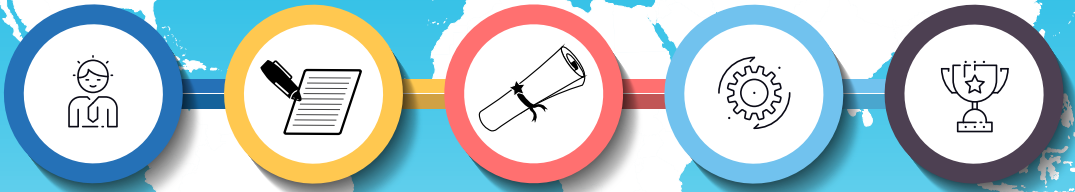




Turkish Qualifications  
Framework

# TURKISH

## REFERENCING REPORT



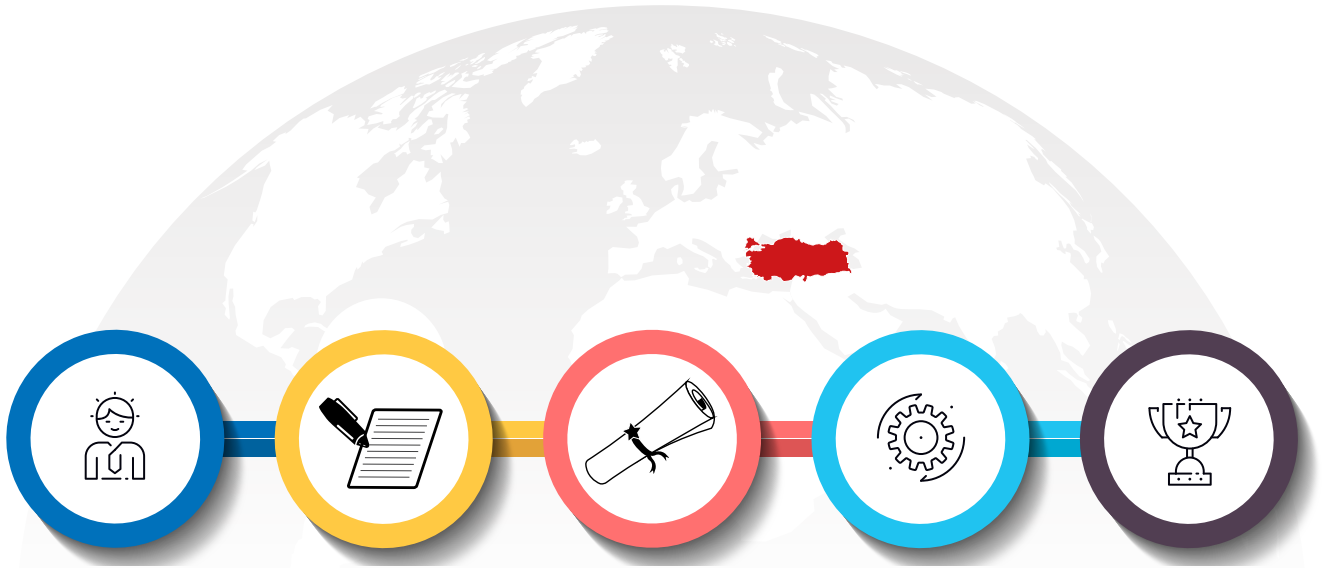
Referencing of the Turkish Qualifications Framework  
to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong  
Learning and Self-Certification to the Framework of  
Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area



Ankara, December 2016

# TURKISH

## REFERENCING REPORT



Referencing of the Turkish Qualifications Framework  
to the European Qualifications Framework for  
Lifelong Learning and Self-Certification to the  
Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher  
Education Area

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Having a national qualifications system that enhances the quality of education and training and strengthens the link between education and employment has been among the priority needs for Turkey. Therefore, Turkey has made an effort to develop the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) which consists of eight levels and based on learning outcomes. The TQF will meet the education and training needs of all individuals through lifelong learning, support and ensure the development of qualifications required by the labour market.

The overall objectives of the TQF are to integrate qualifications available in Turkey in an overarching framework, improve the quality of qualifications, promote and provide systematic support to lifelong learning, maximize national and international transparency as well as recognition and provide opportunities to all individuals of the community. Since an integrated qualifications framework has been developed at national level for the first time, the TQF has brought a range of reforms to the national qualifications system in Turkey.

The TQF has been prepared by the joint work of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in cooperation with the ministries, public authorities, professional bodies, trade unions, employer associations, student council and relevant social stakeholders. The TQF has been officially adopted with the publication of the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles for the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework in the Official Journal No. 29537 on 19 November 2015. Since the Regulation has been approved by a Cabinet Decision, it has a very strong legal status.

The report for the referencing of the TQF to the EQF and self-certification to the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) will be referred to as Turkish Referencing Report in short. It presents the official referencing of the TQF to the EQF and confirms that the TQF is compatible with the QF-EHEA.

The Turkish Referencing Report has been submitted to the European Commission following the approval of the TQF Council on 29/11/2016.

The national bases of the Turkish Referencing Report are the TQF Regulation and the TQF Paper. These have been developed on the basis of arrangements which are included in many policy documents and priorities of Turkey such as increasing the quality of education and training system, strengthening the relationship between employment and education, recognizing prior learning and improving quality assurance systems. The international bases of this Report are recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe and the initiatives of the European Higher Education Area in which Turkey is involved.

The studies for the preparation of the Turkish Referencing Report have been carried out by the Drafting Team under the supervision and guidance of the TQF-EQF Referencing Committee and the TQF Council. Prof. Mile Dželalija from Croatia and Dr. Georg Hanf from Germany were involved as the international experts and Edwin Mernagh from Ireland and John Hart from Scotland took part as technical experts. We express our gratitude for their participation and contributions to the members of the TQF Council, the TQF-EQF Referencing Committee, the Drafting Team, the international and the technical experts, all the relevant institutions and organizations involved in the preparation process of the referencing report, and also to VQA staff for their support.



# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACB</b>	Authorised Certification Body
<b>ALES</b>	Examination for Academic Personnel and Graduate Education
<b>BoE</b>	Board of Education
<b>CEDEFOP</b>	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
<b>CoHE</b>	Council of Higher Education
<b>DİSK</b>	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
<b>ECVET</b>	European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training
<b>EHEA</b>	European Higher Education Area
<b>ENIC</b>	European Network of Information Centres in the European Region
<b>ENQA</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
<b>EQAVET</b>	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
<b>EQF</b>	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
<b>ESG</b>	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>European Frameworks</b>	EQF and QF-EHEA
<b>HAK-İŞ</b>	Hak Confederation of Workers' Unions
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>HEQB</b>	Higher Education Quality Board
<b>IEC</b>	International Electrotechnical Commission
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>ISCO</b>	International Standard Classification of Occupations
<b>IUC</b>	Inter-University Council
<b>KAMU-SEN</b>	Confederation of Unions of Public Employees of Turkey
<b>KESK</b>	Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions
<b>LLL</b>	Lifelong Learning
<b>LYS</b>	Undergraduate Placement Exam
<b>MEMUR-SEN</b>	Confederation of Public Servants Trade Unions
<b>MKTS</b>	Credit System for Vocational Education and Training in Turkey
<b>MoLSS</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
<b>MoNE</b>	Ministry of National Education

# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>NARIC</b>	National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
<b>NCP</b>	National Coordination Point
<b>NOS</b>	National Occupational Standard
<b>NQ</b>	National Qualification
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>NVQS</b>	National Vocational Qualifications System
<b>OSYM</b>	Student Selection and Placement Centre
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QF-EHEA</b>	Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
<b>TESK</b>	Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen
<b>TİSK</b>	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
<b>TOBB</b>	The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
<b>TQF</b>	Turkish Qualifications Framework
<b>TQF Councils</b>	TQF Coordination Council and TQF Council
<b>TQF Regulation</b>	Regulation on the Principles and Procedures for the Implementation of Turkish Qualifications Framework
<b>Student Council</b>	National Student Council of Higher Education Institutions of Turkey
<b>TURKAK</b>	Turkish Accreditation Agency
<b>TÜRK-İŞ</b>	Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions
<b>TYYC</b>	Higher Education Qualifications Framework for Turkey
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training
<b>VQA</b>	Vocational Qualifications Authority
<b>YDS</b>	Test for Foreign Language Knowledge
<b>YGS</b>	Transition to Higher Education Exam
<b>YÖDEK</b>	Commission for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education
<b>YOKSIS</b>	Higher Education Information System

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The Turkish Referencing Report presents the referencing of the TQF to the EQF and self-certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA. The most important principles of the methodology followed in the drafting of the report are transparency and comprehensibility.

The establishment of the TQF will increase the quality of education system and strengthen the relationship between employment and education which are the priority needs of Turkey. For this reason the national qualifications framework and quality assurance are built into legislative arrangements regarding primary education, secondary education, vocational education and higher education and where appropriate the recognition of prior learning is also incorporated.

The national bases of the Turkish Referencing Report are the TQF Regulation and the TQF Paper. These have been prepared by the technical working groups and the NQF Preparation Commission comprising of representatives from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and Council of Higher Education (CoHE) under the coordination and with the participation of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), and finalized through the opinions and suggestions of all the relevant bodies and institutions. The international bases of this Report are the recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe and the initiatives of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in which Turkey is involved.

MoNE, CoHE, and VQA as the bodies responsible for qualifications in Turkey have been actively involved in the whole process from the preparation of the TQF to the finalization of the Turkish Referencing Report. The TQF Regulation provides a new inter-agency coordination and operation architecture for the education and qualifications system in Turkey especially including qualifications, quality assurance and recognition of prior learning. This new structure shall be operated jointly by these three bodies.

The technical and logistical assistance have been provided by VQA through projects co-financed by the European Union and the Turkish government.

The Turkish Referencing Report consists of five main chapters and annexes.

**The first chapter** explains the education, training and qualifications system in Turkey. Following the explanation of each education level, relevant qualifications are presented. The national vocational qualifications system and validation of non-formal and informal learning are also addressed in this chapter.

**The second chapter** addresses the TQF. The purposes, scope, development process, architecture, implementation and governance of the TQF and the referencing process are summarized.

**The third chapter** includes the referencing of the TQF to the EQF and responses to each referencing criterion.

**The fourth chapter** addresses the self-certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA. The responses regarding the each of the seven criteria and six procedures in the self-certification are included in this chapter.

**The fifth chapter** describes the activities and the possible challenges foreseen in the TQF implementation process.

The approach adopted requires that the Turkish Referencing Report will be as brief as possible, and that additional information will be annexed. Where appropriate, hyperlinks to further information are also provided and listed on the last page of the Report.



# 1.

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND QUALIFICATIONS IN TURKEY

---

The following is a brief summary description of the education system and the qualifications in Turkey.

Education is a constitutional right and is offered by the state at public schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) free of charge. Additionally, it is possible to open private schools and HEIs at all levels and for all types of education. There are also conservatories affiliated with the higher education institutions at lower secondary and secondary education levels.

The education and training system in Turkey is planned and operated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in close cooperation with all relevant public, private and non-governmental stakeholders including learners and parents.

The basic principles of the Turkish national education system under the National Education Basic Law No. 1739 (1973) are as follows:

- (i) To educate citizens of the Republic of Turkey as those who know their duties and responsibilities and act in accordance with all policies and principles as expressed in the Constitution of Turkey,
- (ii) To educate individuals as people who are constructive, creative and productive; are accountable to public; prize the personality and entrepreneurship; respect to human rights, hold a broad vision of world, free and scientific power of thinking and personality and character which is developed healthfully and physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and emotionally balanced.
- (iii) To prepare individuals for life and to ensure them to acquire occupations which will make them happy and contribute to the happiness of society, by providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and habit of working as well as improving their interest, ability and talents;
- (iv) To improve the welfare and happiness of Turkish citizens and society; on the other hand, support and accelerate the economic, social and cultural development through national unity and integrity, and finally to make Turkish nation a constructive, creative, and outstanding partner of the contemporary civilization.

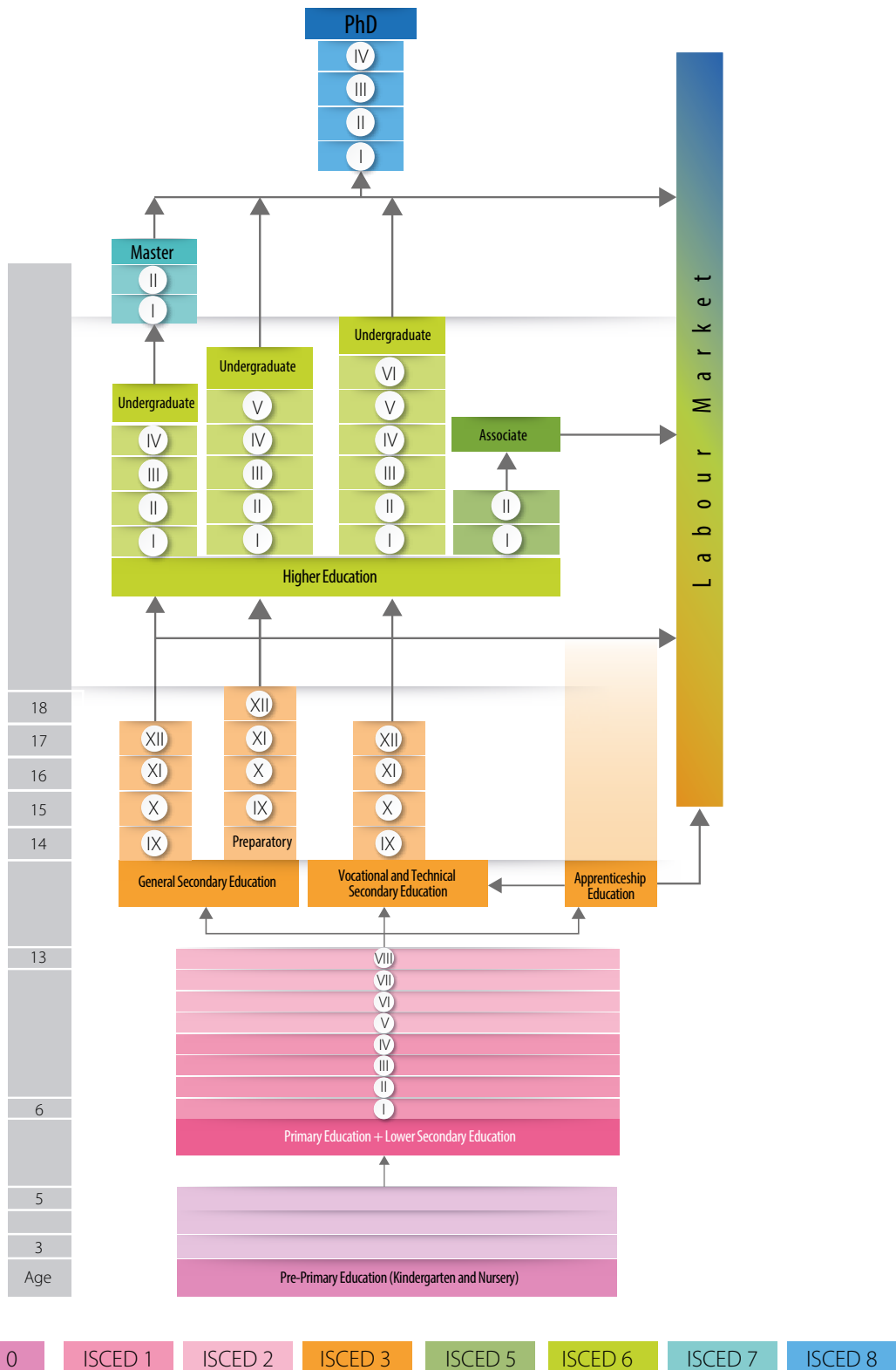
According to article 18 of this law, the Turkish national education system is formed with two main sections: formal education and non-formal education. Informal learning is also recognised in the education system through validation procedures.

- (i) Formal (structured) education refers to institutionalized, chronologically and hierarchically structured education from preschool education to higher education.
- (ii) Non-formal (semi-structured) education refers to an organized or systematic education or training activity conducted beside or outside the formal (structured) education.
- (iii) Informal (unstructured) learning refers to knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that every individual obtains from their daily experiences and relations with the environment (at home, work and during leisure time; from models and attitudes of family and friends; via trips, reading newspapers and books or listening to radio, watching movies on TV or at the cinema).

The figure below illustrates the formal education system in Turkey.



Figure 1.1. Formal Education System in Turkey



### ***The Education and Qualifications System under the responsibility of Ministry of National Education***

MoNE conducts educational activities from the preschool education to the end of secondary education in a centralized manner. Education programmes at basic and secondary education are developed by MoNE and implemented on national basis.

Compulsory education in Turkey was increased to 12 years from 8 years and divided into three four-year stages in 2012. The first stage is primary education (grades 1-4), the second stage is lower secondary education (grades 5-8) and third stage is secondary education (grades 9-12). The compulsory education period generally refers to the ages between 6 and 18 excluding pre-school.

Individuals who have special training needs can pursue their education together with their peers within the framework of inclusion/integration programmes as well as in special training schools and institutions in all types and levels depending on their training needs and performance levels.

### ***The Education and Qualifications System under the responsibility of Council of Higher Education***

The national authority responsible for higher education is CoHE. The main regulation for higher education is the Higher Education Law No. 2457 (1981). In Turkey, higher education is planned centrally; however, higher education institutions are operationally independent and vested with administrative and financial autonomy and have legal entity status. Higher education is provided at universities, higher technology institutes, and higher vocational schools established by foundations. Graduate education is only provided by universities and higher institutes of technology.

Universities and higher institutes of technology need to get permission to start each new programme from CoHE. They can award diplomas at undergraduate, graduate and PhD levels. Universities can also offer associate degree programmes. Higher vocational schools established by foundations only provide associate degree programmes which are two-year programmes and leading to the practice of an occupation.

### ***The National Vocational Qualifications System under the responsibility of the Vocational Qualifications Authority***

The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) was established in 2006 by the Vocational Qualifications Authority Law No. 5544 in order to establish and implement a national vocational qualifications system in line with the principles widely accepted at EU level. VQA is not a provider of education or training, but regulates the preparation of national occupational standards (NOS) and national qualifications (NQs) by taking the labour market needs into consideration. VQA also coordinates the conduct of assessment and certification activities by Authorized Certification Bodies (ACBs). These ACBs can be ministries or other public bodies, professional organizations, labour unions, trade associations, LLL centres or universities, or private enterprises.

The objectives of the VQA include: to establish and operate the national vocational qualifications system; to pave the way for creating qualified labour force by ensuring the link between education and employment; and to ensure effective and efficient provision of activities according to economic and social needs. VQA is also responsible for ensuring the dissemination of a quality assurance culture and awareness across the educational and business worlds, promoting LLL, and facilitating labour force mobility.

## **1.1. Education and Qualifications System under the Responsibility of MoNE**

### **1.1.1. Introduction**

The education system under the responsibility of MoNE consists of basic education, general secondary education, vocational and technical secondary education and non-formal education.

Decisions on educational activities related to opening, monitoring and closing of schools, development of education programmes, assignment and relocation of teachers, financing and investment are made by MoNE in a centralised way. Decisions taken at local level are administered by provincial and district directorates of MoNE.

All education programmes including curricula at all stages are prepared by relevant units of MoNE, submitted to the Board of Education for validation and put into effect with the approval of the Minister. These programmes are reviewed and updated regularly by the Board of Education or the relevant units when necessary.

Public schools are funded by the state budget through MoNE and their material facilities are public state property. These schools provide education and training for children and young people across the whole country.

Teachers decide on teaching methods and educational materials, homework and projects, and methods of assessment. Every teacher is responsible for making necessary preliminary studies based on the curricula related with their course. For the courses with sufficient number of teachers to form subject departments, known as “branches”, the branch teachers can adopt collective approaches. In principle, the textbooks and educational materials to be used at all levels of education in both public and private schools are determined by MoNE (Basic Law of National Education, Article 55) and distributed to students free of charge. For this purpose, studies on the establishment of information technology in classrooms have been intensified within recent years. Teachers and students benefit from communication and informatics technologies that almost all of the schools have.

All statistical data related to the formal education in Turkey is annually published by MoNE. The basic statistics in 2015-2016 academic year are given in the table below; in addition, the details are available [here](#).

**Table 1.1. Basic Statistics related to the Formal Education**

<b>2015-2016 Academic Year</b>	<b>Net schooling ratio (%)</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>Primary Education</b>	94,87	26.522	302.961	5.360.703
<b>Lower Secondary Education</b>	94,39	17.343	322.680	5.211.506
<b>Secondary Education</b>	79,79	10.550	335.690	5.807.643
<b>General Secondary Education</b>	36,65	5.311	151.458	3.047.503
<b>Vocational and Technical Secondary Education</b>	43,14	5.239	184.232	2.760.140

### 1.1.2. Legal Basis

Education and training activities of MoNE and other state institutions are regulated by legislation including the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, the Basic Law of National Education, the Primary Education Law, the Decree on the Organization and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, the Law Amending the Primary Education and Training Law, the Vocational Education Law, the Decree on Special Education, the Law of Special Training Institutions, and regulations involving the implementing procedures and principles<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, education and training activities are arranged through Development Plans, Government Programmes, Decisions of the National Education Council, Strategy Documents and the Action Plans of MoNE<sup>2</sup>.

1) <http://www.meb.gov.tr/mevzuat/liste.asp?ara=5&Submit=Listele>

2) <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/meb-2010-2014-stratejik-plani-ve-ilgili-dokumanlar/icerik/83>

<http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/meb-2015-2019-stratejik-plan-calismalari-ve-duyurulari/icerik/84>

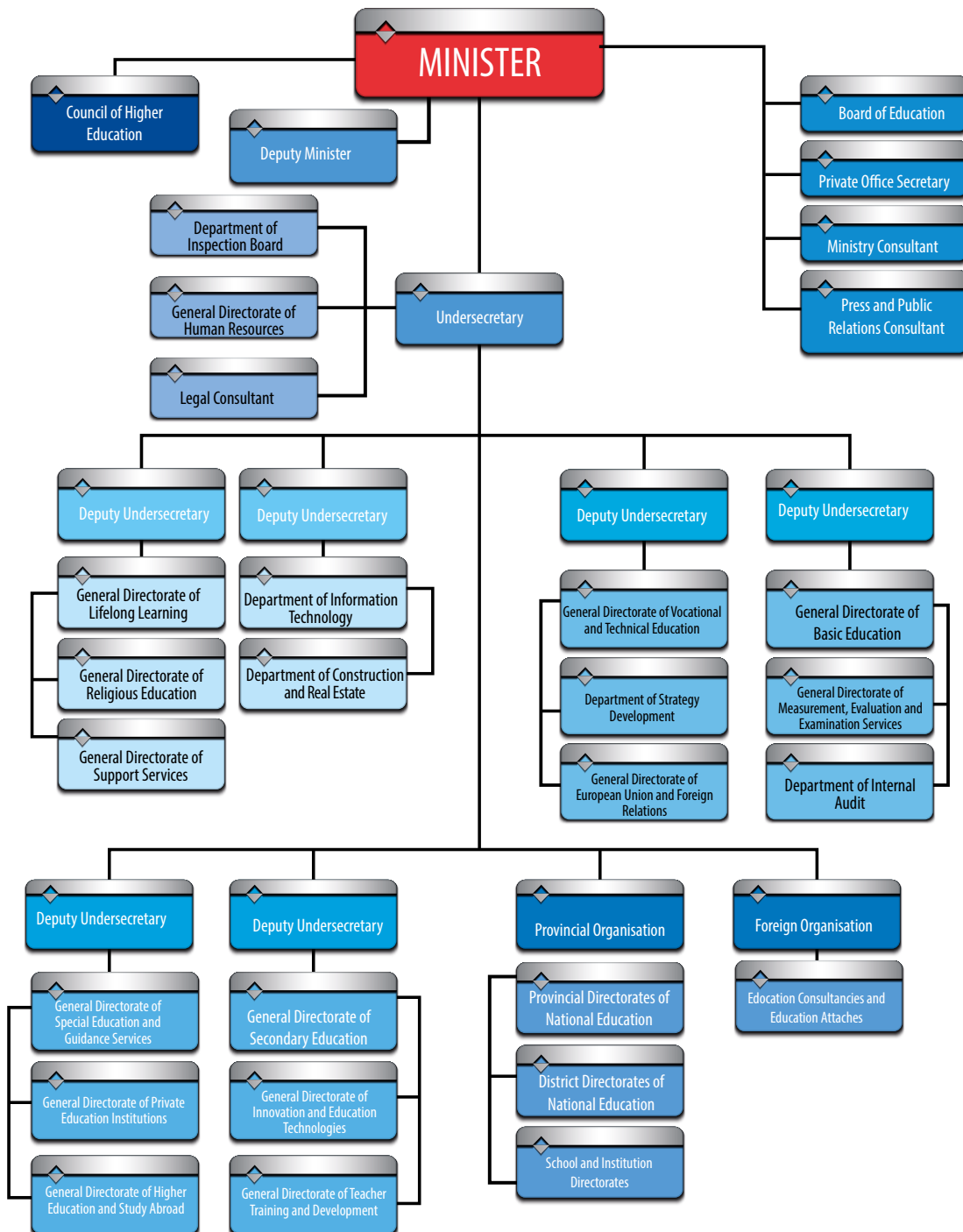
<http://www.kalkinma.gov.tr/Pages/KalkinmaPlanlari.aspx>

More information is available [here](#).

### 1.1.3 Administrative Structure

The organisational structure of MoNE is given in the figure below.

**Figure 1.2. Organizational Chart of MoNE**



MoNE includes 21 service units (general directorates and other units), and the Board of Education, and a Central Ministry Unit. The Minister of Education is the head of the ministerial organization. The duties and authorities of MoNE are regulated by Decree Law No. 652. The general directorates are responsible for setting the education policies for their affiliated institutions. The General Directorate of Private Education Institutions carry out the supervision of the implementation of educational policies by private education institutions.

Many of the general directorates are responsible for particular sectors of the education system e.g. lifelong learning, vocational and technical education, and basic education. However, some have responsibilities across all sectors e.g. the General Directorate of Evaluation, Measurement and Examination Services, the General Directorate of Human Resources and the General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technology.

The implementation of the decisions and policies of MoNE are monitored by the Department of Inspection Board. Standards on activities such as guidance, supervision, inspection, and investigation are set by the Department.

MoNE is made up of provincial units additional to the central organization. The local offices of MoNE are composed of provincial education directorate, district education directorate, schools and institutions. Provincial education directorates are located in all 81 provinces and there are national education directorates in 919 districts. Provincial and district education directorates of MoNE carry out their activities under central supervision and control.

More information is available [here](#).

#### 1.1.4. Finance

Major financial sources of education are made up of

- (i) Allocations from the budget of central administration
- (ii) Allocations from the budget of provincial special administration
- (iii) Foreign credit, scholarships and donations, protocols obtained from foreign countries and institutions
- (iv) Personal and institutional donations for education
- (v) Income from the union of parents and school management

Education and training are provided free of charge at public schools and additional financial support for disadvantaged and needy groups is available. The main financing assistance covers free course books, transportable education, scholarship and boarding schools and conditional education support also known as conditional cash transfer. Free textbooks have been delivered to all students at primary and lower secondary education since 2003, and at secondary education since 2006. In 2015-2016 academic year 236 million textbooks have been distributed to students.

Law No. 6528 has made education support grants available to students enrolled in private or minority schools. In 2016- 2017 academic year about 450.000 students have benefitted from grants. The amounts of the financial support for 2016-2017 academic year vary between approximately €850 and €2000.

More information is available [here](#).

## 1.1.5. Provision of Education and Training

### 1.1.5.1. Basic Education

Basic education involves preschool, primary and lower secondary education and is coordinated by the General Directorate of Basic Education. Primary and lower secondary education are compulsory while preschool education is optional. Open education schools are available at basic education for individuals from every age who dropped out of school for various reasons.

Basic education institutions are composed of preschools, primary schools, and lower secondary schools managed by the General Directorate of Basic Education, imam-hatip lower secondary schools managed by the General Directorate of Religious Education and primary and lower secondary schools for special education managed by the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance. At lower secondary and imam-hatip lower secondary schools, elective courses are available according to students' abilities, progress and preferences in a way to support secondary education.

Basic education aims to help children acquire basic knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in order to be a good citizen, and to prepare them for the life and advanced learning by raising them in line with their interests, abilities and skills.

Individuals who have special training needs can pursue their education together with their peers within the framework of inclusion/integration programmes as well as in special training classrooms within the same school.

Courses in the programmes are divided into two as compulsory and elective. Elective courses are selected by the students in line with their interest, aptitude and preferences with the guidance of parents.

The education year should not be fewer than 180 working days at schools. MoNE determines the official starting and ending time of school year at the beginning of each year. Based on this, working timeline is posted and used after the approval of governorship (Regulation of Early Childhood Education and Primary School Education Institutions, Article 11). Class hours per week are 30 at primary and 35 at lower secondary schools. The population of the classes should be no more than 34 students.

The academic year consists of two semesters, which complement each other in terms of assessment and evaluation. The purposes specified in the education programmes are taken into account while assessing the success and achievement of the students. For students in the first, second and third grade, development levels and participation in course activities that are conducted under the guidance of the teacher are determined by taking into account the assessment and evaluation principles set out in the curriculum.

Elementary student achievement in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade is evaluated based on participation in class activities with scores for studies and exams. In a hundred-point scale system, students who get scores higher than 45 are regarded as successful. Students are expected to do at least one project they want in the form of individual or group work or class through teacher guidance. Projects are evaluated in the period in which they are presented.

At the 8<sup>th</sup> grade two written exams for each semester are made for Foreign Language, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge and Republic Revolution History and Kemalism while three written exams are made for Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology. These exams are conducted at all schools at the same time using the same exam questions. A new transition system from basic education to secondary education (TEOG) was introduced in the 2013-2014 academic year.

**Preschool Education**

Early childhood education covers the Nursery and Day Care Centres for children in the age group of 0-36 months, which is the responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Preschool education refers to the education of children in the age group of 36-66 months who are below the age for primary education and aims to ensure physical, mental and emotional development of children, to help them acquire good habits, to prepare them for the primary education and to ensure that they can communicate properly. Preschool education is offered free at public institutions and is voluntary. However, it is compulsory for children needing special education.

**Primary Education**

Primary education corresponds to the first four years of 12-year compulsory education and refers to the education and training of children in the age group of 6-9 years. Students who successfully complete primary education are enrolled to lower secondary schools or Imam-Hatip lower secondary schools via e-School system.

**Lower Secondary Education**

Lower secondary education corresponds to the second four years of 12-year compulsory education and refers to the education and training of children in the age group of 10-13 years. Students who complete lower secondary education continue secondary education according to their preferences based on the combination of the results of central exam and final grade points of grades 6, 7 and 8.

More information is available [here](#).

**1.1.5.2. Secondary Education**

Upper secondary education, which is in Turkey known as secondary education, corresponds to the last four years of 12-year compulsory education and is composed of “general secondary education” and “vocational and technical secondary education”. Secondary education refers to the education and training of youth in the age group of 14-17 years and also provided through open learning which is coordinated by the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning for those who are older than 18 years.

The purposes of secondary education are,

- (i) to raise the awareness and strength of all students through provision of minimum common general knowledge at secondary level for the recognition of the individual and social matters, seeking solutions and contributing to the economic, social and cultural development of the country,
- (ii) to prepare students for higher education or both for higher education and work or business in line with their interests, aptitude and capabilities.

While fulfilling these purposes, an equilibrium is maintained between the desires and capabilities of students and the needs of society.

Secondary education is provided by specialist branch teachers while guidance teachers are responsible for supporting the students about their needs related to various topics. In the vast majority of schools, it is possible to make use of communication and information technology for teachers and students. Common and elective courses determined by MoNE are available according to school types. Common courses in the 9th and 10th grades are as follows: language skills, Turkish literature, religion and ethics, history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, health information, the first foreign language, physical education, visual arts/music. Elective courses include speech and language, mathematics and science, social studies, religion and values ethics, foreign languages and literature, sports and social events, arts and IT. Common and elective courses (a total of 22 courses in 8 groups) vary in general secondary education from grade 11.

Every teacher is responsible for making necessary preliminary studies based on the curriculum related with their course. In principle, every teacher drafts an annual plan for the courses they will teach at the beginning of the academic year, which is ratified by the principal. The daily plans are conducted according to the annual plan. Each programme for every course is like a map for the teacher. Teachers are allowed to employ visual tools such as video, slide, tape-radio, overhead projector, television etc. Most of the schools are fitted with internet and information technology tools for the use of the teachers and pupils.

The general objectives of the courses are identified on the achievements and topics of each section of the course. The programme also includes examples of activities with the description and examples of process arrangement and evaluation. The course book is a guide for teachers.

Those who want to change school at secondary level due to any valid reason can be eligible for transition and transfer in compliance with the decision No. 93 dated 29/9/2014 of the Board of Education on the transition and transfer of students registered in open high schools or vocational open high schools to formal secondary education institutions<sup>3</sup>. Their eligibility depends on the document<sup>4</sup> indicating their “successfully completed courses, modules, credits, internship and internship periods, summer practice, vocational training period at enterprises and credits” on e-School system.

The “High School Diploma” at TQF Level 4 is awarded to the graduates of secondary education and the information on the diploma depends on the type of the high school graduated and the programme followed.

More information is available [here](#).

### **General Secondary Education**

General secondary education is a four-year education period coordinated by the General Directorate of Secondary Education. It is provided at various high schools with different curricula such as Anatolian, Science, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Basic and Sports.

Assessment methods at general secondary education are regulated by the Regulation on Grade Promotion and Examination at Secondary Education Institutions. Teachers prepare the exam questions according to the general and specific objectives and intended learning outcomes set in the curriculum. Exams, homework, projects and practices are evaluated over 100% with a pass mark of 50%. In order to be successful in any course, arithmetic average of the scores of two semesters should be minimum 50% but the score of the second period must be minimum 70% (Article 56).

### **Vocational and Technical Secondary Education**

Vocational and technical secondary education is a four-year education and training period governed by the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education and aims both to educate students as good citizens and to prepare them for work by providing them with common general knowledge as well as flexible capabilities in line with the level of their education. It is provided at Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools, Multi-Programme Anatolian High Schools, and Vocational and Technical Education Centres. Multi-Programme High Schools bring together Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools, Anatolian High Schools and Anatolian İmam-Hatip High Schools under a single management. Vocational and Technical Education Centres provide both vocational and technical anatolian high school programmes, and vocational course programme developed for further education.

Vocational and technical secondary education is provided in a modular system based on learning outcomes in 205 vocational “branches” distributed to 53 areas<sup>5</sup>. Modules based on learning outcomes have been used for the development of education programmes since 2005-2006 academic year.<sup>6</sup> Education programmes are updated on a regular basis to keep them in line with the national occupational standards approved by VQA and published in the Official Journal.

3) *Journal of Communiqués*, Vol. 2685, October 2014

4) Available [here](#)

5) [http://www.megep.meb.gov.tr/dokumanlar/Diger/53\\_ALAN-205\\_DAL.xlsx](http://www.megep.meb.gov.tr/dokumanlar/Diger/53_ALAN-205_DAL.xlsx)

6) <http://www.megep.meb.gov.tr/?page=moduller>



Assessment and evaluation methods for theoretical exams in vocational and technical secondary education are the same as those in general secondary education. Additionally, students receiving vocational training in enterprises have to take an exam in the last week of the school year to assess the learning outcomes of the training they have received. This exam is carried out in essay type or in practice according to the decision taken by the exam committee. In the areas with more practical courses in the curriculum, the skill exam can cover a single course or a number of courses according to the decision of the committee. Skills-based courses are marked out of 100 of which 80% is devoted to the exam and 20% to the work file prepared during the training in the enterprise.

Students attending 9<sup>th</sup> grade of vocational and technical secondary education receive vocational training on key competences, job security and health and safety, protection of the environment, project preparation, and problem solving and effective communication skills, besides academic subjects also including common general knowledge education. All of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students pursue their education within Anatolian vocational programmes. Students having completed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade have an opportunity to choose a professional field and pass to an Anatolian technical programme according to their success. 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in Anatolian technical programmes receive broad-based training in their professional field to enable them to gain job-related learning outcomes. As per the Vocational Education Law No. 3308, students attending Anatolian technical programmes are obliged to complete a 320-hour-internship (40 workdays) in summer and semester holidays. On the other hand, students who continue Anatolian vocational programmes following the 9<sup>th</sup> grade receive vocational training at enterprises for 3 days per week in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The graduates of the vocational and technical secondary education are awarded a "Vocational and Technical Education High School Diploma" at TQF Level 4.

Europass Certificate Supplements indicating learning outcomes acquired during the education as well as a transcript indicating the "Successfully Completed Courses, Modules, and Credits" (including information about the enterprise where the student was provided with vocational education or completed internship) are also issued upon the request of the graduates.

### **Anatolian İmam Hatip High Schools**

These are education institutions affiliated to the General Directorate of Religious Education that are providing general secondary education and implementing programmes which prepare students for both to the occupation and higher education. The duration of the education is four years and refers to the last four year stage of compulsory education. The graduates are awarded the "Imam Hatip High School Diploma" at TQF Level 4.

#### **1.1.5.3. Apprenticeship Education**

Apprenticeship education is governed by the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education and aims to prepare the individuals to work and to facilitate improvement in the practice of any specific occupation. It combines theoretical education provided at education institutions and practical training provided at enterprises. Apprenticeship education programmes are provided in 152 occupational branches distributed across 31 occupational areas<sup>7</sup>. The qualifications provided in the apprenticeship education are "Journeyman's", "Mastership", and "Qualified Instructor" Certificates.

The duration of apprenticeship training varies between 2 and 4 years depending on the occupational branch. If the graduates of secondary education start an apprenticeship, they are exempt from the general knowledge courses they took during secondary education and thus the duration of apprenticeship is reduced by half for them. Theoretical and practical training are planned and carried

7) [https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/mem/meslek\\_dersleri\\_kalfalik.html](https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/mem/meslek_dersleri_kalfalik.html)  
[https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/mem/meslek\\_dersleri\\_ustalik.html](https://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/mem/meslek_dersleri_ustalik.html)  
<http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File3.pdf>

out so as to complement each other. 40% of the training is related to general knowledge and the rest to vocational skills. Apprentices take practical training for 11 months per year according to curriculum. They receive at least 8 hours theoretical training one day per week at training centres or enterprises with the necessary facilities, and practical training for 5 days per week at the workplace under the supervision of the qualified instructors. Graduates are awarded a "Journeyman's Certificate" qualification at TQF Level 3.

Holders of the Journeyman's Certificate can receive 240-hour mastership training at vocational education centres. Graduates are awarded a "Mastership Certificate" qualification at TQF Level 4. Holders of the Journeyman's Certificate who can prove five years experience registered by the Social Security Institution in the relevant occupation can be directly assessed for the Mastership Certificate. Holders of Mastership Certificate also have the opportunity to be awarded "Vocational and Technical Education High School Diploma" if they achieve a supplementary/remedial training related to the field of apprenticeship education.

Holders of the Mastership Certificate can take a 40-hour long qualified instructor training at vocational education centres. Graduates are awarded "Qualified Instructor Certificate" qualification.

Since the compulsory education has been increased to 12 years, students starting apprenticeship education after graduating from lower secondary education are required to get enrolled in an open high school or open vocational high school in order to complete 12 year compulsory education simultaneous with apprenticeship education.

The awarding of vocational qualifications for fields of occupation in which there are no apprenticeship training programmes are carried out by chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen operating in the scope of Law No. 5362. Among employers and employees of the member enterprises of chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen, those who are over 16 years of age, finished lower secondary education and have proof that they have already pursued the relevant occupation for at least two years and pass the exam held by the chamber are awarded a TESK (Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen) Journeyman's Certificate.

Among holders of the TESK Journeyman's Certificate, those who have proof that they have worked in the relevant professional field for at least five years and pass the exam held by the chamber are awarded a TESK Mastership Certificate.

Chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen cooperate with MoNE in the provision of vocational training and certification activities conducted within the framework of the regulation which is published within the scope of the Law No. 3308 and Law No. 5362.<sup>8</sup> In this regard, a representative from MoNE participates in the examination board and the trainers of MoNE provide support for training programmes. The preparation and application of questions for the theoretical exams are conducted by MoNE representative and MoNE is also represented in the decision-making mechanism of the examination board for the practical exams.

#### 1.1.5.4. Special Education

Individuals with special education needs are defined as individuals showing differences at a significant level compared to their peers in terms of their individual development and educational competences.

Special education and guidance services are carried out by the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services according to a range of law and regulations.

It is a basic principle that individuals with a special need are guided to the most suitable education environments, starting from the process of diagnosing, and to have a qualitative special education service through educational processes prepared depending on the individual needs in the educational environments they are guided.

8) [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/26756\\_0.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/26756_0.html)

Depending on the result of the educational evaluation and diagnosis made in Guidance and Research Centres, individuals with a special education need have education at the same environment with their other peers through mainstreaming/integration applications in the first place based on the least limited educational environments. Besides that, students with a special educational need may also carry on their training in special education classes opened at the schools where they have their education with their other peers. In addition, these individuals may have their education at special education schools and institutions opened at any type and grades according to their educational needs and performances. Education service is given at home and hospital for those who cannot benefit from formal education institutions due to health problems among the individuals with a special education need at the age of compulsory learning.

Supportive education is provided at Science and Art Centres to the students who carry on compulsory education at formal education institutions and have special cognitive, visual and aural talents. The purpose of this supportive education is to make them aware of their individual skills and use their capacities at the highest level by developing their talents.

More information is available [here](#).

### 1.1.5.5. Non-Formal Education

This sector of the education system is generally coordinated by MoNE<sup>9</sup> and CoHE. However, some sector-based non-formal education activities are also provided by authorized bodies such as ministries, independent administrative authorities, municipalities, professional associations and trade unions. Among these, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Turkish Employment Agency, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization and Municipalities are outstanding.

Non-formal education includes education, training, counselling and practical activities that are provided at various durations and levels on a lifelong basis by public institutions or private and voluntary organizations. Non-formal education comprises short term training courses and further education with the aim of acquiring an occupation, maintaining the economic, cultural and social development, improving or supporting prior qualifications with the purpose of personal development.

The responsibility for coordinating the provision of non-formal education is assigned to the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. Its main duties are:

- (i) Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the policies in order to promote education and training apart from compulsory education (i.e. LLL);
- (ii) Carrying out non-formal and open education services;
- (iii) Providing non-formal education at general or vocational and technical educational fields to individuals who graduated from, dropped out of or never enrolled in the formal education system.

More information is available [here](#).

### **Public Education**

Continuing, adult or further education, which is in Turkey known as public education, includes further training and many short-term courses designed to improve or support current competences, to acquire a new job or for leisure, hobbies and individual development. It is provided by the units under DG-LLL, education institutions, authorised public institutions or private and voluntary organizations at various durations and levels on the basis

9) Regulation on Non-Formal Education Institutions is available [here](#)

of LLL. The target groups are generally all citizens regardless of age, gender and education level but specifically adults and individuals who have dropped out of formal education. An updated list of these courses (which are over 3.000 at the time of publication) is available at <http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/modulerprogramlar/>.

Programmes in public education are structured in two major categories, as follows:

- i) General Education Programme: Health, family life, mother-child education, citizenship education, personal development and social and country-side development programme.
- ii) Vocational and Technical Education Programme: Employment-related programme, basic skills development programme and ICT programme.

Employment-related programmes are developed, applied and monitored by MoNE, but programmes for employees are developed in cooperation with industry and applied at Public Education Centres and Vocational Education Centres. Vocational education programmes are based on modules defined by learning outcomes and must be in line with the national occupational standards as well as national competences set by law.

A "Course Completion Certificate" is awarded to those who pass the exam at the end of the courses<sup>10</sup>. "Course Completion Certificate" qualifications are envisaged to be allocated to various the TQF levels depending on the match between the learning outcomes and the TQF level descriptors.

### 1.1.6. Access to Higher Education

Graduates of secondary education can directly participate in the labour force or may progress to higher education according to the results of the Transition to Higher Education Examination (YGS) and Undergraduate Placement Examination (LYS). Graduates of vocational and technical secondary education are provided with a supplemental score if they want to progress to associate degree programmes in higher education relevant to the programme they studied in secondary education. Thus, progression to higher vocational education has been promoted.

### 1.1.7. Credit Accumulation and Transfer System

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is foreseen to be an instrument that will increase transparency in Europe and support mutual trust in the qualifications. Studies related to the preparation of the Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (MKTS), in accordance with ECVET, as an instrument that ensures credit rating of learning outcomes are still going on. It is anticipated that these studies will give a basis for the establishment of credit rating, credit accumulation, and the transfer of learning outcomes acquired by citizens as a result of all kinds of learning.

Credit Principles for Vocational and Technical Education were adopted with the Decision of the Board of Education No. 135 and dated 29/11/2013.

#### **Credit Principles for Vocational and Technical Education;**

- i) A credit accumulation and transfer system (MKTS) based on student workload is applied in vocational and technical education.

