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ARTICLES

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Tuning higher education: A thematic review of quality assurance and qualifications frameworks towards improving standards and student mobility

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Abstract: This research identifies areas that are critical in higher education, focusing on interdependent dynamics between the quality assurance and qualifications framework. It identifies their separate significance and how they complement each other in order to have a better impact in academia.

Key Findings and Results:

Quality Assurance Diverse Models: The study exposes a variety to global quality assurance models that inspire academic excellence and institutional accountability. Among major methods of ensuring quality are the processes of accreditation, assessment of academic programs, and the functions of quality assurance agencies.

Role of Qualifications Frameworks: This study examines how national qualifications frameworks are structured to bring about more transparency, comparability, and recognition of qualifications. This is also an area where quality assurance agencies become crucial to facilitate regional and international mobility, as well as connect educational achievements to labor market needs.

System Integration: In this study, a look is made into the ways in which quality assurance agencies influence the development and refinement of qualifications

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frameworks and how such frameworks are aligned with international standards in support of cross-border recognition of qualifications.

Best Practices and Challenges: This study identifies best practices, challenges, and future directions by a critical literature review and case studies on quality assurance and qualifications frameworks.

The study concludes with valuable lessons for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders seeking to enhance the quality of higher education globally, by stressing that integration of quality assurance and qualifications frameworks holds the key.

Keywords: higher education; quality assurance; qualifications frameworks (QFs); European qualifications framework (EQF); United Kingdom qualifications framework (UKQF); Australian qualifications framework (AQF); South Africa qualifications framework (SAQF); New Zealand qualifications framework (NZQF); Jordanian national qualifications framework (JNQF).

I. Introduction

I.1. Background information

In recent years, the landscape of higher education has undergone transformational changes, with a greater emphasis on assuring academic excellence, fostering openness, and encouraging international mobility. The notions of quality assurance and certification frameworks have emerged as crucial pillars in establishing the standards and efficacy of higher education institutions around the world, according to Zapp and Ramirez (2019).

Lemaitre in (2017) examined the challenges of quality assurance in higher education in Latin America, focusing on structural changes, national systems, regional arrangements, and perceived effects of implementing quality assurance mechanisms. The region faces high inequality and increased demand for tertiary education due to a growing adult population and diversified student body. Three major trends in Latin American higher education systems are expansion of enrollment, diversification, and privatization. The article emphasizes institutional autonomy and the absence of recognized national higher education areas, suggesting initiatives for improvement such as recognizing diversity, developing reliable information systems, and professionalizing management. González and González and Maria (2013) focused on the importance of degree profiles in the design of degrees and their consequences in higher education. It highlights four main components that should be considered when creating new qualifications: analyzing social and professional needs, future trends, referencing the meta-profile, and considering the university where the program is anchored. The

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Tuning Project, a network of Communities of Learning, has shaped higher education intellectual identity for over ten years.

Demchuk et al. (2015) discussed competence-based learning in Russia and its integration into the European Higher Education Area. It proposes an algorithm based on the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe methodology, focusing on assessing learning outcomes. The article also addresses challenges related to mobility, transparency, and information in higher education. The study supported by the European Union, highlights the importance of quality assurance processes in the dynamic higher education environment. It calls for continuous improvement in governance and management practices. On the other hand, using the Tuning Russia project as a model, Zabotkina et al. (2019) explored how to create a translation studies master's program using a modular competence-based approach. The study, which focuses specifically on the LSP translation module, highlights the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration and specialized text translation in order to implant the competencies that are necessary for professional credentials. It is shown how the Bologna Process has influenced Russian higher education and helped it become more in line with European standards. The article suggests the LSP module as a possible model and argues for agreement between the EU and Russia on the development of translation competency models. The paper emphasizes the significance of globally consistent criteria, recognizing the difficulties in evaluating competencies and striving for compliance with the Bologna Process in the Russian higher education system.

Quality assurance in higher education refers to systematic processes and methods that monitor, evaluate, and improve the quality and standards of academic programs and institutions. Accreditation, program evaluations, and institutional assessments are all important components of quality assurance activities, since they help to improve educational offerings and institutional accountability over time. The importance of quality assurance has become even more evident in a globalized environment, where higher education institutions are increasingly networked, and the necessity for established quality benchmarks has intensified (Altbach et al. 2019; Airey and Benckendorff 2017).

Concurrently, national and regional qualification frameworks have emerged as critical tools for establishing and coordinating educational qualifications. These frameworks provide a common language for articulating learning outcomes and abilities at various levels of education. Qualification frameworks make it easier to recognise academic achievements on a national and international scale by developing a transparent and comparable framework. They play an important role in facilitating student mobility,

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supporting lifelong learning efforts, and aligning educational achievements with the changing demands of the workforce (Baker et al. 2017).

The junction of quality assurance and qualification frameworks is a vibrant field of research that requires a thorough examination. Understanding how quality assurance procedures contribute to the establishment and improvement of certification frameworks is critical for improving the overall efficacy of higher education institutions (Lim 2018). Furthermore, aligning qualification frameworks with international standards and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders are crucial topics that demand in-depth investigation (Caena and Redecker 2019).

This study will delve into these linked areas, providing insights into the best practices, problems, and future directions of quality assurance and credentialing frameworks in higher education. Through a detailed assessment of current literature, case studies, and analyses, this research attempts to add to the continuing discourse regarding the development of higher education standards on a worldwide scale.

I.2. Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks

In today's higher education scene, the symbiotic relationship between Quality Assurance (QA) methods and Qualifications Frameworks (QFs) stands out as a crucial predictor of educational excellence, international competitiveness, and the overall efficacy of academic institutions (O'Shea 2018). The shifting standards in these fields have a vital role in influencing the quality and relevance of educational achievements in an era distinguished by globalization, technological breakthroughs, and changing societal needs (Catacutan et al. 2023).

Quality assurance in higher education is the systematic processes and procedures used to ensure and improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of academic programs and institutions. Ayoo et al. (2020) define quality assurance methods as accreditation processes, peer reviews, program evaluations, and institutional assessments, all of which aim to create continuous improvement and accountability in the higher education sector. In today's dynamic educational scene, quality assurance has become crucial for preserving and improving the legitimacy and standards of academic offerings (Phillips and Kinser 2018).

