



KAMUZU UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Qualifications Framework

March 2024

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Effective Date	As determined by the Council of Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
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Next Review	Initial after 12 months and subsequently after five years
Council Approval Date	17 April 2024
Stakeholders subjected to this Policy	All KUHeS employees, Students and Affiliates
Responsible Officers	Executive Deans, Chief Quality Assurance Officer
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice Chancellor

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FOREWORD

The Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) was established based on the value of excellence, recognising that staff training and development is a key factor in achieving its strategic objectives. The University is committed to creating an environment where staff members are accorded opportunities for career growth and continuous professional development. As the University discharges its mandate for producing and building capacity for personnel in the health sector, it shall equally invest in its staff at various levels within its structures. Therefore, this framework shall be an important tool intended to improve the understanding of qualifications (certificates, diplomas, degrees, or recognition of experiential-based learning and capabilities) in terms of information conveyed by the University to its prospective employers about work competencies. I strongly believe that this framework will enhance the competitive edge of the University.

The framework also intends to explain how qualifications relate to each other and thus can build pathways within the KUHeS qualification system. The framework emphasises increasing the relevance and flexibility of education and training programmes, easing the recognition of prior learning, enhancing lifelong learning, improving the transparency of qualification systems, and creating possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer.

It is envisioned that the framework will benefit the entire nation and global community through the production of competent graduates, outstanding services, and high-quality research.



Professor Francis Moto
Chairman of Council

PREFACE

This framework articulates the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences' agenda to ensure that the university qualifications conform to national and international education and training standards. The framework is therefore; regarded as a useful tool in addressing issues of qualification levels, nomenclature, credit accumulation, and transfer to attain the University's strategic goals.

This framework has been developed through a consultative process involving academic staff and external stakeholders including the National Council for Higher Education. The developers have also made use of various materials from various local and international higher education institutions and regulatory bodies.

The University anticipates that all decisions and initiatives pertaining to qualification systems shall adhere to this framework.



Professor MacPherson Mallewa

Vice Chancellor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Qualifications Framework is an outcome of the hard work and dedication of members of the KUHeS Policies Task Force, which was co-chaired by Dr Benjamin Kumwenda and Dr Belinda Gombachika. KUHeS is particularly grateful to the University of Glasgow for the financial support that enabled the University to develop its framework.

The development of this qualifications framework incorporated review of multiple sources including , UNIMA qualifications framework and sub-degree awards and qualifications frameworks from the region and beyond such as Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (2017), Turkish Qualifications Framework (2015), Finnish National Qualifications Framework Descriptors, Zambia Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors(2016), Australian Qualifications Framework (2013), A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (2005), and South Africa Qualification Framework .

KUHeS recognises the contributors of a pre-existing Qualification Framework used by the University of Malawi (UNIMA) from which input has been drawn. Professor MacPherson Mallewa and the late Dr Mercy Pindani provided initiative and encouragement for the development of this Qualifications Framework. Special gratitude is extended to the individuals of the Qualifications Framework Development Team, specifically Dr Lucy Kululanga, Dr Gertrude Mwalabu, Dr Josephine Langton, Dr. Emma Thomson and Mr Ishmael Nyirenda. The University expresses gratitude to the members of the KUHeS Senate and the Staff and Students sub-Committee of the KUHeS Council for their diligent review of the framework. Additionally, appreciation extends to the staff, students, and key stakeholders who contributed valuable input during consultations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANP	Advance Nurse Practice
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
KUHeS	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
MMed	Masters in Medicine
NCHE	National Council for Higher Learning
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QF	Qualifications Framework
UNIMA	University of Malawi

DEFINITIONS

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	The identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement
Accumulate	Building up of credit to achieve a qualification
Assessment regulations	Rules governing assessment, including pass marks, number of credits needed to complete a module, attendance requirements etc
Credit	An indicator of the amount and level of learning that is expected or has been achieved.
Credit value	Indicates both 'how much' learning (the <i>amount</i>) is expected and 'how hard' it is (the relative <i>level of difficulty</i>).
HEI	Higher education institutions - universities and university colleges.
Learning outcomes	Statements of learning achievement expressed in terms of what the student will know, understand or be able to do, on successful completion of a module, unit or qualification.
Level descriptor	The generic outcomes of study at a specific level, used as reference points.
Notional hours of learning	The number of hours a student will need to spend, on average, in a range of activities, to achieve the learning outcomes.
Qualification descriptor	Exemplify the outcomes of the main qualification at each level, and demonstrate the nature of change between levels.
Transcript	The formal record of a student's achievements issued by An HEI.

