



**OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**2016 TO 2018**

## Version Control Initial Implementation Plan

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## Glossary

Awarding Body	An organisation that issues education or training certification following formal assessment, and includes organisations in Oman that certify professional competence including for example Ministries, Higher Education institutions, Technological and Vocational Education and Training and professional bodies <sup>1</sup> .
Capacity Building	Planned development of (or increase in) knowledge, output rate, management, skills, and other capabilities of an organization through acquisition, incentives, technology and/or training <sup>2</sup> .
Credit	A quantitative measurement that represents the learning volume to achieve the respective learning outcomes <sup>3</sup> . This includes all activities required to achieve the learning outcomes including independent learning.
Credit Accumulation	The process by which credits for modules taken may be accumulated and retrospectively brought together to qualify the student for an award <sup>4</sup> .
Credit Transfer	The ability to transfer Oman Qualifications Framework credit from one qualification to another and from one setting to another to minimise the duplication of learning.
Cross-ministerial Working Group	This may involve the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and or other ministries as appropriate.
Cross-sectoral Working Group	This may involve MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries and relevant stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry</li> </ul>	A decision, following evaluation, to include a qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-Entry</li> </ul>	A decision, following evaluation, not to include a qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-Entry</li> </ul>	A decision, following evaluation, to continue to include a qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework.
Foreign and	Foreign qualifications relate to a specific country, (e.g. Edexcel is a UK

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/#a>

<sup>2</sup> <http://businessdictionary.com/definition/capacity-building.html>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)

<sup>4</sup> [www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/CATSRegs0910.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/CATSRegs0910.pdf)

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International Qualifications	Awarding Body) while an international qualification is from an international awarding body (e.g. Cisco, Microsoft etc.)
Governance of the Oman Qualifications Framework	The overall custodianship of the Oman Qualifications Framework; the setting of overarching regulations and policies for the framework.
Higher Education	Post compulsory education at universities, colleges and similar educational establishments (especially to degree level) <sup>5</sup> .
Implementation	Process of accepting applications, assessing applications, making judgement decisions on the listing and/or validation of qualifications and informing the managing body of decisions.
Level	An indicator of relative demand; complexity; depth of study; and learner autonomy <sup>6</sup> .
Level Descriptors	A set of progressive statements assigned to each level of the Oman Qualifications Framework, that describe the complexity of acquired learning in terms of knowledge, skills and general competence <sup>7</sup> .
Licensing	An evaluative process leading to formal approval from the relevant Omani Ministry for institutions and their programs. Institutions include organisations such as universities, vocational training institutions and schools.
Listing	The initial inclusion of a qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework at a particular level following an initial evaluation of the qualification specification, learning outcomes and assessment.
Management of the Oman Qualifications Framework	Monitoring and implementation of the OQF, as well as maintaining the database of qualifications and validating the listing decisions.
Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF)	A comprehensive framework which includes all types of qualifications from all sectors of education and training in Oman.
Program	The courses, modules or units that lead to a qualification.
Program Specification	A detailed description of the content, assessment, quality assurance arrangements, level and credit value of a program.
Progression	A learning pathway taken by learners as they develop their expertise in

<sup>5</sup> OAAA Glossary

<sup>6</sup> 2001 Gosling and Moon

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Bahrain *NQF Handbook for Institutions*  
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	a discipline and achieve qualifications at higher levels on the Oman Qualifications Framework.
Qualification	A certificate, diploma or a degree issued by an awarding body when, following established standards, the awarding body determines that a learner has achieved the learning outcomes related to a complete qualification <sup>8</sup> .
Qualification Providers	Education and training providers that develop and/or deliver qualifications e.g. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Schools, Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), Fisheries Training Institutes (FTIs) and Private Training Institutes (PTIs).
Qualification Type	Each broad category of qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework.
Quality Assurance	The means through which a provider ensures and confirms that the conditions are in place for learners to achieve the standards set by it or another awarding body; the means by which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty, that the standards and quality of its education provision are being maintained and enhanced <sup>9</sup> .
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	The process of identifying, recognising and evidencing the learning and achievement occurred in formal, informal and non-formal learning.
Referencing	In the context of the initial Implementation Plan this will be a one-to-one comparison, rather than a formal arrangement with another framework.
Stakeholder	An individual, a group or an organisation that has interest in, or can be affected by, the Oman Qualifications Framework operations <sup>10</sup> .
Technological and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)	Education and training which aims to equip learners with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labour market <sup>11</sup> .
Validation	The process to confirm that the decision to initially list (register) a qualification on the Oman Qualifications Framework is valid.

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from QFEmirates

<sup>9</sup> Adapted from OAAA Glossary

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from the Bahrain *NQF Handbook for Institutions*

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.eqavet.eu/qa/gns/glossary/v/vocational-education-and-training.aspx>  
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## ACRONYMS

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
FTI	Fisheries Training Institute
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoM	Ministry of Manpower
OAAA	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
OMSB	Oman Medical Speciality Board
OQF	Oman Qualifications Framework
PTI	Private Training Institute
SAC	School Assessment Centre
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
TVET	Technological and Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centre

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of a comprehensive National Qualifications Framework for Oman was recommended by the Education Council in 2014. This Framework is known as the Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF). The Education Council tasked the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) to take the project forward and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) was engaged as experts to assist in its development. The project is being taking forward in two distinct phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2 with Phase 1 beginning in May 2015.

A significant amount of research was conducted in Phase 1 generating a number of reports namely:

- Communications Strategy 2015-2017;
- Consultation Strategy 2015-2017;
- Benchmarking Activity Report;
- Environmental Scan of Qualifications Report;
- Mapping Activity Report;
- Governance Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment;
- Training Needs Analysis;
- Conceptual Design Framework;
- Technical Design Framework.

These reports along with the *OAAA Proposed Project Plan Phase 2 (August 2016 – August 2017)*, informed the development of this *Initial Implementation Plan*.

A combination of the aforementioned reports and SQA's extensive national and international experience of developing, implementing and maintaining national qualifications frameworks informed the identification of fourteen objectives necessary for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF. The *Initial Implementation Plan*, sets out these objectives along with associated targets and activities.

Although at the time of writing (December 2016) the detailed arrangements are yet to be put in place, the strategic decisions made in Phase 1<sup>12</sup> is that the Education Council is responsible for governance, OAAA is responsible for managing the OQF and the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Manpower and the Oman Medical Speciality Board are responsible for its implementation (See Table 1).

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<sup>12</sup> Meeting of the Education Council 23 May 2016  
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**Table 1: Bodies Responsible for Governance, Management and Implementation of the OQF**

Governing Body	The Education Council
Managing Body	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
Responsible for Implementation (including listing qualifications)	The Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Manpower and Oman Medical Speciality Board
Responsible for Curriculum Development and Qualification Design	Qualification Providers (e.g. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Schools, Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), Fisheries Training Institutes (FTIs) and Private Training Institutes (PTIs)

As the arrangements for the operation of the OQF are at a very early stage of development, the legal framework, operating structures and resources required by those responsible for the governance, management and implementation have yet to be put in place.

The objectives within the *Initial Implementation Plan* have been set out according to the three functions of the framework, namely governance, management and implementation. The governance is concerned with the establishment of the OQF legal framework and operating structures along with the associated resources (such as personnel, finance and IT infrastructure).

Operating arrangements, such as agreement on the criteria and methodology for qualifications (existing and new) to be placed (listed) on the OQF, the development of policies, procedures and guidelines, the development of arrangements for the recognition of learning (e.g. credit accumulation and transfer and recognition of prior learning), progression routes, and international relationships along with planning for a pilot to test the operating arrangements are the focus of the management function.

The implementation function is concerned with the listing and subsequent validation of qualifications initially placed on the OQF.

## 1.1 Structure of Initial Implementation Plan

Following the Introduction (Section 2), Section 3 sets out the rationale for the fourteen objectives which have been drawn from the research and subsequent reports throughout the OQF Development Project: *Benchmarking Activity Report; Environmental Scan of Qualifications; Mapping Activity Report; Governance Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment; Training Needs Analysis; Conceptual Design Framework; and Technical Design Framework.*

Section 5, 6 and 7 set out the fourteen objectives and the associated targets and activities in terms of governance, management and implementation. It is not possible at this stage to give specific deadlines for the targets and activities in this *Initial Implementation Plan*. There are many variables not least the time required to engage staff with the necessary skills to carry out the management and implementation functions. However, it is anticipated that for each objective a dedicated project plan will be drawn up and agreed with specific timescales.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

In March 2014, the Sultanate of Oman Education Council recommended the existing National Qualifications Framework for Academic Qualifications be further developed to form a comprehensive framework to include all types of qualifications from all sectors of education and training. The decision of the Education Council tasked the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) to take this work forward<sup>13</sup>. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) was engaged as the external partner for the project which began in May 2015. The development of a comprehensive lifelong learning national qualifications framework for Oman – the Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF) –will include all qualifications from the following sectors:

- General Education – Schools;
- Technological and Vocational Education and Training (TVET);
- Higher Education (Academic);
- Professional Bodies.

The development of the OQF is a significant undertaking which will:

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<sup>13</sup> Sultanate of Oman, The Education Council *The Most Remarkable Projects Developed by The Education Council*, pg14  
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- Bring all quality assured qualifications in Oman into a single comprehensive framework to help raise knowledge and understanding of the wide range of Omani qualifications and their relationship to one another;
- Provide a means of describing and classifying qualifications in Oman in terms of level and credit;
- Increase consistency of qualifications in Oman;
- Increase quality assurance across all sectors of education and training in Oman;
- Provide flexibility for learners through the recognition of prior learning and development of progression routes;
- Provide a means to increase international recognition of Omani qualifications.

## **2.1 Phase 1: May 2015 to June 2016**

Phase 1 involved developing the structure of the OQF by researching the available qualifications in Oman and ascertaining their readiness to be placed on a qualifications framework, identifying international benchmarks and ascertaining the requirements and expectations of stakeholders.

Phase 1 involved research and consultation, which resulted in the following outputs:

- Communications Strategy 2015-2017;
- Consultation Strategy 2015-2017;
- Benchmarking Activity Report;
- Environmental Scan of Qualifications Report;
- Mapping Activity Report;
- Governance Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment;
- Training Needs Analysis;
- Conceptual Design Framework;
- Technical Design Framework.

As a result of the research, the following requirements were identified in Phase 1 for taking forward in Phase 2<sup>14</sup>:

1. All quality assured qualifications would be placed (listed) on the OQF;
2. Qualifications will be based on learning outcomes;
3. The learning outcomes will be assessed;

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<sup>14</sup> August 2016 to August 2017  
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4. There will be quality assurance of institutions<sup>15</sup> and qualifications on the OQF;
5. The development of qualification types and titles and qualification design will be matters for consultation;
6. There will be a system to allow for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications;
7. There will be arrangements for the recognition of prior learning;
8. Extensive capacity building will be needed for ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers, including professional bodies. This will involve building capacity in order that:
  - Existing qualifications can be prepared for placement on the OQF;
  - New qualifications are designed in accordance with the requirements of the OQF;
  - Qualifications can be placed (listed) on the OQF and subsequently validated;
  - All comply with the OQF policies and procedures that will be developed.

