



## **NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM: A GUARD FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE LABOR MARKET AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

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### **ANNOTATION**

This article examines the main reasons for the reforms carried out in the vocational education system, the history of the introduction of the National Qualifications System in our country and its legal basis, as well as the processes associated with ensuring the integration of the labor market and educational services through the maintenance of this system

**Key words:** National qualification system, national qualification framework, professional standards, integration of labor market and educational services, competence-based education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fundamental changes are taking place in the world education system. Today, a diploma on graduation from an educational institution is no longer a "guarantee of a successful and happy future". The mechanisms of traditional education and their recognition have changed, special attention is paid to the competence of specialists, and the mechanisms of validation of competences acquired in informal and informal form are being widely introduced into practice. In the labor market of young people who have graduated from professional educational institutions, the competence to perform the job functions of the qualification set for this profession is of great importance.

In the process of reforming the professional education system in our country, the task of gradually introducing the national qualification system has been set, and this system should serve to train specialists with the necessary competencies to fulfill the qualification requirements set in the professions and specialties by ensuring the mutual integration of the labor market and the market of educational services.



It is no exaggeration to say that the reason for the introduction of the national qualification system in Uzbekistan was the lack of a mechanism of mutual cooperation between the educational services and the labor market. It was a big problem for most of the young people who graduated from educational institutions to find a job not only in the domestic but also in the foreign labor market. This situation can be explained by the following factors:

- lack of participation of employers in the development of requirements for professions and positions due to the fact that educational programs are not directed to the formation of necessary skills in the labor market;
- young people who have graduated from educational institutions, especially professional educational institutions, cannot find their place in the labor market;
- objections of employers about the lack of specialists with the necessary competence, despite the fact that there are many citizens with diplomas in the labor market;
- that the labor market and the educational system are not fully compatible with international educational standards;
- there is no mechanism for recognition of knowledge and skills acquired by citizens informally (informally and informally);
- the ineffectiveness of the principles of lifelong learning, that is, the absence of a system of validating existing qualifications and acquisition of new professions by senior citizens.

## **IMPORTANCE AND ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM**

Our citizens who worked in the domestic and foreign labor market and obtained professional qualifications informally could not get a job in the established order due to the lack of official documents confirming these qualifications. They had the opportunity to get a job only after studying certain courses and getting a diploma of the state model. These studies are usually funded by the government and not all applicants have access to these services when they want.

The above-mentioned circumstances created the basis for the introduction of the national qualification system in Uzbekistan. Decree No. PF-5812 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 6, 2019 "On additional measures to further improve the system of professional education" is an important and, it can be said, foundational legal document on the introduction of the National Qualification System in Uzbekistan.

With this decree, professional education programs are harmonized with the levels of UNESCO's "International Standard Classification of Education" (MSCO-2011). As a result of the incomplete implementation of the National Qualification System of Uzbekistan, the interaction between the labor and educational services market is not developed at the level of demand, which in turn prevents the personnel being trained from taking a proper place in the internal and external labor market. Tasks for development and implementation of qualification frameworks[1] and professional standards are defined.

Regarding the execution of these tasks, the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 15, 2020 "On measures to organize the activities of the national system of professional qualifications, knowledge and skills development in the Republic of Uzbekistan" was adopted. With this decision, the "National qualification framework" and the regulation on the national system of professional qualifications, knowledge and skills development of the Republic of Uzbekistan were approved. This regulation defines the purpose, main tasks and basic components of the National Qualifications System, Competency Assessment Centers and the procedure for conducting the assessment, the procedure for developing and approving Professional Standards.