Transfer	A way of using credit gained in one HEI to transfer to another HEI or from one study programme to another
Unit / Module	A block of learning with a coherent set of formally identified learning outcomes at a single level

1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

KUHeS's Qualifications Framework (KUHeS-QF) is a structured framework that defines and organizes qualifications awarded by the University in terms of levels, learning outcomes, and credit systems' (Harvey & Stensaker, 2018). The primary purpose of KUHeS-QF is to provide clarity and coherence in the university's academic offerings, ensuring that qualifications are aligned with national qualifications framework and international frameworks, standards and recognized benchmarks. In addition, the KUHeS-QF will promote flexibility and mobility within the education system, allowing students to progress horizontally and vertically and facilitating recognition of prior learning and credit transfer (Harvey & Stensaker, 2018). This will enable students to build upon their existing knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, the KUHeS-QF will promote transparency by providing clear information about the structure, content, and outcomes of qualifications offered by the University (European Commission, n.d.). This will help students make informed decisions about their educational pathways and support employers and other stakeholders in understanding the value of qualifications awarded by KUHeS.

The QF has six levels that reflect the current system of education and training. The descriptors show how each level becomes increasingly demanding due to changes in complexity and depth of knowledge, links to associated academic or professional practices, and the degree of autonomy exercised by the learner. At each level, the descriptors articulate the complexity of learning. The learning and training that has taken place shall be measured in units known as credits, where

one credit equates to 10 notional hours of learning time, which comprise both contact and non-contact hours; self-study; and both formative and summative assessments. Contact hours shall be, but not limited to, lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory, practical, and fieldwork. Non-contact hours shall be, but not limited to, pre-reading assignments, projects, research, unsupervised practicals, and fieldwork. Credits shall be accumulated for an award of a qualification, transfer between programs and institutions, and as provided for within pre-requisites and core requisites of particular programs. At each level of the QF, the expected learning outcomes and credits are clearly defined. By distinctly outlining KUHeS's education pathway, this empowers students to progress within their education, training, and career pathways, ultimately improving their employment opportunities. Defining common parameters and exit-level criteria for qualification also enables academic staff to design and develop new programs that are responsive to their vision, mission, and plans, as well as the needs of the clients and communities they serve.

2. THE RATIONALE FOR THE FRAMEWORK

The rationale for the KUHeS-QF is first to define the approved qualifications offered by the university and the levels of the learning outcomes and credits required to attain each qualification. Secondly the KUHeS-QF standardises all the qualifications offered by the university facilitating student mobility internally, nationally and internationally. Thirdly, the KUHeS-QF provides guidance to academic staff in programme design, enabling alignment of the learning outcomes of the programme modules/ courses, with generic decontextualised outcomes and with level descriptors. This will allow modules/ courses to be appropriately located within the curriculum and also determine the qualification appropriate to the level of the programme of study.

3. KUHeS VISION

A world-class university and centre of excellence in health education, research, and innovation.

4. KUHeS MISSION

To advance knowledge, professional competencies, skills, and innovations in health sciences through high-quality student-centered and innovative education and research that responds to and influences global/national policy, health, and development needs in an efficient, sustainable, and result-oriented manner.

5. AIMS OF THE QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

To provide a structure to guide the development of internationally recognised qualifications within the University and ensure that the skills and knowledge to be learned are pitched at the appropriate level of learning.