<sup>10</sup> A "Participation Certificate" is issued to those who only participated to the course but didn't take the exams. The reasons are to motivate people to enrol in lifelong learning and provide the future opportunity for the awarding of Course Completion Certificate following the assessment. It's clear that participation certificates will not be linked to the TQF.

- ii) Student workload for 25 course hours is equivalent to 1 credit.
- iii) Workload in common courses (academic courses in vocational programmes) is determined by combining the duration of the courses with approximately 25% of this duration.
- iv) Workload in vocational courses is determined by the learning duration of modules, which is presumed to be 40 course hours.
- v) Credits are calculated in the credit system by rounding up half and above grades.
- vi) Each 60 minutes spent in skill training, internship and summer period at enterprises is converted to a 40-minute course hour.
- vii) Graduation credit points are not used in equivalence procedures.

The credit system which is applied in general secondary education and vocational education is available [here](#).

### 1.1.8. Work in Progress

There are several studies ongoing regarding the education system at both national and local levels such as implementation of projects, preparation and monitoring of strategic plans and action plans. The major studies are summarised below. More information is available [here](#).

#### ***The Strategic Plan of MoNE (2015-2019)***

Following the re-organization of MoNE, this is the major study that shapes the general structure, short and long term plans about the educational provisions. Within the scope of the Plan, three strategic objectives were identified:

- i) Providing all individuals with equal opportunities of accessing education and training.
- ii) Providing all individuals with the skills, attitude and competences required by the modern era, such as being innovative, entrepreneurial, open to communication and learning, self-confident and responsible, healthy and happy as well as possessing creative thinking abilities and foreign language skills.
- iii) Establishing the best institutional structure that will operate effectively so as to increase the quality of education by improving the administrative and organizational structure as well as human, financial and technological infrastructure.

The Strategic Plan also includes the statement "Immigrants, foreigners under temporary protection, individuals without a country are to be included within the educational system during their stay in Turkey". This strategy statement frames the studies for the Syrian immigrants residing in the country. As of 2016, 320,000 Syrian students are provided with educational provisions. This number is expected to increase up to 650,000.

#### ***The Strategy Document of Turkey for Vocational and Technical Education and Action Plan (2014-2018)***

The project is applied in Turkey to develop a rational model for the vocational and technical education system and to underpin the policies. It has been prepared in order to determine the measures and action steps based on the views of the social partners and all institutions and organizations concerned under the coordination of MoNE. The Action Plan was published in the Official Journal No. 29024 on 08 June 2014. The document is divided into three political aspects:

- i) Access to Vocational and Technical Education
- ii) Capacity in Vocational and Technical Education

iii) Employment in Vocational and Technical Education

### ***The Strategy Document of Turkey for Lifelong Learning and Action Plan (2014-2018)***

This was prepared in order to increase the productivity and the effectiveness of the learning system and was published in the Official Journal No. 29062 on 16 July 2014. In the document, following aspects are prioritized.

- i) Establishing an LLL culture and awareness in the society,
- ii) Increasing LLL opportunities and provision,
- iii) Enhancing access to LLL opportunities,
- iv) Improving the lifelong guidance and counselling system,
- v) Improving the recognition of prior learning system,
- vi) Improving the LLL monitoring and evaluation system

### ***Project for Promoting Lifelong Learning in Turkey - II (LLL-II)***

The overall objective of the project is to develop human resource capacity by promoting an LLL culture in Turkey. Additionally, it is intended to disseminate the LLL culture and increase the access and participation into learning programmes especially leading to employment. It will be implemented between January 2016 and September 2017.

The results to be achieved are;

- i) Developing and revising the legislative structure arrangements to facilitate LLL strategies in MoNE, VET institutions, relevant public and private institutions and the labour market.
- ii) Developing VET educational text books to enable the horizontal and vertical training mobility at TQF levels 2, 3 and 4 for at least 3 selected fields of VET and implementing them in line with the EQF, TQF and ECVET principles.
- iii) Strengthening the co-operation between all relevant parties vis-à-vis LLL principles.
- iv) Implementing comprehensive information and awareness-raising activities about LLL in Turkey.
- v) Developing a web-based LLL Guidance Information System and introducing lifelong guidance expertise into further building the human capital in MoNE.
- vi) Developing and improving the qualifications and capacity of VET teachers in at least 3 fields of VET in line with LLL strategies.
- vii) Introducing a quality assurance system including indicators and tools in VET at all levels in line with LLL.

### **1.1.9. Qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE**

As explained in previous sections, there is a wide range of qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE which are awarded to the graduates of basic education, general secondary education, vocational and technical secondary education, non-formal education and special education. The table below shows the title and the provisional TQF levels of these qualifications and gives some detailed information. The plan and method for the final allocation of the qualifications to the TQF levels is explained in section 3 of this report under criterion 4.

**Table 1.2. Qualifications under the Responsibility of MoNE**

<b>Title of the Qualification</b>	<b>Planned TQF Level</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>1.Primary Education Certificate</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	These may be regarded as a part of the High School Diploma which is the full qualification awarded following the successful completion of 12 year compulsory education. They are not awarded independently but are necessary to move to the next education level.
<b>2. Lower Secondary Education Certificate</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	
<b>3. High School Diploma</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anatolian High School</li> <li>• Science High School</li> <li>• Social Sciences High School</li> <li>• Anatolian Imam Hatip High School</li> <li>• Fine Arts High School</li> <li>• Sports High School</li> <li>• Basic High School</li> <li>• Public Conservatory, Music and Stage Arts High School</li> <li>• Open Education High School</li> <li>• Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School</li> <li>• Vocational Open Education High School</li> <li>• Special Education Vocational High School</li> </ul>	<b>Level 4</b>	<p>This is the full qualification awarded to the graduates of secondary education from different types of high schools following the successful completion of 12 year compulsory education.</p> <p>The name of the diploma differs depending on the school and programme type such as Anatolian High School Diploma or Science High School Diploma.</p>
<b>4. Journeyman's Certificate</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	These are full qualifications awarded to the graduates of apprenticeship education.
<b>5. Mastership Certificate</b>	<b>Level 4</b>	
<b>6. Qualified Instructor Certificate</b>		The level of this qualification will be determined following the preparation of the learning outcomes and comparison of the learning outcomes with the TQF level descriptors.
<b>7. Course Completion Certificate</b>		This qualification is awarded upon the achievement of a wide range of course programmes. The TQF level of the qualification awarded for each course programme will be determined according to the comparison of the learning outcomes of the course programme with the TQF level descriptors.
<b>8. Vocational and Technical Open Education School Certificate</b>		The TQF levels of these qualifications will be determined following the preparation of the qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and comparison of the learning outcomes with the TQF level descriptors.
<b>9. Special Education Vocational Education Centre Certificate</b>		
<b>10. Special Education Business Practice Centre Certificate (School)</b>		
<b>11. Special Education Practice Centre (School) Certificate (GRADE 1)</b> <b>Special Education Practice Centre (School) Certificate (GRADE 2)</b>		

## 1.2. Higher Education System and Qualifications

### 1.2.1. Introduction

Higher education is planned and coordinated by Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Higher education institutions (HEIs) include universities established both by the state (public) and by the foundations (private), higher institute of technologies and higher vocational schools established by foundations. The universities may also incorporate two-year higher vocational schools.

Higher education is provided mainly in three ways: face-to-face, distance and mixed. Generally, in most of the HEIs, education is face-to-face and students are required to attend their courses or practical work sessions.

In distance education students may follow their programme through the internet, radio, television or other training tools and contexts. Since 1982, Anadolu University has been providing distance education for two-year and four-year undergraduate programme at faculties of Open Education, Business Administration and Economics. Recently, in addition to Anadolu University, there are open education faculties in İstanbul University and Erzurum University. Besides, many other HEIs are offering distance education via internet through e-campus system.

Some universities have developed a combination of face-to-face education and distance education. While programmes are mainly provided by distance education, students can attend classes regularly in the evenings or at the weekend.

The main language of instruction in higher education is Turkish, but some universities use English, French and/or German as the language of instruction proceeded by one-year language preparatory classes. Additionally, in some universities there are programmes in which about 30% of the courses are offered in English or the language of instruction is English. In recent couple of years, CoHE has encouraged universities to develop language skills of their graduates and teach at least some courses in one of the widely spoken European languages.

All statistical data related to the higher education in Turkey is annually gathered and published by CoHE. The number of students in higher education in 2015-2016 academic year is given in the table below; in addition, the details are available [here](#).

**Table 1.3. Number of Students in Higher Education**

<b>Academic Year 2015/'16</b>	<b>New Admissions</b>	<b>Total Number of Students</b>
<b>Associate</b>	617.732	2.285.406
<b>Undergraduate</b>	789.726	3.900.601
<b>Masters</b>	113.759	417.084
<b>Doctorate</b>	14.192	86.094
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.535.409</b>	<b>6.689.185</b>



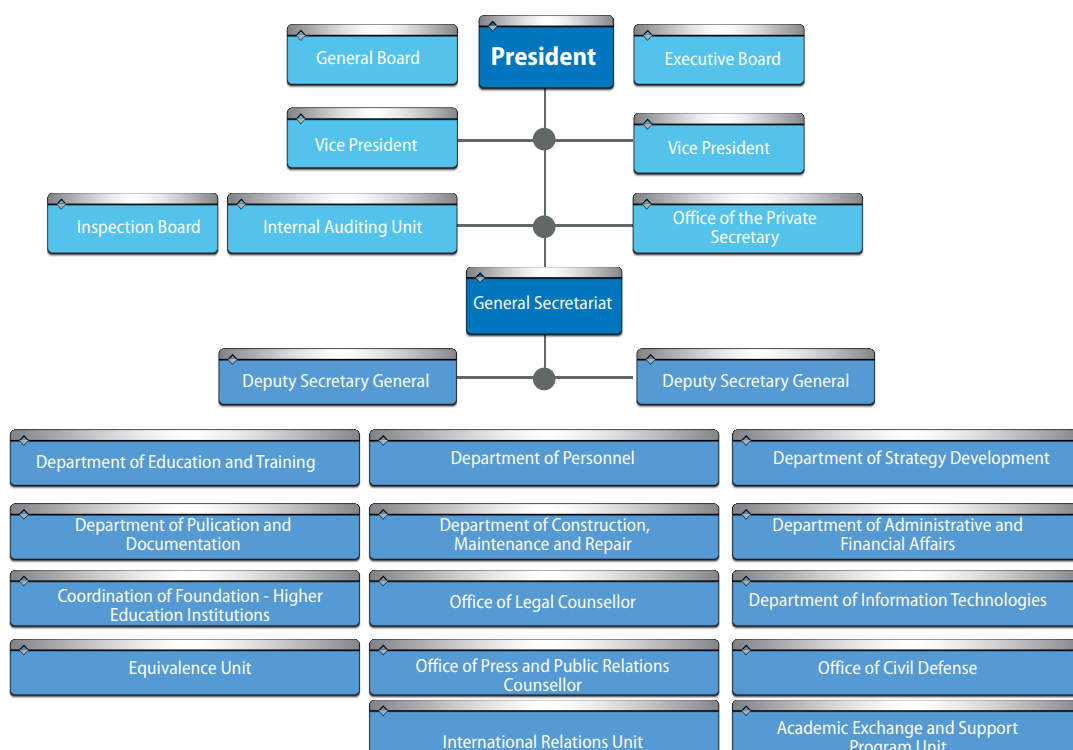
### 1.2.2. Legal Basis

Regulation of the higher education system in Turkey is based on two articles of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (Articles 130 and 131) and the Higher Education Law no. 2547 enacted in 1981. The supreme bodies of the higher education system are CoHE and the Inter-University Council (IUC). CoHE is an autonomous public institution responsible for the planning, coordination, governance and supervision of higher education within the provisions set in the Constitution and the Higher Education Law<sup>11</sup>.

### 1.2.3. Administrative Structure

CoHE has twenty one members: One third of its members are directly appointed by the President of the Republic consisting of former rectors and academic staff who served successfully; one third are selected by the Cabinet among distinguished, high ranking civil servants; one third are selected by the IUC among professors who are not members of the IUC. The selections of members by the Cabinet and the IUC are subject to approval of the President of the Republic. Each member is appointed for a renewable term of four years. The Chairman of CoHE is appointed by the President of the Republic among the members of CoHE for a term of four years. Nine members of CoHE are elected to the Executive Board to carry out day-to-day functions of CoHE. Members of the Executive Board are on duty on a full-time basis. The organisational structure of CoHE is illustrated below.

**Figure 1.3. Organizational Structure of CoHE**



The IUC is an academic advisory body comprising the rectors of all universities (public and foundation) and one additional member elected by the senate of each university to the IUC.

When CoHE was founded in 1981, the number of the HEIs was only 27 and all were public universities. As of the publication date of this report, there are 183 HEIs in total, consisting of 112 public universities, 65 non-profit private universities established by foundations and 6 non-profit higher vocational schools established by foundations<sup>12</sup>. All are subject to Higher Education Law of 1981 and to the regulations enacted in accordance with the Law. Both public and foundation universities are founded by law to be enacted by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey upon the recommendation of CoHE to MoNE and the approval of the Cabinet. The faculties, graduate schools, four-year higher vocational schools and two-year non-profit foundation higher vocational schools are founded by the decision of the Cabinet upon the recommendation of CoHE. Two-year higher vocational schools as well as academic units and sub-units under the HEIs are established through the permission of the General Board of CoHE in compliance with criteria set by CoHE.

#### 1.2.4. Finance

Public universities are financed through the state budget and using revenues from their own activities. Foundation universities and foundation higher vocational schools get financial incentive from state budget, but the level of this support is very low and can be negligible. Tuition fees are regulated in article 46 of the Higher Education Law. Students receiving day-time education on a full-time basis have been exempted from fees since 2012. However, students attending evening programmes are subject to fees varying between 770-2134 TL per academic year. Tuition fees for public HEIs are decided and announced by the Cabinet taking into consideration the type and duration of the study in different disciplines. In non-profit foundation universities, tuition fees are decided by the Board of Trustees of the university. Students must pay their tuition fees for each semester before registering for the courses at the beginning of the semester.

Both in public and foundation universities, a certain percentage of students are given scholarships. These scholarships may be full or partial tuition waiver, and may be based on merit or on the need for support.<sup>13</sup> These scholarships may include academic materials, accommodation, food, and even cash allowances. In addition to this support, there are assistantships and the research fellowships that could be supportive during the study period in Turkey.

There is a centralised state grant and loan system to support both undergraduate and graduate students with Turkish citizenship. The Higher Education Loan and Dormitory Authority provides assistance for students in this context. Scholarships for international students in Turkey are available from MoNE and Department for Turks Abroad and Relative Societies<sup>14</sup>.

#### 1.2.5. Access to Higher Education

Admission of students with Turkish citizenship to undergraduate programme is centralized and based on a nationwide two-stage examination administered by the Assessment, Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM)<sup>15</sup>. For admission to all undergraduate programmes, a valid high school diploma and a high enough score on the examinations (YGS and LYS) are required. The YGS is usually administered in March

12) <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/universitelerimiz>

13) <http://www.kyk.gov.tr>

14) <http://abdigm.meb.gov.tr/www/turkiye-burslari/icerik/39>

15) <http://www.osym.gov.tr>

while the LYS is in June. Each is run at the same time throughout the country.

The results of the first stage of these examinations (YGS) are used both in acceptance for the two-year higher vocational schools and in calculating the total scores of the students in LYS which is required for admission to undergraduate programmes. Admissions to undergraduate programmes are based on the students' composite scores, which are calculated taking into account the YGS and LYS scores and grade point averages at secondary education. Some programmes that require special abilities (art, music, sports, etc.) can select their students using try-outs.

Students also have the opportunity for horizontal progression within or amongst the institutions, and double major and minor programmes within the same institution during bachelor programmes. In such case, the provisions of the following regulation which has been published in the Official Journal No. 27561 of 24 April 2010 are applied: "Regulation on the Principles of Progression, Double Major and Minor Programmes, and Credit Transfer among Programmes at Associate's and Bachelor's Levels in Higher Education Institutions".

Admission to graduate programmes is carried out by the HEIs according to the Regulation on Graduate Education and Training published in the Official Journal No. 29690 dated 20/4/2016. Admission depends on composite scores which take into account the Graduate Education Entrance Examination (ALES), Foreign Language Examination (YDS), undergraduate grade point average, and interview results.

Foreign students who wish to undertake undergraduate studies in Turkey must have completed secondary education in a high school or similar institution in which the education is approved as equivalent to that of high schools in Turkey. The candidates meeting this condition apply directly to the university of their choice and the HEI makes the selection. Foreign students who wish to pursue their graduate/post-graduate studies in Turkey also apply directly to the HEI.

### 1.2.6. Access to Further Studies

The principles and procedures related to the vertical transfer and placement of successful students who graduate from higher vocational schools and open education associate degree programmes to the undergraduate programmes at formal education and open education are in the scope of "The Regulation on the Continuation of Graduates of Undergraduate Programmes for Higher Vocational Schools and Open Education Associate Degree Programs" published in the Official Journal No. 24676 dated 19/2/2002. Graduates of two-year degree programmes can access bachelor's programmes vertically by scoring sufficient points in the vertical transition exam organized by OSYM on a national basis.

Graduates of bachelor's programmes can access graduate programmes by scoring sufficient points from the national central exams called the Academic Graduate Education Exam (ALES) and the Foreign Language Exam (YDS). Both exams are organized and implemented by OSYM. In transition to master's programmes, knowledge of foreign language is not required, but those possess foreign language scores gain advantage. In transition to doctoral programmes, students must also get enough points from YDS in addition to ALES.

Graduates of bachelor's programmes with high success (GPA over 3.00) can directly access integrated graduate programmes (master's plus doctorate). Graduates of non-thesis master's programmes may access doctoral programmes after completing the requirements of thesis-based master's programmes. Graduate education is provided through the Graduate Education Regulation issued by CoHE. The senate of each university can apply additional conditions besides this regulation.

### 1.2.7. Recognition and Equivalence

All diplomas awarded by the HEIs are automatically recognized at national level. Equivalence of diploma programmes is subject to institutional evaluation of public, private or non-governmental employers depending their own needs and regulations. Recognition of higher education qualifications acquired abroad is regulated by the Regulation on Recognition and Equivalency of Higher Education Diplomas Acquired in Abroad which is in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The procedures on recognition and equivalency are conducted by the Recognition and Equivalency Unit of CoHE in accordance with the Regulation. This regulation is also applied in the procedure of equivalency for students with diplomas from foreign countries. The equivalency procedure is also applied for students who acquire their diplomas abroad.

### 1.2.8. Work in Progress

Unlike in the EHEA, undergraduate programmes in Turkey take four years. However, there is an ongoing discussion among higher education experts and administrations of the HEI about bachelor's plus master's programmes (3+2 or 4+1). In addition, some incompatibilities existing in the primary and secondary regulations regarding the Bologna Process are on the agenda of CoHE.

The CoHE Presidency set up two permanent committees in 2014 to steer and implement the developments in EHEA. These are the EHEA Advisory Group and the CoHE Qualifications, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Commission. This is intended to follow the agenda of higher education across the world and develop mechanisms for its adaptation to Turkish higher education system through these committees. The activities of these committees were financially supported by CoHE. Later on, the Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB) was established pursuant to the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education which was prepared by CoHE. Following the publication of this Regulation in the Official Journal No. 29423 on 23/7/2015 previous committees were abolished.

HEQB was established and the first meeting was held on 23 December 2015. Since then, the studies related to the quality assurance in higher education are being carried out by this Board.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, legal arrangements to make the Board a fully autonomous entity with a private budget are under development.

### 1.2.9. Higher Education Qualifications

Higher Education Qualifications Framework for Turkey (TYYC) was piloted in 2009 and introduced in all HEIs in 2010. Higher education qualifications are classified as short cycle (associate), first cycle (bachelor's), second cycle (master's) and third cycle (doctorate) in TYYC.

***There are two types of short cycle qualifications:***

- i) Associate Diploma (Higher Vocational Schools, 2 years, 120 ECTS)
- ii) Associate Diploma (within first cycle, 2 years, 120 ECTS)

The profile of graduates of the second type (within first cycle) is quite different from the first type and is naturally more academically oriented. If the graduates of the first type (higher vocational schools) are accepted for first cycle programmes, only a proportion of the courses are recognized due to the lack of orientation.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/kalitekurulu>

**There are two types of first cycle qualifications:**

- i) Bachelor's Diploma (4 years, 240 ECTS)
- ii) Bachelor's Diploma (Long cycle, 5-6 years, 300-360 ECTS: Dentistry, Veterinary, Medicine, Pharmacy)

Graduates of the second type (long cycle programmes) are awarded an integrated diploma (bachelor's plus master's) and can directly apply to PhD programmes mainly in their fields.

**There are three types of second cycle qualification:**

- i) Master's Diploma (non-thesis, 1 year, 60 ECTS);
- ii) Master's Diploma (non-thesis, 1,5 years, 90 ECTS);
- iii) Master's Diploma (with thesis, 2 years, 120 ECTS);

Non-thesis master's programmes are designed to improve the employability of graduates. These programmes are intensified on professional and occupational standards. Graduates of the first two types of master's programmes may have the right to progress to master's programmes with thesis if they meet the entry requirements of the programme.

**There are five types of third cycle qualifications:**

- i) Doctorate Diploma (3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS)
- ii) Proficiency in Arts (3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS)
- iii) Specialization in Medicine (3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS)
- iv) Specialization in Dentistry (3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS)
- v) Specialization in Pharmacy (3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS)

Doctorate programmes in Turkey are organized in five different profiles. While the first one is mainly academically oriented, the others are professionally oriented. However, all graduates of the doctorate programmes are eligible to use the rights of holding PhD. The table below presents the higher education qualifications and levels.

**Table 1.4 Higher Education Qualifications in Turkey**

TQF	Levels			DURATION (Years)	ECTS Credits	Qualifications
	EQF	QF-EHEA	ISCED-2011			
Level 8	Level 8	Third Cycle	Level 8	3-4	180-240	Doctorate Diploma (Specialization in Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, Proficiency in Arts)
Level 7	Level 7	Second Cycle	Level 7	1-2	60-120	Master's Diploma
Level 6	Level 6	First Cycle	Level 6	4-6	240-360	Bachelor's Diploma
Level 5	Level 5	Short Cycle	Level 5	2	120	Associate Diploma

### 1.3. National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS)

#### 1.3.1. Introduction

Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) was established in 2006 to set up and operate the national vocational qualifications system which is quality-assured at national level in compliance with the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework. The process resulting with the establishment of VQA was initiated by the "Education and Employment Project" in 1992 which was conducted by the World Bank fund under the coordination of Turkish Employment Agency. Within the period until the end of the project in 2000, a draft law was prepared with the participation of stakeholders. The draft was then revised during the "Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System Project" which was conducted under coordination of MoNE. Having been submitted to the Cabinet under the coordination of Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), the draft was referred to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey as a draft bill in 2006 and came into force as "Law on the Vocational Qualifications Authority" on 21/9/2006.

VQA, with a vision of leading the development of qualified workforce by ensuring harmony between education and employment, is responsible for vocational qualifications within the scope of the Law. Professions including physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinaries, engineers and architects as well as professions which require at least undergraduate education and for which conditions to enter into profession have been regulated by law are outside of the VQA jurisdiction.

The National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) defines the rules and activities in the preparation of NOS in professional and vocational fields, development and implementation of national qualifications, and related to authorisation, auditing, assessment and evaluation as well as certification. VQA carries out activities in compliance with the norms and principles accepted at European level, and implements plans that have been prepared accordingly.

VQA is in charge of referencing the TQF to the EQF as the "EQF National Coordination Point" since December 2008. VQA is responsible for ensuring the usage of transparent methods during the referencing period, providing the stakeholders with access to relevant information and guidance as well as involving the relevant stakeholders in the process of comparison and utilisation of qualifications at European level.

Furthermore, VQA, as the National Europass Centre of Turkey, carries out activities regarding the management of Europass documents, promotion of Europass and Europass documents, thoroughly briefing information and counselling centres about Europass and Europass documents.

#### 1.3.2. Legal Basis

Below are the legal arrangements as the basis of the activities in the NVQS:

- i) Law No. 5544 on the Vocational Qualification Authority<sup>17</sup>
- ii) Regulation on the Preparation of National Occupational Standards and National Qualifications<sup>18</sup>
- iii) Regulation on Vocational Qualifications Authority, Testing, Assessment, Evaluation and Certification<sup>19</sup>
- iv) National Employment Strategy which was published in Official Journal No. 29015 on 30/5/2014.<sup>20</sup>

17) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File1.pdf>

18) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File12.pdf>

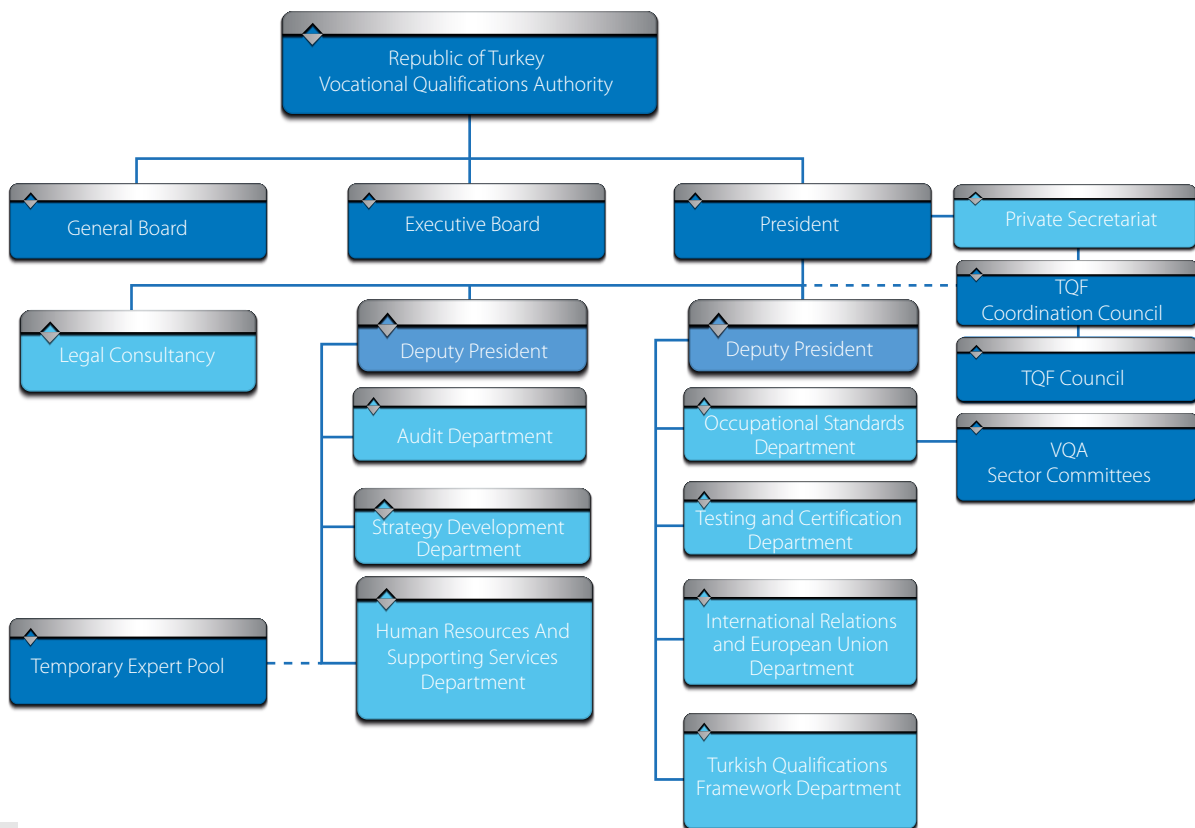
19) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File10.pdf>

20) <http://www.uis.gov.tr/>

### 1.3.3. Administrative Structure

VQA is a public agency as an affiliated body of MoLSS, which has a private budget and administrative and financial autonomy. VQA is governed by a triple structure involving the main national stakeholders in the education and employment in Turkey and performs its duties under steering of a General Board which consists of representatives of MoNE, CoHE, related ministries, public authorities, employee and employer unions, professional organizations and universities. The Executive Board of VQA is elected by the General Board for a three-year period and comprises the representatives of MoLSS, MoNE, CoHE, professional bodies, employer unions and employer associations. The president of the Board is elected by the members and is also the president of VQA.

**Figure 1.4. Organizational Chart of VQA**



One of the cornerstones of sustainability of the NVQS is the committees which are authorized to represent the given sector. These Sector Committees are tripartite structures including the state, employers, and employees.

As per the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles for the Establishment, Duties and Operation of VQA Sector Committees <sup>21</sup>, the sector committees consist of a representative from each of the following bodies and institutions:

21) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File13.pdf>

- (i) MoLSS,
- (ii) MoNE, CoHE,
- (iii) Other ministries related to the sector,
- (iv) Employer and employee unions and professional organizations represented in the General Assembly,
- (v) VQA.

Representatives to work in the sector committee are designated by the abovementioned bodies and institutions. The principle here is to designate the people who have knowledge, experience and competence relevant for the sector and its occupations.

26 sectors have been defined by VQA, and sector committees<sup>22</sup> in all sectors have been working actively.

The duties of VQA Sector Committees are as follows;

- (i) Make suggestions on the preparation, updating and improvement of occupational standards and qualifications.
- (ii) Submit opinions on the templates for occupational standards and qualifications.
- (iii) Review the drafts of occupational standards and qualifications in terms of format and content, evaluate and provide opinions.
- (iv) In case that a technical research on site where the occupation is practiced is deemed necessary to provide comments on the drafts of occupational standards and qualifications, report the said need to VQA and subsequently perform technical research if deemed appropriate by VQA.
- (v) Perform other tasks related to occupational standards and qualifications as per requests of VQA.

### 1.3.4. Finance

Most of VQA's income is comprised of fees received from the member organisations of General Assembly. The development of NOS and NQs is carried out on a voluntary basis in the scope of a memorandum of understanding between VQA and the institution(s) representing the sector. Nevertheless, VQA may procure service or employ competent individuals on temporary basis in its main activity areas such as the preparation, development or updating of the NOS and NQs, operating the sectoral committees, and assessment, evaluation, certification and supervision.

Fees regarding activities for the assessment and certification leading to VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates vary depending on the occupation and are determined by Authorized Certification Bodies with an understanding of free market. However, these fees are monitored by VQA through supervisory visits and appeal mechanisms. Information about the certification fees and fees for authorisation are available at VQA website and can be electronically accessed [here](#).

The candidates are provided with financial supports through Unemployment Insurance Fund and Direct Grant for Certification Programme. As of the publication date of this report, almost €9 million has been reimbursed to 45.000 successful candidates from the Unemployment Insurance Fund in regard to assessment and certification costs for VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates in dangerous and hazardous occupations.

The Direct Grant for Certification Programme is one of the grant components of Strengthening National Vocational Qualifications System and Implementing the Turkish Qualifications Framework Operation. The programme was started on 20/07/2015 with a budget of €5.349.190. Within the scope of the programme, the exam costs (€50 to €300) of successful candidates who applied to ACBs that signed protocol with VQA are reimbursed. As of the publication date of the report, almost €1.7 million has been reimbursed to 10.462 individuals.

22) <http://www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/sector-komiteleri>



### 1.3.5. Functions of the NVQS

Almost all of the activities in the NVQS are carried out by the stakeholders or through active participation of stakeholders and in cooperation with the state, employees and employers.

The main objectives of the NVQS are;

- (i) To cooperate with MoNE and CoHE in order to ensure that VET is provided in line with the national occupational standards, and thus to contribute to the quality assurance of VET by strengthening the relationship between education and employment,
- (ii) To determine vocational qualifications on the basis of national or international occupational standards and award those qualifications through quality-assured processes,
- (iii) To promote LLL by ensuring the recognition of prior learning that has been acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

Within the scope of NVQS, a range of activities are carried out in order to achieve the listed objectives. These activities are;

- (i) Identifying occupations in cooperation with the industry and preparing NOS for these occupations,
- (ii) Developing national qualifications based on NOS in terms of learning outcomes,
- (iii) Authorizing the bodies to carry out assessment and certification activities based on NQs through a process which includes an external evaluation mechanism.

Under the NVQS, activities are carried out in compliance with various quality assurance mechanisms developed at European level, and planning is made accordingly. The recommendations of the EQF and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) are the grounds for ensuring the quality assurance of qualifications.

It is planned to design a credit system in compatible with the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in order to ensure the credit rating of qualifications and credit accumulation.

#### 1.3.5.1. National Occupational Standards (NOS)

The first component of the NVQS is the preparation of NOS in line with the needs of industry. NOS are documents that define the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to practice an occupation successfully.

NOS are prepared by a job analysis method that enables the job/occupation to be divided into units (duty, procedure, procedure step, etc.) in a hierarchical and systematic way. Ensuring the effective participation of social partners and receiving their opinions and contributions are the basis for the development. Therefore, NOS are prepared by the bodies or institutions assigned by VQA among those with the competence to represent their sector, or by working groups established by VQA.

NOS include the main duties one should perform, procedures to be followed and performance criteria to be demonstrated while performing such procedures. In other words, NOS define the worker's profile as demanded by the sector and include the learning outcomes that the worker should have. Legislation on healthcare, safety and environmental protection in a professional field; working setting and conditions in which the occupation is practiced; tools, materials and equipment used in the practice of the occupation; and technical requirements are also included in NOS.

NOS provide input for both vocational and technical education programmes and national qualifications. Based on the published NOS, vocational and technical education programmes are updated, and when necessary, new educational programmes are developed. Depending on the demands of the sector, the NOS are reviewed at least every five years at the latest in line with the needs of business and education world.

NOS which come into force by being published in the Official Journal can be accessed via VQA website<sup>23</sup>. As of the publication date of the Report, 122 cooperation protocols have been signed with various bodies and institutions to prepare 869 NOS in total and 686 of them have been completed and published in the Official Journal.

### 1.3.5.2 National Qualifications (NQs)

The second component of NVQS is the preparation of national qualifications. NQs are documents based on national or international occupational standards. They are used for learning and assessment, defined by learning outcomes, and come into force upon the approval of VQA.

Likewise NOS, NQs are prepared by bodies or institutions approved by VQA. These may be education and training institutions, ACBs, institutions that prepare NOS, or professional organizations.

NQ consist of units. These units include learning outcomes and performance criteria that specify the standards necessary for the demonstration of these learning outcomes. NQ also include assessment tools to be used (theoretical exams, performance-based exams, observation, portfolio, etc.), assessment material (checklists) which define how performance criteria will be measured, competences of the assessors, assessment methods, and expiry date of the qualification.

NQs are published via the VQA website upon the approval of VQA Executive Board<sup>24</sup>. As of the publication date of the Report, 88 cooperation protocols have been signed with various bodies and institutions to prepare 519 NQs in total and 344 of them have been completed and published by VQA.

### 1.3.5.3. Assessment and Certification

The third component of the NVQS is assessment, evaluation and certification. Activities related to them are carried out by certification bodies authorized by VQA. These institutions should first satisfy the requirement to be accredited to offer the relevant qualifications within a system that has been established in accordance with the requirements of TS EN ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. This accreditation is awarded by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) or the accreditation bodies that have signed the multilateral recognition agreement within the European Cooperation for Accreditation.

Institutions meeting the accreditation requirement may apply to VQA for authorisation. VQA examines, audits and evaluates the institution's management system as well as policies and procedures for assessment and certification activities. Having been found eligible, institutions are authorised to do assessment and certification based on NQs and are called Authorised Certification Bodies (ACBs). ACBs are only authorised for doing assessment and evaluation not for provision of training. Authorisation for provision of training is subject to the permission of MoNE in Turkey. ACBs offer individuals, regardless of educational status or work experience, to have the learning outcomes recognised which they have gained in any way.

23) [http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_meslek\\_std\\_taslak&view=taslak\\_listesi\\_yeni&msd=2](http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_meslek_std_taslak&view=taslak_listesi_yeni&msd=2)

24) [http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_yeterlilik\\_ara](http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_yeterlilik_ara)

As of the publication date of the Report, there are 58 ACBs in total, and they carry out assessment and certification activities in 187 NQs<sup>25</sup>. Almost 70% of the ACBs are non-profit organisations such as professional bodies, chamber of commerce and industry, LLL centres of universities, employee unions or employer associations.

ACBs develop the assessment processes in the light of the requirements defined in the NQs. According to the principles set by VQA; all ACBs are obliged to take instant video-records of all the assessments they carry out. Decisions on the awarding of individuals are taken by the “decision-makers”, while the assessors who have the minimum required competences do the assessment of the candidates. The decision-makers take decisions on the awarding by evaluating the evidences produced by the candidates and the evaluation results of the assessors. In other words, the decision-makers validate the assessment activities conducted by the assessors.

People who have applied, participated or have been certified may raise an appeal to the decisions taken by the ACBs. Moreover, a person or an organization may make a complaint against an ACB or the activities of an ACB. Therefore, ACBs are required to have procedures for the acceptance, evaluation and conclusion of appeals and complaints.

Following the decisions of the ACBs on the awarding of candidates who have been successful, VQA prepares and issues the VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates to the successful candidates. As of publication date of this Report, the number of VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates issued has exceeded 105.000. Employers, education providers or others can check whether the people truly have the qualifications that they claim through VQA web portal<sup>26</sup>.

Additionally, Europass Certificate Supplements for VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates are prepared and published on the VQA website<sup>27</sup>.

#### 1.3.5.4. Accreditation of Education and Training Institutions

The fourth component of the NVQS is the accreditation of education and training institutions and/or training programmes in the field of NQs. However, it is not functioning properly yet since the legal preparations and discussions among stakeholders are ongoing. The ultimate aim of the accreditation is to enable both public and private education and training institutions to provide VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates. A particular problem which has emerged is that candidates who have undertaken assessment of their prior learning and found that there are gaps in their experience find it difficult to access training to fill these gaps. ACBs are not authorised to provide that training and, of course, there could be conflict of interest if they were authorised. VQA aims to satisfy these learning needs by authorising education and training institutions for the provision of training which will lead to the VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates.

#### 1.3.6. Recognition, Equivalence, Progression and Transfer

VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates are recognized and credible qualifications in the national labour market. The accreditation of ACBs according to ISO 17024 Standard and quality assurance system applied by both the ACBs and VQA improve the international trust on the VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates.

25) [http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_kurulus\\_ara&view=kurulus\\_ara#&Itemid=322a](http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_kurulus_ara&view=kurulus_ara#&Itemid=322a)

26) [http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com\\_sertifika\\_sorgula](http://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_sertifika_sorgula)

27) [http://www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/component/yeterlilik\\_sor/?view=yeterlilik\\_sor&layout=serlist](http://www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/component/yeterlilik_sor/?view=yeterlilik_sor&layout=serlist)

In case that an individual failed to become successful in all units of the qualification, i.e. he/she becomes successful in some units, Certificate of Unit Achievement is awarded to the individual for the units in which he/she becomes successful. Thus, individuals can accumulate the units and they can apply for the awarding of a full qualification when they achieve all the units.

The TQF constitutes a basis for recognition, equivalence, progression, and horizontal and vertical transfer between different levels and qualification types. In this regard, a guideline shall be prepared with the purpose of identifying the principles and procedures for horizontal and vertical transfer between qualifications in the Framework.

With the initiation of the TQF implementation process, the equivalency of VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates with other qualification types shall be clarified, and processes for the use of VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates in access, exemption, credit accumulation and transfer procedures regarding the education programmes and assessments for the qualifications under the responsibility of other bodies or institutions shall be identified. Progression and transfer between VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates and opportunities for vertical transfer are also defined in the relevant NQ.

There is also various legislative arrangements entailing the requirement of qualifications awarded by VQA. Here are some examples:

**Law No 5544 on Vocational Qualifications Authority; Additional Article 1 – (Annex: 4/4/2015-6645/74 art.):** Vocational Qualification Certificates awarded by VQA shall be mandatory for professions that are classified hazardous and very hazardous and included in the communiqués to be issued by MoLSS. Expenses for the assessment and certification, which is not to exceed the amount set out by the Cabinet, are covered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

Vocational Qualification Certificate is not required for those who hold Mastership Certificate as per the Law dated 5/6/1986 and No. 3308 on Vocational Education and for those who graduated from vocational and technical schools operating under MoNE and/or from schools and departments of universities providing vocational and technical education if they are employed in departments, fields and branches stated on abovementioned qualifications.

For certification requirement to come into force an NOS must have been published by VQA for the relevant profession and the profession must have been mentioned in the communiqués to be issued by MoLSS. Individuals must have obtained their VQA Vocational Qualification Certificates within 12 months as of the date the communiqué in question was published. According to the provisions of the Law, people not holding any of abovementioned qualifications cannot be employed after the 12-month period. Requirement that started with the 40 professions included in the first communiqué numbered 2015/1 published in the Official Journal by the Ministry on 25/5/2015, gradually becomes applicable to other professions classified hazardous and very hazardous and for which NOS are prepared. Accordingly, MoLSS published the second communiqué numbered 2016/1 on 24/3/2016, including 8 more professions in the scope of obligation.

**Regulation on the Records of Building Contractors, Construction Supervisors, and Certified Masters:** Subject to the Regulation, it is required for the masters who will be recruited for the construction and installation works to have a VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate<sup>28</sup>.

28) [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/27787\\_0.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/27787_0.html)

**Regulation on the Vocational Training of Workers to be Recruited for Works Classified as Hazardous and Highly Hazardous:** Subject to the Regulation, it is provided that workers recruited for the works classified as hazardous and highly hazardous shall receive vocational training or certify the training they have received. VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate is one of the documents recognized in this regard.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3.7. Work in Progress

Within the scope of continuous improvement, activities in the NVQS are reviewed periodically, and when needed, planning is made for improvement. Below are some of the activities planned to be realized in the short term:

- i) Diversifying the assessment methods for the recognition of prior learning (e.g. portfolio-based assessment),
- ii) Updating and implementing the process of authorising certification bodies and the criteria used in the authorisation process,
- iii) Ensuring documentation for implementation of internal verification and external verification,
- iv) Conducting works for the credit rating of national qualifications and qualification units in compatible with ECVET

### 1.3.8. Qualifications within the scope of the NVQS

As a single integrated structure which ensures the classification of all quality-assured qualifications in Turkey, the TQF was designed to include qualifications gained through education and training programme including primary, secondary and higher education as well as other ways of learning.

As mentioned in previous sections, qualifications under the responsibility of VQA are not normally awarded following a formal or non-formal education process. These qualifications are designed to recognise the learning which has occurred at several contexts but mainly at work place.

A new type of qualifications emerged as "Vocational Qualification Certificate" following the establishment of the NVQS. Unlike the qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE or at higher education, all qualifications awarded by VQA have the same title as "Vocational Qualification Certificate". What makes the differentiation between these qualifications is the content and level of the NQ on which the assessment is based.

Since the EQF level descriptors have been in use until the approval of the TQF, all qualifications of VQA include a level based on the match between the EQF level descriptors and the learning outcomes of the qualification. Therefore, it is clear that qualifications under the responsibility of VQA are expected to be allocated to the TQF from levels 2 to 8 depending on the match between learning outcomes and the level descriptors. Currently there is no qualifications approved by VQA at level 8 but it is possible in principle.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2013/07/20130713-3.htm>

## 1.4. Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

In Turkey, validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) is mostly valid for the learning outcomes leading to vocational qualifications. VQA plays quite a functional role in this regard. Learning outcomes of the individuals are subject to assessment and evaluation based on NQs published by VQA and certified without regards to where and how they have been achieved. Thus, individuals who acquired learning outcomes in non-formal and informal learning settings are awarded formal vocational qualifications.

The General Directorate of Lifelong Learning drafted a guideline on VNFIL in June 2013 and conducted a pilot study in three occupations. VNFIL approach of MoNE puts importance to the roles of counsellors and assessors. 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document for Turkey strongly focuses on the VNFIL processes and promotes extensive use of it. VNFIL is still at initial stage in higher education. CoHE included the issuance of a directive on VNFIL in its agenda and planning to publish it in the upcoming period. Some universities started arrangements at institutional level through the decisions of their Senates.

The TQF was designed to allow for recognition of qualifications achieved as a result of the learning in informal and non-formal contexts. Therefore, the TQF supports the VNFIL processes which help to clarify the understanding of qualifications and required learning outcomes for the acquisition of qualifications. Based on that, the aim of the policy which promotes VNFIL is to create an environment where the VNFIL arrangements for all qualifications in the TQF are available.

Through VNFIL, the learners are provided with such opportunities;

- i) Access to the programme,
- ii) Access to exams,
- iii) Exemptions,
- iv) Certification of units,
- v) Credit accumulation and transfer,
- vi) Recognition of qualification.

The TQF Regulation describes the duties and responsibilities of several institutions regarding VNFIL and learner mobility and the validation of informal and non-formal learning. These issues are explained in sections 4.6 and 4.7 of the TQF Paper.

Principles and procedures on VNFIL will be prepared by the TQF Council by June 2018. Afterwards, the responsible bodies will publish the procedures on how to apply these principles to the qualifications under their responsibility.

