



National Qualifications Framework of Pakistan 2015



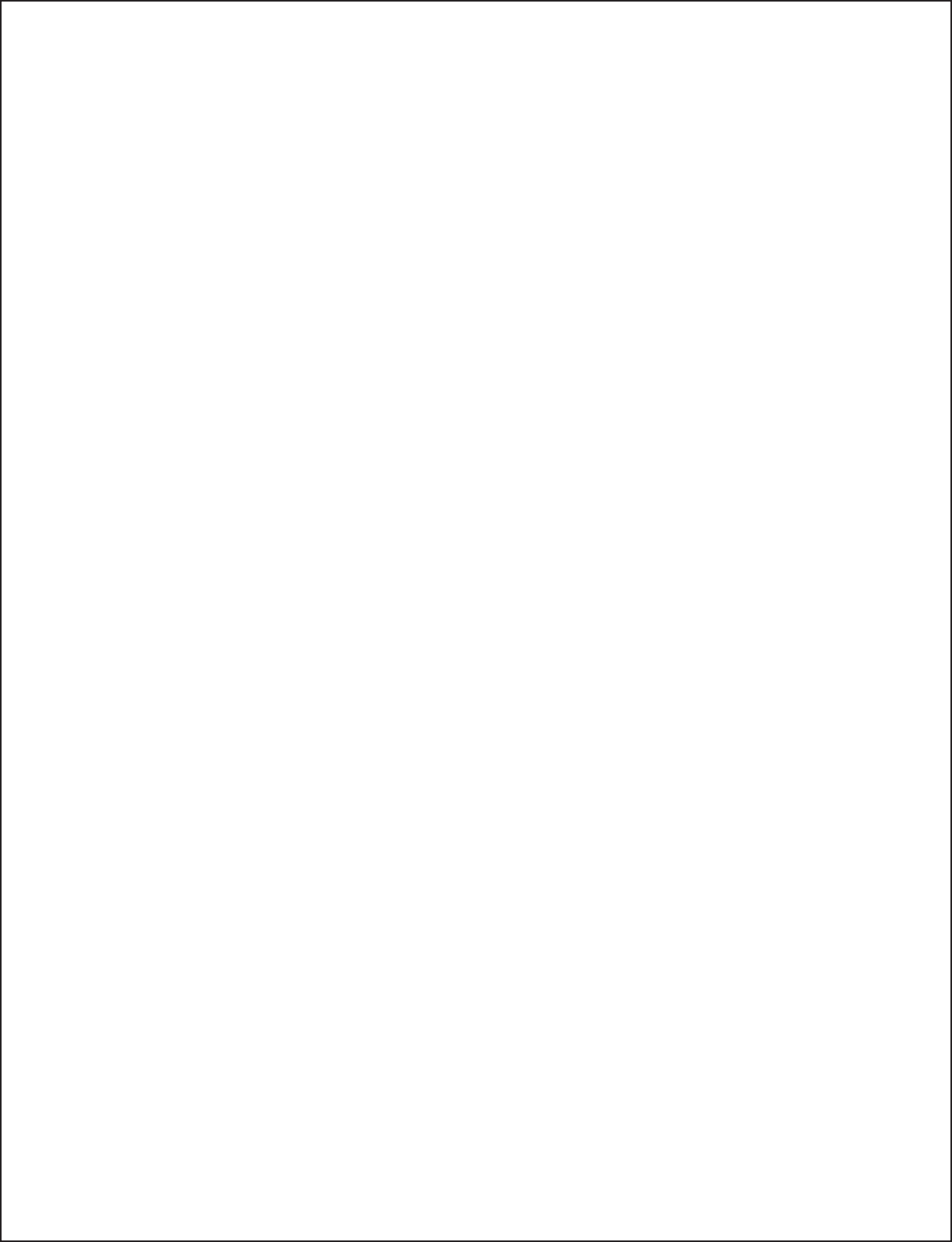


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Introduction:

The Bologna Process (1999-2010) developed and implemented an overarching structure to serve as a catalyst for Higher Educational Reforms in Europe. The process since has been adopted by almost 100 countries in the world to reform their systems of higher education based on commonly agreed standards. Many countries have developed National Qualifications Frameworks to cover the full spectrum of education including Basic Education, Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Tertiary Education including the under graduate and graduate levels of higher education.

Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan started developing a Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in 2009 and took the necessary steps to develop the tools for implementing the framework on a nationwide basis covering all the HEC chartered public and private institutions of higher education in the country. The tools included development and implementation of semester system, National Curriculum Review Committees consisting of Disciplines' experts for curriculum development and refinement to ensure its rigour and relevance, assessment and grading policies, policies related to admission, retention, graduation of students from undergraduate and graduate programmes and a comprehensive list of chartered universities and graduate degree colleges. These were included in the Register of National Qualifications Framework. These twin documents have been widely shared with all stakeholders in printed form as well as on HEC website.

National Qualifications Framework provides clearly defined levels of Knowledge, Skills and Competencies to be acquired by each graduate that are easy to comprehend by students, employers and human resource development policy makers. Bologna initiative resulted in major reforms of higher education in many countries and more countries are voluntarily using the process to promote inter and intra-country mobility of students and credit hours, promotion of collaborative research and relatively uniform standards and learning outcomes. In 2014, over 100 countries have developed their National Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education.

The main objectives of the 1999 Bologna Declaration included,

1. "Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees

2. Adoption of a system of two main cycles (Undergraduate/Graduate)
3. Establish a system of credits transfer (ECTS)
4. Promote mobility by overcoming legal recognition and administrative obstacles
5. Promote cooperation in quality assurance."

Subsequently the 2010 Prague Declaration of the European Ministers of Education added the goal of mutual recognition of undergraduate and graduate degrees offered by recognized universities. It also called for promoting quality of instruction at all levels of higher education, and developing and implementing a system of comparing qualifications among various countries.

Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has used the Bologna Principles to bring about qualitative reforms in higher education and is consistently striving to implement the National Qualifications Framework. This new revised version of the Framework is designed to further sustain the qualitative improvement of programmes of higher education qualifications offered in the country. While moving towards universally recognized undergraduate degree programmes of eight semesters, 124-140 credit hours, and the revised framework has incorporated four semesters, 68 credit hours associate degree programmes those open the doors to initial level employment and further study to complete the 4 year degree programme. The revised framework has outlined the admission, retention and graduation requirements for graduate programmes including significant applied and abstract research component connecting universities to become engines of social, economic and human resource development to create a world class critical mass of specialists in natural, social and applied sciences, and professions to create an economically progressive and tolerant society.