## 2.2 Initial Implementation Plan

The *Initial Implementation Plan* is the deliverable associated with item A8 in the OQF Development Project Plan for Phase 1 which will assist in the further development and implementation of the OQF in Phase 2. It draws on the *Benchmarking Activity Report, Environmental Scan of Qualifications, Mapping Activity Report, Governance, Management and Implementation of the OQF: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment, Training Needs Analysis, Conceptual and Technical Design Frameworks*. It also draws on the *OAAA OQF Development Project Plan for Phase 2 (Draft)* which has a duration of 52 weeks. The OAAA project plan for Phase 2 sets out a significant number of deliverables with regard to the:

- Development of consultation and communication strategies and plans;
- Updating the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (developed in Phase 1 and not yet implemented);
- Development of policies and procedures for the management and operation of the OQF;
- Development of the methodologies for placing (listing) qualifications on the framework and an associated pilot;
- Development of mechanisms to support the governance, management and implementation of the OQF including the review of organisational structures;

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<sup>15</sup> Herewith referred to as qualification providers  
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- Dissemination of information and guidance on the OQF through activities such as sector briefings, capacity building, training workshops and events;
- Further international benchmarking by way of a study visit and referencing to another National Qualifications Framework;
- The development of paper and web-based documentation;
- Evaluation of the Implementation Phase<sup>16</sup>.

Informed by a combination of the aforementioned reports produced in Phase 1 and OAAA proposed project plan for Phase 2, the *Initial Implementation Plan* identifies fourteen objectives and associated targets and activities which have been classified by the functions of the OQF, namely governance, management and implementation which are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: OQF Objectives**

<b>Number of Objective</b>	<b>Title</b>
Objective 1	Establish the legal framework for the OQF.
Objective 2	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.
Objective 3	Establish the strategic direction of the OQF.
Objective 4	Develop effective communication mechanisms for the OQF.
Objective 5	Secure stakeholder engagement.
Objective 6	Establish qualification types, titles and design.
Objective 7	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the OQF.
Objective 8	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion and validation of qualifications on the OQF.
Objective 9	Set up a National Register of Qualifications.
Objective 10	Build capacity to govern, manage and implement the OQF.
Objective 11	Recognise learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.
Objective 12	Establish principles and procedures for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.
Objective 13	Develop international relationships.
Objective 14	Facilitate the development of qualifications for learners with basic educational needs.

<sup>16</sup> OAAA, March 2016, *Oman Qualification Framework Development Project, Planning for Phase 2, August 2016 to August 2017*  
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## 2.3 Strategic Decisions Already Taken

Several strategic decisions were taken in May 2016 following discussions between OAAA and the Education Council. These are that the:

- Governing Body for the OQF will be the Education Council;
- Managing Body for the OQF will be OAAA;
- The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Manpower (MoM) and the Oman Medical Speciality Board (OMSB) will be responsible for implementation of the OQF, including listing of qualifications;
- The Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) and the Schools Assessment Centre (SAC) will be responsible for validation.

The arrangements for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF are at a very early stage of development and the legal framework and operational structures and are not yet in place and the resources that will be needed are yet to be identified. Arrangements include the:

- Definition of roles and responsibilities of:
  - The Education Council in its role as the Governing Body;
  - OAAA in its role as the OQF Managing Body;
  - MoHE, MoE and MoM and OMSB in their role of having responsibility for the implementation of the OQF;
- Organisational structures for the management function of the OQF within OAAA;
- Operational structures for the implementation function of the OQF within MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB;
- Operational structures for SAC who will be responsible for validation of school level qualifications;
- Reporting mechanisms;
- Clarification of the role and responsibilities in relation to the OQF (if any) of other ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defence;
- Provisions for funding, particularly for resources such as personnel, finance and IT infrastructures that the Education Council, OAAA, the MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and SAC will need to carry out their roles.

The Oversight Committee, established at the beginning of Phase 1, will continue to be the main conduit for the dissemination of information and will provide advice on the further development and

implementation of the framework. Membership of the Oversight Committee is provided in Appendix 1.

Strategic and operational decisions will be required throughout the implementation and on-going operation of the OQF which will need different levels of authority depending on the nature of the decision. As the implementation of the OQF requires significant co-ordination of the main sectors of education and training and professional bodies, a review of the existing regulations, rules and remits of those involved in the governance, management and implementation of the OQF is necessary to ensure that they have the authority and remit to carry out their respective roles.

The legal framework and operating structures for the OQF should be put in place as soon as possible along with the associated resources (such as personnel, finance and IT infrastructure).

OQF policies, procedures and remits pertaining to the OQF for ministries and other bodies must conform and align to existing legislation. If the existing legislation and remits do not conform, the necessary legislation must be put in place (See Alignment of Legislation, Policies and Procedures Appendix 2).

### **2.3.1 Founding Principles of the OQF**

Following extensive discussion between the Education Council and OAAA, informed by a discussion paper and subsequent joint paper prepared by OAAA and SQA on the governance management and implementation of the OQF, five `founding principles` were agreed<sup>17</sup>.

- Some preliminary laws are required to provide the necessary enabling legal framework for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF;
- Use existing structures in the education system initially to govern, manage and implement the OQF rather than creating a new authority;
- All qualifications that are placed on the OQF need to be quality assured;
- The Education Council is responsible for the overall governance of the OQF. Coupling of new processes with existing processes (licensing with listing, and accreditation with validation) should be adopted as an interim measure until a central authority has been established with responsibility for listing and validation;
- The existing awarding bodies should continue to be responsible for awarding qualifications that are placed on the OQF<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

<sup>18</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE OQF

This section sets out rationale for each of the fourteen objectives that were identified for the implementation of the OQF. The documentary source for the objectives is given in Table 3.

**Table 3: Source of OQF Objectives**

<b>Number of Objective</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Source</b>
Objective 1	Establish the legal framework for the OQF.	Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment
Objective 2	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.	Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment
Objective 3	Establish the strategic direction of the OQF.	Good Practice
Objective 4	Develop effective communication mechanisms for the OQF.	Benchmarking Activity Report
Objective 5	Secure stakeholder engagement.	Communication Strategy
Objective 6	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	Environmental Scan of Qualifications Report Mapping Report
Objective 7	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the OQF.	Environmental Scan of Qualifications Report Mapping Report
Objective 8	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion and validation of qualifications on the OQF.	Mapping Activity Report Training Needs Analysis Conceptual Design Framework Technical Design Framework
Objective 9	Set up a National Register of Qualifications.	OQF Development Project Plan
Objective 10	Build capacity to govern, manage and implement the OQF.	Mapping Activity Report Training Needs Analysis Conceptual Design Framework Technical Design Framework

Number of Objective	Title	Source
Objective 11	Recognise learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.	Benchmarking Activity Report
Objective 12	Establish principles and procedures for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	Benchmarking Activity Report
Objective 13	Develop international relationships.	Conceptual Design Framework Technical Design Framework
Objective 14	Facilitate the development of qualifications for learners with basic educational needs.	Benchmarking Activity Report Environmental Scan of Qualifications Report Mapping Report

## **OBJECTIVE 1: ESTABLISH THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE OQF**

During Phase 1 several discussions between OAAA and the Education Council took place, based on a Paper jointly prepared by OAAA and SQA which resulted in the formal and final decision on the governance, management and implementation of the OQF. This confirmed the Education Council as the OQF governing body, OAAA as the managing body and the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB responsible for listing qualifications and SAC responsible for the validation of school level qualifications. However, the legal mandates of these organisations do not currently give them the required authority to operate a national qualifications framework.

The first `founding principle` of the OQF recognises that existing legislation needs to be enhanced to provide the necessary legal framework in which the OQF can operate. The existing legislation and remit of the above organisations must be reviewed to ensure they have clear and unquestionable authority for their respective roles in relation to the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.

In line with the first `founding principle`, if the existing legislation does not cover the requirements of the OQF, appropriate legislation and remits must be developed and implemented.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH THE STRUCTURES FOR THE GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OQF**

### **Governance of the OQF**

Tuck (2007) states that “there are two key issues of governance: co-ordination of policy across government ministries; and ensuring adequate involvement of stakeholders”<sup>19</sup>. As the governing body for the OQF the Education Council may wish to give consideration to its membership to ensure that it is representative of all sectors and/or bodies, particularly those stakeholders most affected by the requirements of the framework.

### **Management of the OQF**

As the managing body, OAAA will be involved in developing, seeking approval for and implementing policies, procedures and guidelines for the operation of the OQF. This will involve supervising, administering, monitoring and maintaining the framework. It will also involve providing support to, and capacity building for the MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and SAC, other ministries, a wide range of awarding bodies and qualification providers. While it is recognised the OAAA will not deliver all the capacity building training they will be responsible for the co-ordination of training to ensure that the information is accurate and consistent across organisations. The *Training Needs Analysis* includes the need for Train the Trainer type programs in order that the message of the OQF can be cascaded throughout organisations; it will be for OAAA to ensure the information is correct. The involvement and engagement of all the organisations mentioned above will be essential in the implementation of the OQF. The management of the OQF will also involve:

- Developing the OQF structure within OAAA along with securing the financial arrangements and resources needed<sup>20</sup> to take forward its role of managing the OQF;
- Developing job descriptions for the posts identified in the OQF structure and carrying out an active recruitment campaign;
- Developing an OQF Strategic Plan and associated Operational Plans;
- Consulting with stakeholders on OQF developments and requirements;
- Developing the capacity of OQF staff to:
  - Develop policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation;
  - Communicate the framework widely;
  - Build the capacity of MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to support awarding bodies, qualification providers and professional bodies to prepare qualifications for listing

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<sup>19</sup> Tuck R. *An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks*, (2007) pg. 30 Skills and Employability Department, International Labour Office, Geneva.

<sup>20</sup> In addition to financial resources, resources such as personnel, IT, accommodation  
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- on the OQF e.g. provide support on writing learning outcomes, assessment and quality assurance requirements of the OQF;
- Build capacity in the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to receive applications for qualifications to be listed on the OQF and to process these;
- Build capacity in SAC for the validation of school level qualifications.
- Developing criteria, policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation for the listing and validation of qualifications on the OQF;
- Co-ordinating the implementation of the quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications within the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and awarding bodies and qualification providers;
- Coordinating and facilitating the efforts of the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and awarding bodies in the initial implementation task of listing the main body of existing qualifications;
- Developing criteria, policies and procedures for the recognition of professional, foreign and international qualifications;
- Establishing, implementing and maintaining the OQF National Register of Qualifications;
- Developing criteria, policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation for progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and recognition of prior learning;
- Developing international relationships;
- Developing criteria, policies and procedures for referencing the OQF to other frameworks;
- Updating and disseminating Information on the OQF to MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB SAC, other ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers and stakeholders.

The decision of the Education Council<sup>21</sup> will undoubtedly have an effect on the structure and size of OAAA. It will be necessary for the OAAA senior management to consider the means by which it will finance and incorporate the management function of the OQF into its existing structure and arrangements. It is beneficial that as an existing organisation OAAA already has human resource and IT functions in place. However, additional financial resources will be required for additional staff and an early activity in the OQF *Initial Implementation Plan* must be the development of an appropriate OQF structure within the OAAA, job descriptions to fulfil the identified OQF structure followed by an active recruitment campaign. This is likely to require recruitment of Omani experts in areas such as education, policy development and information technology, as well as significant capacity building of recruited staff and existing OAAA staff.

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<sup>21</sup> May 2016  
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## **Implementation of the OQF**

The responsibility for implementing the OQF lies with the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB. This will include the responsibility for `listing` qualifications (allocating a level and a credit value) for placement on the framework. Therefore, while the existing awarding bodies will continue to be responsible for awarding qualifications (founding principle 5) the qualifications will be listed (allocated a level and credit value) by one of the three ministries or OMSB (as appropriate) and placed on the National Register of Qualifications by OAAA.

A process of validation will be introduced which will link to the accreditation process already in place in higher education. OAAA will be responsible for validation for higher education and technical qualifications and the Schools Assessment Centre (SAC) will be responsible for the validation of school level qualifications.