At the same time, Qualifications Frameworks have arisen as comprehensive systems for defining and aligning educational qualifications within a defined framework. These frameworks explain the desired learning goals, abilities, and skills associated with various stages of education,

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resulting in a transparent and globally applicable structure (Holdsworth and Thomas, 2021). In today's world, national and international Qualifications Frameworks promote academic mobility, lifelong learning initiatives, and cross-border qualification recognition. The role of higher education in driving economic growth and fostering social cohesion is underscored, urging the formulation of policies aligned with current global trends and stakeholder aspirations. Emphasizing the integration of lifelong learning (LLL) principles, the concept of policy learning is introduced, advocating for systematic knowledge extraction and communication, so that transformation of public institutions into learning systems and proposes higher education institutions adopt learning organization structures. With a focus on recognizing everyone as a learner, the importance is emphasized for institutions to teach from diverse stakeholders, including non-traditional learners, contributing to societal improvement through the generation and application of knowledge (Vargas 2014; Rifai 2015).

The interaction between QA and QFs demonstrates a complicated relationship in which quality assurance in educational processes helps to establish, implement, and revise qualifications frameworks. QA and QFs collaborate to build a more comprehensive and responsive higher education environment by aligning curricula with industry needs, emphasizing student-centered learning outcomes, and promoting internationalization (Bateman and Dyson 2022).

As educational systems adopt more global standards and best practices, the dynamic relationship between QA and QFs becomes a focus of research and policy considerations. Contemporary standards in both QA and QFs must adapt to the changing nature of education, embracing challenges like as technological integration, multidisciplinary methods, and the expectations of a varied and interconnected global workforce. Moreover, the impact of integrating creative technology and Interactive Learning in higher education, contribute to the development of I-Generation skills, enhance student-lecturer interaction, and increase student attention (Chikazinga 2022). It's worth mentioning technology integration in universities enhances learning and social circles, but faces challenges like high costs, lack of training, and resistance from traditional staff. Interactive sessions are crucial for maintaining student-teacher relationships and enhancing learning. Quality assurance depends on the implementation of interactive tools and staff training, but lack of knowledge can hinder effective teaching (Al-Azzeh 2019; El-Qirem et al. 2022).

This study seeks to investigate the existing standards of Quality Assurance and Qualifications Frameworks in higher education, giving light on their

interrelationship and impact on educational results. By exploring recent advancements, problems, and creative approaches, the study hopes to give useful insights into how these two pillars of higher education might together enhance the standards of learning, teaching, and institutional success in the modern academic landscape.

II. Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) for the European Union (EU), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and its use in quality assurance

II.1. Introduction

The creation of strong and transparent frameworks for higher education qualifications is a global effort that reflects a dedication to the quality, comparability, and international recognition of academic achievements. This section investigates the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in five different regions: the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, and it ends by clarifying various details and aspects related to the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework. These frameworks are critical instruments not just for constructing academic credentials, but also for facilitating effective quality assurance methods in higher education systems.

At the European level, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) aligns certification regimes across member countries, enabling mobility and recognition. This study examines the EQF's use in quality assurance across the EU's broad educational landscape, stressing its importance in fostering collaboration, comparability, and adherence to agreed academic standards (Mikulec 2017). By investigating the FHEQ in these diverse regions, this study aims to unravel the intricate relationship between qualifications frameworks and quality assurance practices, shedding light on their effectiveness, challenges, and the potential for harmonization in a globalized higher education landscape.

The UK's Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), which evolved from the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) framework in 2008, is innovative, yet it confronts issues such as unitization and criticism for inflexibility. Quality assurance and credentialing frameworks are critical for creating higher education, driving program creation, and sustaining standards. They promote flexibility through the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) system and adhere to worldwide standards such as the European Qualifications Framework. Continuous development promotes relevance and adaptability while encouraging collaboration, recognition, and mobility. The

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symbiotic relationship between quality assurance and credentialing frameworks is critical for maintaining educational quality and enabling informed decision-making in the university sector (Lim 2021; Leu 2017).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a 1995 system that regulates qualifications offered by Australian universities, aiming to provide transparency and uniformity in evaluating degrees across different sectors. It includes all levels of education and requires active participation from universities. Implementing the AQF requires consistent curriculum reviews, periodic changes, and collaboration with stakeholders like trade groups, government agencies, and community organizations to ensure quality and applicability of qualifications (Noonan 2019).

South Africa's education and training system is based on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). SAQA, established in 1995, supervises and develops the NQF, ensuring the validity and comparability of qualifications both domestically and globally. The NQF, established in 1998, categorizes and identifies qualifications in various education and training domains, encouraging lifelong learning and improving education quality. It has ten levels, starting at Level 1 (Adult Basic Education and Training) and ending at Level 10 (Doctoral degree). The NQF Amendment Act of 2012 improved its functioning and addressed issues. In the university sector, SAQA and the NQF ensure that all degrees granted by universities comply with national and international standards. However, alignment across various sectors is a significant challenge, and concerns regarding recognition of prior learning (RPL) in universities must be addressed (Moosa 2018).

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is a global effort to establish strong and transparent frameworks for higher education qualifications. It is crucial for constructing academic credentials and facilitating effective quality assurance methods in higher education systems. The EU's EQF aligns certification regimes across member countries, fostering collaboration and recognition. The UK's Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) promotes flexibility and adherence to global standards. Australia's AQF provides a consistent system for qualifications across multiple education sectors, facilitating national and worldwide qualification recognition. South Africa's NQF encourages lifelong learning and academic excellence, while the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) emphasizes clarity and consistency. These frameworks play a vital role in maintaining educational quality and enabling informed decision-making in the university sector (Barker 2018; Chan 2016).

II.2. FHEQ key components

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is a critical tool in higher education, providing a systematic and uniform structure for organizing and categorizing academic qualifications in this field. It acts as a reference point for institutions, students, employers, and other stakeholders, ensuring clarity and consistency in interpreting academic attainment levels (Stowell et al. 2016). Table 1 depicts the essential components of the FHEQ (Hawley 2016).

