



# **Policy for the Recognition and Equivalence of Qualifications**

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
<b>ENIC NARIC</b>	European Network of Information Centres/ National Academic Recognition Information Centres
<b>MQA</b>	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SADCQVN</b>	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Verification Network
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Awarding body</b>	Body issuing qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) that formally recognises the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual, following an assessment and validation procedure (CEDEFOP 2011).
<b>Accreditation of a training programme</b>	A process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to a programme of education or training, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards (CEDEFOP 2008).
<b>Comparability of Qualifications</b>	This is determined for the purpose of pegging qualifications to a qualifications framework based on a wide range of criteria including purpose, specifications and characteristics of the qualification, high level learning outcomes in relation to level descriptors, credits, and quality assurance arrangements (SADC 2011).
<b>Credit</b>	A value assigned to a unit standard or a qualification that represents the notional learning time required to meet the performance requirements of the unit standard or qualification.
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	Statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.
<b>Level descriptors</b>	Set of statements that describe the levels of a qualification framework in terms of progressive stages of achievement and complexity (SADC 2011).
<b>Qualification</b>	The formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and other requirements at specific levels as determined by the awarding body.
<b>Qualifications Framework</b>	A system for classification, publication and articulation of quality assured qualifications according to a set of criteria (UNESCO, 2017).

**Quality Assurance**

Formal evaluation, monitoring and auditing processes to confirm that systems and processes are in place to ensure that educational/training provision meets the stated standards.

**Recognition of  
Qualification**

A formal acknowledgment as defined and given by the competent recognition authorities of the value of a qualification.

## 1. Introduction

The onus for determining the recognition and equivalence of qualifications other than those obtained in the Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary educational sectors rest to the Mauritius Qualifications Authority in accordance with provisions made in the Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005. The Authority is also responsible for the development and maintenance of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as well as establishing level of comparability of qualifications on the NQF.

The Policy for Recognition and Equivalence of Qualifications serves as a guide to the Authority in providing an efficient and consistent qualification recognition service. It has been drafted following a series of consultation with key stakeholders as well as benchmarking on the best practices of qualification authorities around the world.

### 1.1 Context

In the context of economic globalisation and the internationalisation of education, learners and workers are increasingly moving from place to another. This requires that qualifications are evaluated in a timely and consistent manner.

Qualifications are of diverse characteristics across the world and acquired through new and alternative modes of learning. These qualifications may be obtained locally or obtained outside the national borders.

With the use of modern technology and the rise of the internet, there is an increased prevalence of educational fraud and falsified degrees issued by online degree mills. This is a growing concern worldwide and several initiatives are underway to curb this phenomenon. This saw the emergence of National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks to facilitate recognition of qualifications. As such the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework is one such framework currently being implemented with much emphasis on verification and quality assurance of qualifications.

In order to obtain accurate and trustworthy information against which is carried out evaluation of qualifications, networks have been established. The ENIC NARIC network is the most efficient one established in the European region. A similar network called the SADC Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) ensures timely sharing of recognition and comparability information

On this note, UNESCO has also updated and harmonised its Recognition Conventions to cater for the use of qualification frameworks and new dimensions for consistent evaluation of qualifications worldwide.

## 1.2 Purpose and Benefits

The key purpose of recognition under this policy is to establish the value and level of comparability of both local and foreign qualifications within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

Following evaluation of the foreign qualifications, the outcome will be provided in the form of a Statement of Recognition and Equivalence which provides an indication about the value of the qualification as compared to nationally recognised qualifications on the NQF.

For regulated local qualifications, considered as being de facto recognised, a Statement of Recognition and Equivalence will also be issued as outcome indicating the recognition status and level of the qualification on the NQF.

The decision provided by the Authority on the recognition and equivalence of qualifications will be beneficial for education and training providers. Recognition of qualification is useful as the process sheds light on the different features of the qualification and eases access to further and higher education opportunities. Recognition of qualification also facilitates employers in their recruitment and promotion exercise.