The arrangements for listing and validation of qualifications are at a very early stage of development and will require changes to the existing legislation and remits of the organisations involved. The MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB will be required to set up appropriate structures to enable them to carry out the listing function. The remit of SAC will also require to be extended in order that they have the authority to validate school-level qualifications and their structure will require revision to accommodate the validation process. All organisations involved in the listing and validation of qualifications will no doubt require additional resources including additional personnel and finance.

In conjunction with OAAA, the MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and SAC will be responsible for ensuring that the staff assigned/appointed to list and validate qualifications are trained to carry out these two new functions.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: ESTABLISH THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE OQF**

In *`An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks`* Tuck describes the role of governance as “the setting of strategic direction and determination of policy” and the role of management as “the implementation of agreed policy, carried out by executive officers in the main organisations with responsibilities for the NQF”<sup>22</sup>.

As the governing body the Education Council will be responsible for the OQF, setting its Vision, Mission and Values and its strategic direction and approving the policies, procedures and other relevant documentation necessary for its implementation. Clear Vision, Mission and Value Statements for the OQF should be developed and agreed. The development of such statements for

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<sup>22</sup> Tuck R. *An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Frameworks*, (2007) pg. 29 Skills and Employability Department, International Labour Office, Geneva.  
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the OQF will capture its purpose and its values and will define the benefits of the framework to qualification providers, employers and other stakeholders.

A five-year Strategic Plan for the OQF should be developed to provide a clear focus for the achievement of the OQF Vision and it should set out the OQF's Purpose and Mission, Values and Objectives which will provide the basis for Annual Operational Plans.

Stakeholders need to understand how the OQF will operate and a Strategic Plan will:

- Provide the strategic direction for the actions and decisions to achieve the intent of the Vision, Mission and Values;
- Clearly set out the reasons for a national qualifications framework to ministries, professional bodies and qualification providers as they will be required to take an active role in its implementation;
- Explain the OQF and its requirements to stakeholders to inform and involve them;
- Assist in the benchmarking and monitoring performance;
- Provide a means for continuous improvement, to assist, for example, utilising the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle (PDCA)<sup>23</sup> or other quality management tools;
- Provide the basis for reporting on the progress and impact of the OQF to Cabinet;
- Provide the building blocks for the next and subsequent Strategic Plans.

The Education Council will be responsible for approving the Strategic Plan and reporting to Cabinet on progress in achieving the aims of the OQF as presented in the Strategic Plan and the Annual Operational Plans. Over time, as the implementation of the OQF progresses, the Education Council may wish to consult and report on the impact of the OQF on education and training in Oman.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: DEVELOP EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS FOR THE OQF**

To achieve the objectives set out in this *Initial Implementation Plan* it will be necessary to provide accessible, targeted and jargon-free information on the OQF for qualification providers, learners, employers, parents and other stakeholders.

In line with international conventions, key messages (See Benchmarking Activity Report) should be developed for the OQF and the Vision, Mission and Value Statements (Objective 3) will be a helpful aid in this regard. The agreed key messages should be communicated all stakeholders, including ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers, learners and parents<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://asq.org/learn-about-quality/project-planning-tools/overview/pdca-cycle.html>

<sup>24</sup> See OQF Benchmarking Report  
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During Phase 1, a Communication Strategy was developed which covers both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Project. Annual Communication Plans which focus on the different information requirements of qualification providers and other stakeholders should be developed in line with this strategy.

To avoid mixed messages and confusion, it is important that all ministries, OMSB, awarding bodies, qualification providers and other relevant bodies are consistent in the information they publish on the OQF. In its role as managing body, OAAA will be responsible for monitoring communication of the OQF by others and for ensuring the dissemination of accurate, up-to-date information on the OQF.

### **OBJECTIVE 5: SECURE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Securing the engagement of stakeholders will be of vital importance to the successful implementation of the OQF. It is inevitable that the introduction of the OQF will impact significantly on many existing organisations. Often on top of an already full-time workload, staff within stakeholder organisations will be required to carry out many of the tasks relating to the OQF. For example, MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and qualification providers will be required to establish and integrate within their existing quality assurance systems the necessary quality assurance arrangements that pertain to the framework. They will also need to prepare existing qualifications for listing which will involve carrying out a review of the learning outcomes and assessment and making amendments to these as required. Therefore, key organisations will need to give significant focus to OQF activity in the first years of implementation to complete the initial inclusion of qualifications as quickly as possible. It is therefore important that stakeholders engage with the OQF, are kept informed and are consulted (as appropriate) on developments.

During Phase 1, a Consultation Strategy was developed which covered both Phases of the Project. It is important that all stakeholders feel part of the development and implementation processes. In order to get buy-in from all stakeholders the Consultation Strategy, developed in Phase 1, should form the basis of consultation plans as required.

### **OBJECTIVE 6: ESTABLISH QUALIFICATION TYPES, TITLES AND DESIGNS**

#### **Qualification Types**

The Mapping Activity identified that there is a wide range of qualifications, some with the same title but with a very different number of courses and/or duration of time. It is strongly recommended that consultation is carried out to develop Qualification Type Specifications to identify and classify groups of qualifications that are similar and to standardise the design of qualifications with a given title. This would include for example specifying the structure of the qualification in terms of the

number of courses, the OQF level, the duration of typical programmes, the minimum credit value, the entry requirements and progression opportunities.

### **Qualification Design**

The Mapping Activity identified a lack of consistency in the design of qualifications across the sectors and some elements of qualification design need to be addressed before qualifications could be placed on the OQF. These include the:

- Way in which learning outcomes are written;
- Assessment of learning outcomes;
- Information available on the qualification specification.

In addition, the Mapping Activity Report revealed that there were significant differences in the number of courses that comprised qualifications which have the same title, some of which were delivered over the same duration of time. For example, one diploma comprised 15 courses while another comprised 55. This needs to be addressed.

Learning outcomes which are assessed are fundamental to all qualifications frameworks. Therefore, it is important that learning outcomes are written in a way that they are clear, unambiguous and assessable. The qualifications reviewed in the Mapping Activity identified that in some cases there was a lack of clarity in the way that many of the learning outcomes were written which made them difficult to assess appropriately.

The assessment criteria should be specified for the learning outcomes of the courses that comprise the qualifications. However, this was either not available or was not clear in the documentation for the qualifications that were reviewed in the Mapping Activity.

As assessment of learning outcomes is fundamental to qualifications frameworks the assessment criteria need to be clearly stated and it also has to be clear that all the learning outcomes are assessed.

### **Qualification Specification**

As the Mapping Activity identified that insufficient information was available on the qualification specifications that were reviewed, one of the recommendations within the Mapping Activity Report was to consider the development of a standard design for qualifications. OAAA may wish to consider consultation with stakeholders on this matter as some may consider a standard design of qualifications to be beneficial while others may be of the view that this could possibly reduce

flexibility and that a common template with a core set of headings that every sector would include in its qualification specifications would be sufficient.

### **Credit-Rating System**

A credit-rating system is in place in the higher education sector which establishes the relative volume of qualifications. This helps with the comparison of one qualification to another, the development of progression routes and the recognition of prior learning. It is the intention that with the implementation of the OQF the credit-rating system will be extended to all sectors of education and training. Decisions will be taken on the credit-rating system to be put in place for the OQF along with a decision on the minimum amount of credit that an award can contain. Some international examples on credit-rating systems enable the recognition of very small pieces of learning and will recognise one credit (which equates to 10 notional learning hours) while there are others that only award a larger minimum amount of credit e.g. five credits (50 notional learning hours).

### **OBJECTIVE 7: ESTABLISH QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OQF**

In Oman, the regulatory bodies responsible for compliance, regulation and supervision of education and training lie with different ministries. External quality assurance of qualifications is carried out by organisations as indicated in Table 5.

**Table: 5: Responsibility for existing quality assurance arrangements**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Higher Education	Ministry of Higher Education
	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
	Other Ministries and government bodies
Vocational Education and Training (private)	Ministry of Manpower
School Education (private)	Ministry of Education

## **Current Quality Assurance Arrangements**

The current quality assurance arrangements are briefly described in the following sections.

### ***Ministry of Higher Education, Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, other Ministries and Government Bodies***

The MoHE supervises the Colleges of Applied Sciences (CAS) and private higher education institutions (HEIs) approved by the Education Council<sup>25</sup>.

OAAA provides accreditation for Higher Education institutions and programs of Higher Education.

Other ministries and government bodies such as the Ministries of Defence, Health and Awqaf and Religious Affairs and the Royal Oman Police have responsibilities for supervising higher education institutions that fall within their remit<sup>26</sup>.

### ***Ministry of Manpower***

The MoM supervises and regulates TVET and has the responsibility for licencing institutions and programs. MoM sets the policies and standards for the sector<sup>27</sup>. MoM carries out the external quality assurance of TVET offered in private institutions.

### ***Ministry of Education***

The MoE is a regulating, supervising and executive body with decision making capacity, and concerned with general education in both its public and private delivery<sup>28</sup>. External quality assurance of school qualifications offered in private institutions is carried out by MoE.

## **Quality Assurance of the OQF**

As the managing body for the OQF, OAAA will be responsible for the quality assurance of the framework. Quality assurance of the OQF will be at two levels: one at the level of the institution and the other at the level of the program leading to the award of a qualification.

### ***Institutional Quality Assurance for the OQF***

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<sup>25</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating and Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

<sup>26</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating and Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

<sup>27</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating and Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

<sup>28</sup> Sultanate of Oman Education Council, (undated) The Most Remarkable projects Developed by the Education Council Cited in the Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating and Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

Those who hold responsibility for the quality assurance of institutions within their sector may question why institutional quality assurance for the OQF is necessary. It is likely that existing quality assurance arrangements, while robust, do not include the quality assurance processes required for a qualification framework. The exception in Oman is in the HE sector where there is an existing qualifications framework – the Oman Academic Qualifications Framework.

Nevertheless, the OQF managing body, in consultation with MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and others as appropriate should develop institutional quality assurance criteria which would apply to all sectors. As the managing body, OAAA must satisfy itself that the institutional quality assurance arrangements **in relation to the OQF** are robust in all sectors. OAAA should develop policies and procedures for the institutional quality assurance arrangements to ensure the on-going quality assurance of the OQF taking account of existing regulations and the requirements for quality assurance which are already in place.

In addition, as the listing process will be carried out by the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, institutional quality assurance arrangements for listing should be developed and established in the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and integrated with their existing quality assurance systems.

### ***Quality Assurance for Programs Leading to Qualifications***

A standardised process for the design of qualifications should be adopted by all sectors which is likely to include the requirement that all awarding bodies and qualification providers identify the learning outcomes related to qualifications and create the assessment mechanisms to ensure that the learning outcomes are assessed and quality assured and that qualification design complies with the requirements of the OQF. This would also include the requirement for organisations to have internal and external quality assurance which is subject to continuous improvement.

Although the quality assurance arrangements have yet to be agreed, the Education Council and OAAA may wish to put in place policies and procedures to ensure the providers submitting their qualifications for listing have appropriate quality assurance arrangements in place.

The approved quality assurance policies and procedures will be applicable to all qualifications at all levels and in all sectors of the education and training system. OAAA as the OQF managing body and the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB responsible for the implementation of the framework will need to ensure that providers whose qualifications are placed on the OQF comply with the developed and approved OQF quality assurance policies and procedures and that compliance is maintained.