Since the most extensive arrangements on VNFIL are carried out by VQA at the national level, it is foreseen that the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning, as the other major authority in this field will work in close cooperation with VQA in terms of the transparency and accountability of VNFIL processes. Also, in terms of the development and update of an VNFIL policy consistent at national level it is intended that the approaches of the HEIs and CoHE to VNFIL will be in parallel to the other two institutions.

# 2.

## THE TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

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An elaborated description of the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) is set out in the TQF Paper<sup>30</sup>. In this section, a summary of the key features of the TQF is presented.

### 2.1. Purpose and Scope of the TQF

The design brief for the TQF, as set out in the relevant legislation, was to provide for a single integrated structure to support LLL, in which all quality assured qualifications would be described and classified. The TQF is therefore primarily a reference framework for existing qualifications. However, the framework is also expected to provide for a range of further applications:

- i) Developing new qualifications,
- ii) Recognizing prior learning,
- iii) Identifying opportunities for lateral and vertical transfer between qualifications, and
- iv) Ensuring the international comparability of qualifications.

In fulfilment of this brief, the TQF has been designed as a single integrated structure for the classification of qualifications in Turkey, to accommodate all quality assured qualifications achieved through all education and training programme including primary, secondary and higher education, as well as those achieved through experience-based learning and through individual learning that takes place at the work place or other non-formal and informal learning environments. The TQF also allows for the development of qualifications that will enable the appropriate recognition of learning outcomes to be achieved by individuals with special needs.

Main purposes of the TQF are;

- i) to provide a clear and consistent means of describing, classifying and comparing qualifications
- ii) to provide a single integrated framework including all quality assured qualifications,
- iii) to continuously improve the qualifications system so that it can provide appropriate recognition of qualifications achieved in non-formal and informal learning contexts,
- iv) to contribute to the training of individuals who are employable and equipped with defined and measurable qualifications,
- v) to strengthen institutional cooperation among all parties, which primarily includes awarding bodies, the industry and social partners,
- vi) to provide a benchmark for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Turkey and for the recognition of qualifications awarded in Turkey abroad, and to serve as an instrument of comparison.

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30) TQF Paper is accessible [here](#)

Initially the TQF will include qualifications awarded by MoNE and VQA as well as higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of CoHE. In time, it will include other formal qualifications awarded by various responsible bodies such as ministries, public authorities or professional bodies, together with vocational and professional qualifications, some of which are already available and others that will be required in the Turkish labour market will be gradually included in the TQF.

## 2.2. TQF Development Process

Technical and administrative studies for the preparation of the TQF started in August 2010 with the establishment of an NQF Preparation Commission which consisted of members from MoNE, CoHE, and VQA. Planning and development activities on the TQF had been carried out jointly by the Commission and the Working Group established by the Commission in October 2010. The working group included representatives from MoNE, CoHE, VQA, relevant ministries, public institutions, labour unions, and professional organizations.

A Feedback Forum was established in April 2011 to debrief about the activities carried out in the scope of the TQF preparation and to receive comments, recommendations, and contributions. 77 institutions/organizations were represented in this platform including ministries, public institutions, labour unions, employer associations, professional organizations, student unions, civil society organizations, and other social partners. The list of member institutions and organizations of the Forum is presented in the Annex 11.

In line with the decision of the NQF Commission on drafting a report including the technical and administrative issues regarding the TQF, a TQF Consultation Document was prepared as a result of the work carried out by national and international experts between 2011 and 2012 and finalized with the contributions from all stakeholders represented in the Feedback Forum. The TQF Consultation Document drafted to be discussed in the 1st Consultation Meeting of the Forum was approved by NQF Commission in June 2012.

Two comprehensive consultation processes were carried out during the development of the TQF. The first process was carried out in 2012 on the scope, structure, and design of the TQF while the second process in 2013 focused on the legislation and management of the TQF. Detailed information for these processes is available [here](#).

Besides the consultation processes, the draft TQF Paper was presented for comments and recommendations from over 200 international and national participants including the European Commission, EQF Advisory Group, and representatives of member states at the TQF International Conference organized in Istanbul on 16-17 April 2013.

Drafts for the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper were approved by the VQA Executive Board and the MoLSS in 2014 and then submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister to gather comment from the relevant ministries. Issues shared at this stage led to some revisions of the TQF articles of the VQA law which improved the provisions for the management of the TQF and the establishment of quality assurance models related to the TQF and established a Department of Turkish Qualifications Framework in the VQA.

Final drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper taking account of these changes were submitted to the Cabinet and the TQF Regulation came into force upon their Decision No 2015/8213, published in the Official Journal No. 29537 dated 19/11/2015. The TQF Paper came into force on publication of the Official Journal No. 2958 dated 2/1/2016.

The studies related to the TQF development have been supported through EU funded projects. The table below presents the milestones on the TQF development process.



**Table 2.1. Milestones on the TQF Development Process**

<b>Decision/Action Point</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Date</b>
Action Plan for Strengthening the Link between Employment and Education	Ministerial Decision (MoLSS)	July 2010
NQF Preparation Commission established	Inter-institutional Decision VQA-CoHE-MoNE	August 2010
Technical Working Groups established	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	October 2010
Debriefing Event of Feedback Forum	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	April 2011
NQF Preparation Workshop	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	July 2011
VQA Law No. 5544 amended in relation to NQF	Law	November 2011
TQF Consultation Document prepared	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	June 2012
1 <sup>st</sup> Consultation Event of Feedback Forum	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	July 2012
Preparation of the Draft TQF Regulation started	NQF Preparation Commission Decision	August 2012
Drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper finalized	TQF Editing Committee	June 2014
Drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper approved	VQA Executive Board Decision	July 2014
Drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister	Ministerial Decision (MoLSS)	September 2014
VQA Law No. 5544 amended in relation to the TQF	Law	April 2015
Drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper approved	VQA Executive Board Decision	June 2015
Drafts of the TQF Regulation and TQF Paper submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister	Ministerial Decision (MoLSS)	July 2015
TQF Regulation published in the Official Journal	Decision by the Cabinet	November 2015
TQF Paper published in the Official Journal	Decision by the Cabinet	January 2016

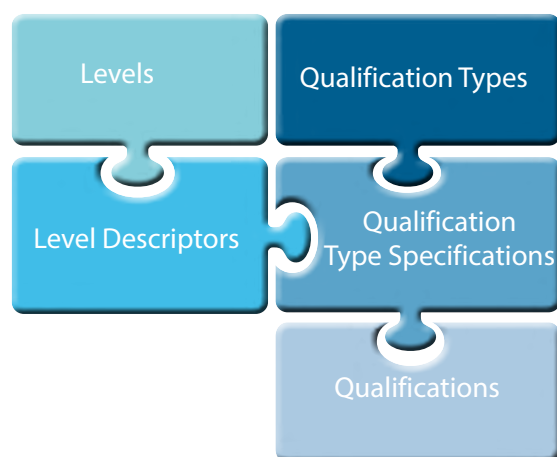
## 2.3. The Architecture of the TQF

The TQF structure comprises levels and qualification types. The eight-level structure is the basis of the TQF and the level descriptors define the minimum common learning outcomes of each level. The level descriptors are also the mechanism for identifying the relevant level of the qualification types and for referencing the TQF to other frameworks.

The qualification types are the main instrument through which many qualifications will be allocated to the TQF levels and they will enable the categorisation of different qualifications at the same level. The learning outcomes of qualifications types will be developed by elaborating and enriching the relevant level descriptors.

The interaction of the levels and qualification types provides a flexible structure for describing all kinds of qualifications and for supporting the development of qualifications suitable for all kinds of learning. The main elements of the architecture of the TQF and the relationships among them are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 2.1. The Elements of the Architecture of the TQF**



### 2.3.1. The TQF Levels

Studies on the TQF started within an EU-funded project called Strengthening Vocational Education and Training Project, which ran from 2002 to 2007. Various models were considered based on the Qualification Frameworks which were in existence at the time, the work of Coles and Oates on European reference levels<sup>31</sup> and the early drafts of the EQF<sup>32</sup>. Different models were checked against available information on labour market structures and existing qualification systems and an eight-level system, compatible with the emerging EQF was found to be suitable to match Turkish requirements.

When preparatory work for the TQF started, an inventory of qualifications was developed and a categorization was prepared according to the types and levels. This confirmed the appropriateness of an eight-level structure in line with a number of frameworks of European countries. All social stakeholders provided active participation in this work and at the end of two years, consensus was built over a distribution of qualification inventory by types and levels in 2013.

31) Coles, M and Oates, T (2005) *European reference levels for education and training promoting credit transfer and mutual trust - Cedefop Panorama Series*, 109. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

32) Eg European Commission (2005a) *Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning - Commission Staff Working Document* Brussels, European Commission.

The descriptors for each of the eight levels are based on common learning outcomes for qualifications at that level. The level descriptors are the core of the TQF, and they provide the basis for all other structures and instruments within the TQF.

Learning outcomes in the TQF are defined in terms of knowledge, skill and competence; thus, level descriptors are based on these three components of learning outcomes. The TQF levels are defined without reference to any particular field of learning. The TQF level descriptors are set out in the Annex 6.

### 2.3.2. Qualification Types in the TQF

Qualification types enable the framework to distinguish between groups of qualifications that are at the same level of the TQF and bear similarities - e.g. in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, credit values or general, vocational and academic orientations. Qualification types are not associated with any specific field of learning. Examples of qualification types are: Associate Degree and Level 5 Vocational Qualification Certificate, both at level 5; Vocational and Technical Education High School Diploma and Mastership Certificate, both at level 4.

Draft classification and levelling of main qualification types widely utilised in the education and qualifications system are illustrated in the Annex 7. This draft classification reflects the common understanding of the responsible public authorities. The draft levelling shall be finalized by the TQF Councils with the cooperation of the responsible bodies during the TQF implementation.

Apart from the types, there are some other qualifications in use in the education and qualification systems. During the TQF implementation process, detailed works will be conducted to identify additional qualification types, and those that are defined based on learning outcomes and assured in terms of quality will be incorporated in the TQF at appropriate levels.

It is foreseen to have discussions regarding the inclusion of some certificates to the TQF i.e. the pre-school participation certificates or certificates those can be considered as a license more than a qualification. They may not be compatible with the definition of qualification; a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards.

“Qualification type specifications” are used to describe qualification types. They define the common characteristics of qualifications within a given qualification type. They will become the standard requirement for responsible bodies to describe their existing qualifications based on learning outcomes, and will form the basis for the design of new qualifications.

A template for qualification type specifications is provided in the Annex 8.

### 2.4. Governance and Implementation of the TQF

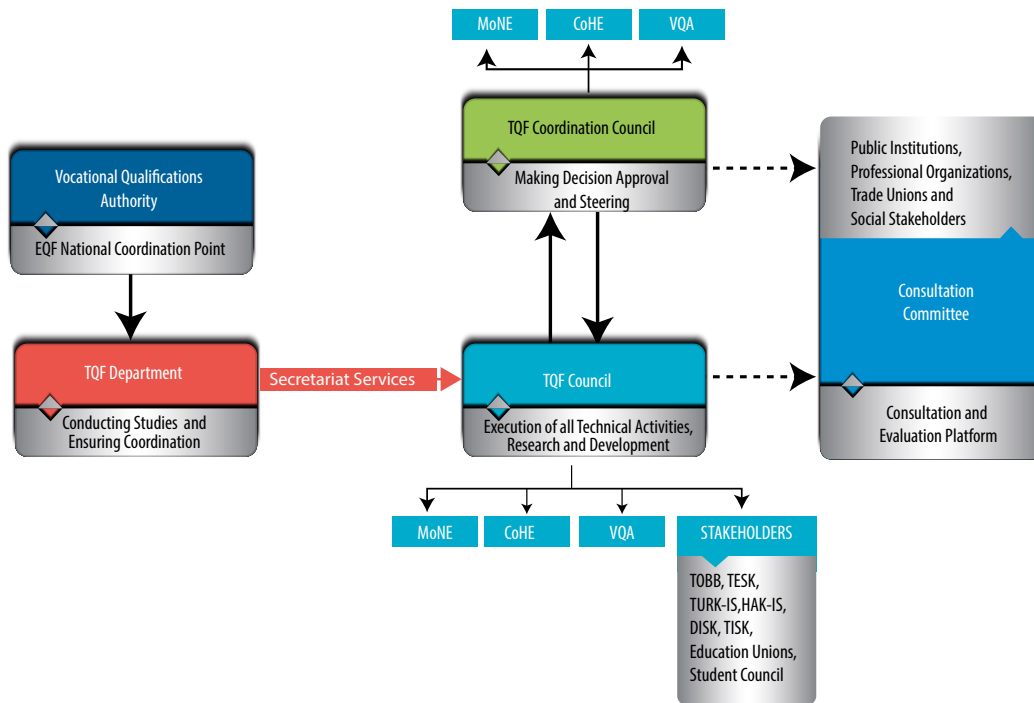
The matrix of policies and procedures that will shape the governance and implementation of the TQF is explained in detail in the TQF Paper. The key legislative instrument in this regard is the ‘Regulation on the Procedures and Principles Regarding Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework’. The TQF Regulation has been drafted to regulate the procedures and principles governing the preparation, development, implementation, management and updating of the TQF.

The TQF Regulation covers principles and procedures for inclusion of qualifications acquired through all education and training programmes including higher education and through other means of learning into the TQF, ensuring their quality assurance, identifying institutions and organisations in charge of

quality assurance, establishment and operation of advisory, decision-making and executive units for the development and maintenance of the TQF, as well as identifying roles, authorities and responsibilities for activities covered by the Regulation.

The tasks involved in preparing, developing and updating the TQF are exercised by VQA. However, it will be the joint work of responsible bodies to implement the TQF; MoNE, CoHE and VQA are the main ‘responsible bodies’ that award qualifications or supervise the award of qualifications throughout the education system<sup>33</sup>. The Regulation sets out a detailed structure through which these bodies are to collaborate to fulfil their responsibility in relation to the TQF, including the establishment of the TQF Coordination Council as the key decision-making body, the TQF Council as the technical working body, and a standing TQF Consultation Committee to provide a platform for on-going broad consultation with stakeholders. The functioning of these management structures are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 2.2. The Management Structure of the TQF**



Following the approval of the TQF, second stage of development and early implementation phase of the TQF have been initiated by the establishment of the TQF Department at VQA and the TQF Councils. Since the TQF Regulation envisages the preparation of principles and procedures regarding quality assurance, credit systems, inclusion of qualifications, progression among qualifications, validation of non-formal and informal learning, it is considered that the development of the TQF progressed to the second stage. In order to have a fully-functioning TQF, all these principles and procedures will have to be put into effect and applied.

33) TQF Regulation provides for the inclusion of qualifications of other responsible bodies such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport, TESK, Turkish Armed Forces, Union of Chambers of Certified Public Accountants and Sworn-In Certified Public Accountants of Turkey, Notaries Union of Turkey and etc.

The TQF Department of VQA is mainly responsible for conducting studies regarding the development, implementation and revision of the TQF and to ensure coordination between the responsible bodies and the TQF Councils. It became operational in January 2016.

The TQF Council consisting of twenty-two members was established in January 2016 in order to carry out the technical studies related to the TQF and submit them to the TQF Coordination Council. The institutions represented on the TQF Council are MoNE, CoHE, VQA, Student Council, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen (TESK), three confederations of employees' unions, three confederations of public employees' unions and Confederation of Employers' Unions (TISK). The TQF Council meets regularly (at least every two months) in order to discuss, evaluate and conclude issues such as TQF action plan, quality assurance criteria and principles, qualifications database as well as the EQF referencing. Since the first meeting on 1 March 2016, the TQF Council had seven meetings. The main outcomes are the approved TQF action plan, consultation plan for the Turkish Referencing Report, evaluation report on quality assurance, preparation and population of qualifications database and the final version of the Turkish Referencing Report.

### ***TQF Action Plan***

According to the TQF Regulation, the first mission following the official approval of the TQF is to prepare a three year action plan regarding the implementation of the TQF. This Action plan was approved by the TQF Council on 27 September 2016. It consists of preparation of the principles and procedures mentioned in the TQF Regulation, preparation of the communication strategy, the EQF referencing, qualifications database, establishment or improvement of quality assurance systems. The TQF Action Plan including detail information about the tasks, methods, deadlines and responsible bodies is available [here](#).

### ***Quality Assurance of Qualifications***

Quality assurance (QA) of both qualifications and the TQF are considered pivotal. Only qualifications which meet the QA criteria shall be included into the TQF according to the TQF Regulation. QA criteria will be identified by responsible bodies under the coordination of VQA. QA criteria for higher education qualifications will be in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area. And QA Criteria for vocational qualifications shall be in accordance with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET). Quality frameworks for national education that are in compliance with these European QA frameworks will also be taken into consideration.

### ***Turkish Qualifications Database***

All quality assured qualifications and reliable information about them will be registered and regularly updated through qualifications database. In order to establish the database a project was initiated in December 2014 in the scope of Erasmus+ and co-financed by EU and VQA. A portal has been established and data entry is ongoing. The database includes information about qualifications, such as the title, awarding body, learning outcomes, ISCED and ISCO codes, access requirements, progression routes, expiry date, Europass supplements and etc. The form used to identify the qualifications is electronically available [here](#).

Currently, 341 qualifications published by VQA, 200 qualifications awarded in VET secondary education, 350 qualifications awarded in apprenticeship education and 384 higher education qualifications have been identified and entered into the portal. The database is currently operating as a general inventory of qualifications, but when the decisions about the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF start to be taken,

the inventory will turn into a database including both registered and unregistered qualifications. The information in the database will be accessible through an internet portal which will be linked to the EQF and ESCO portals. The portal can be electronically accessed [here](#).

## 2.5. The TQF-EQF Referencing Process

In accordance with the EQF Recommendation and confirmation letter of MoNE No. 6334 and dated 19/08/2008, VQA was identified as the EQF NCP and has been representing Turkey in the EQF Advisory Group since December 2008.

VQA is responsible for the referencing of the TQF to the EQF, for the utilization of a transparent methodology throughout the referencing process, ensuring that the stakeholders access to the related information and guidance on how the qualifications are linked to the EQF, and ensuring the participation of related stakeholders in the process of comparison and utilization of qualifications at European level.

VQA has been carrying out the referencing studies through “European Qualifications Framework National Coordination Point Projects” since 2014.

The TQF-EQF Referencing Committee was set up by VQA in June 2013 for the supervision of the referencing process. In addition to the representatives from MoNE, CoHE, and VQA, the Committee included two international experts (Prof. Dr. Mile DŽELALIJA and Dr. Georg HANF) who had the experience in the EQF and Bologna Process, in the scope of 7th criteria in the “Criteria and Procedures for Referencing National Qualification Levels to the EQF”. The committee members are anticipated to participate in all meetings, to review draft versions of Referencing Report and to prepare comments and recommendations of their institutions within the period between the meetings. In total, 4 meetings are planned to be held during the referencing period.

Following the approval of the TQF Regulation and establishment of the TQF Council, the responsibilities and duties of Referencing Committee were assigned to the TQF Council which has a broader participation.

The Report Drafting Team was set up among the members of the Committee with 2 members from each of MoNE, CoHE, and VQA. The Team was headed by a local expert who has experience in Bologna Process and establishment of national framework for higher education qualifications in Turkey. In addition, two international experts were mobilised to support the Report Drafting Team on technical issues (Edwin Mernagh and John Hart).

### **Studies of the Report Drafting Team**

Following the second meeting of Referencing Committee on 30 June 2014, studies for the preparation of the Turkish Referencing Report were commenced. Drafting of the report was carried out simultaneously in Turkish and English, guided by the team leader and supported by the international technical experts. Members of the Drafting Team had carried out works both individually and together and the first draft of the report was submitted to the Referencing Committee on 14 October 2014.

During the third meeting of the Committee on 20 October 2014, comments and recommendations on the first draft were received from the national and international members and the agreed comments and recommendations were reflected in the draft report after the meeting. Upon the request of MoNE representatives in the Committee, a meeting was held on 27 October 2014 with the participation of the Report Drafting Team and experts of MoNE to review all comments and recommendations of MoNE and reflect those agreed in the draft report.

As of November 2014, the draft of the Turkish Referencing Report was ready for the national consultation process, however as mentioned in the section “TQF Development Process” of this report, new requirements emerged for the amendment of TQF-related articles of VQA Law and draft of the TQF regulation. Due to this, the national consultation process for the referencing report was postponed until the official approval of the TQF.

Meanwhile, various legal instruments relevant to this report were put into force by responsible bodies in 2015:

- i) Amendments of Articles in VQA Law regarding the TQF on 04/04/2015,
- ii) National Education Quality Framework on 23/05/2015<sup>34</sup>,
- iii) Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education on 23/07/2015<sup>35</sup>,
- iv) Regulation on Principles and Procedures for the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework on 19/11/2015.

Two full-day working group meetings were held in December 2015 in order to revise the referencing report according to abovementioned legislation.

### **National Consultation Process**

By the TQF Council on 5 April 2016, a plan on the national consultation of the referencing report was approved and the draft report was shared with the members of the TQF Council and relevant staff of the member institutions for comment.

According to the plan, consultation process was implemented at two stages: consultation meetings with main stakeholders and a national conference. In May 2016, four separate meetings were held with the representatives of relevant directorates of MoNE, CoHE, unions, professional bodies and student council. Awareness related to the referencing report has been raised and sections to be revised or updated have been determined through these meetings with the participation of 40 people<sup>36</sup>.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of the national consultation process was initiated with the national conference on 3 June 2016. 85 people in total from ministries, public authorities, education institutions, universities, unions, professional bodies, non-governmental organisations, European Training Foundation and international experts participated to the conference. Awareness about the EQF referencing and the TQF has been raised, the draft of the Turkish Referencing Report and the feedback forms to be used to provide comments have been introduced and the consultation method has been explained. The official consultation process was initiated with the national conference included 75 institutions and bodies and was completed at the end of September.

All of the comments and recommendations provided by national stakeholders, critical comments of ETF experts and international independent experts have been evaluated by the Report Drafting Team. Final draft of the referencing report was submitted to the TQF Council and evaluated at the meeting held on 29 November 2016 with the participation of international experts involved in the referencing process.

34) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File16.pdf>

35) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File4.pdf>

36) News related to these meetings are available [here](#)

# 3.

## REFERENCING OF THE TQF TO THE EQF: ADDRESSING THE CRITERIA

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### Criterion 1

***The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities***

The TQF Regulation regulates the duties, tasks and responsibilities of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including VQA as NCP, MoNE, CoHE, higher education institutions, VQA and institutions determined by relevant legislation or international agreements which are responsible for qualifications are shortly named as “Responsible Bodies” in the TQF Regulation.

Regarding the qualifications to be included in the framework,

- MoNE is responsible for a range of qualifications provided in formal and non-formal education;
- CoHE and higher education institutions are responsible for higher education qualifications;
- VQA is responsible for national vocational qualifications based on occupational standards,
- The bodies and institutions which are set by special law or international agreements are responsible for other qualifications.

The duties of the responsible bodies are:

- i) Work in collaboration with the TQF Council in processes related to the implementation of the TQF.
- ii) Assign representatives for working groups.
- iii) Carry out regulations and transactions relevant to the qualifications for which they are responsible in compliance with the decisions of the TQF Coordination Council.
- iv) Prepare qualification type specifications in collaboration with the TQF Council for the existing and new qualification types for which they are responsible.
- v) Submit proposals for the inclusion of qualifications they are responsible for in the framework, and provide all the requested information regarding the qualifications to the TQF Council.
- vi) Provide training, consultation and guidance services to the staff involved in the development of qualifications that they are responsible for and in the implementation of training, education and assessment activities related to the qualifications.
- vii) Carry out studies in the scope of their responsibilities specified in the communication strategy, and provide support for raising national and international awareness for the TQF.
- viii) Take necessary measures to establish, implement, monitor and improve the quality assurance system for the qualifications for which they are responsible.



- ix) Prepare reports on the qualifications and the quality assurance practices for which they are responsible.
- x) Ensure that credit accumulation and transfer systems for the qualifications they are responsible for are developed in line with the relevant European credit and transfer systems.
- xi) Take necessary measures to implement the TQF and realise its objectives.

No major challenges and difficulties are foreseen in the implementation of the TQF Regulation given that the responsible bodies designated in the Regulation were directly involved in the drafting and approval of the TQF. Although, responsibility for preparing, developing and updating the TQF are governed by VQA; it is the joint work of the responsible bodies to implement the TQF.

As per the TQF Regulation, the TQF Coordination Council, the TQF Council, and the Consultation Committee are established to conduct works for the management and implementation of the TQF. Secretariat services for them are provided by the TQF Department at VQA. MoNE, CoHE and VQA shall assign staff to the TQF Department to perform the tasks.

**The TQF Coordination Council**, comprising the Undersecretary of MoNE, the President or Vice-President of CoHE and the President of VQA, evaluates and approves the TQF Council decisions; ensures monitoring and assessment of TQF-related practices; ensures cooperation among responsible institutions on issues related to the implementation of the TQF and ensuring quality assurance for qualifications; ensures coordination so as to conduct national and international consultations about the TQF; assigns staff members from relevant institutions for the operation of the TQF and takes measures for the implementation of decisions taken in the TQF Councils in their respective institutions. The Council convenes with the participation of all members and takes decisions unanimously.

**The TQF Council** consists of a total of 22 members; a total of five members to be designated by MoNE, one being the Deputy Undersecretary; a total of five members from CoHE, four representatives to be designated by CoHE, one being the Vice President and one being a Rector among members of General Assembly, and one representative from the Student Council; a total of three members to be designated by VQA, one being the Vice President; one member from TOBB and one member from TESK; one member from each of the three confederations of employees' unions; one member, being the representative of education unions, from each of the three confederations of public employees' unions; one member from the confederation of employers' union.

The duties of the TQF Council include the following:

- i) Prepare a three-year action plan related to the implementation of the TQF.
- ii) Prepare the procedures and principles for the quality assurance of the qualifications to be included in the TQF.
- iii) Regulate the procedures and principles to be applied during the process of incorporating the qualifications in the TQF.
- iv) Prepare the procedures and principles on the examination of the objections to the decisions concerning the implementation of the TQF.
- v) Prepare the criteria regarding the qualifications to be included in the TQF.
- vi) Prepare the procedures and principles for the establishment, implementation and updating of the Qualifications Database.
- vii) Prepare the procedures and principles regarding the horizontal and vertical transition among the qualifications to be included in the TQF, as well as credit accumulation and transfer.

- viii) Prepare the procedures and principles regarding the recognition of prior learning and ensuring quality assurance.
- ix) Prepare the procedures and principles for the identification of the existing qualification types, determination of new qualification types and updating and cancellation of qualification types.
- x) Prepare the procedures and principles for updating, modification and cancellation of qualifications.
- xi) Prepare the procedures and principles for the publication of qualifications and use of qualifications by education institutions and awarding bodies.
- xii) Prepare the procedures and principles for updating the TQF.
- xiii) Prepare the procedures and principles for the use of the TQF logo.
- xiv) Prepare a communication strategy to raise the national and international awareness on the TQF.
- xv) Make suggestions to the Coordination Council regarding the qualifications requested to be included in the TQF.
- xvi) Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation reports on the implementation of the TQF are prepared and to submit them to the Coordination Council.
- xvii) Make suggestions to the Coordination Council regarding the preparation, development and updating of the TQF.
- xviii) Publish reports on the functioning of the quality assurance systems regarding qualifications.
- xix) Establish the working groups required for the implementation and improvement of the TQF.
- xx) Submit the annual activity reports to the Coordination Council.
- xxi) Generate suggestions and proposals on issues within its field of operation and are requested to be discussed by the Coordination Council.

**The TQF Consultation Committee** is established by the TQF Coordination Council to evaluate and provide opinions on issues regarding the TQF where stakeholders proposed by the TQF Council are represented. The Consultation Committee will convene at least annually.

## Criterion 2

***There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.***

One of the key functions of the TQF is to be an instrument for the international referencing and alignment of Turkish qualifications. The primary concern in this context was to ensure that there would be clear and unambiguous links between the TQF and the two European meta-frameworks, EQF and QF-EHEA. Consequently, from the outset, the TQF development process has had as a design objective a structure of eight levels corresponding to the levels of the EQF. In developing level descriptors for the eight levels of the TQF, the structure and relations specific to Turkey have been taken as a basis. However, the overall correspondence of the levels in the two frameworks is close. This can be demonstrated by a comparison of

- the structures of the two frameworks;
- the conceptual basis of the two frameworks;
- the level descriptors of the two frameworks.

During the preparation of the TQF, a qualifications inventory was developed through an analysis on the education system and qualifications in Turkey and classification was developed by types and levels. According to the existing qualification inventory, it was agreed that the qualifications in Turkey

were at eight levels. All social stakeholders provided active participation during this work and the probable distribution of the qualifications inventory by types and levels was developed tentatively in line with general approach and anticipation of responsible public authorities at the end of a two-year development period. The levels of the qualification types will be confirmed by the TQF Coordination Council in cooperation with responsible bodies during the TQF implementation process in 2017.

A comparative analysis, on the basis of structures, conceptual basis, and level descriptors of the TQF and the EQF, concludes that there is one-to-one correspondence between the TQF levels and the EQF levels.

The following sections set out the comparative analysis on which this correspondence is based.

### ***Comparing the structures of the TQF and the EQF***

A general comparison of the general structures of the TQF and the EQF establishes that, while there are some differences between them, the similarities between the two Frameworks are clear.

#### ***Similarities***

- i) Both the TQF and the EQF are structures of eight levels, defined by level descriptors.
- ii) Both Frameworks are comprehensive and integrated, designed to relate to qualifications awarded for all learning, whether acquired through formal, non-formal or informal processes, or through learning in programmes of general education, VET or higher education.
- iii) In both Frameworks, the statements that define the levels are completely neutral in terms of contexts of learning.
- iv) In both the TQF and EQF, the level descriptors are designed to be read across all factors of learning outcomes (i.e. knowledge, skill and competence), and aspects of each factor are sometimes elaborated or clarified in other factors; also, in both frameworks the outcomes for a given level build on and subsume the outcomes of the levels beneath.
- v) In both frameworks, key words or phrases are introduced as ‘threshold’ or distinguishing factors in the description of learning outcomes at each level..

#### ***Differences***

- i) Clearly, the TQF differs from the EQF in terms of purpose, in that the TQF is a national qualifications framework into which different types of qualifications are placed, whereas the EQF is a meta-framework that acts as a translation device for national qualifications frameworks.
- ii) The EQF has a very simple structure of levels; however, the TQF is a structure of levels and qualification types, designed to provide a clear and accurate categorisation of the wide variety of qualifications awarded throughout the qualifications system in Turkey.

Taking all of these similarities and differences into account, it can be concluded that, on the whole, the TQF and the EQF share core design criteria, so that a direct comparison of the levels in the two frameworks is a realistic undertaking.

### ***Comparing the concepts that underpin the TQF and the EQF***

There is a very strong correlation between the core concepts of the EQF and those that underpin the TQF:

- Both frameworks define levels in terms of the learning outcomes associated with qualifications at a level;
- Both frameworks define learning outcomes in three ‘factors’ - Knowledge, Skills and Competence.
- The definitions of key terminology – learning outcomes, knowledge, skill/skills and competence – in the two frameworks are similar, so that a direct comparison of the level descriptors of the two frameworks is greatly facilitated.

- In addition, definitions of terms for other key concepts in the TQF can be seen to relate closely to those adopted for the EQF.

These are: ‘qualification’ and ‘national qualifications framework’. The definitions of key terms in the TQF and in the EQF are set out below, and it is evident that they are comparable:

**Table 3.1. Comparison of Definitions of Key Terminology in the TQF and in the EQF**

TQF	EQF
<p><b>Qualification:</b> An official document obtained when a responsible body, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognizes that an individual has achieved the learning outcomes according to certain criteria.</p>	<p>‘Qualification’ means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards;</p>
<p><b>Learning Outcome:</b> Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual after the completion of any learning process.</p>	<p>‘Learning outcomes’ means statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;</p>
<p><b>Knowledge:</b> Defined as theoretical and/or factual knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a working or learning area.</p>	<p>‘Knowledge’ means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practises that is related to a field of study or work. In the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;</p>
<p><b>Skill:</b> Defined in general as “utilisation of knowledge” and “problem solving” which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive, and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.</p>	<p>‘Skills’ means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);</p>
<p><b>Competence:</b> Defined as utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination of learning needs and satisfaction of them, consideration of the social and moral issues and responsibilities.</p>	<p>‘Competence’ means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy;</p>
<p><b>The Turkish Qualifications Framework</b> is the national qualifications framework, designed to be in compliance with the European Qualifications Framework and setting out all qualifications principles acquired through vocational, general and academic education and training programmes including primary, secondary and higher education and through other means of learning.</p>	<p>‘National qualifications framework’ means an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. This aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society;</p>

As explained above, a very important concept in the structure of the TQF is that of ‘qualifications types’. The concept of ‘qualification types’ is not mentioned in the EQF definitions, as no qualifications are directly related to the EQF. However, qualification types are a feature of many national qualifications framework that have been successfully referenced to the EQF. It is now well established that this concept is in harmony with the general approach of the EQF.

### ***Comparing the TQF Level Descriptors and the EQF Level Descriptors***

In preparation for the task of demonstrating the link between the levels in the TQF and the EQF levels, the descriptors for levels in the two frameworks were arranged in parallel level by level and the text in the statements of learning outcomes was analysed: the results of this analysis can be examined in the Annex 1, which presents the two sets of level descriptors in tabular format. The similarities between the two Frameworks are easily apparent; at some levels the correspondence is virtually complete. In the descriptors for levels 2-8 the TQF level descriptors are more elaborate than the EQF equivalents, particularly in the statements for the ‘competence’ factor: these more comprehensive statements provide a richer source on which to base specifications for multiple qualification types at these levels.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 1 with the EQF Level 1***

The two descriptors correspond very closely, sharing the same key concepts for knowledge and skills: ‘basic, general, and simple’; in relation to competence, both descriptors refer to operating in ‘structured contexts’ and ‘under supervision’.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 2 with the EQF Level 2***

The two descriptors correspond quite closely, both referring to basic/elementary, field-relevant knowledge. In relation to skills, both refer to the use or application of basic knowledge/information to solve simple problems. Both descriptors refer to working ‘under supervision’ and with ‘some/limited autonomy’. The TQF statement for competence also refers to the ability to learn and this strand within the competence factor is included and elaborated at each following level.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 3 with the EQF Level 3***

The EQF statement for knowledge at level 3 mentions ‘facts, principles, processes and general concepts’; the TQF descriptor refers to ‘theoretical knowledge and factual knowledge’. In relation to skills, both descriptors refer to the selection and application of methods, tools and materials in solving problems. In relation to competence, both descriptors refer to taking responsibility for tasks: In the TQF as ‘in consideration of changing situations’, and in the EQF in the context of ‘adapting to circumstances’. The TQF competence statement also refers to the beginnings of autonomous learning.

These two descriptors correspond generally and in many particulars.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 4 with the EQF Level 4***

The descriptors for level 4 in the two frameworks correspond closely in relation to the knowledge and skills/skill factors. Both knowledge statements mention ‘theoretical’ and ‘factual’ knowledge. In relation to skills, the descriptors are almost identical. Both descriptors refer to competence factors that require taking responsibility in ‘predictable but changeable’ contexts; to ‘supervising the routine/ordinary work of others’; and to taking responsibility for ‘evaluation and improvement’.

The TQF statement for the competence factor also refers to an ability to plan and meet one’s own learning needs under guidance. A further strand is introduced within the competence factor at this level in the TQF, referring to an awareness of learning in a field of work or study with ‘moral issues and responsibilities’.

The TQF statements for learning outcomes at level 4 encompass all of the key words in the EQF statements for all three factors, but the TQF statement for competence is more complex. The overall correspondence between the descriptors is very strong.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 5 with the EQF Level 5***

The TQF descriptor for level 5 aligns closely with the descriptor for this level in the EQF, with precisely aligned concepts for all three factors and only minor variation in the words adopted to express these concepts - e.g. 'carry out management and supervision tasks' in the TQF and 'exercise management and supervision' in the EQF.

The TQF descriptor for level 5 features three strands within the competence factor those are additional to the EQF statement: these refer to a broadening awareness of the scope of LLL possibilities, the ability to take account of moral issues in the application of knowledge and skill, and the ability to cooperate or collaborate in tasks.

There is, therefore, very strong correspondence between the two frameworks at this level, although the TQF descriptor is significantly more complex than its EQF counterpart.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 6 with the EQF Level 6***

The statement for the skill factor in the TQF descriptor for level 6 is almost identical to its EQF counterpart. The knowledge statements in the two frameworks refer to the same concepts, with minor variations in language: e.g. 'inquiring thinking' in the TQF and 'critical understanding' in the EQF. Similarly, the concepts described under competence in the EQF are mirrored in the TQF statement. As with levels 2-5, the TQF statement for competence at level 6 refers to additional concepts in relation to ability to learn and awareness of social and moral issues.

The correspondence between the TQF descriptor and the EQF descriptor for level 6 is very strong.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 7 with the EQF Level 7***

At level 7, the TQF descriptor relates closely to the EQF descriptor in all three factors of learning outcomes, with only minor semantic and syntactical differences in the statement texts: e.g. 'inquiring approach' in the TQF vis-a-vis 'critical awareness' in the EQF. As with the preceding lower levels, the TQF statement for competence is more complex than its EQF equivalent, referring to leadership in learning in a field and to the ability to integrate knowledge with social and moral responsibility.

The correspondence between the TQF descriptor and the EQF descriptor for level 7 is very strong.

#### ***Comparison of the TQF Level 8 with the EQF Level 8***

The TQF descriptor for level 8 expresses the same concepts as the EQF descriptor at this level, but in a somewhat expanded form. All of the key words from the EQF statements are to be found within the TQF text – 'most advanced', 'frontier', the skills of 'synthesis and evaluation', solving 'critical' problems; 'extending and refining' existing knowledge, competence in 'innovation', 'autonomy', 'new ideas ...at the forefront of work or study'. The ability to innovate and develop new policies and practices is expanded in the TQF statement to include leadership in the field of learning itself and in the ability to take account of social and moral responsibilities in the creation of new knowledge.

The correspondence between the TQF and the EQF descriptors for level 8 is very strong.

### Criterion 3

***The national qualifications framework or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.***

The TQF is entirely based on the principle of describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. The structure and operational procedures of the TQF have been designed to enable the validation of non-formal and informal learning and to facilitate the use of credit systems.

#### ***Basis on the principle and objective of learning outcomes***

The definition of the term 'Qualification' is provided in the TQF Regulation as:

*"An official document obtained when a responsible body, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognizes that an individual has achieved the learning outcomes according to certain criteria."*

#### **(TQF Regulation, Article 3)**

This definition is in compliance with the definition provided in the EQF and it is a clear statement that the TQF is explicitly designed by learning outcomes and all qualifications to be included in the TQF should be firmly based on learning outcomes. This design feature has been fully incorporated in the TQF model. The TQF is a structure of levels and qualification types and both the level descriptors and the qualification type specifications - the key defining elements of the entire structure - are based on learning outcomes described in terms of knowledge, skill and competence.

The principle of learning outcomes is being applied for the qualifications in the national qualifications system of Turkey for more than a decade. Currently, qualifications that are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes are;

- all new qualifications published by VQA,
- all vocational qualifications provided in vocational and technical secondary education, apprenticeship training and public education by MoNE,
- all higher education qualifications (qualifications provided by some newly established HEIs are under development),

VQA has been developing a new range of vocational qualifications as part of its core objectives. These qualifications which are distributed to seven different levels of TQF are all designed on the basis of learning outcomes. Additionally, all vocational qualifications provided at secondary education, apprenticeship training and public education by MoNE are designed in a modular system based on learning outcomes. The learning outcomes of higher education qualifications have been also identified in the scope of Bologna Process. The specifications of these qualifications are accessible at Qualifications Database<sup>37</sup>.

Some of the general education qualifications have traditionally been understood as awards made on the basis of educational "inputs" (e.g. curriculum or education programmes) and/or the required time for the completion of a learning process. These qualifications are considered to be subject-based rather than outcome-based. The need to identify the learning outcomes that are inherent in these qualifications is considered in the TQF development. According to the TQF Action Plan, all of these qualifications must be defined by learning outcomes by 2018.

The TQF Paper sets out the key roles of the responsible bodies in the process of identifying the learning outcomes of qualifications: they are to 'prepare qualification type specifications in collaboration with the TQF Council, for existing and new qualification types under their remit' and 'submit the proposals on the inclusion of the qualifications in their systems along with the information regarding the qualifications to the TQF Council' (section 4.1.5); this task is to be completed by the end of 2019.

### ***Linkage to the validation of non-formal and informal learning***

The TQF Regulation refers to identifying the roles and responsibilities of the responsible bodies in relation to the validation of non-formal and informal learning, the recognition of prior learning and mobility of learners (Article 8) details of which are set out in the TQF Paper (sections 4.6 and 4.7). It is clear that all qualifications to be included in the TQF should have the arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and these arrangements are to be determined in the principles and procedures that will be prepared by the TQF Council by June 2018.

Although the TQF development policy has focused initially on analysing and accommodating the full range of qualifications that are awarded within the formal system, the structure of the TQF is designed to enable the award of qualifications for learning achieved in non-formal and informal contexts. Such qualifications are likely to be of widely varying 'shapes' and 'sizes', sometimes addressing only some of the learning outcome factors in the level descriptors.

Accordingly, the template for qualification type specifications in the TQF has been designed to facilitate the accurate description of qualifications that are significantly different from those awarded in the formal system. An example is the facility for identifying the 'category' of a qualification type, using a classification range of 'principal', 'supplementary', 'unit' and 'special purpose'<sup>38</sup>: it is anticipated that many of the qualifications that will be developed over time to recognize achievement of learning in the workplace are likely to be categorized as 'supplemental' or 'special purpose'. Already the new VQA qualifications and its associated facilities for the assessment of prior learning are opening the way to the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Turkey. Detailed information about the national vocational qualifications system and validation of non-formal and informal learning in Turkey can be found respectively in sections 1.3 and 1.4 of this Report.

### ***Linkage to credit systems***

One of the principles of the TQF is to allow for credit rating of qualifications, accumulation and transfer of credits as well as transition among qualifications. The TQF Regulation also sets out the duties of the responsible bodies in relation to the linkage to the credit systems: 'ensure that the credit accumulation and transfer systems for their qualifications are in compliance with the credit accumulation and transfer systems in the European level'. Additionally, the TQF Regulation refers to the preparation of principles and procedures related to the vertical and horizontal progression among qualifications by the TQF Council. This is planned to be realized by December 2017 and all qualifications to be included in the TQF should have a credit value by June 2018. The detail of the policy in relation to credit rating is set out in the TQF Paper (section 3.2.7).

Currently, widespread or systematic use of credit accumulation and transfer has been identified in two main sectors of the education system in Turkey: the higher education and vocational and technical secondary education. As mentioned before, ECTS is being used in higher education and MKTS is in use in vocational and technical secondary education. Contrarily, there is not a credit system used for qualifications awarded by VQA. Additionally, there is not a common single credit accumulation and transfer system at national level.

38) Detail information about qualification categories is available in section 3.2.3 of *TQF Paper*



Nevertheless, the TQF design does allow for the inclusion of qualifications that have been achieved through credit accumulation: for example, in the categorization of ‘unit’ qualifications in the range of qualification types. Also, qualification type specifications in the TQF include credit rating of each type and this would facilitate the development of credit systems by responsible bodies for the award of qualifications. The intention that credit systems should be in line with the provisions of the TQF is clear.

#### Criterion 4

***The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.***

Qualifications and responsible bodies for them are explained in Chapter 2 of this Report. All qualifications awarded in Turkey will be included in the TQF if they satisfy the requirements which will be determined by the TQF Council by August 2017. Following this, principles and procedures to be applied during the process of incorporating the qualifications in the TQF will be determined by the TQF Council by October 2017. Then, the process for the official inclusion of qualifications to the TQF levels will start.

Initially, the TQF will include qualifications awarded by MoNE, VQA and higher education institutions under the coordination and supervision of CoHE; in time, it will gradually include the qualifications awarded by other responsible bodies.

Currently, there are two basic requirements: to be defined in learning outcomes, and to be quality assured. The full matrix of procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF would take time, however, the approach to be adopted, the strategy for the inclusion of qualifications and for their allocation to appropriate levels and types are already outlined in the TQF Paper as follows (section 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

The key feature is in the use of qualification types in addition to the levels, as it is through the type specifications of that specific qualifications will be included in the TQF. All responsible bodies have the obligation to identify the learning outcomes related to their qualifications and ensure that each qualification is in compliance with the qualification type specifications it corresponds. Qualifications which are not compliant with any of the existing qualification types will be included at appropriate levels under new types. Quality assured qualifications that are fully compliant with the relevant qualification type specifications will be included in the TQF as per their level, type and category. Responsible bodies will submit proposals to the TQF Council for inclusion of qualifications in the TQF for which they are responsible along with the information related to those qualifications. The TQF Council will evaluate these applications and make proposals to the TQF Coordination Council which will make a final decision regarding qualifications to be included in the TQF. Decisions on the qualifications requested to be included in the TQF will be taken in line with the principles set. These decisions will always be open to appeals.

