculum development, expected learning outcomes, and credit allocation) are now also highlighted in **Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3** and further elaborated under **Criterion 5**. We trust these revisions will address the reviewer's concern while preserving the coherence and cross-sectoral alignment that the VQF is designed to promote.
8 A clearer explanation of the relationship between the NSQF and VQF may also aid understanding of the levelling process.	We thank the reviewer for this helpful comment. In response, we have now created a **dedicated section (Section 3.1.4)** titled **"The Relationship between VQF – NSQF – NOSS"** to clarify the distinctions and connections among the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS), and the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Section 3.1.4 explains: • The different purposes of the three frameworks: with VQF serving as the overarching qualifications framework across all sectors, NSQF focusing on the recognition of vocational skills, and NOSS providing the occupational standards that underpin skills-based training; • How NSQF and NOSS operate within the broader scope of the VQF, especially in the levelling and certification of vocational qualifications; • The alignment challenges and synergies between occupational standards and national qualifications levels. This new section aims to strengthen the reader's understanding of how qualifications, skills standards, and levelling processes are coordinated within Vietnam's education and training system.

Reviewer's feedback	Responses
9 Some aspects of the report, particularly as it relates to HE, are complicated and difficult to comprehend. I would encourage colleagues to simplify explanations as much as possible to improve the transparency of the referencing to the AQRF.	We thank the reviewer for this valuable feedback and fully acknowledge the importance of ensuring clarity and accessibility, especially when presenting complex aspects of the higher education (HE) system. In response, we have made **targeted efforts to simplify and clarify key explanations.** The revised version improves the logical flow, reduces technical density where appropriate, and uses clearer language to enhance readability for a broader audience. Additional language refinements and explanatory adjustments have also been made throughout the report to enhance clarity and simplify complex content where appropriate. We hope these revisions strengthen the overall transparency of the report and better support the referencing of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) to the AQRF.
10 The section outlining the structure of the education and training system is particularly strong and sets a firm foundation for the remainder of the report. This would be strengthened by clearer information about how learners transfer and progress from VET to HE systems and clear understanding of the ease of such a transfer.	We thank the reviewer for this valuable observation. We fully agree that transparency in the progression pathways between vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education (HE) is essential for understanding the structure and permeability of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), particularly in relation to its alignment with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF). While elements of these articulation pathways were previously mentioned across various sections of the original report (e.g., 3.4.4, Appendix IV, etc.), we acknowledge that this may not have provided a sufficiently cohesive picture. In response to the reviewer's comment, we have now added a dedicated section titled **1.7. Articulation Pathways from TVET to HE in Vietnam** to present this information more clearly and explicitly

Detailed Analysis		
Criterion 1: The structure of the education and training system is described		
11	There are two tracks at secondary level in the diagram indicating upper secondary school and vocational secondary school, but only the upper secondary school is described. It would be helpful to understand the difference between the two types of secondary schools, the relevant VQF levels and the transition between the system. The transfer from Level 5 TVET to HE could be described in more detail including if there are assessments required to support such a transfer.	Section **1.4 has now been restructured** to clearly present the two pathways at the secondary level: **Upper Secondary Education** and **Vocational Secondary Education**. The revised section outlines the differences in purpose, curriculum, and learning outcomes between the two types of secondary schooling, as well as their respective qualification types and associated VQF levels.
		The updated section also explains how **learners may transition between the two tracks**, including the conditions under which vocational students may earn an upper secondary diploma through the continuing education curriculum and graduation examination.
		Additionally, **the articulation from Level 5 TVET to HE** has been clarified under section 1.7 for the sake of logical flow and enhanced clarity, including policy provisions, conditions for credit recognition, and limitations as regulated under Decision No. 18/2017/QĐ-TTg. We have specified whether entrance assessments are required for such transfers and the extent to which credits can be exempted.
		These revisions aim to improve clarity on progression and transfer pathways across education sectors and their connection to the VQF.
12	This section of the report could be strengthened by providing hyperlinks to relevant resources such as legislation and policies. I understand that these are likely to be in Vietnamese and not that relevant to the international reader, but it could still be useful as some websites provide translation.	We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful suggestion. We agree that providing hyperlinks to official legislation and policy documents would enhance transparency and allow interested readers to access source materials directly. While many of these resources are indeed in Vietnamese, some government websites do offer English versions or automated translations. In response, we have now included hyperlinks to key legal and policy documents in the footnotes and references of the relevant sections. Where English versions are available, we have indicated so. We hope this addition improves the report's usability and credibility for both domestic and international audiences.
13	Participation rates are provided in terms of overall numbers, but it would be helpful if this was described in terms of percentages of the population. It is difficult to understand the rates of participation at every level of the education system.	We thank the reviewer for this helpful observation. We agree that presenting participation data as percentages of the relevant population cohorts would enhance interpretability and allow for easier comparison across education levels and with international benchmarks.

Detailed Analysis

		At the time of drafting, national statistics were more readily available in terms of absolute enrolment figures. However, in response to this comment, we have included the relevant section (**please refer to Section 1.1**) with the the following information from official sources such as the General Statistics Office (GSO), MOET, and MOLISA:
		'Vietnam's labor force comprises approximately 52 million people, with a participation rate ranging from 68% to 70%. Although a large proportion of the workforce is employed in the agricultural and informal sectors, the government aims to shift the labor structure towards industrialization and modernization, focusing on developing the manufacturing sector, high-quality services, information technology and renewable energy.
		The proportion of trained workers holding qualifications and certificates reached nearly 27% in 2022, with targets set to rise to 30% by 2025 and 35–40% by 2030. This poses an urgent requirement for the education and training system to provide high-quality human resources, in line with the development needs of the digital economy, green economy and international integration'.
		Where data is not disaggregated by VQF level, we have indicated this limitation and, where appropriate, provided estimates based on population data and enrolment trends to offer a more complete picture of participation throughout the education system—from upper secondary through vocational and higher education.
		We hope this additional information strengthens the report and improves clarity for the reader.
14	I am not clear to which level of schooling does VQF Level 1 apply so it would be good to clarify the education pathways in terms of VQF Levels. It would be useful to understand what volume of eligible learner's progress to each level of the education system including taking VET and HE pathways.	We thank the reviewer for this important observation. However, we'd like to note the following: According to the **Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)** issued under **Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg dated 18 October 2016**, we would like to clarify the following: • **VQF Level 1 does not apply to general education (schooling)**. The VQF begins at **Level 1**, which corresponds to short-term vocational education and training, specifically the elementary-level certificate (chứng chỉ sơ cấp). This qualification is designed for individuals trained to perform simple tasks under supervision, typically through short-duration skills training programmes.