## Consistency of Outcomes with Regard to Listing Qualifications

OAAA will be responsible to ensure that there is consistency in the outcomes of the listing activity across the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB. This will require the development of clear policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation and extensive capacity building for the appointed staff within OAAA and the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB in relation to listing. It is recommended that OAAA ascertains whether it has the required remit to carry out such capacity building within these organisations. This is one example of where the current remit and role of OAAA may require to be extended to include the management functions of the OQF.

## OBJECTIVE 8: ESTABLISH PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE INCLUSION AND VALIDATION OF QUALIFICATIONS ON THE OQF

One of the five founding principles for the OQF includes the decision that existing Awarding Bodies will continue to be responsible for the award of qualifications. However, currently there are a range of bodies in Oman that are responsible for licensing, supervising, approving and awarding the qualifications offered within their respective sectors. These are set out in the Table 6:

Table 6: Summary of Current Arrangements for the Award of Qualifications in Oman<sup>29</sup>

	Higher Education	TVET	Schooling
<b>Regulatory body</b> Purpose: compliance, regulating and supervising	Ministry of Higher Education for the Colleges of Applied Sciences and private HEIs	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education
<b>Licensing Bodies (institutions)</b> Purpose: Quality Assurance	Ministry of Higher Education	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education
	Ministry of Health		
	Ministry of Defence		
<b>Licensing Bodies (programs)</b> Purpose: Quality Assurance	Ministry of Higher Education (for private institutions)	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education
	Supervising ministries		
<b>Sultan Qaboos University</b>	License not required		
<b>Accreditation Body External Quality Assurance of Qualifications (public)</b> Purpose: Quality Assurance	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	None	None
	Ministry of Higher Education		

<sup>29</sup> Adapted from the Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating and Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment where a more detailed table is available

<b>External Quality Assurance of Qualifications (private)</b> Purpose: Quality Assurance	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education
	Ministry of Higher Education		
<b>Awarding Bodies (public)</b> Purpose: Recognition of learning	Ministry of Higher Education	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education (public only)
	Ministry of Health		
	Ministry of Defence	Ministry of Defence	Ministry of Defence
	Oman Medical Speciality Board		
	Royal Court of Diwan	Royal Court of Diwan	Royal Court of Diwan
	Royal Oman Police	Royal Oman Police	Royal Oman Police
	Sultan Qaboos University		
<b>Awarding Bodies (private)</b> Purpose: Recognition of learning	Private Higher Education Institutions and Affiliates	Private Institutions	Private Institutions

It can be seen that ministries are currently responsible for licensing (institutions and programs), quality assurance and awarding certification. With the introduction of the OQF, the MoHE, MoE, MoM will be responsible for licensing institutions and programs. As a public university with independent status, Sultan Qaboos University does not need a licence.

The inconsistency in the design of qualifications needs to be addressed before qualifications could be placed on the OQF. These include the:

- Way in which learning outcomes are written;
- Assessment of learning outcomes;
- Information available on the qualification specification.

`Listing` and `Validation` are two new processes which the OQF will introduce. These are described below:

### **Listing Qualifications**

The initial placing of qualifications on the OQF will be known as `listing`. This process will require OQF level descriptors, clear listing criteria and a standard methodology for listing qualifications on the OQF.

*Listing* will be carried out by the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB. It is a process whereby an application for inclusion on the OQF is received, administratively processed, evaluated and a recommendation made for entry, re-entry or non-entry onto the framework prior to being offered by a qualification provider.

Listing involves assessing the complexity of the qualification to place it at an appropriate level on the OQF. It also includes evaluating the:

- Qualification provider's compliance with OQF policies for qualification design, assessment and quality assurance;
- Title for the qualification based on a standardised way of naming qualifications;
- Rationale for the qualification and its purpose;
- Need or demand in the marketplace for graduates with such a qualification;
- Progression routes for graduates of the qualification;
- Admission requirements (including provisions for RPL and CAT);
- Unitised or modularised curriculum<sup>30</sup>.

As agreed by the Education Council, for qualifications to be eligible for listing they must be in learning outcomes which are assessed and quality assured. As the managing body, OAAA will develop and publish the criteria and a standardised process for listing qualifications. Finalisation of criteria for listing qualifications on the OQF will enable the development of:

- OQF policies, procedures and guidance documents for publication;
- Tailored capacity building workshops on the agreed criteria and methodology for listing qualifications.

### **Validation**

Listing will subsequently be followed by *'validation'* to ensure that during the delivery the OQF criteria were complied with and that the level of complexity of the qualification had not changed.<sup>31</sup> The process will be carried out after a cohort of students have completed the program and will be undertaken in conjunction with the accreditation process currently only in place in higher education. *Validation* is described as a "process which corroborates that the initial listing of a qualification was valid". *Validation* will be carried out by OAAA for HE and technical qualifications and the Schools Assessment Centre (SAC) for school qualifications and vocational qualifications at school level.

This model for the OQF links *listing* to licencing and *validation* to accreditation as follows:

- The listing (or placing) of HE, technical and professional qualifications in the OQF will be linked to the licencing function of the MoHE;

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<sup>30</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment

<sup>31</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment  
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- Validation of the listing be undertaken by OAAA in tandem with its accreditation function;
- In the schooling and vocational sectors, the listing of qualifications in the OQF will be linked to the licencing responsibilities of the MoE and MoM;
- Validation of the listings will become a responsibility of the SAC<sup>32</sup>.

**Table 7: Summary of Arrangements for the Award of Qualifications in Oman with the introduction of the OQF**

	Higher Education	TVET	Schooling
<b>Accreditation Body</b> <b>External Quality Assurance of Qualifications (public )</b>	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Technical qualifications at HE level: Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Schools Assessment Centre
		Vocational qualifications at school level: Schools Assessment Centre	
<b>External Quality Assurance of Qualifications (private)</b>	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Ministry of Education
<b>Awarding Bodies (public)</b> Purpose: Recognition of learning	Ministry of Higher Education	Ministry of Manpower	Ministry of Education (public only)
	Ministry of Health		
	Ministry of Defence	Ministry of Defence	Ministry of Defence
	Oman Medical Speciality Board		
	Royal Court of Diwan	Royal Court of Diwan	Royal Court of Diwan
	Royal Oman Police	Royal Oman Police	Royal Oman Police
	Sultan Qaboos University		
<b>Awarding Bodies (private)</b>	Private Higher Education Institutions and Affiliates	Private Institutions	Private Institutions
<b>Validation (OQF)</b>	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority	Schools Assessment Centre

### Level Descriptors

The OQF level descriptors were developed at the end of Phase 1. These are an important tool in the development of a national qualifications framework as they are used to determine the level of complexity of the learning outcomes that comprise a qualification. Therefore, are used to:

<sup>32</sup> Governance, Management and Implementation of the Oman Qualifications Framework: Creating an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Environment  
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- `List` (place) qualifications at an appropriate level on the OQF;
- Achieve consistency of complexity of qualification types at a given level on the framework across providers and sectors;
- Assist with the transfer of credit at an appropriate level in Credit Accumulation and Transfer;
- Assist with the recognition of prior learning.

Expert focus groups, with representation from all sectors of education and training should be held to consult on these as a matter of priority in Phase 2. The level descriptors should be amended in light of feedback from the focus groups and tested in a pilot which will also test the listing criteria and methodology for listing qualifications on the OQF.

### **OQF Pilot for Including Qualifications on the OQF**

OAAA will pilot the OQF level descriptors, criteria, policies, procedures guidelines and documentation to list qualifications on the OQF. This requires decisions on the scope and basis on which the pilot will be run. For example, the number of qualifications, the providers and whether a particular qualification/subject area common to both the vocational education and training and higher education sectors will be identified for use in the pilot. Feedback from the pilot will be used to refine the level descriptors, policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation for the full roll-out of the OQF.

### **Listing the Main Body of Existing Qualifications**

There are two categories of Omani qualifications that need to be listed on the OQF: existing Omani qualifications which are already awarded, and new qualifications that may be developed. The aim of the OQF is to bring as many qualifications into it in as short a time as possible which will most likely be the existing qualifications in Oman. A pragmatic and systematic approach for the inclusion of existing qualifications should be identified and agreed.

Once the framework is in place, new qualifications should be presented to either the MoHE, MoE, MoM or OMSB to be listed on the framework at an appropriate point in their development.

### **Qualifications of Professional Bodies**

It is planned that the qualifications of Omani professional bodies will also be included on the OQF. It will be necessary to define the criteria for this inclusion. As these bodies have not been directly involved in the development of the OQF, it is likely that they will require specifically targeted capacity building and guidance materials. The process of including professional qualifications may require the design of additional qualification types.

## **OBJECTIVE 9: SET UP A NATIONAL REGISTER OF QUALIFICATIONS**

A National Register of Qualifications will be established to provide an official record of all qualifications listed on the OQF. It will be the responsibility of OAAA as the OQF managing body to progress the Terms of Reference for the OQF Portal and Register developed in Phase 1.

When the National Register of Qualifications is complete, it will be the responsibility of OAAA to keep the Register up-to-date and to liaise with the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains. In this way the National Register of Qualifications will provide a central information point for all qualifications on the OQF in Oman as recommended in the Mapping Activity Report carried out in Phase 1.

As the Managing Body, OAAA will develop policies, procedures and guidelines setting out the arrangements for the operation, maintenance and review of the Register. This will provide information on the search and retrieval functions along with details of the information on qualifications that will be made available to the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers and the information that will be made available to the public.

## **OBJECTIVE 10: BUILD CAPACITY TO GOVERN, MANAGE AND IMPLEMENT THE OQF**

Capacity Building is an essential element for the successful implementation of a national qualifications framework therefore it must have a significant presence the implementation of the OQF. Capacity building will be required for the personnel within the Education Council and OAAA as the governing and managing Bodies and for personnel within the MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and SAC as the implementing bodies. Other ministries, awarding bodies, and qualification providers including professional bodies will also require capacity building as appropriate. Capacity building sessions will include training on:

1. Writing policies and procedures;
2. Writing learning outcomes and outcome based assessment;
3. Designing qualifications that are in compliance with the requirements of the OQF;
4. The required quality assurance of qualifications;
5. The required quality assurance of institutions involved in the implementation of the OQF, including ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers including professional bodies;
6. The listing and application process for placing qualifications on the OQF;
7. The validation of higher education qualifications and school level qualifications.

A capacity building strategy will be developed based on the detailed *Training Needs Analysis* which has been produced as part of Phase 1 of the OQF Development Project. A `train the trainer` system will be put in place to cascade information and knowledge throughout the sectors in order to build expertise.

As the HE sector in Oman already has an academic qualifications framework operating in higher education and many of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) deliver qualifications from international organisations there is the view that within this sector there is significant experience in areas 1) to 6) above. Those with expertise should be identified and invited to support and mentor less experienced personnel in the other sectors.

In order to reach a large audience, the capacity building workshops will be developed in a format suitable for on-line delivery in order that they are widely available.

### **OBJECTIVE 11: RECOGNISE LEARNING THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRESSION ROUTES, CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER AND THE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

As a lifelong learning framework, one of the benefits of the OQF is its potential to increase the mobility of learners. The mobility of learners is enhanced when they are aware of:

- The progression routes from one qualification to another and from one sector to another;
- Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT);
- The recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Taking into account existing regulations and practice, OAAA will develop policies and procedures for progression, credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning. If there is legislation and/or regulations which prohibit (or limit) CAT or RPL or it is not possible to progress from vocational qualifications to academic qualifications due to regulatory bodies regulations, the framework will not provide solutions to learner mobility. It is only possible for the OQF to be effective when the legislation/regulations and the OQF policies are in alignment.