6. OBJECTIVES OF THE QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The objectives of this framework are to:

- a. Define the framework for KUHeS' qualifications.
- b. Achieve excellence in teaching and learning.
- c. Promote lifelong learning through credit transfer and accumulation.
- d. Facilitate the development of globally recognised professional qualifications, thereby permitting accreditation of qualifications nationally and internationally.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

a. Proactiveness and Responsiveness

KUHeS shall be receptive, approachable, and inclusive of the needs, demands, and rights of staff, students, and societies at

national and international levels. KUHeS shall respond to emerging issues related to the qualifications framework to keep abreast with current international trends.

b. Diversity and Equity

Regarding the award of qualifications, the university shall treat everyone equally and with dignity irrespective of ethnicity, creed, socioeconomic status, disability or gender.

c. Professional Excellence

The university shall ensure that curricula are aligned with the appropriate levels of QF so that graduates are fully equipped with competencies necessary to excel in their chosen profession.

d. Transparency

The university shall publish the QF and ensure that it is available in the public domain.

e. Internationalisation

The KUHeS-QF is benchmarked regionally and internationally so that graduates are recognised internationally as evidence by the list of bibliography on page 17.

8. CREDIT SYSTEM

a. **A credit** summarises and describes the amount of learning; it helps to identify 'how much' learning is involved and the level of complexity. Students are awarded credits after they have completed a 'block of learning'; that 'block' might be called a course, module, unit or qualification. The **number of credits** awarded to a student is determined by the **credit value** assigned to a course, module, unit, or qualification.

b. Individual students are given credit after completing the requisite learning activities and achieving the specified learning outcomes.

as demonstrated by the appropriate assessment. **A learning outcome** is a statement of what a learner should be able to do, at the end of a unit of study and . specifies the criteria for determining whether it has been achieved.

- c. To be awarded credits, a student must reach the minimum standard, also known as the threshold or pass, in the assessment(s). The minimum standard expected for a pass is set out in the **assessment regulations for the programme**. Exceeding the minimum standard does not result in a student being awarded more credit, as the credit value is fixed before the assessment.
- d. The amount of learning indicated by a credit value is based on an estimate that is calculated using the idea of **notional hours of learning**. **One credit** represents **10 notional hours of learning**. The University uses this estimate to set the credit value of a course, module, unit, or qualification. If a student takes more or less time than estimated to complete the learning, they will still be awarded the set credit value - not more or less. If a student starts but does not complete the required learning, they will not be awarded any credit. The number of notional hours indicates how long it will take for a typical student to achieve these learning outcomes. **All** types of learning are included in the estimation of notional hours of learning, including formal classes, self-study, clinical learning, clinical practice, clinical teaching, revision, and assessment.
- e. A full-time programme (undergraduate and postgraduate) will have a minimum of 60 credits per semester. A semester is half of an academic year. For the total credits of each qualification level, refer to Table 2.

9. CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER

The university believes that the KUHeS-QF will provide a basis for recognising a wide range of learning achievements, whether in education and training. The recognition of credits and competencies obtained from recognised national institutions and beyond through formal and prior learning will be considered. For this reason, learning that takes place outside of a KUHeS setting, can also be formally recognised. This is done through a process known as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). HEIs use credit to indicate how much and at what level they should formally recognise the learning achieved in a different setting.

KUHeS's clearly defined certification structure allows for credit accumulation and transitions in learners' educational training and professional careers. Learners can choose and accumulate credit from different fields of professional education, enabling them to acquire the specific skills they need for their chosen careers. The flexible KUHeS-QF also allows for the transfer of credits between educational programs both within KUHeS and other educational institutions.

Students may be able to transfer the credits they have been awarded to another programme offered by KUHeS and/or transfer credit when moving to a training programme or educational institution within Malawi or internationally.

Through the use of internationally recognised qualification titles and the increased transparency of this qualification structure, credits may be universally transferable from KUHeS to other educational institutions.

Credits accumulated outside KUHeS will be formally verified and evaluated. This process comprises the following steps;

- a) Verification of the issuing body or institution.

- b) Corroboration that the issuing body or institution is officially accredited within their country.
- c) Confirmation that the credits are valid and correct.
- d) The accumulated credits and learning outcomes will then be compared with the KUHeS equivalent, considering the structure and outcomes of the foreign qualifications, to locate them within the KUHeS-QF. Some of the factors that will be considered when assessing credit transfer requests shall include:
 - i. **Course Content and Syllabus:** The content and rigor of the courses taken at the previous institution are compared to those offered by KUHeS. A detailed examination of the syllabus, textbooks, assignments, and learning outcomes helps evaluate the similarity and depth of coverage.
 - ii. **Grade Earned:** The University shall set minimum grade requirements for transferred credits.
 - iii. **Course Level and Equivalency:** The level of the course/ programme and its equivalency to courses/ programmes offered by KUHeS shall be evaluated. This assessment shall consider factors such as the depth and breadth of material covered and the alignment of learning outcomes.
 - iv. **Course Age:** The University shall consider courses done within the last three years to be eligible for credit transfer.