Table 1

Key components of the FHEQ

Component	Description
Levels of Qualifications	The FHEQ comprises several levels, each corresponding to a specific stage of academic progression. In most cases these levels range from Level 1 to Level 10 (Doctoral degree). Each level is associated with distinct learning outcomes, reflecting the depth and complexity of knowledge and skills expected at that stage.
Qualification Descriptors	At each level, the FHEQ includes descriptors that articulate the general characteristics of qualifications. These descriptors define the knowledge, understanding, and skills that students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of a particular qualification.
Types of Qualifications	The FHEQ encompasses various types of qualifications, including certificates, diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral degrees. Each type of qualification is positioned within the framework based on its academic rigor and depth.
Credit Accumulation and Transfer	The FHEQ incorporates the concept of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT), allowing for the modularization of programs. Credits represent the volume of learning, and students can accumulate credits toward higher-level qualifications or transfer them between institutions.
Quality Assurance and Accreditation	The FHEQ plays a crucial role in the quality assurance processes of higher education institutions. It provides a common reference for internal quality assurance mechanisms and external accreditation bodies. Accreditation of programs and institutions often involves alignment with the FHEQ, ensuring that academic standards are met consistently.

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Component	Description
Alignment with European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	The FHEQ is designed to align with the broader European Qualifications Framework (EQF), facilitating comparability and recognition of qualifications across European countries. This alignment promotes international mobility and collaboration in education.

II.3. What is the purpose of the FHEQ?

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) is a critical tool meant to serve a variety of important functions in the higher education landscape. The FHEQ was developed to give clarity, uniformity, and comparability across academic qualifications, and it plays an important role in influencing students' educational experiences, guiding institutions, and facilitating larger public understanding (McGhee 2021). Table 2 highlights the FHEQ's major purposes.

Table 2

Purpose of the FHEQ

Purpose	Description
Standardization and Transparency	The FHEQ creates a standardized framework for categorizing and classifying academic qualifications. This standardization adds transparency to the varied range of qualifications granted by higher education institutions, allowing students, employers, and educational professionals to better understand the nature and level of various qualifications.
Levels of Academic Attainment	One of the primary purposes of the FHEQ is to define distinct levels of academic attainment. Each level corresponds to a specific stage of the academic journey, in most cases ranging from Level 1 to Level 10 (Doctoral degree). This hierarchical structure provides a clear progression framework, aiding students in understanding the depth and complexity of knowledge and skills associated with each level.
Qualification Descriptors	The FHEQ includes qualification descriptors for each level, outlining the general characteristics and learning outcomes expected from individuals who achieve a particular qualification. These descriptors serve as a reference point for institutions in designing and assessing programs, ensuring alignment with established academic standards.

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Purpose	Description
Quality Assurance and Accreditation	The FHEQ, which serves as the cornerstone for quality assurance systems, helps higher education institutions maintain and improve academic standards. Accreditation authorities and quality assurance agencies use the FHEQ to analyze the rigor and appropriateness of programs, ensuring that institutions meet defined standards.
International Comparability	The FHEQ facilitates international comparability of qualifications. By aligning with frameworks such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), it enables global stakeholders to understand the qualifications system. This comparability is crucial for international collaboration, mobility of students, and recognition of qualifications on the global stage.
Credit Accumulation and Transfer	The FHEQ contains the notion of Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT), which allows for greater flexibility in learning courses. Students' credits can be acquired and transferred, encouraging lifelong learning and allowing individuals to pursue education at their own pace and through a variety of educational institutions.
Guidance for Lifelong Learning	The FHEQ provides a foundation for lifelong learning by offering a structured framework that accommodates different types of learners. It encourages individuals to engage in education across various stages of life, fostering continuous personal and professional development.
Empowering Stakeholders	By providing a thorough and accessible framework, the FHEQ enables stakeholders such as students, employers, and educators to make educated decisions. It helps students organize their academic career, companies identify potential employees' qualifications, and educators develop curricula.

Understanding the FHEQ's numerous aims is critical for determining its impact on the higher education environment and its role in fostering educational excellence, transparency, and lifelong learning. This study will look into the subtleties of how the FHEQ fulfills its objectives and influences educational policies and practices in the United Kingdom.

II.4. The application of the FHEQ

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) shapes and guides higher education in a variety of ways, with implications for institutions,

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students, employers, and regulatory organizations. Its many uses include serving as a framework for academic program design and revision, assuring uniformity and quality in offerings. It also plays an important role in quality assurance and accreditation, guiding institutions to comply with FHEQ descriptors. The FHEQ serves as a resource for students in pathway planning, facilitates credit accumulation and transfer, aids employers in understanding qualifications, allows for international comparability, guides policy development, promotes institutional collaboration, and undergoes continuous improvement to adapt to evolving educational needs (Bowers 2021).

Understanding the FHEQ's numerous uses emphasizes its critical role in sustaining quality, promoting educational mobility, and allowing informed decision-making in the higher education sector. This study seeks to investigate the practical consequences and outcomes of the FHEQ's use within the educational ecosystem.

II.5. How do QAA's audit and review teams employ the FHEQ?

Quality assurance is an important part of higher education around the world, with several accreditation agencies and review committees ensuring academic standards are maintained. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is a major actor in this scene, using a thorough audit and review system to evaluate program quality across many institutions. The use of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), a crucial tool that provides uniform criteria for academic qualifications, is central to these evaluations, according to McGhee (2021).

The FHEQ is used as a major tool in evaluations by audit and review teams at quality assurance agencies around the world. This entails a thorough review of academic programs to ensure that they are aligned with the national or regional requirements established in the FHEQ. The framework, which includes qualification descriptors and level indicators, acts as a global standard against which institutions are evaluated. During the audit and review processes, teams determine whether the design and implementation of academic programs meets the criteria for each qualification level. In this broader context, the FHEQ emerges as a critical guide for quality assurance, assuring the uniformity, quality, and relevance of higher education offerings worldwide (Airey and Benckendorff 2017).

II.6. How the FHEQ is kept up to date?

Keeping the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) relevant and responsive is a dynamic process that requires continuous

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revisions and reviews to keep up with changing educational demands and societal trends. The FHEQ's maintenance and enhancement need collaborative activities that involve important players in the higher education sector, according to Maxwell and Armellini (2019).

The FHEQ is normally kept up to date by periodic assessments undertaken by educational authorities, accreditation bodies, and relevant institutions. These assessments aim to assess the framework's efficacy and relevance in meeting current educational needs. Input from academic experts, policymakers, industry representatives, and other stakeholders is vital in identifying areas for improvement and revising qualification descriptions (Lambert 2016).