#### **Develop Progression Routes**

In its role as the OQF managing body, OAAA will work closely with awarding bodies and qualification providers to identify existing progression routes and develop policies, procedures and guidelines that encourage the development of improved progression opportunities for learners.

## **Credit Accumulation and Transfer**

Credit Accumulation and Transfer is based on the principle that learners can accumulate and transfer credit from one qualification to another and from one sector to another;

This approach means that learners can achieve and accumulate the learning outcomes of certain qualifications in different institutions and or/environments<sup>33</sup> and at different times.

In its role as the OQF Managing Body, OAAA will develop and build on the system of credit accumulation and transfer already in place in Higher Education. This will be extended to include the Technological and Vocational Education and Training sector. The Education Council and OAAA will agree the minimum number of credits that can be awarded and transferred and OAAA will take forward the development of appropriate policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation.

## **Recognition of Prior Learning**

The Recognition of Prior Learning is based on the principle that learners can have recognition for the learning gained from life and work experiences. In this context, the recognition of prior learning refers to the informal and/or non-formal learning that is gained through life and work experiences. OAAA will establish policies and procedures for the recognition of prior learning to apply across all sectors of the OQF and to enable:

- Entry to a program leading to a qualification;
- Credit to be awarded and imported into a qualification;
- The award of a full qualification.

The policies and procedures will clearly state the arrangements to be adopted by providers, the quality assurance mechanisms and the maximum and minimum amount of credit that can be awarded through RPL.

OAAA will develop and disseminate guidelines on RPL and provide support to ministries, OMSB, awarding bodies and qualification providers in order that RPL can be applied consistently in the respective sectors.

## **OBJECTIVE 12: ESTABLISH PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Recognition of Foreign and International Qualifications**

The recognition of foreign and international qualifications are important elements of the OQF. This involves a qualification to qualification comparison in that it compares the learning of outcomes of a

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<sup>33</sup> E.g. work based learning  
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foreign or international qualification to an appropriate Omani qualification. Due to the significant number of foreign and international qualifications awarded in Oman and the population of Omanis and expatriates that hold such qualifications.

These include:

- Foreign qualifications, that are included in their national qualifications frameworks;
- Qualifications awarded by international awarding bodies;
- Qualifications that are awarded by international professional bodies.

Some countries include foreign and international qualifications in their national qualifications framework by adopting a process for inclusion on their framework parallel to that used for their national qualifications. Other countries use a process of `alignment` to recognise foreign and international qualifications in that they are not included on the national framework but sit alongside it. The crucial issue is to identify what quality assurance arrangements underpin awards made by foreign and international awarding bodies and ensure that only qualifications that are sufficiently quality assured are included or aligned to the OQF and to compare the level of the learning outcomes to those of the OQF.

However, the inclusion or alignment of foreign and international qualifications requires negotiation and agreement with the awarding bodies concerned. It is strongly recommended that this is undertaken when the OQF is well established. If a unilateral placing of foreign or international qualifications is adopted and there is disagreement by the international authorities, there is the possibility that it could bring the OQF into disrepute. Therefore, the decision to include or align such qualifications and when this should be carried out are significant strategic decisions that should be taken by the Education Council having sought the viewpoint of awarding bodies and other stakeholders.

### **Referencing to International Frameworks**

Referencing to an international framework involves a `level to level` comparison of one framework to another based on a set of agreed referencing criteria. At an early stage in the development of the OQF, it is likely that international framework authorities/bodies consider a formal referenced position inappropriate due to such factors as the `newness` or `state of maturity` of the OQF. In the early stages of OQF implementation it may be considered that an informal comparison is more appropriate. When referencing to international frameworks OAAA along with the `international partner` should develop criteria in order that the boundaries of the referencing activity is clear to both parties.

### **OBJECTIVE 13: DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

In its role as the OQF managing body, OAAA should develop relationships with international frameworks to build up a network of international contacts. To do this OAAA may wish to consider attending and participating in international conferences on qualification frameworks and conducting and hosting study visits from other frameworks.

### **OBJECTIVE 14: FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEARNERS WITH BASIC EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The joint report from the World Bank and the MoE identified the need for the MoE and the Ministry of Social Development to jointly develop a national strategy for people with special educational needs<sup>34</sup>. The report identified that the requirement for special needs provision was greater than the availability.

As a national strategy of this nature would include the development of appropriate elementary qualifications to address the needs of all citizens, including those who require support in literacy and numeracy. Basic qualifications at this level do not currently exist in Oman. Although it is not in OAAA's remit to develop qualifications, as the OQF managing body, it can support qualification providers and facilitate the development of qualifications at appropriate levels and must ensure that the qualifications offered in Oman span all levels of the framework. It will be the responsibility of the qualification providers to develop the qualifications and either the MoM or the MoE, as appropriate, to list such qualifications on the OQF.

## **4. SUMMARY**

This *Initial Implementation Plan* sets out fourteen objectives, associated targets and activities to implement the OQF. The priority must be to put in place the necessary legislation and operational structures required for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF. These are currently not in place and the implementation of the OQF will require significant changes to the existing structures and systems in OAAA and the MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB and SAC in particular.

It will be essential to prioritise the objectives and associated activities as contained in the *Initial Implementation Plan*, together with the milestones presented in OAAA's Proposed Project Plan, Phase 2 to plan a realistic programme of work for the implementation of the OQF to be realised.

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<sup>34</sup> 2012 Joint Report World Bank and Ministry of Education *Drive for Quality*  
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The successful implementation of the QQF will involve OAAA securing the engagement and support of ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers and stakeholders. Involvement of these stakeholders is vital. For several of the targets in the Initial Implementation Plan, working groups should be established to support OAAA in its management function and also to provide a sense of ownership of the framework across the sectors and share information and experience. It is recognised that it may be a substantial undertaking for stakeholders to provide personnel for individual working groups therefore it may be beneficial for working group members to serve in several groups, perhaps with a related theme and that meetings are scheduled accordingly.

Implementation of a framework requires time, substantial capacity building and support and the acquisition of experience from the development process itself. As the managing body it is anticipated that OAAA will provide support to the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, awarding bodies and qualification providers to gain the experience required in order that the QQF can be implemented as smoothly as possible.

## 5. GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES FOR THE QQF

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
1.	Establish the legal framework for the QQF	1.1	The legal framework for the QQF in place	The preliminary laws required to provide the legal framework for the governance, management and implementation of the QQF are developed, agreed and introduced.	a. Consider and agree the legal requirements for the governance, management and implementation of the QQF in regard to the role of the Education Council as the Governing Body, OAAA as the Managing Body and the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB in regard to their roles to implement the QQF.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA, MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Develop, agree and implement new laws and/or remits or amend and/or extend existing laws and/or remits accordingly in order that the framework can be governed, managed and implemented.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA
2.	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the QQF	2.1	Governance arrangements for the QQF are established	The governance arrangements for the QQF are developed and agreed.	a. Develop Terms of Reference for the Education Council setting out its governance role and remit in relation to the QQF.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA
					b. Review existing legislation and/or rules/regulations governing the remit of the Education Council to ensure it has a clear and unquestionable remit as the QQF Governing Body.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA
					c. If required, amend existing legislation and/or rules/regulations or develop new ones.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA
					d. Ensure membership of the Education Council is representative of all sectors and/or bodies affected by the QQF.	Lead: Education Council

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
					e. Develop appropriate mechanisms for the Education Council to report on the OQF to Cabinet.	Lead: Education Council
					f. Develop appropriate mechanisms for OAAA, as the Managing Body, to report to and receive direction from the Education Council in its role of OQF Governing Body.	Lead: Education Council Support: OAAA
3.	Establish the Strategic Direction for the OQF	3.1	Strategic Direction of the OQF finalised, disseminated and monitored.	The Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF, the five-year Strategic Plan and first Annual Operational Plan approved.	a. Review, comment on and approve the Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF	Lead: Education Council
					b. Review, comment on and approve the Strategic and First Annual Operational Plan.	Lead: Education Council
		3.2		Monitor progress on the Annual Operational Plan and realisation of the five-year strategic plan are monitored	c. On a quarterly basis monitor progress towards the realisation of the Annual Operational Plan and approve second Annual Operational Plan.	Lead: Education Council
		3.3		Approved second Annual Operational Plan.	a. Review, comment on and approve the second Annual Operational Plan.	Lead: Education Council

## 6. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR THE OQF

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
1.	Establish the legal framework of the OQF	1.1	The legal framework for the OQF in place	The preliminary laws required to provide the legal framework for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF are developed, agreed and introduced.	a. Assist the Education Council in the development and drafting of the preliminary laws necessary for the OQF.	Lead: OAAA Approve: Education Council
					b. Review the mandate of OAAA in relation to its role as the managing body for the OQF and draft legislation if it is required to be extended.	Lead: OAAA Approve: Education Council
					c. Establish the legal mandate to enable OAAA to enable it to take up its role as OQF Managing Body.	Lead: OAAA
2.	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.	2.2	<i>Structures are in place to enable OAAA to operate as the managing body for the OQF</i>	The structure to enable OAAA to function in its role as the OQF managing body is developed, approved and implemented.	a. Develop and agree the OQF structure within OAAA including the identification of roles and functions for OQF personnel; develop job descriptions for the identified posts; and implement a recruitment process.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Identify and acquire the resources needed in terms of finance, personnel, office accommodation and associated furnishing and IT infrastructure.	Lead: OAAA
2.	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.	2.3	Structures for the implementation of the OQF established in	OAAA works collaboratively with MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB in supporting each organisation to establish their internal structures to enable	a. Hold high-level strategic discussions to provide advice and information to the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB on the requirements to implement the OQF.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
			MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	them to implement the OQF. This will involve areas such as providing advice and guidance, co-ordinating and disseminating information as appropriate	<p>b. Support MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to identify the resources required to enable them to carry out their role as the implementation bodies for the OQF.</p> <p>c. Support the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to develop appropriate job descriptions and person specifications for the recruitment of staff as required to carry out the implementation of the OQF, including the listing process.</p> <p>d. Provide opportunities for the dissemination of information as appropriate to enable organisations to share knowledge, practise and expertise.</p>	<p>OAAA provide advice and support</p> <p>OAAA provide advice and support</p> <p>Lead: OAAA</p>
<b>3.</b>	Establish the Strategic Direction for the OQF	3.1	Strategic Direction of the OQF finalised, disseminated and monitored.	The Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF, the five-year Strategic Plan and first Annual Operational Plan approved.	<p>a. Establish a cross-ministerial committee to develop and gain the Education Council approval on the Vision, Mission, Values and strategic direction for the OQF.</p> <p>b. Develop statements to reflect the Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF.</p> <p>c. Develop and gain approval for a five-year Strategic Plan for the OQF to reflect the agreed strategic direction of the OQF.</p> <p>d. Develop associated first annual Operational Plan setting out how progress towards the OQF Strategic Plan will be realised in those years</p>	<p>Lead: OAAA</p> <p>Lead: OAAA</p> <p>Lead: OAAA</p> <p>Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p> <p>Lead: OAAA</p> <p>Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p>