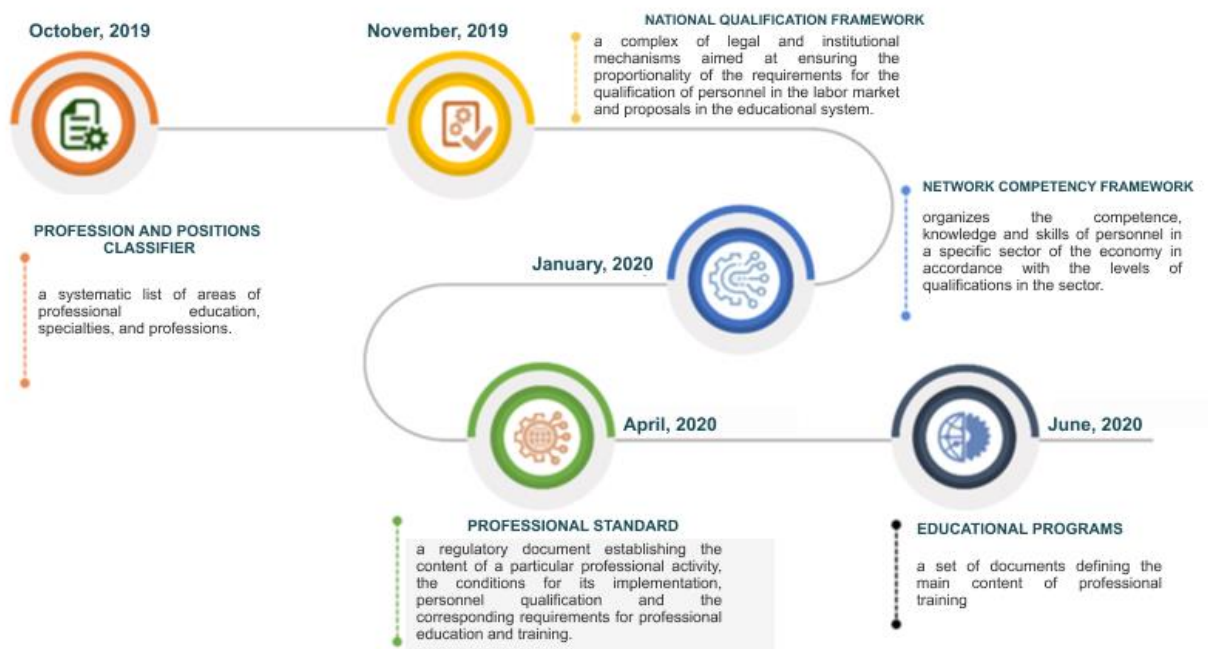


Fig 1. Implementation of national qualification system in Uzbekistan based on international experience



In order to further accelerate the process of introducing the national qualification system, the decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 31, 2020 "On measures to radically improve the system of qualification assessment and provide the labor market with qualified personnel" was adopted. By this decision:

- Scheme of Achievement of Qualification Levels, which provides flexibility and variety of ways to achieve the appropriate qualification level;
- The structure and tasks of the board for the development of professional qualifications and knowledge;
- Model composition of regional councils for the development of professional skills and knowledge under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city governments and their tasks;
- List of sectoral councils for the development of professional skills and knowledge, as well as the list of ministries, departments, educational and scientific institutions responsible for organizing their activities;
- the schedule for the development of professional standards for the priority areas of professional activity for 2021;
- the program for the establishment of skill assessment centers at large enterprises in the priority sectors of the economy for 2021;
- The roadmap for improving the qualification system and providing the labor market with qualified personnel was approved[1].

Resolution No. VMQ-616 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 30, 2021 "On additional measures to further improve the system of professional qualifications and knowledge" was adopted in order to ensure the implementation of the tasks defined in the decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4939 of December 31, 2020 done

By this decision:

- On the Network Councils for the Development of Professional Skills and Knowledge, which stipulates the procedure for organizing the activities of the network councils for the development of professional skills and knowledge (hereinafter referred to as the Network Council), its tasks, functions, rights and obligations, its composition, as well as the periodicity of the organization of the meetings of the Network Council model charter;
- The model regulation on the Center of Qualifications, which stipulates the procedure for organizing the activities of the qualification assessment centers, the





standard requirements for them, their goals and tasks, rights and obligations, and the model structure of the qualification assessment centers, was approved.

At the same time, in accordance with paragraph 8 of the decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-4939 dated December 31, 2020, the Institute of Labor Market Research was established under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Institute is considered a working body of the Republican Council for the Development of Professional Qualifications and Knowledge and carries out the following tasks:

- ensures methodological, organizational and informational activities of branch councils, including the development and implementation of professional standards;
- conducts studies in the national system of professional qualifications, knowledge and skills and organizes improvement of the system in accordance with the results of the studies;
- organizes formation, maintenance and development of the register of qualifications system and other information resources.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION SYSTEM**

The national qualification system is a set of legal and institutional regulation mechanisms of the labor market's demand for employee qualifications and the education and training system's supply of qualifications.

If earlier (within the framework of the industrial economy) a prerequisite for entering the labor market was vocational training in educational institutions that implemented approved educational programs, then a person could find a job and climb the career ladder, improving his qualifications within the specified time. Nowadays, in the knowledge-based modern post-industrial society, it is almost impossible to have a so-called "once and for all" education. In modern conditions, a person must constantly learn and improve, develop his competences. For this, the formal education system is not enough and therefore the importance of non-formal education and spontaneous learning is increasing. On-the-job/on-the-job training takes a special place.

Recognizes educational outcomes and qualifications in all forms of the National Qualifications System. It is an important tool in the recognition, approval and accreditation of formal, non-formal and informal education. Through the National Qualifications Framework, students will have a wider and more flexible

range of educational opportunities. This can increase the mobility of students and workers not only in the domestic but also in the international market.

