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Bhutan Qualifications Framework 2023

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Bhutan Qualifications & Professionals Certification Authority

Bhutan Qualifications Framework 2023

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The process of reforming our education system must aim for standards and goals which are of the highest possible order. We cannot compare present progress with our past and celebrate it as a measure of success. We cannot compare with our neighbours and draw satisfaction from having caught up with them. Instead, we must aspire to be ahead of them and become the standard-bearers. Such an aspiration is not an expression of misplaced idealism. Rather, it is founded on the strength of conviction that our survival as a sovereign state will depend on the physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and moral make of our children and indeed their competencies.

-- The Royal Kasho on Education Reform, 17 December 2020



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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
BHUTAN QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONALS

BQPCA/HEQC/BQF/01/735

7 June, 2023

Foreword

I am delighted to share the revised Bhutan Qualifications Framework 2023, a national document that will guide Bhutan's qualifications system. Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) is an important component of the national regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for education and training. It ensures that the quality and relevance of education and training are maintained across various sectors.

The BQF was launched in 2012, and since then, it has undergone a comprehensive review by involving multiple stakeholders from different sectors, such as education and training providers, quality and professional councils, relevant agencies, and policymakers. The review was conducted to enhance trust, credibility, and accountability in light of the rapid development across sectors and beyond. During the review process, various national and regional qualifications frameworks were consulted to ensure alignments and comparability.

The revised BQF includes qualifications from diverse education sectors such as community, school, vocational, higher, and monastic education in a single framework, making it more inclusive. Its scope has also been expanded to consider the diversity across sectors and the rapid technological advancements, which demands the adoption of contemporary modes of delivery. It will serve as the basis for ensuring quality at the national level and comparability of Bhutanese qualifications with other national and regional qualifications frameworks. It will also support national and international mobility. The framework promotes lifelong learning through its flexible credit transfer system, multiple pathways for education and training progression, and recognition of prior learning and experiences of the learners.

The BQF consists of eight levels of learning complexity structured around four domains: knowledge, skills, values, and application. Each level is defined by a descriptor, with higher levels indicating greater challenges and expectations for the learners.

Bhutan Qualifications and Professionals Certification Authority (BQPCA) will ensure the implementation of the BQF in close collaboration with key stakeholders. The BQF will be a dynamic document that is responsive to changing national priorities and rapid developments in the global context.

We are confident that the implementation of this revised BQF will contribute significantly to enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training in Bhutan, and promote national and international mobility for learners and workers.

Thank you!

(Duba)
DIRECTOR

Acronyms

ALC	Advanced Learning Course
BCSE	Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education
BCSEA	Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
BHSEC	Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate
BQF	Bhutan Qualifications Framework
BQPCA	Bhutan Qualifications and Professionals Certification Authority
BQR	Bhutan Qualifications Register
EMD	Education Monitoring Division
PLC	Post Literacy Course
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education & Training

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition

Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) is an integrated national framework that outlines all types of qualification in Bhutan. As an established and nationally accepted instrument, the BQF has been benchmarked against international practices in terms of standards.

The BQF aims to recognize all forms of learning systems, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning. It acknowledges technological advancements and recognizes contemporary modes of delivery.

The BQF outlines various Bhutanese qualifications to help learners, education and training providers, employing agencies, and the public understand the qualifications and related pathways across various education sectors.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the framework are to:

- i. Identify broad knowledge, skills and values a learner should be able to apply upon completing a qualification at a particular BQF level;
- ii. Facilitate and support a lifelong learning by offering flexible pathways that recognises formal and informal learning systems;
- iii. Promote equity, inclusivity, and confidence in the quality of qualifications in Bhutan;
- iv. Provide comprehensive guidelines for developing integrated and coherent qualifications which are aligned with national needs and priorities;
- v. Facilitate the recognition and comparability of qualifications offered by different providers within

- Bhutan, as well as qualifications offered by international providers; and
- vi. Promote the recognition of qualifications to enhance opportunities for learner and labour mobility.

1.3. Scope

The BQF covers a broad range of education systems, including community education, school education, higher education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and the monastic education system. Qualifications awarded in these systems must meet the respective learning domains, and the framework outlines its descriptors according to their levels.

The BQF clearly outlines the types of qualifications at the same level of complexity and indicates how one qualification may lead to another at the same or different level. It supports the lifelong learning goals of individuals by providing a basis for them to progress through pathways within different education and training systems. It also recognises flexible modes of delivery that leverage on rapid technological advancement.

However, the BQF does not encompass the following:

- i. Honorary symbolic awards such as honorary doctorates and degrees;
- ii. Certificate of attendance or completion; and
- iii. Professional registration and licensing, fellowships, or similar certifications.

1.4. Principles

Bhutan Qualifications Framework is founded on the following principles:

1.4.1. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes define what learners are expected to understand and be able to apply in terms of knowledge, skills,

values, and application. Qualifications based on learning outcomes support and facilitate a wider variety of learning pathways, enhance the transferability of formal learning (e.g., credits), and provide recognition to non-formal and informal learning.

1.4.2. Quality Assurance

The BQF aims to support and link to quality assurance arrangements and forms the basis for a systemic and sustained development of the quality of education and training. Quality assurance arrangements include the design and development of qualifications, approval of providers and their programmes that lead to the award of qualifications. Engaging external stakeholders on an ongoing basis is a critical component of quality assurance of the qualifications system.

1.4.3. Need-based

The BQF ensures that qualifications are based on the needs of the country and global demands. It also acknowledges the spiritual and rich cultural heritage of Bhutan, aligning with the Gross National Happiness policy framework and the vision of a developed Bhutan.

The BQPCA may review the BQF from time to time in consultation and agreement with stakeholders. Any changes to the BQF will be based on emerging needs and for the benefit of Bhutanese citizens.

1.4.4. Flexibility

The BQF acknowledges various forms of quality-assured learning modes gained through different modes of delivery to leverage on rapid technological advancement to promote lifelong learning. In addition to formal learning, non-formal and informal learning is recognised to allow learners to learn in ways most suited to their needs.

The BQF encourages lifelong learning and pathways are not necessarily hierarchical.

1.4.5. Trust and Accountability

The BQF is developed collaboratively through comprehensive stakeholder consultations based on active engagement, collaboration, mutual trust, and accountability.

1.5. Benefits

Bhutan Qualifications Framework will benefit the following stakeholders:

1.5.1. Learners

Learners can clearly identify the level of their qualification within the BQF. Moreover, they can evaluate their prior learning and identify potential pathways for lifelong learning.

1.5.2. Employing Agencies

Employers can identify the level of qualification held by the learner by referring to the level descriptors within the BQF and match the knowledge, skills, values and application based on their employment needs.

1.5.3. Institutions

Approved providers can develop educational and training programmes that align with the requirements of each accredited BQF qualification within the standards and processes established by the relevant competent authorities in Bhutan.

1.5.4. Qualification Agencies

Qualification agencies within and outside of Bhutan will have confidence in the award of BQF qualifications and will support the mapping of qualifications, whilst allowing them to provide qualification recognition services.

