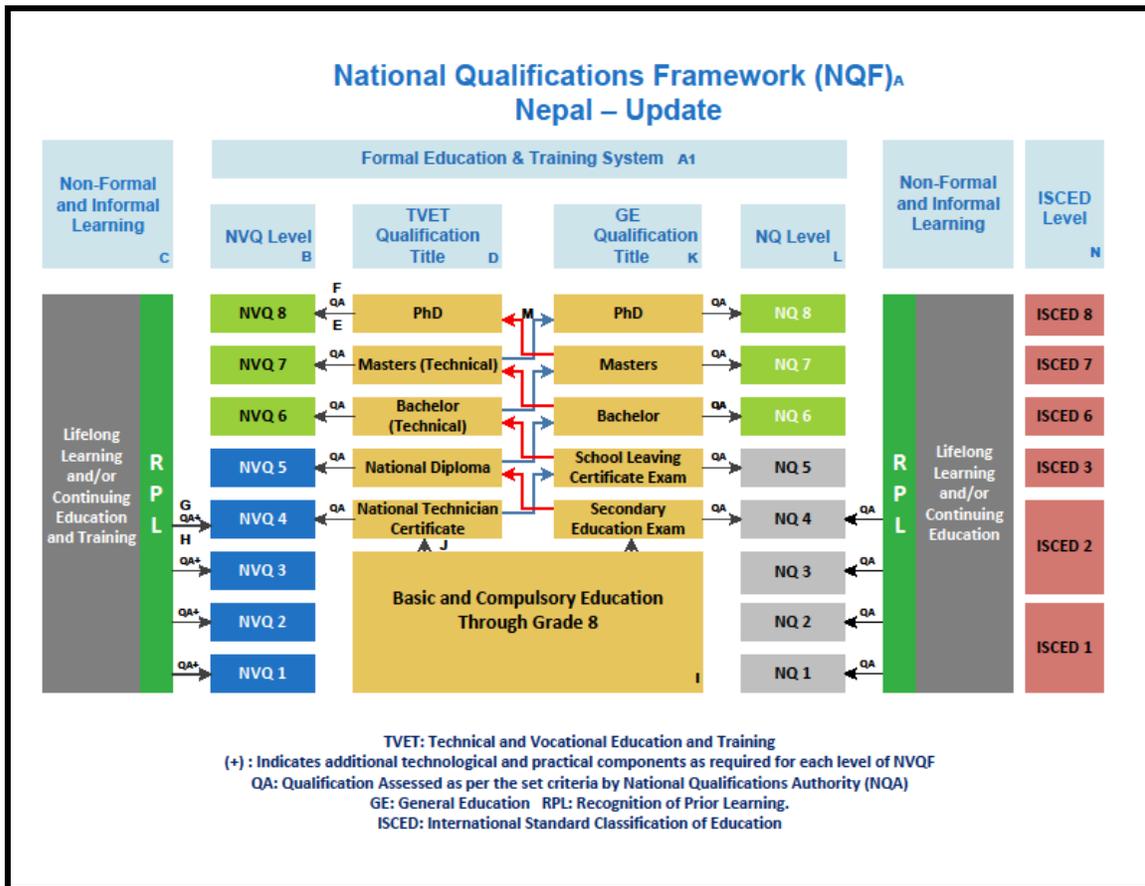


Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
Nepal Vocational Qualifications System/National Skill Testing Board