The following pages describe the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Pakistan and policies related to its implementation. The NQF is augmented by a register that lists all the chartered Higher Education degree awarding institutions and programmes offered by them. The register has included in it detailed HEC approved policy on implementing semester-based assessment of learning outcomes and grading to ensure uniform standards of quality of qualifications offered by all chartered universities and post-graduate degree colleges.

National Qualifications Framework of Higher Education in Pakistan:

the higher education system of Pakistan is heir to a diverse set of sources and traditions. The prevailing system has drawn its structure from the British tradition of higher education as it was emerging in the late 19th century. Its oldest seat of higher learning, Punjab University, Lahore was modeled after the then existing University of London where instruction was actually provided in its constituent and affiliated colleges and the University served as the examining body for students from its affiliated colleges as well as for those who prepared on their own for the examinations according to the curricula set for each level and discipline of knowledge by the university.

These students were called external or private students whose only resource to prepare for the University examination were the prescribed textbooks and the university catalogue prescribing the courses and their outlines. The qualifications offered were mostly at the undergraduate, Level 5, and Masters, Level 6. The system of collegiate instruction and university examinations resulted in qualifications that called for traditional methods of teaching and learning emphasizing dissemination of existing and limited range of disciplines of knowledge with little reliance on discovery of knowledge through creative and innovative research that could solve the critical problems facing the society. Very limited attention was paid to Levels 7 and 8 thus a small number of scholars dared to devote their efforts to original research leading to discovery of new, utilitarian knowledge and skills impacting society.

Pakistani higher education is also heir to a scholarly system that was established over a 500 years period, symbolized by "Darul Hikma (House of Wisdom)" and "Madrasa Nizamia" (8th-15th century) at Baghdad. *Darul Hikma* produced reflective scholars who rediscovered Greek Literature, Philosophy and lost ancient texts. They based their scholarships on four cardinal questions: (i). *Afala Yatafakarun*, Why don't you reflect? Cultivation of reflection was necessary to convert knowledge into wisdom. (ii). *Afala Ta'qelun*; Why don't you use reason and rational logic? The basic premise of this question was that human reason as a tool for learning and problem solving must be cultivated to go beyond the known to discover the unknown. (iii). The next question posed for scholars was *Afala Ta'lamun*, Why don't you seek knowledge? The pursuit of knowledge demands lifelong search for perfection through intuition, pragmatic problem solving and constant critical reconstruction based on intense scholarly experiences. (iv). The fourth challenging question for the Muslim scholars was *Afala Ta'malun*, why don't you act morally, righteously and ethically discover and use new and old knowledge to create a progressive society. These four fundamental questions launched a series of schools of thought and action that produced scholars like Avicenna, Ibn e Rushad, Al Gibran, Al Ghazali, Ibn e Khaldun to name a few, who explored new horizons of knowledge. On

the one hand these scholars and their schools set the stage for renaissance to take Europe out of its age of darkness but also spread enlightenment through producing scholarly empowerment in the emerging institutions of higher education.

In 2002, a bold restructuring of higher education was done in Pakistan. A national Commission of Higher Education was established with a clear mission to "facilitate institutions of higher learning to serve as engine of socio-economic development of Pakistan." The Core Strategic Aims of the Commission were to increase equitable access to quality higher education to create a critical mass of creative, constructive and committed scholars to undertake innovative research to build knowledge-based economy without which the critical national problems cannot be solved. Through the strenuous efforts of the Commission the number of Universities in Pakistan has multiplied. Quality assurance has been given a high priority, systems of accountability and accreditation have been instituted and huge investments in technology embedded scholarly research have been made.

The NQF along with a policy manual of semester-based assessment of students and a register of institutions offering various qualifications has been developed to build on the heritage of higher education.

The NQF is considered as a mechanism for classification of the qualifications on the basis of the learning outcomes i.e. knowledge, skill and competence. It is level-based and outcomes focused. It sets out the levels on which a qualification can be recognized in Pakistan. The NQF encompasses a comprehensive list of all quality assured qualifications in Pakistan. Each accredited qualification offered in Pakistan has been assigned a level. It consists of Entry Level 1 to Level 8, describing the difficulty of qualifications at each level. The National Qualifications Register is also a part of NQF which provides all the information regarding the accredited higher education qualifications and institutions recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan as degree granting institution.

Objectives of the NQF

The NQF has been structured to:

- Help learners to make informed decisions about the qualification required
- Help the employers to assess what qualification a candidate has achieved
- Help in establishing the national standards of qualifications
- Provide a basis for comparison of qualifications at national as well as international level
- Help in international recognition of academic qualifications

- Facilitate the trans-national mobility of graduates and learners
- Be used as an instrument for qualitative reforms in education system
- Help promote the linkages between industry and education system

Terminology

- a. **‘Credit’** is a uniformly recognized measure of time and effort expended to acquire information, skills, competencies and recognition that a learner has successfully completed prior course of learning, corresponding to the qualification at given level,
- b. **‘Competence’** means the demonstrated ability to acquire and use knowledge, skills, competencies and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy at the level of the qualification,
- c. **‘Field-Specific Competence’** means ability to use discipline-specific information, processes and tools of knowledge and practice,
- d. **‘Knowledge’** means the outcome of the acquisition, assimilation, comprehension and application of information through learning activities. Knowledge is the body of concepts, facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. Knowledge is described as theoretical, factual and practical,
- e. **‘Learner’** refers to an individual undergoing skill development training, whether in a formal or informal setting,
- f. **‘Learning Outcomes’** means what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence,
- g. **‘National Qualifications Framework’** means a national instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved. It aims to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improves the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society,
- h. **‘Recognition of Prior Learning’** is the process of recognizing previous learning, often experiential, towards gaining a qualification,
- i. **‘Skills’** mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems critically, creatively and constructively,
- j. **‘Trainer’** means someone who trains, instructs, teaches, or otherwise enables the learner (s) to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills,
- k. **“Training provider”, “Institute” and “Institution”** refers to any accredited organization providing knowledge and skills to learner,

Activity Sheet for Curriculum Framework Elements

- A curriculum framework is an organized plan or set of standards or learning outcomes that defines the content to be learned in terms of clear, definable standards of what the student should know and be able to do at the time of graduation. A curriculum framework is part of an outcome-based education or standards based education reform design.
- It is a document (or set of documents) that sets standards for curriculum and provides the context (available resources, capabilities of teachers and system support) in which subject specialists develop syllabi
- A curriculum framework describes the educational environment in which syllabi (or subject specific outlines of objectives, outcomes, content and appropriate assessment and teaching methodologies) can be developed.
- Each individual system/discipline of knowledge can maintain the ‘identity’ of its own curriculum while ensuring consistency and quality through compliance with a set of agreed standards expressed in the framework
- A curriculum framework commonly contains the elements described in the Table below. However, one of the advantages of a framework approach is flexibility and elements can be added to or deleted from the framework structure to suit the needs of the education system or systems developing it.