		Detailed Analysis
		• **The general education system (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels) is not included in the VQF**, as the VQF is designed to capture post-secondary qualifications related to technical, vocational, and higher education. This is explicitly stated in Decision 1982/QĐ-TTg: "The Vietnam Qualifications Framework is a standard classification framework comprising the levels of education and training... and does not include general education." "The lowest level in the framework is Level 1 (elementary), and the highest is Level 8 (doctoral or equivalent)." This information has already been presented in **Section 3.2. Procedures for Assigning Qualifications to VQF Levels** of the report which describes the VQF. A sentence has now been added to signal the exclusion of general education (schooling) from the VQF system. Regarding learner progression across the education system, including both VET and HE pathways, this is now addressed in the report. For details, please refer to Point 10 in this letter and Section **1.7. Articulation Pathways from TVET to HE in Vietnam** of the report, where typical progression routes have been outlined in relation to VQF levels.
15	It is mentioned that recognition of prior learning of non-formal and informal learning is used in TVET which is a clear strength of this system. It is described as used for certification, which is welcome, but it would be useful to know if RPL is also used for access to programmes. Later in the report, it confirms that RPL of non- formal and informal learning is not used in higher education, but it would be good to make this clear in this section too. In the absence of RPL in higher education, it would be useful to understand the pathway for a learner to access HE.	We thank the reviewer for this insightful observation and apologise for any confusion that may have arisen from the wording in earlier drafts. We would like to re-emphasize that **Vietnam currently does not implement recognition of prior learning (RPL) of non-formal and informal learning in either the TVET or higher education sectors**. This was clearly stated in **Section 5.4. Recognition of Formal, Non-formal, and Informal Learning** in the original version of the report, which reads: *"Currently, Vietnam does not use the term non-formal education in the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018). Instead, it recognises part-time (in-service) training and distance education, both of which lead to the award of official qualifications. There are no regulations in place for the recognition or certification of informal/non-formal education."*

Detailed Analysis

By saying this, we also would like to clarify that the definition and scope of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Vietnamese context may differ from that used in other international frameworks, which may have contributed to the misunderstanding reflected in the feedback. In Vietnam, RPL is generally understood as the recognition of previously accumulated formal learning, primarily for the purpose of credit transfer between institutions. At present, there are no formal mechanisms or regulations in place for recognising learning acquired through non-formal or informal means—such as work experience or community-based learning—for entry to or exemption from formal TVET or higher education programmes.

We regret any misunderstanding that may have arisen in earlier versions of the report, potentially due to language limitations or insufficient clarity, and have revised the report accordingly. Specifically, we have:

- Now **dedicated Section 3.4.5 to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** and have revised this section thoroughly to improve clarity and better reflect Vietnam's current policy and implementation status.

- Removed or revised earlier references to RPL that may have implied broader recognition mechanisms than those currently practiced.

- Ensured consistent messaging across all sections to avoid redundancy and reader confusion;

- Clarified access pathways to HE, particularly in the absence of RPL, noting that progression typically depends on the completion of required formal qualifications and success in national or institutional entrance examinations.

We hope these revisions address the concern and improve the report's clarity.

How credit is calculated please refer to section / appendix xxx

We acknowledge that the role of credit and credit transfer in both TVET and higher education systems should be more clearly explained.

	Detailed Analysis	
16	Credit is mentioned occasionally in this section and credit transfer is available for Level 5 in the TVET system. However, these programmes are not described in this section in terms of credit. It would be useful to understand if credit is used in TVET, or if only available when utilising credit transfer. If credit transfer is used, how is this calculated and how is transparency and fairness ensured? Credit is also mentioned in terms of higher education programmes. It would be useful to understand how credit is calculated.	To address this, we have now included additional information on the use of credit systems and credit transfer mechanisms in both subsectors. Specifically: • For detailed information on **how credit is defined and calculated**, as well as how it is applied in **TVET and higher education**, including for transfer and exemption purposes, please refer to **Section 3.4.2** of the revised report. • These sections clarify the credit hour conversion, how equivalence and overlap in learning outcomes are assessed, and the procedures in place to ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency across institutions. We hope these additions provide the clarity needed to address the reviewer's concerns regarding credit use and transferability.
17	The reported reforms are positive, and the promotion of university autonomy is particularly welcome. It would be useful for the report to outline how the impact of these reforms is planned to be monitored and the expected role these reforms will play in the achievement of higher rates of participation in higher education. As the reforms are relatively recent and only some HEIs are piloting institutional autonomy, it would be helpful to explain if there is any impact of this new autonomy on the approaches outlined to developing and levelling qualifications.	We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful comment and fully agree that the monitoring and long-term implications of institutional autonomy reforms are important to highlight—particularly in relation to participation rates and the development and levelling of qualifications. In response, we have updated the content and provided a **revised version of Section 1.8.2: Promotion of Institutional Autonomy**, which now includes: • **Quantitative data** and key figures demonstrating the current status and scope of autonomous HEIs; • A description of how the impact of autonomy is being monitored, including the role of performance indicators and self-evaluation mechanisms; • An explanation of the anticipated contributions of autonomy reforms to improving access, participation, and responsiveness of the higher education sector; • Reflections on how these reforms may affect the development, diversification, and levelling of qualifications, especially as HEIs gain greater flexibility in curriculum design and programme delivery. We hope this expanded section provides a clearer picture of how autonomy reforms are unfolding and their relevance to the broader qualifications landscape in Vietnam.

Detailed Analysis	
18	There is mention of the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) but the relationship between the NSQF, underpinned by the NOSS, and the VQF is not clear. It would be useful if this were explained in more detail in this section of the report.	Please refer to Point 8 above in this letter and Section 3.1.4 in the report, which further support the discussion on the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS) but the relationship between the NSQF, underpinned by the NOSS, and the VQF.
CRITERION 2: THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL BASIS OF ALL RELEVANT NATIONAL BODIES INVOVLED IN THE REFERENCING PROCESS ARE CLEARLY DETERMINED AND PUBLISHED BY THE MAIN PUBLIC AUTHORITY RESPONSEIBLE FOR THE REFERENCING PROCESS		
19	While higher education institutions are represented in the Advisory Council, TVET institutions are not. This is a potential weakness in the approach used. I also note that international experts were not included in this description of the referencing process, but an international expert is later referenced in Criterion 8. It would be useful to briefly describe here the role played by the international expert in the referencing process.	We thank the reviewer for this important observation. Regarding the representation of TVET institutions, we would like to clarify that **colleges in Vietnam fall under the management of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), not the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)**. As such, **MOLISA served as the representative body for the TVET sector** in the Drafting Committee for the Referencing Report. Feedback from colleges was gathered **indirectly through MOLISA**, in its role as the state agency responsible for formulating and overseeing national TVET policies. We recognise the importance of strengthening direct engagement with TVET institutions in future iterations of the referencing process. As for the involvement of international experts, we have followed the **AQRF Referencing Guidelines**, which recommend their participation be described under **Criterion 8**. The role and contributions of the international expert—particularly in reviewing the methodology, verifying the level-to-level comparisons, and offering independent advice—have been detailed in that section. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the reviewer's suggestion and will include a brief cross-reference to the international expert's role earlier in the report to improve transparency and coherence in the description of the referencing process.

