

## Benchmarking the Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Ecctis' independent benchmarking of the Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) has identified comparability to national qualification framework levels in the following six countries:

	UK	India	UAE	Oman	South Africa	Serbia
<b>Framework</b>	Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) / Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF)	National Qualifications Framework for the UAE (QF Emirates)	Oman National Qualifications Framework (OQF)	National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	National Qualifications Framework of Serbia (NQFS)
<b>Cambridge PDQ Certificate</b>	<b>4</b> Level 4 Certificate, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	<b>4.5</b> Undergraduate Certificate	<b>5</b> Associate degree, Diploma	<b>5</b> Certificate	<b>5</b> Higher Certificate	<b>5</b> Certificate of Specialised Exam, Master Craftsman Certificate
<b>Cambridge PDQ Diploma</b>	<b>5</b> Level 5 Diploma, Higher National Diploma (HND), Foundation degree, Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Higher National Diploma (HND)	<b>5</b> Undergraduate Diploma	<b>6</b> Higher Diploma, Advanced Diploma	<b>6</b> Diploma	<b>6</b> Diploma, Advanced Certificate in Education / National Professional Diploma in Education	<b>6.1</b> Diploma of Higher Education

## Context and scope

Cambridge International Education, the awarding body of the International Education Group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment, commissioned Ecctis to undertake an independent evaluation and benchmarking exercise in relation to the newly updated Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) in order to facilitate wider understanding and stakeholder recognition of the Cambridge PDQs. The exercise comprised of the following components:

- A benchmarking of the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and PDQ Diploma to national

qualifications frameworks in the UK, India, Oman, Serbia, South Africa and the UAE

- A mapping study of the Cambridge Teacher Standards to Teacher Standards in India, Serbia, South Africa, UAE and the UK
- A credit evaluation of the Cambridge PDQs to credit systems in India, Oman, UAE and the UK.

## Cambridge PDQs

Cambridge PDQs are delivered in Cambridge-approved professional development centres that can be Cambridge schools (for teachers in their own school or in the local area) or Cambridge Professional Development training providers (that run external programmes for teachers in the local

area). Candidates for the Cambridge PDQ Certificate and Diploma must be employed as a teacher in an educational institution.<sup>1</sup>

Cambridge PDQs cover six subject areas, which are available at Certificate and Diploma level:<sup>2</sup>

- Classroom Practice
- Teaching and Learning
- Educational Leadership
- Teaching Bilingual Learners
- Teaching with Digital Technologies
- Early Years Good Practice.

The PDQ Certificate comprises one module and the PDQ Diploma a further two modules after successful completion of the Certificate. The PDQ Diploma can also be taken independently of the PDQ Certificate, subject to eligibility. Modules in the PDQ Certificate are broken down further into individual units. Each module in the PDQ Certificate and Diploma programmes comprises at least 150 hours learning time undertaken over approximately four months.

The PDQ Certificate and Diploma are taught through workshops, seminars and tutorials (guided learning) and practical and work-based learning. Candidates are assessed through a portfolio of evidence of practice, learning and reflection.

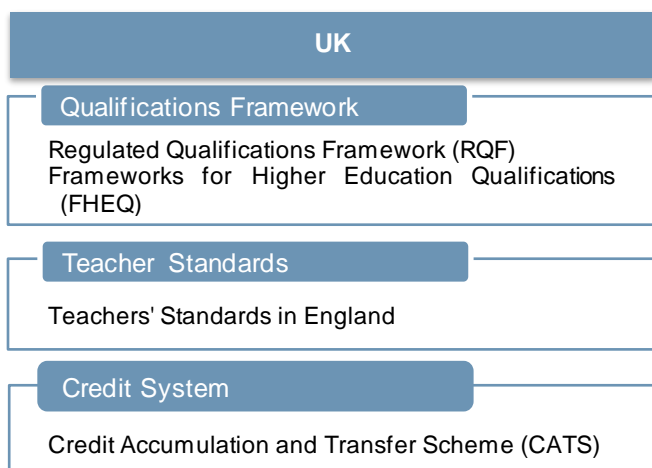
Cambridge PDQs may provide access to further study, with potential credit exemption dependent on institutional discretion.

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Certificate in Classroom Practice which does not require candidates to be teachers, but training to be a teacher.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the Certificate in Classroom Practice which is only available at Certificate level.

## Key findings



- Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils
- Understand how pupils learn and how this impacts teaching and learning
- Meet wider professional responsibilities and contribute to the life and ethos of school.

### Academic Comparability

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to FHEQ/RQF Level 4, with a clear requirement for the demonstration of practical, theoretical and technical knowledge and the application of this knowledge to complex but well-defined situations in a teaching context. A broad understanding of relevant concepts and principles, and their application to practice, and the ability to analyse, evaluate and interpret information were other key skills which aligned with Level 4 descriptors.

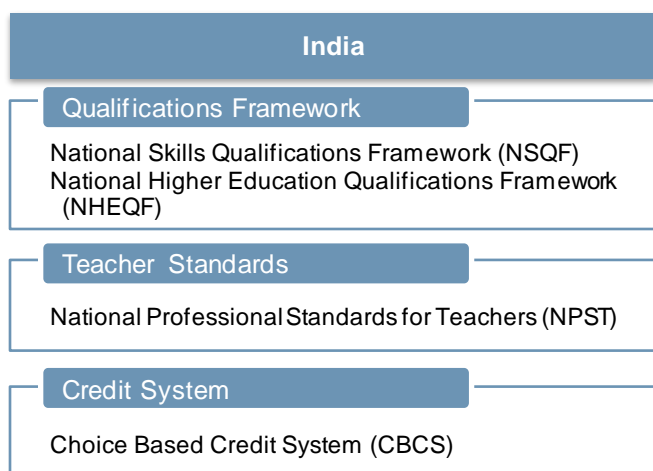
The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to FHEQ/RQF Level 5 with candidates expected to demonstrate more advanced conceptual and practical knowledge and an understanding of different perspectives, approaches and schools of thought, and applying those to a range of situations in a teaching context. In addition, at Level 5 candidates are expected to demonstrate more advanced conceptual and practical knowledge and an understanding of different perspectives, approaches and schools of thought, and applying those to a range of situations in a teaching context.