National Qualifications Framework of Nepal: Short Explanation



CTEVT/NSTB – Swisscontact
 September 2019

Contents

Foreword	2
Why we need national qualifications framework / national vocational qualifications framework?	2
Goals to achieve through development of NQF/NVQF	2
A. National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	3
B. NVQ Level	3
C. Non-Formal and Informal Learning	5
D. Lifelong Learning and /or Continuing Education:	5
E. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):	5
F. TVET Qualification Title	6
F1. National Technician Certificate (NTC)	6
F2. National Diploma (ND):	6
F3. Bachelor (Technical):	6
F4. Masters (Technical):	6
F5. PhD:	6
G. GE Qualification Title	6
H. NQ Level	7
I. ISCED Level	8
J. Arrow pointing towards NVQ level from TVET qualification title	9
K. Qualification Assessment (QA)	10
L. Arrow pointing towards NVQ level from nonformal and informal learning	10
M. Qualification Assessment Plus (QA+)	10
N. Basic Education through Grade 8	10
O. Arrow pointing upwards from Basic education through grade 8 section	11
P. Cross sectional Arrow Permeability:	11

Foreword

Through series of discussions among the government officials, private sector actors, and professionals together with inputs on the framework from international experts – the given frame/visual (in the title page) is the latest version of NVQF integrated with General Education Qualifications Framework (GEQF) for Nepal. Nepal Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) supported the government of Nepal for the development of National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF). In totality the above picture is an updated version of National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Further to this, next steps are to have simple description of all the parts/elements of the framework for people to understand clearly. Secondly, it is important to forward the complete document to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) through the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) for the NVQF approval.

Why we need national qualifications framework / national vocational qualifications framework?

In order to realize the dream of raising Nepal from a low income country to a middle income country in the near future, the systemic change of technical and vocational education is essential. Nepal has been doing a lot of work in the areas of general education and technical and vocational education where private sector participation is commendable. But until we manage it systematically, the achievements we seek is not taking place and cannot be achieved. The only way to leap for the achievements is from well-developed and implemented national qualifications framework/national vocational qualifications framework through organized management and positive participation of the general public. This framework helps in maintaining the credibility of our human resources' skills, knowledge and attitudes by enhancing the credibility of general education and technical and vocational education, marketing and aligning with international demand.

Goals to achieve through development of NQF/NVQF

The crucial first step in NQF policy formation is being clear about the purposes and goals that the NQF is expected to contribute to achieving the following. These vary across different countries. There are two main sets of reasons for developing and implementing NQF: promoting lifelong learning; and quality assurance and recognition (with reference to experiences of different countries).

Promoting Lifelong Learning including objectives such as:

- improving understanding of **learning routes and qualifications** and how they relate to each other
- improving **access to education and training** opportunities
- **creating incentives for participation** in education and training
- making **progression routes easier and clearer/** improving **learner and career mobility**
- increasing and improving **credit transfer between qualifications**
- increasing the scope for **recognition of prior learning (RPL)**

Quality Assurance and Recognition including objectives such as:

- ensuring that **qualifications are relevant** to perceived social and economic needs
- ensuring that **education and training standards are defined** by agreed learning outcomes and applied consistently
- ensuring that **education and training providers meet certain quality standards securing international recognition** for national qualifications

Hence, following description of each part/element of NVQF/NQF is expected to clarify the entire visual.

A. National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the development, classification and recognition of competencies (attitude, skills, and knowledge) along a continuum of agreed levels. It is a way of structuring existing and new qualifications, which are defined by learning outcomes, i.e. clear statements of what the learner must know or be able to do whether learned in a classroom, on-the-job, or less formally. The Qualifications Framework indicates the comparability of different qualifications and how one can progress from one level to another, within and across occupations or industrial sectors and even across vocational and academic fields that is designed to include both vocational and academic qualifications in a single framework. ([ILO \(SED\) 2007, Global](#)).

NQF classify qualifications according to a set of levels based on learning outcomes. NVQ levels reflect what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand and be able to do. It allows the learners to make a choice of their interest in higher education through the provision of progression pathways and permeability between General Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training stream.

The concept of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is new to Nepal. Upon its successful implementation, NQF offers policy-makers a more comprehensive picture of the qualifications landscape in the country. It will promote the use of learning outcomes as a tool to describe and classify qualifications, thus increasing their transparency and recognition.

