

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Qualifications Framework
Policy Number	004
Approved by	Academic Council
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Contact Office	Office of the Registrar

- 1.0 The University will clearly define the qualifications (degrees, diplomas and certificates) it awards in ways that are consistent with international practices; and which provide public assurance of competence, with clearly enunciated attributes and abilities expected of a holder of the qualification.
- 2.0 All qualifications will be defined in terms of their level and generic qualification descriptors in a consistent manner.
 - 2.1 These descriptors will define the level of intellectual development, and performance attributes and abilities expected of a holder of that qualification, in terms that assist assurance of quality, and provide readily understood information on the skills brought by graduates to a job.
 - 2.2 Levels of learning will be differentiated by the capacity for conceptualization; the degree of autonomy of learning; the understanding of increasingly difficult and complex body of knowledge; level of research and whether it is at the boundaries of knowledge; analytical and problem-solving skills; the ability to make judgments based on evaluation of evidence, arguments and assumptions; and the ability to communicate effectively.
 - 2.3 Different types of programmes at the same level will be distinguished by a distinctive title.
- 3.0 A qualification will be awarded to mark the achievement of positively defined outcomes; not as a compensation for failure to achieve a higher-level qualification.
 - 3.1 All assessments will measure achievement at the level of the qualification.
 - 3.2 Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the outcomes that warrant the award of the qualification.
- 4.0 Degrees and diplomas and certificates will only be awarded for completion of study in academic programmes which are reviewed and approved by the Registrar's Working Group and endorsed by Academic Council.

- 5.0 There will be two graduate degree levels: Master's and Doctorate.
- 5.1 Master's and Doctorate levels courses will require mastery of knowledge within a given field, demonstration of ability to integrate, apply and communicate that knowledge to others, support emerging knowledge in students and colleagues; ability to address ethical issues; and acquisition of the ability to carry out research projects relevant to the qualification and the field of study.
- 5.2 The levels of knowledge required for Master's and Doctoral degrees will be judged against the forefront of current knowledge, as represented by current research or equivalent advanced scholarship.
- 5.3 PhD and Master's programmes will be distinguished by the depth of study, required advancement in the field of study which will be more narrowly focused and of greater intensity in the PhD programmes.
- 6.0 A Master's degree which carries the title of Master of Science (MSc) or Master of Arts (MA) will normally require two years full-time equivalent study, and will include a substantial research project.
- 6.1 Other Master's degrees, for example MEd, MPH, in which candidates are expected to have advanced competencies and professional experience at admission, may be completed in one year and will not necessarily require the completion of a substantial piece of independent research.
- 6.2 Students in Masters programmes may be exempted from some elements of the course on the basis of demonstrated proficiency in the area of study concerned, but under no circumstances will the course last for less than one year, or the student be exempt from programme requirements related to research.
- 6.3 A major portion of the teaching for Masters degrees must be demonstrably beyond the level required for an undergraduate degree.
- 7.0 The award of PhD will require the demonstration by the candidate of a comprehensive and advanced level of understanding of the relevant field of knowledge, research methodology and ethics. This may be achieved prior to the commencement of the course, or may be based on course work as part of the degree programme.
- 7.1 A Doctoral degree also signifies acquisition of special knowledge to enable completion of significant approved research in a specific field, or discipline and successful defence of a thesis.
- 7.1.1 This research will require the discovery of significant new facts and/ or the exercise of independent critical analysis in respect of existing theories and approaches.
- 7.2 Doctorate level degrees will require study and research for between three and four years full-time equivalent with an expectation that the thesis will be submitted by 7 years.
- 7.3 Candidates for other doctoral degrees (such as D Ed) that may be awarded, will be required to submit for assessment substantial pieces of research-based work which

demonstrate the candidate's ability to integrate, apply and / or communicate knowledge; and / or other evidence of scholarship in their chosen fields.

- 8.0 A Bachelors degree signifies the acquisition of fundamental theoretical knowledge, skills and attitudinal and behavioural competences, some of which is towards the forefront of the subjects studied; secure knowledge of the way in which well established principles within the subjects have developed; ability to use established techniques to critically analyze literature, and concepts and data that may be incomplete; and the ability to formulate problem-solving strategies from such analyses.
- 9.0 A Diploma will require acquisition of knowledge that illustrates and exemplifies underlying concepts and principles of the subjects studied; knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in those subjects; the ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied; the ability to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study; and the appreciation of the boundaries of the subject(s) and the interrelationships with other subjects.
 - 9.1 A unit may at its discretion award an advanced diploma provided the student already has a graduate degree in a related field.
- 10.0 A Certificate awarded by the University signifies satisfactory completion of a course of study, which involves acquisition of knowledge and comprehension of analytical frameworks, with a broadening and deepening of the knowledge base required for admission to the programme; and/or an introduction to new fields of knowledge.
 - 10.1 Such certification is awarded for completion of study in programmes approved by the Registrar's Working Group and endorsed by Academic Council and is distinct from the certificates of attendance and other certificates given by academic units for continuing education.
 - 10.2 Where the programme is based on credits the number of credits will be specified.