Furthermore, the FHEQ's compatibility with bigger international frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ensures its continued relevance. This alignment enables worldwide comparability, which promotes international recognition and mobility (Lambert 2016).

Overall, the FHEQ's constant improvement and adaptation demonstrate its dedication to staying a strong and responsive tool that represents the dynamic nature of higher education and matches with the changing requirements of students, institutions, and society.

III. European Qualifications Framework (EQF): Perspective from the sector of the universities

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), launched in 2008, is a key attempt for unifying and comparing qualifications across European countries. It acts as a reference framework for increasing transparency and qualification recognition across Europe. The EQF is divided into eight tiers depending on learning objectives, with the goal of increasing skill mobility and transferability. This learner-centered approach enables individuals to receive recognized for their knowledge and competences gained through a variety of means, including formal schooling, non-formal training, and job experience. The EQF supports lifelong learning, improves employability, and promotes social inclusion throughout Europe by providing a consistent structure for comparing degrees across countries and sectors. It serves as a translation tool for making national qualifications understandable while also promoting workforce and learner mobility according to Bohlinger (2019).

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was formed in 2008 to improve the transparency, comparability, and transferability of qualifications throughout Europe. Its origins may be traced back to early 2000s debates about a uniform qualification framework, which culminated in a consultation

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procedure started by the European Commission in 2004. The European Parliament and Council adopted the EQF in 2008, which consists of eight reference levels based on learning outcomes and competencies. These levels range from fundamental skills to advanced knowledge, with precise descriptors for knowledge, abilities, and autonomy. Over time, the EQF has been revised to preserve its effectiveness and relevance according to Elken (2016).

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) aims to improve the transparency, comparability, and transferability of qualifications throughout Europe. It has eight reference levels that define knowledge, abilities, and competencies, ranging from basic to advanced degrees. The EQF prioritizes learning outcomes, evaluating individuals based on practical application rather than formal degrees. It also refers to national qualification frameworks to ensure compliance with European standards. Furthermore, the EQF encourages the recognition of earlier learning through validation and accreditation processes, allowing individuals to be recognized for their knowledge and abilities regardless of source according to Mikulec (2017).

The European credentials Framework (EQF) has had a substantial impact on Europe's university future by increasing transparency and comparability of credentials. It acts as a shared reference point, making it easier to recognize and evaluate qualifications across borders. This is beneficial to students who want to extend their education or work overseas. The EQF also promotes lifelong learning, encouraging universities to provide flexible courses and acknowledge non-formal and informal learning. This inclusive approach welcomes a wide spectrum of learners, including those with job experience. Furthermore, the EQF has helped to build clearer progression pathways inside university systems by linking qualifications with specified learning outcomes. Overall, the EQF has altered the university sector by encouraging transparency, lifelong learning, and clearer pathways for students according to Bohlinger (2019).

The adoption of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) brings both obstacles and opportunities to universities. Aligning national credentials frameworks with the EQF presents challenges, as does the need for curriculum reviews and prospective program adjustments. Another problem is a clear grasp of the EQF levels and descriptors, which requires staff training to ensure uniform interpretation. However, implementing the EQF provides potential for universities to improve transparency, comparability, and qualification recognition in Europe. It promotes student mobility, quality assurance, and learner-centered techniques that prioritize learning outcomes over input-based education. This change emphasizes student-centered

teaching methods, resulting in a more dynamic educational environment according to Elken (2016).

IV. Quality assurance and qualifications frameworks in the United Kingdom (UK): Perspective from the sector of the universities

The UK's qualifications frameworks have evolved over time, with the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) being the third-generation successor to the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) framework. Introduced in 1987, the NVQ aimed to classify vocational qualifications by level and occupational sector. The QCF, introduced in 2008, focuses on units rather than qualifications, allowing achievements to be captured and certified regardless of size, level, or learning context. The QCF covers only part of the qualifications system, mainly focusing on vocational and basic skills qualifications. However, challenges related to unitization and credit, such as surface-level and atomistic learning, are discussed. The QCF is seen as an innovative development, aligning credit-based approaches with a qualifications framework, but faces criticism for being less flexible in responding to innovations within the qualification system. Additionally, the QCF lacks links between vocational qualifications and professional status, suggesting that professional bodies play a significant role in the UK qualifications system but should not be the appropriate place for positioning memberships and registrations according to Leu (2017).

Quality assurance and credentials frameworks play an important role in establishing the landscape of higher education in the United Kingdom (UK), notably in the university sectors. The constant interaction of quality assurance procedures and credentials frameworks lays the groundwork for sustaining and improving educational standards, ensuring that academic programs are aligned with national norms. Universities in the United Kingdom regularly use these frameworks to design, structure, and review academic programs. The qualification descriptors and level indicators given by these frameworks help institutions maintain consistency and quality across a variety of program offerings according to Lim (2021).

Accreditation bodies and quality assurance agencies in the United Kingdom utilize these frameworks to assess the quality and standards of higher education programs. Institutions seeking certification must demonstrate compliance with the descriptors outlined in credentials frameworks, ensuring that their academic offerings match the established standards for each qualification level. Furthermore, these frameworks give vital help to students, assisting them in grasping the hierarchy of qualifications, accompanying

learning outcomes, and making educated judgments about program selection (Wang 2019).

The UK credentials frameworks also support the Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) system, which enables students to accrue and transfer credits between institutions. This flexibility encourages a variety of learning paths, such as part-time education, work-based learning, and recognition of prior learning, so increasing accessibility and supporting lifelong learning. Employers benefit from the frameworks because they allow them to grasp the qualifications and competencies associated with various levels of academic attainment, resulting in more informed recruiting and workforce development plans (Leu 2017).

Furthermore, it is critical to discuss the intricate complexities underlying the vital role that these meticulously designed frameworks play in the worldwide educational landscape. The UK qualifications frameworks masterfully orchestrated as these frameworks strategically align themselves with bigger frameworks, most notably the prestigious European Qualifications Framework (EQF), gains undeniable prominence. The importance of this strategic synergy goes beyond rhetoric, serving as a keystone for achieving unprecedented worldwide awareness on a massive scale. This sophisticated interplay of comparability, far from being a passing fad, emerges as a foundation for the frictionless mobility of not only academically astute students but also seasoned professionals beyond the frontiers of international academia. Within this crucible, previously hidden potentials for boosting the worldwide eminence of the United Kingdom's higher education sector emerge (Wang 2019).