NQF will act as a reference point for identifying, documenting, assessing and recognizing learning acquired in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

After the approval from Nepal Government, this framework will work as 'bridge' to the huge variety of learning activities taking place outside the formal education and training system from which mostly those who are outside formal education and training and those who want to continue the lifelong learning will be benefitted more.

A1. Formal Education and Training System

The education and training designed, implemented and evaluated based on the nationally approved curricula following through the given national education structure (basic and compulsory education Act) passed by the parliament. In this case, for NVQF and NQF, the formal TVET and GE starts from NVQ Level 4 and for NQ Level 4 respectively after the enactment of the new structure of basic education. This is because, by law from grade one to eight of school education is the basic education which is compulsory and free to all the children.

B. NVQ Level

One of the series of levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order from 1 to 8 according to which the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is organized and to which qualification types are linked. (SAQA 2013, South Africa.)

This section represents the level of competencies (Attitude, Skills and Knowledge) required to perform job at different levels of learnings. The levels are classified as National Vocational Qualifications Level from 1 to 8. The NVQ Level is classified based on thorough consultations with different national and international TVET experts, referencing to different countries' NVQ levels and various validation workshops.

Classification of NVQ level will be important for the employers to select the required competency areas suitable for particular job and equally needed for the TVET implementers to design and execute different trainings as per the demand. This improves overall performance and motivation in delivery of quality services to customers in one hand and to develop skillful workforce relevant to the business on the other. Similarly, NVQ certificates will open up the formal pathway of technical and vocational education system.

These levels can be described as follows:

B1. NVQ Level 1:

The level of competencies that NVQ Level 1 requires basic general knowledge, social skills and basic skills to carry out simple tasks. Needs to work under full supervision of the supervisor and can deal with simple work situations.

B2. NVQ Level 2:

The Competencies required in NVQ Level 2 is higher than Level 1. One should have knowledge of particular field of work, should possess minimum cognitive and practical skills, basic skills to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools. But still need to follow guidelines of the supervisor.

B3. NVQ Level 3:

NVQ Level 3 requires the candidates to have general concepts and skills of the job. Should have skills to apply basic tools and techniques to solve problems. Need to have attitude to act with some autonomy, cope with challenges under given conditions. NVQ Level 3 certificate holder will be eligible to enroll in National Technician Certificate Program (NTCP) fulfilling the entry criteria of NTCP.

B4. NVQ Level 4:

The level of competencies that NVQ Level 4 required are in-depth theoretical knowledge in the field of work, should possess generating techniques to solve specific problems. Should be able to handle assigned and routine situations independently. Should supervise others in common tasks. NVQ Level 4 certificate holder will be eligible to enroll in National Diploma Program (NDP) fulfilling the entry criteria of NDP. NVQ Level 4 and National Technician Certificate holders will be eligible to enroll in School Leaving Certificate Program (SLCP) fulfilling the entry criteria of SLCP.

B5. NVQ Level 5:

The competencies required for NVQ Level 5 are specialized theoretical and factual knowledge and skills to work, supervise and assess subordinates. Should demonstrate creative abilities to solve abstract problems. Should manage, coordinate and supervise selected projects/assignments independently, handle the unpredictable situations, critically and responsibly deal with the actions of other people. NVQ Level 5 and National Diploma certificate holders will be eligible to enroll in Technical Bachelor's Degree. NVQ Level 5 and ND Certificate holders will be eligible to enroll in Bachelor's Degree Program (BDP) in higher education after fulfilling the entry criteria of BDP.

B6. NVQ Level 6:

NVQ Level 6 requires the candidates to have advanced theoretical knowledge of the field of work. Solid understanding and analyzing theories from critical perspectives. Should demonstrate mastery of skills, solve complex and unpredictable problems. Should be able to take full responsibility of defined managerial tasks, act entrepreneurially, lead complex projects and manage subordinates.