Table: 1 Common Elements of Curriculum Frameworks.

Elements	Function or Purpose
1. Introduction: Current Context	Describes the social and economic environment in which education policy is made and in which teaching and learning take place
2. Educational Policy Statement	Describes the Government's goals for education, such as universal literacy and numeracy, the development of skills needed for economic prosperity and the creation of a stable, tolerant and democratic society
3. Statement of Broad Learning Objectives and Outcomes / standards for each level/cycle	Describes what students should know and be able to do when they complete their school education. Outcomes should be expressed in a range of domains, including knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies, values and attitudes
4. Structure of the Education System	Describes the school system within which the curriculum framework is to be applied. It should specify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of years of schooling, including compulsory schooling • Stages (or cycles) of schooling and their durations • Number of weeks in the school years, hours or teaching periods in the school week
5. Structure of curriculum content, learning areas and subjects	Describes the organization of content within the framework and the extent to which schools and students can make choices. It might describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pattern of subjects or learning areas to be studied in each stage or cycle (such as core, elective and optional subjects) • A brief description of each subject or learning area outlining the rationale for its inclusion in the curriculum and the contribution it makes to the achievement of the learning outcomes defined in Section 3 • The number of hours to be assigned to each subject or learning area in each stage or cycle
6. Standards of resources required for implementation	Describes standards as they apply to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers – qualifications, teaching load (number of classes per week) • Students – number per class in each subject • Materials – textbooks, computers and connectivity, other equipment; facilities – classrooms, laboratories, libraries furniture, fittings.
7. Teaching methodology	Describes the range of teaching strategies, approaches that might be employed in the implementation of the framework and achievements of learning outcomes through interactive and recursive strategies.
8. Assessing student achievement	Describes the importance of assessing the extent to which students achieve the outcomes established for each subject, and recommends or

Levels and Programme Titles

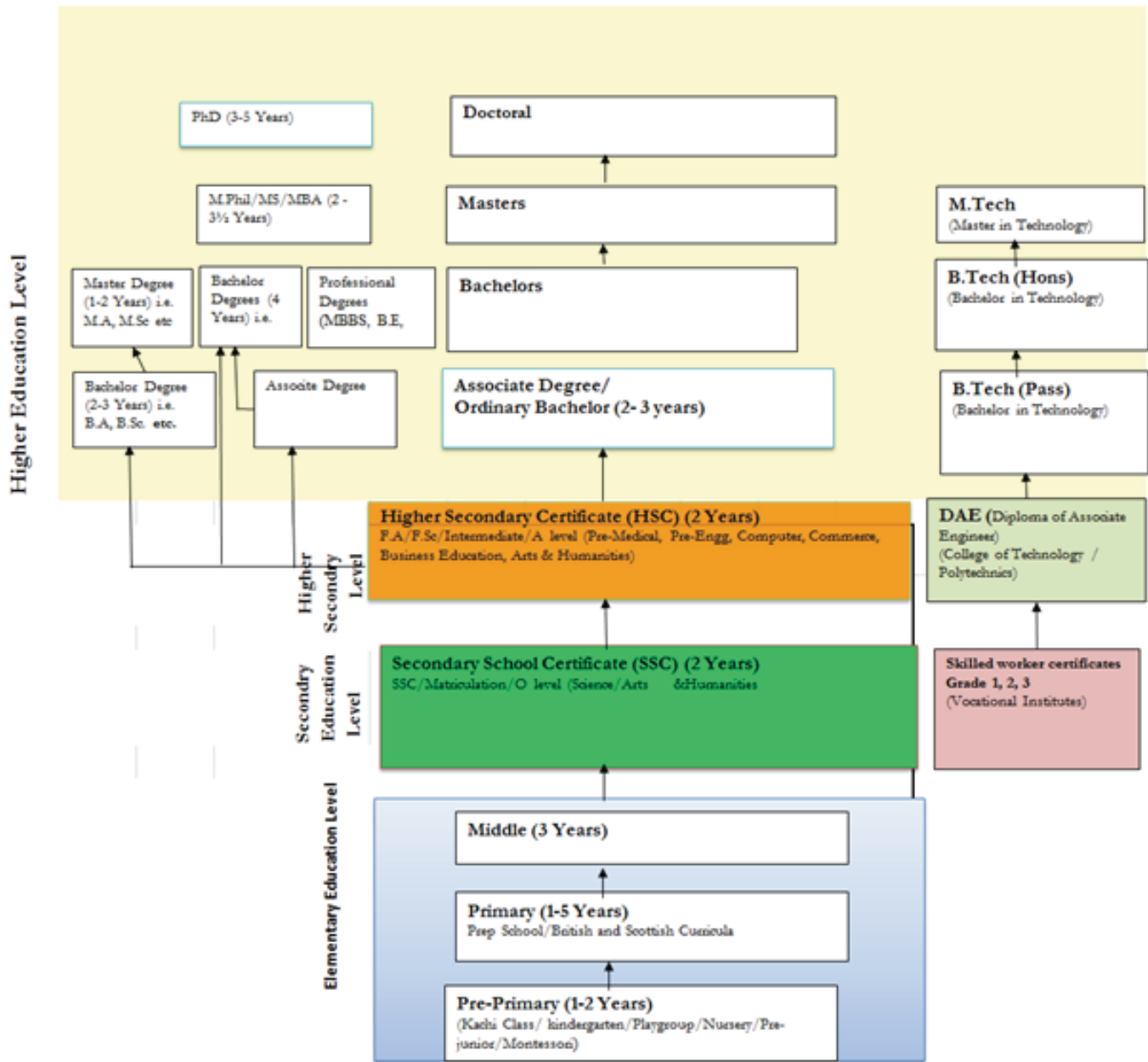
The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Pakistan is developed and published by Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. It describes the levels of achievements and features of higher education qualifications. It covers academic qualifications from Level 5 to Level 8.