Furthermore, a thorough investigation into the labyrinthine regions of institutional collaboration and articulation is required, as these sacred ideals are elevated through the complicated tapestry of qualifying frameworks. These frameworks, when painstakingly created and implemented, become real torchbearers, offering a vital common reference point for the complex processes of recognizing and effortlessly transferring qualifications across the enormous landscapes of universities. The orchestration of institutional collaboration reaches its peak, resulting in a harmonic symphony that echoes across academia. Furthermore, the everlasting ethos of continual development and adaptation serves as a guiding star for the paths of these frameworks. They transform through the lens of periodic reviews, maintaining a constant resonance with the dynamic and changing scene of higher education in the United Kingdom. The symphony of continual improvement resonates throughout educational institutions, guaranteeing that these frameworks are paragons of relevance, responsiveness, and seamless alignment with the ever-changing educational landscape according to Lim (2021).

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A comprehensive grasp of the several ways in which the symbiotic link between quality assurance and credentials frameworks occurs inside the prestigious domain of the university sector acquires critical importance that cannot be understated. It is within this complicated relation that the fulcrum of educational quality maintenance, academic mobility promotion, and the foundation of wise decision-making are realized (Leu 2017).

V. Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): Perspective from the sector of the universities

A comprehensive system that regulates the qualifications offered by Australian universities is the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It was first introduced in 1995 with the intention of offering a transparent and uniform framework for evaluating degrees between different educational sectors. The Academic, Vocational, and Technical Qualifications (AQF) encompasses all educational levels, from certificates to doctorates. Universities are essential to the AQF because they offer postsecondary education programs and grant credentials that meet its requirements. This entails modifying curricula to satisfy AQF standards without sacrificing academic rigor and excellence, demonstrating the universities' continuous participation in its creation, application, and assessment (Broggian 2019).

All Australian educational qualifications are included in the extensive system known as the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). It consists of AQF Levels (10 levels from Certificate I to Doctoral Degree), Qualification Types (Certificates I–IV, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, and Associate Degrees), and Learning Outcomes as a key component. The amount of learning is reflected in credit points, yet flexible learning transitions are supported via pathways and articulation (Noonan 2019).

Universities that are part of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) play a crucial role in serving as the main suppliers of qualifications for higher education. By planning, creating, and distributing credentials in accordance with AQF standards, they make sure that their programs meet those standards. Universities strictly evaluate the learning objectives of their students while upholding equity and openness in the procedure. Universities also actively participate in the creation of the AQF by reviewing and debating policies, which helps to shape upcoming changes that will maintain the framework's applicability. In general, universities are significant stakeholders since they are vital to maintaining the AQF's reputation and quality while also giving students access to excellent educational opportunities (Noonan 2019).

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For both universities and students, the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) has a number of advantages. It offers transparency and confidence in degrees while guaranteeing the caliber of credentials across the country. Inter-institutional mobility is supported by this system. Additionally, the AQF encourages flexibility in learning by acknowledging a range of credentials, such as training and vocational education, which enables colleges to provide a variety of programs. Universities play a crucial role in facilitating continuing professional development through AQF-aligned programs. It also promotes lifelong learning, enabling people to upskill or reskill throughout their careers. All things considered, the AQF strengthens cooperation between colleges and other educational institutions, resulting in a coherent system of higher learning that is advantageous to both establishments and learners according to Broggian (2019).

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is difficult to implement at Australian institutions since it must be consistent and aligned with standards, requiring a curriculum review that consumes a lot of resources. AQF requirements necessitate periodic changes due to the challenges of training teaching personnel and navigating complex credit transfer procedures. Working together is essential to guaranteeing the caliber and applicability of credentials within the AQF. Universities interact with a wide range of stakeholders, such as trade groups, government agencies, community organizations, and professional associations. Representatives from the industry work together to build curricula that meet the needs of new skills. In order to improve students' employability and practical experience, it also supports work-integrated learning. Professional associations and government agencies work together to maintain regulatory compliance and standards alignment, respectively, which guarantees quality assurance in higher education according to Broggian (2019).

To guarantee the quality and applicability of qualifications, cooperation between universities and different stakeholders under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is crucial. Active participation in trade associations, governmental entities, professional associations, and community organizations is required for this. Industry leaders help build curricula, which supports work-integrated learning and improves students' employability and hands-on experience. Maintaining quality assurance in higher education requires cooperation with government agencies to ensure regulatory framework compliance and professional groups to match qualifications with standards. Through the establishment of precise standards and requirements for qualifications, the AQF itself plays a critical role in guaranteeing quality assurance in university education. It helps companies and students comprehend certification levels by offering a thorough framework. The AQF

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enforces compliance with particular learning objectives, guaranteeing that graduates have the requisite abilities, competencies, and characteristics. A strong emphasis on evaluation procedures also helps to improve overall quality assurance in higher education (Noonan 2019).

VI. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF): Perspective from the sector of the universities

Two essential elements of South Africa's education and training system are the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The mission of SAQA, which was founded in 1995 by the SAQA Act, is to supervise and develop the NQF while guaranteeing the validity and comparability of qualifications both domestically and globally. SAQA is essential to the recognition of professional associations, the accreditation of training and education providers, the assessment of foreign credentials, and the upkeep of the National Learners' Records Database (Wedekind 2018).

Established in 1998, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provides a structure for classifying and identifying qualifications in a range of education and training domains. It attempts to encourage lifelong learning, advance the caliber and applicability of education, and offer an organized framework for categorizing and certifying credentials. The NQF has ten levels that represent the depth and complexity of learning, starting at Level 1 (Adult Basic Education and Training) and ending at Level 10 (Doctoral degree). A credit and notional hour system is also incorporated into the framework to quantify the amount of learning needed to obtain each qualification according to Moosa (2018).

