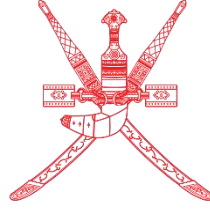


Sultanate of Oman
Oman Authority for
Academic Accreditation and
Quality Assurance of Education



سلطنة عمان
الهيئة العمانية للاعتماد الأكاديمي
و ضمان جودة التعليم



POLICY ON MAJOR CHANGE NOTIFICATION FOR THE OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Policy Number	OAAAQA/OQFM/0		
Category	OQFM (OQFM)		
Initiating Directorate or Department	Directorate General of National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF)		
Contact Person	Directorate General of National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF) Email: QQF@oaaqa.gov.om		
Related Policies or Manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OQF Document• OQF Manual• OAAAQA Policy for Listing Qualifications on the OQF• OAAAQA Policy for the Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications to the OQF• OAAAQA Policy for the Quality Assurance of the OQF• OAAAQA Policy for Re-Listing and Re-Alignment of Qualifications on the OQF• OQF Appeals Manual		
Version (v)	1		
Approved by	OAAAQA Executive Committee	11 April 2023	(v 1)
	OAAAQA Legal Affairs Department	14 May 2023	(v 1)
	OAAAQA Board	29 August 2023	(v 1)
Circulation	Internal and External		
Review Date	December 2027		



POLICY ON MAJOR CHANGE NOTIFICATION FOR THE OMAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures by which an Awarding Body notifies the Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework (DGNQF) at the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) of any major change that may impact the Oman Qualifications Framework (OQF) Level and/or OQF Credit Value of a qualification Listed on, or Aligned to, the OQF. Reporting these changes ensures the integrity of the OQF and the National Register of Qualifications (NRQ).

2. Scope

This policy applies to Omani qualifications Listed on the OQF and Foreign and International qualifications Aligned to the OQF and placed on the NRQ.

3. Policy Statement

- a. To ensure the integrity and accuracy of the qualifications placed on the NRQ, Awarding Bodies are required to notify the DGNQF of any major change that may have an impact on the qualification continuing to meet the Listing or Alignment Criteria including the allocated OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value. Examples of major change include, but are not limited to:
 - Significant changes to quality assurance of the programme that leads to the qualification
 - Significant changes to the qualification design (including the addition of new modules), changes to the programme that leads to the qualification; the duration; the Learning Outcomes; and the assessment¹
 - Significant changes to the way in which the key OAAAQA Policies concerning the OQF are implemented
 - Change of title of the award
- b. In the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment review, the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Panel ensures that no major change was made to the structure of the qualification, Learning Outcomes of the modules and/or to the assessment arrangements, which affect the allocated OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification.
- c. Minor changes that do not affect the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value may be made to the qualification without the need to inform the DGNQF, but they should be detailed in the Re-Listing or Re-Alignment Application Form.

¹ This change is also mentioned in the OAAAQA Major Change Notification Policy.

- d. If there has been a major change to any of the modules that comprise the qualification, or one or more modules have been removed and/or replaced with others, the amended and/or new modules are evaluated to ensure that the changes did not impact on the OQF Level and/or the OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification.

4. Procedure

4.1 Major Change Procedure

- a. The Omani Awarding Body must notify the DGNQF in writing prior to the occurrence of any major change to the programme of a Listed qualification that may impact the Listing Criteria, its OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value, and/or where relevant its Qualification Type².
- b. The Foreign or International Awarding Body (through the Education or Training provider in Oman) must notify the DGNQF in writing prior to the occurrence of any major change to the programme of an Aligned qualification that may impact on the Alignment Criteria, its OQF Level of Alignment and/or comparable OQF Credit Value.
- c. Once a notification is received, the DGNQF takes the required action to ensure the qualification continues to meet the Listing or Alignment Criteria and remains at the allocated OQF Level and OQF Credit Value. This may involve the evaluation of revised and/or new modules added to the programme that leads to the qualification. The DGNQF decides whether the extent of the change requires the engagement of one or more Oman Qualifications Framework External Reviewers (OQFERs) or whether any changes and/or evaluation (if required) can be dealt with by experienced staff within the DGNQF³.
- d. If the qualification continues to meet the Listing or Alignment Criteria and remains at the allocated OQF Level and OQF Credit Value, the qualification remains on the NRQ.
- e. If a major change impacts on the requirements for the qualification type for an Omani qualification⁴ or if the qualification no longer meets the Listing or Alignment Criteria, and/or the allocated OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value, the DGNQF⁵ contacts the Awarding Body to discuss any issues that have arisen due to the impact of the major changes and provides it with the opportunity to rectify the situation⁶.

² OAAAQA OQF Document (2023) Section 7

³ e.g. the change of title of an award requires a check that the revised title continues to reflect the content. Major changes to Learning Outcomes and/or assessment of one or two modules is unlikely to impact on the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification and in such cases the engagement of an OQFER is normally not required. The engagement of one or more OQFERs is recommended where major changes have been made to a number of the modules comprising the programme that may affect the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification.