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
		3.2		Monitor progress on the Annual Operational Plan and realisation of the five-year strategic plan are monitored	a. Review the annual Operational Plan on a quarterly basis to ensure progress towards the achievement of the OQF Annual Operating Plan and five-year Strategic Plan are 'on track' and identify and rectify areas of slippage.	Lead: OAAA
		3.3		Approved second Annual Operational Plan.	a. Develop and seek approval for the second Annual Operational Plan	Lead: OAAA Approve: Education Council
4.	Develop effective communication mechanisms for the OQF	4.1	Increased awareness and visibility of the OQF	Two-year Communication Plan finalised, approved and disseminated and co-ordinated across all sectors.	a. Gather baseline information to ascertain the current level of knowledge on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Consult with all ministries and other relevant bodies to develop a two-year Communication Plan which is based on the Communication Strategy developed in Phase 1.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Begin the implementation of the first communication plan for the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Review the first Communication Plan on a specified regular basis to measure progress to ensure its effectiveness.	Lead: OAAA
		4.2	Key messages of the OQF developed and agreed.	a. Develop the key messages of the OQF to be disseminated and used consistently by all relevant bodies.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
				b. Develop a logo for the OQF in order that it instantly recognisable across all sectors in Oman.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
		4.3		Information on the OQF disseminated to a range of target audiences.	a. Hold regular sector briefings for key groups of staff, including those from the marketing and communication departments, within qualification providers, ministries and other stakeholders.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Develop a range of activities to disseminate information on the OQF to keep stakeholders informed of the plans and the progress.	Lead: OAAA
	Develop effective communication mechanisms for the OQF	4.3 (contd)	Increased awareness and visibility of the OQF	Disseminate information on the OQF to a range of target audiences.	c. Develop a dedicated OQF website portal to provide information on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
d. Ensure the OQF website is updated on a specified regular basis in order that it contains accurate up-to-date information on the OQF developments and on OQF events.					Lead: OAAA	
e. Develop an OQF newsletter or e-zine to promote the framework and to highlight its use by qualification providers and other stakeholders.					Lead: OAAA	
f. Promote good practice and use of the OQF by MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, awarding bodies and qualification providers.					Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
4.4			Revise Communication Plan	a. Nearing the end of the first Communication Plan, hold a consultation with stakeholders to seek their views as to the continued relevancy of the Communication Strategy.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
				b. Amend the Communications Strategy developed in Phase 1 in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA	

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
5.	Secure stakeholder engagement.	5.1	Consultation on OQF Developments with stakeholders as appropriate	A two-year Consultation Plan developed to guide the way in which stakeholders are consulted on matters pertaining to the OQF.	a. Develop a two-year Consultation Plan based on the Consultation Strategy developed in Phase 1.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Review Consultation plan on a specified regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Nearing the end of the two-year Communication Plan consult with stakeholders to seek their views as to the continued relevancy of the Consultation Strategy	Lead: OAAA
		5.2	Stakeholders contribute to the further development and implementation of the OQF	Regular schedule of meetings with Oversight Committee established	d. Plan quarterly meetings of the Oversight Committee which comprises representatives from the main stakeholder organisations. It provides a forum where the sectors can jointly identify and address issues and advise on implementation.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Consider holding an initial implementation conference to inform and promote the OQF. A conference is a good way to bring representatives and practitioners together to discuss particular issues and share ideas.	Lead: OAAA
6.	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	6.1	National Qualifications Types and Titles established in Oman	Structure for national qualification types and titles developed.	a. Establish cross-sectoral working group to develop qualification types, titles and design for qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Cross-sectoral working group draft national qualifications types and titles	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					c. Consult with a wide of stakeholders on draft national qualification types and titles.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Amend in line with feedback from consultation.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Seek approval from the Education Council on the proposed national qualification types and	Lead: OAAA Approval Education

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
					titles.	Council
					f. Disseminate information on the agreed national qualification types and titles to ministries and all qualification providers and agree a date for implementation.	Lead: OAAA
6.	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	6.2	Standard information on qualification specifications across all sectors.	Criteria developed for the design of qualifications including the information on the requirement for the qualification specifications.	a. Use the cross-sectoral working group established in 6.1 to develop, as appropriate, the design for qualifications to be included on the OQF and/or a common core set of headings. Agree the information to be included in qualification specifications across all sectors.	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross sectoral working group
					b. Consult with ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers and other relevant stakeholders on the proposed qualification design and/or a common core set of headings and information required in the qualification specification. Amend proposal in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Seek approval for the proposed design of qualifications and/or common core set of headings and information required in the qualification specification from the Education Council	Lead: OAAA
						Approval Education Council
					d. Write policy, procedures and guidelines on the design of qualifications to be listed on the OQF and information required in the qualification specification.	Lead: OAAA
	e. Support providers in all sectors implement the agreed qualification design and qualification specification information requirements.	Lead: OAAA				

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
6.	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	6.3	A common credit-rating system implemented across all sectors.	Credit-rating system established in all sectors of education and training.	a. Use the cross-sectoral working group established in 6.1 to review existing credit-rating systems in Oman and propose a draft credit-rating system across all sectors.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					b. Hold consultation on the proposed draft credit-rating system to seek the views of stakeholders.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Seek the approval of the Education Council for the proposed credit-rating system.	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
					d. Write policy, procedures and guidelines on the agreed credit-rating system.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Support ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers to implement the agreed credit-rating system.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
7.	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the OQF.	7.1	Established processes for the quality assurance of the OQF (institutions)	Institutional quality assurance arrangements for the OQF are in place for those listing qualifications on the OQF	a. Establish a cross-sectoral working group to develop the institutional quality assurance requirements for the OQF.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					b. Develop quality assurance arrangements that will be required by the MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB who responsible for listing qualifications on the OQF. Quality assurance arrangements are likely to include having formally documented internal quality assurance systems, staff development for the OQF and capacity to list qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Consult with the MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB on the proposed quality assurance arrangements to list qualifications on the OQF and amend arrangements, as appropriate, in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Seek the approval of the Education Council for the proposed OQF quality assurance requirements for MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB.	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
					e. Write policy and procedures for the agreed quality assurance requirements for MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB to list qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					f. Produce OQF guidelines on the institutional quality assurance requirements for MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB. Develop forms as required, for example for institutions to document their institutional quality assurance arrangements.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
7.	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the QQF.	7.1	Established processes for the quality assurance of the QQF (institutions)	Institutional quality assurance arrangements for the QQF are in place for those listing qualification and providers seeking to have their qualifications listed.	g. Disseminate the agreed quality assurance requirements for MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB to list qualifications on the QQF and publish on the QQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					h. Evaluate the institutional quality assurance arrangements in the MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB for compliance with the requirements of the QQF and to check for any gaps.	Lead: OAAA
					i. Provide support to MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB and their networks as required to implement the quality assurance arrangement for the QQF.	Lead: OAAA
7.	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the QQF.	7.2	Established processes for the Quality assurance of the QQF (programs).	Qualifications on the QQF are quality assured.	a. Use the cross-sectoral working group established in 7.1 to develop the quality assurance requirements for the programs to be listed on the QQF.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Develop quality assurance arrangements that will be required for qualifications to be listed on the QQF. Quality assurance arrangements are likely to include being written in learning outcomes which are assessed and quality assured.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Consult with the MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers on the proposed quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF and amend arrangements, as appropriate, in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
7.	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the QQF.	7.2	Established processes for the Quality assurance of the QQF (programs).	Qualifications on the QQF are quality assured.	d. Seek the approval of the Education Council for the proposed QQF quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
					e. Write policy and procedures for the agreed quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead: OAAA
					f. Produce QQF guidelines on the quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF to provide support to MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB in their role of listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead: OAAA
					g. Disseminate the agreed quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF and publish on the QQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					h. Provide support for MoE, MoHE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers to help them to implement the quality assurance requirements for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead: OAAA
					7.	Establish quality assurance arrangements for the QQF.

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.1	OQF level descriptors are approved for use in the pilot.	OQF level descriptors ready for testing in pilot.	a. Establish expert focus group(s), with representation from all sectors of education and training, to comment on and to take ownership of the OQF level descriptors.	Lead: OAAA Support expert focus group
					b. Refine the OQF level descriptors in response to the feedback received from expert focus group(s) for use in the OQF pilot (see 8.3) to test criteria for listing qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.2	Standard methodology for listing qualifications on the OQF	Establish the arrangements for listing (placement of) qualifications on the OQF.	a. Form a cross-ministerial working group to develop the criteria and procedures for listing (placement of) qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross ministerial working group
					b. Hold consultations on the proposed OQF listing criteria and procedures to seek the views of stakeholders.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Seek the approval of the Education Council for the proposed OQF listing criteria and procedures.	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
					d. Write policy and procedures for listing qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.2	Standard methodology for listing qualifications on the OQF	Establish the arrangements for listing (placement of) qualifications on the OQF.	e. Write guidelines and other information documents as appropriate to support MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB carry out the licencing process and other qualification providers to prepare their qualifications for submission to the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB for listing.	Lead: OAAA
					f. Publish the agreed criteria and procedures for listing qualifications on the OQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					g. Develop the application forms and other documentation as required for providers to submit their qualifications to the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB for listing.	Lead: OAAA
					h. Develop the arrangements and forms as required for MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to inform the OQF managing body on the outcome of listing applications in order that the Register of Qualifications can be updated.	Lead: OAAA
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.3	OQF level descriptors, methodology for listing, policies and procedures and documentation are tested and trialled in pilot prior to roll-out in Oman.	Develop pilot to test the OQF listing of qualifications.	a. Use cross-ministerial working group established in 8.2 to develop and manage a pilot to test the level descriptors listing criteria and arrangements and the quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Agree the scope of the pilot e.g. number of qualifications, the providers, qualification subject area and timescale.	Supported by cross ministerial working group
						Lead: OAAA
						Approval Education Council
c. Provide capacity building workshop(s) for the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB and the providers of the qualifications used in the pilot.	Lead: OAAA					