Important turning points in the NQF's history include its founding in 1995, formal debut in 1998, and ensuing legislative advancements in 2001 and 2012. To improve the functioning of the framework and address issues, the NQF Amendment Act of 2012 was introduced. The NQF's components cover a range of qualification categories, such as degrees, certificates, diplomas, and doctorates. Unit standards are essential since they give certain results and evaluation standards for every certification. SAQA-recognized Quality Councils supervise the creation of credentials and establish benchmarks in particular industries. SAQA and NQF collaborate to standardize qualifications in post-apartheid South Africa, ensuring consistency, quality, and comparability, thereby enhancing the country's education and training landscape (Ntshangase and Msosa 2022).

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In the university sector, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are essential. SAQA is in charge of directing the creation and application of the NQF. A thorough framework for quality control and certification recognition in a variety of industries, including higher education, is offered by the NQF. Within the higher education sector, SAQA and the NQF guarantee that all degrees granted by universities are in compliance with both national and international standards. They encourage uniformity in credit accumulation plans, evaluation techniques, and curriculum design. This guarantees that university graduates from South Africa have credentials that are respected on a national and worldwide level (Wedekind 2018).

In South African universities, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) are essential for guaranteeing high-quality instruction and encouraging lifelong learning. Still, there are a number of issues that make it difficult for them to be implemented effectively. Aligning qualifications across various sectors, such as higher education institutions, career training centers, and industry-specific agencies, is a significant difficulty. To guarantee a smooth integration of credentials inside the NQF, stakeholders must continually collaborate and coordinate. Furthermore, concerns pertaining to recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the context of universities must be addressed immediately (Ntshangase and Msosa 2022).

VII. New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF): Perspective from the sector of the universities

The NZQF comprises several integral components that contribute to its effectiveness. Qualification types span a range including certificates, diplomas, degrees, and postgraduate qualifications, each assigned a specific level from 1 to 10. These levels signify the depth and complexity of learning associated with each qualification. The credit framework, utilizing a credit-based system, quantifies the volume of learning required for a qualification, with one credit generally equivalent to ten notional learning hours (Chan 2016).

The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) has significantly impacted universities in New Zealand, focusing on outcomes-based education. Universities are now required to align their curriculum and assessment methods with NZQF levels, ensuring students achieve specific learning outcomes at each level. This shift has led to a more transparent and consistent approach to assessing student achievement, facilitating the recognition of prior learning and enhancing employability. The NZQF has also encouraged collaboration between universities and other tertiary

education providers, making it easier for students to transfer credits between institutions. The NZQF has also stimulated universities to review and enhance their academic programs, investing in curriculum development and quality assurance processes (Barker 2018).

Universities face difficulties in implementing the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), especially in terms of matching current qualifications to NZQF levels and criteria. This calls for careful mapping and assessment, which is a labor-and resource-intensive procedure. Universities are under pressure to modify their teaching strategies and assessment procedures in order to align with employer expectations, as the NZQF places a strong emphasis on outcomes-based learning and emphasizes practical skills over theoretical knowledge. Furthermore, the application process is considered difficult for those who want to enter New Zealand because of the substantial documentation requirements. Despite these challenges, the NZQF presents opportunities for universities, offering a clear pathway for students to progress through different education levels and fostering inclusivity by attracting a diverse range of learners from various backgrounds. The framework's support for multiple methods of achieving educational objectives, recognition of prior learning, and flexibility in pathways for individuals with work experience or vocational qualifications contribute to the overall adaptability and inclusiveness of New Zealand universities (Barker 2018).

VIII. The present state of the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF)

VIII.1. Introduction

The Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) is a key component that shapes Jordan's academic trajectory and is a focal point in the country's changing higher education environment. Jordan's dedication to strengthening its educational sector is embodied in the JNQF, which is a comprehensive framework that navigates the complexity of certification standards. It is based on the ideals of quality assurance and educational excellence. According to Al-Anber et al. (2023), this backdrop examines the current status of the JNQF, dissecting its complexities and throwing light on its implications in relation to Jordan's higher education system.

VIII.2. The current status of qualifications in Jordan

A wide range of academic programs and institutions that each add to the rich tapestry of higher learning characterize Jordan's educational landscape.

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The JNQF serves as a compass in this environment by offering an organized framework for the categorization and acknowledgment of qualifications. According to Zaqaibeh et al. (2023), evaluating the state of qualifications in Jordan now entails closely examining how the JNQF corresponds with the various academic programs, guaranteeing coherence and consistency in the requirements established for various degrees of qualification.

VIII.3. Strengths of JNQF

Jordan's National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (JNQF) has many advantages that support the country's educational system as a whole. Its ability to offer an organized and methodical approach to program planning and review is one of its main advantages. With qualification descriptors and level indicators at its disposal, the JNQF enables educational establishments to carefully organize their curricula in accordance with nationally accepted standards, guaranteeing uniformity and excellence in a range of programs. According to Al-Anber et al. (2023), this dedication to quality assurance is felt both domestically and internationally, improving Jordanian credentials' standing and encouraging professional and student academic mobility.

The JNQF is unique in that it is a dynamic instrument for ongoing improvement. The framework is updated and reviewed on a regular basis to reflect changes in society demands and the educational environment. Because of its dedication to ongoing development, the JNQF is guaranteed to be current and adaptable to the ever-changing landscape of higher learning. The Jordan National Quality Framework (JNQF) is a proactive framework that contributes to the continuous improvement of educational standards and quality in Jordan by welcoming change and keeping up with developing trends. The JNQF is a keystone in Jordan's quest of educational excellence in higher education because of its diverse qualities, which highlight its substantial influence on program design, worldwide recognition, and adaptability, according to Al-Anber et al. (2023).

VIII.4. Weaknesses of JNQF

Although the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (JNQF) has many positive aspects, it also has some inherent shortcomings that should be carefully considered. A noteworthy feature concerns possible obstacles to the efficient application and enforcement of the framework's requirements throughout Jordan's heterogeneous network

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of universities. A uniform application of the JNQF's principles may be hampered by institutional variability in capacities, resources, and commitment, which raises questions regarding the coherence and rigor of academic programs provided by various institutions, according to Al-Anber et al. (2023).