⁴ OAAAQA OQF Document (2023) Section 7

⁵ Listing of Omani Qualifications Department or Alignment of Foreign and International Qualifications Department

⁶ Regarding g. and h., discussions are documented and agreed by both parties.

- f. If agreement cannot be reached with the Awarding Body, details of the major change, the outcome of the evaluation and the steps taken to inform the Awarding Body are sent to the Director General of the DGNQF to take the appropriate action⁷.
- g. When agreement is reached, the Director General of the DGNQF submits the documentation to the OAAAQA CEO's approval to update the NRQ accordingly.
- h. An Awarding Body may lodge an appeal against the evaluation outcome, as per the procedures stipulated in the OQF Appeals Manual. Outcomes of any appeal process are final and there is no recourse to legal action.

4.2 Failure to Notify the DGNQF of Major Change

Awarding Bodies that fail to notify the DGNQF of any major change to their Listed or Aligned qualifications, placed on the NRQ, are considered in breach of this policy and in breach of their obligations towards the OQF Listing or Alignment processes. Actions, such as publication of the failure to comply with this policy, are likely to be taken in the public interest to protect the integrity and accuracy of the NRQ. Sanction may also include, but not be restricted to, the removal of the qualification from the NRQ.

5. Abbreviations

DGNQF	Directorate General of the National Qualifications Framework
NRQ	National Register of Qualifications
OAAAQA	Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education
OQF	Oman Qualifications Framework
OQFER	Oman Qualifications Framework External Reviewer

6. Definitions

Alignment [of a qualification to the OQF]: An evaluation of a Foreign or International qualification against the Alignment Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level that the qualification aligns to and, if applicable, the comparable OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification

Awarding Body: An organisation that issues education or training awards following formal assessment (for example, Academic Higher Education Institutions and their Affiliates, Technological Institutions, Professional Bodies and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Providers) ⁸

⁷ In the first instance, the Director General will discuss with the Awarding Body to clarify the situation and try to gain agreement. If still there is no agreement, the matter is referred to the CEO of OAAAQA as responsible for the management of the OQF for guidance on appropriate action. If still there is no resolution, the final step is to refer the matter to the OAAAQA Board, responsible for the governance of the OQF, for a decision.

⁸ Adapted from <http://qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/#a>.

Foreign and International Qualifications: Foreign qualifications relate to qualifications awarded in a country other than Oman (for example, a United Kingdom Awarding Body). International qualifications relate to qualifications awarded by an International Awarding Body (for example, Cisco and Microsoft)

Listing [a qualification on the OQF]: An evaluation of an Omani qualification against the Listing Criteria and the OQF Level Descriptors to determine the OQF Level and the OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification

Major Change: A change that affects the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the qualification or impacts on the qualification meeting the Listing or Alignment Criteria and subsequently its placement on the National Register of Qualifications.

Module: A component of a qualification. Also known as course or unit by some Awarding Bodies.

National Register of Qualifications [NRQ]: An online official record of all nationally recognised qualifications Listed on, or Aligned to, the OQF. Managed by the DGNQF, the NRQ is available to stakeholders and the general public. Submission and evaluation of Listing and Alignment applications are carried out through the NRQ online system, allowing for secure storage and easy retrieval of documentation.

Oman Qualifications Framework [OQF]: An instrument to describe, compare and classify qualifications from all sectors of education and training in Oman. It is based on one set of generic Level Descriptors, which describe the expected outcomes at each of its ten levels. The OQF provides a reference point for qualifications delivered and awarded in Oman; the comparison between Omani qualifications and Foreign or International qualifications; and the Recognition of Prior Learning.

Placement [of a qualification on the NRQ]: The inclusion of a qualification on the National Register of Qualifications following the nine-stage Listing or Alignment process, which includes a Proposal, Recommendation, Verification and Approval of the OQF Level and OQF Credit Value of the qualification .

Re-Listing and Re-Alignment: A review process for Listed and Aligned qualifications to ensure that the Listing or Alignment Criteria were maintained throughout the delivery of the qualification and no major changes were made to the Learning Outcomes of the units, modules or courses that impacted on the OQF Level and/or OQF Credit Value of the entire qualification.

OQF Credit Value: The number of OQF Credit Points or OQF Credit Hours, which are allocated to units, modules, courses and qualifications for learning that is verified through reliable and valid assessment.

OQF Level: An indicator of relative demand, complexity, depth of knowledge and learner autonomy as described in the OQF Level Descriptors⁹.

⁹ Adapted from D Gosling and J Moon, *How to Use Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria* (London: Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer, SEEC Office, 2001).

7. References

OAAAQA (2023) OQF Document

OAAAQA (2023) OQF Manual

OAAAQA Policy on Major Change Notification

OQF Appeals Manual

8. Document History

Document History				
Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Circulation Date	Brief Description
1.0	29 August 2023	OAAAQA Board	-	This is the first version of the Policy on Major Change Notification for the Oman Qualifications Framework