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USING THE STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

An integrated approach to learning outcomes, assessment and labour-market relevance

Imomova Sitora Xamidovna
Rahimova Musavvara Orifjon qizi
Institute for the Development of the National Qualifications System,
National Quality Assurance Agency for Education, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
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Abstract. This article examines how the structural components of Uzbekistan's national qualifications system can operate coherently to connect education with labour-market requirements. Qualitative documentary analysis of national legislation, institutional materials and international research identifies three priorities: alignment between occupational standards, learning outcomes and assessment; clear institutional responsibilities; and systematic feedback for updating qualifications. A practical matrix links the principal components with verifiable implementation outputs. Particular attention is given to independent assessment, recognition of prior learning, employer participation, quality assurance and digital registers. The analysis suggests that system performance should be assessed through the reliability, accessibility and practical use of qualifications, alongside the number of standards and certificates produced. The proposed approach provides a basis for coordinated implementation and further empirical evaluation.

Keywords: national qualifications system; national qualifications framework; Uzbekistan; occupational standards; learning outcomes; independent assessment; recognition of prior learning; quality assurance.

1. INTRODUCTION

A qualification should communicate what its holder knows and can do. Employers need reliable evidence of competence, education providers need clear requirements for programme design, and individuals need understandable routes into employment and further learning. Meeting these needs requires effective connections between qualification levels, occupational standards, education, assessment and recognition.

Uzbekistan's reforms have established an institutional basis for these connections. Presidential Resolution PQ–345 of 30 September 2024 and Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 369 of 17 June 2025 define the renewed system's central arrangements [2, 3]. The practical challenge is to translate them into consistent procedures. This article examines how the components can be coordinated and proposes verifiable outputs for evaluating their implementation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study uses qualitative documentary analysis of Uzbekistan's principal legal and institutional instruments [2–17] and international sources on qualifications, skills and validation [18–25]. The Institute's 2026 methodological guide provides a supporting conceptual source [1]. Information were taken based on Lex.uz data. The analysis identifies each component's function, examines its relationship with other components, and distinguishes legal requirements and

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programme commitments from proposed improvements. The resulting matrix is an analytical proposal; no primary survey or experimental data are reported.

3. LEGAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The national qualifications framework organises qualification levels and descriptors, while the wider qualifications system includes the institutions and procedures for designing, awarding and recognising qualifications. International principles support this integrated approach. ILO Recommendation No. 195 links qualifications frameworks with lifelong learning and recognition of previously acquired competence [18]. UNESCO emphasises stakeholder participation, flexible pathways and quality assurance [19]. The European Qualifications Framework supports comparison through learning outcomes, although matching level numbers do not establish automatic equivalence or recognition [20].

Implementation evidence requires caution. Allais's sixteen-country study found limited evidence that frameworks had achieved their ambitious objectives, while acknowledging the early stage of many reforms [21]. The OECD places the development and effective use of skills alongside system governance [22]. The ETF's 2025 Uzbekistan report describes an eight-level framework at the activation stage and identifies a need for greater stakeholder awareness [23]. Together, these sources support evaluating institutional practice rather than assuming that formal adoption guarantees results.

Uzbekistan's education, employment and labour legislation supplies the broader legal foundation [4–6]. Earlier instruments—Resolution No. 287, PQ–4939, Resolution No. 616 and Resolution No. 144—represent a previous regulatory phase and have been repealed [7–10]. The current architecture rests principally on PQ–345 and Resolution No. 369. The latter regulates the Republican Council, sector skill councils, qualification assessment centres and their accreditation, and requires relevant educational programmes to be developed in accordance with occupational standards [2, 3].

Connected reforms concern vocational education under PF–158 and PF–190, education quality assurance under PF–76, and educational-organisation accreditation under Resolution No. 498 [11–14]. PF–58 amended provisions concerning the Institute and the National Quality Assurance Agency for Education [15]. Accreditation of education providers and accreditation of qualifications assessment centres remain distinct arrangements.

PF–22 of 16 February 2026, Annex 3, item 2, envisages 24 qualification assessment centres, assessment tools for 60 occupations and training for 120 assessors, with voucher-based support for eligible independently trained people [16]. These figures are policy commitments, not verified achievements in this study. The Republican Council's Minutes No. 114 of 18 December 2025 approve sectoral-framework and occupational-standard templates and call for updated standards to inform curricula and final state-assessment tasks from 2026/2027 [17]. These measures connect institutional responsibilities with practical implementation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Connecting standards, learning and assessment

National descriptors provide a common reference for complexity, autonomy and responsibility. Sectoral frameworks interpret progression within an occupational field; occupational standards specify work functions and competence requirements. Educational programmes must translate these requirements into learning outcomes, appropriate content and opportunities for practice. Assessment must then establish whether the outcomes have been achieved.