10. LEVEL AND LEVEL DESCRIPTOR

The KUHeS-QF is outcome-based. This means that the learning outcomes are used to define the complexity of each stage of learning and to determine the metric for the qualification hierarchy. The level descriptors clearly define the outcomes for each qualification level within KUHeS. They include the notions of competence and

professionalism, which are both abilities extending beyond the possession of knowledge, understanding, and skills. It includes:

- a. Cognitive competence: The use of theory and concepts, critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, reflection, decision-making, and informal tacit knowledge gained experientially.
- b. Functional competence: acquisition and use of the skills required for the profession.
- c. Personal behaviour: knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation.
- d. Professional competence: the capability to perform the duties of one's profession.
- e. Ethical competence: possession of certain personal and professional values.

The framework includes the following qualifications:

- i. Certificate;
- ii. Diploma;
- iii. Bachelor's Degree;
- iv. Bachelor's Degree with Honours ;
- v. Postgraduate Certificate;
- vi. Postgraduate Diploma;
- vii. Masters Degree by Research
- viii. Masters Degree by Course work and Research Masters in Medicine (MMED) and Advance Nursing Practice (ANP) (Professional clinical training);
- ix. PhD by Research
- x. PhD by Research and Coursework

The KUHeS qualification framework has six levels: starting level five (L5) to level ten (L10). Table 1 presents the qualification framework for KUHeS. Table 2 presents the level and competence descriptors.

Table 1: KUHeS Qualifications Framework

LEVEL	ACADEMIC PATH
L5	Certificate
L6	Diploma
L7	Ordinary Degree
L8	Honours Degree Postgraduate Certificate Post Graduate Diploma
L9	Master's Degree by Research Master's Degree by Research and Coursework Master of Philosophy
L10	Doctor of Science Doctor of Philosophy

Note: Masters in Medicine (MMed) is yet to be placed in the Qualifications Framework and the issue will be presented to Senate.

Table 2: Level and Competence Descriptors

QUALIFICATION	COGNITIVE COMPETENCE	PSYCHOMOTOR COMPETENCE	PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL COMPETENCE	MINIMUM CREDITS
Level 5 Certificate	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to remember and uphold common concepts and values, show a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, demonstrate the ability to analyse data and be able to build a cohesive and measured case.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to apply a broad spectrum of fundamental concepts, scientific, and/or scholastic skills in a variety of contexts, employing both traditional and nonstandard techniques, often in tandem.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to perform basic duties correctly, assimilate expertise and experience, and perform basic functions under observation while demonstrating an understanding of the field's basic fundamental concepts.</p>	120
Level 6 Diploma	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to choose, critique and apply varied specialist technical or theoretical knowledge and skills, with traditional and non-standard processes to their field.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to demonstrate the application of specialist technical or theoretical knowledge and skills to their field, generating solutions to problems encountered.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to apply their knowledge and skills in a broader context, demonstrate the use of problem-solving skills, generate solutions that are innovative, competitive and dynamic, and demonstrate self-reflective leadership practices.</p>	240

<p>Level 7</p> <p>Bachelors</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to show knowledge of a major discipline, including command of the recognised discipline's theories, rules, definitions, primary study methodology, and problem-solving strategies, as well as potential areas of expertise in that discipline.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be capable of rigorous independent thought and subject matter research, as well as advanced listening, teamwork, and collaboration skills.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification must show subject matter expertise, experience, and integrity in their field of specialisation, as well as the ability to conduct research, question the status quo, introduce creativity, entrepreneurship, collaborate effectively, and lead a diverse team.</p>	<p>480</p>
<p>Level 8</p> <p>Honours</p> <p>Postgraduate certificate</p> <p>Postgraduate diplomas</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to show a critical grasp of the discipline's concepts, philosophies, methodologies, recent science, and literature, as well as comprehension of laws, rules, norms, and ethics.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to analyse challenges, design, propose, and propose solutions based on a critical and unbiased interpretation of the concepts, hypotheses, and methodologies of a specific discipline as influenced by analysis.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to use their experience and expertise to design solutions, perform inquiries and studies independently and under the guidance of others, and analyse, plan, and write technical reports in a sense.</p>	<p>600</p> <p>PGC = 60</p> <p>PGD = 120</p>