## 1.3 Qualification Recognition

This policy has been formulated by having the NQF as the central feature. Reference has been made to the *UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher*

*Education* (Lisbon Recognition Convention) for the European region and *Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States* (Addis Convention) for the African region. For this policy, the term recognition will be defined within the context of the National Qualifications Framework.

**Recognition of qualification** is a process of determining the value (profile, legal status and quality) of a qualification and its level of comparability on the **National Qualifications Framework** for the purpose of establishing its **equivalence**.

In the process of establishing recognition of a qualification, a comparable qualification type on the NQF may be identified for the purpose of establishing its equivalence.

#### 1.4 Scope

Qualifications to be considered under this policy will be at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) level and other than those obtained in the Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary educational sectors.

The process of recognition under this policy is meant for:

- qualifications obtained overseas;
- programmes of study and qualifications offered by foreign-based institutions operating in Mauritius;
- programmes of study that candidates intend to pursue overseas;
- programmes of study that Licensed Recruiting agents intend to send students overseas; and
- qualifications to be used in the drafting of schemes of service by employers.



For the purpose of recognition under this policy, the Authority will not evaluate the following:

- partial qualification or incomplete training programmes that did not result in award of a qualification;
- certificate of attendance, certificate of completion or statement of results;
- vendor certifications (e.g. Microsoft or CISCO);
- letters or certificates testifying work experience or apprenticeships;
- membership certificates;

## 2 Principles and Criteria for Evaluation of Qualifications

The MQA aims to deliver qualifications evaluation service based on international best practices and in line with principles underpinning the UNESCO Recognition Conventions. The Authority works with all stakeholders to ensure that recognition decisions and advices are communicated in a clear, consistent, accurate and timely manner.

### 2.1 Guiding Principles

Evaluation of qualifications will be based on the following principles:

#### 2.1.1 *Accessibility*

MQA shall provide holders of qualifications adequate access, upon application, to an evaluation of their qualifications based on procedures established by the MQA.

### **2.1.2 NQF-based Qualification Evaluation**

All qualifications shall be assessed in line with the requirements of the NQF and its level descriptors. All NQF qualifications are developed based on industry needs, awarded by recognised awarded bodies and quality assured by competent authorities.

### **2.1.3 Fair and transparent process**

Qualification recognition shall be conducted in accordance with principles of fairness, transparency and confidentiality. Applications will be considered on the basis of its own merits in line with international best practices.

The diversity of education and training systems in other countries will be taken into account when completing evaluations in line with international conventions and arrangements.

### **2.1.4 Right to appeal**

Applicants who do not agree with the decision of the Authority regarding the recognition of their qualifications shall have the right to appeal against the decision as per established procedures.

### **2.1.5 Consistency**

The Authority shall ensure that same qualifications have the same recognition and comparability outcomes by maintaining a database of previous evaluations.

Notwithstanding the above, the MQA

- (i) will consider qualifications, awarded under specific circumstances, on a case to case basis without compromising on the core evaluation process and stages.
- (ii) will exempt national qualifications from the recognition process given these qualifications are already subject to accreditation.

## 2.2 Criteria for Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications

All applications for recognition and equivalence of foreign qualifications shall be processed by applying the following criteria:

**(i) *The certificate and related documents should be authentic.***

All certificates and related documents, certified true by the relevant competent body, would be deemed to be authentic at the time of application. A visual check will normally be conducted to detect any inconsistency regarding the format of the certificate, the signatories, seals and font used.

In cases of doubt, further investigation will be conducted to determine the authenticity of the certificates. This is normally established by contacting the awarding body to verify that the qualification was awarded to the applicant and the certificate was issued to the applicant after all requirements were met for the award.

Where information is available that the submitted documents attesting a qualification acquired have been forged, the authority will not further process the application and the matter will be referred to the Police for further investigation. The applicant will be notified thereof in writing.

The MQA reserves the right to revoke a recognition decision should there be evidence that a qualification or certificate has been acquired through fraudulent means or any information material to the recognition has been concealed.