	Detailed Analysis	
20	The report clearly outlines the legal basis for the inclusion of various agencies and departments. However, it is not clear how these sub-committees worked together to develop, refine and approve the final referencing report. A flow chart might be a useful way of providing this information. A timeline of meetings for each of the committees would also be useful so the reader can better understand the role each of the committees played in the development of the report. This could be provided in the Appendices. This section would be strengthened by giving more information about the stakeholder consultations, thematic workshops and surveys which are mentioned in the overview. There is no evidence provided outlining how the referencing report was informed and improved by the wide stakeholder consultation which is reported as being undertaken. I think it is particularly important to ensure that the voices of end users of qualifications, including learners, are clearly incorporated into the referencing process.	We thank the reviewer for this constructive suggestion. As noted, **Criterion 2** of the report already provides detailed information regarding the **legal responsibilities and structure of all relevant agencies and committees** involved in the referencing process. Specifically: • Section **2.1** outlines the **agencies involved**, both directly and indirectly; • Section **2.2** details the **structure and responsibilities of the National Advisory Council (NAC)**; • Section **2.2.3** highlights the **roles of the subcommittees** under the NAC in supporting the development and appraisal of the report. However, in response to the reviewer's helpful recommendation, we have now created a **new appendix** to provide a clearer visual and chronological overview of how these entities coordinated throughout the process. This includes: • A **timeline of key meetings** held by each of the committees during the development of the referencing report. These additions are now available in Criterion 10, and we trust they will help readers better understand the collaborative and phased nature of the referencing process. We thank the reviewer for this important comment and fully agree on the value of transparency and inclusiveness in the referencing process—particularly in ensuring that the voices of all relevant stakeholders, including learners and employers, are incorporated. 1. We can confirm that the consultation process was conducted widely and in a transparent manner, engaging a broad range of stakeholders such as HE and TVET institutions, employers, professional associations, and learners. This engagement is presented under **Criterion 2**, particularly in **Table 2.1 – The Role of Agencies Directly and Indirectly Participating in the Development of the Referencing Process**.

Detailed Analysis		
		2. To enhance clarity and better reflect the breadth of participation, we have **updated Section 2.1.2**, renaming it to **"Agencies and Representatives Directly and Indirectly Involved in the Referencing Process"** which elaborates on how these parties were engaged along with their roles and responsibilities. 3. Additional information regarding **consultations, workshops, and surveys** is presented under **Criterion 10: Publication and Dissemination of Referencing Outcomes** as these areas directly linked to the dissemination of information to the wider public which includes activities carried out in accordance with MOET Decision No. 1596/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 21 May 2021. This approved the Plan for Developing the VQF Referencing Report to the AQRF. This Plan has guided implementation from June 2021 through December 2025, covering both technical development and stakeholder engagement phases. We trust these updates provide a clearer picture of how stakeholder voices—including those of end users—were integrated into the referencing process, and we remain committed to improving the accessibility and visibility of these contributions throughout the report.
	CRITERION 3: THE PROCEDURES FOR INCLUSION OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OR FOR DESCRIBING THE PLACE OF QUALIFICATIONS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM ARE TRANSPARENT	
21	The section introducing the VQF would be strengthened by a diagram or graphic presenting the NQF in terms of levels, sector and typical qualification types and titles. It appears later in this section but would benefit from earlier presentation. Figure 1.1 could be presented again in this section of the report, but to include VQF Levels so it is clear where the VQF begins. I am unclear if upper secondary and vocational secondary are Level 1 in the VQF.	We thank the reviewer for this helpful suggestion. In response, the section introducing the VQF has now been revised and strengthened to include a **diagram presenting the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** in terms of levels, education sectors (TVET and HE), and typical qualification types and titles. This visual aims to enhance clarity and support early understanding of the structure and scope of the VQF. Regarding **Figure 1.1**, as responded above, we would like to reaffirm that: • The **general education system**, including **primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education**, is **not part of the VQF**. • The **VQF begins at Level 1**, which corresponds to **elementary-level vocational training**, not upper or vocational secondary education.
		Please refer to **Point 14** of this letter for further information. We hope these revisions and clarifications help improve the accessibility and transparency of the framework's structure for all readers.

	Detailed Analysis	
22	Furthermore, the report frequently presents Levels 1-5 separately to Levels 6-8. It would be useful to clearly explain if the VQF combines two distinct frameworks that combine to make the VQF, or if the VQF is a single, integrated framework of lifelong learning. It would also be useful to understand clearly if NOSS and NSQF relate to all levels of the VQF or just Levels 1-5.	Please refer to **Point 8** above in this letter and **Section 3.1.4 of the report**, which further elaborate on the **National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)** and the **National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS)**, as well as their **relationship with the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)**. To reiterate: • **Levels 1–5**: Primarily correspond to **TVET** qualifications • **Levels 6–8**: Apply to **HE** qualifications All levels are encompassed within the **VQF**, which is managed by the **Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)**, while the **NSQF and NOSS** are developed and overseen by the **Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)**.
23	APPENDIX VII provides a comparison of the AQRF and VQF, but it would be useful if a table of just the domain descriptions for each VQF level were presented in this section. It was challenging to understand the VQF in its entirety without such a table.	We thank the reviewer for this helpful suggestion. In response, we have now included a dedicated table presenting the domain descriptors for each level of the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF)—covering Knowledge, Skills, and Autonomy and Responsibility for Levels 1 to 8. This aims to provide a clearer overview of the VQF's structure and facilitate easier understanding of each qualification level in its own right. Please refer to **Appendix VIII** for this newly added table.
24	Section 3.2 is confusing to the reader that is unfamiliar with the Vietnamese education system, and it is difficult to understand how VQF levels are allocated. I would suggest that it would be better to deal with VET from beginning to end (ie) approach for determining level, responsible organisations, process of developing learning outcomes, etc; and then repeat with HE	We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful suggestion and fully understand the rationale behind a more sequential, sector-based presentation. While we appreciate the proposed structure—organising the discussion by sector (VET followed by HE)—we have opted to retain the current thematic organisation in order to align with the structure and flow of the AQRF Referencing Criteria. This allows for direct mapping of evidence and explanations to the requirements of each criterion, and is consistent with the approach taken by other ASEAN Member States in their referencing reports. That said, we recognise the importance of improving accessibility for international readers who may not be familiar with the Vietnamese education system. Therefore, efforts have been made to enhance clarity, particularly around credit allocation and qualification levels, through the inclusion of a newly developed **integrated table in Section 3.3**. This table brings together key information on VQF levels, qualification types, learner pathways, and minimum credit requirements across both VET and HE sectors. We hope this approach offers improved transparency while preserving structural alignment with the AQRF framework.

	Detailed Analysis	

25	- Table 3.3 [corrected; Relationship between levels and the corresponding number of credits and diplomas] presents the VQF Levels, qualification description and minimum learning load, presented in terms of credits. The allocation of credits, as described, is confusing and overly complex. In the interest of transparency, credits should have a simple underlying principle for their calculation, and I would urge Vietnamese colleagues to find a simpler way to explain the allocation of learner effort (usually in the form of hours) to justify credit volumes. This will be especially relevant for the international recognition of Vietnamese qualifications in other jurisdictions and this report should inform international colleagues of the underpinning principles to support recognition, where possible. There are different minimum learning loads for qualifications depending on the path that a learner has taken. This might be usefully articulated by outlining the different pathways available to learners and the associated credit workload dependent on the pathway taken.
	