Quality assured qualifications of the responsible bodies and general, vocational and academic qualifications offered upon permission and inspection of these institutions will be included in the TQF within four years following the publication of the TQF Regulation. So, the deadline for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF is the end of 2019.

All qualifications included in the TQF will be registered in the Qualifications Database by VQA. Furthermore, responsible bodies are to keep traceable records of the qualifications for which they are responsible. The recording of a qualification in the Database will be the evidence of its inclusion in the TQF.

The requirements and processes regarding the inclusion of qualifications achieved in other countries or awarded by foreign awarding bodies into the TQF and determining the TQF level will be set by the TQF Coordination Council. Referencing and mutual recognition agreements concluded on the basis of the EQF will be taken into account for the recognition of these qualifications.

## Criterion 5

***The national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in Annex 3 of the Recommendation).***

Until the development of the TQF, the institutions and organizations responsible for qualifications were solely responsible for ensuring the quality assurance (QA) of the qualifications they provided and there was no systematic link between different QA practices. In addition, there was no authority responsible for monitoring and harmonizing the QA systems at national level. Upon the efficient implementation of the TQF, QA structures and practices which are comparable, transparent, and compatible with international approaches will be given a systematic structure at national level for the first time and an integrated QA approach will be adopted through the monitoring and harmonization tasks of the TQF Councils.

QA is one of the building blocks of the TQF. For this reason, a set of provisions, that all responsible bodies will comply with, are determined in the TQF Regulation. It also makes clear that the responsible bodies should establish and operate QA systems in compliance with the principles below:

- i) Identifying clear and measurable objectives and learning outcomes for qualifications,
- ii) Planning the processes for internal and external quality assurance,
- iii) Including practical guidelines including the involvement of stakeholders,
- iv) Allocating appropriate resources,
- v) Defining methods for self-assessment and external evaluation,
- vi) Developing feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement,
- vii) Organizing accessible evaluation results.

These principles are in full compliance with the principles set out in Annex 3 of the EQF Recommendation; "Joint Principles for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and in Vocational and Technical Education in the Context of EQF".

For ensuring the QA; MoNE is responsible for education and training qualifications under its remit, CoHE and higher education institutions (HEIs) are responsible for higher education qualifications, and VQA is responsible for vocational qualifications in the scope of VQA Law No. 5544. Quality assurance of other qualifications will be ensured by the responsible bodies specified in the relevant legislation.

The criteria for ensuring the QA of qualifications will be determined by responsible bodies in coordination with VQA, while principles and procedures for ensuring QA will be set out by the TQF Council. The TQF Coordination Council will monitor all works regarding continuous improvement of all QA processes. As mentioned in section 2.4 of this Report, studies related to criteria, principles and procedures for ensuring QA are ongoing. Upon the adoption of these, responsible bodies will review their QA systems and will carry out the necessary arrangements in the scope of principles abovementioned.

There are some aspects, which are regarded as specific for Turkey, in the design of QA systems within the education and qualifications system. For example, education at all levels is planned, organized and executed in a centralised way and the vertical hierarchy is a distinctive characteristic of the education system. Therefore, it is very important to ensure the effective functioning of organizational structures and the vertical and horizontal relations within the hierarchy in order to achieve the outcomes of the system successfully.

In explaining the QA systems operated by MoNE and CoHE, quality assurance is addressed in terms of functional and administrative organization in line with the principles in Annex III of the EQF. Institutional internal control and audit mechanisms have been set up well in terms of input, process and output with the impact of national management culture. Even though, strict and integrated supervision of administration and operation have been carried out both in-school or in-house and by external regulatory authorities, it can be claimed that foreseen benefits in terms of supervision and the evaluation of supervision results are not yet realised. However, this organizational audit and management model has begun to become more effective by including performance monitoring and learning outcome approach in recent years.

The qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE and higher education qualifications mostly focus on academic knowledge and key competences, while the qualifications under the responsibility of VQA focus more on skills required for employment. Thus, the QA systems operated by different responsible bodies have different procedures by nature. For this reason, outlines used for introducing the QA systems differ between responsible bodies. The QA systems operated by each responsible body are summarized below and are presented in detail in the Annexes 2, 3, and 4.

### ***Quality Assurance of Qualifications under the Responsibility of the Ministry of National Education***

Quality assurance of qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE is addressed in these dimensions:

- i) Development and validation of education programmes,
- ii) Determination and validation of education materials and tools,
- iii) Assignment of the teaching staff,
- iv) Assessment and evaluation,
- v) Self-assessment and external evaluation,
- vi) Information management systems,
- vii) Quality standards for education and training.

#### ***i) Development and Validation of the Education Programmes***

The programme development process and the management of this process are crucial for QA. This process starts with the development of programmes by relevant general directorates of MoNE and by private schools. The Department of Programme and Teaching Materials and the Department of Monitoring and Assessment in each general directorate are responsible units. While developing programmes, the participation of all stakeholders and use of learning outcomes approach are ensured. Programmes developed are submitted to the Board of Education (BoE) for validation. At the first stage, BoE reviews the programmes in terms of national priorities and policies, structure, legal and institutional regulations, practical principles, learning field, units, outcomes, teaching and learning processes, and assessment and evaluation methods. On the completion of the analysis, validated programmes are

submitted to the Minister for approval. On the approval by the Minister, programmes are put into practice. Monitoring and evaluation activities for programmes are carried out in the implementation process. At this stage, update, improvement and evaluation of the efficiency of programmes are conducted.

### **ii) Determination and Validation of Education Materials and Tools**

The education materials and tools to be used are determined by relevant general directorates and submitted to the BoE for validation. In addition, course books and education materials can be developed by the private education institutions. The Board examines the course books, education tools based on the programme requirements and submits validated education materials and tools to the Minister for approval. The Board also ensures that they are effectively used by teachers and trainers.

### **iii) Assignment of the Teaching Staff**

The selection, training and assignment of the teaching staff are co-implemented by MoNE and CoHE. The candidate teachers are appointed among the graduates of the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Science and Literature and other faculties having pedagogical formation courses. They are selected through an assessment and interview process among the graduates of the faculties abovementioned. The selected teachers are assigned as a candidate teacher in education institutions by MoNE. Candidate teachers who succeed the written and oral exams held after one year experience in education institutions are assigned as permanent teachers.

Planning and implementation of in-service training activities for the professional development of teachers is carried out by the General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development on a regular basis.

### **iv) Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment and evaluation methods and techniques are designed based on the learning outcomes specified both in the education programmes and courses. Assessment and evaluation are carried out at both school and national level. There are examinations which are designed and held at school level and those designed centrally and held at national level. Data and assessments on in-school examination are transferred to the e-School System, which enables monitoring by parents, students, school management and the Ministry. Data and results of examination held at national level are produced by the units holding the examination, and used in planning education and training activities. In addition, the results of assessment and evaluation in non-formal education are transferred into e-Non-formal System and can be tracked by students, trainees, teachers, management of the institutions, and the Ministry.

### **v) Self-assessment and external evaluation**

These functions are carried out through measures developed based on the evaluation of school-related data, reports, and opinions produced at school and national levels by the school management and relevant units of the Ministry.

Self-assessment is carried out within the framework of the 'Directive on Quality Management System in Education' published by MoNE<sup>39</sup>. Under this directive, which entered into force in November 1999 and was revised in January 2014, self-assessment became compulsory for schools. Self-assessment is done annually within the Education Quality Management System in all types of education institutions.

39) [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/kaliteyonsis\\_1/kaliteyonsis\\_1.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/kaliteyonsis_1/kaliteyonsis_1.html)

Institutions regularly and systematically carry out self-assessment, report their review and improvement activities according to set criteria. Reporting procedures are different for each type of school, and appropriate templates including the relevant criteria are provided. The total quality management approach has been used for quality assurance and improvement in schools providing vocational and technical education since 2009. These schools carry out self-assessment following the Excellence Model developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management applied as the basis of the continuous improvement of areas of concern.

Inspection and evaluation of schools by MoNE is considered as external evaluation, since the central and provincial administrative organization of MoNE is responsible for the regulation and inspection of education institutions and is not the education provider itself. External evaluations are done on a three-year basis. The main purpose of external evaluation is to check compliance of schools with existing legislation and provide guidance for improvement. Inspectors carry out external evaluation activities following the 'School Guidance and Control Guidelines' prepared by the Department of Inspection Board for different school types and levels<sup>40</sup>. Inspectors seek to identify problems, propose appropriate solutions, improve practices, performance and quality, enable schools to make better use of public resources and help school staff meet these aims. While evaluating schools, the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation are coordinated by the Department of Inspection Board and conducted by the inspectors of the Provincial Education Inspectors' Units.

#### **vi) Information Management Systems**

These are MEBBIS (MoNE IT Systems) and e-School modules. These information management systems enable storage and monitoring of all types of information about teaching staff, students, trainees, schools and education institutions, assessment and evaluation and all other related fields. Through these channels, the units of MoNE responsible for the development, implementation, and assessment of quality assurance as well as the school managements, teachers, students and parents can access to information, which effectively increases the accountability of the education system.

#### **vii) Quality Standards for Education and Training**

A National Education Quality Framework has been developed by MoNE and came into force in May 2015 in order to set standards for education and training provided under the monitoring of MoNE<sup>41</sup>. The framework comprises all aspects of education and training in 14 thematic areas. The Department of Strategy Development is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the framework in all education sectors. The development and implementation of the framework is considered as a way of implementing the EQAVET.

#### **Quality Assurance of Higher Education Qualifications**

Quality assurance has been on the agenda of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Turkey at least for the last decade, as a result of requirements arising from international accountability, recognition of qualifications and, more recently, from the Bologna Process. The Higher Education Law covers traditional administrative measures towards quality control mechanisms, but since these measures were not supported by corporate governance principles, strategic planning instrument and measurement of performance, this traditional QA system has not been dynamic or sustainable.

40) These guidelines are available [here](#)

41) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File16.pdf>

Although there had been some attempts at national level to initiate a QA system and individual voluntary exercises of some HEIs, it had not been a national priority in the agenda of higher education in Turkey until participation in the Bologna Process. Efforts and activities to take Bologna reforms forward have gained a momentum particularly after 2005. Among these, setting up a national QA system, with a structure and function comparable to its transnational counterparts that would also match Turkey's future needs in higher education, has always come to the forefront.

An independent commission called Commission for Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education (YODEK) comprising of ten members including nine representatives of the universities selected by the Inter-University Council (IUC) and one student representative appointed by the Student Council was established in 2005 as being responsible for setting up and conducting the follow up processes within the responsibilities set by the regulations.

In 2011, due to the need for a change brought about by the recent developments and implementations in higher education, there were some amendments made to the Higher Education Law No. 2547 among which the major emphasis was on Higher Education Qualifications Framework for Turkey (TYYC) and internal and external dimensions of QA. By law, it is the responsibility of both CoHE, Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB) established in CoHE and IUC to take measures for the establishment and implementation of a national QA system. By law, it is the responsibility of the HEIs to ensure the compatibility of programmes they offer with the requirements (in terms of credits and learning outcomes) of TYYC and develop and implement internal and external QA mechanisms in accordance with the principles and the framework determined by CoHE and IUC.

In July 2015, YODEK was repealed and HEQB was established within CoHE as per the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education<sup>42</sup>. The Regulation sets out principles regarding the internal and external QA of education, training and research activities and administrative services of the HEIs, accreditation processes, and authorisation processes of independent external evaluation institutions along with the principles regarding duties, authorities and responsibilities defined in this scope. It is considered that the Regulation brings all kinds of activities held by the HEIs into the scope of QA.

The QA system designed for higher education in Turkey within the provisions of both the former YODEK Regulation and the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education is based on the evaluation of the HEIs in terms of their services. These services include the educational processes and procedures with respect to that whether the learning outcomes of the programmes within the institutions are in line with the relevant levels of TYYC, the curriculum are designed accordingly and how the HEIs monitor and improve themselves.

Quality assurance of higher education qualifications is addressed in these dimensions:

- i) Establishment of academic institutions and units,
- ii) Development and validation of academic programmes,
- iii) Determination and validation of education materials and tools,
- iv) Assignment of the academic staff,
- v) Assessment and evaluation,
- vi) Self-assessment and external evaluation,
- vii) Information management systems,
- viii) Quality standards for higher education.

42) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File4.pdf>

***i) Establishment of academic institutions and units***

In Turkey, all HEIs are founded by law enacted by the Parliament upon the recommendation of CoHE to MoNE and with the approval of the Cabinet. Faculties, graduate schools and higher vocational schools as well as two-year foundation higher vocational schools are founded by the decision of the Cabinet upon the recommendation of CoHE. The two-year public higher vocational schools, conservatories as well as open education academic units and sub-units under the HEIs are established by the permission of the General Board of CoHE in compliance with the criteria set by CoHE.

CoHE evaluates the compliance of education, training, research, development, and community service activities as well as the physical, technological, and academic and administrative human resources foreseen for the conduct of the managerial and administrative services of the HEIs through its expert commissions and administrative units. The availability of the approaches and structures for education, training and research activities foreseen by CoHE decisions in line with the guidelines in EHEA is sought.

***ii) Development and validation of academic programmes***

CoHE is the responsible body for the validation of associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programmes offered by the HEIs based on written and publicly available criteria<sup>43</sup>. Once a programme is validated, it means that it is accepted and automatically accredited by CoHE. These processes ensure that minimum criteria are met at the beginning and that related units start service at a certain quality level. CoHE also evaluates and monitors the effectiveness and quality level of services of these academic units.

The Presidency of CoHE informed the HEIs that, application for opening a programme and student admissions should be made to CoHE through a template in parallel to the programme template in ECTS User's Guide as of 2013. It is also required that course learning outcomes and programme learning outcomes are to be specified, associated with each other besides associating the program learning outcomes with higher education qualifications.

***iii) Determination and validation of education materials and tools***

The text books, other tools and equipment to be used for the courses should comply with the learning outcomes and the assessment tools required for these learning outcomes. All HEIs are obliged to prepare the ECTS packages accordingly. The academicians have the freedom to choose the training materials, as long as the material meets the learning outcomes.

***iv) Assignment of the academic staff***

The criteria for appointment of academic staff are prepared by the HEIs and published both on the websites of CoHE and the relevant HEI after being approved by CoHE.

While allowing the public universities to use their academic staff, CoHE determines the staff positions for professors, associate professors, and assistant professors of the HEIs in a balanced ratio considering the needs of the HEI, education and training programmes, specifications of scientific branches, research activities, practice areas, premises, tools, equipment, and similar facilities, as well as the number of students among other relevant elements.

***v) Assessment and evaluation***

Assessment may vary depending on the education programme and the learning outcomes. The law specifies the general principles on this, while delegating the right to the senates of the HEIs to issue a

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43) Criteria for opening associate degree programmes are available [here](#)  
 Criteria for opening bachelor's degree programmes are available [here](#)  
 Criteria for opening master's degree programmes are available [here](#)  
 Criteria for opening doctoral degree programmes are available [here](#)

specific regulation on the assessment and evaluation. The regulation issued by the senates determines the framework of the assessment; however the decision for the assessment method at course or module level is taken by the lecturer. The lecturer prepares the syllabus of the course in detail including the learning outcomes for each topic, performance criteria, method and types of assessment.

#### **vi) Self-assessment and external evaluation**

Self-assessment and external evaluation have been set out together when establishing QA systems in the HEIs. The HEIs are required to establish and operate QA systems as well as to ensure that the self-assessment and external evaluation processes are undertaken in the scope of the principles of implementation to be issued. The HEIs prepare a strategic plan containing all education, training and research activities as well as administrative services supporting these activities; along with a self-assessment report that is integral to the performance programme and activity report on an annual basis. The HEIs finalise their self-assessment activities by January-March every year and submit the self-assessment reports to HEQB for information by the end of April. These reports are used as a basis for the external evaluation teams in the process of external evaluation managed by HEQB.

Self-assessment contains; (i) the mission, vision and strategic objectives defined in light of the national strategy and objectives of higher education as well as policy and processes set out for QA, (ii) measurable objectives of academic units, performance indicators for these objectives and their periodical review, (iii) activities about structuring of programmes on the basis of TYYC and learning outcomes and fulfilling the requirements of the accreditation process, (iv) activities addressing areas that were highlighted as needing improvements in the previous self-assessment and external evaluation. Self-assessment reports include headings as information about the HEI, QA system, education and training, research and development and management system. Under each heading there are questions directed to the HEIs<sup>44</sup>.

The HEIs are required to undergo external evaluation at least every five years in the scope of a periodical, corporate external evaluation process to be conducted by HEQB<sup>45</sup>. An external evaluation calendar is prepared and announced by HEQB. External evaluation is performed by external assessors that are recognised or assigned by HEQB or by independent institutions licensed with a Quality Assessment Registration Certificate by HEQB<sup>46</sup>. An external evaluation service regarding accreditation at unit/programme-level is provided by independent national or international bodies holding a Quality Assessment Registration Certificate and remains limited to the unit/programme. Corporate external evaluation of the HEIs is performed so as to include the scope and topics set out in the Regulation. If the external evaluation is performed at unit/programme level, assessment topics are limited to the operation/service area of the unit/programme to be evaluated.

Results of self-assessments and external evaluations are public. Annual self-assessment and external assessment reports of the HEIs are published on the websites of the HEIs while the external evaluation reports are published on the website of HEQB<sup>47</sup>.

#### **vii) Information management systems**

The Information System of CoHE (YOKSIS) is a centralized database where information regarding the units, sections, academic and administrative staff, students, and many other data are registered. The system presents this information to other stakeholders via web services.

Studies are ongoing to ensure that the system hosts all information needed for decision makers, where this information is presented and exchanged in statistical table format as it expands. YOKSIS will be the

44) The guideline to prepare self-assessment report is available [here](#)

45) The directive on corporate external evaluation is available [here](#)

46) <http://yok.gov.tr/web/kalitekurulu/17>

47) <http://yok.gov.tr/web/kalitekurulu/34>



single address for the provision of any information related to the higher education.

A “Diploma and Alumni System” has been established and become operational. All information in the system is presented in meaningful and available report formats. As the diversity of data increases, the module is expanded with new requests. The system also hosts many detailed data forms of the HEIs including legal proceedings, Bologna Process forms, Entrepreneur Innovative University Index, Woman Studies, Higher Education Programme Atlas<sup>48</sup>, CoHE Academic System and Foreign Academician Information System. All these applications operate in integration with the system.

**viii) Quality standards for higher education**

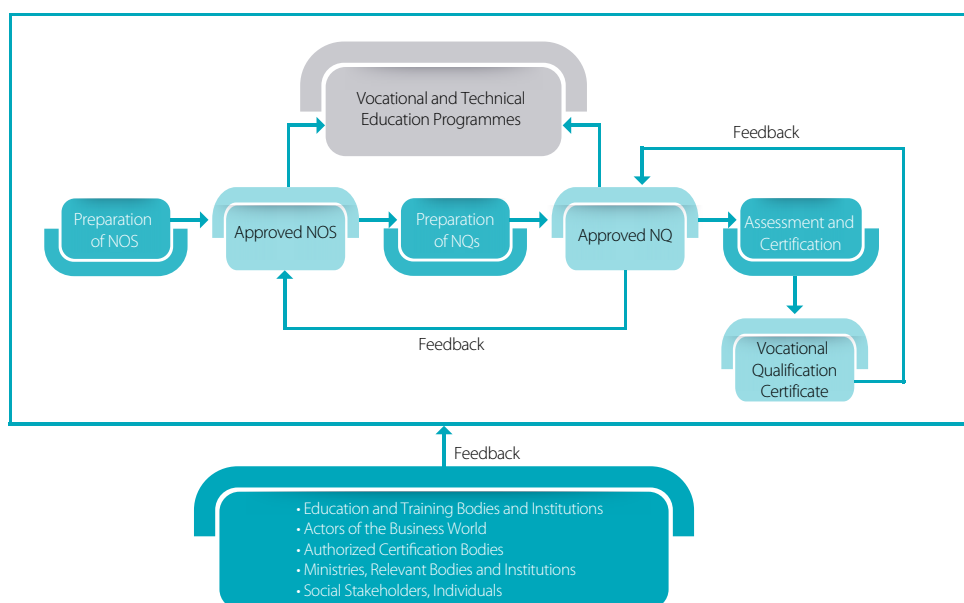
The Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education is based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in EHEA published by European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Revision studies regarding the ESG have been taken into consideration while preparing the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Therefore, the quality standards for higher education in Turkey are in line with the ESG. The standards for the corporate external evaluation have been published by HEQB<sup>49</sup>.

**Quality Assurance of Qualifications in National Vocational Qualifications System**

The QA elements which are implemented within the national vocational qualifications system (NVQS) are summarised here and detailed information is provided in the Annex 4 of this Report.

The NVQS consists of various interacting processes that influence each other’s quality. These processes and their interactions are outlined as follows.

**Figure 3.1. The Processes in the NVQS**



As indicated in the figure above, NOS provide input for NQs, and NQs are the basis of the assessment and certification activities. Therefore, the quality of NOS influences that of NQs, and similarly, the quality of NQs directly influences that of assessment and certification processes.

48) <https://yokatlas.yok.gov.tr/>

49) The standards for corporate external evaluation is available [here](#)

VQA has adopted principles for the activities implemented in NVQS in order to offer vocational qualifications within a quality-assured system, and implements certain QA elements in various processes in order to attain the targets for quality.

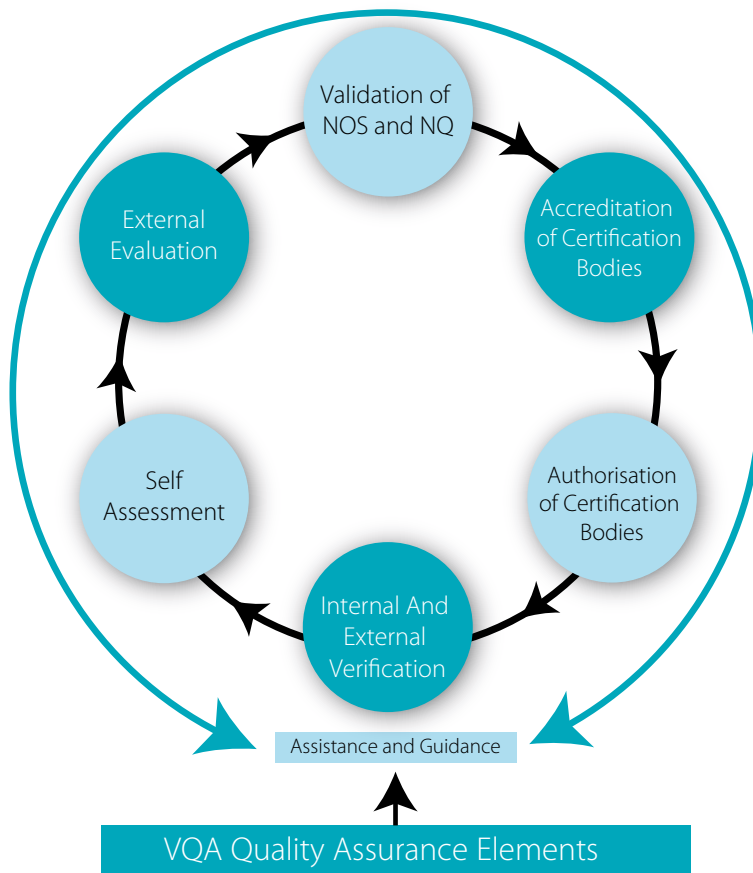
In operating and improving the QA elements, the principles and criteria set in the recommendations adopted in the European Union, including the EQF, EQAVET, and ECVET are taken into consideration.

The elements of the QA model implemented within the scope of NVQS are;

- Development and validation of the NOS and NQs,
- Accreditation of certification bodies
- Authorisation of certification bodies to carry out assessment and certification activities
- Internal and external verification,
- Self-assessment of Authorized Certification Bodies (ACBs),
- External evaluation of ACBs.

Assistance and guidance at all stages is continuously provided to all stakeholders involved in the NVQS by VQA. The elements of the QA model applied in the NVQS are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 3.2. The Elements of the Quality Assurance Model**



NOS and NQs are developed by the competent authorities assigned by VQA. The draft NOS and NQs are validated by the VQA Sector Committees and approved by the VQA Executive Board. ACBs are accredited by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK) against the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard as the General Requirements for Personnel Certification Bodies and they are authorised by VQA Executive Board following the audit based on the criteria set by VQA. ACBs are obliged to carry out self-assessment through internal audits, review by the management and submit annual activity reports to VQA including the self-assessment results. ACBs are also subject to external evaluation of both TURKAK and VQA annually. TURKAK is subject to external evaluation of European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) on a regular basis and the activities and decisions of the VQA Executive Board are monitored by the General Board of VQA and Court of Accounts annually on a regular basis.

The NVQS should be considered as a flexible system which proceeds with sensitivity to the changing needs of the education and training sector and labour market, and which is updated in line with these needs by reviewing the activities. In this regard, amendments have been made in the legislation and existing regulations have been updated.

External and internal verification processes, preparation of annual activity reports including the self-assessment of the ACBs, and assistance and guidance support by VQA have been added to QA elements.

## Criterion 6

***The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.***

The main responsible bodies in relation to quality assurance of the qualifications in the TQF are MoNE, CoHE and VQA. The whole process for the development of the TQF has been implemented with the cooperation of these three responsible bodies.

The Turkish Referencing Report was approved by the TQF Council on 29/11/2016 which is in charge of the referencing process.

The written agreements of the relevant quality assurance bodies are presented in the Annex 10. Each of these bodies fully and actively involved in the preparation of the Turkish Referencing Report. Their involvement and contribution to the referencing process also represents their agreement with the process.

## Criterion 7

***The referencing process shall involve international experts.***

The TQF-EQF referencing process includes two international experts, with knowledge and experience of the EQF and qualifications systems.

They are;

- Prof. Dr. Mile DŽELALIJA, the representative of the NCP of Croatia
- Dr. Georg HANF, independent EQF expert from Germany, former representative of the NCP of Germany

Turkey invited these experts for the following reasons:

- Both of them have an experience of representing their home countries in the EQF Advisory Group
- Both of them have advanced knowledge and experience of the EQF and qualifications systems
- One of them (Dr. Georg Hanf) has specific expertise in the field of VET.
- One of them (Prof. Dr. Mile DŽELALIJA) has specific expertise in the field of higher education.
- Germany is a big country with large group of workers from Turkey.
- Croatia has developed a national qualifications framework and referenced to the EQF in the recent past.

Three meetings have been held during the referencing process with the participation of both of the international experts:

- First meeting on 30 June 2014 to discuss the work plan and methodology of the referencing process, establish the drafting team and determine the table of content of the Referencing Report.
- Second meeting on 20 October 2014 to discuss a first draft of the Referencing Report to be consulted to the relevant national and international stakeholders.
- Third meeting on 29 November 2016 to discuss the final draft of the Referencing Report, including the results of the consultation process and the final conclusions.

The two international experts have participated fully in the referencing process and their statements regarding the process are attached in the Annex 5.

## Criterion 8

***The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria***

The drafting process of the proposed referencing report is presented in detail in section 2.5 of this Report. The preparation and consultation of the Report have been steered and monitored by the TQF Council in which all competent national bodies including the National Coordination Point is represented.

The Turkish Referencing Report which addresses separately each of the criteria was presented to the TQF Council at its meeting of April 5, 2016. After their comments were incorporated into the report, a national consultation process was carried out between May and September 2015. After consultations were completed the referencing report have been finalised and presented to the TQF Council at its meeting of November 29, 2016.

The Turkish Referencing Report has been approved by the TQF Council during the meeting held on 29/11/2016. This approval certifies that this referencing report is the single integrated national report on referencing of the TQF to the EQF and self-certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA.

This Report, when accepted by the EQF Advisory Group, will be published on the dedicated TQF website<sup>50</sup> as well as the websites of competent national authorities.

<sup>50)</sup> [www.tyc.gov.tr](http://www.tyc.gov.tr)

## Criterion 9

***The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.***

Following the completion of the referencing process, VQA will submit the Turkish Referencing Report to the European Commission and provide a link to the published report in order to include it into the official EQF platform.

## Criterion 10

***Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.***

During the implementation process of the TQF, a consistent approach will be determined by a procedure to use the TQF logo and relevant TQF level on all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents. In the scope of that procedure, use of the relevant EQF level will also be evaluated and decided on by the TQF Councils.

There may be a need to make legal amendments in order to indicate the EQF level in all new certificates and diplomas. The legislations related to the design and publication of the certificates and diplomas by various competent authorities may need to be adopted or amended following the adoption of the procedure about the use of the EQF levels.

The indication of the EQF level on certificates and diplomas will depend on the allocation of qualifications to the appropriate TQF levels and completion of the referencing of the TQF to the EQF.

# 4.

## SELF-CERTIFICATION OF THE TQF TO THE QF-EHEA

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### 4.1. Introduction

CoHE developed the Higher Education Qualifications Framework for Turkey (TYYC) and brought the studies to a certain stage between 2006 and 2008, long ago the development of the TQF. TYyc was developed by taking into consideration the QF-EHEA and the EQF and was introduced in all higher education institutions as of 2010. TYyc is in compliance with the QF-EHEA but it is also compatible with the EQF. TYyc was replaced with the TQF, following the enactment of the TQF upon the Decision No. 2015/8213 of the Cabinet and publication in the Official Journal dated 19/11/2015.

The process of self-certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA was performed in line with the criteria and procedures defined in the QF-EHEA.

### 4.2. Comparison of Terminology and Definitions

When the terminology and approach of the TQF are analyzed, it is seen that, the approach in the Dublin descriptors has not been followed directly, and more there is similarity with the approach and methodology of the EQF. However, it can be said that there is a complete implicit or explicit compatibility between the TQF and the QF-EHEA in terms of the level hierarchy. Since Turkey has divided higher education into associate, bachelor, master's and doctorate education for a long time, the TQF levels and the QF-EHEA levels overlap completely. In fact, Turkey's view in this regard gets full scores in the Bologna Score Card.

QF-EHEA levels are described using the following factors: knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements, and communication and learning skills. The conceptual methodology used in the Dublin descriptors has not been used in the TQF. However, the conceptual approach used in the EQF has been adopted in the TQF - i.e. the factors used in the TQF are similar to those used in the EQF: knowledge (theoretical and factual), skill (cognitive and practical) and competence (taking responsibility and autonomy).

While definitions in the EQF do not completely overlap with those in the QF-EHEA, they allow for comparability. When TYyc was being developed between 2006 and 2010, the approach of QF-EHEA in its level descriptors was adopted. Since CoHE representatives who were involved in the development process of the TQF have experience in the implementation of both methodologies (EQF and QF-EHEA), studies were conducted effectively when developing the TQF.

An LLL approach and contexts of non-formal and informal learning which were included indirectly and implicitly in the EQF and QF-EHEA have been stated explicitly in the TQF level descriptors. Additionally, the aspect of moral issues and responsibilities in the field of work or study which was also stated indirectly and implicitly in the EQF and the QF-EHEA has been considered in the TQF levels. Both aspects are very important both for the Bologna Process and as a dimension of participant citizenship in social issues.

**Table 4.1. Elements of Level Descriptors in the QF-EHEA and the TQF**

QF-EHEA	TQF	Definition in the TQF
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge (theoretical and/or factual)	Theoretical and/or factual knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a working or learning area.
Applying knowledge and understanding	Skills (cognitive or practical)	“Utilisation of knowledge”, “problem solving” and “transferring knowledge and skills to others” which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive, and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.
Making judgements	Competences (responsibility and autonomy)	Utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work and/or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning needs in line with lifelong learning approach.

Various methodologies were examined while preparing the TQF level descriptors. It was considered that adopting a holistic and systematic approach would be necessary for a framework to be comparatively more effective, applicable, comparable and dynamic with horizontal and vertical hierarchical consistency. Certain references, principles and rules were grounded as basis in the preparation of the TQF level descriptors.

The following approach was followed in this regard.

- i) The criterion considered has been to ensure that level descriptors meet the EQF in terms of all levels and Dublin descriptors (QF-EHEA) in terms of levels of higher education qualifications. Since Dublin descriptors are primarily implicit in the EQF, there was no new or complex case in this regard.
- ii) Aspects and approaches such as LLL, and recognition of non-formal and informal learning which are seen as important in Turkey and internationally, are included in the TQF level descriptors.
- iii) School education (awarding with a degree or diploma) has been taken as a reference in creating the hierarchy of levels in the TQF. Work-based learning and ways of non-formal and informal learning have been also considered.
- iv) ISCED approach has been grounded in the field of work and study from the first level to the eight level: the approach from the broad field to the narrow field, programme and subject.
- v) Horizontal harmony has been ensured between knowledge, skill and competence at the same level while describing learning outcomes at each level.
- vi) An approach from simple to complex, general to specific, concrete to abstract, no responsibility to limited responsibility and full responsibility, and following instructions to team membership and leadership has been adopted between levels.
- vii) An approach from structured context to semi-structured and non-structured contexts with unexpected changes has been adapted from the first level to further levels.
- viii) “Transfer what has been learnt to others and identify own learning needs”, which arises from the Dublin descriptors and is not provided explicitly, but implicitly is present in the EQF, and is implicitly in the TQF, has been satisfied by ensuring its systematic inclusion with a reference to social and moral issues, LLL, and non-formal and informal learning.
- ix) “Contribution to the continuous development of society” aspect is included in Dublin descriptors. In parallel with the descriptors in the EQF, this approach has been included between levels 2 and 8 in

terms of LLL approach and included in the last five levels in terms of “sensitivity towards social and ethical issues” with the appropriate levelling.

- x) Non-formal and informal learning together with an LLL approach were considered through hierarchy in levels where higher education qualifications exist.

### 4.3. Self-Certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA: Addressing the Criteria

#### Criterion 1

***The national framework for higher education qualifications and the body or bodies responsible for its development are designated by the national ministry responsible for higher education***

CoHE is the only national authority responsible for higher education in Turkey. CoHE initiated the studies for the preparation of TYYC in 2006 by establishing a permanent commission and study group under CoHE. The commission and study group prepared TYYC with the active participation of higher education institutions (HEIs). The HEIs in Turkey introduced a pilot scheme for TYYC in 2009 and initiated fully implementation in 2010. During the development of the TQF, the adaptation in the higher education was swifter due to the experience of CoHE and HEIs on implementation of TYYC.

As the EQF NCP for Turkey, VQA collaborates with CoHE on all issues related to higher education in Turkey. Since CoHE is also represented in the VQA Executive Board, adoption and implementation of the decisions taken here proceed faster.

AN NQF Preparation Commission was established in August 2010, and CoHE actively participated in this commission with their representatives and was actively involved in all stages of the TQF development, approval and implementation. Detail information is available in section 2.2 and 2.3 of this report.

#### Criterion 2

***There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications in the national framework and the cycle qualification descriptors in the European Framework.***

Both frameworks are consistent in terms of comparability. The TQF is intended to be a clearer and comparable framework, considering the main action titles of the Bologna Process and developments in EHEA. In this regard, aspects including LLL, recognition of prior learning and sensitivity toward social and ethical issues, which are implicit in European Frameworks, are levelled and included explicitly in the TQF.

Although the TQF level descriptors comply with the cycle qualification descriptors in the QF-EHEA in terms of comparability and recognition, they manifest a different structure seemingly with the QF-EHEA descriptors as they use the similar definitions and the approach in the EQF. Some of the Bologna experts in CoHE who were involved in the development of TYYC in line with the QF-EHEA were also involved in the preparation of the TQF. Therefore, compliance has been easily ensured between the TQF and the QF-EHEA. As in the descriptors of the TQF and the QF-EHEA, chronological and hierarchical association has been made in all concepts and levelling used in the descriptors of the TQF. The TQF has ensured to meet the approach in the QF-EHEA following the designations made in terms of conceptual approach and the principles followed in the QF-EHEA and EQF. The descriptors for levels in the two frameworks were arranged in parallel level by level and the text in the statements of learning outcomes was analysed: the results of this analysis are provided in the Annex 1. Table 4.3, below, presents the comparison of the levels of the TQF and the QF-EHEA.



**Table 4.2 Comparison of TQF Levels and QF-EHEA Cycles**

QF-EHEA	Short Cycle	First Cycle	Second Cycle	Third Cycle
TQF	5	6	7	8

### Criterion 3

***The national framework and its qualifications are demonstrably based on learning outcomes and the qualifications are linked to ECTS or ECTS-compatible credits.***

The HEIs in Turkey have adopted a learning outcomes approach since 2009 as a result of studies carried out from 2000, when Turkey got involved in Bologna Process. Two arrangements became milestones at national level. The first one is that the concept of learning outcomes was subject to secondary legislation following the implementation of TYYC in 2010. The second one is that this concept was placed in the law for courses, programme and diploma levels at the beginning of 2011. ECTS became the official credit system of higher education in Turkey by the legislation in 2011 and is stated in the law that ECTS credits are based on students' workload. CoHE has been monitoring the HEIs on whether the courses and programme are linked to the learning outcomes and whether the programme outcomes are linked to the national qualifications. Learning outcomes were defined as knowledge, skills and competence in the applicable law. Table 4.4, below, presents the ECTS credit ranges in higher education.

**Table 4.3. ECTS Credit Ranges in Higher Education (QF-EHEA and TQF)**

QF-EHEA	Short Cycle	First Cycle	Second Cycle	Third Cycle
TQF	5	6	7	8
ECTS Credits	120	240-360	60-120	180-240

### Criterion 4

***The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national framework are transparent.***

The fulfilment of this criterion is explained under Criterion 4 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report.

### Criterion 5

***The national quality assurance systems for higher education refer to the national framework of qualifications and are consistent with the Berlin Communiqué and any subsequent communiqué agreed by ministers in the Bologna Process.***

The fulfilment of this criterion is explained under Criterion 5 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report. The section below is inserted additional to the response for Criterion 5.

The General Board of CoHE is in charge of regulation, inspection and quality assurance of higher education. The General Board carries out these tasks through an Executive Board, whose members are selected among the General Board; the Higher Education Inspection Board, whose members are assigned from non-members of the General Board with a procedure set out by law; and the Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB). Studies of these three boards are evaluated by the General Board. Although CoHE has established regulation, quality and inspection functions in three main structures, there is a situation that

is seemingly conflicting with the principle of segregation of duties. The Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education has a provision designed to make up for this contradiction with external evaluation bodies.

The duties of HEQB are to:

- i) Define and submit for the approval of the General Board a national policy and strategy for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education,
- ii) Support building internal quality assurance systems in the HEIs and provide them with guidance on the issue,
- iii) Organise training programmes, meetings, workshops and other similar activities to develop and mainstream quality culture,
- iv) Monitor activities regarding quality assurance systems in higher education and realise joint activities at national and international level,
- v) Set out and submit for the approval of the General Board the principles, quality indicators and rules applied in external assessment and accreditation,
- vi) Inform the HEIs of the external quality evaluations approved by the General Board as well as the procedures applied in accreditation, and to issue publications,
- vii) Draft the final report to include recommendations for quality improvements and submit to the General Board by examining external evaluation reports following the self-evaluation and external evaluation process prepared by higher education institutions ,
- viii) Make a request from the General Board on an external evaluation at the expense of relevant higher education institution in the event that a higher education institution has not undergone an external evaluation which is required at least once every five years although it is overdue,
- ix) Submit proposals regarding the external quality evaluations that have been performed in the HEIs throughout the year, problems encountered and quality improvement process to the General Board at the end of each year,
- x) Present remarks to the General Board by examining registration applications of private law legal persons applying to CoHE to become registered for carrying out activities in the area of external quality evaluation and accreditation in the framework of the set principles and rules; monitor these organisations' activities and obtain information when deemed necessary, issue warnings if necessary or make a proposal to the General Board to terminate their registration,
- xi) Represent the Board on quality assurance in higher education within international organisations,
- xii) Share simultaneously the reports and opinions submitted to the General Council with public on the website of CoHE,

The Board conducted its first meeting on 23 December 2015 and afterwards has held 12 meetings up to date of the report. Within the framework of institutionalisation process, the Procedures and Principles of Higher Education Quality Board, the Standards for the Corporate External Evaluation, the Directive regarding the Authorisation of External Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies Operating in the field of Higher Education as well as the Guide for Corporate External Evaluation, the Guide for Preparation of Corporate External Evaluation and Self-Assessment Reports have been adopted. More information is available [here](#).

## Criterion 6

***The national framework, and any alignment with the European framework, is referenced in all Diploma Supplements***

All HEIs in Turkey are legally required to issue the diploma supplement for the diplomas of associate, undergraduate, graduate and PhD degrees according to their qualifications they provide. The Supplement fully complies with the relevant Council of Europe and UNESCO format. The fulfilment of this Criterion is also explained under Criterion 10 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report.

## Criterion 7

***The responsibilities of the domestic parties to the national framework are clearly determined and published.***

The fulfilment of this criterion is explained under Criterion 1 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report.

## 4.4. Self-Certification of the TQF to the QF-EHEA: Addressing the Procedures

### Procedure 1

***The competent national body/bodies shall reference the national framework to the European framework.***

The response to this procedure is explained under Criterion 8 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report. Additionally, as per the TQF Regulation, the self-certification to the QF-EHEA shall be performed within the referencing studies of the TQF to the EQF.

### Procedure 2

***The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the quality assurance institutions authorized in the country in the scope of the Bologna Process.***

The response to this procedure is explained under Criterion 6 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report. Written agreement of the responsible bodies for the Referencing Report is presented in the Annex 10.

### Procedure 3

***The referencing process shall involve international experts.***

The response to this procedure is explained under Criterion 7 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report. In the studies regarding the referencing of the TQF with the EQF and compatibility with QF-EHEA, Prof. Dr. Mile Dželalija from Croatia, Dr. Georg Hanf from Germany were mobilized as international experts and Edwin Mernagh from Ireland and John Hart from Scotland were mobilised as consultants and technical experts.

The opinions of these experts are provided in the Annex 5.

### Procedure 4

***Referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published. Each described criterion is treated separately.***

The response to this procedure is explained under Criterion 9 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report. Additionally, the Self-Certification Report will be published on the website of EHEA.

## Procedure 5

***The ENIC and NARIC networks shall maintain a public listing of States that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process..***

Following the approval of the Referencing Report, VQA as the EQF NCP will notify the ENIC and NARIC networks that referencing and self-certification of the TQF with European Frameworks have been completed and will ensure the publication of the report on the website of the ENIC and NARIC networks.

## Procedure 6

***The completion of the referencing process shall be noted on Diploma Supplements issued subsequently by showing the link between the national framework and the European framework.***

The HEIs have been issuing diploma supplements for all higher education qualifications from associate degree to PhD degree since 2005 upon the decision of CoHE. Turkey has a high performance in the use of the diploma supplement label. CoHE is providing diploma supplement label for the HEIs as of 2016 to create a sustainable process.

The response to this procedure is also provided under Criterion 10 related to the EQF referencing in section 3 of this report.

## 4.5. Conclusion

The TQF fully complies with the QF-EHEA in terms of terminology and definitions, aims, scope, instruments, target group, and stakeholders.

The TQF meets all self-certification criteria and procedural requirements. Accordingly: (i) the responsible bodies have adopted and approved the TQF; (ii) transparent and comparable link has been established between the TQF and the QF-EHEA; (iii) the TQF and qualifications are based on measurable learning outcomes and linked to learners' workload; (iv) the procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF will be transparent; (v) quality assurance systems are compatible with the Berlin Communiqué and the other relevant agreed communiqué; (vi) in all diploma supplements, the TQF levels and alignment to QF-EHEA levels will be referred; (vii) responsibilities of domestic parties with respect to the TQF have been clearly explained.

The TQF followed all the procedures of the QF-EHEA. Accordingly: (i) the authorised national bodies actively participated in all stages of the TQF process, provided active support to the team established exclusively for referencing, and supported the referencing of the TQF to the EQF and the self-certification process; (ii) CoHE has been represented at all stages and actively involved in the referencing process; (iii) an intense support and contribution have been provided by international experts in the referencing process; (iv) The Turkish Referencing Report, in which criteria and procedures have been discussed individually, has been prepared; (v) the completion of the referencing will be notified to the international community through ENIC and NARIC networks; (vi) the link between the TQF and the QF-EHEA will be noted on Diploma Supplements.

# 5.

## NEXT STEPS AND CHALLENGES

This section provides an outline for the actions anticipated for implementing and improving the TQF and explanations on possible challenges and the measures to overcome them during the implementation of the TQF.

### 5.1 Next Steps

Like other frameworks, the TQF will be improved over time, in line with the changes in the different sectors of the education and qualifications system. It is obvious that effective collaboration among responsible bodies will be required to ensure the consistency of studies and the successful implementation of the TQF. As has been stated in different sections of this report, the TQF Regulation is the basic legislation for the TQF and it refers to several secondary legislation to be prepared and applied in order to have a well-functioning framework. Along with the approval of the TQF, both the initial implementation and the further development stages of the TQF have been started.

First of all, a management structure has been adopted with the establishment of the TQF Councils and the TQF Department and an allocation of resources in terms of environmental, financial and human resources. Capacity building of the responsible bodies and members of the TQF Councils has been initiated.