**(ii) *The awarding body should be recognised and regulated in the country of origin.***

This is established by contacting the competent authority in the country of origin to verify whether the awarding organisation was regulated by a recognised quality assurance body and has a credible and verifiable status in the country of origin. Official registers may be consulted to obtain such information.

***(iii) The qualification is recognised and regulated by the competent authority in the country of origin.***

This is established by contacting the competent authority in the country of origin to verify whether the qualification was regulated by a recognised quality assurance body and is in the country of origin. Official registers may be consulted to obtain such information.

In the absence of the above, in case of qualifications acquired through distance and online mode, reference should be made to the body, if any, regulating such provision including the mode of assessment.

***(iv) The qualification should be part of the formal education and training system in the country of origin.***

This is established by contacting the competent authority in the country of origin or reference is made to official registers of regulated qualifications maintained by the competent authority. In order to situate the position of the qualification within the education and training system in the country of origin, views of respective National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) or qualification and quality assurance bodies may be solicited.

***(v) Recognition agreements, where available, between Mauritius and other countries should be considered in the evaluation of qualifications for recognition.***

MQA will refer to provisions in existing Recognition Agreements between Mauritius and other countries in matters pertaining to recognition and comparability of qualifications for evaluation of qualifications for recognition.

**(vi) The level of comparability of the qualification should be established in the formal education and training system or on the National Qualifications Framework in the country of origin and benchmarked on the local NQF.**

If the qualification is located on a qualifications framework in the country of origin, the foreign qualifications framework will be compared with the NQF in order to establish the level of the foreign qualification on the NQF.

If there is no qualifications framework in the country of origin, the qualification is located in the education and training system of the country which is benchmarked against the NQF to determine the level of the qualification on the NQF. The learning outcomes and the level descriptors are compared to establish the level. Other dimensions such as duration, entry requirements and number of credits may be considered to confirm the level.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide sufficient information on the structure, characteristics and component outcomes of the qualification, to enable the Authority to determine the level of comparability of the qualification.

### **3. Outcome of evaluation**

As outcome of an application for recognition and equivalence of qualification, the Authority may:

- i. grant recognition and equivalence of the qualification.
- ii. refuse recognition and equivalence of qualification.

The applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the application. A Statement of Recognition and Equivalence will be issued to the applicant following evaluation of both local and foreign qualification. Clear reasons will be provided in the case of qualifications that are not recognised.

The Statement of Recognition and Equivalence will be issued based on the information available to the Authority at the time the evaluation is undertaken and does not entitle the applicant for admission to education and training programmes, employment or registration purposes.

## 4. Equivalence of Qualifications

In addition to applying for recognition of qualifications, applications for equivalence of two qualifications may be considered by the Authority for the following purposes:

- i. Recruitment and Promotion
- ii. Registration/accreditation/licensing with a competent authority

Equivalence of qualifications will be established based on comparison of content and will be conditional to the qualification under consideration being recognised and both qualifications are at the same NQF level

As outcome, the applicant will be issued a Statement of Recognition and Equivalence together with a decision on the equivalence of the two qualifications.

## 5. Appeal

Applicants can appeal against the decision of the Authority by writing to the Chairperson of the MQA Board within 21 days of notification of the decision related to the recognition and equivalence of qualifications, specifying clearly the grounds for review. A processing fee of Rs 2000/- will be applicable and refunded in case of a favourable outcome.

## 6. Recognition And Equivalence Committee

All applications for recognition and equivalence of a new qualification will be considered by a Recognition and Equivalence Committee. The Committee will comprise the following persons:

- (1) A representative of the MQA (in the Chair)
- (2) A representative from the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
- (3) A representative from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate
- (4) A representative from the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms

- (5) A representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade
- (6) A representative from the Higher Education Commission
- (7) Expert/s in the relevant field (Co-opted).
- (8) A representative of the MQA (Secretariat)