	- The table in APPENDIX VIII would be better included in this section. A similar table for VET would be welcome and aid the transparency of credit allocations for qualifications.
		We sincerely thank the reviewer for this insightful and constructive feedback.
		
		In response, we have taken the following steps to improve transparency and clarity in how credit volumes and qualifications are described across the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF):
		
		1. **Section 3.3 has been revised and an integrated table** (Table 3.3) titled "Relationship between VQF Levels, Qualification Types, and Credit Allocations" has been developed.
		   o This table brings together both academic and vocational education tracks across VQF Levels 1 to 8.
		   o It clearly indicates qualification types, minimum credit requirements, and typical learner pathways, distinguishing between those entering from lower secondary and upper secondary levels where applicable.
		   o The structure aims to simplify how credit volumes are calculated and relate to learner effort, typically based on hours of study, while highlighting the rationale behind different learning loads depending on entry point.
		   o This approach is intended to enhance the report's usefulness for international readers, particularly in the context of qualification recognition.
		
		2. **Appendix VIII has now been relocated into this section under Criterion 3**, as suggested, and merged with the newly created table to ensure consolidation and visibility of key information.
		
		We trust these enhancements will make the report more accessible to international stakeholders and better reflect the logic and structure underlying Vietnam's credit and qualification framework.	

Detailed Analysis		
26	The heading in Section 3.2.3 the process of developing ELOs in HE says this is conducted from levels 5 to 8. I was under the impression that HE was conducted at Levels 6-8. This may be a simple typographical error, but it requires clarification.	We thank the reviewer for identifying this issue. We acknowledge that this was a typographical error, and it has now been corrected. The revised section clearly states that: • **Levels 1–5** correspond to the **TVET sector**; and • **Levels 6–8** are aligned with **Higher Education (HE)** qualifications. We appreciate the reviewer's attention to detail in helping us improve the accuracy of the report.
27	The process for the recognition of international qualifications is sufficiently described. It might be useful to understand the volume of international qualification recognition required in Vietnam and the common subject/occupational areas, VQF levels and origin countries, if available. It would be useful to understand is it primarily Vietnamese nationals returning from study abroad with international qualifications, or inward migration. It would be useful to point to the resources available to support individuals seeking qualification recognition.	We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful comment and agree that additional contextual information would enhance the understanding of how international qualifications are recognised in Vietnam. In response, we have now updated **Section 3.4.3 – Evaluation and Recognition of International Qualifications** to include a more detailed overview of the volume of applications, the main origin countries, and the intended use of recognised qualifications. Specifically, data from the Department of Quality Management (MOET) has been added, showing that over 37,000 applications were received between 2017 and November 2023, with a recognition rate of over 95%. The most common origin countries include the UK, Australia, China, the US, and others, as detailed in the revised section. We also note that, unlike countries with strong inward migration patterns (e.g., in Europe or North America), Vietnam's international education dynamic is predominantly outbound. As such, the majority of applications for international qualification recognition come from Vietnamese nationals returning from study abroad, who seek qualification validation for employment or further study within the country. Recognition of qualifications held by foreign nationals migrating to Vietnam remains very limited and statistically insignificant.
		Lastly, while we are mindful that the primary scope of this report is to benchmark the VQF against the AQRF, we have included this additional information in a targeted and concise manner to avoid redundancy, while still addressing the reviewer's important points. Information on resources available for individuals seeking qualification recognition has also been referenced in Section 3.4.3, including links to official portals and guidelines published by MOET. We hope this provides greater clarity and context for understanding Vietnam's approach to international qualification recognition.

Detailed Analysis		
CRITERION 4. THERE IS A CLEAR AND DEMONSTRABLE LINK BETWEEN THE QUALIFICATIONS LEVELS IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK OR SYSTEM AND THE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS OF THE AQRF		
28	It is fair to say that the VQF broadly corresponds with the AQRF but there are levels where the complexity of knowledge, skill and responsibility falls below that outlined in the AQRF. This is particularly evident in: Level 3, where the AQRF requires an ability to work in **potentially changing environments** while the VQF specifies familiar environments.	We acknowledge the reviewer's observation regarding inconsistencies between the comparative tables and the narrative analysis of AQRF and VQF levels, particularly the need to address areas where the VQF appears to fall below AQRF descriptors in complexity and scope. In response, we have conducted **further benchmarking and in-depth comparative analysis** of the VQF level descriptors against the AQRF descriptors. This updated analysis now places greater emphasis on **both similarities and substantive differences**, particularly in relation to Levels 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, as highlighted by the reviewer. The revised version of Criterion 4 includes: • **Expanded justification for level-to-level referencing**, with detailed explanations of the rationale for each comparison.
29	Level 4 of the AQRF also introduces the concept of **unfamiliar problems**, while the VQF focuses on **predetermined tasks**.	• **Clear acknowledgment of limitations or gaps**, especially where the VQF does not fully reflect the higher-order competencies required by the AQRF.
30	Level 5 of the AQRF requires the capability of addressing some abstract issues, while the VQF requires the performance of defined tasks.	• Clarification on whether differences are due to **semantic nuances or substantive divergence** in outcomes. • **Enhanced alignment between the comparison tables and the narrative discussion**, resolving the previously noted disconnect.
31	Level 7 of the AQRF requires the learner to be at the forefront of the field	The updated Criterion 4 section can now be found in the main body of the report, with new content marked in red for transparency. Every effort has been made to demonstrate and explain the comparability of the two frameworks, while maintaining transparency and integrity in the benchmarking process.
32	Level 8 of the AQRF requires the generation of new knowledge.	We thank the reviewer for this critical feedback, which has helped strengthen the analytical rigour and clarity of this important section.

	Detailed Analysis	
33	Overall, the narrative supporting the tables, which present the similarities and differences, focuses mostly on the similarities and rarely addresses the differences. In some cases, it describes how there is no difference, despite having highlighted the differences in the table. In this way, the tables and the narrative reflect a different analysis. It is possible that the differences identified in the table reflect a semantic language assessment rather than a deep analysis of the content. However, for transparency, the report needs to resolve the disconnect between the tables analysing each level and the associated narrative explanation.	
	CRITERION 5: DESCRIPTION OF THE BASIS AND FOUNDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS IDENTIFIED IN THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND DEGREES SYSTEM	
34	There is a clear approach to developing both TVET and HE programmes, though I note that neither approach includes learners in the advisory councils.	We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful observation. While it is correct that learners are not formally represented in the national-level advisory councils responsible for programme development or referencing, this reflects a broader characteristic of Vietnamese educational governance, which traditionally emphasises expert-led, government-regulated processes. In Vietnamese culture, learners are generally seen as recipients of knowledge rather than co-constructors of educational policy, especially at the national level. However, their voices are typically conveyed indirectly through feedback mechanisms such as institutional surveys, student satisfaction studies, and internal QA reviews, rather than through direct participation in policymaking or advisory roles. That said, we fully recognise the importance of amplifying learner perspectives in future governance structures. As Vietnam continues to internationalise its education system, there is growing awareness of the need to enhance stakeholder inclusiveness, including mechanisms for more meaningful learner representation—especially at the institutional and programme levels. We hope this cultural and contextual clarification helps explain the current approach, while also signalling the direction for future improvement.