1.5.5. General Public

The general public can have access to comprehensive information on the full range of qualifications available in Bhutan, as well as equivalency mappings among different education systems and educational pathways to support lifelong learning opportunities for individuals.

1.5.6. International Community

The international community can access information on the BQF qualifications offered in Bhutan and facilitate the mobility of learners and workers across borders.

2. FEATURES OF BHUTAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

2.1. Definition of Qualification

A qualification is defined as the formal recognition of an individual's learning achievements, obtained when an awarding body assesses and confirms that the individual has met the required learning outcomes to a specified standard. This recognition is conferred in the form of certificates, diplomas, degrees or other titles, and provides formal acknowledgement of the value of the individual's learning outcomes in the labour market and education and training sectors.

2.2. Levels and Qualification Types

The BQF is a comprehensive framework that includes eight levels of qualifications across various education and training sectors, such as community education, school education, higher education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and monastic education. The levels represent the amount of learning, the complexity of knowledge, skills, values, and their application required at each level.

Each level is defined by a descriptor that indicates a hierarchy of relative learning difficulty, complexity, and depth. The higher the level, the greater the challenge and demand expected of a learner in order to be awarded the relevant qualification. A clear breakdown of the different types of qualifications and levels offered in various sectors is provided in Table 1 and 2.

2.3. Domain Description

2.3.1. Knowledge

The knowledge domain of the BQF describes the expected level of knowledge and understanding for each qualification level. The domain encompasses the following aspects:

- i. **Depth of knowledge:** It refers to the extent to which specific topics are covered in detail and explored in depth. It can be either general or specialized, and it reflects the level of understanding required to answer a question or perform an activity.

Table 1: Type of Qualifications and Levels.

BQF Level	Qualification Type
8	Doctoral Degree/ <i>Khewang</i> (མཁམ་དབང་།)
7	Master's Degree/ <i>Tsugla Gongma</i> (གཞུག་ལག་ལོང་མ།)
	Postgraduate Diploma
	Postgraduate Certificate
6	Bachelor's Degree (Honours)
	Bachelor's Degree/ <i>Tsugla Wogma</i> (གཞུག་ལག་འོག་མ།)
	Applied Degree
	Graduate Diploma
	Graduate Certificate
5	Advanced Diploma
4	Diploma
3	Certificate 3
	Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC)/ <i>Dringrim Gongma</i> (འབྲིང་རིམ་ལོང་མ།)
2	Certificate 2
	Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education (BCSE)/ <i>Dringrim Barma</i> (འབྲིང་རིམ་བར་མ།)
1	Certificate 1

Table 2: Qualification Types and Levels Based on Education Sector.

BQF Level	Community Education	School Education	TVET	Higher Education	Monastic Education
8				Doctoral Degree	<i>Khewang</i> མཁམ་དབང་།
7			Master's Degree Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate	Master's Degree Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate	<i>Tsugla Gongma</i> གཞུག་ལག་ཤོང་མ།
6			Applied Degree	Bachelor's Degree Bachelor's Degree (Honours) Graduate Diploma Graduate Certificate	<i>Tsugla Wogma</i> གཞུག་ལག་ཤོང་མ།
5			Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	
4			Diploma	Diploma	
3			Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate	Certificate 3	
2	Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education	Certificate 2	<i>Dringrim Barma</i> འགྲིང་རིམ་བར་མ།		
1	ALC	Certificate 1			

- ii. **Breadth:** It refers to the full range of subject knowledge, which can range from a single topic to a multi-disciplinary area of knowledge.
- iii. **Types of knowledge:** It refers to the range of knowledge types, from concrete to abstract, and from segmented to cumulative. The three core types of knowledge are explicit (documented information), implicit (applied information), and tacit (understood information).
- iv. **Complexity of knowledge:** It refers to the combination of depth, breadth, and types of knowledge.

2.3.2. Skills

The skills domain in this framework outlines the types, ranges, and complexities of skills that a learner is expected to demonstrate at each level, including:

- i. Literacy, numeracy, digital, entrepreneurial, and communication skills, and the ability to present knowledge and ideas to others.
- ii. Cognitive skills to access, record, and act on information from various sources appropriate to subject disciplines, and to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise.
- iii. Technical, communication and creative skills specific to particular disciplines, and the ability to integrate disciplines to solve problems, support flexible and analytical thinking, and to work collaboratively with others.

2.3.3. Values

The values domain in the BQF describes what a learner is expected to demonstrate at each level in terms of civic sense, sense of community, human dignity and self-efficacy, including ability to:

- i. Show interest in learning about people's beliefs, values, traditions, and worldviews;
- ii. Express interest in public affairs and issues, and actively participate in community issues;
- iii. Exhibit respect for other people and create space for others to express themselves;
- iv. Express belief in their ability to undertake actions to achieve goals; and
- v. Demonstrate awareness and the ability to resolve ethical and moral dilemmas.

2.3.4. Application

The application domain in this framework describes how a learner can combine the knowledge, skills, and values domains and apply them at each level, including the ability to:

- i. Demonstrate self-management and leadership skills in a profession or workplace, and assume responsibility for the performance of others;
- ii. Apply knowledge, skills, and values to specific contexts within civic life, work life, and lifelong learning;
- iii. Be confident and successful individuals, playing active and informed roles as citizens, and
- iv. Apply knowledge, skills, and values in contexts that involve taking individual responsibility, with some direction and accountability for the quality of outcomes.

2.4. Level Descriptors

Level descriptors are unique descriptions of the levels of complexity in a qualifications framework, using broad statements on knowledge, skills, and values, and applications that distinguish one level from the other. The level descriptors are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Level Descriptor of Bhutan Qualifications Framework

	Knowledge	Skills	Values	Application
Level	Knowledge that is:	Demonstrate skills that involve:	Demonstrate values that involve:	Applied in contexts that involve:
8	Substantial in broad areas and in-depth in specialised subject areas	<p>Applying expert and advanced processes to highly complex, diverse and emergent tasks or research</p> <p>Formulating and testing of theories and processes to resolve significant, highly complex, abstract and emerging issues for the creation of new knowledge</p> <p>Communicating research findings in the field of expertise and conveying ideas effectively and coherently to peers</p>	<p>Sustained awareness of self, others, and global character; respect for divergent views of norms and values; respect for diversity and interdependence with profound belief system; and be exemplary service to humanity and well-being</p> <p>Appreciation of complex and potentially divergent ethical standards and works to resolve these and tackle emerging ethical issues</p> <p>Sustained commitment to professional integrity,</p>	<p>Highly complex tasks, specialised with new and emerging aspects</p> <p>High level of autonomy and self-direction with authoritative and expert judgement</p> <p>Significant responsibility for self, others and outcomes, and for challenging new knowledge and ideas</p>

			knowledge creation, resilience, and demonstrate high entrepreneurial and intellectual flexibility	
7	Highly advanced or specialized	<p>Applying and evaluating various approaches/processes to highly complex tasks</p> <p>Developing and formulating processes and approaches to resolve highly complex and emergent issues and problems</p> <p>Communicating and critiquing using the language of instruction and demonstrating advanced English and Dzongkha skills</p>	<p>Advance level of awareness of self and others; role model accepted norms and values; respect for diversity and interdependence with sound belief system; and be of service to the community and its well-being</p> <p>Role modelling of ethical norms</p> <p>Demonstration of resilience and entrepreneurial skills, and a high level of commitment to profession or discipline</p>	<p>Complex tasks with some specialisation and emerging new aspects</p> <p>Significant autonomy and self-direction for expert judgement</p> <p>Responsibility to self and others to achieve sound outcomes and to seek new practice or knowledge</p>