The national qualification system is seen as a means of increasing the capacity and competitiveness of personnel to meet the demands of production and services in today's rapidly changing economic environment. It empowers citizens to define their own educational paths by setting uniform standards for qualifications and specific learning outcomes.

The national qualification system includes:

- national qualification framework;
- the list of types and qualifications of labor activities (professions) grouped by professions, fields of professional activity and qualification levels;
- professional standards in the fields of professional activity;
- the procedure (rules and mechanisms) of recognition (registration) of professional standards;
- institutional, organizational and methodological mechanisms of development and implementation of national or regional policy in the field of qualifications;
- a catalog of qualifications compiled in the form of a catalog of educational programs, indicating the necessary education and training results (competencies), sorted by levels for each field of professional activity;
- the system of qualification quality assurance (assessment and approval procedures, i.e. certification of qualifications obtained in the process of formal education, informal education and work experience).

## EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN

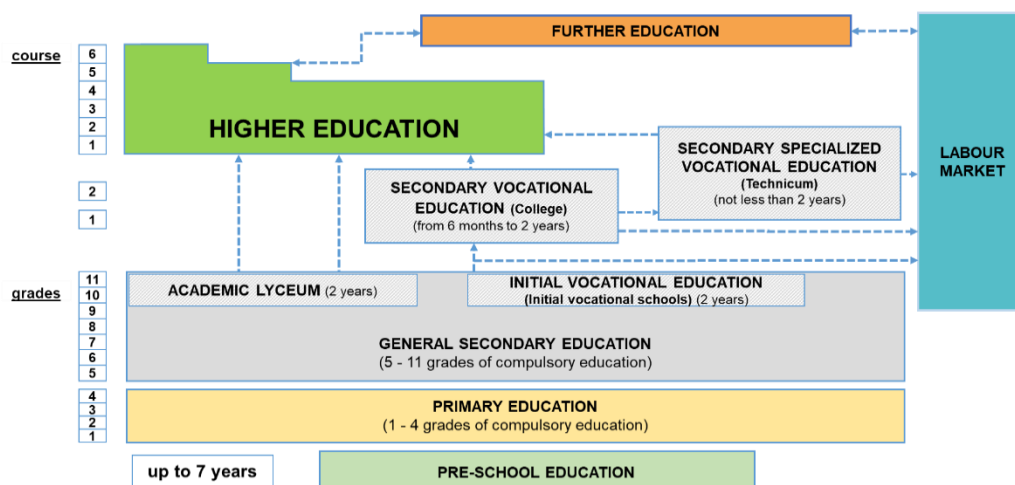


Fig. 2. Education system of Uzbekistan



The main participants of the national qualification system:

- Council on development of professional skills and knowledge;
- Network councils for the development of professional skills and knowledge;
- Territorial councils for the development of professional skills and knowledge under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city governments;
- Center for independent assessment of qualifications (MBM);
- Employers;
- Professional associations;
- Regional authority;
- Educational organizations.

The National Qualifications Framework is a single descriptive framework for describing nationally and internationally recognized qualifications. The MMR is being created to integrate and coordinate national qualifications subsystems and improve qualification transparency, accessibility, promotion and quality in relation to the labor market and civil society.

The National Qualifications Framework establishes a single scale of qualification levels for the development of sectoral qualification frameworks (frameworks) for sectoral professions, professional standards, ensures cross-sector comparability of qualifications and is the basis for the conformity assessment system and qualification of specialists.

The National Qualifications Framework is an integral part of the National Qualifications System and the basis for its development, providing uniform mechanisms for the collection and recognition of qualifications at the national and international level for all levels of professional education.

Stakeholder benefits of implementing the National Qualifications Framework:

- connects qualification frameworks in different fields of education and brings them into a single structure, provides guarantees of vocational education and educational quality;
- clarifies issues of determining qualifications, skills and competences of personnel needed by enterprises;
- education and promotion from one qualification level to another will be transparent;
- by recognizing formal and informal education, it enables (ensures the right of) a wide range of students to acquire qualifications;



- provides employers with benchmarks (starting criteria) for measuring quality-based qualifications;
- determines the format and platform of mutual cooperation (social partnership) of vocational education and training institutions with the labor market and civil society.

Professional standard - requirements for the content and quality of work within a certain type of professional activity and the conditions for its implementation, as well as the level of qualification of the employee and the requirements for professional education and training that meet this qualification.

Professional standards are developed as a basis for evaluating the qualifications of personnel, their knowledge and skills, their attestation, training and retraining.

At the same time, the professional standards:

to employees - to understand the requirements of the profession in the network, to plan for the improvement of their skills and to grow in the service;

to employers - to develop requirements, guidelines and obligations applied to employees, to conduct recruitment and certification of employees, as well as to draw up personnel training, development, growth and rotation programs;

to the educational system (institutions) — is the basic document for the development of educational programs and modules.