A 3-year TQF Action Plan has been prepared and approved by the TQF Council. Thus, the roadmap for the further development and implementation of the TQF has been determined. The introduction of the TQF to major stakeholders has been realised through a national conference in June 2016. Publication materials such as the TQF booklet consisting of the TQF Paper and the Regulation, brochures, visuals, bill-posting about the TQF and the EQF have been prepared and disseminated to all stakeholders. The TQF section of the VQA website<sup>51</sup> has been updated, the Qualifications Database<sup>52</sup> has been established and descriptions of 1.400 qualifications have been entered into the database.

Since the terminology, scope, structure, level descriptors, and qualification types of the TQF have come into force by legislation, these elements have started to be adopted and used by relevant stakeholders. Responsible bodies have started to take actions to adapt principles of the TQF in the national qualifications system. The establishment of the Higher Education Quality Board, approval of the National Education Quality Framework, preparation of strategic plans, policy documents and national strategies in line with the provisions of the TQF Regulation, use of the TQF level descriptors while developing or describing qualifications are examples for the implementation of the TQF at national level.

On the other hand, there are studies to be done for the further development of the TQF. These include the preparation of plans, strategies, criteria, principles and procedures, guidelines and forms addressed in the TQF Regulation. This stage has started with the preparation of a plan for the national consultation of the referencing report, and the TQF Action Plan as well as the criteria for the quality assurance of qualifications.

All of the studies abovementioned will be supported by the Strengthening National Vocational Qualifications System and Implementing the Turkish Qualifications Framework Operation (UYEP II) in the scope of IPA-II. The operation is anticipated to be implemented between 2017 and 2020 and the total allocated budget to the TQF related activities is almost €1 million.

The steps to be followed in the TQF implementation process are determined in the TQF Action Plan and milestones are presented in the table below:

51) [www.tyc.gov.tr](http://www.tyc.gov.tr)

52) <http://portal.tyc.gov.tr/>

**Table 5.1. TQF Implementation Timetable**

<b>Steps to be Followed</b>	<b>Anticipated Date</b>
<p><b>Preparation of the Principles, Procedures and Guidelines to be used in the TQF Implementation Process</b></p> <p>Preparation of the principles and procedures on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assurance of qualifications to be included in the TQF,</li> <li>• Identification of criteria for qualifications to be included in the TQF,</li> <li>• Inclusion of qualifications in the TQF,</li> <li>• Examination of objections about decisions regarding the TQF,</li> <li>• Horizontal and vertical progression routes between qualifications in the TQF, credit transfer and accumulation,</li> <li>• Management and update of the Qualifications Database,</li> <li>• Recognition of prior learning, and ensuring quality assurance,</li> <li>• Identification of the existing qualification types, determination of new qualification types, and updating and cancelling of them,</li> <li>• Update, amendment and abolition of qualifications,</li> <li>• Publication and use of qualifications by education institutions and awarding bodies,</li> <li>• Update of the TQF,</li> <li>• Use of the TQF Logo.</li> </ul>	Until June 2018
<p><b>Establishment of the Quality Assurance Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approval of the criteria and procedures related to the quality assurance of the qualifications to be included in the TQF</li> <li>• The inception of the establishment/improvement of quality assurance systems by responsible bodies</li> </ul>	By December 2016
<p><b>Preparation of the TQF Qualification Type Specifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approval of the qualification type specifications developed in collaboration with the responsible bodies by the TQF Coordination Council</li> <li>• The inception of the review of the current qualifications to be included in the TQF by the responsible bodies according to the quality assurance criteria</li> </ul>	Until July 2017
<p><b>Amendment of the Current Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The harmonisation of the current qualifications with the qualification type specifications gradually</li> </ul>	Until December 2017
<p><b>Inception of the Inclusion of Qualifications into the TQF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inclusion of the quality assured qualifications that are fully compatible with the qualification type specifications</li> </ul>	By July 2017
<p><b>Population of Qualifications Database</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The input of the data related to the qualifications which will be officially registered when they meet the requirements</li> </ul>	By March 2017
<p><b>Recognition of Prior Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actualisation of the national measures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning</li> </ul>	By June 2018
<p><b>Full-Implementation of Quality Assurance Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The completion of the establishment process and the effective implementation of the quality assurance systems by the responsible bodies</li> </ul>	By December 2018
<p><b>Completion of the Inclusion of the Qualifications into the TQF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The completion of the inclusion of the quality assured qualifications to the TQF that are under the responsibility of public bodies and institutions and are provided by the institutions outside the public sector upon the consent and under the supervision of the public bodies</li> </ul>	By December 2019

## 5.2. Challenges

The effective collaboration and active cooperation between MoNE, CoHE and VQA as main responsible bodies and partners of the TQF will be the greatest strength in implementation as it has been in the development process. However, there can be inevitable challenges in the future.

The TQF is designed as a comprehensive framework which comprises a wide range of qualifications from all sectors of the national qualifications system. This may create a challenge for determining common approaches on e.g. quality assurance, VNFIL, credit accumulation and transfer systems.

The TQF is more of a transforming than a communication framework. Concepts such as VNFIL, credit transfer and accumulation systems, key competences, recognition of foreign qualifications which have been in the agenda of Turkey for decades have been included into the TQF Regulation and therefore into the scope of the TQF. However, wide range of functions of the TQF seems likely to be one of the major challenges in the TQF implementation.

Since the education system in Turkey is highly regulatory, there will be a need for the revision of a lot of relevant legislation according to the TQF Regulation. The review and amendment of these legislations will require time and human resources.

The TQF Council has a significant role with many duties in the implementation of the TQF. The members of the Council are mostly senior managers and in time they will have to deal more with the TQF-related issues in their work.

Stakeholders at national level have different levels of knowledge and expertise regarding the TQF and related concepts. Additionally, the concept of frameworks and related terminology is still new to many of the stakeholders and key users. Therefore, continuous capacity building and awareness-raising for teachers, qualification developers, policy makers as well as other key stakeholders and beneficiaries is considered a challenge.

As mentioned previously, the preparation of all principles and procedures referred in the TQF Regulation will require technical knowledge and time. The potential for delay in the preparation of these principles and procedures is another significant challenge for the TQF.

In the view of the fact that, Turkey is a huge country with a population of 80 million people, thousands of schools and hundreds of universities, the diversity and number of qualifications is also a key factor. In addition, there are some official documents which can be interpreted as a license or warrant rather than a qualification but may be considered as qualifications by the competent authorities. The need to make a distinction between these licenses and genuine qualifications may be challenging.

Since all higher education institutions are autonomous, they develop their own qualifications and this creates a range of qualifications which are different in titles but similar in content. This creates a challenge for the inclusion of higher education qualifications into the Qualifications Database. The question is how to enter same qualification awarded by tens of HEIs in the database.

Qualifications within the remits of the responsible bodies are supposed to be included in the TQF by the end of 2019. However, there are no financial and administrative sanctions foreseen in the TQF Regulation for the qualifications that do not meet the requirements and are not included in the TQF. This may be a challenge in the long term.

Additional to the deadlines set up in the national legislation there are also deadlines determined by Recommendations at EU level such as establishing and operating a system for VNFIL by 2018.

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## CONCLUSIONS

The Turkish Referencing Report describes the referencing and self-certification of the TQF to the European Frameworks. The education and qualifications system in Turkey are strongly compatible with the European Frameworks in terms of the hierarchies and level descriptors. There is also full correspondence of the principles behind the TQF with the European Frameworks in terms of transparency and general comparability. Therefore, no big challenges have been experienced in the referencing studies.

It is expected that the TQF will provide reliability, transparency and added value to the national qualifications system and the labour market particularly in terms of the recognition of prior learning. The most significant instrument of the TQF, which is expected to make considerable contributions to the functioning of the education system and the labour market, is a modern quality assurance approach.

The implementation of the TQF and referencing of the TQF to the EQF will have a significant impact on changing the learning approaches and the human capital investments in Turkey by creating new learning and employment opportunities for citizens and improving the rate of participation in lifelong learning.

The TQF and the Turkish Referencing Report will create a more transparent national qualifications system and contribute to the changes in the education and labour market policies. They will also provide a basis for ensuring that the diplomas and certificates awarded in Turkey will be comparable to those in other national frameworks which have been referenced to the EQF. Ultimately, the mobility of the workers and learners between Turkey and other European countries will be enhanced.



## Annex 1: Cross-Referencing of the Level Descriptors in TQF, EQF and QF-EHEA

The following table provides an alignment of the TQF and EQF descriptors in sets of statements for the factors of knowledge, skills and competence. This enables cross-referencing of the statements in the two frameworks.

**Table Annex 1.1. Cross Referencing between Level Descriptors of TQF and EQF**

TQF Level Descriptors	Level		EQF Level Descriptors
<p>Have a <b>general knowledge</b> of self and environment</p> <p>Have <b>basic skills required to carry out simple tasks</b></p> <p>Carry out simple tasks <b>under guidance and supervision</b></p>	1	1	<p>basic <b>general knowledge</b></p> <p><b>basic skills required to carry out simple tasks</b></p> <p>work or study <b>under direct supervision</b> in a structured context</p>
<p>Have an <b>elementary factual knowledge</b> in a field of work or study</p> <p>Have <b>basic skills required to use necessary information</b> in order to carry out tasks and to <b>solve potential simple problems</b></p> <p>Carry out simple tasks <b>under supervision with limited autonomy</b></p> <p>Have awareness of own learning needs within the scope of lifelong learning approach</p>	2	2	<p><b>basic factual knowledge</b> of a field of work or study</p> <p><b>basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information</b> in order to carry out tasks and to <b>solve routine problems using simple rules and tools</b></p> <p>work or study <b>under supervision with some autonomy</b></p>
<p>Have an <b>elementary theoretical knowledge</b> and moderate <b>factual knowledge</b> in a field of work or study</p> <p>Have skills required to <b>select and apply data, methods, tools and materials</b> in order to carry out tasks and <b>solve problems</b></p> <p><b>Take responsibility in carrying out tasks</b></p> <p>Complete tasks <b>in consideration of changing situations</b></p> <p>Identify and meet own learning needs under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach</p>	3	3	<p><b>knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts</b>, in a field of work or study.</p> <p>a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and <b>solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information</b></p> <p><b>take responsibility for completion of tasks</b> in work or study; <b>adapt own behaviour to circumstances</b> in solving problems</p>
<p>Have a moderate <b>theoretical</b> and operational knowledge and good <b>factual</b> knowledge in a field of work or study</p> <p>Have <b>cognitive and practical skills</b> required to perform procedures and <b>generate solutions to problems specific for a field of work or study</b></p> <p><b>Take full responsibility in completing tasks</b> within predictable, but changeable contexts</p> <p><b>Supervise the ordinary tasks of others</b>, and take <b>limited responsibility in evaluating and improving</b> such tasks</p> <p>Meet own learning needs, and define proactive learning goals under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach</p> <p>Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities</p>	4	4	<p><b>factual and theoretical</b> knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study</p> <p>a range of <b>cognitive and practical skills</b> required to <b>generate solutions to specific problems</b> in a field of work or study</p> <p><b>exercise self-management</b> within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually <b>predictable, but are subject to change</b> ; <b>supervise the routine work of others</b>, taking <b>some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement</b> of work or study activities</p>

TQF Level Descriptors	Level		EQF Level Descriptors
<p>Have <b>comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge</b> in a field of work or study in <b>aware of the boundaries</b> of that field</p> <p>Have <b>comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills</b> required to develop creative solutions to <b>abstract problems</b>, whose limits are defined, and concrete problems</p> <p>Carry out <b>management and supervision</b> tasks in <b>contexts with unpredictable changes</b></p> <p><b>Evaluate and improve own and others' performance level</b></p> <p>Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the management of projects</p> <p>Have general awareness of the scope of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities</p>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<p><b>comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge</b> within a field of work or study and an <b>awareness of the boundaries</b> of that knowledge</p> <p>a <b>comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills</b> required to develop <b>creative solutions to abstract problems</b></p> <p>exercise <b>management and supervision</b> in contexts of work or study activities <b>where there is unpredictable change</b>; <b>review and develop performance of self and others</b></p>
<p>Have an <b>advanced theoretical</b>, methodological and factual <b>knowledge</b> in a field of work or study, including <b>inquiring thinking</b></p> <p>Have <b>advanced skills</b>, including the quality of <b>mastery and innovation</b>, required to <b>solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</b></p> <p><b>Make decisions by taking responsibility</b> in <b>unpredictable work or study contexts</b>, and <b>manage complex technical or professional activities or projects</b></p> <p><b>Take responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups</b></p> <p>Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Have awareness of social and moral issues in assessing work or study</p>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<p>advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a <b>critical understanding of theories</b> and principles</p> <p>advanced skills, demonstrating <b>mastery and innovation</b>, required to <b>solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</b></p> <p><b>manage complex technical or professional activities or projects</b>, taking <b>responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts</b> ; <b>take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</b></p>

TQF Level Descriptors	Level		EQF Level Descriptors
<p>Have advanced specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for original ideas and/or research; have an inquiring approach for knowledge issues in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field</p> <p>Have advanced problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to develop new knowledge and methods in a field of work or study and to integrate knowledge from different fields; have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a team member or partially autonomously</p> <p>Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches</p> <p>Have experience in managing changes within a complex context</p> <p>Take responsibility in contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams</p> <p>Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>	7	7	<p>highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking; critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</p> <p>specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields</p> <p>manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</p>
<p>Have the most advanced systematic knowledge and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study; have the most advanced interface knowledge in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study</p> <p>Have the most advanced and specialised skills, including synthesis and evaluation, that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to solve critical problems in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice; have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously; have problem-solving skills, including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field</p> <p>Demonstrate competence in the development of new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research Show leadership in developing new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice in a field of work or study</p> <p>Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Create new knowledge in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>	8	8	<p>knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields</p> <p>the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</p> <p>demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research.</p>

**Table Annex 1.2. Comparison of the TQF Level Descriptors with the Cycle Descriptors of the QF-EHEA**

QF-EHEA		TQF	
Descriptor	Short Cycle	Descriptor	Level 5
Knowledge and understanding	<p>have demonstrated <b>knowledge and understanding in a field of study</b> that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by <b>advanced textbooks</b>. Such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle</p>	Knowledge	<p>Have <b>comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge</b> in a field of work or study in <b>aware of the boundaries</b> of that <b>field</b></p>
Applying knowledge and understanding	<p>can <b>apply their knowledge and understanding</b> in occupational contexts;</p>	Skill	<p>Have <b>comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills</b> required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems, whose limits are defined, and concrete problems</p>
Making judgements	<p>have the ability to <b>identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems</b></p>		
Communication	<p>can <b>communicate about their understanding, skills and activities</b>, with peers, supervisors and clients;</p>	Competence	<p>Carry out <b>management and supervision tasks</b> in contexts with <b>unpredictable changes</b>  <b>Evaluate and improve own and others' performance level</b>            Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the <b>management of projects</b>            Have general awareness of the <b>scope of lifelong learning approach</b> for a field of work or study as well as the <b>relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</b>            Have awareness of the <b>relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes</b> in a field of work or study with <b>moral issues and responsibilities</b></p>
Learning skills	<p>have the <b>learning skills</b> to undertake further studies with some autonomy.</p>		

QF-EHEA		TQF	
Descriptor	1 (Bachelor)	Descriptor	Level 6
Knowledge and understanding	have demonstrated <b>knowledge and understanding in a field of study</b> that builds upon and their <b>general secondary education</b> , and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by <b>advanced textbooks</b> , includes some aspects that will be informed by <b>knowledge of the forefront of their field of study</b> ;	Knowledge	Have an <b>advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in a field of work or study</b> , including <b>inquiring thinking</b>
Applying knowledge and understanding	can <b>apply their knowledge</b> and understanding in a manner that indicates a <b>professional approach</b> to their work or vocation, and have <b>competences</b> typically demonstrated through <b>devising and sustaining arguments</b> and <b>solving problems</b> within their field of study;	Skill	Have <b>advanced skills</b> , including the quality of <b>mastery and innovation</b> , required to solve <b>complex and unpredictable problems</b> in a <b>specialised field of work or study</b>
Making judgements	have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant <b>social, scientific or ethical issues</b> ;		
Communication	can <b>communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions</b> to both <b>specialist and non-specialist audiences</b> ;	Competence	<p>Make <b>decisions</b> by taking <b>responsibility in unpredictable work or study contexts</b>, and manage <b>complex technical or professional activities or projects</b></p> <p>Take <b>responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups</b></p> <p>Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of <b>lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study</b> as well as the relationship of them with <b>formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</b></p> <p>Have awareness of <b>social and moral issues in assessing work or study</b></p>
Learning skills	have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a <b>high degree of autonomy</b> .		

QF-EHEA		TQF	
Descriptor	2 (Master)	Descriptor	Level 7
Knowledge and understanding	have demonstrated <b>knowledge and understanding</b> that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically <b>associated with the first cycle</b> , and that provides a basis or opportunity for <b>originality in developing and/or applying ideas</b> , often within a research context;	Knowledge	Have <b>advanced specialised knowledge</b> , some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for <b>original ideas</b> and/or research; have an <b>inquiring approach for knowledge issues</b> in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field
Applying knowledge and understanding	can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;	Skill	Have <b>advanced problem-solving skills</b> required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to <b>develop new knowledge and methods</b> in a field of work or study and to <b>integrate knowledge from different fields</b> ; have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a <b>team member or partially autonomously</b>
Making judgements	have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;		
Communication	can <b>communicate their conclusions</b> , and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to <b>specialist and non-specialist audiences</b> clearly and unambiguously;	Competence	<b>Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches</b> Have experience in managing changes within a complex context Take responsibility in <b>contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams</b> Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities
Learning skills	have the <b>learning skills</b> to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be <b>largely self-directed or autonomous</b> .		

QF-EHEA		TQF	
Descriptor	3 (Doctorate)	Descriptor	Level 8
Knowledge and understanding	have demonstrated a <b>systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research</b> associated with that field;	Knowledge	Have the <b>most advanced systematic knowledge</b> and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study; have the <b>most advanced interface knowledge</b> in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study
Applying knowledge and understanding	have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity; have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;	Skill	Have the <b>most advanced and specialised skills</b> , including <b>synthesis and evaluation</b> , that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to <b>solve critical problems</b> in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and <b>to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</b> ; have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously; have <b>problem-solving skills</b> , including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field
Making judgements	are capable of <b>critical analysis</b> , evaluation and <b>synthesis of new and complex ideas</b> ;		
Communication	can <b>communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community</b> and with society in general about their areas of expertise;		
Learning skills	can be expected to <b>be able to promote</b> , within <b>academic and professional contexts</b> , technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.	Competence	Demonstrate competence in the development of <b>new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts</b> , including <b>strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research</b> Show <b>leadership</b> in developing <b>new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice</b> in a field of work or study <b>Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</b> Create <b>new knowledge</b> in a field of work or study in <b>consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</b>

## Annex 2: Quality Assurance of Qualifications under the responsibility of Ministry of National Education

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) tends to follow the changes in education systems on regular basis and make reforms to the national education system accordingly. Education system in Turkey has a strict vertical hierarchy. Therefore, organisational regulation and inspection activities are quite effective.

Quality assurance system for education and training under the responsibility of the MoNE is addressed under two main headings: the elements of the QA system and the QA structures both at national and unit levels.

### 1. The Elements of the Quality Assurance System

#### 1.1. Development and Validation of the Education Programmes

In Turkey, primary and secondary education programmes which are carried out by the public and private schools are under the supervision of the General Directorates of MoNE. Programmes developed by MoNE with the participation of the relevant stakeholders are delivered in public schools at national level. Private primary and secondary education institutions operate under the regulation and supervision of the General Directorate of Private Education Institutions affiliated to the MoNE. They prepare weekly course schedules and education programmes and submit to the BoE for approval.

Below is the list of the institutions responsible for the development of education programmes and the grades for which they are responsible:

- (i) General Directorate for Basic Education (Preschool, primary school Grades 1-4, secondary school: Grades 5-8)<sup>53</sup>
- (ii) General Directorate of Secondary Education (High School: Grades 9-12)<sup>54</sup>
- (iii) General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education (High School: Grades 9-12, apprenticeship training)<sup>55</sup>
- (iv) General Directorate of Religious Education (High School: Grades 9-12)<sup>56</sup>
- (v) General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services (Preschool, Grades 1-12; counselling and guidance courses delivered in all types of schools in Grades 9-12)<sup>57</sup>
- (vi) General Directorate of Lifelong Learning (Open education general and vocational-technical schools: Grades 5-12, non-formal education course programmes)<sup>58</sup>
- (vii) General Directorate of Private (Sector) Education Institutions (Preschool, Basic Education and Secondary Education)<sup>59</sup>

53) <http://tegm.meb.gov.tr/>

54) <http://ogm.meb.gov.tr/>

55) <http://mtegm.meb.gov.tr/>

56) <http://dogm.meb.gov.tr/>

57) <http://orgm.meb.gov.tr/>

58) <http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/>

59) <http://ookgm.meb.gov.tr/>



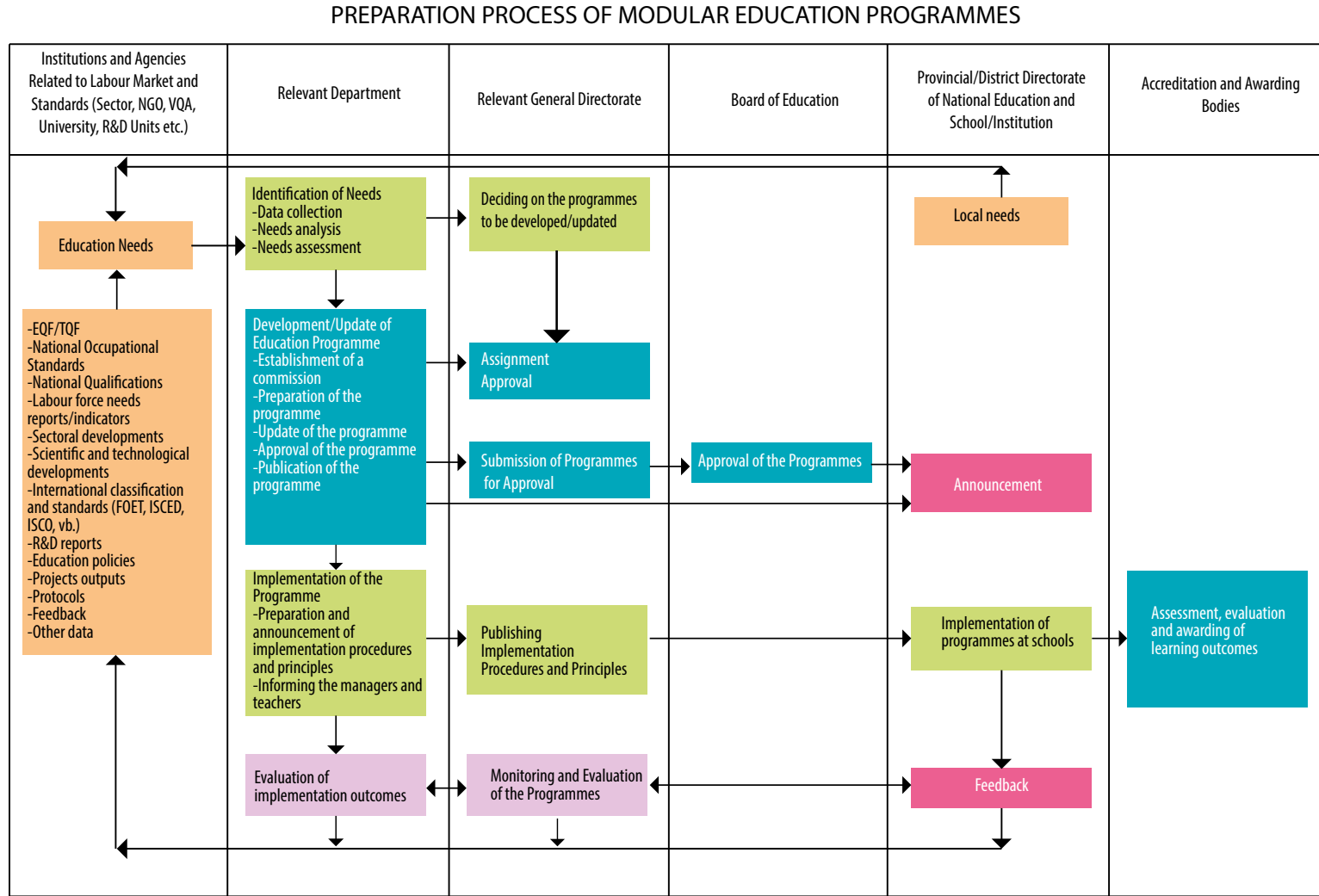
Education programmes to be delivered both at public and private schools relevant to the type of school are designed around common courses and elective courses determined by MoNE. The participation of all stakeholders and use of learning outcomes approach are ensured while developing programmes. Additionally, education programmes provided in vocational and technical secondary education and apprenticeship training are developed in accordance with the national occupational standards (NOS) which are published by the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA); and if required, new education programmes are designed by taking into account international occupational standards. Individual applications and evaluations of natural and legal persons are also taken into account as input, although the programme development activities are carried out at institutional level.

Education programmes developed by the Department of Programme and Teaching Materials and the Department of Monitoring and Assessment in each general directorate are submitted to the Board of Education (BoE) for validation. At the first stage, BoE reviews the programmes in terms of national priorities and policies, structure, legal and institutional regulations, practical principles, learning field, units, teaching and learning processes, and assessment and evaluation methods. Programmes are also reviewed chronologically and vertically on inter-level aspects, and horizontally on the aspects of the intra-level, inter-programme links and harmony, and learning outcomes. At the second stage, BoE submits the validated programmes to the Minister for approval or requests some revisions and send invalidated programmes back to the relevant units. On the approval by the Minister, programmes are put into practice. The process for the preparation of modular education programmes are presented in the figure below.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in the programme implementation stage. The units which developed the programmes carry out these activities through the Department of Programme and Education Materials and the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation at central level; and by the provincial and district commissions at provincial and district levels. At this stage, update, improvement and evaluation of the efficiency of programmes are conducted.

There are various units which provide mutual feedback based on data and reports produced both inside and outside schools in developing strategies, which enable a systematic programme development process. The units in schools are the board of teachers, student's councils, and school-parent unions. The units outside the schools are the Department of Strategy Development, the Department of Quality Development, the Department of Programmes and Education Materials, the Department of Improving Education Environment and Processes, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, the General Directorate of Measuring, Assessment and Examination Services, the Department of Inspection Board, and the Board of Education.

**Figure Annex 2.1. Preparation Process of Modular Education Programmes**



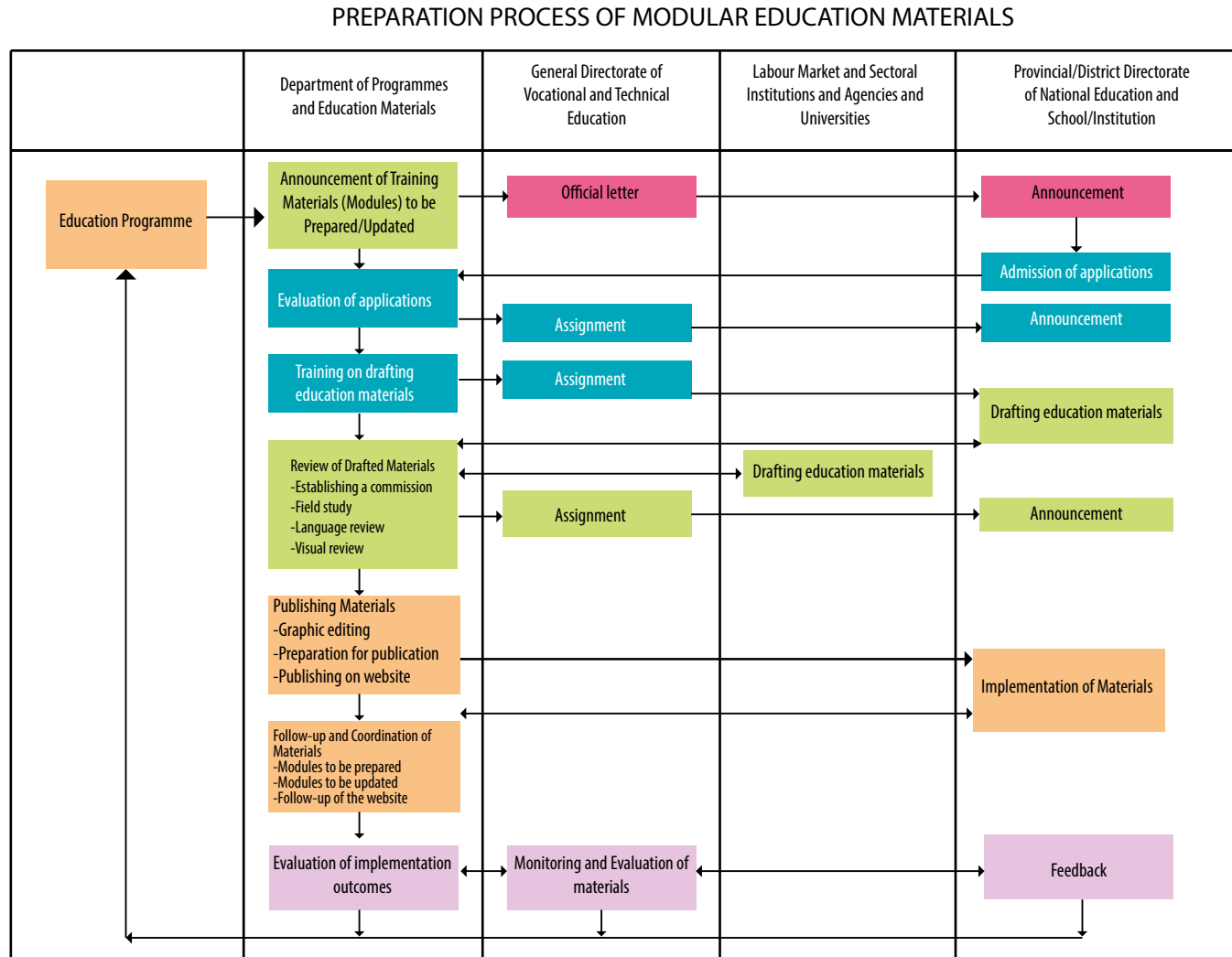
## 1.2. Determination and Validation of Education Materials and Tools

The education materials and tools to be used are determined by relevant general directorates and submitted to the BoE for validation. The general directorates design course books and education tools or have them designed for schools and educational institutions in their mandate. In addition, course books and education materials can be developed by the private education institutions. They prepare and submit their education materials and tools to the BoE for validation. The Board examines the course books, education tools based on the programme requirements, and validates the appropriate ones. Then, the Board submits those validated to the Minister for approval and may request some revisions from the related unit or private education institution. The invalidated ones are sent back to the relevant unit or private education institution<sup>60</sup>. The process for the preparation of modular education materials are presented in the figure below.

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60) <http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/dersarac/dersarac.html>

Figure Annex 2.2. Preparation Process of Modular Education Materials



### 1.3. Assignment of the Teaching Staff

The selection, training and assignment of the teaching staff to deliver education programmes are co-implemented by MoNE and CoHE. The candidate teachers are appointed among the graduates of the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Science and Literature and other faculties having pedagogical formation courses. Those studying at faculty of education take education formation courses as a part of their education. Those studying at other faculties are allowed to receive education formation during or after their undergraduate programmes at the faculties of education determined by CoHE.

Candidate teachers are selected and assigned at the end of an assessment and interview process. In this process, the content of the assessment for candidate teachers is developed by Teacher Training Working Group which is co-established by MoNE and CoHE. The assessment of the candidate teachers is carried out by an examination held by OSYM at national level. The candidate teachers who meet the requirements in terms of competences and exam scores can apply to the calls published by MoNE for assignment. MoNE selects the teaching staff among the appropriate candidates through casting lots. Then, these candidates attend to the interviews held by MoNE and the successful candidates are assigned as a candidate teacher in the education institutions by MoNE. Candidate teachers who succeed the written and oral exams held after one year experience in education institutions are assigned as permanent teachers.

The General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development of MoNE is in charge of developing and monitoring general teaching competences and special branch competences of the teachers. The Information Systems of MoNE (MEBBIS) module in electronic format contains demographical data and evaluations about teachers. This module serves a main source while designing the training programmes for teachers.<sup>61</sup>

### 1.4. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation methods and techniques are designed based on the learning outcomes specified both in the education programmes and courses. Design of these methods and techniques is an essential element of programme development and is undertaken by the units actively participating in the programme development process.

In the education system, assessment and evaluation are carried out at both school and national level. There are examinations which are designed and held at school level and those designed centrally and held at national level. The written examinations at school level are designed by the group of branch teachers. However, branch teachers can assess students individually without using written forms of examination. Central examinations are held at national level. Both forms of examination are held in the school setting. Data and assessments on in-school examination are transferred to the e-School System, which enables monitoring by parents, students, school management and the Ministry. Data and results of examination held at national level are produced by the units holding the examination, and used in planning education and training activities. In addition, the results of assessment and evaluation in non-formal education are transferred into e-Non-formal System and can be tracked by students, trainees, teachers, management of the institutions, and the Ministry.

The examination dates are determined by the Council of Teachers' Group, consisting of teachers of the same branch, at the beginning of each school year. The Council of Teachers' Group prepares examination questions and evaluates the results. Examinations are held under the supervision of a different branch teacher. Based on the examination analysis, common mistakes made in the exams are also shared with students while announcing the results.

61) <http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/www/ogretmenlik-alanlari/icerik/201>, <http://oyegm.meb.gov.tr/>

In the scope of the Examination for Transition from Basic Education to Secondary Education held on Grade 8, the questions of only one of such nation-wide examinations per semester on Science and Technology, Turkish Language, Mathematics, History of Turkish Revolution and Kemalism, Religious Culture and Ethics, as well as Foreign Languages are prepared by MoNE. Students take the examination at their own school but under the supervision of teachers coming from different schools.

Statistical data regarding the results of all examinations held at national level are compiled and submitted to the relevant units of MoNE by the units which organise the examination so that the programme development and update as well as guidance and inspection activities can be planned accordingly.<sup>62</sup>

### 1.5. Self-Assessment and External Evaluation

These functions are carried out through measures developed based on the evaluation of school-related data, reports, and opinions produced at school and national levels by the school management and relevant units of the Ministry.

Self-assessment is carried out within the framework of the 'Directive on Quality Management System in Education' published by MoNE<sup>63</sup>. Under this directive, which entered into force in November 1999 and was revised in January 2014, self-assessment became compulsory for schools. Self-assessment is done annually within the Education Quality Management System in all types of education institutions. Institutions regularly and systematically carry out self-assessment, report their review and improvement activities according to set criteria. Reporting procedures are different for each type of school, and appropriate templates including the relevant criteria are provided. The total quality management approach has been used for quality assurance and improvement in schools providing vocational and technical education since 2009. These schools carry out self-assessment following the Excellence Model developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management applied as the basis of the continuous improvement of areas of concern.

Inspection and evaluation of schools by MoNE is considered as external evaluation, since the central and provincial administrative organization of MoNE is responsible for the regulation and inspection of education institutions and is not the education provider itself. External evaluations are done on a three-year basis. The main purpose of external evaluation is to check compliance of schools with existing legislation and provide guidance for improvement. Inspectors carry out external evaluation activities following the 'School Guidance and Control Guidelines' prepared by the Department of Inspection Board for different school types and levels<sup>64</sup>. Inspectors seek to identify problems, propose appropriate solutions, improve practices, performance and quality, enable schools to make better use of public resources and help school staff meet these aims. While evaluating schools, the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation are coordinated by the Department of Inspection Board and conducted by the inspectors of the Provincial Education Inspectors' Units.

To motivate schools to become involved in quality improvement, MoNE introduced a range of awards for quality in education for providers, according to a range of criteria focusing on management, performance and satisfaction rates of the stakeholders.

62) <http://odsgm.meb.gov.tr/>

63) [http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/kaliteyonsis\\_1/kaliteyonsis\\_1.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/kaliteyonsis_1/kaliteyonsis_1.html)

64) These guidelines are available [here](#)

## 1.6. Information Management Systems

Through Information Systems of MoNE (MEBBIS) and e-School modules, the units responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of quality assurance as well as the school managements, teachers, students and parents can access to information, which effectively increases the accountability of the system.

### **Information Systems of Ministry of National Education (MEBBIS)**

The sub-modules of MONEBIS are: e-School module, e-nonformal module, personnel module, physical investment transactions module, scholarship module, documentation module, book selection module, investigation, inspection module, e-mezun (e-graduate module), guidance and research centre module, disability module, teacher's house module, performance management system module, activity module, e-talep (e-demand) and e-anket (e-survey) module<sup>65</sup>. The most important modules among these are the e-School module and e-nonformal module.

#### **e-School Module**

In e-School (e-okul) module; registration procedures are carried out; data and photos are filed, transfer procedures are conducted; absence data is entered and monitored; information on school curriculum, lessons to be taught, teachers to deliver courses and examination dates are entered; all scores the student obtained from all courses, status of year-end success, the certificates awarded (certificate of appreciation, certificate of achievement, etc.), books read, Development Report procedures are followed.

The local and central stakeholders such as parents, students, school management, Directorate of Internal Audit, Department of Inspection Board, and Department of Strategy Development can access to the database within the scope of their relevance and authority. This access provides an important input in quality improvement regarding curriculum review, education materials and tools, teachers, teaching and learning techniques, assessment and evaluation, and self-assessment and external evaluation<sup>66</sup>.

#### **E-Nonformal Module**

This is a system where the course, seminar, and activities of the General Directorate of LLL are recorded. Attendance, course programmes, scores, and evaluations as well as issued certificates are followed up through the system.

## 1.7. Quality Standards for Education and Training

A National Education Quality Framework has been developed by MoNE and was published in the Official Journal on 23 May 2015 in order to set standards for education and training provided under the monitoring of MoNE<sup>67</sup>.

The Quality Framework is process and output oriented, foreseeing risk assessment and monitoring explicitly and quality assurance implicitly. It seems to have a parallel approach and content to reform activities in basic education and higher education across the world. The development and implementation of the framework is also considered as a way of implementing the EQAVET.

The Quality Framework comprises all aspects of education and training in 14 thematic areas. Each one of these sections has sub-sections and sub-section components. Sections are broader in scope and have been designed rather as basic reform areas and main functions; sub-sections are narrower in scope and have been categorised in subject, method and competences. Sub-section components focus rather on concrete outcomes and outputs.

65) <https://mebbis.meb.gov.tr/default.aspx/>

66) <https://e-okul.meb.gov.tr/>

67) <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File16.pdf>

Sections and sub-sections of the Quality Framework are:

- i) **Basic learning outcomes** section (sub-sections: mathematics; reading, comprehension and writing; sciences; information and communication technologies; problem-solving; foreign languages; dignification of learning; human rights, citizenship and democracy; life skills; vocational skills; art; physical education).
- ii) **Human infrastructure** section (sub-sections: teacher; manager; education inspector; other education staff).
- iii) **Financial and physical infrastructure** section (sub-sections: financial infrastructure; physical infrastructure).
- iv) **Readiness** section (sub-sections: special education; childhood era; health; learning experience).
- v) **Education environment and surroundings** section (sub-sections: school environment; school surroundings).
- vi) **Involvement of social stakeholders** section (sub-sections: parent involvement; student involvement; staff involvement; social stakeholders; sector involvement).
- vii) **Life-long learning** section (sub-sections: skills, attitudes and competences; access and participation; LLL resources; strategies and system).
- viii) **Mobility** section (sub-sections: mobility regarding the school type and level).
- ix) **Success and transitions** section (sub-sections: participation in higher education; drop-out; absence; schooling; transitions).
- x) **Monitoring environment** section (sub-sections: ethical values and honesty; mission, organisational structure and duties; proficiency and performance of staff; delegation of authority).
- xi) **Risk assessment** section (sub-sections: planning and programming; risk identification and assessment).
- xii) **Monitoring activities** section (sub-sections: monitoring strategies and methods; identification and documentation of procedures; segregation of duties; hierarchical monitoring; continuity of activities; monitoring of information systems).
- xiii) **Information and communication** section (sub-sections: information and communication; reporting; registration and filing system; reporting of errors, irregularities and corruption).
- xiv) **Monitoring section** (sub-sections: internal monitoring; evaluation).

The Department of Strategy Development is responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the Quality Framework in all education sectors.

## 2. Quality Assurance Structures

Naturally, the effectiveness of the organisational design and functioning model of MoNE plays an important role in the quality assurance of education, training and other school activities and taking measures. Recently, accelerating its administrative reform process, MoNE has developed a systematic structure composed of sub-structures at school and central levels designed to cooperate and coordinate with each other. These sub-structures are presented in this section.

### 2.1. Department of Strategy Development

The Department of Strategy Development provides guidance and coordination in the development of strategic objectives, targets and performance criteria in national and unit plans<sup>68</sup>. Provincial and District

68) <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/>



Directorates of National Education, schools and central offices prepare their strategic plans or targets in accordance with the “Strategic Plan of Ministry of National Education” which is developed in the capacity of a macro plan at Ministry level.

The Department is also responsible for monitoring, data collection, assessment and sending feedback to the relevant units on the strategic plans at Ministry and unit level. The task for developing performance indicators and quality criteria related to the activities of MoNE is assigned to this Department.

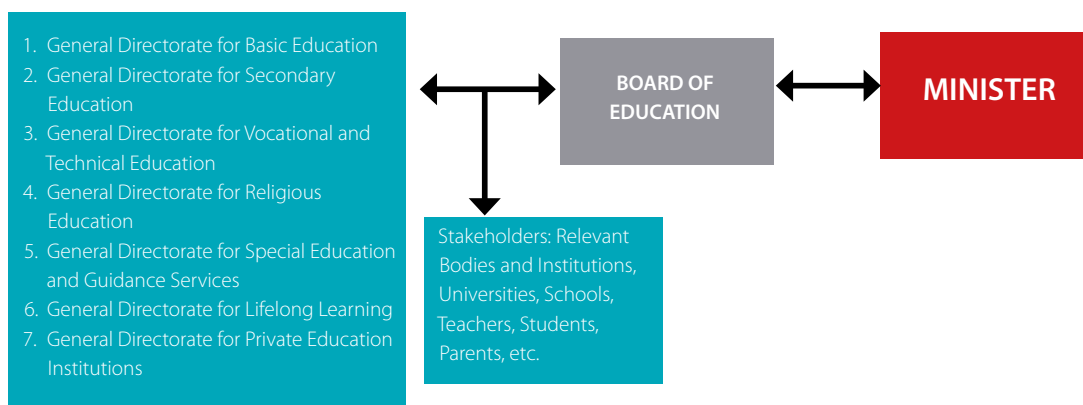
## 2.2. Board of Education

The Board of Education is the scientific advisory and inspection organ of the Ministry and cooperates with the relevant units of the Ministry in their efforts of developing policies and strategies on issues related to the education and training.

The Board contributes to the aim of developing an education system based on quality, equality and efficiency principles and national and social values by taking the universal values and standards into account. The Board is mainly responsible for having prepared the education system, education and training plans and programmes, course books along with teachers books and work books; reviewing or having reviewed those prepared; validating them and submitting opinions on the research, development and implementation to the Minister for approval.<sup>69</sup>

The decision making process of BoE regarding the education programmes are presented below.

**Figure Annex 2.3. The Decision Making Process of BoE Regarding the Education Programmes**



## 2.3. Department of Internal Audit

This department, which was established within the framework of the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 enacted in 2005 in the scope of general administration reform in Turkey, evaluates and make recommendations on the internal systems (internal audit, internal control and risk management) of the central office of the Ministry and schools. Since the unit evaluates the national education system as a whole, it contributes to the quality assurance.

The department aims to ensure the planning and operating of the activities in line with objectives and policies, annual programme, strategic plans, performance programmes, and law; to ensure the effective, economic, and efficient use of the resources; and to ensure the reliability, and accuracy of information as well as timely collection<sup>70</sup>.

69) <http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/>

70) <http://icden.meb.gov.tr/>

## 2.4. Council of National Education

The Council of National Education is the highest advisory body of MoNE. Members of the Board of the Council include; Chairman and members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports Commission; Deputy Minister of MoNE; Undersecretary, heads of departments at the central office of the Ministry, and other members (invited by the General Secretariat from MoNE, ministries, public bodies and institutions, local administrations, universities, professional bodies at home and abroad, non-government organisations, private sector, press, student and parent representatives, and specialists who are known for their studies on the fields of the Council). The Council is held once in every four years.