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6	Advanced theoretical and technical	<p>Selecting and adapting processes to complex and unpredictable tasks</p> <p>Analysing and generating solutions to complex and unpredictable problems</p> <p>Conveying ideas (in written and oral formats using appropriate and different forms of presentation in both English and Dzongkha skills) confidently, accurately and coherently in a well-structured manner to varied audiences</p>	<p>High level of awareness of self and others;</p> <p>promote social norms and values; respect for diversity and interdependence with some belief system; and contribute to nation building and its well-being</p> <p>Strong commitment to ethical norms</p> <p>Strong commitment to professionalism, continuous learning, and resilience</p>	<p>Complex tasks that are subjected to change</p> <p>Acting autonomously with self-direction for significant judgement</p> <p>Responsibility for self, collective work and achievement of goals</p>
5	Specialised theoretical, technical and operational	<p>Selecting and applying standard and non-standard processes to complex tasks</p> <p>Analysing and generating solutions to complex and sometimes</p>	<p>Deep level of awareness of self and others; exhibit and represent accepted social norms and values; respect for diversity and interdependence; and</p>	<p>Stable tasks with some unpredictable changes</p> <p>Minimal guidance with self-direction or autonomy for sound and valid judgement</p>

		<p>unpredictable problems</p> <p>Communicating in a comprehensive and well-structured manner, for social, academic and professional purposes, with a high level of oral and written Dzongkha and English</p>	<p>contribute to nation building and its well-being</p> <p>Acceptance for and commitment to ethical norms</p> <p>Commitment to high quality professional work</p>	<p>Responsibility for self and collective work</p>
4	<p>Broad theoretical, technical and operational</p>	<p>Selecting and applying a range of standard processes relevant to varied and sometimes unpredictable tasks</p> <p>Selecting and applying a range of solutions involving formulation of solutions to resolve complex issues</p> <p>Demonstrating a high level of proficiency in English and Dzongkha</p>	<p>Strong level of awareness of self and others; and an appreciation of belief system, role of social norms, and the importance of relationship building</p> <p>Application of ethical norms and legal rules in decision-making; and comprehending the correlation between values and behaviour</p> <p>Commitment to own profession and quality of work</p>	<p>Stable tasks with predictable changes</p> <p>Broad guidance with some self-direction that require sound judgement</p> <p>Taking some responsibility for planning and coordination with others</p>

3	Theoretical with some technical and operational processes	<p>Applying a range of standard processes to known but varied tasks</p> <p>Selecting and applying a range of solutions to familiar and unfamiliar problems</p> <p>Communicating effectively and clearly, both oral and written, in both English and Dzongkha</p>	<p>Sound level of self-awareness and beliefs; and ability to apply social norms and build relationships</p> <p>Application of a set of ethical norms</p> <p>Commitment to own field of interest and apply self-management of learning and performance</p>	<p>Stable tasks with some aspects of change</p> <p>General guidance and supervision that require discretion and judgement</p> <p>Adapting to own behaviours to work with others</p>
2	Basic, factual and conceptual	<p>Applying standard processes relevant to carry out known tasks</p> <p>Applying a set of known solutions to solve simple and straightforward issues</p> <p>Using simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters</p> <p>developing basic proficiency in Dzongkha and English</p>	<p>Some level of self-awareness and beliefs, and appreciation of social norms; and significance of relationships</p> <p>Awareness of ethical norms, and openness to different activities</p> <p>Developing own knowledge and skills</p>	<p>Structured and stable tasks</p> <p>General support and supervision that require some discretion and judgement</p> <p>Collaboration with others to achieve goals</p>

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1	Foundational , every day and general	<p>Applying operational literacy, numeracy skills required to carry out simple tasks</p> <p>Applying simple solutions to solve simple and straightforward everyday issues</p> <p>Communicating using everyday expressions and simple phrases in Dzongkha and English</p>	<p>Basic awareness of self, beliefs, and social norms; and understand the significance of relationships</p> <p>Basic awareness of fundamental ethical norms, basic civil rights, and responsibilities</p> <p>Willingness to understand tasks and motivated to implement them successfully</p>	<p>Highly structured tasks with close support and supervision</p> <p>Minimal discretion and judgement</p> <p>Readiness to work together and share knowledge with others</p>
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3. STRUCTURE OF QUALIFICATION TYPE DESCRIPTOR

The structure of qualification type descriptors includes the following:

3.1. Purpose

The purpose statement clearly identifies why the qualification type is a feature of Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF). It specifies the qualification type used and explains its relevance to Bhutanese learners, employing agencies, and communities.

3.2. Level

The BQF level indicates the complexity of learning outcomes for the qualification types.

3.3. Credit Requirements

Each BQF qualification type has a credit value that indicates the estimated learning hours required to achieve the specified learning outcomes. One credit is equivalent to ten notional learning hours. To earn the lowest level of qualification in BQF, a minimum of 40 credits is required. However, accredited qualifications may require more credits depending on the specific area of study or requirements from professional bodies. Table 4 lists the minimum credit requirements for each qualification type.

3.4. Entry Requirements

The entry requirements for qualifications are typically established as a minimum standard for eligibility, and these requirements are typically explained by the respective BQF levels.

3.5. Relationship to Other Qualification Types

The relationship to other qualification types describes the connections between BQF qualifications type and potential pathways.

Table 4: Minimum Credits required for specific qualification types

BQF Level	Qualification Type	Minimum Credit
8	Doctoral Degree/ <i>Khewang</i> (མཁུང་དབང་།)	360
7	Master's Degree/ <i>Tsugla Gongma</i> (གཞུག་ལག་གོང་མ།)	180
	Postgraduate Diploma	120
	Postgraduate Certificate	60
6	Bachelor's Degree (Honours) Bachelor's Degree/ <i>Tsugla Wogma</i> (གཞུག་ལག་འོག་མ།)	480/120
	Applied Degree	360
	Graduate Diploma	120
	Graduate Certificate	60
	Advanced Diploma	240/120
4	Diploma	240
3	Certificate 3 Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC)/ <i>Dringrim Gongma</i> (འབྲིང་རིམ་གོང་མ།)	40 -
	Certificate 2 Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education (BCSE)/ <i>Dringrim Barma</i> (འབྲིང་རིམ་བར་མ།)	40 -
1	Certificate 1	40

Note: In the case of BHSEC and BCSE, the volume of learning is a minimum of 1600 instructional hours.