		Detailed Analysis

35	This section **again** introduces the different approaches to allocating credit where one credit is equal to different workloads depending on whether it is theoretical instruction, practical training or internship. It would be useful to provide a rationale for this approach and to provide information about how the underpinning workload is communicated to end users. There is the chance that 60 credits of learning are made up of quite different learner input depending on the design of a programme.	We thank the reviewer for raising this important point regarding the variability in workload composition across different forms of instruction.
		
		However, we'd like to note the following:
		
		1. While both **Section 3.2** and **Criterion 5** relate to qualification levels and learning outcomes, they serve distinct but complementary purposes:
		
		• **Section 3.2** focuses on the **procedures for assigning qualifications to specific VQF levels**. It includes:
		
		   o Level determination criteria (3.2.1)
		
		   o How ELOs are developed for TVET (Levels 1–5) and HE (Levels 6–8).
		
		• **Criterion 5**, on the other hand, explains the **standards that underpin** those qualifications at each level. It goes deeper into:
		
		   o The legal and academic basis for learning outcomes
		
		   o Standard procedures and criteria for curriculum and programme design
		
		   o Sectoral regulations in both TVET and HE (e.g., through Circulars from MOET and MOLISA)
		
		   o How standardisation aligns with the VQF framework (5.3)
		
		Thus, we hold the perspectives that these are not overlapping, but rather build on each other:
		
		Section 3.2 explains how levels are assigned, while Criterion 5 explains how the content and structure of those qualifications are standardised and delivered.
		
		2. The differentiated credit allocation model in Vietnam reflects the sector-specific pedagogical nature of TVET and HE. Although both systems use the same national standard of 1 credit = 30 hours of learner workload (per Circular 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT for HE and Circular 10/2022/TT- BLĐTBXH for TVET), the types of activities that constitute those 30 hours differ by context. For example:

Detailed Analysis

o In HE, the 30 hours may include lectures, self-study, group work, and assessment preparation.

o In TVET, the same 30 hours may involve more hands-on instruction, workshops, or workplace-based practice, often calculated at 15 hours theory = 30 hours practice.

This model ensures that the same amount of total effort is maintained across sectors, even when the learning format and delivery method vary.

The rationale for this approach is rooted in Vietnam's competency-based education system, which aligns learning with national skill and knowledge standards. These are detailed in:

o Section 3.2.2 & 3.2.3 – covering the development of ELOs per level;

o Section 5.1 and 5.2 – outlining standard programme structures, required personnel qualifications, and curriculum development procedures for TVET and HE respectively.

To support transparency and end-user communication, the expected workload and credit structures are:

o Published in programme specifications at institutional level;

o Disclosed to learners via course syllabi, programme handbooks, and institutional websites;

o Accredited through national QA frameworks (e.g., NOSS standards).

In short, **total workload is standardised, but delivery methods are contextualised**, and information is consistently communicated to learners and employers.

Please also refer to section 3.1.4 (revised version) which has now clarified the credit allocation details following reviewer's feedback.

Detailed Analysis	
36	Section 5.3 presents the relationships between the VQF and standardised regulations between TVET and HE, but I note that the presentation of TVET does not point to the VQF specifically. I suspect that the orange column in Figure 5.1 labelled 'contents of learning outcomes' relates to the level descriptors (ie) knowledge, skills, autonomy but this is not clear. As raised earlier, it would be helpful to more clearly understand the relationship between the NOSS, NSQF and VQF.	This issue has now been addressed in **Point 8** above of this letter where we have now created a dedicated section (**Section 3.1.4**) titled: **"Relationship between the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF), the National Occupational Skills Standards (NOSS), and the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)."** This section clarifies the distinct roles and interconnections of these frameworks: • The **NOSS** defines occupational standards and required competencies for specific job roles. • The **NSQF**, developed by MOLISA, translates NOSS-based outcomes into structured TVET qualifications. • The **VQF**, managed by MOET, provides the overarching national structure for all qualifications (Levels 1–8), including those from TVET and HE.
37	Section 5.4 refers to recognition of non-formal and informal learning and it emphasises that this is not available in HE. However, it mentions that in- service training and distance education both lead to the award of qualifications, and it would be useful to understand if the preceding sections about the development of standards and levelling of qualifications applies to these types of learning. Earlier in the report it states that RPL of non-formal and informal learning is available in TVET and in the interest of transparency, it would be useful if this were addressed in this section with more detail about the process involved and how this ensures standards are met and the appropriate levelling of the qualification.	We thank the reviewer for this important and constructive observation. In response, we have revised **Section 5.4** to clarify several key points related to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and the scope of application of programme standards: 1. **Clarification of Terms in HE** While non-formal and informal learning are not formally recognised for credit or certification purposes in higher education, Vietnam recognises in-service (part- time) training and distance education as legitimate forms of delivery within the national higher education system. These delivery modes are governed by the same programme standards and qualification levels as regular full-time education. Therefore, the processes described earlier in Section 5.2 (e.g. on the development of learning outcomes, programme design, and levelling) apply equally to in- service and distance education. The qualifications awarded are identical and fully aligned with the VQF, regardless of delivery mode.

Detailed Analysis		
		2. **Clarification Regarding TVET** We would also like to re-emphasize that Vietnam **does not formally implement Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) of non-formal or informal learning in the TVET system**. Please refer to **Point 15** in this letter for further justification.

CRITERION 6: THE NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR HE AND TVET IN VIETNAM

| 38 | The description of the external quality assurance system is high level and focuses on responsibility, rather than the details of the standards against which quality is measured. The report would be strengthened by explaining what aspects of institutional systems and structures are considered as part of the external quality assurance assessments, and what methods are used by accreditation agencies. | We thank the reviewer for this thoughtful and constructive observation.

We acknowledge that the current description of the external quality assurance (EQA) system presents a high-level overview, with a focus on the institutional responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) and the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET/MOLISA). This approach was intentionally adopted to maintain alignment with the purpose and structure of the AQRF Referencing Report, which requires the demonstration of coherence, consistency, and trustworthiness of the national EQA system—rather than a comprehensive technical breakdown of all standards and instruments used.

That said, the high-level description is underpinned by a nationally regulated and standards-based EQA system. The specific standards and evaluation procedures applied by accredited agencies (including criteria, domains of assessment, and QA tools) are already outlined in detail under Section 6.1.4. and its sub-sections, as well as supporting HE legislation—such as Circular 08/2021/TT-BGDĐT for HE and Circular 38/2022/TT- BLĐTBXH for TVET—and are well documented in the public domain.