The NQF has eight levels that are based on the generic nomenclature used for the qualifications in the country. A qualification must be assigned to one of the eight levels. The Framework does not describe qualifications at the same level as being equal and qualifications at the same level are not interchangeable, however, they are at a comparable level in terms of knowledge, skills or competence required to be demonstrably completed.

Table: 2 Programmes by Levels and Credit Hours Requirements (New System)

	Levels	Award Type	Award Example	Semesters	Technical/Vocational
Higher Education Levels	8	Doctoral	PhD	18 Crt Hrs course work and dissertation evaluated by at least two PhD experts from technologically/academically advanced countries in addition to one local expert and doctoral Committee members	
	7	Masters	MA/ M.Phil./MS/MBA, M.Sc. (Eng.), M.E, M.Tech	Minimum 30 Credit Hours with thesis or without thesis	M.Tech (Master in Technology) 30
	6	Bachelor (Hons)	BA/ BS, B.E, B.Arch., BSc (Eng.), BSc (Agr), B.Tech (Hons) MA/MSc (16 year), LLB, B.Com (Hons), MBBS, DVM, BDS, PharmD	8-10 semesters/124-140* Credit Hours	B.Tech (Hons) (B.Tech) 124-140 Crt. Hrs.
	5	Associate Degree Ordinary Bachelor	BA/BSc (Pass), B.Tech (Pass), Associate Degrees etc	4-6 semsters/50+ Credit Hours	B.Tech (Pass) (Bachelor in Technology) 50+ Crt. Hrs.
Higher Secondary Education	4	Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC)	F.A, F.Sc, ICS, I.Com, DBA, D.Com etc	A Level	DAE (Diploma of Associate Engineer) (College of Technology / Polytechnics)
Secondary Education Level	3	Secondary School Certificate (SSC)	Matriculation	O Level	National Vocational Certificates (Level 1 to 4)
Basic/Elementary Education Level	2	Middle (3 Years)			
	1	Primary (1-5 Years) Pre-Primary (1-2 Years)			

Table: 3 Qualifications by Number of Year/s (Old System)



**National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Pakistan
Key Student Learning Outcomes of Level 5***

1. KNOWLEDGE	2. SKILLS	3. COMPETENCIES			
-Theoretical -Conceptual	-Cognitive -Practical	Competence to Work Independently and Take Responsibility	Learning Competence	Communication and Social Competence	Field Specific Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess theoretical and practical knowledge supported by textbooks with updated information, practice, equipment and other resource on basic level based on qualifications gained at secondary education level. • Functional knowledge of Urdu and English. • Reflective thinking • Social context of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain the skills to use basic level theoretical and practical knowledge acquired within the field in the same field of a higher education level or in a field of same level. • Interpret and evaluate data, define problems, do analysis, produce solutions based on proof with using basic level knowledge and practices gained within the field. • Problem solving skills through application of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct studies at basic level within the field independently. • Take responsibility as a team member in order to solve unexpected complex problems faced in the applications within the field. • Conduct activities towards the development of subordinates within a project. • Work collaboratively in teams. • Use knowledge and skills to solve practical problems as a technician and a supervisor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the acquired knowledge and skills at basic level within the field with a critical approach, determine and respond to learning needs. • Direct the education received to a higher education level in the same field or to an occupation in the same level. • Gain awareness of lifelong learning. • Demonstrate use of skills acquired for occupational success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the ideas based on the basic knowledge and skills acquired within the field through written and oral communications in Urdu and English. • Share the ideas and solutions to problems about issues within the field with professionals and non-professionals. • Monitor the evolving developments in the field and communicate with peers by using a local language. • Use informatics and communication technologies with at least a minimum level of Computer Application for data processing and Basic Level software usage knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess social, scientific, cultural and ethical values on the stages of gathering, implementation and release of the results of data related to the field. • Possess sufficient consciousness of universality of human rights, social justice, equality, cultural values and also, environmental protection, worker's health and security. • Demonstrated academic integrity. • Honesty in occupational practice

* Adapted from National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey.

Note: Admission requirement for Associate Degree is completion of SSC/Matriculation/ F.A/F.Sc/A-Levels examination with more than 50% (Second division)

National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Pakistan Key Student Learning Outcomes of Level 6*

1. KNOWLEDGE	2. SKILLS	3. COMPETENCES			
-Theoretical -Conceptual	-Cognitive -Practical	Competence to Work Independently and Take Responsibility	Learning Competence	Communication and Social Competence	Field Specific Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess higher level theoretical and practical knowledge supported by textbooks with updated information, practice equipment and other resources. • Complete a required core of General Education Courses. • Bilingual proficiency in Urdu and English. • Logical persuasive critical expression. • Reflective thinking to solve problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of advanced theoretical and practical knowledge within the field. • Interpret and evaluate data, define and analyze problems, develop solutions based on research and proofs by using acquired advanced knowledge and skills within the field. • Problem solving skills through application of knowledge acquired. • Writing report of innovative research activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct studies at an advanced level in the field independently. • Take responsibility both as a team member and individually in order to solve unexpected complex problems faced within the implementations in the field. • Planning and managing activities towards the development of subordinates in the framework of a project. • Work collaboratively in teams. • Interactive problem solving • Appreciate diverse opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the knowledge and skills acquired at an advanced level in the field with a critical approach. • Determine learning needs and direct the learning. • Develop positive attitude towards lifelong learning. • Demonstrated use of Urdu and English for professional communications. • Efficient use of scholarly and practical tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform people and institutions, transfer ideas and solution proposals to problems in written and orally on issues in the field. • Share the ideas and solution proposals to problems on issues in the field with professionals and non-professionals by the support of qualitative and quantitative data. • Organize and implement project and activities for social environment with a sense of social responsibility. • Monitor the developments in the field and communicate with peers by using both Urdu and English • Use informatics and communication technologies with at least a minimum level of European Computer Usage Advanced Level software knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in accordance with social, scientific, cultural and ethical values on the stages of gathering, implementation and release of the results of data related to the field. • Possess sufficient consciousness about the issues of universality of human rights, social justice, equality, cultural values in a diverse world and also, environmental protection, worker's health and security. • Demonstrate academic integrity in all academic and practical activities.