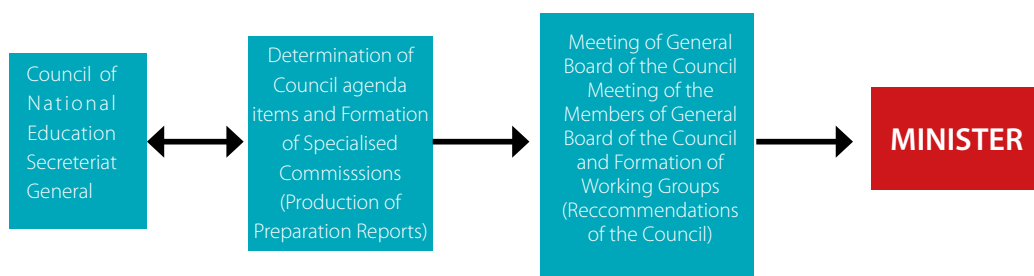
The agenda of the Council and the date of the meeting is determined directly by the Minister or by BoE and submitted to the Minister. In determining the agenda, the Council may take the opinions of central and provincial units and other institutions and organisations.

The General Secretariat of the Council carries out preparatory activities regarding the agenda items in the centres, provinces, regions and/or foreign cities, and produces Preparation Reports. If required, opinions can be requested from the ministries, the universities, individuals, bodies and institutions to extend the scope of the preparatory activities. Specialised commissions can be established on the agenda items of the Council, and Specialised Commission Reports can be produced. These reports are circulated to the Council members at least 10 days before the meeting.

At the first session, the General Board of the Council forms an Executive Board. Working groups are formed in line with the interests and preferences of the members, and these groups start to work for each agenda item. The reports produced are submitted to the General Board of the Council. The Board reviews, discusses, and make decisions on these reports. Non-agenda items or issues not addressed in the reports cannot be discussed in the meeting.

The decisions made in the General Board of the Council are published on the Journal of Communiqués upon the approval of the Minister. The Council Decisions are in the status of recommendation. The General Secretariat distributes the council decisions to the relevant units<sup>71</sup>.

**Figure 2.2. Functioning of the Council of National Education**



## 2.5. General Directorate for Measuring, Evaluation and Examination Services

The unit evaluates the results of the examinations held by the Ministry. According to the results, it provides data support in areas as programme development, curriculum update, education materials and tools, teachers, teaching and learning techniques, assessment and evaluation, and guidance and supervision.

71) <http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/www/surular/dosya/12>  
<http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/www/19-milli-egitim-surasi/icerik/222>

The activities of the General Directorate which provides input for the quality assurance are:

- i) Planning, implementing, and evaluating the examinations for public and private placement, graduation, comparison, and circulating the results to the relevant units,
- ii) Preparing or having prepared, and control the questions to be used in the examinations held by the General Directorate,
- iii) Conducting or having conducted researches on assessment and evaluation techniques,
- iv) Ensuring coordination between application centres and examination coordination offices to be established when necessary, identifying the personnel to take charge during examinations, and providing them with necessary in-service training,
- v) Providing data to the relevant service units with the aim to develop and improve education policies by evaluating the examination results.<sup>72</sup>

## 2.6. Department of Quality Development

The Department of Quality Development has been established under four different general directorates of MoNE. The one under the General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development focuses on the qualifications of teachers and in-service training. The one under the Department of Inspection Board focuses on the performance evaluation of both schools and staff. The one under the Strategy Development Department is responsible for all processes regarding the Quality Framework and the one under the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education focuses on the self-assessment and internal evaluation of quality management.<sup>73</sup>

## 2.7. Department of Inspection Board

The Department is one of the central service units of the Ministry and also operates under the Provincial Directorates of National Education. The Directorate aims to carry out guidance, on-the-job training, audit, evaluation, research, inspection, and investigation services of all education institutions at all types and levels and Provincial and District Directorates of National Education through education inspectors.

The Boards of Education Inspectors under the Provincial Directorates of National Education develop annual working plans for the guidance and inspection of all education institutions in a particular province, in compliance with the plan developed by the Department of Inspection Board. Apart from the planned inspections, unplanned inspections can be conducted based on demands and speculations. The Department of Inspection Board also published a Quality Manual.<sup>74</sup>

The Department is assigned and authorized for controlling and inspecting services provided by or under the supervision of the Ministry in cooperation with the relevant units; analyzing, comparing and measuring the processes and the outcomes in terms of legislation, predetermined aims and objectives, performance criteria, and quality standards; evaluating these processes based on evidences; producing and circulating a report based on the outcomes.

Central and provincial units of the Department produces and submits findings and assessments on school management and provision of education services in a report format (Development Plans) to the relevant schools, district and provincial directorates, and to the Department at the central office. The Department disseminates these reports to the other relevant units of the Ministry<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> <http://odsgm.meb.gov.tr/>

<sup>73</sup> <http://mtegm.meb.gov.tr/www/kalite-gelistirme-daire-baskanligi/icerik/638>

<sup>74</sup> [http://tkb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2015\\_10/23013433\\_kalite\\_kitab.pdf](http://tkb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2015_10/23013433_kalite_kitab.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> <http://tkb.meb.gov.tr/>

## 2.8. Department of Education Policies

The Department of Education Policies has been established at the general directorates of MoNE which are in charge of the educational provision at basic and secondary education.

The duties of the Department are to:

- i) Carry out activities to develop policies and strategies related to vocational and technical education and training and implement the policies and strategies,
- ii) Take measure to ensure vocational and technical education complies with local and national needs,
- iii) Carry out activities to disseminate and to increase access to vocational and technical education,
- iv) Carry out activities to increase equal opportunities in education,
- v) Carry out research, planning and development activities to meet the needs and expectations regarding the vocational and technical education,
- vi) Develop, implement and coordinate the application of policies and strategies to strengthen the relation between vocational and technical education and employment,
- vii) Draft legislation about new policies and practices

## 2.9. Department of Programme and Education Materials

The Department of Programme and Education Materials has been established at the general directorates of MoNE which are in charge of the educational provision at basic and secondary education.

The duties of the Department are to:

- i) Prepare and commission the preparation of education programmes for vocational and technical education, taking into account the needs and requirements of businesses,
- ii) Set out standards for the programme modules, textbooks, e-book and course software (content),
- iii) Prepare and commission the preparation of the programme modules, textbooks, e-book and course software,
- iv) Carry out necessary research and development for textbooks and education tools and equipment,
- v) Develop, implement and coordinate the implementation of the policies and strategies to strengthen the relation between vocational and technical education and employment.

## 2.10. Department of Student Affairs and Social Activities

The Department of Student Affairs and Social Activities has been established at the general directorates of MoNE which are in charge of the educational provision at basic and secondary education.

The duties of the Department are:

- i) Take measures to enhance students' integration and sense of belonging to school,
- ii) Carry out procedures for students including registration, admission, transfer, quota, awards, discipline and achievement assessment,
- iii) Carry out transactions and procedures about boarding, scholarship and mobile teaching for students at vocational and technical schools,
- iv) Plan and ensure the implementation of social, cultural, sports and scouting activities for students at national and international level,
- v) Carry out transactions and procedures about vocational and technical school students who were transferred from abroad.

### 2.11. Department of Monitoring and Assessment

The Department of Monitoring and Assessment has been established at various general directorates of MoNE.

The duties of the Department are to:

- i) Monitor, assess and evaluate the productivity and efficiency of managers, teachers and other service staff,
- ii) Monitor, assess and evaluate the achievements of students in view of basic learning outcomes,
- iii) Monitor and evaluate students' school attendance, success and drop-out rates,
- iv) Conduct research on, monitor and evaluate students' transition to higher education and inform other units about the findings,
- v) Monitor, assess and evaluate graduates' participation in the labour market,
- vi) Follow up on developments regarding monitoring and evaluation standards and criteria,
- vii) Monitor and evaluate processes regarding the use of education programmes and materials, education tools and technology,
- viii) Monitor and evaluate the projects and protocols that are being implemented,
- ix) Monitor and evaluate inspection and investigation processes and results of schools/institutions and staff,
- x) Cooperate with OSYM and the General Directorate of Assessment, Evaluation and Examination Services of the Ministry.

### 2.12. Department of Improving Educational Environment and Learning Processes

This Department exists in all of the general directorates of MoNE which are in charge of the educational provision at basic and secondary education.

The roles of this Department are to:

- i) Improve education environment and learning outcomes,
- ii) Take measures to overcome qualitative and quantitative discrepancies between schools,
- iii) Improve effective and student oriented education and promoting those practices,
- iv) Determine the efficiency standards of education institutions,
- v) Define general equipment standards for general secondary education institutions,
- vi) Define the principles and procedures regarding the opening and closing of general secondary education institutions,
- vii) Improve the relations with parents and other social partners and taking measures to ensure their support for education.

As indicated in its job description, the department is designed to be a very important assessor of quality assurance.

### 2.13. Board of Teachers in Schools

The Board of Teachers in schools is composed of teachers, specialists, and training staff under the chairmanship of the school principal. This Board is a platform where administrative and other decisions regarding all types of services provided in school are discussed and agreed.

The Board of Teachers form committees and commissions in schools, with the aims of ensuring the efficiency of education, training and management activities, achieving the cooperation between school and its surrounding, ensuring the support of local administrations and non-governmental organisations, developing cooperation between education institutions of all types and levels, realisation of e-School project, student success and protecting child rights.

These committees and commissions can be as Board of Branch Teachers, Board of Branch Teachers' Group, School Board of Heads of Branch Teachers' Group, School Student Board, Discipline Committee, Committee of Social Activities.

School Development and Management Teams are formed at schools since the total quality management is regarded crucial. These teams carry out current and future plans of schools in coordination with the Strategic Plan Development Team<sup>76</sup>.

### 2.14. Council of Students

The Council of Students is a platform enabling students, who are primary stakeholders of quality assurance, to express their demands in a structured way in order to receive a quality education; defend their rights against school management and teachers; express their opinions on curriculum review, education materials and tools, teachers, teaching and learning methods, and assessment and evaluation methods; and defend a student-oriented education. The chairman of Council of Students participates in the meetings and activities of the Board of Teachers and School Development and Management Teams.

### 2.15. School-Parent Union

The parents whose children attend to the relevant school form a School-Parent Union through an election. The chairman of the Union participates in the activities of Board of Teachers and School Development and Management Teams. The Union carries out its activities in cooperation with school management and teachers throughout education processes.

<sup>76</sup>) [http://ogm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2016\\_11/03111224\\_ooky.pdf](http://ogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_11/03111224_ooky.pdf)  
[http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/ilkveokuloncyon\\_0/ilkveokuloncyon\\_0.html](http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/html/ilkveokuloncyon_0/ilkveokuloncyon_0.html)

## Annex 3: Quality Assurance of Higher Education Qualifications

The regulations and activities regarding the quality assurance (QA) in higher education can be presented under three main headings. The first heading includes the mechanisms and projects developed and carried out in Turkey as a result of the studies conducted in the European Higher Education Area; second heading includes the QA system implemented from the opening of a programme until awarding a qualification in terms of the functions; the third heading includes the QA structures both at institutional and unit levels.

Participation of Turkey in the Bologna Process in 2001 initiated a systematic awareness regarding the QA in higher education in Turkey. The system for QA in higher education became operational in 2005 with the enactment of the Regulation on Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education, YODEK Regulation, shortly. In the scope of YODEK Regulation, Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Commissions (ADEK) have been established at higher education institutions and annual reports have started to be sent to Council of Higher Education (CoHE). In 2015, a new legislation, the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education was issued, abolishing the previous YODEK Regulation. The new Regulation sets out a structure and functioning for QA in higher education in a far more systematic and consistent way with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (ESG).

In 2011, internal and external QA concepts were included in the scope of the law. Prior to that date, there had always been QA elements to some extent although it lacked a holistic QA structure in a systematic way.

### 1. Quality Assurance System Developed though ESG and Bologna Process

#### 1.1. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

One year after Turkey was involved to Bologna Process, the IUC (Inter-University Council) of which rectors are members, issued a regulation on academic evaluation and quality control in higher education institutions. In 2005, this regulation was repealed and a more comprehensive one was published with a minor change in its name, Regulation on Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement in Higher Education, by CoHE.

In August 2014, Presidency of CoHE established a commission to ensure coordination on “qualifications, quality assurance, accreditation, and recognition” and entrusted this commission with the task of updating the YODEK Regulation. The Commission updated the regulation and submitted it to CoHE Presidency in October 2014.

This draft regulation came into force with the title “the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education” upon publication in the Official Journal on 23/7/2015. Within the scope of the regulation, the Higher Education Quality Board within CoHE and quality commissions within the HEIs have been established.

The Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education as well as the previous YODEK Regulation is based on the ESG published by European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Revision work in the ESG has been taken into consideration while drafting the existing regulation.

#### 1.2. Bologna Process

Turkey started to mobilize all instruments and mechanisms in the higher education area through CoHE, after involvement to the Bologna Process in 2001. Awareness and implementation expansion work was

granted a legal basis in 2011 with amendments in the Higher Education Law. EHEA approach regarding the qualifications, quality assurance, recognition, transparency, and social aspect which have been developed in Bologna Process were deemed as legal obligations as of 2011.

CoHE commenced the pilot implementation of TYYC (Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework) in 2009 taking into consideration the Dublin Descriptors and the EQF. In the light of feedback, TYYC started to be implemented in all HEIs as of the beginning of 2010.

Approach and instruments with regard to the Bologna Process are regulated in Article 44 of the Higher Education Law No. 2547. The senate of each university has the authority for setting the regulations at institutional level following the setting of the general principles and procedures by CoHE. The elements which have been attributed to the Bologna Process and specified in detail in Article 44 of the law are:

- Qualifications,
- Credit system based on student workload
- Assessment method for learning outcomes,
- Qualifications framework,
- Programme learning outcomes,
- Course learning outcomes,
- Course credits,
- Number of semesters in education and training,
- Amount of credits for each semester,
- Method for teaching and assessment of foreign language knowledge,
- Opinions of external stakeholders in updating the curriculum and increasing employability,
- Recognition of courses taken in other national and foreign HEIs,
- Recognition of prior learning,
- Minor and double major,
- Internal and external quality assurance,
- Maximum study period,
- Three semester education,
- Flexibility for the examinations measuring course achievement, diploma, and placement examinations,
- Distance learning in associate, undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate levels,
- Establishing advisory councils at HEIs.

## 2. Quality Assurance System in Higher Education

The Higher Education Law sets the primary objectives and principles on QA which all HEIs are required to take as a basis. The level of achievement of these objectives and the availability of mechanism and instruments which will ensure compliance to these principles are sought when evaluating the QA system of the HEIs with regard to their activities. These objectives and principles can be considered quite visionary in terms of the relation of higher education with the society and education, internationalization, participation of internal and external stakeholders, accountability, transparency, and performance.

The higher education in Turkey is regulated, planned and supervised at the central level. This centralized approach allows for a more effective, determined, and holistic implementation of the reforms by the means of contemporary technologies.



## 2.1. General Objectives and Principles of Higher Education

The general objectives and principles of higher education in terms of individual development, employability, national development, internationalization, innovation and research, recognition of national culture and universality, equality in opportunity, accessibility of higher education, and continuous improvement of academic staff are specified in the Higher Education Law.

General objectives of higher education are;

- (i) To educate graduates who possess the power of free and scientific thinking, have a broad world view, and are respectful to human rights,
- (ii) To educate graduates who possess the knowledge, skills, behaviour and general culture of an occupation which would meet the needs of the country and its development, while providing a life and happiness for themselves,
- (iii) To ensure that the country becomes a constructive, creative, and prominent partner in modern civilization by implementing programmes which will contribute to and accelerate the economic, social, and cultural development;
- (iv) To conduct high-level scientific studies and research, to produce information and technology, to disseminate scientific findings, and to contribute to the progress and development at national level as higher education institutions,
- (v) To become a prominent member of the scientific world by cooperating with national and foreign institutions and to contribute to the universal and contemporary development.

Principles of Higher Education are;

- (i) To ensure that the students have the competency for experiencing national culture in a universal environment,
- (ii) To develop and continuously improve the plans and programmes of education-training based on scientific and technologic principles as well as the national and local needs in short and long terms,
- (iii) To ensure the equal opportunity in access to higher education,
- (iv) To establish the universities, faculties, institutes, and higher schools within universities by law upon the comments and proposals of CoHE in the frameworks of higher education planning in line with principles and objectives of development plans and programmes,
- (v) To establish higher schools which train members of profession by the Cabinet decision in line with the principles determined by CoHE.

Higher education, including formal, non-formal, continuous and open education-training, is planned and realised in line with principles and objectives in the national education policy and development plans to meet the needs at national, environmental, and implementation levels. To this end, it should be ensured that HEIs are improved, their efficiency is increased, new ones are opened with dissemination purposes, academic staff is trained and appointed at home or abroad, balance between production-human force-education is ensured, and the resources and know-how allocated for higher education are distributed.

## 2.2. Establishing Higher Education Institutions and Opening a Programme

Universities founded both by state and foundations are established through law; faculties, graduate schools and higher schools through decision of the Cabinet, and higher vocational schools and conservatories are established through the decision of CoHE. Establishment of academic institutions and units is based on the objectives and principles of higher education as specified in law. Evidence on meeting these objectives and principles should be presented in the application of the institutions and units. Supervision and evaluation of higher education units at all levels are under the authority of CoHE.

Applications for establishing a university are made to CoHE. Upon the comments or proposal of CoHE, the establishment is realised by law. For the applications with regards to the universities, faculty, college, and programme, CoHE prepares its comments taking the general objectives and principles in the law as the basis and in line with the priorities in development plans and annual plans. CoHE submits its comments and proposals to the Cabinet through MoNE. Universities are established following the approval of the draft law which is prepared and submitted by the Cabinet to the Parliament.

The Senate of the university issues a decision and applies to CoHE to establish a faculty, graduate school or higher school within the university. The decision for the establishment is taken by the Cabinet. Applications for establishing a higher vocational school or a conservatory and opening a new programme are directly evaluated and concluded by CoHE. Law on the establishment of universities, Cabinet decisions are published in the Official Journal.

CoHE evaluates the applications through permanent commissions which it establishes. Secretariat of the commissions is carried out by related departments within CoHE. These commissions and administrative units, evaluate the compliance of education, training, research, development, and community service activities as well as physical, technological, academic-administrative human resources foreseen for the conduct of managerial and administrative services. The existence of the approaches and structures for education-training and research activities foreseen by CoHE decisions in line with EHEA is also sought.

The Presidency of CoHE informed the HEIs that, application for opening a programme and student admissions should be made to CoHE through a template in parallel to the programme template in ECTS User's Guide as of 2013. It is also required that course learning outcomes and programme learning outcomes are to be specified, associated with each other besides associating the programme learning outcomes with higher education qualifications.

### ***Opening of Associate and Undergraduate Programmes***

The following information should be included in the file to be submitted to CoHE for the opening of departments under faculties, higher schools, higher vocational schools, as well as for the opening of programme under higher vocational colleges. After the opening of the department or programme, the applications regarding the student admission in an undergraduate programme should be prepared according to the "Criteria for Opening Undergraduate Programme" and for an associate programme, according to the "Criteria for Higher Vocational Schools".

The information that should be included in the application files is as follows:

- The decision of the senate,
- The rationale for the department or programme to be established,
- If there is no domestic example for the requested department or programme, information on foreign examples including which universities they exist in, and information on the programme,
- Domestic and international examples of the department or programme separately (minimum 3 examples from abroad),

- Detailed information on the national and international implementation of the programme,
- Similarities and differences of the proposed programme with existing national and international programmes.

In the General Board meeting of CoHE on 04/02/2010, it was decided that the criteria for student admissions into higher vocational school programmes should include the recruitment of at least 3 academic staff members, and at least one of them should have graduate degree. In addition, overall student ratio of the previous year should be considered when evaluating the requests for opening a programme and student admissions in higher vocational schools. Student ratio in evaluation may vary according to CoHE principles but can be minimum 85% and above.

The criteria for student admissions in undergraduate programmes require that at least 3 academic staff members are recruited in the undergraduate programme and department. For Law Faculty, there should be 6 academic staff members, each of whom is in different departments, and a research assistant. In addition, at least three research assistants should be employed starting from the first year, totalling up to twelve research assistants at the end of four years.

Regarding the student admissions into undergraduate programmes at Theology/Islamic Sciences Faculty, the following number of academic staff should be employed in the relevant fields in accordance with the decision of General Board of CoHE on 05/05/2011.

- Minimum 5 academic members for Basic Islamic Sciences
- 1 academic member for Philosophy and Religious Sciences
- 1 academic member for Islamic History and Arts
- 1 Research Assistant

It is generally required that minimum one academic member is recruited in each department under Basic Medical Sciences of Faculties of Medicine. In addition, it is required that a Faculty of Medicine hospital exist or affiliation with another hospital which is approved by CoHE is available. At the same time, recent evaluations are based on minimum one academic member in each of seven departments under Basic Medical Sciences in line with Medical Workgroup suggestions to the General Board of CoHE.

For the most courses of first and second years in Faculty of Pharmacy, namely Analytical Chemistry, Biochemistry, Pharmaceutical Microbiology, Basic Sciences of Pharmacy, Pharmacology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmaceutical Botanic, and Pharmaceutical Technology, at least one academic member should be recruited in each department. However, since organic chemistry training is provided in the departments of Analytical Chemistry and Basic Pharmacy Sciences, if there is a faculty member in the Faculty of Science and Literature, this academic member can be mobilised. For Biochemistry and Pharmacology departments, mobilisation from Medical Faculty is acceptable.

In accordance with the decision of General Board of CoHE on 07/04/1997; the following criteria is sought for Dentistry; necessary academic staff, laboratory equipment, and practice fields should be available for basic medical sciences and pre-clinical period; the nits, devices, and equipment for clinical period should be provided at the level of advanced dentistry faculties; an academic staff member should be recruited in each department of the faculty.

### ***Opening of Graduate Programmes***

The most recent regulation on the opening of graduate programmes is based on the decision of General Board of CoHE on 08/10/2009. At least 3 academic members, two of whom are associate professors are required for each graduate programme individually.

### ***Opening of Doctorate Programmes and Specialization in Art Programmes***

The most recent regulation regarding the opening of these programmes is based on the decision of General Board of CoHE on 08/10/2009. At least, five academic members, namely two professors or one professor and two associate professors, are required for each program individually.

### ***Joint graduate education with domestic universities***

The following documents are required in the application file in accordance with the Regulation on the Establishment of Joint Graduate Education-Training Programme with Domestic Higher Education Institutions dated 22/02/2007:

- (i) The information which is prepared according to the criteria on opening the requested graduate, doctorate, or specialization in arts programme,
- (ii) The copy of protocol signed in compliance with the "Directive on Preparation of Joint Graduate Education Protocol between Domestic Higher Education Institutions" as decided in General Board of CoHE on 26/08/2010,
- (iii) Information on the mobilisation of academic staff from both universities in spreadsheets,
- (iv) Assignment of at least two academic members from each of the universities,

The universities which will conduct the joint program should be within the same province or neighbouring provinces.

### ***Opening of joint education and training programme with universities abroad***

The establishment of an education and training programme jointly with the HEIs abroad was regulated with a regulation issued in 2006 (Regulation on the Establishment of Joint Education and Training Programmes by Higher Education Institutions with Higher Education Institutions Abroad which are in the scope). The regulation sets out the principles and procedures applying to associate, undergraduate and graduate programmes with provisions regarding the student admissions, curriculum, examination and assessment, attendance, permissions, maximum durations, graduation requirements, diplomas to be awarded and tuition fees as well as other issues regarding education<sup>77</sup>.

## **2.3. Determining the Training Materials, Equipment and Tools**

The text books, other tools and equipment to be used for courses should comply with the learning outcomes and the assessment tools required for these learning outcomes. All HEIs are obliged to prepare the ECTS packages accordingly. The academicians of the university have the freedom to choose the training materials, as long as the material meets the learning outcomes.

## **2.4. Assessment**

Assessment may vary depending on the education programme and the learning outcomes. The law specifies the general principles on this, while delegating the right to the senates of the HEIs to issue a specific regulation on the assessment and evaluation. The regulation issued by the senates determines the framework of the assessment; however the decision for the assessment method at course or module level is taken by the lecturer. The lecturer prepares the syllabus of the course in detail including the learning outcomes for each topic, performance criteria, method and types of assessment.

<sup>77</sup>) The regulation is available [here](#)

Assessment should be in compliance with the student workload and learning outcomes which are defined as the knowledge, skills, and competences at course and programme level. Institutional regulation also specifies how to take into consideration feedback obtained through student questionnaires or forms of which the frequency, format, and content have been determined, when updating the curriculum.

## 2.5. Determining the Academic Staff

The criteria for appointment of academic staff are prepared by HEIs and published both on the websites of CoHE and the relevant HEI after being approved by CoHE.

While allowing the public universities to use their academic staff, CoHE determines the staff positions for professors, associate professors, and assistant professors of the HEIs in a balanced ratio considering the needs of the HEI, education and training programmes, specifications of scientific branches, research activities, practice areas, premises, tools, equipment, and similar facilities, as well as the number of students among other relevant elements.

### **Academic Staff**

In public universities, selection and appointment processes for faculty members (professors, associate professors, and assistant professors) are in parallel to the selection and appointment processes for other research fellows, lecturers, instructors, and specialists. The process follows the phases in the department, section, faculty management board, university management board, and CoHE. Each unit in each phase approves the needs analysis and request of the previous unit and passes the request to the next unit. Each unit has the initiative to approve the application and submit to the next phase, or reject the application at that phase. The application by the HEI is evaluated by CoHE in terms of human resources planning and needs analysis taking into account the institutional and national priorities and plans and is approved accordingly. Following the approval of CoHE, the HEI publishes a public announcement. Application to the vacancy is made directly to the relevant HEI.

Appointment procedures for academic staff are parallel in public and foundation universities. The required qualifications for research associates, instructors, specialists, and lecturers should to be approved by CoHE to prevent pre-selected recruitment (recruitment of specific people). It is also forbidden to publish announcements which point specific people.

Minimum conditions for the appointment of academic staff are specified in the law; however the HEIs may determine additional objective and reviewable conditions for the purpose of increasing scientific quality exclusively, considering the differences between scientific disciplines, with the approval of CoHE.

Associate professor tenure is considered an academic title for post-PhD in Turkey. Any person who does not work in any HEI, and who is employed or unemployed has the right to apply to CoHE and request the establishment of a commission and enter the examination for associate professorship which includes the evaluation of publications and oral examination. Prerequisite for the oral examination is that the person needs to succeed in the evaluation of scientific publication phase. In addition, sufficient foreign language knowledge is required. The HEIs may set additional criteria in terms of language, publications, education, and research experience.

The determination of the principles for the doctorate, evaluation of doctorate degrees, associate professorship and professorship titles acquired abroad, arrangement of associate professorship exams and assessment jury, setting the principles of these exams, and evaluation of the publication and research of the candidates are the duties of the IUC.

Appointments for professorship differ in terms of the duration required in comparison to other academic positions. For appointments to professorship, besides other scientific criteria, five years should pass after receiving the associate professor title or evidences should be submitted to prove five years of employment in the relevant scientific field.

### **Lecturer**

Lecturers can be appointed into tenures of academic staff, teaching assistant and lecturer through receiving comments from related management boards, upon recommendations from deans at the faculties, and from department heads in the departments, and with the approval of the rector; or they can be employed contract-based or fee-based for lecture hours. People who are known with their studies and publication in their area can be mobilized on a definite term or fee-based on lecture hours for the education, training and practice of a topic in which there is no appointed academic staff by law at the universities and affiliated units.

Lecturers can be appointed into academic staff positions maximum for two years; at the end of this period, unless there is an application to the position from an academic staff and if their continuing work is found beneficial, they can be reappointed based on the same procedure. Their assignments expire automatically at the end of the appointment period. Lecturers can be appointed in conservatories and higher vocational schools constantly when needed.

### **Instructors**

Instructors are appointed in definite or indefinite terms after receiving comments from related institutions and upon recommendation from the deans at faculties and departments, and from directors of the institutes and higher schools within rectorship, with the approval of the rector. Their assignments expire automatically at the end of appointment period. Their reappointment is possible. In that case, the procedures in the previous appointment are applied.

### **Assistant Staff**

Assistant staff includes research assistants, specialists, translators, and education and training planners.

Research assistants are the faculty assistants who assist the research, studies, and experiments in HEIs and carry out other duties assigned by competent bodies. They are appointed to research associate positions for maximum three years with the recommendations from the heads of the academic programme or art department, upon consent of the relevant director, with the approval of the rector. Their assignments automatically expire at the end of appointment period. They can be reappointed by following the same procedures.

Since research assistants are recruited for continuing graduate education and to be trained, the procedures for their selection and appointment are moderately different. Among the application criteria for research assistants are receiving minimum required points from the "Academic Personnel and Graduate Education Exam (ALES)" and "Foreign Language Exam (YDS)". In addition, undergraduate cumulative grade point average and interview evaluations are the other criteria taken into consideration for the research assistants.

Qualifications and other requirements for the research assistants who will be sent abroad for graduate education and who will be appointed for the first time for this purpose are determined by CoHE. The regulation for those who will be sent abroad for training is based on Law No 1416 on the Students to be Sent Abroad.

Specialists are assistant staff assigned with a specialist job and mobilised in laboratories, libraries, workshops, and other practical fields directly or indirectly related to the training. Translators are assistant staff mobilised for verbal or written translation work. Education and training planners are assistant staff assigned with the planning of education and training at HEIs.

Appointment of specialists, translators, and planners or their mobilisation with a contract are carried out for at most two years through receiving comments of related management boards, with recommendations from deans at faculties, or institute/higher school directors, or department heads, upon the approval of the rector. Their assignments automatically expire at the end of appointment period. They can be reappointed by following the same procedures. After third appointment, they can be appointed constantly.

### ***Lecturers with foreign origin***

Contracted lecturers with foreign origin can be appointed in HEIs with the recommendations from related faculty, institute, or higher school managerial board upon consent from university managerial board with the approval of the rector. In terms of teaching duties, they are subject to the same provisions set in the law for the salary based instructors. If the appointment and mobilisation of instructors with foreign origin is approved by CoHE, without subject to the provisions of Law No. 657 which requires the Decision of Cabinet, their contracts are made with the universities.

### ***Training of Instructors***

HEIs train instructors at home or abroad to meet their needs or the needs of new or prospective HEIs, based on the needs and principles to be determined by CoHE in line with development plans and objectives. For this purpose, research assistant tenure at HEIs may be allocated by CoHE to another HEI for research and doctorate studies on a temporary basis. Those who get their degrees in doctorates, medical specialty, specialty in dentistry, or specialization in arts in this way return to their universities at the end of the training period. The instructors who are trained at home or abroad are obliged to carry out their compulsory services in their affiliated HEI. This compulsory service cannot be carried out in other HEIs or public authorities with the exception of health and spouse-related issues.

### ***Work and supervision of teaching staff***

Teaching staff work on a continuous basis at the HEIs. Associate professors, lecturers, instructors, research assistants and assistant staff are appointed for a limited time. Faculty members are obliged to provide least ten hours of lecture per week at their universities without limitation with the unit they are tenured. Lecturers and instructors are obliged to provide at least twelve hours of lecture weekly.

CoHE specifies the following points; how many lecture hours are equal to the non-course counselling for applications, seminars, projects, graduation projects, or thesis supervision by the teaching staff; maximum lecture hours that they can give at other public universities or foundation universities; and how many lecture hours they give at distance learning programmes are equal to the how many hours of lecture given in the formal education programme.

The number of contracted professor and associate professors shall not exceed 5% of the permanent faculty members at the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry. The HEIs which were established after 01/03/2006 may employ up to five contracted faculty members without subject to the rates mentioned previously.

The contracts are made for up to one year on the condition that working hours per month do not exceed eighty hours. Contracts up to two months can be made with the decision of the management

board and CoHE should be notified on the content and justification of the contract within seven days. Contracts for more than two months are made with the decision of the managerial board and with the permission of CoHE. These people cannot be rector, dean, director of institute, higher school or research centre, member of senate, executive board or board, department head, head of academic programme or branch, or head physician; cannot be deputies of those mentioned positions; cannot be the manager of any academic units.

The principles and procedures with regard to employment of contracted academic staff, the amount of contract fee per hour to be paid depending on their work, and other issues regarding the implementation are agreed jointly by the Ministry of Finance and CoHE.

The teaching staff is audited and evaluated by CoHE at national level and by their institutions at local level regarding their duties and requirements such as workload, research, education, social services. Quality assurance is basically implemented through the perspective of auditing.

## 2.6. Student Admissions

In Turkey, a central examination is applied at national level and there is a positive public perception as this system provides the highest equality of opportunities in public. Examinations that require special abilities are done by the HEIs as well as taking the central exams into consideration.

### **National Student Admissions**

Admission and placement in higher education are carried out in line with the article 45 of Higher Education Law no. 2547 as defined below:

- (i) Admission and placement in HEIs are carried out in accordance with the principles and procedures determined by CoHE on the condition that measures are taken to ensure equality of opportunity.
- (ii) One can be admitted into an HEI through a central examination at national level. The essentials of the examination are determined by CoHE. The success of the candidates at secondary education is also taken into consideration while calculating the placement scores. Graduation grade scores from the secondary education are converted into success grade scores between 250 up to 500 points. %12 of this grade score is added into the score gained in the examination when calculating the placement scores.
- (iii) Separate quotas might be given besides the existing quotas for the candidates who graduate at the top of secondary schools, upon the decision of CoHE.
- (iv) Graduates of vocational and technical secondary education might be placed in the vocational or technical associate programmes which are continuation of the programme they graduate from or similar programme, without placement exam upon their will. The related principles and procedures are determined through the regulation issued by CoHE upon the suggestions from MoNE.
- (v) External transfer quotas non exceeding 10% of the determined quota for related undergraduate programme can be reserved each year for the graduates of associate programmes, upon the decision of CoHE.
- (vi) The principles and procedures for the admission of foreign origin students and the students who have completed their secondary education abroad are determined by CoHE. Placement procedures for foreign students who will study at HEIs in Turkey with scholarship in accordance with international agreements are carried out by CoHE.



- (vii) The students who are highly talented in specific artistic and sports branches and those who are awarded in international scientific competitions specified by Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey can be placed in an HEI on the condition that they study in related branches, in accordance with the principles and procedures to be determined by CoHE.

### **Foreign Student Admissions**

In accordance with the decision taken on 18/03/2009 at the meeting of the Evaluation Committee which was established in accordance with the “Law on Foreign Students Studying in Turkey”, the HEIs can admit foreign students upon the approval of CoHE.

Quota suggestions from the HEIs which will admit foreign students are collected by the Student Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM), and included in the Foreign Student Admissions Manual if agreed by CoHE. The calendar regarding the date for the publication and dissemination of this manual is determined by the Presidency of OSYM.

Quotas can be reserved in associate and undergraduate programme, extension programme, distance education programme, and open education programme at the universities which agree to admit foreign students. The Foreign Student Placement Examination which had been carried out at central level until 2010-2011 academic year has been removed.

There is no limitation on the validity period for the following high school graduation examinations approved by CoHE and suggested to be used in the evaluation of foreign student admissions (Abitur, International Baccalaureate, GCE, Tawjihi etc.). However, there is two year validity period for university entrance examinations like SAT, YÖS, etc.

Minimum and maximum tuition amounts for the foreign students are determined by the Cabinet without exception to the public universities. Tuition fees for the students to be admitted into foundation universities are determined by the boards of these HEIs.

The HEIs may determine the admission criteria for the foreign students within the framework specified above on the condition that they get approval from CoHE. The essentials on foreign student admissions including national examination of the countries, international examination, secondary school graduation grade scores, and examinations by the HEI, etc. are prepared in the form of a directive or regulation approved by the senates of the university and submitted to the approval of CoHE.

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities also takes an active part in the admission of foreign students in the HEIs in Turkey. This institution has an organisational unit called the Department of International Students. This institution admits students from virtually any country on the basis of the quotas set up in coordination between universities in Turkey and CoHE. One of its fundamental objectives is student admissions from Turkey and related communities; however, it currently receives student applications from all over the world and places an average of four thousand undergraduate and graduate students per year in higher education in Turkey<sup>78</sup>.

## **2.7. Accountability**

HEIs are subject to the supervision of Higher Education Supervisory Council under CoHE in terms of external supervision; to external evaluation of Higher Education Quality Board in terms of quality assurance; to auditing of Ministry of Finance and Court of Accounts in terms of financial affairs; and to evaluation of the Ministry of Development in terms of strategic planning.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5978.pdf>

Higher Education Supervisory Council supervises whether the academic activities and other activities at the HEIs are in line with the general objectives and main principles in the law. The Board conducts this supervision on behalf of CoHE according to the procedures prepared by CoHE. The Board also carries out the discipline and punishment proceedings specified in the law upon the order of the President of CoHE.

The HEIs are subject to internal audit, performance supervision, and academic and administrative supervision hierarchically. The Senate, Faculty or Institute Board, Department Board constitute the main hierarchical sequence for academic supervision and assessment.

Scientific supervision for the HEIs is regulated in Article 42 of the Higher Education Law. Internal scientific supervision of the HEIs is conducted in a hierarchical way which includes the activities of the academic staff, activities of the departments, faculties, and university:

- (i) Scientific supervision of the academic staff is carried out through their education-training, scientific research, publications, clinical and practical activities.
- (ii) The department head submits a report on the academic activities and research activities of the department from the previous year as well as planning for the next year to the Dean at the end of each academic year. The Dean adds comments to the report and send it to the Rector. The Rector evaluates the report and the comments, takes necessary measures, and notifies CoHE on decisions about any inadequacy. The director of the institute or higher school sends the report to the rector or dean to whom they report.
- (iii) Each academic staff member is supposed to submit a list of their scientific researches, publications, courses, seminars, practical parts they give and manage a copy of the presentations in national and international scientific conferences, to the rectorship through their unit manager. A copy of the unpublished manuscripts is submitted.
- (iv) A special archive is kept for the scientific publications of the academic staff at the HEIs and CoHE.

In the scope of the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, universities annually prepare "Self-Assessment Report" in a template compatible with ESG manual and submit the report to CoHE. The HEIs are required to undergo external evaluation at least every five years in the scope of a periodical, corporate external evaluation process to be conducted by Higher Education Quality Board (HEQB)<sup>79</sup>.

### ***Institutional evaluation and programme-specific accreditation***

In addition to compulsory institutional quality assurance envisaged by the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, field/discipline-specific independent quality assurance agencies are also encouraged by CoHE.

So far, eight agencies have been licensed as national quality assurance agency in the related fields by CoHE. Furthermore two new agencies have been recently established and they are, currently, in the process of eligibility evaluation by CoHE in order to acquire national licenses for accreditation. Eventually, the number of such agencies is expected to extend to cover all disciplines and levels in higher education. The decision of the General Board of CoHE regarding the indication of education programmes which are accredited in the guideline of OSYM in 2016 is considered as important for encouraging the process.

Field/discipline specific quality assurance (accreditation) agencies licensed as national quality assurance agencies by CoHE and currently operating in Turkey are as follows:

- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programmes (MÜDEK)
- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programmes (TEPDAD)

<sup>79)</sup> The directive on corporate external evaluation is available [here](#)

- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Programmes in Science, Literature, Science&Literature, Languages, History and Geography Education Faculties (FEDEK)
- Council for Accreditation of Architecture (MiAK)
- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Programmes in Education Faculties (EPDAD)
- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Programmes in Nursing Education Faculties (HEPDAK)
- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Programmes in Pharmacology Faculties (ECZAKDER)
- Association for Accreditation of Veterinary Education Institutions and Programmes (VEDEK)

Field/discipline specific quality assurance (accreditation) agencies in the process of eligibility evaluation by CoHE are;

- Association for Accreditation and Graduation of Education and Training
- Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Education Programmes in Health Sciences

## 2.8. Education and Training

Higher education is regulated according to the general objectives and main principles specified in the Higher Education Law. Each HEI prepares its own regulation on education and assessment to be submitted for the approval of CoHE. Development of programmes, training of teaching staff, cooperation with domestic and foreign HEIs are regulated by each university in line with the objectives and principles of higher education and subject to CoHE approval.

Accordingly;

- (i) The essentials on education and training and the diplomas awarded in HEIs according to their nature and establishment rationale are determined in the education and assessment regulations which are prepared by each HEI.
- (ii) CoHE regulates that the education and training, methods, scope, education period, and assessment principles within the same year should be equivalent and that the titles and rights gained after the education should be equal. This is conducted upon the recommendation from the IUC and in cooperation with MoNE in terms of the departments which train the teachers.
- (iii) HEIs can carry out international joint education and training programme including associate and undergraduate programmes in cooperation with foreign HEIs and other institutions. Essentials on the student admission, curriculum, examinations and assessment, and graduation in these programmes as well as their operations are specified with a regulation issued by CoHE.<sup>80</sup>

## 2.9. Social Services

Social services included in the Higher Education Law are a topic which is quite consistent with social aspect and employability in the Bologna Process.

- (i) HEIs are supposed to protect physical and mental health of the students, to provide reading halls, inpatient health centres, medico-social centres, canteens and restaurants, meeting halls, cinema and theatre halls, sport centres and fields, camping areas as their budget allows for the purpose of meeting the students' needs such as accommodation, nutrition, studying, resting, and recreation; and to take necessary measures for ensuring that the students can use these facilities in the most optimized way.

<sup>80</sup>) The regulation is available [here](#)

- (ii) HEIs cooperate with private and public organizations to support their graduates for employment.
- (iii) The HEIs establish guidance and psychological counselling centres and try to solve the personal and private problems of their students.
- (iv) The number and distribution of scholarships for the prospective university students on behalf of public institutions are specified by CoHE according to the principles and objectives of state development plans in terms of manpower requirements and training of academic staff. Tuition fees, costs of examinations and diplomas of the scholarship students are covered by the scholarship.

### 3. Quality Assurance Structures in Higher Education

There are responsible units for the quality assurance in higher education both at national and institutional level. In this section, these units, their tasks related to the quality assurance and relationships among them are explained.

#### 3.1. Internal Units in Higher Education Institutions

##### ***Quality Commission of Higher Education Institution***

HEIs establish a Quality Commission as per the Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education for self-assessment, external evaluation and quality development activities. The Commission is chaired by the rector of the relevant HEI, or the vice-rector in the absence of the rector.

The Commission comprises members assigned by the university senates provided that they are not from the same faculty, institute, higher school, and higher vocational school, not more than one and from different disciplines. Among the commission members, there are also the secretary general of the HEI, student representative and head of the department of strategy development in public HEI and unit manager responsible for relevant processes in foundation HEI. The number of members, membership durations of members, which is not to be less than two years for the members assigned by senate, and principles and procedures governing the operations of the commission are set out by the university senates or executive boards of the relevant HEI. These are made publicly available on the websites of the HEI. Student representative is assigned within principles and procedures to be defined by the university senates and serves for one year.

The tasks of the quality commission for higher education institution are:

- i) Establishing the internal and external quality assurance system of the relevant institution to assess and improve the quality of education, training and research activities and administrative services in line with the strategic plan and objectives of the institution, identifying institutional indicators and conduct activities therein in line with the principles and procedures set out by the HEQB and submitting these activities to approval of the senate,
- ii) Conducting self-assessment activities and preparing an annual institutional assessment report containing the results of self-assessment and quality development activities and submitting the report to the senate or to the executive board of the institution, sharing the approved annual institutional assessment report publicly on the website of the institution,
- iii) Making necessary preparations for external evaluation process, providing the HEQB and external evaluation bodies with all the necessary support.

##### ***The Senate***

The Senate is headed by the rector and composed of vice-rectors, deans, an academic member from each faculty who would be selected by the faculty boards for three years, and the directors of institutes

and higher schools under the rectorship. The Senate is the academic body of the HEI and carries out the following duties:

- (i) To decide on the essentials regarding the education, training, scientific research, and publication activities of the HEI,
- (ii) To review and agree on the annual education and training programme and academic calendar of the HEI,
- (iii) To review and resolve the appeals against the decisions of the Faculty Boards and institutes and higher schools under the rectorship,
- (iv) To select members for the University Managing Board.

#### ***Management Board of the University***

The Board is headed by the rector and is composed of deans and three professors representing the various teaching units and fields of the HEI. These members are elected for four years by the Senate. Vice-rectors may attend the board meetings but do not hold the right to vote.

The Management Board is an auxiliary body in administrative activities to the rector and carries out the following tasks:

- (i) To assist the rector in the implementation of decisions by supreme institutions of higher education and by the Senate in line with the plans and programme,
- (ii) To ensure implementation of the activity plans and programme; to review investment programme, budget proposals of the units at the HEI and to submit these including their own comments to the rector, and to the Board of Trustees in foundation universities,
- (iii) To review and resolve the appeals against the decisions of the management boards of the faculty, institute, and higher school.

#### ***Strategy Development Department and Internal Audit Unit***

Strategy Development Department provides coordination and guidance in the process of strategic plan development and in developing strategic objectives, targets, and performance criteria in the institutional plan and unit plans at the level of HEI and units. Monitoring, data collection, evaluation, and feedback for the institutional and unit based strategic plans are carried out by this department.

Internal audit units aim to ensure that the activities of the HEI are planned and carried out in line with the objectives and policies, development plan, programmes, strategic plans, performance programmes, and legislation; to ensure the effective, economic, and efficient use of the resources; and to ensure the reliability and accuracy of information as well as timely collection. The unit also makes suggestions to the management in terms of assuring the assets of public administration; defining risks that may have a negative impact on public administration for ensuring internal audit efficiency and minimization of risk; taking necessary precautions; making constant reviews and digitizing those risks if possible.