To strengthen transparency without overburdening the main report, we have opted to:

• Reference these national regulations in the footnotes and appendices;

• Emphasise that while the report presents the EQA system structurally, the operational standards and methods are well established and monitored through accredited agencies; and

• Highlight that the quality standards are designed in alignment with VQF level descriptors (knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility), ensuring coherence between programme-level QA and national qualifications levelling. |

		Detailed Analysis
		We hope that this explanation clarifies the rationale for the current structure and reassures the reviewer of the robustness of the EQA system, even where operational specifics are not detailed extensively within the main body of the report.
39	Programme level QA and institutional level QA are not sufficiently differentiated and it would be helpful to understand the role of external QA at institutional level. As outlined before, it is not clear what role the learner voice places in both internal and external quality assurance.	The QA system for TVET is presented more clearly and succinctly and is easily understood. I would suggest that a similar approach be used for the HE section to improve its readability.
	CRITERION 7: THE REFERENCING PROCESS HAS BEEN INITIATED BY COMPETENT STATE AUTHORITIES AND CONFIRMED BY RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE QUALIFICATIONS/DEGREES SYSTEM	
40	This section represents a detailed description of competent authorities involved in the referencing process. The various tasks and timelines might be better presented in a table or other visual format and is more related to Criterion 2.	We agree with the reviewer that the description of competent authorities, associated tasks, and timelines is more appropriately aligned with Criterion 2 rather than Criterion 7. In response, this section has been relocated to Criterion 2. To enhance clarity and accessibility, the various tasks and timelines undertaken by the relevant authorities during the referencing process have now been revised and presented in a table, included as u**nder Criterion 2** of the report.
41	This section would be strengthened by including endorsements from the relevant competent authorities and relevant stakeholders to confirm the accuracy of the referencing report and the transparency of the referencing process.	Thank you for the valuable suggestion. We acknowledge that the inclusion of formal endorsements from competent authorities and stakeholders would strengthen this section by providing clear evidence of national-level validation and transparency. In Vietnam, the co-working rule within relevant bodies is that: all relevant bodies will send a signed document o introduce their representatives to join a project. In this referencing report development, all relevant bodies sent their representative to MOET and MOET established a Decision with all names given by relevant bodies. This Decision is signed and stamped by MOET minister. So, all names in the Appendix 1 are from the Decision number 1639/QĐ-BGDĐT on 28th May 2021 and the Decision number 1030/QĐ-BGDĐT on 15th April 2022, signed by the MOET Vice-minister Hoang Minh Son.

Detailed Analysis
CRITERION 8: INVOLVEMENT OF EXPERIENCED FOREIGN EXPERTS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE REFERENCING REPORT

| 42 | The report introduces an international expert Ha-Ngan Ngo but does not sufficiently detail her involvement in the development of the referencing report. This section would be strengthened by describing how the international expert was involved, how frequently and how her contribution informed the report. It would also be useful to include a summary of her involvement, experience and a summary from her perspective of the referencing process. Furthermore, it mentions that she has experience of the Vietnamese education system. The role of the international expert is often to be an objective reader improving the readability and explanations included in the report. An expert with familiarity with the Vietnamese system may not be able to provide this advice as they understand the system and I would suggest this is taken into consideration for future reports. | We appreciate the reviewer for the observation. While Ms. Ngan-Ha Ngo is familiar with the Vietnamese education system, her professional base is in New Zealand, where she worked in the Quality Assurance Division at NZQA, specifically in qualifications recognition and referencing. Her role in this process focused on reviewing the report through the lens of an external reader to ensure clarity, transparency, and alignment with AQRF expectations. Regular written reflections on the transparency, structure, and readability of the report were shared with the NAC, as recommended in the AQRF Guidelines. This dual perspective helped strengthen—not diminish—the objectivity and usefulness of her contributions. Please refer to **criterion 8** for an updated version of her role and contributions during the referencing process. |

APPENDIX
XI

LIST OF REPRSENTATIVES
OF STAKEHOLDERS' STATEMENT OF ENDORSEMENT

1. Form of Endorsement

FORMAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE NATIONAL REPORT
ON THE REFERENCING OF VQF TO THE AQRF

We, the undersigned representatives of the relevant ministries, agencies, institutions, and stakeholders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, having been duly consulted in the process of referencing the Vietnam Qualifications Framework (VQF) to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF),

Information of the Representative:

1. Name of the Organisation

2. Name of the Representative

3. Position of the Representative

4. Email of the Representative

5. Phone number of the Representative

Questions:

1. The referencing process has been conducted in accordance with the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) Referencing Guidelines (2020).

  ☐ Agree   ☐ Do not agree

2. The process was transparent, consultative, and inclusive of all relevant stakeholders across education, training, labour, and quality assurance sectors.

  ☐ Agree   ☐ Do not agree

3. The report accurately represents the Vietnam Qualifications Framework, its structure, quality assurance arrangements, and its referencing to the AQRF levels.

  ☐ Agree   ☐ Do not agree

4. The undersigned stakeholders fully support the outcomes of the referencing process and agree to the submission of this report to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework Committee for review and endorsement.

  ☐ Agree   ☐ Do not agree

5. Statement of endorsement

☐ I, representative of my organisation, totally agree with the National Report of Referencing from VQF to the AQRF

☐ I, representative of my organisation, do not agree with the National Report of Referencing from VQF to the AQRF

2. List of stakeholders signing to the form of endorsement

Representation for	Name of Agency/Unit	Results
Government Bodies	International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Education and Training	100% agree
	Department of Vocational and Continuing Education, Ministry of Education and Training	
	Quality Management Department, Ministry of Education and Training	
	Department of Primary and Secondary Education (or General Education Department), Ministry of Education and Training	
Universities	Vietnam National University, Hanoi	100% agree
	The University of Danang	
	Thai Nguyen University	
	University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City	
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Medicine and Pharmacy	
	Hoa Sen University	
	College of Foreign Languages, Hue University	
	University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (UEH)	
	Nguyen Tat Thanh University	
Employers	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)	
QA agencies	Center for Education Accreditation, Vietnam National University, Hanoi	100% agree
	Center for Education Accreditation, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City	
	Quality Management Center, Can Tho University	
Vocational Colleges	Cao Thang Technical College	100% agree
	Saigon Tourism College	
	Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade College (or Ho Chi Minh City College of Industry and Trade)	
	Ho Chi Minh City College of Transport	
	Pham Ngoc Thach Medical College	
	Ho Chi Minh City Vocational College	
Learners	Student Union/Association of Cao Thang Technical College	100% agree
	Student Union/Association of Nguyen Tat Thanh University	
	Student Union/Association of Van Lang University	

APPENDIX
XII

LIST OF LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS ON EDUCATION AND ON QUALIFICATIONS

Circular No. 01/2024/TT-BGDĐT on Standards for Higher Education Institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 02/2022/TT-BGDĐT on stipulating the conditions, order, and procedures for opening new training programs, and suspending the operation of training programs for bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 03/2022/TT-BGDĐT on stipulating the determination of enrollment targets for bachelor's, master's, doctoral degrees, and college-level enrollment targets for Early Childhood Education, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 04/2022/TT-BGDĐT amends Circular No. 35/2020/TT-BGDĐT on codes, professional title standards, appointment, and salary ranking for teaching staff in public pedagogical colleges; and Circular 40/2020/TT-BGDĐT on codes, professional title standards, appointment, and salary ranking for teaching staff in public higher education institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 04/2022/TT-BLĐTBXH stipulating the organization of intermediate and college-level training according to academic years or by module or credit accumulation, issued by the Minister of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs.