<p>Level 9</p> <p>Master's degrees</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should demonstrate a deeper understanding of the theory, concepts and principles pertaining to the subject matter, show critical awareness of current problems and generate new insights at the forefront of their discipline.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should be able to conduct deeper and more advanced research using complex intellectual analysis and independent thinking in new situations in solving problems based on knowledge and evidence</p>	<p>Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to provide leadership independently and demonstrate mastery of theoretically sophisticated subject matter's skills and knowledge, with a critical understanding of current issues and new insights in the field of specialisation and apply evaluative research findings and make a judgment based on knowledge and evidence</p>	<p>240</p> <p>Masters = 240</p>
<p>Level 10</p> <p>Doctorate</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should demonstrate knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of study, contributed through research that is judged by independent experts applying international standards.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should demonstrate critical reflection on existing knowledge or practice and the creation of new knowledge through research which is evaluated by independent experts against international standards.</p>	<p>Holders of the qualification should demonstrate competence in knowledge contribution and creation through research and consultancies, sustainable commitment to professional integrity and innovation, engagement in critical dialogue, and development of new practice at the forefront of their discipline.</p>	<p>360</p>

11. KUHeS NOMENCLATURE OF QUALIFICATIONS

The naming of KUHeS qualifications shall follow the following format:

- a. University Certificate in XXXX
- b. Diploma in XXXX
- c. Bachelor of XXXXX in XXXXXX (one field of study)
- d. Bachelor of XXXX in XXXXX with XXXX (two equally weighted fields of study)
- e. Bachelor of XXXX in XXXXX and XXX (two fields of study on unequal weight)
- f. Bachelor of XXXXX in XXXXXX Honours (one field of study)
- g. Bachelor of XXXX in XXXX with XXXX honours (two fields of study of equal weight)
- h. Bachelor of XXXXX in XXXX and XXXX Honors (two fields of study on unequal weight)
- i. Postgraduate Certificate in XXXX
- j. Postgraduate Diploma in XXXX
- k. Masters of XXXXX in XXXXXX (one field of study)
- l. Master of XXXXX in XXXX with XXXX (two fields of study of equal weight)¹
- m. Master of XXXXX in XXXXX and XXXX (two fields of study of equal weight)

¹ Equal weight = double major; unequal weight = a major and a minor.

- n. Masters of Philosophy in XXXXX
- o. Doctorate of Philosophy in XXXXX
- p. Doctor of Science in XXXXX

12. CERTIFICATES OFFERED BY DEPARTMENTS, SCHOOLS AND CENTRES

All certificates offered by departments, schools and centres are not academic qualifications and shall not be defined in this qualifications framework.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For monitoring and evaluation systems with regard to the aims and objectives of KUHeS-QFs, KUHeS developed a specific set of outcome-based success indicators. The success indicators include the following.

- a) The number of qualifications included in the register and the amount of use of the register by students, employers, and providers.
- b) The number of graduates.
- c) The quality of modules and providers is revealed through the audit processes.
- d) The number of international students who study at KUHeS towards qualifications is included in the register.
- e) Employer feedback through employer satisfaction surveys, annual performance appraisals, and consultations for graduate tracer studies reveal information about their patterns of employment and career progression.

The qualification framework shall be reviewed initially 12 months from the date of approval and thereafter every five years. The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be based on national, regional, and international accreditation agency standards. The office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor shall coordinate the review process.

13. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implementation of this qualifications framework will ensure its integration into all academic programs of the university, rather than relying on ad hoc activities that incur separate costs. Activities necessitating involvement from external stakeholders will require financial resources and will be funded by the implementing units.

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