#### ***Student Council***

Student Council aims to protect the rights of the students in the HEI in terms of meeting and improving their education, health, sports, and cultural needs; to convey the students' expectations and requests to the management bodies through establishing an effective communication between the management and the students; and ensuring student participation on the decisions regarding the education and training.

The student representatives participate in the meetings according to their representation at the level of academic programme, departments, faculty and university to present their opinions and protect student rights in any issue concerning the students.

### **Faculty Boards**

The Faculty Board is headed by the dean and composed of department heads, directors of institutes and higher schools, and three professors who are elected among each other, two associate professors who are elected among each other, one assistant professor who are elected among each other for three years. Generally, the Board convenes at the beginning and end of each academic semester ordinarily.

The Faculty Board is an academic body which carries out the following tasks:

- (i) To make decisions on the education and training, scientific research and publication activities of the faculty, on the principles for these activities, on the plan, programme and academic calendar of the faculty,
- (ii) To elect members for the Faculty Management Board.

Faculty Management Board is headed by the dean and composed of three professors, two associate professors, and one assistant professor to be elected by the faculty board for three years. Management Board can establish ad hoc working groups and education and training coordinators when necessary and regulate their tasks.

Faculty Management Board is an auxiliary body for the dean in administrative activities and carries out the following tasks:

- (i) To ensure the implementation of education and training, plans, programmes and academic calendar of the faculty,
- (ii) To prepare the investment, programme, and budget proposals of the faculty,
- (iii) To agree on the issues as admissions, orientations, and dismissals of the students as well as the procedures on education, training and assessment.

### **Institute Boards**

Institutes are units providing graduate education. Generally, social sciences, health sciences, and science institutes operate as graduate education institutes. The bodies of the institute are the Director of the Institute, the Institute Board, and Management Board of the Institute. The Director of the Institute carries out the duties entrusted to the deans through law at institute level. The Board and Management Boards of the Institute carry out duties entrusted to the Faculty Boards and Faculty Management Boards through law at institute level.

The actual education and research units of the institutes which provide graduate education are the departments. Consequently, the undergraduate and graduate education are in an organic relation especially in terms of teaching staff.

### **Department Boards**

Departments are managed by department heads. The department head is responsible for the education, training and research activities of the department as well as for the regular and efficient implementation of any other activity related to the department. The department head is appointed by the dean at the faculties, proposed by the director and appointed by the dean at the higher schools under faculties, and proposed by the director and appointed by the rector at the higher schools under the rectorship for three years.

### 3.2. External Units

External units are mainly institutions at national level. Consequently, the audit and evaluation of these units are generally apart from each other and do not cause the aim or result of affecting each other. The main reason of this situation is the non-existence of any anticipated functioning among these institutions. Nevertheless, it can be considered that a systemic structure in terms of setup is anticipated.

#### ***Council of Higher Education***

The duties of CoHE regarding the education, training, research, development, and community services which are specified in the Higher Education Law are as follows (article 7):

- (i) To develop short term and long term plans for ensuring the establishment and development of HEIs and ensuring the conduct of their education and training activities in line with the general objectives and principles specified in the higher education law, and for training of academic staff at home and abroad, which are needed in higher education fields; and to supervise and control the efficient use of allocated resources in line with these plans and programmes,
- (ii) To ensure the cooperation and coordination between HEIs,
- (iii) To determine the limitations of the growth in higher education for the maximum conduct of activities and to take measures such as summer education, evening education, and dual education,
- (iv) In line with the principles and objectives of the state development plans and in the framework of higher education planning; (1) to submit proposals and opinions to MoNE with regard to establish new universities and merging universities when necessary, (2) to take decisions for opening, merging, or closing a faculty, institute, or higher school within a university directly or based on proposals from the universities and to submit those decisions to MoNE; to take decisions for opening, merging, or closing departments, academic programmes, art programmes, research and application centres, conservatories, higher vocational schools, or prep schools, or auxiliary units in HEIs directly or based on proposals from the universities; to take decisions directly or based on proposals from the universities, regarding suspension of education in cases which may halt education and training or take decisions regarding restarting of education and to ensure implementation of those decisions, (3) to review the establishment, objectives, and essentials regarding the HEIs to be established by the Ministries and to present opinions to the relevant authority,
- (v) To determine minimum course hours and duration in the education and training programmes at the HEIs, and other principles regarding the vertical and horizontal progression of students, and study of higher school graduates in an upper level, by taking opinions from IUC,
- (vi) To determine the professor, associate professor, and assistant professor tenures at the universities in a balanced way by taking into consideration the needs of the universities, their education and training programmes, specifications of scientific branches, research activities, practical fields, premises, equipment, and similar facilities, and the number of students as well as other related issues,
- (vii) To review and assess annual activity reports from the HEIs; to determine high achievements and under achievements and to take necessary measures,
- (viii) To review the proposals from the universities regarding the number of proposed student admissions each year and to determine the capacity of universities; to determine the principles on the selection and admission of students in line with the human resource planning, capacity of institutions, and the interests and competences of the students considering the essentials in secondary education orientation,

- (ix) To take measures for ensuring equality of opportunity at the HEIs as well as in the placement into these institutions,
- (x) To review and resolve proposals of the HEIs regarding the tuition fees to be paid by the students in each education and training program,
- (xi) To review and approve the budgets prepared by higher education supreme institutions and universities and to submit them to MoNE,
- (xii) To proceed and resolve discipline proceedings of the rectors, to dismiss those academic staff member who are deemed unsatisfactory in carrying out the duties specified in the law and who act against the general objectives, main principles and the system foreseen in higher education, directly or upon rector's proposal in accordance with normal procedures,
- (xiii) To establish scientific national committees and working groups in various science and art branches,
- (xiv) To delegate advanced universities for contributing to the new or developing universities in terms of education and academicians and to determine procedures for implementation in this issue,
- (xv) To submit comments and opinions to MoNE with regards to the establishment of HEIs by foundations in line with the provisions in the law; to make necessary arrangements regarding these institutions; and to supervise and audit them,
- (xvi) To determine the equivalency of the associate, undergraduate, and graduate diplomas obtained from the HEIs abroad.

### **Higher Education Quality Board**

The Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which was enacted in July 2015 replacing the YODEK Regulation of 2005 sets out principles regarding the internal and external quality assurance of education, training and research activities and administrative services of HEIs, accreditation processes and authorisation processes of independent external evaluation institutions along with the principles regarding duties, authorities and responsibilities defined in this scope. It is considered that the Regulation includes all kinds of activities held by HEIs in the scope of quality assurance.

The Regulation tackles QA with a conceptual approach that is in line with international approaches. Concepts of accreditation, self-assessment, external evaluation, quality evaluation registration certificate, quality assurance, strategic planning, Higher Education Qualifications Framework of Turkey, national qualifications framework, HEQB, Higher Education Quality Committee, higher education assessment and quality assurance status report and higher education institution performance evaluation report are primary building blocks of the organisational structure stipulated in the regulation. In its capacity as the primary nation-wide quality assurance body for HEIs, HEQB also serves as a national reference for international quality structures.

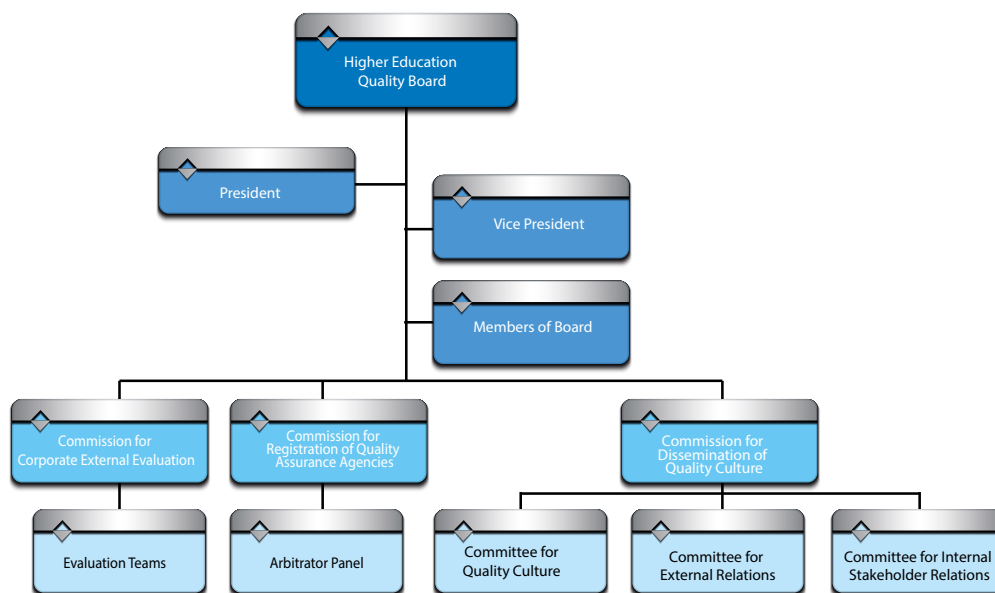
The General Board of CoHE is responsible for regulation, inspection and quality assurance. General Board carries out these tasks via the Higher Education Executive Board, the Higher Education Inspection Board, and the HEQB. Work of these three sub-councils are evaluated by the General Board. Although CoHE has established the regulation, quality and inspection functions in three main structures, there is a situation that is seemingly conflicting with the principle of segregation of duties. The Regulation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education has a provision designed to make up for this contradiction with external evaluation bodies.



The HEQB is made up of twenty-one members: five selected by the General Board of CoHE, four selected by the Inter-University Council, one representative from each of the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology, the Ministry of Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Health, the Academy of Sciences of Turkey, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, the Health Institutes of Turkey, the Vocational Qualifications Authority, the Turkish Accreditation Agency, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey, the Students' Council of Turkey.

The organisational structure of the Board is presented in the figure below.

**Figure 3.1. The Organisational Structure of Higher Education Quality Board**



The duties of the HEQB are as follows:

- i) Define and submit for the approval of the General Board a national policy and strategy for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education,
- ii) Support building internal quality assurance systems in the HEIs and provide them with guidance on the issue,
- iii) Organise training programmes, meetings, workshops and other similar activities to develop and mainstream quality culture,
- iv) Monitor activities regarding quality assurance systems in higher education and realise joint activities at national and international level,
- v) Set out and submit for the approval of the General Board the principles, quality indicators and rules applied in external assessment and accreditation,
- vi) Inform the HEIs of the external quality evaluations approved by the General Board as well as the procedures applied in accreditation, and to issue publications,
- vii) Draft the final report to include recommendations for quality improvements and submit to the General Board by examining external evaluation reports following the self-evaluation and external evaluation process prepared by higher education institutions ,

- viii) Make a request from the General Board on an external evaluation at the expense of relevant higher education institution in the event that a higher education institution has not undergone an external evaluation which is required at least once every five years although it is overdue,
- ix) Submit proposals regarding the external quality evaluations that have been performed in the HEIs throughout the year, problems encountered and quality improvement process to the General Board at the end of each year,
- x) Present remarks to the General Board by examining registration applications of private law legal persons applying to CoHE to become registered for carrying out activities in the area of external quality evaluation and accreditation in the framework of the set principles and rules; monitor these organisations' activities and obtain information when deemed necessary, issue warnings if necessary or make a proposal to the General Board to terminate their registration,
- xi) Represent the Board on quality assurance in higher education within international organisations,
- xii) Share simultaneously the reports and opinions submitted to the General Council with public on the website of CoHE,

The Board conducted its first meeting on 23 December 2015 and afterwards has held 12 meetings up to date of the report. Within the framework of institutionalisation process, the Procedures and Principles of Higher Education Quality Board, the Standards for the Corporate External Evaluation, the Directive regarding the Authorisation of External Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies Operating in the field of Higher Education as well as the Guide for Corporate External Evaluation, the Guide for Preparation of Corporate External Evaluation and Self-Assessment Reports have been adopted. More information is available [here](#).

### **Higher Education Supervisory Council**

This Council is composed of ten members; namely five professors elected by CoHE; one member from each of the Court of Appeals, Council of State, Court of Accounts, the Office of Commander in Chief and MoNE.

The president of the Council is appointed among the members by the President of CoHE. The member from the Office of Commander in Chief has two years assignment period whereas the others have six years assignment period.

This Council supervises the compatibility of the education, training and other activities carried out in the HEIs with the aims and principles of higher education and legislation regarding the higher education.

The Council monitors and supervises the studies of the HEIs, personnel affairs, all kinds of income and expenses, premises, classrooms, tools, equipment and other physical resources, canteen, printing, publication activities, working capital, discipline affairs, all affairs regarding the students, social activities, student activities apart from education and training programmes, relationships of the HEIs with other institutions, and all other relevant activities, all studies of the units affiliated to the CoHE.

### **Inter-University Council**

The IUC is composed of university rectors, a professor from the Armed Forces who is selected for four years by the Office of Commander in Chief, and one professor to be elected by each university senate from the relevant university for four years. The rectors chair the Council for one year in order, according to the establishment year of their HEI in the history of the Republic.

The IUC is an academic body which carries out the following tasks:

- (i) To coordinate education, training, scientific research, and publication activities of the universities in line with higher education planning; to assess the implementation; to make suggestions to CoHE and the universities,
- (ii) To propose measures for meeting academic staff needs of the universities in line with the organization and tenures as well as CoHE decisions,
- (iii) To develop regulations on education, training, scientific research, and publication activities which concern all universities; or to present opinions on this,
- (iv) To ensure harmonization between the principles and durations regarding education and training of the same or similar faculties, or HEIs under universities and faculties,
- (v) To determine essentials with regard to doctorate and to evaluate the doctorate, associate professorship, and professorship titles which are obtained abroad,
- (vi) To arrange associate professorship examinations; to determine principles for those examination for assessing publications and research of the candidates, and to elect jury members.

#### ***Turkish Student Council***

A regulation on the establishment, duties, capacities, and operations of higher education institutions' student councils and Turkish Student Council was issued by CoHE. In each university, a representative or representatives council exist at the level of academic programme, department, faculty, or university. Since student councils are established with union status, their organization is supposed to be realised according to institutional management principles.

Turkish Student Council is foreseen to work for the protection of the rights of university students in front of the academic and administrative managers; to make suggestions; and to maximize service quality for the students as the most important stakeholders of the process.

#### ***Advisory Council***

Bologna Process considers employability among the most important functions of higher education and envisages active participation of the employers in opening and updating of programmes, determining professional and sectoral qualifications, and providing key competences.

In accordance with the amendment in the Higher Education Law in 2011, stakeholder participation in the processes in higher education is strengthened. According to the law, advisory councils can be established for the purpose of improving relationships between the HEIs, the business world and other stakeholders. The establishment and duties of these councils are specified with the regulation issued by CoHE.

#### ***CoHE Information Management Channels***

The Information System of CoHE (YOKSIS) is a centralized database where information regarding the units, sections, academic and administrative personnel, students, and many other data are registered. Information related to all students enrolled in the higher education is included into student database by the HEIs.

The system allows for an electronic environment where tenure approval, unit transactions, and personnel appointment processes are recorded, where the academic personnel can enter their detailed resumes and many online reports are obtained. The system presents the appropriate piece of this information to other stakeholders via web services.

The system is becoming integrated increasingly while also continuing to provide essential services for MoNE, Ministry of Defence, TurkStat, Social Security Institution, and OSYM. Studies are ongoing to ensure that the system hosts all information needed for decision makers, where this information is presented and exchanged in statistical table format as it expands. YOKSIS will be the single address for the provision of any information related to the higher education.

“Diploma and Alumni System” has been established and become operational. All information in the system are presented in reports module in a meaningful and usable report format. As the diversity of information increases, the module is expanded with new requests. The system also hosts many detailed information forms of HEIs including legal proceedings, Bologna Process forms, Entrepreneur Innovative University Index, Woman Studies, Higher Education Programme Atlas<sup>81</sup>, CoHE Academic System and Foreign Academician Information System. All these applications operate in integration with the system.

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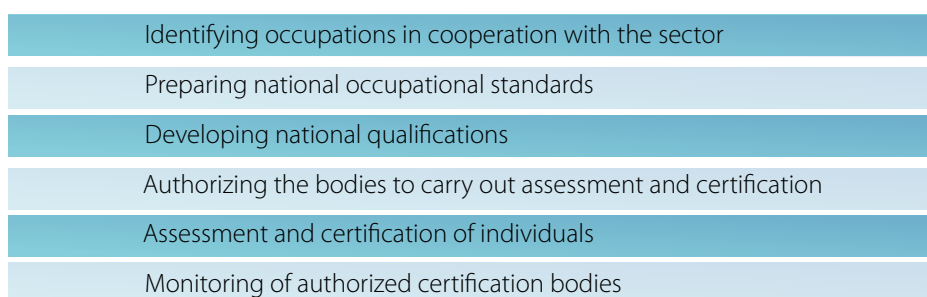
81) <https://yokatlas.yok.gov.tr/>

## Annex 4: Quality Assurance of Qualifications in National Vocational Qualifications System

### 1. Introduction

The Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) is responsible for carrying out the activities defined in the national vocational qualifications system (NVQS). These activities are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.1. Activities Carried Out in the NVQS**

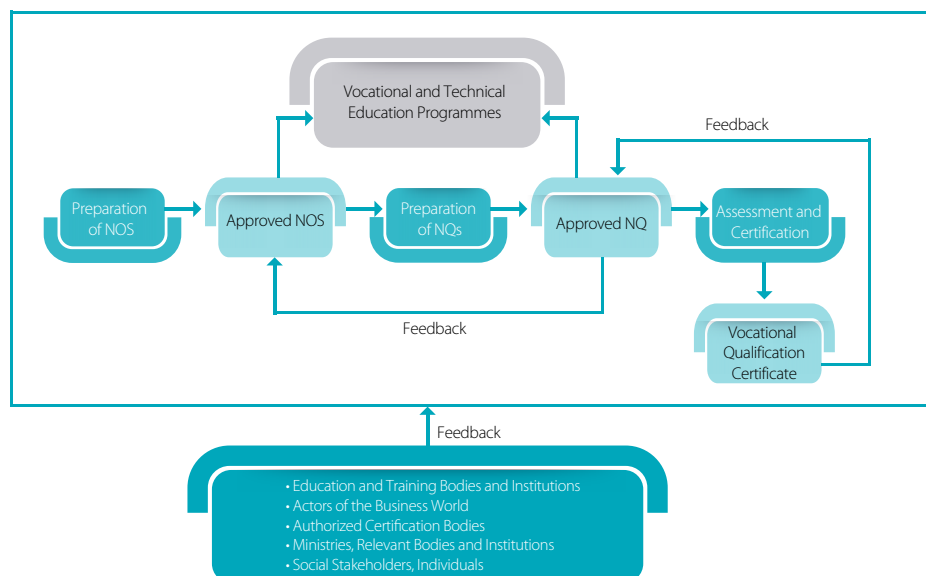


Assistance and guidance are continuously provided to all of the stakeholders involved in the activities in the NVQS by VQA. VQA also identifies its targets and implements plans which are prepared within a system compatible with the norms and principles accepted at European level.

### 2. Quality Assurance in the National Vocational Qualification System

The NVQS consists of various interacting processes that influence one another's quality. These processes and their interactions are outlined as follows.

**Figure 4.2. The Processes in the NVQS**



As indicated in the figure above, national occupational standards (NOS) provide basis for national qualifications (NQ), and NQs are the basis of the assessment and certification activities. Therefore, the quality of NOS influences that of NQs, and similarly, the quality of NQs directly influences that of assessment and certification processes.

VQA carries out the activities defined in the NVQS in a quality-assured system. In this regard, various quality assurance (QA) elements are operated in the preparation processes of NOS and NQs, and assessment and certification in order to attain the targets for quality.

In operating and improving the QA elements, the principles and criteria set in the recommendations which have been adopted in the European Union, including the European Qualifications Framework for LLL (EQF), the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), and the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are taken into consideration.

### 3. Quality Assurance Principles and Elements

#### 3.1. Quality Assurance Principles

VQA has identified QA principles for the implementation of the NVQS. These principles are:

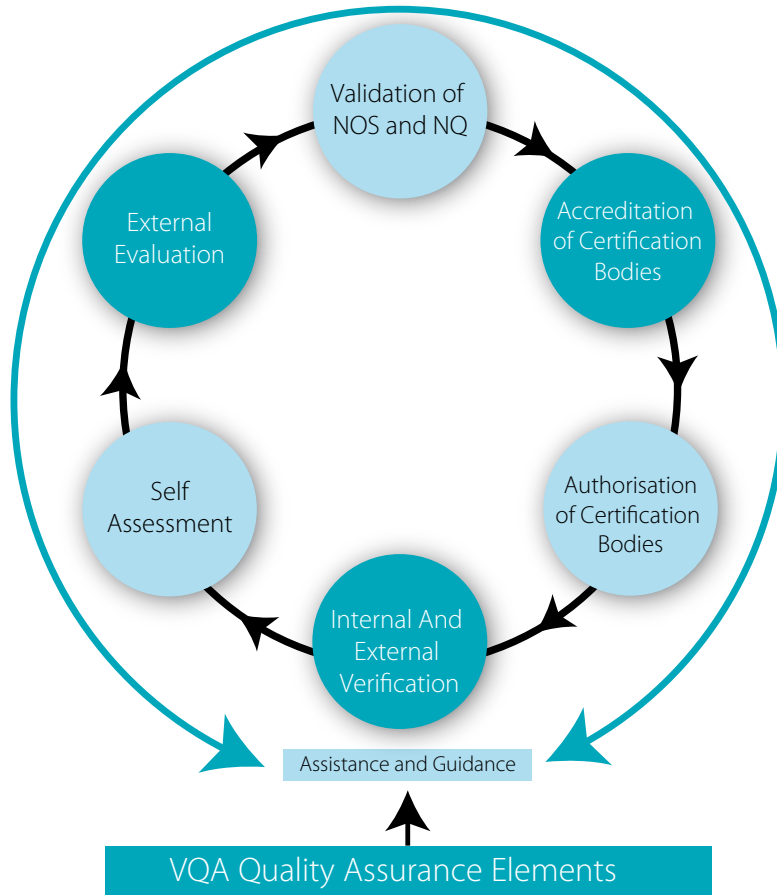
- i) NOS should present an occupation profile to define the qualifications demanded by the labour market.
- ii) NQs should be prepared based on occupational standards to ensure valid, reliable and applicable assessment and certification.
- iii) NOS and NQs should be prepared, confirmed and approved with a participative approach.
- iv) NOS and NQs should be prepared in line with the criteria set by VQA.
- v) NQs should consist of qualification units to enable unit certification, and qualification units should be defined with learning outcomes.
- vi) Performance criteria which are expected to be met should be stated explicitly in the NQs and units of NQs.
- vii) Unreasonable preconditions should not be determined in access to Vocational Qualification Certificates.
- viii) Assessment and certification activities should be valid, reliable and applicable, and they should be carried out in line with the NQs.
- ix) Assessment and certification activities should be carried out by the certification bodies authorized by VQA.
- x) Authorized Certification Bodies should meet the authorisation criteria set by VQA.

#### 3.2. The Elements of the Quality Assurance Model

The elements of the QA model implemented within the scope of NVQS are as follows;

- Development and validation of the NOS and NQs,
- Accreditation of certification bodies,
- Authorisation of certification bodies to carry out assessment and certification activities,
- Internal and external verification,
- Self-assessment of Authorized Certification Bodies (ACBs),
- External evaluation of ACBs.

Assistance and guidance at all stages is continuously provided to all stakeholders involved in the NVQS by VQA. The elements of the QA model applied in the NVQS are presented in the figure below..

**Figure 4.3. The Elements of the Quality Assurance Model**

### 3.2.1. Development and Validation of the National Occupational Standards and National Qualifications

#### 3.2.1.1. Development of National Occupational Standards

NOS are documents that define the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to practice an occupation successfully. Within the scope of NOS, an occupation profile is defined as demanded by the labour market.

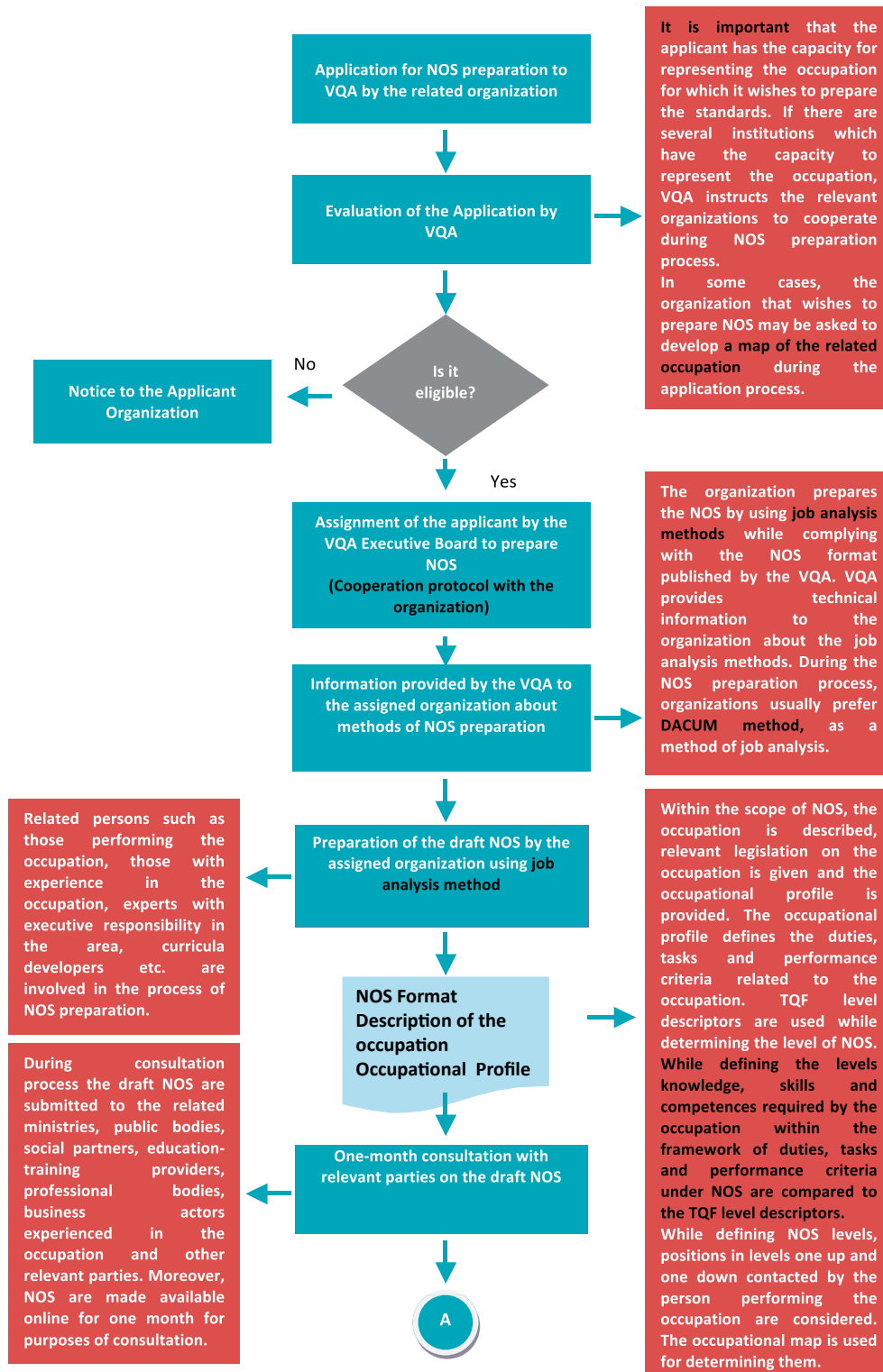
In this regard, quality in the NOS is contextualized as the definition of the occupation profile needed by the labour market, the contribution to satisfying the labour market's needs, and the satisfaction of the criteria set by VQA.

Thus, all elements defined in the NOS (tasks, procedures, performance criteria, etc.) should meet the VQA requirements, present the sector's expectations for the given occupation properly, and determine the sector's expectations from individuals to practice the occupation explicitly.

NOS are prepared by the bodies or institutions assigned by VQA, which can represent the sector, or the working groups established by VQA.

The development process of NOS is presented in the figure below.

Figure Annex 4.4. Development Process for the National Occupational Standards





### 3.2.1.2. Development of the National Qualifications

NQs are documents based on national or international occupational standards. They are used for learning and assessment, defined by learning outcomes the individual should attain, and come into force upon the approval of VQA.

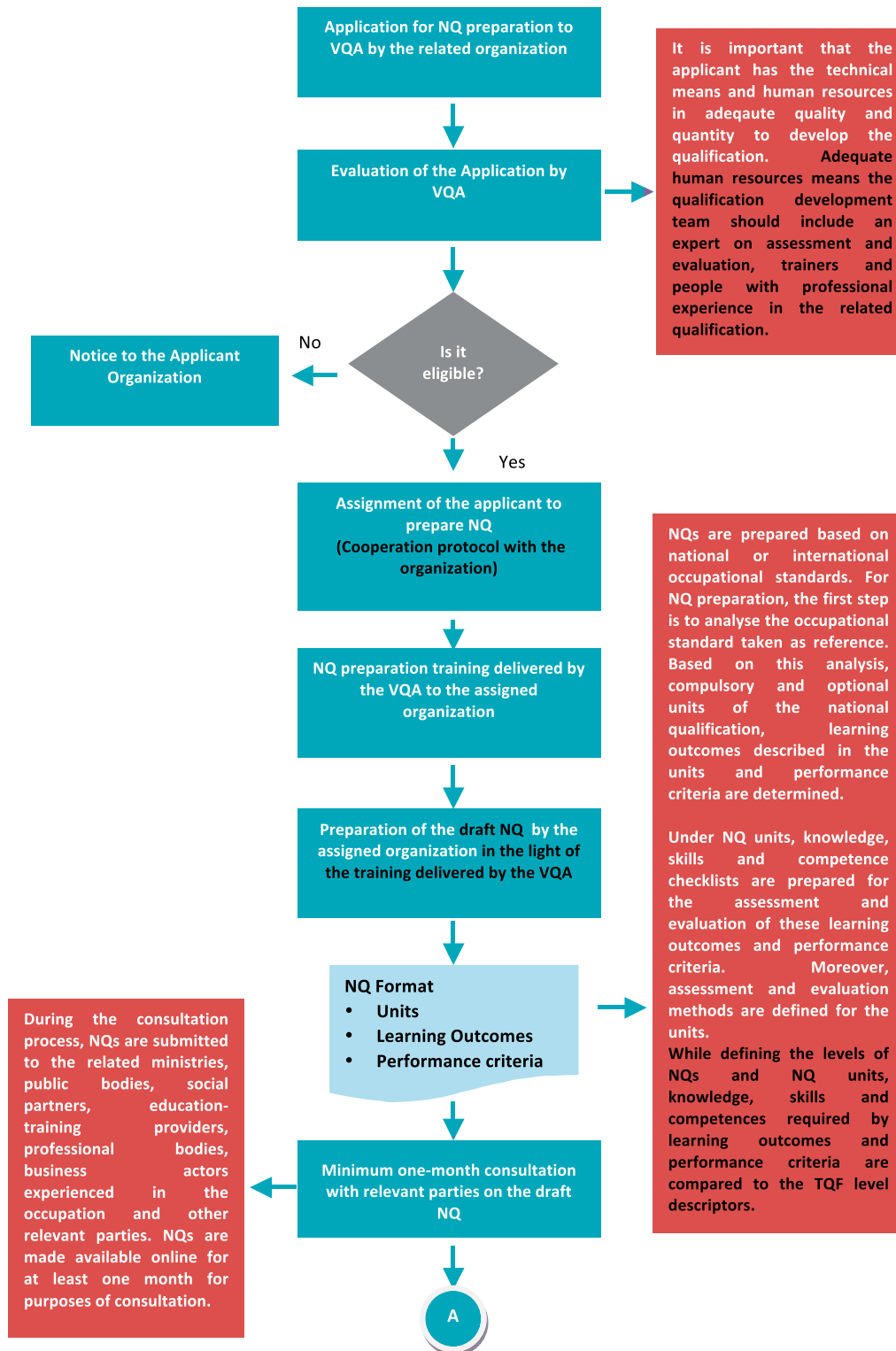
NQs also define the assessment process which candidates will be subject to, assessment tools to be used (theoretical exams, performance-based exams, observation, portfolio, etc.), competences required for the assessors and minimum performance criteria that candidates should demonstrate in the assessment.

In this regard, quality in the NQs is contextualized as the definition of elements to ensure the accurate, reliable and valid assessment of whether the individual practicing the occupation has the occupational profile defined in NOS.

Likewise NOS, NQs are prepared by bodies or institutions assigned by VQA. These may be education and training institutions, certification bodies, institutions which prepare NOS (actors of the business world to represent the sector and have competence) and professional organizations.

The development process of NQs is presented in the figure below.

Figure Annex 4.5. Development Process for the National Qualification



### 3.2.1.3. Validation of the National Occupational Standards

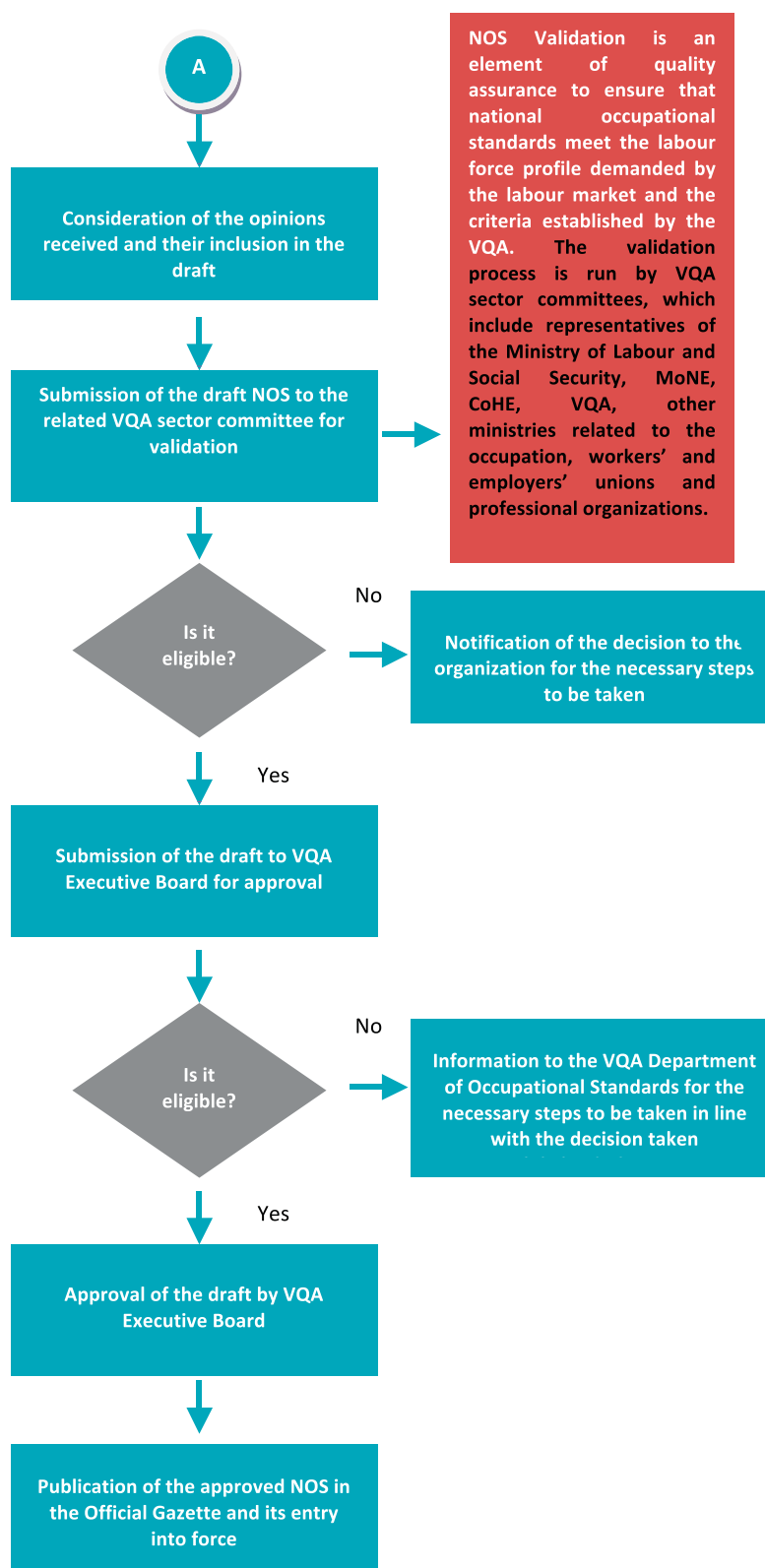
Validation of NOS is a crucial QA element to ensure that the NOS meet the criteria set by VQA as well as the occupation profile demanded by the labour market. The draft standards are reviewed, evaluated and validated by sector committees having technical knowledge and skills regarding the occupation in which the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, MoNE, CoHE, VQA, other ministries relevant to occupation, employer and employee unions, and professional organizations are represented. VQA Sector Committees validate the NOS in the light of the criteria in the “Guideline for Preparing National Occupational Standards” prepared by VQA.

Following the validation process by sector committees, NOS are approved by the VQA Executive Board and published in the Official Journal.

NOS are subject to revision and update at the latest every five years on the basis of demands from the labour market.

The validation process of NOS is presented in the figure below.

Figure Annex 4.6. Validation Process for the National Occupational Standards



### 3.2.1.4. Validation of the National Qualifications

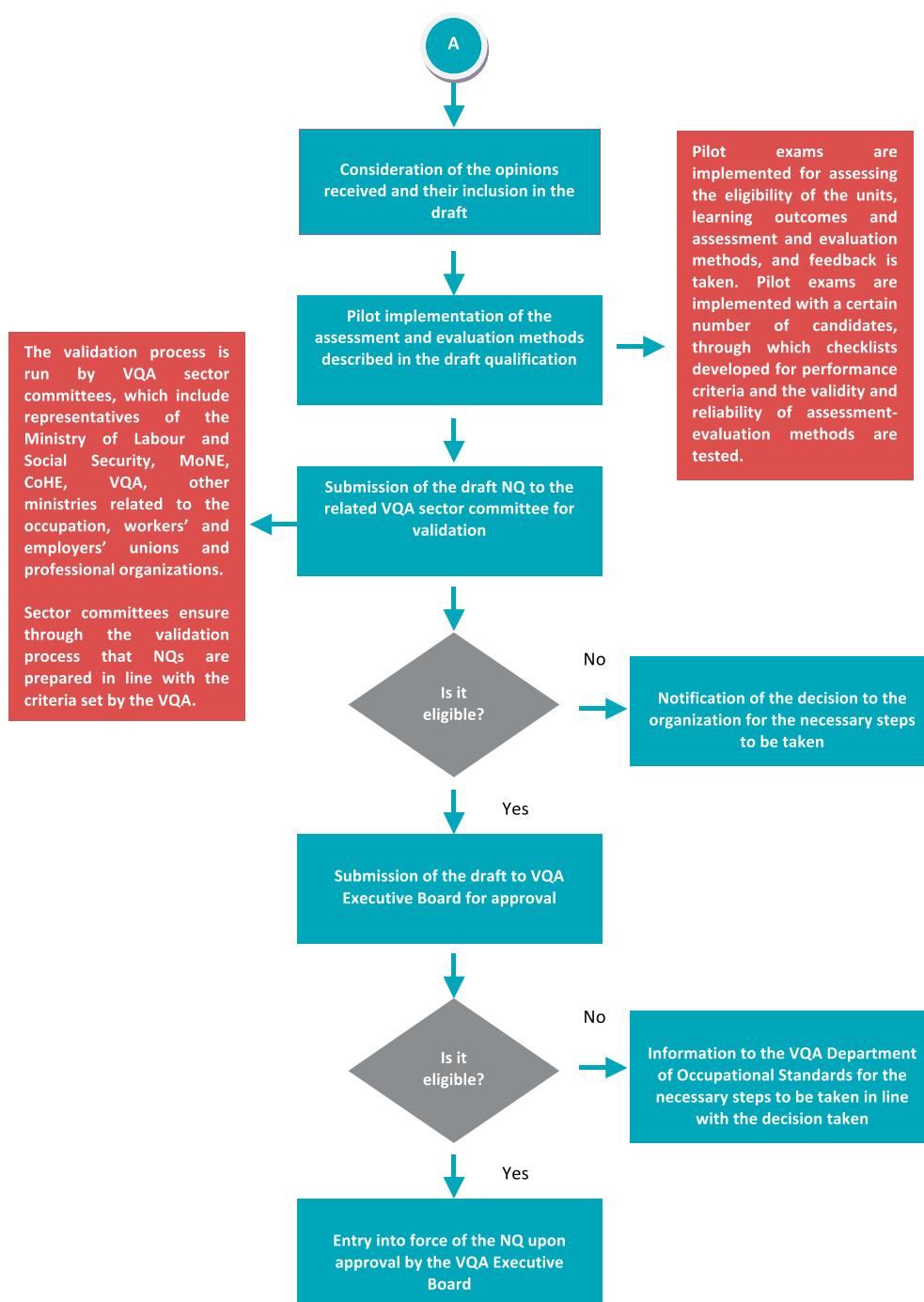
Likewise NOS, NQs are validated by the VQA Sector Committees. In the validation stage, sector committees ensure that NQs have been prepared in accordance with the VQA criteria. These criteria are:

- i) Qualifications should be prepared on the basis of national or international occupational standards,
- ii) Qualifications should be prepared based on units, learning outcomes and performance criteria and allow for unit certification,
- iii) NQs should consist of units which will reflect its scope properly, and units should consist of learning outcomes which will reflect its scope properly.
- iv) Requirements for access to qualification should be defined explicitly,
- v) Accurate, reliable and applicable methods to be used in the assessment of learning outcomes and performance criteria should be defined,
- vi) Success requirements to achieve units should be defined,
- vii) Unreasonable preconditions should not be introduced in NQs,

NQs are subject to revision and update on the basis of demands from ACBs and other relevant parties. NQs are updated within a year at the latest following the update of the relevant NOS.

The validation process of NQs is presented in the figure below.

Figure Annex 4.7. Validation Process for National Qualifications



### 3.2.2. Accreditation of the Certification Bodies

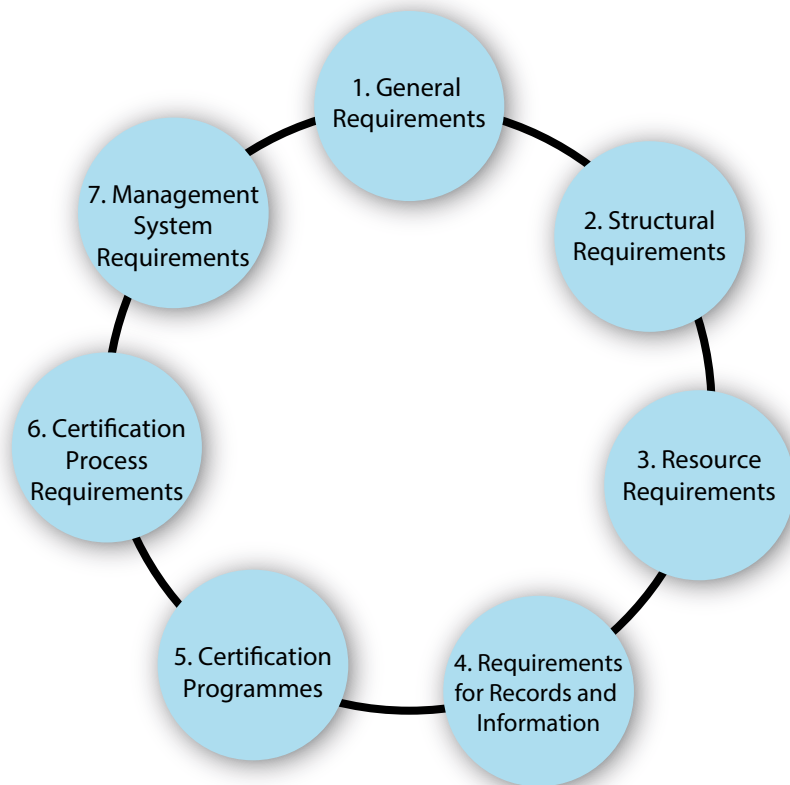
Assessment and certification activities can only be carried out by the certification bodies authorized by VQA. In order to be authorized, bodies are obliged to meet the requirements set in VQA legislation. The first of these requirements is to be accredited by the Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK)<sup>82</sup> or other accreditation bodies that signed multilateral recognition agreement under the European Cooperation for Accreditation, within a system to be established in accordance with the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard as the General Requirements for Personnel Certification Bodies.

As per the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard, institutions are obliged to establish and operate a quality management system based on PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, which is a management system adopting the process approach.

Institutions are audited by TURKAK in terms of the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. Findings for meeting the requirements, evidences obtained and outcomes of the audit are reported to the institutions. Institutions are accredited if they are found eligible as a result of accreditation audits conducted by TURKAK.

The figure below classifies the requirements that should be met by the institutions subject to the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. The details of the accreditation requirements are included in the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard.