Circular No. 04/2024/TT-BLĐTBXH dated May 10, 2024, stipulating professional and operational standards for vocational education teachers.

Circular No. 05/2022/TT-BGDĐT amending the Regulations on standards and procedures for compiling and revising textbooks; standards for organizations and individuals compiling textbooks; and the organization and operation of the National Textbook Appraisal Council, attached to Circular No. 33/2017/TT-BGDĐT, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT stipulating the quality accreditation of higher education institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 13/2021/TT-BGDĐT stipulating the conditions, order, procedures, and authority for recognizing diplomas and certificates issued by foreign educational institutions for use in Vietnam, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 14/2022/TT-BGDĐT stipulating regulations for higher education and pedagogical college education accreditors, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT stipulating standards for training programs; the development, appraisal, and training programs for higher education levels, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 22/2022/TT-BTC guides the management and use of recurrent expenditures for implementing the National Key Program for Mathematics Development from 2021-2030, issued by the Minister of Finance.

Circular No. 34/2021/TT-BLĐTBXH amending Circular No. 27/2018/TT-BLĐTBXH, which regulates the assessment process for issuing vocational education quality accreditor cards; and the process and cycle of vocational education quality accreditation, issued by the Minister of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs.

Circular No. 35/2021/TT-BGDĐT stipulating the compilation, selection, appraisal, approval, and use of teaching materials and textbooks for higher education, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 40/2021/TT-BGDĐT regarding the regulations on the organization and operation of private primary schools, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, and multi-level general education schools, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 44/2021/TT-BGDĐT regarding regulations on admission, pre-university preparatory training; and consideration of transfer to bachelor's degree programs, college-level Early Childhood Education programs for pre-university students, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 45/2021/TT-BGDĐT stipulating the construction of safe schools and the prevention and control of accidents and injuries in preschool education institutions, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 48/2021/TT-BGDĐT repeals several legal documents issued by the Minister of Education and Training and jointly issued regarding regimes and policies for pupils and students.

Circular No. 50/2021/TT-BGDĐT amending the Regulations on school transfer and admission of students to lower secondary and upper secondary schools, attached to Decision No. 51/2002/QD-BGDĐT, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Circular No. 62/2012/TT-BGDĐT regarding the regulations on the process and cycle of educational quality accreditation for universities, colleges, and professional secondary schools, issued by the Minister of Education and Training.

Decree No. 04/2021/NĐ-CP stipulating administrative penalties for violations in the field of education.

Decree No. 109/2022/NĐ-CP stipulating scientific and technological activities in higher education institutions.

Decree No. 113/2015/NĐ-CP stipulating specific allowances, preferential allowances, job responsibility allowances, and hazardous, toxic, and dangerous allowances for teachers in public vocational education institutions.

Decree No. 116/2020/NĐ-CP stipulating policies on tuition fee support and living expense support for pedagogical students.

Decree No. 127/2021/NĐ-CP stipulating Decree No. 04/2021/NĐ-CP on administrative penalties for violations in the field of education.

Decree No. 135/2018/NĐ-CP amending Decree No. 46/2017/NĐ-CP on conditions for investment and operation in the field of education.

Decree No. 14/2020/NĐ-CP stipulating the allowance regime for retired teachers who have not yet received seniority allowances in their pensions.

Decree No. 37/2025/NĐ-CP stipulating the functions, duties, powers, and organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Decree No. 59/2014/NĐ-CP amending Decree No. 69/2008/NĐ-CP on policies to encourage socialization of activities in the fields of education, vocational training, healthcare, culture, sports, and environment.

Decree No. 71/2020/NĐ-CP stipulating the roadmap for implementing the nâng trình độ chuẩn được đào tạo (raising the standard training level) for preschool, primary, and lower secondary school teachers.

Decree No. 80/2017/NĐ-CP stipulating a safe, healthy, and friendly educational environment, and the prevention and control of school violence.

Decree No. 81/2021/NĐ-CP stipulating the mechanism for collecting and managing tuition fees for educational institutions within the national education system, policies on tuition fee exemption and reduction, study cost support; and service prices in the field of education and training.

Decree No. 86/2021/NĐ-CP stipulating Vietnamese citizens going abroad for study, teaching, scientific research, and academic exchange.

Decree No. 87/2014/NĐ-CP regarding the attraction of overseas Vietnamese individuals working in science and technology, and foreign experts participating in science and technology activities in Vietnam.

Decision No. 1982/QD-TTg dated October 18, 2016, approving the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework.

Decision No. 1981/QD-TTg dated October 18, 2016, approving the Framework of Vietnam's National Education System Structure.

Education Law 2019

Higher Education Law 2012, **Amended Higher Education Law 2018**

Law on Dissemination and Education of Law 2012

National Defense and Security Education Law 2013

Vocational Education Law 2014

APPENDIX
XIII

LISTS OF FIGURES AND TABLES

1. List of Figures

2. List of Tables

APPENDIX XIV

GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELEVANT TO THE REFERENCING PROCESS

TERMS	DEFINITION
Accreditation	While not explicitly defined in the document, it is implied in the context of QA discussions. Accreditation generally refers to a process by which an educational institution or program is evaluated and recognized as meeting a predetermined set of quality standards.
Advisory Council for the formulation and appraisal of VQF referencing process	A specific body or group mentioned in the document that provides guidance and evaluates the process of linking the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework (VQF) to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF).
Apprenticeship	A system of training where a person learns a trade or profession by working under the supervision of skilled workers for a set period, combining on-the-job training with theoretical instruction. The document refers to it in the context of TVET.
College	An educational institution that offers higher education degrees, vocational training, or other specialized programs, often at a level below or distinct from a university.
Comparative Qualifications Assessments (CQAs)	The process of evaluating and comparing qualifications from different education or training systems to determine their equivalence or comparability.
Competencies	The abilities, skills, and knowledge that an individual possesses and can demonstrate. In the context of education, these are the expected outcomes or attributes a program graduate should have, similar to LOs.
Credentialing	The process of providing an individual with a qualification, certificate, or other formal recognition of their achieved LOs, skills, or professional standing. Curriculum
Curriculum	The planned content of an educational program, including the subjects taught, the knowledge and skills to be learned, and the learning experiences provided to students.