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.3	OQF level descriptors, methodology for listing, policies and procedures and documentation are tested and trialled in pilot prior to roll-out in Oman.	Pilot developed to test the OQF listing of qualifications.	d. Consult with all those involved in the pilot on their experience and ascertain their suggestions for amendments to, for example the level descriptors, listing process, the capacity building workshops, the policies, procedures, guidance documents, paperwork and make amendments as appropriate.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Seek approval from the Education Council for the amended OQF level descriptors.	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
					f. Disseminate the OQF level descriptors widely and publish on the OQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Seek approval of the Education Council for changes to the OQF policies and procedures in light of feedback from the OQF pilot (if any).	Lead: OAAA Approval Education Council
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.4	All the main types of qualifications included on the OQF	Bring the main types of Omani qualifications into the OQF.	a. Establish a cross-sectoral working group to explore ways in which the main types of qualifications in Oman are to be included on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					b. Identify pragmatic and systematic mechanisms for the inclusion of the main types of Omani qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Develop guidance materials to inform MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, awarding bodies and qualification providers of the agreed listing process to bring the main types of Omani qualifications into the OQF.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.4	All the main types of qualifications included on the OQF	Bring the main types of Omani qualifications into the OQF.	d. Disseminate the agreed mechanisms for the inclusion of the main types of Omani qualifications into the OQF and place on the OQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Support MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB as required to list the main types of Omani qualifications into the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.5	At an appropriate point in their development, all new qualifications are listed on the framework	Bring new Omani qualifications into the OQF	a. Develop guidance materials on the agreed listing requirements and processes to bring new Omani qualifications into the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Disseminate the agreed mechanisms for the inclusion of new qualifications into the OQF and place on the OQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Support MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB as required to list new Omani qualifications into the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
8.	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF.	8.6	Professional bodies submit their qualifications for listing on the OQF	Support professional bodies to list their qualifications on the OQF	a. Develop policies, procedures and guidelines as required for the inclusion of professional bodies' qualifications on the OQF	Lead: OAAA
					b. Consult with Omani professional bodies to identify the support that they require from the OQF managing body to enable professional qualifications to be listed on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Develop information on the OQF targeted at professional bodies.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
9.	Set up a National Register of Qualifications.	9.1	National Register of Qualifications established in OAAA.	Development of a National Register of Qualifications.	a. Based on the advance preparatory work undertaken in Phase 1, develop a specification for the Register of Qualifications which includes elements such as the design and scope of the OQF Portal and Register, together with the specification for potential contractors in terms of experience and anticipated timescales.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Take forward the above specification to engage a contractor with appropriate expertise.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Establish a cross-ministerial working group to take forward the development of the Register of Qualifications to work collaboratively with the contractor engaged to develop the OQF Portal and Register.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Work collaboratively with the successful contractor to take forward the above developments. This will include decisions on the information that the Register of Qualifications should contain: for the Education Council and OAAA as the Managing and Governing Bodies, MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies, qualification providers, employers, learners and their parents.	Lead: OAAA Support: MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Approval: Education Council
9	Set up a National Register of Qualifications.	9.2	Users have a standard set of procedures to enable them to use the National Register of Qualifications	Develop policies, procedures, guidelines and documentation for the operation, maintenance and review of the National Register of Qualifications (NRQ).	a. Develop policies and procedures and guidelines for the operation of the NRQ.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Ensure that the NRQ is kept up to date with accurate information.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Develop the procedures for including qualifications listed by the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB on the NRQ.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
10.	Build capacity to Govern, Manage and Implement the OQF.	10.1	Tailored capacity building which is delivered consistently in all sectors.	A Capacity Building Strategy is developed to be used by all sectors.	a. Establish a cross-ministerial committee to develop a Capacity Building Strategy which will be tailored for all sectors.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Develop a Capacity Building Strategy which is agreed and approved.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross ministerial working group
					b. Review the Capacity Building Strategy on a specified regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.	Lead: OAAA
10.	Build capacity to Govern, Manage and Implement the OQF.	10.2	Education Council and OAAA personnel are trained to carry out the functions required in the roles of governance and management of the OQF.	Build capacity of personnel in the Education Council and OQF personnel in OAAA on their roles in the governance and management of the OQF	a. Build the capacity of the Education Council to function in its role as the Governing Body.	Lead: OAAA Support MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Build the capacity of OAAA staff engaged in the management and development of the OQF and other OAAA staff as relevant, to: develop policies and procedures relating to the OQF;	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
<b>10.</b>	Build capacity to Govern, Manage and Implement the OQF.	10.3	Stakeholders understand the policies and procedures relating to the OQF and the use of the OQF level descriptors.	Develop Capacity Building workshop(s).	a. Develop capacity building workshop(s) for MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers on the design of qualifications, learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance and the completion of OQF documentation.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Pilot the delivery of the capacity building workshop(s), gather feedback and amend workshop(s) in light of feedback as appropriate.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Plan the roll out of the capacity building workshop(s) across Oman and promote the arrangements on the OQF website.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Develop capacity building workshop(s) on the design of qualifications, learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance and completion of OQF documentation suitable for delivery in an online environment.	Lead: OAAA
<b>10</b>	Build capacity to Govern, Manage and Implement the OQF.	10.4	Capacity Building Sessions available to a wide range of audiences.	Develop capacity building workshop(s) for online environment.	a. Engage e-learning expert to develop the capacity building workshop(s) in an e-learning format.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Place workshop on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
11.	Recognise Learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.	11.1	Progression routes are available for learners both horizontal and vertical	The development of progression routes (horizontal and vertical).	a. Establish a cross-sectorial working group for the development of progression routes with representation from relevant sectors of education and training.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Review the availability and use of existing progression routes and develop arrangements for progression.	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross sectoral working group
					c. Widely disseminate information on the existing progression routes.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Draft arrangements to facilitate the development of progression routes from one qualification to another and from one sector to another.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Consult with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements for progression from one qualification to another and from one sector to another. Amend arrangements in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA
					f. Seek approval from the Education Council on the proposed arrangements for progression from one qualification to another and from one sector to another.	Lead: OAAA
						Approval: Education Council
					g. Write policy and procedures for the agreed arrangements for progression.	Lead: OAAA
					h. Develop guidelines as required on progression.	Lead: OAAA
i. Support ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers to develop appropriate progression routes.	Lead: OAAA					

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
11.	Recognise Learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.	11.2	Credit Accumulation and Transfer is available in all sectors.	System for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) developed for all sectors	a. Establish a cross- sectoral working group to develop a CAT system in all sectors.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Review the CAT system in Higher Education (HE).	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross sectoral working group
					c. Develop arrangements to extend the CAT system in HE to the Technological and Vocational Education and Training sector.	Lead: OAAA
					d. Consult with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements for a CAT system for all sectors. Amend arrangements in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Seek approval from the Education Council on the proposed CAT system for all sectors.	Lead: OAAA
						Approval: Education Council
					f. Write policies, procedures and guidelines for a harmonised credit accumulation and transfer system across all education and training sectors. Disseminate widely.	Lead: OAAA
	g. Provide support as required to MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, awarding bodies and qualification providers to implement the agreed CAT system.	Lead: OAAA				

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
11.	Recognise Learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.	11.3	Approved policies, procedures and guidelines for the recognition of prior learning	Develop a system for the Recognition of Prior Learning	a. Establish cross-sectoral working group to develop arrangement for the recognition of prior learning (RPL).	Lead: OAAA
					b. Develop and consult with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements for RPL, including whether it should be mandatory or voluntary for providers to implement. Amend arrangements in light of feedback.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Seek approval from the Education Council on the proposed arrangements for RPL.	Supported by cross sectoral working group
						Lead: OAAA
					d. Write policy, procedures and guidelines and disseminate widely to all qualification providers and put on OQF website.	Approval: Education Council
						Lead: OAAA
					e. Hold events, seminars, workshops on RPL as appropriate.	Lead: OAAA
f. Establish RPL network to provide support, develop expertise and share practice in the recognition of prior learning.	Lead: OAAA					

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
12.	Establish principles and procedures for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	12.1	Foreign and international qualifications are listed on the OQF	Establish protocols for the inclusion of foreign and international qualifications on the OQF.	a. Establish a cross-ministerial working group for the inclusion of foreign and international qualifications on the OQF.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Carry out international benchmarking to identify the pros and cons of both inclusion and alignment of foreign and international qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross ministerial working group
					c. Consult with stakeholders and Awarding Bodies offering foreign and international qualifications in Oman.	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross ministerial working group
					d. Based on the benchmarking and consultation with stakeholders develop criteria for the inclusion or alignment of foreign and international qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
						Supported by cross ministerial working group
					e. Seek approval on the criteria for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications from the Education Council.	Lead: OAAA
						Approval: Education Council
f. Develop policies and procedures for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	Lead: OAAA					
g. Disseminate widely the approved criteria for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	Lead: OAAA					
h. Develop guidance materials on the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	Lead: OAAA					

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
13.	Develop international relationships.	13.1	Relationships developed with international framework authorities	Conduct study visit(s) to an international qualifications framework body/authority.	a. Decide and seek approval from the Education Council for study visit(s) to international qualification frameworks body(ies); Make contact with the international framework authority and seek agreement; Develop scope of visit and liaise with international framework authority; Following visit write up report and publish on OQF website.	Lead: OAAA  Approval: Education Council
					b. Participate in international conferences on qualifications themes, and in other networking opportunities.	Lead: OAAA
					a. Develop a cross-sectoral working group to reference the OQF to an international qualifications framework.	Lead: OAAA
13.	Develop international relationships.	13.2	Reference OQF to an international qualifications framework.	Criteria and policies and procedures established, tested and trialled for reference in to international framework.	b. Develop relationships with international framework authorities.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Decide and seek approval from the Education Council for the framework to which the OQF propose to reference.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					d. Make contact with and seek approval from the framework body/authority responsible for the relevant international framework.	Lead: OAAA
					e. Develop the criteria and scope for the referencing activity.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
13.	Develop international relationships.	13.2			f. Carry out the referencing activity in consultation with the relevant international framework body.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					g. Governing bodies of all parties agree the referencing position.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					h. Publish the referencing report and disseminate widely to stakeholders.	Lead: OAAA
13.	Develop international relationships.	13.3	Clearer indication of the level of Omani School qualifications in relation to the OQF	Levels of the international school qualifications with the Oman school qualifications compared.	a. Establish a cross-sectoral working group to develop the criteria and scope for the comparison of international school qualifications with Omani school qualifications.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					b. Identify the qualifications for comparison.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Consult with awarding bodies of the identified qualifications regarding comparison activity including the purpose, criteria, scope and expected outcome.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					d. Carry out a comparison activity to identify level and credit value of both qualifications.	Lead: OAAA Supported by cross sectoral working group
					e. Disseminate outcome as appropriate.	Lead: OAAA

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
14	Facilitate the development of qualifications for learners with basic educational needs.	14.1	OQF has qualifications at every level.	Facilitate the development of qualifications to meet the needs of learners with basic educational needs	a. Establish need for and availability of elementary level qualifications.	Lead: OAAA
					b. Support policy makers, awarding bodies and qualification providers as relevant to develop qualifications at appropriate levels for learners with special needs.	Lead: OAAA
					c. Ensure that there are appropriate qualifications at all levels of the framework.	Lead: OAAA

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES FOR THE OQF

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
1.	Establish the legal framework of the OQF.	1.1	The legal framework for the OQF in place	The preliminary laws required to provide the legal framework for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF are developed, agreed and introduced.	a. Work collaboratively with the Education Council and OAAA as required in the development of the preliminary laws necessary for the OQF	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Implement the legal mandate to extend the remit of the MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to enable them to take up their role of the implementing the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
2.	Establish the structures for the governance, management and implementation of the OQF.	2.4	Structures for the implementation of the OQF established in Mo HE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	Develop the structural arrangements in MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to enable each organisation to implement the OQF.	a. Participate in discussions with OAAA on advice and information on the requirements of implementing the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Identify and acquire the resources required, e.g. finance, personnel, IT infrastructure, accommodation and associated furnishing, to implement the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Within each licencing ministry, develop and agree the structure for the implementation of the OQF including the identification of roles and functions for OQF personnel; develop job descriptions for the identified posts; and implement a recruitment process.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
3.	Establish the Strategic Direction of the OQF	3.1	Strategic Direction of the OQF finalised, disseminated and monitored.	The Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF, the five-year Strategic Plan and	a. Contribute to the development of the Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF and development of the five-year strategic plan and first Annual Operational Plan.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
				first Annual Operational Plan approved.		
3.		3.3	Strategic Direction of the OQF finalised, disseminated and monitored.	Approved second Annual Operational Plan.	Contribute to the development of the second Annual Operational Plan	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
4.	Develop effective communication mechanisms for the OQF	4.1	Increased awareness and visibility of the OQF.	Two-year communication plan finalised, approved, disseminated and co-ordinated across all sectors.	a. Develop internal mechanisms within MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to enable participation of appropriate personnel in the OQF consultation on the development of the two-year communication plan.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
		4.3		Information on the OQF disseminated to a wide range of target audiences	a. Attend OQF sector briefings to learn of plans and progress of the OQF.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Attend, and where appropriate participate, in workshops, seminars, conferences on the OQF.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Visit the OQF website on a regular basis to keep informed of developments and upcoming events.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
d. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB arrange regular sector briefings within their organisation and networks to inform them of OQF developments and implementation.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB					
		4.4		Revise Communication Plan.	a. Participate as required in the working group for the review of the Communications Plan and respond to consultation on the Plan as appropriate.	MoHE, MoM and OMSB
5.	Secure	5.1	Consultation on OQF	A two-year	a. Develop internal mechanisms within MoHE, MoE,	MoHE, MoE,