3.6. Variations (if any)

Some qualification types are offered across various education and training sectors. In cases where there are differences in contextual requirements, these variations are explained.

3.7. Certification of the Qualification

A BQF qualification shall be awarded by approved providers or awarding bodies. These providers or awarding bodies are accountable for performing assessments that lead to the award of the qualification. They are responsible for ensuring that the achieved learning outcomes meet the required quality standards and verifying that the graduate has met all the qualification requirements. All qualifications that comply with the BQF must use the Titling of Qualification Awards stated in Appendix 1.

3.8. Qualification Type Descriptors

There are 16 different types of qualification in the BQF, which are briefly described in the following sections.

3.8.1. Doctoral Degree/*Khewang*

Purpose

The Doctoral Degree/*Khewang* qualification enables an individual to apply a substantial body of knowledge to undertake original, in-depth research in one of the fields of specialisation and contribute new knowledge.

This qualification is typically the culmination of study that begins at the Bachelor's level and reaches a stage beyond the Master's level. The development takes place under the guidance of recognised experts in the field of study and under circumstances that allow the individual access to appropriate research resources.

The contribution to knowledge is evaluated by independent experts who apply contemporary international standards of the discipline. The hallmark of the qualification is the individual's

ability to conduct substantial independent research or scholarly creative activity, as evidenced by their educational institution and/or demonstrated through their submitted work.

The body of work that leads to the award of a doctoral degree may consist of one or more of the following:

- i. A thesis (the PhD);
- ii. Creative work in the visual or performing arts (the PhD);
- iii. A combination of a thesis or equivalent creative work with coursework (for the named doctorate, e.g. EdD);
- iv. A combination of a creative work in the visual or performing arts with a thesis (for the named doctorate); and/or
- v. Published work (for both the PhD and named doctorate, as appropriate).

The following types of Doctoral Degree are recognised:

- i. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD/DPhil)
- ii. Doctorate in a specified field or discipline - the named doctorate (e.g., EdD or the DMus)
- iii. Higher Doctorate (e.g., the Doctor of Science (DSc) or the Doctor of Literature (DLitt))

1) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD/DPhil)

A thesis is a written document that represents the entirety of an individual's research on a particular topic. It serves as the primary means of evaluating the award of a qualification. In some cases, coursework may also be required as part of the doctoral programme, but this will mainly serve as a preparation for the research required in the thesis. Individuals may also have the option to present creative work as part of the thesis requirement, where appropriate.

2) Doctorate in a specified field or discipline - the named doctorate (e.g., EdD or the DMus).

For a doctorate in a specific field, coursework may be included as part of the assessed programme. However, research or scholarly

creative activity, along with the associated thesis, must occupy at least two full-time academic years and account for no less than two-thirds of the overall credit for the degree.

The coursework must be at a doctoral degree standard and should be part of a coherent programme associated with the research work. Generally, it should cover no more than one full-time academic year or no more than one-third of the overall credit.

In order to obtain a named doctorate, an individual must achieve a passing grade in both the coursework and the thesis or its creative work equivalent.

3) Higher Doctorate (e.g., the Doctor of Science (DSc) or the Doctor of Literature (DLitt))

Higher Doctorates are awarded for independent work of exceptional quality, as judged by leading international experts, which is completed prior to an individual's application for the degree. Applicants are typically expected to have at least ten years of independent work experience and to have published extensively. In the visual or performing arts, applicants are expected to have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.

Publication will normally be in scholarly books and/or in reputable international journals. Individuals in the visual or performing arts will have made equally outstanding contributions in their creative work.

BQF level

The Doctoral Degree is at level 8 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Doctoral Degree requires at least 360 credits.

Entry requirements

The minimum entry requirement for a Doctoral Degree is typically a Master's Degree that includes a research component or its equivalent. However, in certain cases, a Bachelor's Degree (Honours) may suffice as the minimum entry requirement. Approved providers are responsible for setting specific entry requirements for their qualifications.

Relationship to other qualifications

This degree is the most advanced qualification on the BQF.

Variations

The Doctoral Degree is offered in higher education as Doctoral Degree and in monastic education as *Khewang*.

3.8.2. Master's Degree/*Tsugla Gongma*

Purpose

A Master's Degree enables an individual to apply for an advanced body of knowledge in a variety of contexts for research, a pathway for continuous learning, professional practice and/or for further studies. It usually builds on a Bachelor's Degree (Honours), Bachelor's Degree, Applied Degree or Postgraduate Diploma or an equivalent qualification. They may also build on extensive professional experience from a relevant field or coherent programme of study. Master's Degrees may be undertaken through coursework, research, or a combination of both.

BQF level

The Master's Degree is at level 7 on the BQF and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Master's Degree requires a minimum of 180 credits and potentially up to 240 credits. However, if the candidate holds a Bachelor's Degree (Honours), an equivalent qualification, or has

significant relevant professional experience, the programme may require fewer than 180 credits, but not fewer than 120 credits.

- i. **Masters by Research:** This degree is achieved through a research project presented in the form of a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper, or scholarly creative work, of at least 120 credits.
- ii. **Masters by Combination of Coursework and Research:** This degree is achieved through a thesis, dissertation, substantial research paper, or scholarly creative work, of at least 90 credits, and at least 30 credits in the form of coursework
- iii. **Masters by Coursework:** The degree is achieved through coursework consisting of courses, project work and research in varying combinations.

If a Master's Degree includes a supervised research component (i.e., Masters by Research or Masters by Combination of Coursework and Research), the research component should not be fewer than 90 credits.

The research graduate should be able to:

- i. Demonstrate a high level of skills in planning, executing and completing a piece of original research or creative scholarly work
- ii. Apply the skills learned during the programme to new situations.

The research is to be completed to internationally recognised standards, demonstrating that the graduate has the capacity for independent thinking.

Entry requirements

The entry qualification for a Master's Degree is a minimum Bachelor's Degree/Applied Degree or equivalent at level 6 or above on the BQF.

Approved providers are responsible for establishing entry requirements to qualifications. Admission to a Master's Degree

may be based on the evaluation of documentary evidence of the individual applicant's ability to undertake a Master's Degree in a specific field.

Relationship to other qualifications

An individual with a Master's Degree that includes a research component may be considered for admission to a programme leading to advanced study and/or original research leading to a Doctoral Degree.

Variations (if any)

The Master's Degree programme may be research-based, coursework, or the combination of both. The Master's Degree is offered in the higher education sector (Master's Degree) and the monastic education system (*Tsugla Gongma*).

3.8.3. Postgraduate Diploma

Purpose

The Postgraduate Diploma enables individuals to expand and deepen their theoretical knowledge, skills and other abilities relevant to the discipline to bridge the requirement gap demanded by employers. It prepares for independent research and further studies in the subject of the Postgraduate Diploma.