In this picture, we can see how the integration of labor market requirements with educational services will be realized as a result of the introduction of the national qualification system. As you can see, network qualification frameworks are developed based on the national qualification framework. All professions and specialties available in the network are divided into levels in the network competence framework based on the knowledge, skills and competencies required for their acquisition. In this case, the requirements for knowledge, skills and competences for each level of the sectoral qualification framework should be consistent with the national qualification framework. Professional standards are developed based on professions and specialties in the network qualification framework.



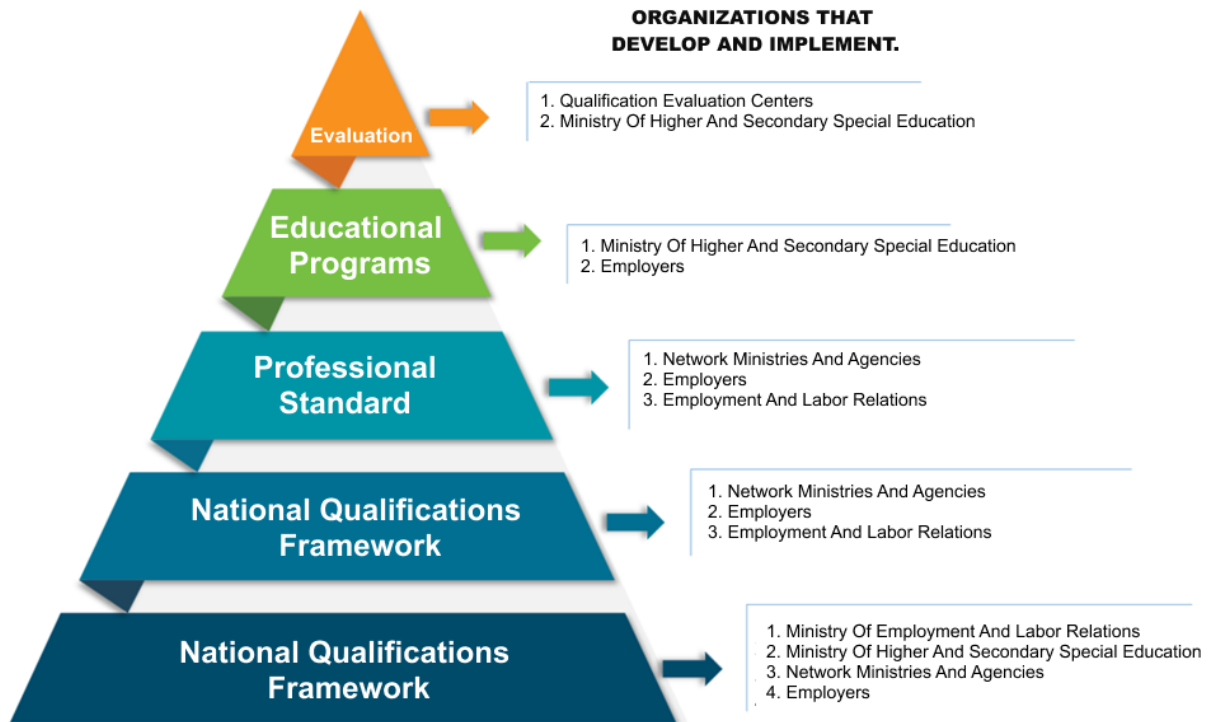


Fig 3. The structure of the national qualification framework

As stated above, professional standards clearly define requirements for the content and quality of work and the conditions for its implementation, as well as the level of the employee's qualifications within a certain type of professional activity. Professional standards are developed directly by employers and approved by the relevant industry council. To date, employers have developed professional standards for 963 professions and specialties available in the labor market.

Tab 1. Table of application of professional standards for current professions and specialties in the modern labor market

№	Level of professional education	Number of educational programs developed	Used professional standards number	
			Number	Percentage
1	Initial professional education programs	106	50	47%
2	Secondary professional education programs	139	103	74%
3	Secondary special professional education programs	100	42	42%
TOTAL		345	195	54%



In accordance with the decision of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 31, 2020 "On measures to fundamentally improve the skills assessment system and provide the labor market with qualified personnel" No. It is decided that the ministries and agencies with institutions will review the relevant educational programs of educational organizations before the start of the next academic year, as well as organize the improvement of the qualifications of professors and teachers. 54% of educational programs developed for professions and specialties accepted in the 2021-2022 academic year were developed based on professional standards.

## CONCLUSION

In Uzbekistan, education and vocational training are included in the National qualification system, which includes lifelong education and non-formal education. It should be noted that the reforms in the field of education are carried out today creates opportunities for students to develop vertically and horizontally and to recognize their previous knowledge, regardless of whether it is in a formal, informal or informal form.

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