* Adapted from National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey.

Note: Admission will be granted on merit to those who have completed secondary school certificate examination or A level examination and fulfill the eligibility criteria set by the higher education institutions.

**National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Pakistan
Key Student Learning Outcomes of Level 7***

1. KNOWLEDGE	2. SKILLS	COMPETENCES			
-Theoretical -Conceptual	-Cognitive -Practical	Competence to Work Independently and Take Responsibility	Learning Competence	Communication and Social Competence	Field Specific Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deepen knowledge in the same or in a different field to the proficiency level based on Bachelor level qualifications. • Conceive the interdisciplinary interaction which the field is related with. • Advanced knowledge of research in the chosen field. • Recent development in one's related field of study. • Cognitive, creative, constructive skills for research and reporting results. • Utilitarian applied research to solve socio-economic problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of theoretical and practical knowledge within the field at a high proficiency level. • Interpret the knowledge about the field by integrating the information gathered from different disciplines and formulate new knowledge. • Solve the problem faced related to the field by using research methods and tools. • Critical ability to analyze and synthesize technical knowledge and apply it to solve complex problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independently conduct studies that require proficiency in the field. • Take responsibility and develop new strategic solutions as a team member in order to solve unexpected complex problems faced within the applications in the field. • Demonstrate leadership in contexts that require solving problems related to the field. • Apply methods and tools of inquiry to advance useful knowledge impacting socio-economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate knowledge and skills acquired at proficiency level in the field with a critical approach and direct the learning. • Ethical use of knowledge created by others. • Fidelity of data gathering and its use in technical reports • Complete and report an innovative research project to positively impact society • Present reports of the research activities to peers and other senior scholars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate current developments and studies within the field to both professional and non-professional groups systematically using written, oral and visual techniques by supporting with quantitative and qualitative data. • Investigate, improve social connections and their conducting norms with a critical view and act to change them when necessary. • Communicate with peers by using a foreign language proficiently. • Use advanced informatics and communication technology skills with software knowledge required by the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit the data gathering, interpretation, implementation and announcement stages by taking into consideration the cultural, scientific, and ethical values and teach these values. • Develop strategy, policy and implementation plans on the issues related to the field and assess the findings within the frame of quality processes. • Use the knowledge, problem solving and/or implementation skills in interdisciplinary studies. • Be familiar with professional codes of conduct and adhere to them for academic integrity.

* Adapted from National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey.

Note: Admission will be granted on merit to those who have completed Bachelors Degree Programme, and fulfil the eligibility criteria established by higher education institutions.

National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Pakistan Key Student Learning Outcomes of Level 8*

1. KNOWLEDGE	2. SKILLS	COMPETENCES			
-Theoretical -Conceptual	-Cognitive -Practical	Competence to Work Independently and Take Responsibility	Learning Competence	Communication and Social Competence	Field Specific Competence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deepen the current and advanced knowledge in the field with original thought and/or research and come up with innovative definitions based on Master's degree qualifications. • Conceive the interdisciplinary interaction which the field is related with; come up with original solutions by using knowledge requiring proficiency on analysis, synthesis and assessment of new and complex ideas. • Substantial advanced knowledge in the field to develop original new knowledge through basic and applied research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and use new information within the field in a systematic approach. • Develop an innovative knowledge, method, design and/or practice or adapt an already known knowledge, method, design and/or practice to another field; research, conceive, design, adapt and implement an original subject. • Critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation of new and complex ideas. • Gain advanced level skills in the use of research methods in the field of study. • Demonstrate intellectual autonomy to add new knowledge to the field through use of advanced research methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the progression in the field by producing an innovative idea, skill, design and/or practice or by adapting an already known idea, skill, design, and/or practice to a different field independently. • Broaden the borders of the knowledge in the field by producing or interpreting an original work or publishing at least one scientific paper in the field in national and/or international refereed journals. • Demonstrate leadership in contexts requiring innovative and interdisciplinary problem solving. • Use expert creative, critical, technical skills to design and implement research projects at the frontiers of knowledge • Conduct utilitarian research independently to discover new knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new ideas and methods in the field by using high level mental processes such as creative and critical thinking, problem solving and decision making. • Collaborative learning with senior and junior scholars to broaden the field. • Ability to widely share with peers and defend their research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and improve social connections and their conducting norms and manage the actions to change them when necessary. • Defend original views when exchanging ideas in the field with professionals and communicate effectively by showing competence in the field. • Ability to communicate and discuss orally, in written and visually with peers by using a foreign language. • Demonstrate scholarly communication in multiple languages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the transition of the community to an information society and its sustainability process by introducing scientific, technological, social or cultural improvements. • Demonstrate functional interaction by using strategic decision making processes in solving problems encountered in the field. • Contribute to the solution finding process regarding social, scientific, cultural and ethical problems in the field and support the development of these values. • Abide by professional codes of academic and research integrity.

* Adapted from National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey.

NQF Qualification Titles

Titles of the NQF qualifications/programmes indicate the qualification and programme type, field of study/discipline and provide a basis for national and international recognition. In order to control the ambiguity, HEC has outlined the basic names and has provided the criteria that how these names will be expanded to precisely describe the content covered.

Criteria for the Use of Titles/Nomenclature for the Degree
















1. The degree may be termed/ named as per the level along with respective major field of study/discipline, not stream/specialization.
Example: BS in Economics
2. A programme containing only one area may be termed as per its respective area of concentration, Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering etc.
Example: BS in Economics
3. A programme with specialization in at least 25 percent of the main field, the specialization may be indicated in Brackets
Example: BS in Computer Science (Programming), Bachelors in Electrical Engineering (Telecommunication)
4. A programme contains fundamental components of two fields of study with the percentage of 50-50, the qualification may be connected with "AND"
Example: BS in Economics and Political Science, BS in Physics and Mathematics etc.
5. A major-minor programme that contains at least 25 percent component in other fields of study is named using the connector "WITH"
Example: BS in Economics with Mathematics.

The transcript and degree certificate will use the nomenclature of the qualification to describe the field (s) of study.