BQF level

The Postgraduate Diploma is typically at level 7 on the BQF and demonstrates learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Diploma requires at least 120 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry to Postgraduate Diploma is open to those who have achieved a Bachelor's Degree or Bachelor's Degree (Honours) or Applied Degree. Graduates of a Postgraduate Certificate may

continue into a Postgraduate Diploma with an additional 60 credits.

Relationship to other qualifications

A graduate who holds a Postgraduate Diploma may be considered for admission into a Master's Degree.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for Postgraduate Diploma.

3.8.4. Postgraduate Certificate

Purpose

This qualification enables an individual to extend and deepen knowledge and skills to bridge the requirement gap demanded by employers. It recognises continuing professional development or academic achievement in advance of a Bachelor's Degree.

BQF level

The Postgraduate Certificate is at level 7, and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Postgraduate Certificate requires at least 60 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry to the Postgraduate Certificates is open to those who have achieved either a Bachelor's Degree/Bachelor's Degree (Honours)/Applied Degree/Diploma in a similar subject, or relevant skills and knowledge acquired through appropriate work or professional experience.

Relationship to other qualifications

A Postgraduate Certificate provides the basis for postgraduate study and may lead to a Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Degree.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for Postgraduate Certificate.

3.8.5. Bachelor's Degree (Honours)

Purpose

The Bachelor's Degree (Honours) is designed to produce a graduate who can apply broad knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work or who can conduct research projects or independent study and qualify for further learning.

BQF level

The Bachelor's Degree (Honours) is at level 6 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor's Degree (Honours) requires a minimum of 480 credits, or may be a standalone 120-credit degree following a Bachelor's Degree.

Entry requirements

Entry to the Bachelor's Degree (Honours) requires a minimum of a Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC) or its equivalent.

For the 120-credit degree, the entry is open to those who have excelled in a Bachelor's Degree/Applied Degree.

Relationship to other qualifications

A Bachelor's Degree (Honours) provides the basis for postgraduate study at levels 6 or 7.

Variations (if any)

For the 480-credit Bachelor's Degree (Honours), an exit point option can be offered after meeting the requirements for a Bachelor's Degree.

3.8.6. Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma*

Purpose

The purpose of Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* qualification is to prepare a graduate with a broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of disciplines. The content is progressively developed to form a basis for postgraduate study and/or professional practice/Buddhist practice.

BQF level

The Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* is at level 6 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

A Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* requires at least 360 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry to the Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* is open to those who have successfully completed Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC) or its equivalent or a qualification at level 5 or above.

Relationship to other qualifications

A Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* may lead to any qualification at level 6 or 7.

Variations (if any)

The Bachelor's Degree/*Tsugla Wogma* is offered in both the higher education sector (Bachelor's Degree) and the monastic education system (*Tsugla Wogma*).

3.8.7. Applied Degree

Purpose

This qualification is designed to produce graduates with focused knowledge and skills within a particular field to meet the

requirements of the labour market or to qualify for further learning.

BQF level

The Applied Degree is at level 6 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

An Applied Degree requires at least 360 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry to the Applied Degree is open to those who have completed a minimum of Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate or its equivalent, Advanced Diploma, or Diploma.

Relationship to other qualifications

An Applied Degree may lead to any qualification at level 6 or 7 in either sector.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for the Applied Degree.

3.8.8. Graduate Diploma

Purpose

A degree at the advanced undergraduate level is commonly seen as bridging qualification to postgraduate study. It also offers an opportunity to expand one's knowledge and skills in a subject or discipline already familiar, or to develop expertise in a new area.

BQF level

The Graduate Diploma is at level 6 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Graduate Diploma requires at least 120 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry into the programme is open to those who hold a Bachelor's Degree or Applied Degree Graduates or equivalent. However, in accordance with the award's regulations, applicants who can demonstrate equivalent practical, professional, or educational experience may also be considered for admission.

Relationship to other qualifications

A Graduate Diploma may provide the basis for postgraduate study at levels 6 or 7.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for Graduate Diploma.

3.8.9. Graduate Certificate

Purpose

The purpose of this qualification is to provide individuals with the opportunity to pursue further study at an advanced undergraduate level. It is designed to provide a bridging qualification to postgraduate study for individuals who wish to develop their educational, professional, or vocational knowledge in a new discipline, profession, or subject area.

BQF level

The Graduate Certificate is at level 6 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Graduate Certificate requires at least 60 credits.

Entry requirements

Entry is open to Bachelor's Degree/Applied Degree graduates or equivalent. However, individuals who can demonstrate equivalent practical, professional, or educational experience of an

appropriate kind may also be granted entry, subject to the regulations of the award.

Relationship to other qualifications

A Graduate Certificate may provide the basis for postgraduate study and may lead to a Graduate Diploma or other qualifications at level 6 or 7.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for Graduate Certificate.

3.8.10. Advanced Diploma

Purpose

This qualification aims to qualify individuals with theoretical and/or technical knowledge and skills in specialised areas or contexts.

BQF level

The Advanced Diploma is at level 5 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

An Advanced Diploma requires a minimum of 240 credits, or may be a standalone 120-credit degree following a Diploma.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements.

Approved providers are responsible for establishing entry requirements to qualifications. Admission to an Advanced Diploma may be dependent on previous qualifications, entry tests, or experience.

Relationship to other qualifications

The Advanced Diploma may be a standalone qualification or may build on a Diploma. It may also lead to a Bachelor's Degree or other qualifications at levels 5 or 6.

Variations (if any)

The Advanced Diploma is offered in both the higher education sector and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector.

3.8.11. Diploma

Purpose

The purpose of the Diploma is to qualify individuals with specialized theoretical and/or technical knowledge, as well as the skills necessary to make informed judgments and interpretations within a specific field or aspect(s).

BQF level

The Diploma is at level 4 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

The Diploma requires a minimum of 240 credits.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements for the Diploma. Approved providers are responsible for determining the entry requirements for qualifications. Admission to a Diploma may be contingent on prior qualifications, entry tests, or relevant experience.

Relationship to other qualifications

The Diploma may be considered a standalone qualification, or it can build on a Certificate 3. It may also lead to an Advanced Diploma or higher qualification.

Variations (if any)

The Diploma will be offered in both the higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sectors.

3.8.12. Certificate 3

Purpose

The purpose of Certificate 3 qualification is to qualify individuals with a wide range of knowledge and skills necessary for a field(s)/areas of work or study.

BQF level

Certificate 3 is classified as a Level 3 qualification and reflects the corresponding learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

Certificate 3 requires a minimum of 40 credits but may range up to 120 credits.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements for Certificate 3. Approved providers are responsible for establishing entry requirements for qualifications. Admission to a Certificate 3 may be dependent on previous qualifications, entry tests, or relevant experience.

Relationship to other qualifications

Certificate 3 may be considered a standalone qualification or may build on Certificate 2. It may also lead to Diploma.

Variations (if any)

There are no variations for Certificate 3.

3.8.13. BHSEC/*Dringrim Gongma*

Purpose

The purpose of Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC)/*Dringrim Gongma* is to provide individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to pursue diverse educational pathways, training, work, and effective participation in civic or monastic life.