B7. NVQ Level 7:

The competencies required for NVQ Level 7 are highly specialized knowledge of the work. Analytical forefront of knowledge in the field that includes critical thinking and or research, knowledge on the interface between different fields. Should possess specialized problem-solving skills. Research and innovation skills should be able to lead complex projects, independently takes responsibility in decision making, monitor and supervise the implementation of the strategy.

B8. NVQ Level 8:

NVQ Level 8 is the highest level of vocational qualifications. Hence, it requires knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study at the interface between themes. Should possess the most advanced and specialized skills and techniques including evaluation and innovation. Should have skills to solve critical problems through research and innovation. Able to redefine existing knowledge or professional practice. Should conduct research on the process and product of the company, make innovations to contribute for further development of learners/ employees and company.

C. Non-Formal and Informal Learning

Non-formal learning includes various semi structured learning or structured learning situations. This form of learning do not either have the level of curriculum, syllabus, accreditation and certification associated with 'formal learning', but is structured than that associated with 'informal learning', which typically takes place naturally and spontaneously as part of other activities.

Informal learning is any learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner's standpoint. For all learners, this includes heuristic language building, socialization, enculturation, and play. Informal learning is a pervasive ongoing phenomenon of learning via participation or learning via knowledge creation, in contrast with the traditional view of teacher-centered learning via knowledge acquisition.

This section in the NVQF describes that skills, knowledge and attitudes gained from lifelong learning and or education and training and Prior Learning are recognized, validated and permitted to get entitlement of claimed NQ/NVQ Levels both in General Education stream and Technical and Vocational Education and Training stream. This is the special arrangement for the non-formal and informal learners to mainstream them into national education system of their choice.

D. Lifelong Learning and /or Continuing Education:

Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge" for either personal or professional reasons.

Similarly, ¹Continuing Education is the education provided for adults after they have left the formal education system, consisting typically of short or part-time courses. This is also an all-encompassing term within a broad list of post-secondary learning activities and programs. It is recognized forms of post-secondary learning activities within the domain include: degree credit courses by non-traditional students, non-degree career training, college remediation, workforce training, and formal personal enrichment courses (both on-campus and online).

E. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

Process of recognition of already gained skills of the individuals (with or without portfolios) to enable them to acquire NVQ after going through assessment system is called Recognition of Prior Learning. People have their understandings, experiences and learning on certain occupation while working or going through certain

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuing_education

courses in the formal, non-formal or informal academic and/or occupational sessions. These experiences and learning help people to demonstrate their capability in performing a job that is offered. Hence, Recognition of Prior learning will help the one to have their skills validate and recognized and also provide space to get higher level qualifications through recognizing their competencies and guiding them to fulfill the gaps in their skill to attain the particular NVQ level.

National Qualifications Framework structure has provisioned that candidates from Non-Formal and Informal Learning from in both the stream General Education and TVET can be eligible for earning NVQ Level. But in order to earn the NVQ level they need to go through Qualification Assessment process and another soft skills assessment. This provision will especially benefit the people who are acquiring skills, knowledges from employment or self-learning.

F. TVET Qualification Title

The title of professional or academic certificates achieved through approved short or long courses or formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training is taken as TVET Qualification Title. These Qualification Titles can be earned from Technical and Vocational Schools, Technical institutes, Industry/ Workplace, Polytechnics or Colleges and Universities. Following explanation clarifies requirements for the respective TVET Qualification Titles.

F1. National Technician Certificate (NTC): Completers of basic education with knowledge and skill in the relevant occupation gained through apprenticeship, prescribed training from technical and vocational schools, technical institutes, industry/ workplace. A person with required literacy having knowledge and skill in the relevant occupation can also be certified who has minimum of five years' work experience in a relevant occupation/trade. Or, Two years' work experience after one-year training in a relevant occupation/trade. Or, one year's work experience after skill level-2 certificate passed in relevant occupation/trade. Similarly, a person with enough work experience in relevant occupation/trade having required literacy level can also be certified through RPL Assessment.