TERMS	DEFINITION
Descriptors of LOs	Statements that describe what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the completion of a learning process or at a specific qualification level within a framework. These descriptors help define the standards for different qualification levels.
Education programs	Structured courses of study designed to provide learners with specific knowledge, skills, and competencies, leading to a qualification. These programs imply a standard for their content, delivery, and expected outcomes.
Examination and assessment methods	The processes and techniques used to evaluate a learner's knowledge, understanding, and skills against defined LOs or program standards. In the context of the document, these are highlighted as key components of QA in education.
General Department of TVET (GDT)	A governmental body under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) in Vietnam, responsible for the management and development of technical and vocational education and training.
General education programs and textbooks	The structured curricula and accompanying learning materials used in primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education. The document mentions their reform, indicating an evolution of their content and standards.
HE Program Development	The process of designing, developing, and revising educational programs offered at the higher education level.
Intermediate vocational education	A level of technical and vocational education and training that provides skills and knowledge for specific occupations, typically above primary vocational training but below college-level vocational education.
International qualifications	Qualifications that are recognized across multiple countries, often based on international standards or agreements, facilitating mobility for learners and workers.
Learning content	The specific knowledge, information, and subject matter that is taught and learned within an educational or training program.
LOs	Statements that describe what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of a learning process. They are fundamental to qualifications frameworks and program design as they define the achievement standards.

TERMS	DEFINITION
Levels of qualifications/QF levels	The distinct categories or stages within a qualifications framework that describe the increasing complexity of LOs. Each level is defined by a set of descriptors indicating what a learner at that level should know, understand, and be able to do.
National qualifications	Formal awards or certifications issued within a specific country's education and training system, recognized by the national authorities.
Occupational skills	The specific practical and theoretical abilities required to perform tasks and duties within a particular job or profession. These are often developed through vocational education and training.
Program development	The systematic process of designing, planning, and creating educational or training courses and curricula to meet specific LOs and standards. This includes defining program standards.
QA (in the context of programs/ curriculum)	The systematic process of ensuring that educational programs and curricula meet defined standards of quality, effectiveness, and relevance. This involves processes for monitoring, evaluating, and improving program design and delivery.
Quality Management System (QMS)	A formalized system that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality policies and objectives. In education, a QMS helps ensure consistent quality in teaching, assessment, and program delivery.
Recognition of qualifications	The formal acknowledgment of the validity and comparability of qualifications obtained in one education system or country by another system or country, often facilitating further study or employment.
Reference Committee (AQRF Reference Committee)	A specific committee or body responsible for overseeing and validating the referencing processes of national qualifications frameworks to the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF).
Referencing (VQF referencing process with AQRF)	The process of establishing a clear and transparent link between a national qualifications framework (specifically Vietnam's VQF) and a regional qualifications framework (the AQRF), demonstrating how the levels of one relate to the other.
Referencing process	The formal procedure by which a national qualifications framework is compared and aligned with a regional or international qualifications framework, establishing the relationship between their respective levels.

TERMS	DEFINITION
Regional HE Support Program	A program designed to provide assistance and foster development in higher education across a specific region, often involving collaboration between multiple countries or international organizations.
Regional QA Standards	QA benchmarks or criteria that are commonly agreed upon and applied across multiple countries within a geographical region, serving as specific quality benchmarks for programs and institutions at a regional level.
Standards (in the context of quality)	Defined levels of quality or achievement that are expected to be met. In education, these refer to benchmarks or criteria used to evaluate the quality of educational provision, programs, or outcomes.
Standards (referring to program/ curriculum standards)	Specific criteria or benchmarks that outline the expected content, structure, delivery, and LOs for educational or training programs and curricula. These are used broadly in the context of QA for programs.
Teaching methods	The strategies, techniques, and approaches used by educators to facilitate learning, convey knowledge, and develop skills in students.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	A comprehensive term encompassing education and training that prepares individuals for specific occupations or trades, providing practical skills and theoretical knowledge relevant to the world of work.
Training standards	Specific criteria or benchmarks that define the expected knowledge, skills, and competencies to be achieved at the completion of a training program, ensuring consistency and quality of outcomes.
TVET Development	The process of improving and expanding the technical and vocational education and training sector, often involving policy reforms, curriculum upgrades, and infrastructure enhancements.
University	A higher education institution that offers a wide range of academic disciplines and typically grants undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.
University autonomy	The degree of independence and self-governance that universities have in managing their academic, administrative, and financial affairs, often promoting flexibility and innovation.
Vietnam National Qualifications Framework (VQF)	The national framework in Vietnam that classifies qualifications by levels based on LOs, providing a structure for the country's education and training system.

TERMS	DEFINITION
Vocational colleges	Vocational education institutions that primarily offer vocational or professional training programs, typically leading to diplomas or associate degrees, focusing on practical skills for specific industries.
Vocational schools	Educational institutions that provide technical and vocational training, often at a secondary or post-secondary non-tertiary level, focusing on practical skills for specific trades.
Workforce training	Education and development activities designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of individuals currently in the workforce or preparing to enter it, aiming to meet industry needs and improve productivity.

REFERENCES

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2. Prime Minister (2012), Decision approving the Education Development Strategy 2011-2020, Vietnam.

3. The Government (2014), the Government's Action Program to implement Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW dated 04/11/2013 of the Eighth Meeting of the XI Central Committee on fundamental and comprehensive reform of education and training, Vietnam.

4. National Assembly (2009), Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Education Law (2019), Vietnam.

5. National Assembly (2012), HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), Vietnam.

6. National Assembly (2014), Law on Vocational Education (2014), Vietnam.

7. Prime Minister (2016), Decision approving the Structural Framework of the National Education System, Vietnam.

8. National Assembly (2019), Education Law (2019), Vietnam.

9. Prime Minister (2010), approving the Scheme on universalization of preschool education for five-year-old children in the period 2010-2015, Vietnam.

10. National Assembly (1991), Law on Universalization of Primary Education, Vietnam.

11. National Assembly (2018), Law amending and supplementing a number of articles of the HE Law (2012 and amended in 2018), Vietnam.

12. Vietnam's referencing process for the first 3 criteria to be submitted to the Secretariat of the AQRF Reference Committee (Version: Second Draft / Criteria 1-3, April, 2019);

13. ASEAN Level Reference Framework;

14. Documents of the VQF Scientific Workshop and HE Program Development (MOET in collaboration with the Vietnam Association of Universities and Colleges organized at Nha Trang University on March 23, 2017);

15. Document of the National Workshop on the Impact of VQF and Regional QA Standards on HE in Vietnam (MOET in collaboration with the ASEAN Regional HE Support Program of the European Union (SHARE) organized in Da Nang City from May 30 to June 1, 2017);

16. Documents of the Secretariat of the Advisory Council for the formulation and appraisal of VQF referencing process with AQRF;

17. MOET website (https://moet.gov.vn/Pages/home.aspx)

18. Website of MOLISA(http://www.molisa.gov.vn/Pages/trangchu.aspx)

19. ASEAN website (https://asean.org/)

ASEAN QUALIFICATIONS REFERENCE FRAMEWORK
REFERENCING REPORT OF VIETNAM