BQF level

BHSEC/*Dringrim Gongma* is classified as a Level 3 qualification and reflects the corresponding learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

A graduate of BHSEC/*Dringrim Gongma* should have approximately 1600 instructional hours, or typically 2 school years following Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Education (BCSE) or its equivalent.

Entry requirements

Entry to BHSEC/*Dringrim Gongma* is open to those who have completed Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education (BCSE) or *Dringrim Barma* or its equivalent.

Relationship to other qualifications

BHSEC/*Dringrim Gongma* builds on BCSE or its equivalent. It may also serve as a basis for higher education or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Variations (if any)

The BHSEC is offered in the school education sector, and the *Dringrim Gongma* is offered in the monastic education system.

3.8.14. Certificate 2

Purpose

The purpose of Certificate 2 qualification is to qualify individuals with a range of knowledge and skills necessary for a field(s) or areas of work or study.

BQF level

Certificate 2 is at level 2 and demonstrates the learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

Certificate 2 requires a minimum of 40 credits but may range up to 80 credits.

Entry requirements

There are no specific entry requirements.

Approved providers are responsible for establishing entry requirements to qualifications. Admission to a Certificate 2 may be dependent on previous qualifications, entry tests, or experience.

Relationship to other qualifications

Certificate 2 may be a standalone qualification or may build on Certificate 1. It may also lead to Certificate 3.

Variations (if any)

There is no variation for Certificate 2.

3.8.15. BCSE/Dringrim Barma

Purpose

The purpose of Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education (BCSE)/*Dringrim Barma* is to qualify individuals with basic knowledge, skills, values, and practical application to enable them

to make informed decision about the choice of stream and career alignment or monastic life.

BQF level

BCSE/*Dringrim Barma* is at level 2 of the BQF and is designed to demonstrate learning outcomes at that level.

Credit requirements

A graduate of BCSE/*Dringrim Barma* should have approximately 1600 instructional hours, or typically two school years.

Entry requirements

Entry to BCSE/*Dringrim Barma* is open to those who have completed Lower Secondary Education or its equivalent.

Relationship to other qualifications

BCSE/*Dringrim Barma* may provide a foundation for Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate (BHSEC)/*Dringrim Gongma* or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Variations (if any)

The BCSE is offered in the school education sector, while the *Dringrim Barma* is provided within the monastic education system.

3.8.16. Certificate 1

Purpose

The purpose of Certificate 1 is to qualify individuals with a functional and basic set of knowledge and skills for a specific field(s) or area(s) of work or study.

BQF level

Certificate 1 is at level 1 of the BQF, and demonstrates learning outcomes at the foundational level.

Credit requirements

To obtain Certificate 1, a minimum of 40 credits is required.

Entry requirements

No specific entry requirements are needed for Certificate 1.

Relationship to other qualifications

Certificate 1 is an entry qualification and may lead to Certificate 2 or Certificate 3.

Variations (if any)

Certificate 1 will be offered by the TVET and the community education sectors.

The community education sector offers the Advanced Learning Course (ALC) at BQF level 1, which is a vocational skills programme that prepares individuals for entry-level jobs. The ALC programme is one and a half years in duration and involves approximately 900 instructional hours. While completion of a Post Literacy Course (PLC) is not a requirement for entry into ALC, the ALC programme may build on the foundation of literacy and numeracy skills acquired during a PLC programme, which is a one-year literacy and numeracy programme that involves approximately 600 instructional hours. Upon completing ALC, graduates may apply for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for their vocational skills at level 1 that they gained during the programme. Graduates of ALC may also advance to BQF level 2 or higher.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1. Governing Body

Bhutan Qualifications and Professionals Certification Authority (BQPCA) was established in 2023, with its scope and remit governed by legislation. As the guardian of Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF), the BQPCA is the competent authority for quality assurance, qualifications accreditation, and professional certification. Currently, the BQPCA is comprised of four Councils: The Higher Education Quality Council, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Quality Council, the Medical and Health Professionals Council, and the Engineering Professionals Council. Additional councils may be established in response to national needs.

Each council is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of members with expertise and experience in their respective sectors. The TACs provide technical advice to their respective councils and the BQPCA as a whole.

4.2. Bhutan Qualifications Register

All accredited BQF qualifications are listed on Bhutan Qualifications Register (BQR). Basic information on the qualifications, programmes, awarding providers and accreditation duration are stated in the BQR to assist learners and other global stakeholders to obtain the key information of a qualification.

Only qualifications that are approved as meeting the requirements of the BQF and relevant quality standards are listed on the BQR. The register also contains the details of providers and their programmes leading to a BQF qualification.

All accredited qualifications are listed in Bhutan Qualifications Register (BQR). The BQR provides basic information about each qualification, including the programme details, awarding institution, and accreditation period, to help students and

stakeholders worldwide understand the qualification's key features.

Qualifications are only listed on the BQR if they have been approved as meeting the requirements of the BQF and relevant quality standards. Additionally, the BQR includes information on providers and their programmes that lead to accredited qualifications.

5. LIFELONG LEARNING

5.1. Overview

The BQF recognises learning gained through different ways. It acknowledges the importance of prior learning and aims to facilitate progression pathways between higher, vocational, monastic, community, and school education sectors. The BQF has three primary education pathways: Individual Development, Credit Transfer, and Recognition of Prior Learning.

Competent authorities are responsible for implementing mechanisms that promote lifelong learning, such as designing and developing lower-level qualifications that can serve as a pathway to higher qualifications, recognizing prior learning, and establishing a flexible credit transfer system.

5.2. Key mechanisms to support lifelong learning

The BQF makes lifelong learning a reality by encouraging greater collaboration between public, private, and institutional sectors within and among education sectors. This is achieved through articulation arrangements that facilitate advanced placement for learners. The BQF's level descriptors and credit system play a crucial role in determining comparability between qualifications, enabling the determination of parity at the same level across different sectors. Additionally, the BQF's accreditation of qualifications ensures that there is consistency and quality across different types of BQF qualifications awarded by different sectors at the same level.

By linking qualifications, the BQF supports learners by indicating all possible opportunities and learning pathways for individual progress. The BQF acknowledges the recognition of prior learning which provides opportunities for individuals with

knowledge and skills acquired from work or life experience and self-learning to be assessed and attain qualifications.