F2. National Diploma (ND): Certificates earned through formal TVET education in polytechnic institutes through 3 years approved course with inductive and deductive mode of education who enter the Programme after NTC.

F3. Bachelor (Technical): Tertiary level of education gained from Colleges and Universities in Technical subjects through 4 years of approved programme/course. Bachelor's degree in particular subject can be earned following 4 years of approved program/course after completing ND.

F4. Masters (Technical): Tertiary level of education gained from Colleges and Universities with specialization in Technical subjects through 2 years of approved programme/course. Master's degree in particular subject can be earned following 2 years of approved program/course after completing Bachelor degree.

F5. PhD: Highest professional level of education gained in Technical subjects from Universities that contains in depth researches on the subject matter through 3 years of approved programme/course.

G. GE Qualification Title

The title of academic certificates achieved through formal General Education is taken as GE Qualification Title. These Qualification Titles can be further classified as:

G1. Secondary Education Exam:

After the implementation of new Education Act, 2016 the final examination that will take place in grade 10 and is called Secondary Education Exam. Before, it was popularly known as School Leaving Certificate (SLC).

It is mandatory that each student has to go through SEE examination for higher studies. Eligibility to get SEE certificate is a two-year full-time study in grade 9 and 10.

Hence, qualification title of Secondary Education Exam is shown in the section GE qualification Title in NQF structure. It shows that the mobility of GE to TVET and vice versa starts from this level.

G2. School Leaving Certificate Exam:

After the implementation of new education Act 2016, the final examination that will take place in grade 12 is School Leaving Certificate Exam, an individual who wants to study bachelor need to go complete and get a pass in School Leaving Certificate Exam. Now the National Qualifications Framework has provisioned the permeability of National Technician certificate from Technical education into School Leaving Certificate Exam qualification of GE. Eligibility to get SLC certificate is a two-year full-time study in grade 11 and 12.

This is a new arrangement provisioned for the first time in Nepal. Hence, all the learners and students those want to continue the education of their choice can be benefitted from it.

G3. Bachelor:

An academic degree awarded by colleges and universities upon completion of at least 4 years of approved programme/course in particular subject after SLC certificate in Nepal. As positioned in the NQF an individual with National Diploma title in TVET can also enroll for Bachelor level in General Education once he/she fulfils the entry criteria of the bachelor program. An NVQ Level 6 qualification obtained through National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) is equivalent to a bachelor's degree technical and vocational education from any university.

G4. Masters:

An academic degree awarded by universities or colleges upon completion of a course of study demonstrating mastery or a high-order overview of a specific field of study or area of professional practice. A master's degree normally requires previous study at the bachelor's level, either as a separate degree or as part of an integrated course. Within the area studied, master's graduates are expected to possess advanced knowledge of a specialized body of theoretical and applied topics; high order skills in analysis, critical evaluation, or professional application; and the ability to solve complex problems and think rigorously and independently. An NVQ Level 7 qualification obtained through National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) is equivalent to a master's degree from any university in particular technical and vocational education from any university.

G5. PhD:

PhD is the highest level of academic degree a student can achieve. It is a globally recognized postgraduate academic degree awarded by universities and higher education institutions to a candidate who has submitted a thesis or dissertation, based on extensive and original research in their chosen field. An NVQ Level 8 qualification obtained through National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) is equivalent to PhD by research from any university.

H. NQ Level

NQ level in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) here denotes the qualification level from the General Education stream. It is the series of levels of learning achievement arranged in ascending order from level 1 to 8 according to which the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is organized and to which qualification types are linked. (SAQA 2013, South Africa.)

This section represents the level of competencies (Attitude, Skills and Knowledge) required to perform job at different levels of learnings. The levels are classified as National Vocational Qualifications Level from 1 to 8.

These levels can be described as follows:

H1. NQ level 1 person requires to have general knowledge and skills to carryout simple tasks working under direct supervision in a structured context.

H2. NQ level 2 person requires to have general factual knowledge and practical skills to use relevant information and solve routine problems using simple rules and tools under supervision with some autonomy.