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
	Stakeholder engagement		Developments with stakeholders as appropriate.	Consultation Plan developed to guide the way in which stakeholders are consulted on matters pertaining to the QQF	MoM and OMSB to receive and respond to QQF consultations on developments with the framework.	MoM and OMSB
		5.2	Stakeholders contribute to the further development and implementation of the QQF	Regular schedule of meetings with the Oversight Committee Established	a. Appoint a representative from MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB to attend and participate in the Oversight Committee and on QQF working groups as appropriate.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Establish the mechanism within MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB for two-way communication with the Oversight Committee and QQF working groups. Each ministry ensure the respective representative on the Oversight Committee and/or QQF working groups provides feedback to relevant ministry personnel and also receives contributions from relevant ministry personnel to provide input from the ministry at the Oversight Committee meetings and working groups	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
6.	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	6.1	National qualifications types, and titles established in Oman	Structure for national qualifications types and titles developed	a. Participate in the QQF cross-sectoral working group as required and QQF consultation on qualification types and titles and information on qualification specifications.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminate information within their organisations and networks on the agreed qualification types and titles and information on qualification specifications.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
		6.2	Standard information on qualification specifications across sectors.	Criteria developed for the design of qualifications including the information on qualification specifications.	<p>c. Review qualifications to implement the OQF requirements on qualification types and titles. Review qualification specifications to ensure they contain the agreed information.</p> <p>d. Receive support on qualification types and titles and information on qualification specification from OQF managing body as required.</p>	<p>Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p> <p>Qualification providers</p> <p>Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p>
6.	Establish qualification types, titles and design.	6.3	A common credit-rating system implemented across all sectors.	Credit rating system established in all sectors of education and training.	<p>a. Participate in the OQF working group as required and OQF consultation on a credit rating system for all sectors.</p> <p>b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminate information within its organisation and networks on the agreed credit rating system for all sectors.</p> <p>c. Implement agreed credit rating system from the agreed implementation date.</p> <p>d. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminates information within its organisation and networks on the agreed credit rating system.</p>	<p>Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p>
7.	Establish quality assurance of the OQF	7.1	Established processes for the quality assurance of the OQF (institutions).	Institutional quality assurance arrangements for the OQF are in place for those listing qualification and providers seeking	<p>a. Participate in the OQF cross-sectoral working group as required and OQF consultation on the institutional quality assurance requirements for the OQF.</p> <p>b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB undertakes a review of their quality assurance systems and integrates the institutional quality assurance requirements for the OQF.</p>	<p>Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p> <p>Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB</p>

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
				to have their qualifications listed.		
					c. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminates information within its organisation and networks on the agreed institutional quality assurance requirements for the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					d. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB provide support to their network of qualification providers to implement the institutional quality assurance requirements.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
						Qualification providers
<b>7.</b>	Establish quality assurance of the OQF	7.2	Established processes for the quality assurance of the OQF (programs).	Qualifications on the OQF are quality assured.	a. Participate in the OQF cross-sectoral working group as required and OQF consultation on the quality assurance requirements for qualifications to be listed on the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminate information within their organisations and networks on the agreed quality assurance requirements for qualifications to be listed on the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Receive support from OQF managing body for listing qualifications on the OQF, e.g. attend capacity building on listing qualifications on the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Provide support to institutions that do not meet the required quality assurance arrangements for the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
<b>8.</b>	Establish principles and	8.1	OQF level descriptors are	OQF level descriptors ready	a. Participate as required in the OQF expert focus group for the finalisation of the OQF level descriptors.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility	
	procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the QQF		approved for use in the pilot.	for testing in pilot.		OMSB	
					b. Contribute to the refinement of the QQF level descriptors.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
					c. Participate as required in the QQF pilot to test QQF level descriptors and criteria for listing qualifications and provide feedback to QQF managing body.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
							Qualification Providers
		8.2	Standard methodology for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Establish the arrangements for listing (placement of) qualification on the QQF.	a. Participate in the QQF cross-ministerial working group as required to develop the criteria and procedures for listing (placement of) qualification on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
					b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB participate in consultation on the criteria and procedures for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
		8.3	QQF level descriptors, methodology for listing, policies and procedures and documentation are tested and trialled in pilot prior to roll-out in Oman.	Pilot developed to test the QQF listing of qualifications.	a. Participate in the QQF pilot to test the listing criteria and arrangements and the quality assurance arrangements for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
					b. Feedback on experience of listing qualifications on the QQF to QQF managing body.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
		8.4	All the main types of Omani qualifications included on the QQF.	Bring the main types of Omani qualifications into the QQF.	a. Participate in the QQF cross-sectoral working group as required to explore ways in which the main types of qualifications in Oman are to be included on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
					b. Undertake the agreed mechanisms for the inclusion of the main types of qualifications in Oman on the	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and	

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
					QQF.	OMSB
					c. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB provide support to their network of qualification providers to in their preparation of qualifications for submission for listing on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					d. Review qualifications to implement the QQF requirements for qualification design	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Qualification Providers
					e. Receive support on qualification design from QQF managing body as required.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
<b>8.</b>	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the QQF	8.5	At an appropriate time in their development, all new qualifications are listed on the framework.	Bring new Omani qualifications into the QQF	a. In line with the agreed processes for listing qualifications on the QQF, develop forms for qualification providers to submit their qualifications for the listing.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Qualification Providers
					b. Receive and acknowledge applications from qualification providers for listing qualifications on the QQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Review submitted qualifications to evaluate if they meet the qualification design requirements of the QQF. Where required, support providers to meet the QQF requirements in qualification design.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					d. Carry out an evaluation of the learning outcomes and the assessment to reach an agreed position on the level and credit value of the qualification.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					e. Notify the QQF managing body of the outcome of listing applications in order that the QQF National	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
					Register of Qualifications can be updated.	OMSB
	Establish principles and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications on the OQF	8.6	Professional bodies submit their qualifications for listing on the OQF.	Support professional bodies to list their qualifications on the OQF.	a. In line with the agreed processes, MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB support relevant professional bodies to prepare and submit their qualifications on the OQF.	Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Professional Bodies
b. Carry out the listing process as agreed and inform OQF managing body of the outcome of the decision.					Lead MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB	
9.	Set up a national register of qualifications	9.1	National Register of Qualifications established in OAAA	Development of a National Register of Qualifications.	a. Participate in the cross-ministerial working group as required to take forward the development of the National Register of Qualifications.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
10.	Build capacity for the governance management and implementation of the OQF	10.1	Tailored capacity building which is delivered consistently in all sectors.	A capacity building strategy is developed to be used by all sectors.	a. Participate in the cross-ministerial committee to develop a Capacity Building Strategy which will be tailored for all sectors.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
		10.3	Stakeholders understand the policies and procedures relating to the OQF and the use of the OQF level descriptors.	Develop Capacity Building workshop(s).	a. Participate in the capacity building workshop(s) for MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB, other ministries, awarding bodies and qualification providers on the design of qualifications, learning outcomes, assessment, quality assurance and the completion of OQF documentation.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
11.	Recognise Learning through the development of progression routes, credit accumulation and transfer and the recognition of prior learning.	11.1	Progression routes are available for learners both horizontal and vertical	The development of progression routes (horizontal and vertical).	a. Participate as required in the cross-sectoral working group for the development of progression routes and respond to consultation as appropriate.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Participate in the consultation with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements for progression from one qualification to another and from one sector to another and provide feedback.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. As required and in conjunction with the OQF managing body provide support to awarding bodies and qualification providers to develop appropriate progression routes.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Qualification providers
		11.2	Credit Accumulation and Transfer is available in all sectors.	System for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) developed for all sectors	a. Participate in cross-sectoral working group and consultation for CAT.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Participate in the consultation with stakeholders on the proposed arrangements for CAT system for all sectors and provide feedback.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Check for the implementation of CAT policy by qualification providers when evaluating qualifications submitted for listing on the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB Qualification providers
		11.3	Approved policies, procedures and guidelines for the recognition of prior learning	Develop a system for the Recognition of Prior Learning	a. Participate in the cross-sectoral working group and consultation for RPL.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Participate in the consultation with stakeholders on the proposed RPL arrangements and provide feedback.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
					b. Attend events on RPL to exchange knowledge and experience with others.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Participate in RPL network.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					d. Check for the implementation of RPL policy by qualification providers when evaluating qualifications submitted for listing on the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
						Qualification providers
12.	Establish principles and procedures for the recognition of foreign and international qualifications.	12.1	Foreign and international qualifications are listed on the OQF	Establish protocols for the inclusion of foreign and international qualifications on the OQF.	a. Participate as required in the cross-ministerial working group for the inclusion of foreign and international qualifications on the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. In line with the agreed protocols MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB support qualification providers to prepare and submit foreign and international qualifications on the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					c. Carry out the listing process as agreed and inform OQF managing body of the outcome of the decision.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
13.	Develop international relationships	13.1	Relationships developed with international framework authorities	Conduct study visit(s) to an international qualifications framework body/authority.	a. Participate in study visits to international framework bodies	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB disseminate information from study visit to their networks.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
		13.2	Reference OQF to an international qualifications framework.	Criteria and policies and procedures	a. Participate as required in the working group for the referencing of an international framework.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

Objective	Objective	Ref	Indicator	Target	Activities	Responsibility
				established, tested and trialled for reference in to international framework.	b. Disseminate information to licensing ministry and appropriate networks.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
14.	Development of qualifications for learners with basic educational needs as	14.1	OQF has qualifications at every level.	Development of qualifications to meet the needs of learners with basic educational needs	a. Establish need for and availability of elementary level qualifications.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB
					b. Support qualification providers (as appropriate) to develop qualification(s) at appropriate levels for learners with basic educational needs.	Qualification Providers
					c. MoHE, MoE, MoM, OMSB as appropriate list the qualification(s) on the OQF.	MoHE, MoE, MoM and OMSB

## References

Ron Tuck, (2007), *An Introductory Guide to National Qualifications Framework*

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## **Appendix 1: Membership of the OQF Oversight Committee**

The OQF Oversight Committee comprises representatives from the following key organisations:

- Secretariat General Education Council;
- Diwan of Royal Court;
- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Higher Education;
- Ministry of Manpower;
- Secretariat General Supreme Planning Council;
- Ministry of Defence;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Civil Service;
- Oman Medical Speciality Board;
- Sultan Qaboos University;
- Private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
- Employers and Professional Bodies;
- The Research Council.

## Appendix 2: Alignment of Legislation, Policies and Procedures

	Requirements	Approval Level	Description
Level 1	Legislation	Royal Decree	To establish the OQF as a mandatory National Qualifications Framework
Level 2	Regulations and Rules	Ministries/Licencing Bodies	The strategic direction of the OQF needs to fit within the existing regulatory system.
Level 3	Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF. Strategic Direction and Decision/Directives	OQF Governing Body: Education Council	The strategic direction of the OQF set by the Governing Body in its Decisions and Directives. These should be informed by the Vision, Mission and Values of the OQF and its Strategic Plan.
Level 4	Policies	OQF Governing Body: Education Council	A policy is a predetermined course of action <sup>35</sup> . These should be aligned to the Strategic Plan
Level 5	Procedures	OQF Managing Body: OAAA	The procedure is the method by which the policy can be accomplished. It provides the necessary instructions to carry out the policy statement.
Level 6	Guidelines	OQF Managing Body: OAAA	Guidelines provide supplementary information and advice on ways in which to carry out the procedure. Guidelines are not mandatory.
Level 7	Forms and Documentation	OQF Managing Body: OAAA	Forms and Documentation should comply with the procedural requirements to ensure the necessary information is collected.