The BQF recognizes credit transfer for the purpose of accessing and attaining higher-level qualifications, which reduces duplication of learning and learning time. This widens access and progression to learners who actively seek to upgrade their qualifications and acquire advanced skills and competencies for career development, thus fulfilling industry needs and providing better life opportunities

5.2.1. Pathways

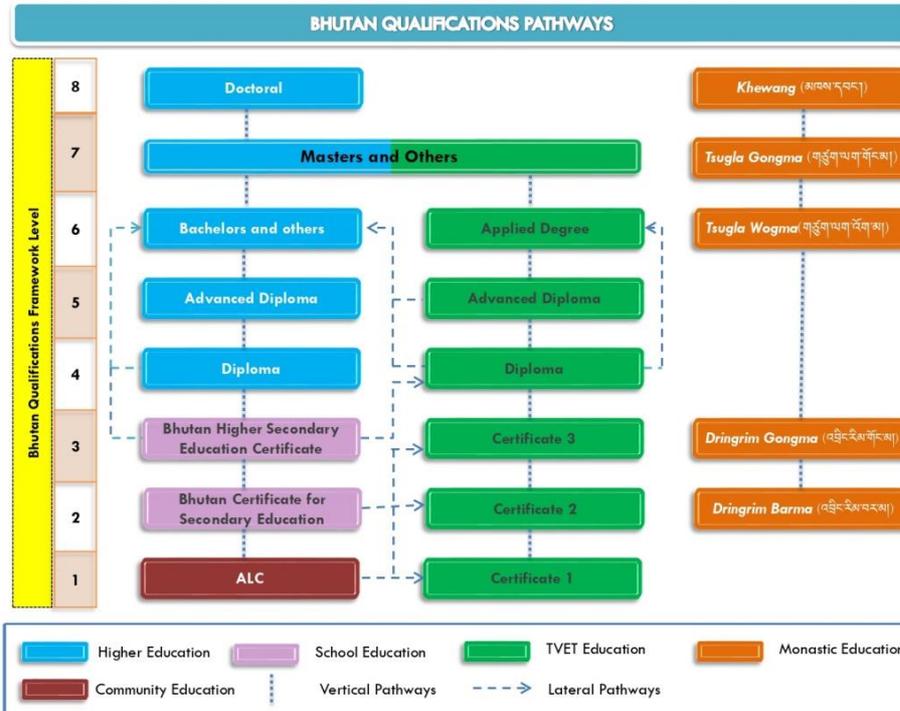
The BQF fosters links between qualifications across various education sectors and provides flexible learning pathways and opportunities for learners with diverse backgrounds and needs. It also promotes collaboration between QA agencies and education and training providers, with the goal of facilitating lifelong learning and cultivating a culture of learning. Accredited qualifications will include information on pathways, credit transfer, and recognition of prior learning.

Since the BQF encourages lifelong learning, the learning pathways are not necessarily hierarchical, and the pathways illustrated in Figure 1 below are only indicative.

5.2.2. Credit Transfer

The BQF provides guidance on the minimum credit required for each qualification type, but it does not regulate the transfer of credits. Credits can be obtained through formal learning and assessment, as well as recognition of prior learning.

Figure 1: Bhutan Qualifications Pathways



Credit transfer is a process that enables learners to have credits earned in one context recognized in another context. Further, this is a way to accept components of a previous qualification as meeting the learning outcomes for components in another qualification, so the learner need not take it as part of that qualification. This reduces the number of components (and the length of time) required to complete a qualification.

To support this, there should be a flexible credit transfer system in place that can quantify and record learning achievements. This includes information on credit transfer within the design of qualifications and processes within education and training providers.

5.2.3. Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to a systematic process that involves the identification, documentation, and assessment of prior experiential learning, including knowledge, skills, values, and application. The RPL process aims to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes, irrespective of time and place, and is certified accordingly.

RPL can enable individuals to gain entry to a qualification or acquire a formal qualification that matches the required competencies, contributing to enhancing their employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion, and self-esteem.

6. NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

The BQF is supported by the following national quality assurance mechanisms.

6.1. Overview of Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The BQF is supported by both external and internal quality assurance mechanisms. These mechanisms are managed by competent authorities responsible for each sector, including:

- i. Bhutan Qualifications and Professionals Certification Authority (BQPCA) is responsible for the sectors under respective councils.
- ii. Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA), the Education Monitoring Division (EMD), and School Curriculum Division under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development are responsible for the school sector.
- iii. The Programme Coordination Division, Department of Education Programme is responsible for the community sector.
- iv. The Dratshang and Chhoedey Lhentshog are responsible for the monastic sector.

The internal quality assurance of education and training providers is a shared responsibility between the providers and the relevant operational departments.

6.2. External Quality Assurance Mechanisms of Qualifications

The BQPCA is the apex body responsible for the quality of BQF qualifications through mechanisms that guarantee:

- The need for the qualification;
- The design of qualifications meets the requirements of the BQF;

- The promotion of pathways and credit transfer;
- The recognition of non-formal and informal learning; and
- The maintenance of Bhutan Qualifications Register (BQR).

6.3. External Quality Assurance Mechanism of Providers and Their Programmes Leading to A Qualification

The relevant Ministries are responsible for the approval and establishment of providers to operate in Bhutan. If a Ministry determines that there is no national need for a provider or receives a recommendation from the competent authority of the relevant sector, it may choose to close the provider.

Each sector has its own competent authority responsible for ensuring the quality of education and training providers and their programmes leading to a qualification.

- i. The Higher Education Quality Council is responsible for overseeing the design and development of higher education qualifications, as well as the education and training providers offering programmes leading to a qualification in the higher education sector.
- ii. In the case of specialised fields of study, e.g., medical education, BQPCA draws on the expertise of respective professional councils to ensure the quality of qualifications and the programmes leading to a qualification and based on the specific standards. For example, the Medical and Health Professionals Council ensures the fulfilment of requirements for medical and health education.
- iii. For TVET, the TVET Quality Council shall provide oversight of qualifications design and development, providers and programmes leading to a qualification.

In addition, currently the agencies with relevant authority are:

- i. In absence of a Council under BQPCA, the Dratshang and Chhoe dey Lhentshog are responsible for quality assurance in the monastic education system. This includes the establishment of the monastic institutions, and of programmes leading to a qualification.
- ii. For the community education sector, the Programme Coordination Division, Department of Education Programme is responsible for ensuring the provision of community programmes across Bhutan starting from the establishment of centres until the completion of the course.
- iii. For school qualifications, the Education Monitoring Division is responsible for conducting monitoring of schools to assess their performance, while Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment is responsible for conducting national-level assessments to ensure that learners achieve learning outcomes at the specific level. The School Curriculum Division is responsible for developing the curriculum and providing the necessary support for curriculum implementation in schools.

6.4. Internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Operational departments or providers are responsible for Internal Quality Assurance, which will focus on the following aspects:

- i. Designing and developing qualifications and curriculum that meet the current and emerging needs of the nation;
- ii. Developing quality programmes that lead to a BQF qualification;
- iii. Implementing appropriate teaching, learning and assessment approaches;
- iv. Ensuring that learners achieve the desired learning outcomes for each qualification;

- v. Promoting a culture of quality and values among the learners; and
- vi. Creating an environment where accountability is valued and autonomy is earned.

6.5. External Linkages

Establishing linkages between education and training providers is a beneficial approach to improving the quality of education and training, as well as serving wider social objectives. Internationalization initiatives encourage collaboration among providers and promote mutual understanding, facilitating the mobility of learners and workers. The increasing focus on internationalization and quality assurance in education and training is shaping the global development of education and training. This involves a deliberate and continuous effort to make education and training more responsive to the demands and opportunities associated with globalization, including changes in societies, economies, and labour markets.