H3. NQ level 3 person requires to have knowledge of facts, principles, processes and practical skills to accomplish task and solve problems by applying basic methods, tools, materials and information by taking responsibility f for completing task and adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problem.

H4. NQ level 4 person requires to have factual and theoretical knowledge and practical skills to generate solutions to specific problems by exercising self-management within the guidelines of work or study that are predictable but can change and are able to supervise the routine work of others.

H5. NQ level 5 person requires to have comprehensive, specialised factual knowledge and practical skills to develop creative solutions to abstract problems by exercising management and supervision roles in unpredictable work environment by reviewing and developing performance of self and others.

H6. NQ level 6 person requires to have critical understanding of theories and principles and practical skills to demonstrate mastery and innovation to solve complex and unpredictable problems by managing complex technical or professional activities or projects in unpredictable work or study contexts

H7. NQ level 7 person requires to have highly specialised knowledge as the basis for original thinking /or research and Should have specialised problem-solving skills in research and / or innovation to develop new knowledge and procedures by managing and transforming work or study that require strategic approaches.

H8. NQ level 8 person requires to have knowledge and skills at the most advanced frontier of field of work or study by demonstrating most advanced and specialised skills, techniques including synthesis and evaluation to solve critical problems in research and innovation and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice by showing sustained commitment to develop new ideas or processes.

I. ISCED Level

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is a statistical framework for organizing information on education maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). It is a member of the international family of economic and social classifications of the United Nations.

“ISCED is an instrument suitable for assembling, compiling and presenting statistics of education both within individual countries and internationally”.

In order to make the NVQ levels consistent with the widely accepted ISCED level the NQF has structured the contents ISCED level in the framework.

The description of different ISCED levels are:

11. ISCED 1

Primary education	Programmes typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics and to establish a solid foundation for learning.
-------------------	---

12. ISCED 2

Lower secondary education	First stage of secondary education building on primary education, typically with a more subject-oriented curriculum.
---------------------------	--

13. ISCED 3

Upper secondary education	Second/final stage of secondary education preparing for tertiary education and/or providing skills relevant to employment. Usually with an increased range of subject options and streams.
---------------------------	--

14. ISCED 6

Bachelor or equivalent	Programmes designed to provide intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies leading to a first tertiary degree or equivalent qualification.
------------------------	---

15. ISCED 7

Master or equivalent	Programmes designed to provide advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies leading to a second tertiary degree or equivalent qualification.
----------------------	--

16. ISCED 8

Doctoral or equivalent	Programmes designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification, usually concluding with the submission and defense of a substantive dissertation of publishable quality based on original research.
------------------------	--

J. Arrow pointing towards NVQ level from TVET qualification title (←).

In the Structure of National Vocational Qualifications Framework, arrow pointing towards NVQ Level from TVET Qualification title denotes that the candidates can get the entitlement of different NVQ Level from their corresponding TVET Qualification title. The candidates that already possess TVET Qualification Title also can receive NVQ level that is recognized nationally. It is expected that such qualifications are also recognized in international arena of work and study. The NVQ level will be granted by National Vocational Qualifications Authority after assessment of qualification based on the competency standards.

K. Qualification Assessment (QA)

Qualification Assessment is the process that measures the learning outcomes of an individual claiming for certain level of qualifications based on rigorous TVET programs or work experience, and informal learning against the set standards like competency standards and performance criteria. The qualification assessment for different levels of qualification depends on different competency standards as per the job role starting from simple competency standard to more complex standards at higher level of qualifications.

In the Structure of National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Qualification Assessment (QA) denotes the process of determining the competency of an individual through which NVQ Level will be awarded. Due to this arrangement students and workers can be benefitted to enroll into higher studies and to get better jobs through acceptance of the NVQ Level that will be of international standard.