NQF Qualification Names and Abbreviation of Degrees being used by HEIs/DAIs:

AD	Associate Degree (in technical, vocational, Professional fields)
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BBA	Bachelor of Business Administration
B.Com (Hons)	Bachelor of Commerce (Honours)
BE	Bachelor of Engineering
B.Tech	Bachelor of Technology
BSc (Engg.)	Bachelor of Science (Engineering)
BSc (Hons)	Bachelor of Science (Honors)
B.Ed. (Hons)	Bachelor of Education (Honors)
BFA	Bachelor of Fine Arts
B. Pharm	Bachelor of Pharmacy
BS	Bachelor of Science
Pharm D.	Doctor of Pharmacy
BDS	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
DVM	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
LL.B	Bachelor of Law
LL.M	Master of Law
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery
MD	Doctor of Medicine
M.E	Master of Engineering
M.Tech	Master of Technology
M.Ed.	Master of Education
MFA	Master of Fine Arts
MLS	Master of Library Sciences
MPA	Master of Public Administration
M. Pharm	Master of Pharmacy
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MPH	Master of Public Health
MS/MSc	Master of Science
MSc (Hons)	Master of Science (Honours)
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy

Nomenclature and Abbreviations of Qualifications offered in Pakistan

Award Type	Name of Degree	Abbreviation
Ordinary Bachelor/ Associate Degree 2 years/60-72 credit hours and 3 years/90-108 credit hours	 Bachelor of Science in (field of study/ discipline)  Bachelor of Arts in (Field of study/ discipline)	 BSc in (field of study/ discipline)  BA in (field of study/ discipline)
Bachelors (Hons) 4 years/124-140 credit hours 5 years*	 Bachelor of Science in (field of study/ discipline)  MBBS  Bachelors of Medicine and Bachelors of Surgery	 BS in (field of study/ discipline)  MBBS
Masters Minimum 30 Credit Hours with thesis or without thesis	 Master of Science in (field of study/disciple)  Master of Philosophy in (field of study/discipline)	 MS in (field of study/discipline)  MPhil in (field of study/ discipline)
Doctoral Minimum 18 credit hours course work and dissertation evaluated by at least two PhD. experts from technologically/academically advanced foreign countries in addition to one local expert and PhD Committee member	 Doctor of Philosophy in (field of study/ discipline)	 PhD in (field of study/ discipline)

* B.Arch., MBBS, DVM, Pharm.D, etc.

Degree Issuance Policy:

Introduction:

The reliability of qualification included in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is protected and maintained by:

- Legislation that provides for the accreditation of qualifications and organizations authorized to issue qualifications by accrediting authorities¹
- Quality assurance arrangements for qualifications and authorized issuing organisations²
- Nationally consistent and correct use of qualification titles/Nomenclature.

Policy:

All the graduates after completing a programme of study are entitled to receive the following documents on the award of degree;

- o A degree with security watermark and seal of the university
- o A Detailed Marks Certificate (DMC)/Transcripts with semester and cumulative GPA
- o Degree Supplement Form (on demand): The Degree Supplement Form (DSF) will also be provided on the demand of the graduates. It will provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual. The DSF contains name of the qualification, the comprehensive qualification profile including the levels, contents of the programme and result gained, access to further studies and the professional status etc.
- It is mandatory for a University/Degree Awarding Institution to conduct convocation once a year at the principal campus or at the regional sub-campuses.
- If any part of the study has been delivered/ assessed in a language other than English, the medium of instruction will be mentioned explicitly on the degree/DMC/Transcript.
- Adequate information must be provided on Degree, Detailed Marks Sheet and Transcript with seal that ensures that the degree is authentic. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) ensure that the final transcript for the award of degree includes following information:
 - o Name of Student (Front Side)
 - o Father's Name (Front Side)
 - o Date of Birth (Front Side)
 - o Registration No. /Roll No. (Front Side)

- o Date of Admission into Degree Program (Back Side)
- o Date of Completion of Degree Requirements (Back Side)
- o Basic Admission Requirement of the Program (Back Side)
- o Previous Degree Held by the Student along with Institution's Name (Back Side)
- o Semester Wise Break-up (Front Side)
- o Subjects Detail along with Credit Hours and GPA/ Marks (Front Side)
- o Credit Hours Exempted/Transferred (Front Side)
- o GPA/CGPA and Overall Percentage Against Earned CGPA or total marks respectively (Front Side at the End of the Transcript)
- o Picture of the Applicant be printed on Transcript. (Front Side)
- o CNIC No. for Pakistani and Passport No. for Foreign Student (Back Side)
- o Online Result Verification Key/ID (Front Side at the End of the Transcript)
- o Signature of Issuing Officer(s) (Front and Back Side at the end of the Transcript)
- o Scale Must be Mentioned on Back Side of the Transcript.(Back Side)
- o Charter Date of the University/DAI may be Mentioned.(Back Side)
- o Name of Campus/College be Mentioned along with HEC Permission Date (Back Side)
- o Mode of Study-----Regular or Private or Distance Learning (Front Side)

*Requirements for Issuing and Verifying degree

- The degree will only be issued by the Institutions recognized by the Higher Education Commission, Islamabad and authorized by Law to do so.
- The degree issuing University/DAIs is required to adhere to the rules, regulations and quality assurance criteria laid down by the HEC and the respective accreditation council and the compliance of the rules, regulation and criteria is systematically monitored by the HEC and respective accreditation council through well-laid out policies and procedures.
- The degree issuing organization requires seeking the formal approval of the HEC and respective accreditation council in case of change of title of qualification or replacement of any Degree.

Footnotes:

1. Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013
2. Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013

Description of Higher Education Qualifications:

The description informs the degree profile, education and employment pathways and the accreditation of the ordinary bachelor qualification.

The users of the description are degree issuing organizations, the accreditation bodies, industry, regulatory bodies, students, graduates, and employers.

Associate Degree:

Entry Requirements	HSSC/F.Sc/FA/A' level. (Level-04)
Duration	4 semesters/65-68 credit hours
Semester Duration	16-18 weeks (Minimum teaching 15 weeks, Exams one week)
Course load per semester	16-18 credit hours
Average no. of courses per semester	4-6 (not more than 3 lab/practical course/semester)
Level	5
Subject Areas	Associate of Arts degree, Associate of Applied Science degree, Associate of Science degree.