The requirement for improved stakeholder participation and communication channels represents another serious shortcoming. Because of the complexity of the JNQF and changing educational paradigms, educational institutions, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders need to have strong systems in place for continuous communication and cooperation. Lack of communication channels might make it more difficult for the framework to quickly adjust to changing educational requirements and can also make it unclear how to apply and interpret certain qualification descriptors. In order to ensure the successful and equitable implementation of the JNQF across Jordan's diverse higher education landscape, addressing these weaknesses necessitates a strategic approach that includes increased institutional capacity-building, streamlined communication channels, and targeted interventions, according to Al-Anber et al. (2023).

VIII.5. Elements of JNQF

The Jordanian higher education environment is shaped in part by the basic parts that make up the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF). These components serve as the framework's skeleton, offering a thorough and organized method for arranging credentials and advancing the caliber of education. The qualification levels, which specify the complexity, breadth, and depth of learning connected to a certain certificate, are one important component. According to Al-Anber et al. (2023), these levels provide a hierarchical framework that makes it easier for students to move from lower to higher qualifications and gives them the information they need to make an informed choice about their educational path. Another integral element is the qualification descriptors, which articulate the learning outcomes and competencies associated with each qualification level. These descriptors serve as a crucial tool for aligning educational programs with national standards, ensuring consistency and quality across diverse institutions. Additionally, the credit system is a fundamental element that quantifies the volume of learning required for a qualification, promoting transparency and facilitating credit accumulation and transfer within and across institutions. The quality assurance mechanisms embedded in the JNQF form another essential element, safeguarding the integrity and

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relevance of qualifications through rigorous evaluation processes (Al-Anber et al. 2023).

In addition, the JNQF encompasses a variety of credentials, such as professional, vocational, and academic credentials, encouraging diversity and meeting the demands of the job market as well as the different needs of students. The incorporation of lifelong learning ideas into the framework is an additional crucial component that underscores the significance of ongoing education and skill enhancement outside of conventional academic environments. Al-Anber et al. (2023) assert that these components work together to support the JNQF's efficacy in offering a strong and flexible framework for arranging, identifying, and elevating the caliber of higher education credentials in Jordan.

VIII.6. JNQF Alignment to quality assurance standards issued by Higher Education Accreditation Commission

A key factor in guaranteeing the integrity, legitimacy, and coherence of higher education credentials in Jordan is the alignment of the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) with the quality assurance requirements published by the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC). As the main accrediting authority, the HEAC establishes strict standards and requirements for assessing and approving programs and institutions of higher learning. Along with these criteria, the JNQF provides a structure that makes it easier to organize and recognize qualifications, strengthening the quality control systems in Jordan's higher education system (Al-Anber et al. 2023).

A key component of alignment is the careful adjustment of JNQF qualification descriptors to meet the standards and expectations of the HEAC for professional, vocational, and academic qualifications. This guarantees that credentials at different levels and disciplines follow nationally accepted norms, fostering consistency and openness in the evaluation and certification procedures. The credit system, where credit values are closely tied to the depth and scope of learning activities, is another area where the JNQF and HEAC standards agree. This is in line with the HEAC's emphasis on educational quality and relevance, as noted by Samawi et al. (2023).

Moreover, the JNQF provides a systematic framework for higher education institutions to self-assess and align their programs with HEAC quality assurance standards. This alignment encourages institutions to continually evaluate and enhance their offerings, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and quality assurance. By harmonizing the JNQF

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with HEAC standards, Jordan establishes a robust foundation for ensuring that qualifications meet established benchmarks, promoting educational excellence, and contributing to the overall enhancement of the higher education landscape in the country (Zaqaibeh 2022).

IX. Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF): Perspective from the sector of the universities

A model of academic excellence, the Jordanian National Qualifications Framework (JNQF) is a complex and painstakingly constructed framework that is used in Jordan's higher education system. Its influence can be seen throughout the country's vast network of universities. The viewpoint from the university sector reveals a complicated web woven with the subtleties and intricacies of the mutually beneficial partnership between these postsecondary educational establishments and the JNQF (Al-Anber et al. 2023).

At its core, the JNQF stands as an august framework, akin to a scholarly compass, guiding universities through the labyrinthine corridors of academia. It provides a systematic and comprehensive approach, offering a discernible path for categorizing qualifications, from the humble certificates to the loftier echelons of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. This categorization, couched in the terminology of levels that mirrors the ascending complexity of knowledge and skills acquired, metamorphoses into a universal language, facilitating the evaluation and comparison of academic achievements across disciplines (Al-Mawadiah and Al-Zu'bi 2021).

Universities, those ancient founts of wisdom and thought-provoking conversation, become active players in this academic dance, designing their curricula to move in step with the JNQF's specified levels and learning objectives. As such, their function goes beyond the simple transfer of information; they are now the defenders of academic honesty, charged with the grave duty of ensuring that their services are in perfect harmony with the standards established by the framework (Al-Anber et al. 2023).

In this intricate relation between universities and the JNQF, accreditation, quality assurance, and the relentless pursuit of continuous improvement become the keynotes. These academic citadels engage in a ballet of self-assessment and external evaluation, wherein the efficacy of their programs is measured against the exacting criteria laid out by the framework. This symbiotic relationship fosters an environment of perpetual refinement, propelling academic institutions towards evolution and adaptation in response to the dynamic currents of global education, disciplines (Al-Mawadiah and Al-Zu'bi 2021).

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Outside of academic institutions, the JNQF becomes the pivot, serving as a bridge between scholastic accomplishments on an individual basis and the more general domains of national and worldwide recognition. Universities, in their crucial capacity as custodians of knowledge, skillfully negotiate this complex landscape, enabling the smooth transfer of credits and credentials. Their engagement reaches the international arena, where partnerships, student exchanges, and cooperative research projects are carefully selected with a keen eye toward qualification harmonization on a worldwide basis (Zaqaibeh et al. 2023).

In conclusion, the Jordan Qualification Framework represents educational rigor and vision when seen through the lens of institutions. It is evidence of the academic institutions' steadfast dedication to maintaining high standards, encouraging ongoing development, and making sure Jordanian education is integrated into the larger international academic conversation. The JNQF's symbiotic relationship with the university sector is more than just a partnership; it is a dynamic synergy that drives Jordan's educational landscape to new heights and makes sure that its institutions remain strong in the face of knowledge's ever-evolving currents (Al-Mawadiah and Al-Zu'bi 2021).