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The essential connection is a documented relationship between an occupational requirement, a learning outcome and acceptable evidence. For example, "understanding equipment maintenance" is quite broad for a performance decision. The outcome should identify the task, operating conditions and expected standard of safe completion. Knowledge that supports judgement in unfamiliar situations should accompany task-specific skills. Table 1 summarises the proposed connections and their reviewable outputs.

Table 1. Proposed operational connections between the NQS components

Component	Practical connection	Evidence for review
National and sectoral frameworks	Locate occupational progression within level descriptors.	Documented level justification and progression routes.
Occupational standards	Translate work requirements into outcomes for education and assessment.	Current standard; employer consultation and recorded revisions.
Educational programmes	Connect outcomes with teaching, practice and assessment preparation.	Outcome-to-module and outcome-to-assessment mapping.
Assessment and RPL	Judge evidence against specified competence requirements.	Assessment specification, assessor records, decisions and appeals.
Quality assurance	Review development, delivery and assessment responsibilities.	Accreditation scope, moderation findings and corrective actions.
Digital registers	Link credentials to qualifications, issuers and applicable versions.	Verifiable status and traceable version identifiers.
Labour-market intelligence	Use changes in work and user feedback to update requirements.	Dated review, evidence considered and agreed revision actions.

Source: authors' synthesis [1–3, 18–25]. Proposed implementation outputs.

Common qualification identifiers and version references would help maintain these connections. When an occupational standard changes, the responsible institutions should be able to identify the affected curricula, assessment instruments and register entries. This makes updating a coordinated process rather than a series of unrelated document revisions.

4.2. Independent assessment and Recognition of prior learning

Independent assessment requires suitable tasks, competent assessors and consistent decision rules. Written tests can demonstrate knowledge, while practical competence may require observation, work products or realistic simulations. Resolution No. 369 provides procedures for assessment commissions, professional examinations and appeals [3]. In practice, each decision should retain sufficient evidence for review.

Recognition of prior learning gives experienced workers a route to demonstrate competence acquired outside formal programmes. Cedefop distinguishes identification, documentation, assessment and certification [24]. Applicants should receive clear guidance on evidence, costs and appeal options. Different learning routes can lead to assessment against

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comparable requirements; where a gap is identified, targeted learning can address it. Such arrangements support the independently acquired skills agenda under PF–22 [16].

Assessor development should include the evaluation of sample evidence and discussion of borderline cases. Independently scoring the same anonymised work and reviewing disagreements could help improve consistency. This is a proposed moderation mechanism, rather than a claim about measured assessor performance in Uzbekistan.

4.3. Quality assurance, participation and digital registers

Quality assurance should cover qualification development, learning opportunities, assessment and subsequent review. Responsibilities for preparing standards, assessing candidates and reviewing quality need to be clearly defined, with conflicts of interest managed. Employer participation should produce documented contributions to standards and assessment tasks. Workers' representatives can contribute perspectives on access, progression and the recognition of experience.

Digital registers should identify the qualification, relevant standard version, awarding organisation and credential status. Qualification assessment centre records should also show the authorised occupational scope. These records can support verification and coordinated updates, but digital authenticity does not establish the quality of the assessment itself. Auditable evidence and appropriate access controls are therefore necessary alongside verification services.

Micro-credentials offer a further route for focused learning. The EU's 2022 Recommendation requires transparent information about assessed outcomes and quality assurance and does not treat stacking as automatic entitlement to a larger qualification [25]. A domestic pilot should specify occupational value, assessment requirements and recognition conditions before enrolment. Similarly, international comparability requires credible evidence and appropriate recognition procedures; an NQF level or electronic certificate alone is insufficient.

4.4. Implementation priorities

The proposed matrix could first be tested in selected occupations where employer demand, assessment facilities and institutional partners are available. Each pilot should document the connection between requirements, learning outcomes, assessment decisions and registration. Monitoring could examine the proportion of assessed outcomes mapped to current standards, assessor agreement on sample cases, candidate waiting times and costs, and the use of qualifications by employers. These indicators require baselines before targets or impact claims are made.

Feedback should connect assessment difficulties, appeal outcomes and changes in work requirements with revisions to standards and programmes. The main limitation of this study is that documentary analysis cannot establish service quality or labour-market effects. Institutional case studies and follow-up of qualification holders are needed to test the proposed approach and distinguish the effects of certification from wider economic influences.

5. CONCLUSION

The practical value of Uzbekistan's national qualifications system depends on consistent connections between occupational requirements, education, assessment and recognition. Priorities are explicit alignment, capable assessors, accessible recognition pathways, meaningful social-partner participation and traceable digital records. Coordinated review of these connections can turn the legal architecture into dependable practice. Progress should be assessed through how reliably people can demonstrate and use their competence, together with the continued improvement of the institutions responsible for qualifications.

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