L. Arrow pointing towards NVQ level from nonformal and informal learning (↔)

National Vocational Qualifications Framework incorporates the needs of people engaged in Lifelong Learning and or continuing Education and Training in order to mainstream them into formal Vocational Qualifications. Hence, arrow pointing towards NVQ Level from non-formal and informal learning denotes that the framework allows the candidates, having non-formal and informal learning and experiences, to apply for the entitlement of different NVQ Level from their corresponding level of learning and experiences that are assessed through RPL process.

It is very much beneficial for the candidates from non-formal and informal sectors to have their competencies assessed and recognized to further enhance their career goals. The NVQ level will be granted by National Vocational Qualifications Authority either through the means of training, additional training and qualification assessment of the acquired competencies.

M. Qualification Assessment Plus (QA+)

Qualification Assessment Plus is the process through which individuals having non-formal and informal learning such as lifelong learning or continuing education and training or work-based experiences can achieve desired NVQ levels. The QA+ mainly assures that those candidates possess required level of soft skills [preferably theoretical content (basic mathematics), communication skills (language), technological know-how (science)] that are important for the employment.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) approach will be the approach to assess the skills, knowledge and attitudes of such individuals based on pre-determined unit wise or full competency standards of that qualification level. Candidates also get opportunities to identify their gaps for full competency in the particular level and prepare for fill the gap from training or coaching.

N. Basic Education through Grade 8

There are certain limitations in moving from TVET to general and from general to TVET education. In Nepal's education system the school level TVET starts at grade 9 and 11. Grade 9 TVET is a mixed one with general education. After grade 10, one can have different options: Continue TVET mixed general education, move to general education or join 3-year TVET diploma.

Hence, the section of Basic education through Grade 8 in NVQ framework shows about the provisions of mobility into different streams as mentioned above. It allows the learners to enjoy the type of education they want and can have move across the streams on their choice.

O. Arrow pointing upwards from Basic education through grade 8 section (↑)

Since, basic education till grade 8 is free and compulsory in Nepal, without completing the basic education, no one can enroll into formal further education both in technical and general streams. Separate provision of RPL is included in the framework for the informal and non-formal learners and those who have work experience.

Hence, the arrow pointing upwards from Basic education through grade 8 section denotes that the upward mobility into formal TVET or basic education can be continued only after completing grade 8. Or they can enter through RPL to achieve NVQ Level.

The benefit of this provision is that it will support the government's approaches to achieve free and compulsory basic education and also to differentiate on how RPL can incorporate the individuals into qualifications frame for those who do not complete basic education but have informal, non-formal learning experiences.

P. Cross sectional Arrow (↔) Permeability:

Permeability is the capacity of education and training systems to enable learners to:

- access and move among different pathways (program, levels) and systems;
- validate learning outcomes acquired in another system or in non-formal/informal settings.

(CEDEFOP 2014, Europe).

If regular learning is to become an integral element of the whole lifespan, it must be possible for people in every phase of life to take the next step from their existing qualifications and competencies and pursue the educational pathways they want to choose upon in one direction or another. Therefore, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has provisioned the progression and permeability between TVET Qualification Title and General Qualification Title.

The cross-sectional arrow in the NQF denotes the progression and permeability between National Vocational Qualifications Framework and General Education Qualifications Framework. It also shows that the permeability of General Education to TVET is applicable from Secondary Education Exam or NQ level 4 till PhD or NVQ level 8. Similarly, one can enter GE from TVET from National Technician Certificate or NVQ level 4 till PhD or NQ level 8 with some ladders and bridges (e.g. Bridge Course, Extra Credit).

Moreover, Level 5 under NVQF is a National Diploma which is made equivalent to grade 12 in general education. The permeability from TVET to general higher education, therefore, is only possible after this level is completed. Completing grade 12 or equivalent is mandatory to join university education.

Due to the provision of progression and permeability between two streams the people who wish to continue their education and lifelong learning can benefit more and can enjoy their career aspirations.

XXXXXXXXX