X. Conclusions

Ultimately, this study become a lighthouse shedding light on the crucial relationship between quality assurance systems and qualifications frameworks in the context of higher education, for a closer look at how different international qualifications frameworks stack up, including their structures, benefits, and challenges, refer to Table 3 which provides a snapshot of the key elements and issues associated with these frameworks, adding valuable context to our discussion. According to Mokwele and Chetty (2023), the level of attention devoted to these aspects highlights their critical importance in creating an atmosphere that supports academic excellence, institutional credibility, and international recognition.

The empirical evidence amassed throughout this research journey substantiates the assertion that a robust quality assurance apparatus, coupled with a meticulously crafted qualifications framework, forms the bedrock upon which the edifice of higher education can be fortified. The symbiotic relationship between these two pillars engenders an ecosystem wherein academic programs are not only aligned with international standards but are also subjected to rigorous scrutiny, thereby ensuring a perennial commitment to excellence (Mambo et al. 2016).

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Table 3

International qualifications frameworks: structure, benefits, and challenges

Aspect	European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	United Kingdom Qualifications Framework (UKQF)	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)	Jordan National Qualifications Framework (JNQF)
Introduction	Launched in 2008 to unify and compare qualifications across European countries. The EQF revised in 2017	The first partial National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was designed in 1987 for the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and there were just five levels, focuses on unit-based qualifications and credit accumulation.	Introduced in 1995 to provide a transparent, uniform framework for evaluating qualifications across educational sectors in Australia.	SAQA established in 1995; NQF established in 1998 to standardize and enhance qualifications.	NZQF was established in 1989. It became a unified framework in 2010, and was fully integrated into the Act through an August 2011 amendment.	The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission for Higher Education Institutions, launched the JNQF in 2019
Framework Levels	8 reference levels based on learning outcomes, from basic to advanced knowledge. learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications serves as a translation tool between different national qualifications frameworks	later it was extended with other qualifications, and revised in 1999 as an 'eight-plus Entry' level NQF. Levels range from Entry Level to Doctoral, including various credit-based units.	10 levels from Certificate I to Doctoral Degree.	10 levels from Adult Basic Education and Training (Level 1) to Doctoral Degree (Level 10).	10 levels, including certificates, diplomas, degrees, and postgraduate qualifications.	The JNQF has 10 levels for academic and vocational pathways. Levels range from basic certificates to doctoral degrees.

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Aspect	European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	United Kingdom Qualifications Framework (UKQF)	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)	Jordan National Qualifications Framework (JNQF)
Credit System	Notional hours and learning outcomes; promotes recognition of various learning experiences.	Credit-based system allowing for accumulation and transfer of credits.	Utilizes credit points to quantify learning, with 1 credit equivalent to 10 notional hours; supports flexible learning pathways and articulation.	Credit and notional hour system to quantify learning.	Credit-based system, with 1 credit typically equaling 10 notional hours.	Credit system to quantify learning and facilitate transfer.
Impact on Universities	Facilitates recognition and mobility across Europe; promotes lifelong learning and flexible learning pathways.	Aligns curricula with frameworks; supports credit transfer and quality assurance.	Essential for planning, creating, and delivering programs; ensures alignment with AQF standards. Universities must adapt curricula and participate in policy development.	Ensures compliance with national and international standards; encourages uniformity and quality.	Encourages alignment with outcomes-based education; enhances credit transfer.	Guides curriculum development and ensures alignment with standards.
Strengths	Enhances transparency, comparability, and transferability of qualifications across Europe.	Facilitates flexible learning paths and international mobility; aligns with EQF.	Promotes transparency, consistency, and flexibility in learning pathways; supports inter-institutional mobility and lifelong learning.	Structured framework for consistency and quality; facilitates international and national recognition.	Outcomes-based education; flexible learning pathways; support for credit transfer.	Organized framework for program planning; dynamic and adaptable.

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Aspect	European Qualifications Framework (EQF)	United Kingdom Qualifications Framework (UKQF)	Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)	South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)	Jordan National Qualifications Framework (JNQF)
Challenges	Aligning national frameworks with EQF; ensuring clear understanding and application of EQF levels.	Challenges with unitization and credit flexibility; professional status alignment issues.	Resource-intensive alignment and curriculum review; need for continual updates and stakeholder collaboration; complex credit transfer procedures.	Variability in institutional capacities; need for improved stakeholder communication.	Resource-intensive alignment; challenges in adapting teaching and assessment methods.	Issues with uniform application across institutions; need for enhanced stakeholder communication.
Quality Assurance	Encourages clear and consistent interpretation of learning outcomes and competencies; supports lifelong learning.	Quality assurance through frameworks; supports institutional self-assessment and external evaluations.	Universities ensure compliance with AQF standards, participate in policy development, and maintain high-quality educational offerings.	SAQA ensures consistency and quality through Quality Councils; alignment with international standards.	Universities align programs with NZQF levels and learning outcomes.	JNQF aligns with HEAC standards; promotes continuous improvement.
International Recognition	Acts as a translation tool for understanding national qualifications; promotes mobility and workforce recognition.	Aligns with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); supports global academic and professional mobility.	Enhances national and international recognition of Australian qualifications; supports student and professional mobility.	Ensures recognition of South African qualifications internationally.	Facilitates international credit transfer and recognition.	Aims for international recognition and consistency in qualifications.

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Furthermore, the examination goes beyond theoretical reflection to explore the real-world ramifications for higher education institutions. It outlines practical advice for those involved in education and exhorts them to see quality assurance as a driving force behind ongoing development rather than a red tape obstacle. In turn, the credentials framework appears as a dynamic tool that facilitates the smooth transfer of information and skills on a worldwide scale, rather than just a tool for categorization (Kahn 2016).

As we get to the end of this thorough examination, there is an unmistakable call to action: improving higher education requires embracing a culture of responsibility, transparency, and unwavering quality pursuit. Higher education's future depends on the synthesis of credentials frameworks and quality assurance methods; it is not only an administrative formality. We can only strengthen academic institutions' foundations and make them adaptable to the demands of a constantly changing educational environment by taking a comprehensive strategy. Essentially, Boltonet et al. (2020) research is a stark call to action, pleading with all involved in education to support a paradigm change that will usher in a time when academic credentials will be the gold standard for international recognition and quality will not be negotiable.

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