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Associate Degree qualifies individuals who apply underpinning technical and theoretical knowledge in arrange of contexts to undertake advanced skilled or paraprofessional work and as a pathway to further learning.
Knowledge	Graduate of Advanced Diploma will have specialized and integrated technical and theoretical knowledge with depth within one or more fields of work and learning
Skills	<p>Graduates of an Associate Degree will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to identify, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information and concept from a range of sources • Cognitive, technical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge and ideas with some depth in a discipline • Cognitive, communication and analytical skills to interpret and transmit responses to sometimes complex problems • Communication skills to make a clear and coherent presentation of knowledge and ideas with some intellectual independence
Application of knowledge and Skills	<p>Graduates of an Associate Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With initiative and judgment in planning, problem solving and decision making in paraprofessional practice • To adapt knowledge and skills in a range of contexts and/or for further studies in one or more disciplines • To adapt fundamental principles and techniques to known and unknown situations • With responsibility and accountability for own learning and work and in collaborations with others within broad parameters

Pathways to Further Education:

The graduates can complete the Bachelor's degree in the area of specialization

Pathways to Employment:

Seek employment in the area of professional/ vocational development at the entry level.

2-year Bachelor (Pass) Degree:

Entry Requirements	HSSC/F.Sc/FA/A' level. (Level-04)
Duration	2-years/60-72 credit hours
Level	5
Subject Area	Arts, Commerce, Natural Sciences, Humanities
Qualifications Offered	BA, BSc, B.com, BBA, (2 years),

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Bachelor Degree qualifies individual who applies broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning.
Knowledge	Graduate of Bachelor Degree (pass) will have a broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning.
Skills	<p>Graduate of Bachelor Degree will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to review critically, analyze, consolidate and synthesize knowledge Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas • Cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgment in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence • Communication skill to represent a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas
Application of Knowledge and Skills	<p>Graduate of Bachelor Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With initiative and judgment in planning, problem solving and decision making in professional practice and/or scholarship • To adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • With responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to Bachelor (Honors) A 2 year Bachelor Degree (BA, BSc etc.) under Annual System is equivalent to 50 credit hours under the semester system. Students after 2 year Bachelor degree (annual system) should be enrolled in Bridging Semester, Minimum Courses to be studied in this semester (18 Crt Hrs: Four Courses (English 3 Cr.Hr, Computing 3 Crt Hrs, **Mathematics** 3 Crt Hrs, Management Skills 2 Crt Hrs). Two Courses each 3 Crt Hrs (Introductory broad core courses related to degree program core) to be identified by the University.

Semesters 5 to 8 (approximately 65-67 Crt Hrs) Basic courses (Mathematics, English, Islamic/Pakistan Studies, humanities), intermediate and advanced core courses related to degree program core. Award of 4 year Bachelor Degree yields 16 years of education)

<p>Admission into Masters after 2 years Bachelor</p>	<p>This is for those students who will be joining the institute after completing 2 years Bachelor (annual system). The students may be enrolled into the Master's programme directly by offering 94-106 credit hours, but they have to fulfil the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Will earn first 64 76 credit hours at undergraduate level, and then ii. Will earn 30 credit hours at Masters / M. Phil level. <p>· The Institute is obliged to issue a Bachelor (Hons.) degree to the student after completing the additional undergraduate course requirement, i.e. 64-76 credit hours.</p>
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Pathways to Employment

3-year Bachelor (Pass) Degree:

Entry Requirements	HSSC/F.Sc/FA/A' level. (Level-04)
Duration	3 years/90-108 credit hours
Level	5
Subject Area	Arts, Commerce, Natural Sciences ,humanities,
Qualifications Offered	BA (Hons), BSc, , BCS, BBA, (3 years)

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Bachelor Degree qualifies individual who applies broad and coherent body of knowledge in a range of contexts to undertake professional work and as a pathway for further learning.
Knowledge	Graduate of Bachelor Degree (pass) will have a broad and coherent body of knowledge, with depth in the underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines as a basis for independent lifelong learning.
Skills	<p>Graduate of Bachelor Degree will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to review critically, analyze, consolidate and synthesize knowledge Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge with depth in some areas • Cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgment in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence • Communication skill to represent a clear, coherent and independent exposition of knowledge and ideas
Application of Knowledge and Skills	<p>Graduate of Bachelor Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With initiative and judgment in planning, problem solving and decision making in professional practice and/or scholarship • To adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • With responsibility and accountability for own learning and professional practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to Bachelor (Honors)

Admission into Masters after 3 years Bachelor

Pathways to Employment

Entry level employment in the field of study


Professional Bachelor Degree:

Entry Requirements	HSSC/F.Sc/FA/A' level. (Level-04)
Duration	4 years (8-semesters)/124-140 credit hours 5 years (10 semesters)/160-170 credit hours
Semester Duration	16-18 weeks
Course load per semester	15-18 credit hours
Level	6
Subject Areas	Agriculture, Architecture, Business Education, Computing Education, Engineering, Homoeopathy, Law, Medical& Dental, Nursing, Pharmacy, Teachers Education, Tibb, Veterinary Sciences,
Qualifications offered	BBA (Hons), B.Arch., BE, LLB, MBBS, BDS, B. Pharm, PharmD, B.Ed, DVM,

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Bachelor Honours Degree qualifies individual who apply body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research further learning.
Knowledge	Graduate of Bachelor Honours Degree will have coherent and advanced knowledge of underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines and knowledge of research and principles and methods
Skills	Graduate of Bachelor Honours Degree will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to review, analyze, consolidate and synthesis knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problem with intellectual independence • Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with advanced understanding in some areas • Cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgment in developing new understanding • Technical skills to design and use research in a project • Communication skill to represent a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences."
Application of knowledge and Skills	Graduate of Bachelor Honours Degree will demonstrate the application of Knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With initiative and judgment in professional practice and/or scholarship • To adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • With responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters • To plan and execute project work and/or a piece of research and scholarship with some independence

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to MPhil/MS	 Sixteen years of schooling or 4 year education (124-140 credit hours) after HSSC/F.A./F.Sc/Grade 12 equivalent will be required for admission in the M.Phil./MS.
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Pathways to Employment

Bachelors Degree:

4-year Bachelor Degrees:

Entry Requirements	HSSC/F.Sc/FA/A' level. (Level-04)
Duration	8 Semesters (4years)/124-140 Credit Hours
Semester Duration	16-18 weeks
Credit Hours	15 – 18 Credit Hours*
Level	6
Subject Areas	Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences , Biological Sciences, Business Studies, physical sciences, Computer Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences
Qualifications offered	BS, B.E, BSc (Eng.), BSc (Agri), B.Com (Hons), B.Tech (Hons) etc.