Internationalization can improve the quality of education and training, including:

- i. Enhancing international cooperation, networking and capacity building;
- ii. Fostering the internationalisation of curriculum and qualification recognition;
- iii. Improving graduate employability by providing international experience and exposure;
- iv. Increasing global awareness and understanding; and
- v. Benchmarking institutional performance against international best practices.

GLOSSARY

Accreditation of a qualification means approval by the competent authority that the qualification meets the requirements of Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) and any quality standards set by the relevant competent body.

Approved providers are those approved by the competent authority based on the quality standards within the respective sector. These providers deliver programmes leading to an accredited BQF qualification.

Awarding body is a body that issues qualifications (certificates, diplomas or other titles) formally recognizing the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, values and their applications) of an individual, following an assessment process.

Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) is an integrated national framework that outlines all qualification types according to the various education sectors in Bhutan. The BQF, an established and nationally accepted instrument, has been benchmarked against international practices in terms of standards.

Community education is the creation of lifelong learning opportunities for community members to improve their quality of life, and promote entry into further education and training (e.g., non-formal and continuing education).

Comparability of qualifications is the comparison of one qualification with another to determine the degree of similarity of qualifications (including the purpose, level, credit requirement, learning outcomes, and quality assurance) issued at sectoral, national, regional, or international levels.

Competence is the proven ability to apply knowledge, skills and values in a defined context, such as education, work, personal or professional development.

Competent authority is a relevant organisation empowered and/or approved to execute various functions including external quality assurance.

Components of a qualification are known as units, courses, modules, competencies, or units of competency. They are the smallest part of a qualification that can be individually assessed and certified.

Credit is a quantitative measurement that represents the volume of learning based on the estimated learning hours to attain the learning outcomes. One credit is equivalent to 10 notional learning hours.

Credit transfer is a process that allows individuals who have achieved credit in one context to have it valued and recognised in another context.

Formal learning refers to learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (such as in an education or training provider or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources) that is intentional and leads to certification.

Higher education refers to all types of study at post-secondary education which are recognized by competent authorities and offered by institutions belonging to the higher education system in the host country.

Informal learning refers to learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Instructional hours are used within the school and community education sectors to describe the timetabled hours required for the programme.

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do after completing a course or programme. Learning outcomes are references for

standard and quality, as well as for developing and delivering curriculum in terms of teaching and learning that determines the credits and the assessment of students.

Level descriptors are unique descriptions of the levels of complexity of a qualifications framework, using broad statements on knowledge, skills and values, and their application to distinguish one level from another.

Lifelong learning means all learning activities undertaken throughout one's life, with the aim of improving competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

Monastic education refers to the traditional Buddhist form of education and remains the central form of spiritual learning and development in Bhutan. Monastic education provides a distinct medium of acquiring knowledge, skills, and values, and their applications. There are a number of public and private monastic education systems within Bhutan, each with their own established governance arrangements.

Non-formal learning refers to learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time, or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Notional learning hours include all the learning and assessment activities required to achieve the learning outcomes, such as lecture, tutorial, seminar, research, practical, project work, clinical practice, studio work, fieldwork, work-based learning, as well as preparing for and undertaking assessment.

Programme is an approved course of study that provides a structured learning experience leading to a Bhutan Qualifications Framework (BQF) qualification.

Providers may include centres, schools, colleges, institutions, and universities across the various sectors in Bhutan.

Qualification refers to the formal outcome of an assessment process, in which an awarding body determines that an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes to a given standard. It confers official recognition of the value of the individual's learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. Qualifications can take the form of certificates, diplomas, degrees, or other titles, depending on the level and nature of the learning achieved.

Recognition of prior learning refers to a systematic process that involves identifying, documenting, and assessing an individual's prior experiential learning, including, knowledge skills, and values and their applications. RPL's purpose is to determine the extent to which an individual has achieved the desired learning outcomes through formal, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and community education, irrespective of time and place. The assessment of prior learning can provide access to a programme of study leading to a qualification

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to education and training that aims to equip individuals with the competencies required in a particular occupation or more broadly on the labour market.

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APPENDIX

Titling of BQF Qualifications

Qualification Titles

All BQF qualifications shall adhere to the following titling conventions.

Qualifications listed on the BQF are identified by a generic title, followed by a designator that specifies the main discipline or subject area. Additional qualifiers or subject areas may be included in brackets after the qualification field.

The titling conventions of BQF accredited qualifications and awards are:

1. Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of *broad field of study*
2. Master of *broad field of study*
3. Postgraduate Diploma of *broad field of study*
4. Postgraduate Certificate of *broad field of study*
5. Bachelor of *broad field of study* (Honours)
6. Bachelor of *broad field of study* (which may be followed by the name of a major)
7. Graduate Diploma of *broad field of study*
8. Graduate Certificate of *broad field of study*
9. Advanced Diploma of *field of study/Occupation*
10. Diploma of *field of study/Occupation*
11. Certificate 3 in *field of study/Occupation*
12. Certificate 2 in *field of study/Occupation*
13. Certificate 1 in *field of study/Occupation*
14. Bhutan Higher Secondary Education Certificate
15. Bhutan Certificate for Secondary Education

Monastic titling

1. མཁམ་དབང། Doctor of Buddhist Studies
2. གཙུག་ལག་ལོང་མ། Master of Buddhist Studies
3. གཙུག་ལག་འོག་མ། Bachelor of Buddhist Studies
4. འབྲིང་རིམ་ལོང་མ། Certificate in Higher Secondary Education
5. འབྲིང་རིམ་བར་མ། Certificate in Middle Secondary Education

BQF qualifications awarded must adhere to these conventions.

Conventions for post nominal

Providers are required to provide details of the post-nominal associated with each qualification.

Abbreviations for qualifications should conform to international conventions, recognizing that there may be variations in the titles and descriptions of some qualifications across nations.

Graduates who have earned a BQF award may use the approved abbreviation for the qualification as a post-nominal, in accordance with accepted conventions for qualifications.

An example would be 'Jigme Dorjee, BA'. Other examples are:

BSc (Geology) Bachelor of Science, majoring in Geology

BEng, Bachelor of Engineering

MBBS, Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

PGradCertIT, Postgraduate Certificate in Information Technology

PGradDipSusDev, Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development

MBA, Master of Business Administration

PhD, Doctor of Philosophy

Protected terms

An approved provider must seek approval from the relevant competent body before using the following terms, including their vernacular translations, for the purpose of

- i. Using such words for the purpose of naming the provider, or
- ii. Using such words for the purpose of naming a qualification to be awarded.

However, if a provider is established by an Act of Parliament or Royal Charter, they are exempt from this requirement.

The protected terms include:

- i. Bhutan
- ii. Bhutanese
- iii. Royal
- iv. National
- v. University
- vi. All BQF qualification type titles
- vii. Others terms or names that are under the authority of the Department of Media, Creative Industry and Intellectual Property.

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