**Figure 4.8. Requirements in ISO 17024 Standard**



<sup>82</sup> TURKAK has been signing Multilateral Agreements (MLAs) with the European Accreditation (EA) to which it is a party since 2002. With the 2<sup>nd</sup> recognition agreement signed in 2008, it included personnel certification bodies into its scope. As per international standards and agreements having been signed, TURKAK is subject to peer evaluation teams established by the European Accreditation.

### 3.2.3. Authorisation of the Certification Bodies

The certification bodies which have been accredited by TURKAK can apply to VQA for authorisation. However, bodies who have applied to VQA should have participated in the seminars held by VQA which are about the authorisation processes. The application and supporting documents are evaluated by VQA and if the application is found eligible, the certification body is subjected to an audit for authorisation.

Certification bodies are audited in terms of the criteria set by VQA. The criteria consist of the following:

- i) The organizational structure, duties and responsibilities: the eligibility of the organizational structure, development of terms of references, and arrangements to ensure that certification activities are not influenced should be addressed.
- ii) The human resources and physical, technical and financial facilities: assessors should meet the requirements defined in the relevant NQ, and the physical, technical and financial structure should be appropriate for the assessment activities.
- iii) The assessment and certification activities: the practices should be compatible with the procedures on testing and certification processes, the records should be kept, the procedures for the evaluation of appeals and complaints should be determined, and measures to ensure the unity in the practices of different assessment boards should be taken.
- iv) The assessment materials: the existing assessment materials developed by the certification bodies should be compatible with the NQs.
- v) The internal and external audits: the records of the internal audits conducted within the institution and results of external audits conducted by TURKAK should be accessible.

Within the scope of audits, technical experts who are competent in the relevant field examine the following issues for the scope of each NQ in detail:

- Satisfaction of the minimum criteria for assessors defined in the relevant NQ,
- Compatibility of the assessment materials prepared for theoretical and performance-based assessment with the learning outcomes defined in the units of the NQ,
- Appropriateness of the assessment settings for an accurate and reliable assessment defined in the relevant unit of the NQ,
- Evaluation regarding the reliable and consistent assessment of candidates subjected to sample exam<sup>83</sup> by assessors,
- Taking measures to eliminate the inconsistencies among assessors.

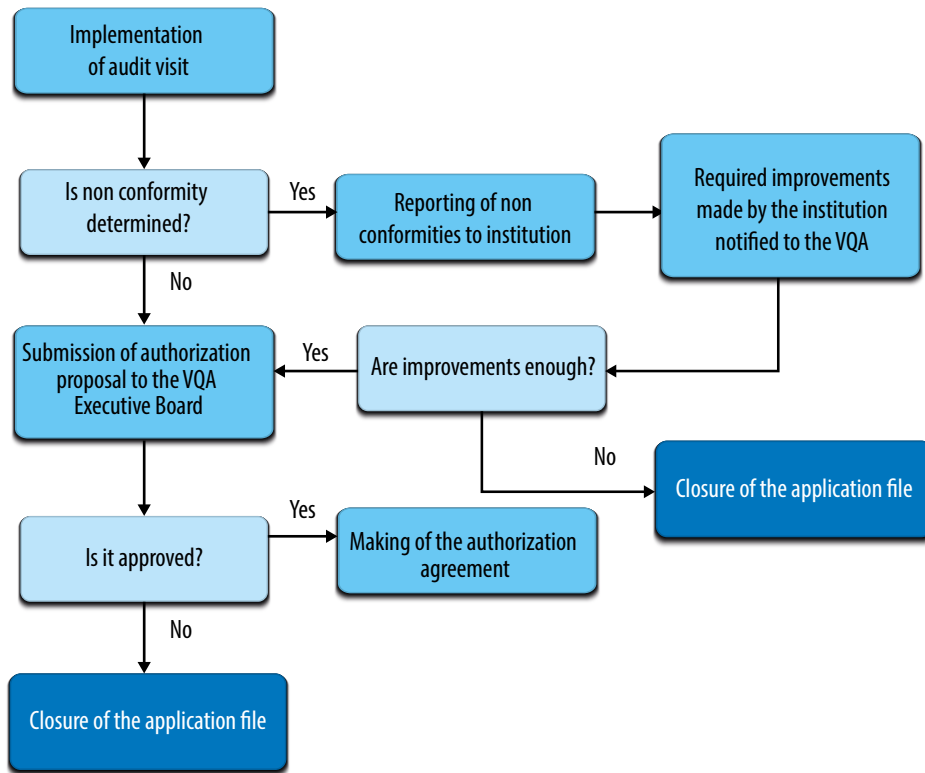
Auditing processes are presented as follows.

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83) In the authorisation audit, sample exam practices are monitored with the purpose of evaluating how the assessment described in the relevant national qualification is implemented.

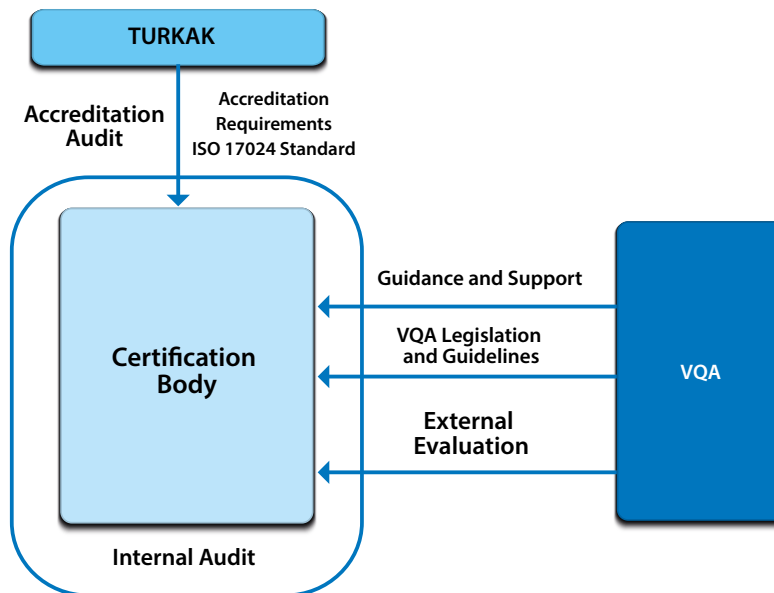


**Figure 4.9. Auditing Processes**



The QA mechanisms applied in the authorisation of ACBs are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.10. Quality Assurance Model for Authorisation**

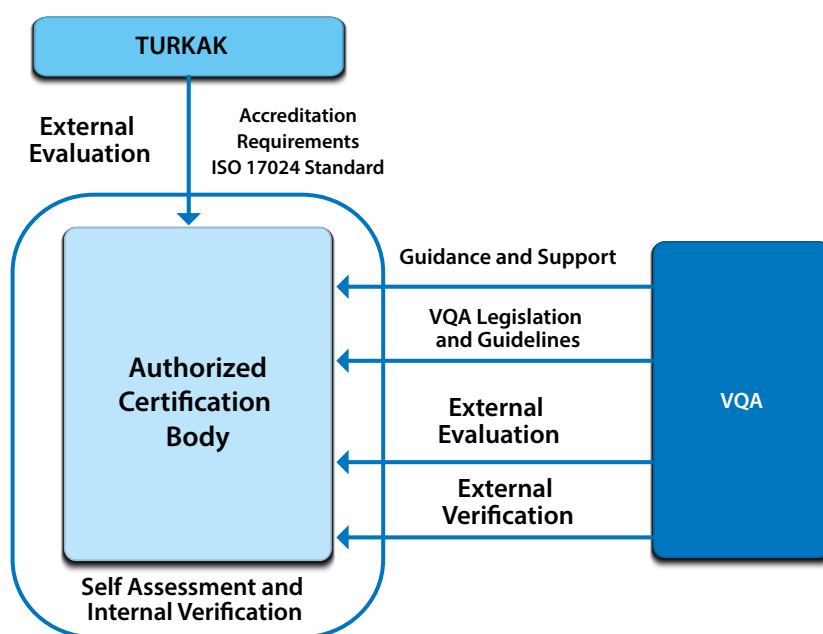


### 3.2.4. Monitoring of Authorized Certification Bodies

ACBs are obliged to carry out self-assessment through internal audits and review by the management and submit annual activity reports to VQA including the outcomes of the self-assessment. They are also subject to external evaluation of both TURKAK and VQA annually. In addition, they review their quality management systems and assessment and certification processes and carry out necessary corrective and preventive activities periodically.

The QA mechanisms applied in the monitoring of the ACBs are presented in the figure below.

**Figure 4.11. Quality Assurance Model for the Monitoring of Authorized Certification Bodies**



#### 3.2.4.1. Self Assessment

ACBs review periodically their processes both due to the requirements of accreditation and VQA authorisation. In this scope, institutions carry out activities for internal audit and the review of the management.

Institutions conduct an internal audit, at least once a year, to validate that they meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 standard and VQA, and that they implement and maintain management systems effectively. Institutions also undertake corrective and preventive activities to eliminate the nonconformities identified during internal audits.

Senior management of ACBs review the quality management system, at least once a year, to ensure the compatibility, efficiency and effectiveness of the management system, including the policies and targets to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 Standard and VQA. It is required that following the review, institutions improve the effectiveness of the quality management system and processes, improve assessment and certification services, and identify and meet resource needs.

### 3.2.4.2. External evaluation

ACBs are subject to periodical external evaluation by both TURKAK and VQA. A surveillance audit is conducted once a year by TURKAK to evaluate whether the institutions maintain the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. VQA also undertakes a surveillance audit once a year to evaluate whether requirements under the title of "Authorisation Requirements" are maintained.

In these audits, the compatibility of institutions with the requirements and procedures is examined, and evaluations are made based on the records and evidences obtained as a result of operated processes.

Results of the audits are reported to institutions, and nonconformities identified in the reports are notified to them. Institutions are required to undertake corrective and preventive activities for these inconveniences and notify TURKAK and/or VQA about the results.

### 3.2.5. Internal and External Verification

ACBs develop the assessment processes in the light of the requirements defined in the NQs. All ACBs are required to take instant video-records of all the assessments they carry out, according to the principles and procedures set by VQA. Decisions on the awarding of individuals are taken by the "decision-makers", while the assessors who have the minimum required competences do the assessment of the candidates. The decision-makers take decisions on the awarding by evaluating the evidences produced by the candidates and the evaluation results of the assessors. In other words, the decision-makers validate the assessment activities conducted by the assessors.

People who have applied, participated or have been certified may raise an appeal to the decisions taken by the ACBs. Moreover, a person or an organization may make a complaint against an ACB or the activities of an ACB. Therefore, ACBs are required to have procedures for the acceptance, evaluation and conclusion of appeals and complaints.

There are two important elements developed for the quality assurance of the assessment and evaluation activities. These are internal and external verification.

Internal verification is conducted by the ACBs to ensure that assessment and evaluation processes performed in compliance with the NQ are valid, reliable, applicable, consistent and equal. Internal verification is performed by the internal verifiers assigned by the ACBs who ensure the valid, reliable and applicable performance of the assessment and evaluation activities, and provision of consistency and equality for these activities.

Internal verification is performed within the scope of an annual plan notified to VQA which includes the minimum number of the internal verifications to be conducted. Besides, an internal verification should be performed after the first examination performed for each NQ or NQ unit. An extraordinary internal verification can be performed upon any changes in NQ, documents, assessment materials and assessors that affect the assessment, evaluation and certification processes.

ACBs notify the internal verification report on the first examination performed and examination results to VQA within ten business days following the certification decision. ACBs also notify other internal verification activities to VQA within ten business days following the report date.

External verification is conducted by VQA to ensure that ACBs act in compliance with the criteria set and take consistent decisions on the assessment, evaluation, certification and internal verification activities they conduct.

External verification can be performed via external verifiers determined by VQA, if necessary. External verification activities can be performed at ACBs, at the bodies that provide service to ACBs, or by a method of requesting information, documents and records from the ACB. The external verifiers review, evaluate and report the compliance of the internal verification, assessment, evaluation and certification activities of the ACB to the legislation and documents.

## Annex 5: Statements of International Experts

Dr Georg Hanf, Turin

1 December 2016

Statement on the Draft TURKISH REFERENCING REPORT (Ankara, 2016)

### General

The Turkish Referencing Report is prepared and presented by the Vocational Qualifications Authority. It comprises both the Referencing of the Turkish Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Self-Certification to the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. This statement leaves out any observations on higher education issues since these were to be addressed by the other international expert.

The Report is comprehensive and rich in information; it meets the criteria set out for presenting it, except for Criterion 4. The Report is about referencing a framework without qualifications allocated to its levels. The process of 'populating' the framework with qualifications will start in July 2017 according to the implementation timetable (Table 1.1); not before October 2017 according to the text under Criterion 4. The Report may be submitted without qualifications referenced to it; but it has to make clear the procedures for including qualifications.

### Specific

#### ***Ad 1 The Education and Qualifications System in Turkey***

##### ***Ad 1.1.5 Provision of Education and Training***

To make the Turkish education system transparent to an international public it might be reasonable to use the ISCED classification for describing the formal education and training provision: Early childhood, Primary, Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary, Post-secondary Non-tertiary, Short Cycle, Bachelor or equivalent, Master or equivalent, Doctoral or equivalent.

Nothing is said about how the qualifications of vocational and technical schools, of apprenticeship education, of vocational and technical education programs in Public Education and NVQs might be related to each other and how the TQF might be used to rationalize the qualifications system.

Table 1.1 (p. 16) shows 11 titles of qualifications with the planned TQF level. Surprisingly the Journeyman's Certificate is planned for level 3 – the same level as Lower Secondary Certificate; the Mastership Certificate is planned for level 4 – the same as the 'High School Diploma' (Upper Secondary Certificate). This seems strange, at least from a German point of view: In the 8 level German framework the Journeyman's Certificate is on level 4 and the Mastership Certificate on level 6! It remains an open question to be addressed in a straightforward comparison whether this two levels difference is justified by the respective learning outcomes of 'Mastership' in Turkey and in Germany. Like in some other countries, there is obviously a demarcation line between qualifications under MoNE and those under CoHE – which is in principle against EQF philosophy.

##### ***Ad 1.3 National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS)***

This chapter is about vocational qualifications which are under the responsibility of the Vocational Qualifications Authority. But the text throughout is talking about National Qualifications (NQs) when it is about National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Paragraphs on the other sectors (General and Higher Education) don't mention NQ's. And there are obviously no vocational qualifications in these sectors. Or are there?

NVQs are designed in order to recognize learning that occurred in non-formal/informal contexts, mainly at the workplace. The Report mentions NQs as components of NVQs – but a more general category cannot be a sub-category of a more specific one. NVQs can be defined by National Occupational Standards, Expected Learning Outcomes, Assessment/Evaluation/Certification Standards; all three together constitute a vocational qualification. (Also see comments on the definition of ‘qualification’ (criterion 2, p. 49)). Paragraphs 1.3.5.1, 1.3.5.2, 1.3.5.3 and 1.3.5.4 might be restructured accordingly – e.g. assessment should be addressed under the heading assessment only; accreditation should not be addressed under assessment.

### **Ad 2. The Turkish Qualifications Framework**

This Chapter gives very valuable information about the purposes, the development and the core features of the TQF.

### **Ad 3. Referencing of TQF to EQF: Addressing the Criteria**

#### **Criterion 1 (Responsibilities)**

The REPORT is quite impressive in showing the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and their responsibilities. Criterion is met.

#### **Criterion 2 (Links EQF/TQF)**

The REPORT shows a great similarity between EQF and TQF (same number of levels, same learning outcome categories), at the same time stressing particularities in learning outcome descriptors.

However, the definition of ‘qualification’ – the core term of any qualifications framework – is critical, both in EQF and TQF. TQF: ‘An official document’ ... ‘an individual has achieved the learning outcomes according to certain criteria’. EQF: ‘A formal outcome of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards’. In both cases ‘qualification’ is an individual statement; but a qualifications framework does NOT classify individual statements/documents. It classifies standards individual achievements can be referred to.

Interestingly Turkey has adopted the concept of qualification types. According to Annex 7 there are 20 (+?) qualification types in the Turkish system. Annex 8 has a long table with 16 items for specifying qualification types. It would help transparency to have brief descriptors for these qualification types (e.g. standards of knowledge, skill and competence; level; volume; assessment methods; progression characteristics).

In the definition of ‘National Qualifications Framework’ EQF clearly says, what an NQF is aiming for in qualifications systems reform, whereas TQF talks about ‘setting out principles’.

The Criterion is met.

#### **Criterion 3 (learning outcome orientation; recognition of non-formal/informal learning; credit transfer)**

This paragraph is well elaborated. The Criterion is met.

### Criterion 4 (procedures for including qualifications into the framework)

The proposed timetable (table 5.1, p.73) says: The inception of the inclusion of quality assured qualifications is foreseen for July 2017. The text under Criterion 4 says: Criteria for the inclusion will be determined 'until August 2017' and the procedures of inclusion 'until October 2017'. But inclusion can only start AFTER the determinations on how to do it.

In section 4 of the REPORT which is about compatibility of TQF with QF-EHEA, under Criterion 4 it says: "The fulfilment of this criterion is explained under the Criterion 4 related to EQF referencing in section 3 of this report." Looking into this section (p.52) we find statements on principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications. This leaves the reader wondering about the status of those, since the procedures are not agreed upon yet.

Given the contradictory information on this issue, the criterion is not met.

### Criterion 5 (national quality assurance system)

Quality assurance dimensions are well elaborated for MoNE and CoHE qualifications.

A National Education Quality Framework for all education and training provision under MoNE came into force in May 2015 with 14 thematic areas. The Framework is mentioned under Quality Standards for Education and Training (p.56). If this is the framework for all quality issues, it should be at the beginning of the paragraph naming all its areas. The text elaborates on 6 quality themes. What about the other 8?

For VQA qualifications there is a rather short list of elements of QA; not on the list are quality assurance for the development of qualifications and for their assessment.

Without clarification of all QA aspects the Criterion is not met in full.

### Criteria 6-10

All these criteria are met in a sound way.

#### ***Ad 4 Compatibility of TQF with QF-EHEA***

(To be addressed by another expert)

#### ***Ad 5 Next steps and challenges***

This chapter shows a high level of reflection and awareness as regards future challenges arising in the implementation phase of the TQF.

## Clarifications on the Statements of the International Experts

The relevant sections of the Report have been revised by taking into consideration the comments of the international expert, Dr. Georg HANF. However, it is considered by the Report Drafting Team that it can still be useful to make clarifications regarding the statement. Therefore, this section is prepared.

The ISCED classification has been included into the figure presenting the formal education system in Turkey.

There are definitely vocational qualifications in general education and higher education. But, in Turkish context, only VQA uses the term "National Qualification" because of the definition in Law. MoNE and the HEIs don't conceptualise their qualifications by using the term "National Qualification". They rather use concepts as VET qualifications, general education qualifications or higher education qualifications.

The Report mentions the NQs (national qualifications) as the component of the NVQS (National Vocational Qualifications System) not the national vocational qualifications (NVQs).

The deadlines foreseen for the preparation of the criteria and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications to the TQF are expressed with the phrase "until". Because, it is expected that they may be finalised earlier so, the inception of the inclusion may happen in July 2017 at the earliest.

In the response to criterion 5, the quality assurance for the development and assessment of qualifications in the NVQS are listed and briefly explained. Information in detail is provided in the Annex 5.

The text on the quality assurance of qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE is not only based on the national education quality framework. The quality framework is considered an element of the QA system. Therefore, other elements explained in that section, are independent from the thematic areas of the quality framework.

It is considered that the plans regarding the criterion 4 and 5 are clearly determined in the Report.

## Statement on the Turkish Referencing Report

Prof. Dr. Mile DŽELALIJA

International Expert,

University of Split, professor – tenure,

EQF Advisory Group member

The aim of the Turkish Qualifications Framework is to describe, classify and to compare all qualifications, to ensure quality of all types of qualifications, to facilitate recognition of foreign qualifications in Turkey and qualifications awarded in Turkey abroad, to facilitate mobility of citizens in the wider European area in the labour market and education, to develop new relevant qualifications based on learning outcomes approach leading to better understanding and relevance in the country and abroad, to increase coherency of the qualifications system, to facilitate validation of non-formal and informal learning, and to support lifelong learning for all citizens in Turkey.

By the Referencing Report, Turkey is willing to verify the compatibility of the NQF in Turkey with the EQF and the QF-EHEA. The Turkish Referencing Report presents the existing education and training system in Turkey and description of impressive stakeholders' involvement during the development of the NQF. Moreover, the Report gives detailed background of the fulfilment and response to the EQF and QF-EHEA criteria and procedures demonstrating that the Turkish Qualifications Framework is compatible with the EQF and the QF-EHEA.

The Report presents development process of the NQF in Turkey, from the strategic elements, through the establishment of the NQF Preparation Commission, up to the development of legislation and preparation for implementation of the TQF. It is clear that all key stakeholders have been involved in the process.

The Turkish Referencing Report to the EQF and QF-EHEA is a comprehensive report, which gives a lot of details on the existing educational system, quality assurance arrangements and responsibility of main actors. Tables, figures, examples and annexes give additional value to understanding and real value of the Report to all readers. Definitions of main concepts bring more transparency and understanding of the qualifications system. The Report has a very good structure, including five main chapters: describing the education system and qualifications in Turkey, key elements of the Turkish Qualifications Framework, addressing EQF criteria, self-certification to the QF-EHEA, and next steps and challenges. In addition to the main chapters, there is a set of relevant annexes on quality assurance arrangements and other documents demonstrating transparent referencing process.

The Report demonstrates the great efforts that have been done by national experts from various key institutions in Turkey. It is clear that this work and further activities during the implementation of the TQF will bring a platform for modernisation and influence to the education system, labour market and to the society life in Turkey, giving benefits for all citizens. Regulations make the whole concept fundamental. Vocational Qualifications Authority, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, has guided the referencing and self-certification process of the TQF to the EQF and QF-EHEA, ensuring implementation of EQF and QF-EHEA referencing criteria and procedures.

International experts have been involved during the referencing process and preparation of the Report. Suggestions and comments submitted by the international experts have been well taken into account.

In addition to usual EQF criteria, the response to the QF-EHEA criteria and procedures are explicitly written in the separate chapter.

The Report presents the NQF structure and main concepts, legal framework, responsibilities of bodies, basic information on quality assurance system and related components. Level descriptors gradually



build complexity and the scope of learning outcomes. The eight levels of the TQF cover the full range of qualifications system in Turkey, from primary education to higher education. Each level is defined by level descriptors of learning outcomes, which are classified in three domains: knowledge, skills and competence. Besides level descriptors, very important parts in the classification of qualifications are well-defined types of qualifications. Each qualifications type is defined by several characteristics, including unique title, level and credit range, awarding body, orientation, assessment and evaluation methods, learning outcomes and quality assurance, which is absolutely in line with theoretical view of minimal but complete characteristics. One qualifications type belongs to only one level, and one level usually includes more qualifications types in the TQF.

Population of the TQF by qualifications has been planned to start in the second part of 2017, which should be based on clear procedure for levelling qualifications in the TQF using qualifications type specifications.

Sections on fulfilment of all EQF and QF-EHEA criteria and procedures are very well prepared. Comments on fulfilment of the EQF criteria are well addressed by another international expert.

All criteria and procedures for the self-certification to the QF-EHEA are well addressed and presented in the separate chapter. Turkey started piloting the implementation of the Bologna process in 2009, taking consideration of the Dublin Descriptors and the EQF. After the feedback, Turkey started full implementation of the Bologna Process in 2010. Higher education in Turkey includes qualifications within 4 cycles: short, the first, the second and the third cycles (from level 5 to level 8 in the TQF).

The General Board of CoHE is in charge of regulation and quality assurance of higher education, taking the new ESG as a basis for the internal and external quality assurance mechanisms. Details on the quality assurance mechanisms in the higher education are presented in the Annex 3 of the Report.

Currently, the external quality assurance body is not a member of the ENQA and EQAR.

## Annex 6: TQF Level Descriptors

**Table 6.1 TQF Level Descriptors**

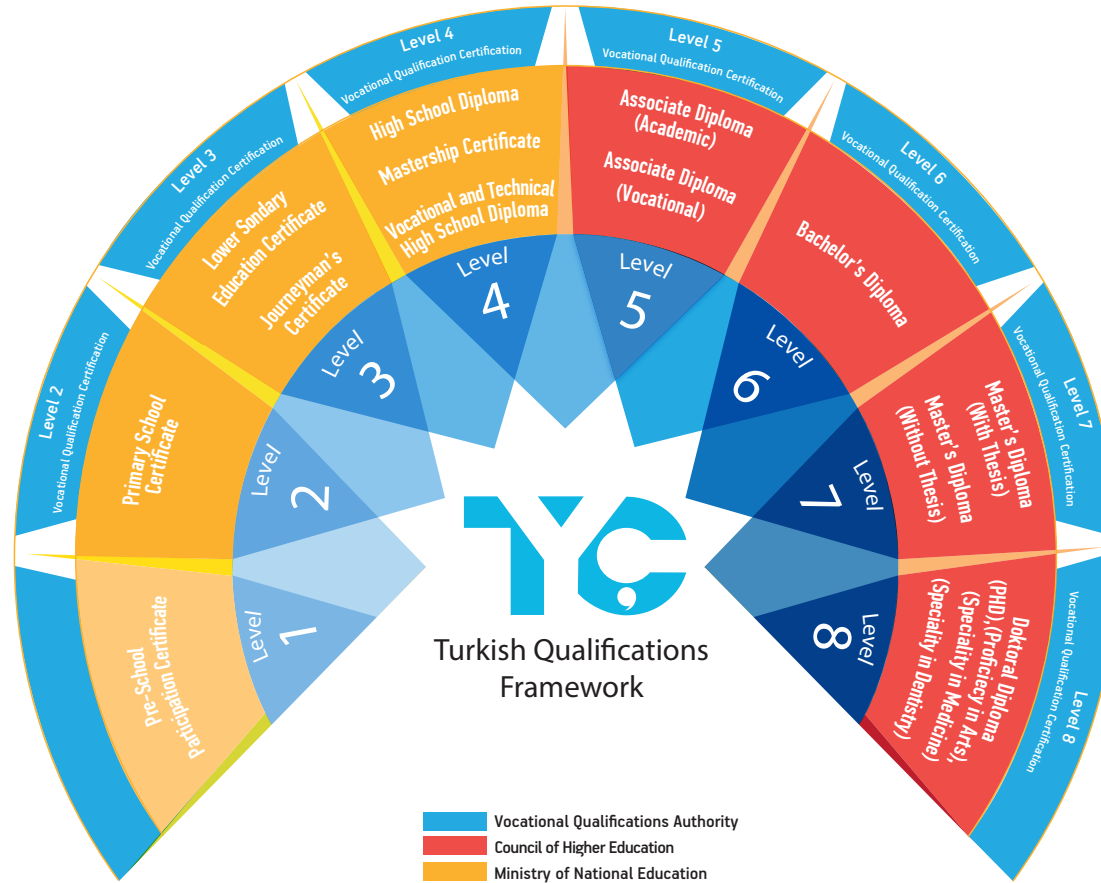
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Competence</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Have a general knowledge of self and environment	Have basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Carry out simple tasks under guidance and supervision
<b>Level 2</b>	Have an elementary factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have basic skills required to use necessary information in order to carry out tasks and to solve potential simple problems	Carry out simple tasks under supervision with limited autonomy Have awareness of own learning needs within the scope of lifelong learning approach
<b>Level 3</b>	Have an elementary theoretical knowledge and moderate factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have skills required to select and apply data, methods, tools and materials in order to carry out tasks and solve problems	Take responsibility in carrying out tasks Complete tasks in consideration of changing situations Identify and meet own learning needs under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach
<b>Level 4</b>	Have a moderate theoretical and operational knowledge and good factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have cognitive and practical skills required to perform procedures and generate solutions to problems specific for a field of work or study	Take full responsibility in completing tasks within predictable, but changeable contexts Supervise the ordinary tasks of others, and take limited responsibility in evaluating and improving such tasks Meet own learning needs, and define proactive learning goals under guidance within the scope of lifelong learning approach Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities

	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Competence</b>
<b>Level 5</b>	<p>Have comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of work or study in aware of the boundaries of that field</p>	<p>Have comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems, whose limits are defined, and concrete problems</p>	<p>Carry out management and supervision tasks in contexts with unpredictable changes</p> <p>Evaluate and improve own and others' performance level</p> <p>Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the management of projects</p> <p>Have general awareness of the scope of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities</p>
<b>Level 6</b>	<p>Have an advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in a field of work or study, including inquiring thinking</p>	<p>Have advanced skills, including the quality of mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</p>	<p>Make decisions by taking responsibility in unpredictable work or study contexts, and manage complex technical or professional activities or projects</p> <p>Take responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups</p> <p>Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Have awareness of social and moral issues in assessing work or study</p>

	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Competence</b>
<b>Level 7</b>	<p>Have advanced specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for original ideas and/or research</p> <p>Have an inquiring approach for knowledge issues in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field</p>	<p>Have advanced problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to develop new knowledge and methods in a field of work or study and to integrate knowledge from different fields</p> <p>Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a team member or partially autonomously</p>	<p>Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches</p> <p>Have experience in managing changes within a complex context</p> <p>Take responsibility in contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams</p> <p>Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as the relationship of them with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>
<b>Level 8</b>	<p>Have the most advanced systematic knowledge and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study</p> <p>Have the most advanced interface knowledge in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study</p>	<p>Have the most advanced and specialised skills, including synthesis and evaluation, that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to solve critical problems in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</p> <p>Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously</p> <p>Have problem-solving skills, including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field</p>	<p>Demonstrate competence in the development of new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research</p> <p>Show leadership in developing new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice in a field of work or study</p> <p>Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Create new knowledge in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>

**Annex 7: Qualification Types, Levels and Responsible Bodies in TQF (Provisional)**

**Table 7.1 Qualification Types, Levels and Responsible Bodies in TQF (Provisional)**



## Annex 8: Template for Qualification Type Specification

**Table 8.1 Template for Qualification Type Specification**

Qualification Type Title				
Awarding Body				
Orientation	General:	Academic:	Professional	
Level	TQF:	EQF:	ISCO:	ISCED (2013):
Category	Principal:	Supplemental:	Unit:	Special Purpose:
Credit Range and Normal Duration of Programme				
Programme Profile				
Learning Context				
Learning Outcomes				
Key Competences				
Assesment and Evaluation Methods				
Quality Assurance				
Entry Requirements				
Requirements for Awarding the Qualification				
Progression Paths				
Legal Basis for the Qualification				

## Annex 9: Member Lists

**Table 9.1 List of Members in TQF Council (Since January 2016)**

<b>Name - Surname</b>	<b>Represented Body</b>	<b>Title</b>
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Hilmi ÇOLAKOĞLU	MoNE	Deputy Undersecretary
Osman Nuri GÜLAY	MoNE	Director General for Vocational and Technical Education
Ali Rıza ALTUNEL	MoNE	Director General for Lifelong Learning
Dr. Recep ALTIN	MoNE	Head of Department-Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education
Süleyman AKGÜL	MoNE	Head of Department-Directorate General for LLL
Prof. Dr. Hasan MANDAL	CoHE	Executive Board Member
Prof. Dr. Muzaffer ELMAS	CoHE	Rector of Sakarya University
Prof. Dr. Orhan UZUN	CoHE	President of Higher Education Quality Board
Prof. Dr. Tuncay DÖĞEROĞLU	CoHE	Vice President of Higher Education Quality Board
Nihat Buğra AĞAOĞLU	Student Council	President
Metin KARAMAN	VQA	Deputy President
Mehmet ORDUKAYA	VQA	Head of Testing and Certification Department
Osman Seçkin AKBIYIK	VQA	Head of Turkish Qualifications Framework Department
Abidin MEMİLİ	TOBB	Representative
Ersin ARTANTAŞ	TESK	Director of Training and Planning
Hakan YILDIRIMOĞLU	TİSK	Secretary General -Turkish Employers Association of Metal Industries (MESS)
Enis BAĞDADIÖĞLU	TÜRK-İŞ	Advisor
Şahin SERİM	HAK-İŞ	Project Coordinator
Tevfik GÜNEŞ	DİSK	Head of Education, Occupational Health and Safety Department
Nevzat ÖYLEK	MEMUR-SEN	Coordinator
Cesur ALTUNTAŞ	KAMU-SEN	Deputy Manager of Çankaya Public Education Centre
Nedret GÜZELORDU	KESK	Teacher

**Table 9.2 List of Members in TQF–EQF Referencing Committee (2013-2015)**

<b>Name - Surname</b>	<b>Represented Body</b>	<b>Title</b>
Firuzan SİLAHŞÖR	VQA	Deputy Chairman of VQA ( <i>Former</i> )
Şennur ÇETİN	MoNE	Acting Head of Department
Abdullah BÜYÜKYILDIZ	MoNE	Expert Teacher
Dilek AYDOSLU	MoNE	Expert Teacher
Abdullah YURDABAKAN	MoNE	Head of Division
Erdi YÜCE	MoNE	Assistant Expert
Prof. Dr. Metin TOPRAK	CoHE	Bologna Expert
Prof. Dr. Mehmet DURMAN	CoHE	Bologna Expert
Canan ÜNVAN	CoHE	Expert
Osman Seçkin AKBIYIK	VQA	Expert
Prof. Dr. Mile DŽELALIJA		International Expert
Dr. Georg HANF		International Expert
Nesrin DOĞAN	VQA	Assistant Expert

**Table 9.3. Members of the TQF–EQF Referencing Report Drafting Team**

<b>Name - Surname</b>	<b>Represented Body</b>
Prof. Dr. Metin TOPRAK	Team Leader - CoHE
Abdullah BÜYÜKYILDIZ	MoNE
Çiğdem DEMİR	MoNE
Prof. Dr. Sibel AKSU YILDIRIM	CoHE
Osman Seçkin AKBIYIK	VQA
Yaprak AKÇAY ZİLELİ	VQA

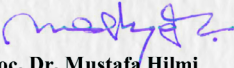


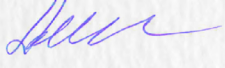
## Annex 10: Mutual Agreement of the Responsible Bodies on the Referencing Process





**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**  
**VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**  
 The Department of Turkish Qualifications Framework  
**TURKISH QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK COUNCIL**  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**ON THE TURKISH REFERENCING REPORT**

<b>Number of Decision</b>	2016/07
<b>Date of Decision</b>	29/11/2016
<b>Content</b>	<p>The Turkish Referencing Report presents the referencing of the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF) to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and self-certification of the TQF to the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).</p> <p>The Turkish Referencing Report has been prepared by the joint work of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA), the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in cooperation with the ministries, public authorities, professional bodies, trade unions, employer associations, student council and relevant social stakeholders. The Referencing Process, which was initiated in 2014, has been steered and monitored by both the former TQF-EQF Referencing Committee and the TQF Council. The Referencing Process also included the involvement of international experts and national and foreign technical experts. All the stages of the Referencing Process have been carried out with a transparent and participatory approach.</p> <p>The draft version of the Turkish Referencing Report has been discussed and revised in consultation with all relevant national stakeholders between May and November of 2016.</p> <p>As the member organisations to the TQF Council, we declare that,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisations that we represent have been actively involved in the preparation and the consultation of the Turkish Referencing Report,</li> <li>• VQA has carried out the whole process in cooperation with the organisations that we represent and all other stakeholders,</li> <li>• The Turkish Referencing Report has been approved as the single national referencing report for Turkey by the organisations that we represent.</li> </ul>
<b>Signed on behalf of</b>	MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY NATIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF TURKEY TURKISH UNION OF CHAMBERS AND COMMODITY EXCHANGES CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADESMEN AND CRAFTSMEN TURKISH CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS TURKISH CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS HAK CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS CONFEDERATION OF PROGRESSIVE TRADE UNIONS OF TURKEY CONFEDERATION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS TRADE UNIONS THE CONFEDERATION OF UNIONS OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES OF TURKEY CONFEDERATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' TRADE UNIONS

  
**Doç. Dr. Mustafa Hilmi ÇOLAKOĞLU**  
 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı  
 (Kurul Başkanı)

  
**Prof. Dr. Hasan MANDAL**  
 Yükseköğretim Kurulu

  
**Enis BAĞDADIOĞLU**  
 Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu  
 (Kurul Başkan Vekili)

  
**Prof. Dr. Muzaffer ELMAS**  
 Yükseköğretim Kurulu

  
**Metin KARAMAN**  
 Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu

  
**Osman Nuri GÜLAY**  
 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

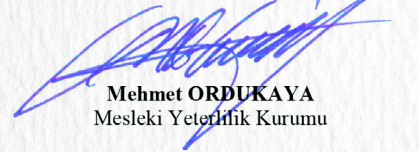
  
**Ali Rıza ALTUNEL**  
 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

  
**Prof. Dr. Orhan UZUN**  
 Yükseköğretim Kurulu

  
**Prof. Dr. Tuncay DÖĞEROĞLU**  
 Yükseköğretim Kurulu


  
**Dr. Recep ALTIN**  
 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

  
**Süleyman AKGÜL**  
 Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

  
**Mehmet ORDUKAYA**  
 Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu

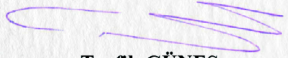
  
**Osman Seçkin AKBIYIK**  
 Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu

  
**Abidin MEMİLİ**  
 Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği

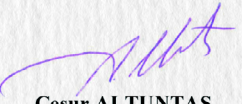
  
**Ersin ARTANTAŞ**  
 Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkarları  
 Konfederasyonu

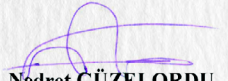
  
**Hakan YILDIRIMOĞLU**  
 Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları  
 Konfederasyonu


  
**Şahin SERİM**  
 Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu

  
**Tevfik GÜNEŞ**  
 Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları  
 Konfederasyonu

  
**Nevzat ÖYLEK**  
 Memur Sendikaları Konfederasyonu

  
**Cesur ALTUNTAŞ**  
 Türkiye Kamu Çalışanları Sendikaları  
 Konfederasyonu

  
**Nedret GÜZELORDU**  
 Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları  
 Konfederasyonu

  
**Nihat Buğra AĞAOĞLU**  
 Yükseköğretim Kurumları  
 Ulusal Öğrenci Konseyi



## Annex 11: List of Member Institutions and Organizations in Feedback Forum

**Table Annex 11.1. List of Member Institutions and Organizations in Feedback Forum**

1	Prime Ministry
2	Ministry of National Education
3	Ministry of National Defence
4	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
5	Ministry of Finance
6	Ministry of Environment and Urbanization
7	Ministry of Health
8	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
9	Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology
10	Ministry of Justice
11	Ministry of the Interior
12	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
13	Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs, and Communications
14	Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources
15	Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs
16	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
17	Prime Ministry, Undersecretariat of Treasury
18	Ministry of Customs and Trade
19	Ministry of Economy
20	Ministry of Development
21	Ministry of Family and Social Policies
22	Council of Higher Education
23	Ministry of European Union
24	Centre for European Union Education and Youth Programme
25	Turkish Employment Agency
26	Turkish Standards Institute
27	Turkish Statistical Institute
28	Turkish Accreditation Agency
29	Turkish Academy of Sciences
30	Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey
31	Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
32	Turkish Radio and Television Corporation
33	Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency
34	Information and Communication Technologies Authority
35	Energy Market Regulatory Authority
36	State Personnel Presidency
37	Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Support Organization
38	Inter-university Council
39	Capital Markets Board

40	Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges
41	Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen
42	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
43	Turkish Confederation of Trade Unions
44	Hak Confederation of Trade Unions
45	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey
46	Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists
47	Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation
48	Teacher's Trade Union
49	Education Union of Turkey
50	Union of Education and Science Workers
51	Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects
52	Union of Chambers of Certified Accountants and Sworn-in Certified Public Accountants of Turkey
53	Turkish Bar Association
54	Turkish Bank Association
55	Turkish Medical Association
56	Turkish Dental Association
57	Turkish Veterinary Association
58	Turkish Pharmacy Association
59	Turkish Notary Association
60	Turkish Capital Market Intermediary Firms Association
61	Insurance Association in Turkey
62	The Union of Turkish Agricultural Chambers
63	Turkish Travel Agency Union
64	Turkish Exporters Assembly
65	Turkish Nurses Association
66	Turkish Midwives Association
67	Turkish Industry and Business Association
68	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association
69	Anatolia Lions Businessmen Association
70	Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey
71	Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Engineering Programme
72	Social Sciences Association of Turkey
73	Quality Association of Turkey
74	Turkish Journalists' Society
75	Turkish Education Foundation
76	Education Volunteers Foundation of Turkey
77	National Student Council of Higher Education Institutions of Turkey

## Annex 12: Glossary

**Awarding Body:** A body authorised by a responsible body to conduct the relevant tasks for assessing an individual's learning outcomes and, if the individual is successful, certifying the requested qualification.

**Competence:** Defined as utilisation of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning needs; taking into consideration the social and moral issues and responsibilities.

**Credit:** The numeric description of the learner workload based on learning outcomes.

**Diploma:** Official document describing the degree which is prepared by the responsible body for those who graduate from education and training programmes including higher education with respect to the school and programme type.

**Education Institution:** Secondary education and higher education institutions awarding diplomas in the fields of general, vocational and technical education as well as all types and degrees of formal and non-formal education and training institutions offering certification programs.

**Formal (Structured) Education:** Defined and sequential education delivered in schools including education at pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities as defined within the national education system designed from a learner's perspective with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support.

**Informal (Non-Structured) Learning:** All kind of learning based on experience that cannot be acquired in formal and non-formal education institutions ranging from learning obtained without any purpose or intention to conscious and intentional learning.

**Key Competences:** Basic competences required by the information society that all the individuals should possess and that support the personal development, the social participation in society as efficient and responsible individuals and the employability in the scope of lifelong learning.

**Knowledge:** Defined as theoretical and/or factual knowledge involving the comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a working or learning area.

**Learner:** An individual who continues to develop his/her knowledge, skills and competences on his/her own or accompanied by a trainer, within the scope of formal and non-formal education, on the job or in informal learning contexts.

**Learning Outcome:** Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual after the completion of any learning process.

**Level:** Each of the eight levels defining knowledge, skills and competences in the TQF.

**Level Descriptors:** Knowledge, skills and competences required by the levels in the Turkish Qualifications Framework.

**Lifelong Learning:** This covers all the activities to certify the outcomes that are obtained through and as a result of formal, non-formal and informal learning events voluntarily or consciously participated by an individual throughout his/her life for personal and/or vocational reasons in order to decrease social exclusion and increase active citizenship by improving knowledge, skills and competences as well as increasing personal development, competitiveness and employability.

**National Occupational Standard:** The minimum norms for the required knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes as have been adopted by the VQA for the successful practice of a vocation.

**National Qualifications System:** All the activities in a country related to the recognition of learning and other mechanisms that links education and training to the internal market and civil society.

**Non-formal (Semi-Structured) Education:** Education that actually functions to fill the gaps in the system of formal education and supports the development of personal skills, that is structured in terms of its objective, timing and support, is designed according to the learner, can take place either within or outside educational institutions and can target every age group, results with obtaining a certificate, is qualified as an organized and continuous learning event, can be obtained at school or outside school and that does not take place within defined and sequential education.

**Orientation:** Description of general, vocational or academic features of learning processes relevant to qualifications.

**Programme:** Certification-based education and training unit developed the scope of lifelong learning in education institutions or institutions where education-training and scientific research and practice is done; which is comprised of similar branches of science or art, and constitutes a whole and contemplates each other in terms of aim, scope and quality.

**Qualification:** An official document obtained when a responsible body, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognizes that an individual has accomplished the learning outcomes according to certain criteria.

**Qualification Type:** Qualification groups in which qualifications at the same level of the TQF that are similar in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, value and/or orientations are classified.

**Qualification Type Specifications:** Documents that describe the common features specific to qualifications under each qualification type.

**Quality Assurance:** Activities related to planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting and quality improvement that ensures qualifications to meet defined quality standards and criteria.

**Recognition of Prior Learning:** The process of evaluating the credits and learning outcomes acquired previously by an individual through formal education, non-formal and informal learning in order to achieve a qualification or to be exempt from a part of an education programme.

**Responsible Body:** The institutions that are responsible for the legal arrangements, tasks and coordination related to the identification, definition and presentation of the qualifications in the education and training system.

**Skill:** Defined in general as “utilisation of knowledge”, “problem solving” and “transferring knowledge and skills to others” which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive, and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.

**Turkish Qualifications Framework:** The national qualifications framework, which has been designed in line with the European Qualifications Framework and indicates all qualification principles acquired through general, academic and vocational education and training programs including primary, secondary and higher education as well as other ways of learning.

**Workload:** Time spent for all education activities required for the achievement of learning outcomes.

## HYPERLINKS USED IN THE REPORT

- Page 14** [http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_ajs\\_dosyalar/2016\\_03/30044345\\_meb\\_istatistikleri\\_orgun\\_egitim\\_2015\\_2016.pdf](http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_ajs_dosyalar/2016_03/30044345_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2015_2016.pdf)
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- Page 125** <http://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File2.pdf>







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