Guidelines on Bosnia and Herzegovina Qualification Framework (BHQF)

Bosnia and Herzegovina Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (BHQF)

BHQF was adopted in 2011 by the Council of Ministers. BHQF comprises **eight reference levels**, matching the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Each level includes generic descriptors covering **knowledge, skills, and competences**, reflecting progressive complexity and autonomy.

BHQF is applicable to all qualifications—formal, non-formal, and informal. BHQF facilitates systematic development of occupational standards, qualifications, and lifelong learning pathways. It is overseen by the BH Ministry of Civil Affairs in close cooperation with sub-state authorities. Bosnia and Herzegovina participates in EQF and Bologna processes but has yet to complete referencing and self-certification stages. BHQF's implementation in higher education aligns with the **Dublin descriptors**—frames for bachelor/master/doctoral cycles—enhanced through EU/CoE-supported development of subject-specific qualification and occupational standards.

European Qualification Framework (EQF)

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for three cycles agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle. Table 1 below shows Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

TABLE 1. Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.	**Knowledge**	**Skills**	**Responsibility and autonomy**
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking), and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, material, tools and instruments).	In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility.

Level 6 (I Cycle) **The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are**	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialized field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7 (II Cycle) **The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are**	Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
Level 8 (III Cycle) The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Comparison of EQF and BHQF

The table 2. below provides a comparison between the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (BHQFHE).

Attribute	EQF (European Qualifications Framework)	BHQFHE (Bosnia & Herzegovina)
Structure and Levels	Eight reference levels covering all education and training types (Levels 1–8)	Eight levels aligned with EQF, covering general and higher education
Learning Outcomes Descriptors	Defined via Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibility & Autonomy – from basic factual knowledge at Level 1 to frontier, innovative knowledge and autonomy at Level 8	Mirrors EQF descriptors: statements of knowledge, skills, competence for each level; structured around learning outcomes
Higher Education Cycle Alignment	Level 5: Short cycle; Level 6: Bachelor's; Level 7: Master's; Level 8: Doctorate (PhD)	First cycle – Bachelor: 180–240 ECTS (up to 360 for integrated); Second cycle – Master: 60–120

		ECTS; Third cycle – Doctorate: 180 ECTS
ECTS Credit Guidelines	EQF itself does not specify ECTS, but Bologna-based QF-EHEA aligns: Short cycle: 90–120; Bachelor: 180–240; Master: 60–120; Doctorate: research-based	Explicitly uses ECTS credits: Bachelor: 180–240 (up to 360 for integrated); Master: additional 60–120; Doctorate: ~180
Governance & Implementation	Managed via Council Recommendation and supported by EQF Advisory Group; voluntary referencing by Member States	Baseline Framework adopted by Council of Ministers; implementation led by Ministry of Civil Affairs; governance structures evolving
Purpose & Use	Reference tool to compare qualifications across Europe; enhances transparency, employability, mobility, lifelong learning	Aligns with EU standards; promotes social inclusion; links qualifications to labor market needs; supports lifelong learning

Matrix Sample: Correspondence between BHQF and study program learning outcomes is shown on the next page.

Correspondence between BHQF and SP Learning Outcomes (First Cycle)

SP TITLE -:No contribution (~ very low), 1:Low level contribution, 2:Moderate contribution, 3:High level contribution.	**Knowledge**[1] -Theoretical -Factual	**Skills**[2] -Cognitive -Physical -Practical	**Competences**[3] -Autonomy -Responsibility
SP Learning Outcomes:	**Relationship Level**		
Identify, formulate and solve biological problems by using appropriate theoretical and experimental skills (including bioinformatics and laboratory work)	2	3	3
Identify, classify and describe the performance of biological systems and components through the use of analytical methods and modelling techniques	3	3	3
Identify constraints of engineering solutions including environmental, social and sustainability limitations, health and safety and risk assessment issues	2	1	1
Apply gained management experience in designing and running experiments and analyse obtained results	1	2	2
Apply knowledge and understanding to acquire practical skills for problem solving, for research tasks and the design of protocols and procedures	2	2	3
Develop an awareness of and commitment to the role of engineers in society including their professional and ethical responsibilities	1	3	3
Develop technical and professional skills for individual and team work including coordinating the team if necessary	1	2	3
Develop an area for creativity excellence through interactivity and participate in scientific events	3	3	2

[1] Level Descriptors: This person demonstrates knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education and which is typically at a level, whilst supported by appropriate learning resources (texts, information and communication technologies), which includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront in a given field of study.

[2] Level Descriptors: This person; **(i)** is able to apply acquired knowledge and critical understanding of the principles relating to the given field of study/discipline in a manner to demonstrate professional approach to their work or vocation, and has competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within a given field of study; **(ii)** is able to apply main methods of acquiring new knowledge and applicative research in a given discipline, and is able to decide on which approach to use in solving a given problem and is aware of the extent to which the selected approach is suitable for solving such a problem; **(iii)** is able to communicate in one or several foreign languages and by using communication technologies, information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences for given area of study.

[3] Level Descriptors **Professional competence**: This person **(i)** demonstrates ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within the given field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues.
Personal competence: This person **(i)** has developed learning skills to undertake further study, with a high degree of autonomy and academic skills and attributes necessary to undertake research work, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources; **(ii)** possesses a foundation for future self-directed and lifelong learning; **(iii)** has acquired interpersonal skills, teamwork skills adequate for employment and further study.