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to MPhil/MS	 Sixteen years of schooling or 4 year education (124-136 credit hours) after HSSC/F.A./F.Sc/Grade 12 equivalent will be required for admission in the M.Phil./MS.
	 The GAT-General (www.nts.org.pk/gat/gat.asp) conducted by the National Testing Service with a minimum 50% cumulative score will be required at the time of admission to M.Phil./M.S.

Pathways to Employment

Employment as Faculty in Colleges, Industry and Business.

Masters Degree:


1-2 Years MA/MSc:

Entry Requirements	BA, BSc., B.Com, BBA (3 years), BCS
Duration	1-2 years (Include total Credit Hours)
Level	6
Subject Areas	Biological Sciences, Business Studies, Physical Sciences, Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, humanities, Languages
Qualifications offered	MA, MSc, MBA, MCS etc.

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Bachelor Honors Degree qualifies individual who apply body of knowledge in a specific context to undertake professional work and as a pathway for research further learning.
Knowledge	Graduate of Bachelor Honors Degree will have coherent and advanced knowledge of underlying principles and concepts in one or more disciplines and knowledge of research and principles and methods
Skills	<p>"Graduate of Bachelor Honors Degree will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to review, analyze, consolidate and synthesis knowledge to identify and provide solutions to complex problem with intellectual independence • Cognitive and technical skills to demonstrate a broad understanding of a body of knowledge and theoretical concepts with advanced understanding in some areas • Cognitive skills to exercise critical thinking and judgment in developing new understanding • Technical skills to design and use research in a project • Communication skill to represent a clear and coherent exposition of knowledge and ideas to a variety of audiences.
Application of knowledge and Skills	<p>Graduate of Bachelor Honors Degree will demonstrate the application of Knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With initiative and judgment in professional practice and/or scholarship • To adapt knowledge and skills in diverse contexts • With responsibility and accountability for own learning and practice and in collaboration with others within broad parameters • To plan and execute project work and/or a piece of innovative research and scholarship with some independence

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to MPhil/MS	 Sixteen years of schooling or 4 year education (124 credit hours) after HSSC/F.A. /F.Sc/Grade 12 equivalent will be required for admission in the M.Phil./MS.
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Pathways to Employment

Employment as School, College, Faculty, Research Institutions, Business and Industry, Entrepreneurship in area of specialization
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Masters Degree:

Entry Requirements	✚ Sixteen years of schooling or 4 year education (124-136) credit hours) after HSSC/F.A. /F.Sc/Grade 12 equivalent
Duration	1.5 – 2 years
Semester Duration	16- 18 weeks
Credit Hours	30 credit hours of course work or complete 24 credit hours of course work along with a minimum of 6 credit hours for research work/thesis.
Level	7
Subject Areas	Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences , Biological Sciences, Business Studies, physical sciences, computer sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences,
Qualifications offered	MS, MPhil, M.E, MSc (Eng.), MSc (Agri), M.Com (Hons), M.Tech (Hons)etc.

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	<p>The Master’s Degree (Research)</p> <p>The Master Degree (Research) qualifies individuals who apply an advanced body of knowledge in a range of contexts for research and scholarship and as a pathway for further learning.</p>
Knowledge	<p>Graduate of Master Degree (Research) will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A body of knowledge that includes the understanding of recent developments in one or more disciplines • Advanced knowledge of research principle and methods applicable to the field of work or learning
Skills	<p>Graduate of a Master Degree (Research) will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to demonstrate mastery of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on theory and its application • Cognitive, technical and creative skills to investigate, analyses and synthesize complex information, problems, concepts and theories to apply established theories to different bodies of knowledge or practice • Cognitive, technical and creative skills to generate and evaluate complex ideas and concepts at an abstract level • Cognitive and technical skills to design, use and evaluate research and research methods • Communication and technical skills to present a coherent and sustained argument and to disseminate research results to specialist and non-specialist audiences • Technical and communication skills to design, evaluate, implement, analyses, theories and disseminate research that makes a contribution to knowledge
Application of knowledge and Skills	<p>Graduate of Master Degree (Research) will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With creativity and initiative to new situations and/or for further learning • With high level personal autonomy and accountability • To plan and execute a substantial piece of research

Pathways to Further Education:

Admission to PhD	✚ PhD minimum CGPA 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale in the Semester System) or First Division (in the Annual System) in M.Phil./M.S/Equivalent degree is required
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Pathways to Employment

Doctoral (PhD) Degree:

Entry Requirements	✚ PhD minimum CGPA 3.0 (out of 4.0 in the Semester System) or First Division (in the Annual System) in M.Phil./M.S/Equivalent degree is required
Duration	Minimum 18 credit hours course work and dissertation evaluated by at least two Ph.D. experts from technologically / academically advanced foreign countries in addition to local doctoral Committee members
Level	8
Subject Areas	Biological Sciences, Business Studies, Physical Sciences, Computer Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities
Qualifications offered	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Learning Outcomes:

Purpose	The Doctoral Degree qualifies individuals who apply a substantial body of knowledge to research, investigate and develop new knowledge in one or more fields of investigation, scholarship or professional practice.
Knowledge	Graduate of Doctoral Degree will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A substantial body of knowledge at the frontier of a field of work or learning, including knowledge that constitute an original contribution • Substantial knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to the field of work or learning
Skills	Graduate of Doctoral Degree will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills to demonstrate expert understanding of theoretical knowledge and to reflect critically on that theory and practice • Cognitive skills and use of intellectual independence to think critically, evaluate existing knowledge and ideas, undertake systematic investigation and reflect on theory and practice to generate original knowledge • Expert technical and creative skills applicable to the field of work or learning • Communication skills to explain and critique theoretical propositions, methodologies and conclusions • Communication skills to present cogently a complex investigation of originality or original research for external examination against international standards and to communicate results to peer and the community • Expert skills to design, implement, analyze, theorize and communicate research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice
Application of knowledge and Skills	Graduate of Doctoral Degree will demonstrate the application of knowledge and skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With intellectual independence • With initiative and creativity in news situations and/or for further learning • With full responsibility and accountability for personal outputs • To plan and execute original research • With the ongoing capacity to generate new knowledge, including in the context of professional practice

Pathways to Further Education:

Post-Doc Research

Pathways to Employment

University Faculty, Professional research in areas of specialization

References:

- I. National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)
- II. Higher Education Commission (www.hec.gov.pk)
- III. National Curriculum Framework Development



Higher Education Commission of Pakistan