### Teacher standards

The Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect the majority of Teachers' Standards in England<sup>3</sup> with similarity in a number of areas including to:

- Have higher expectations for all pupils
- Establish a safe, stimulating and supportive classroom environment

<sup>3</sup> Department for Education, 2021. Teachers' Standards Guidance. [pdf] Published by: Department for Education. Available at: <[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61b73d6c8fa8f50384489c9a/Teachers\\_\\_Standards\\_Dec\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/61b73d6c8fa8f50384489c9a/Teachers__Standards_Dec_2021.pdf)>.



- Demonstrate classroom management techniques to accommodate diverse student needs.

### *Academic Comparability*

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to NHEQF Level 4.5, with a clear requirement to demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of relevant theories and concepts and the application of appropriate cognitive and technical skills in defined contexts. In addition, there was alignment in expectations of candidates to analyse and evaluate relevant information and apply this to generate solutions to specific problems in the field of learning.

The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to NHEQF Level 5 where there is an expectation to demonstrate a deeper theoretical and technical knowledge and apply a broader range of critical thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation of concepts and theories. In addition, alignment was found in the use of advanced cognitive and technical skills to find solutions to complex and/or unpredictable problems.

### *Teacher Standards*

The Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect a range of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)<sup>4</sup> with similarity in areas including to:

- Motivate, challenge and extend the learning of children
- Develop effective relationships with parents and the wider community
- Employ a range of pedagogical strategies to develop critical thinking skills
- Use reflective practice to modify practice

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education, 2023. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). [pdf] Published by: Ministry of Education. Available at: <<https://ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/NPST/NPST-Book.pdf>>.

## Oman

### Qualifications Framework

Oman National Qualifications Framework (OQF)

### Credit System

OQF Credit

### *Academic Comparability*

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to OQF Level 5, with a requirement to demonstrate a broad range of factual and procedural knowledge with some theoretical and conceptual knowledge. The application of this knowledge together with the requirement to demonstrate a broad range of cognitive and technical skills also aligned well with OQF Level 5.

The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to OQF Level 6. Candidates are expected to be responsible for their own learning and demonstrate an understanding and application of more specialist knowledge of teaching practice, which reflects descriptors at OQF Level 6 outlining the autonomous nature of the learner and a greater understanding of the scope and nature of the area of study or work.

## Serbia

### Qualifications Framework

National Qualifications Framework of Serbia (NQFS)

### Teacher Standards

Competence Standards for the Profession of Teachers and their Professional Development

### *Academic Comparability*

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to NQF Level 5, with candidates developing a professional knowledge base, and demonstrating the application of skills to a range of tasks, some of which may be complex. Identifying areas for further development in professional practice was another key area in which the PDQ Certificate aligned well with NQF Level 5 descriptors.

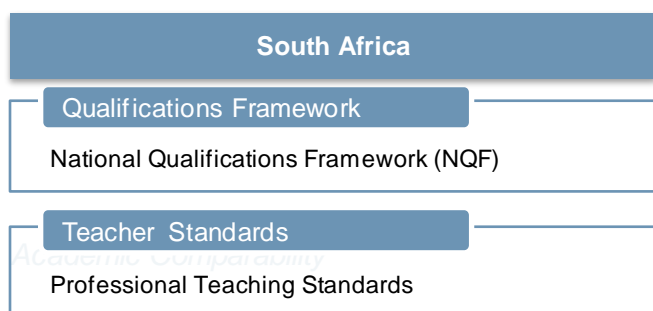
The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to NQF Level 6.1, where there is an expectation to be able to possess more advanced professional knowledge and critical understanding of the field and solve more complex problems. Furthermore, the requirement in the PDQ Diploma to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills is reflected at NQF Level 6.1 where analysis and evaluation of different concepts and theory of practice is expected.

### *Teacher standards*

The Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect a range of the 'Competence Standards for the Profession of Teachers and their Professional Development'<sup>5</sup> in Serbia, with similarity in areas including to:

- Collaborate with others to support teaching, learning and professional development
- Create well managed and safe learning environments
- Actively monitor and assess student learning
- Select appropriate teaching and learning strategies
- Engage in reflective practice and continuous professional development.

<sup>5</sup> Competence Standards for the Profession of Teachers and their Professional Development' (Serbian language), 2011. Available at: [http://www.cep.edu.rs/sites/default/files/Standardi\\_kompetencija\\_zaprofesiju\\_nastavnika.pdf](http://www.cep.edu.rs/sites/default/files/Standardi_kompetencija_zaprofesiju_nastavnika.pdf).



- Model the highest standards of ethical conduct in their interactions with the school community.

### *Academic Comparability*

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to NQF Level 5, with a focus on demonstrating an informed understanding of concepts, principles and theories and the ability to apply this knowledge within the field. Furthermore, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to apply basic processes to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information, and operate in a range of familiar and new contexts.

The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to NQF Level 6. Candidates are required to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the main areas of the discipline, and the ability to apply concepts, principles and theories to unfamiliar but relevant contexts within the field. Furthermore, alignment was found with NQF Level 6 where there is an expectation to be able to evaluate different sources of information and apply well-developed processes to analysing, synthesising and evaluating information.

### *Teacher standards*

The Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect a range of the 'Professional Teaching Standards'<sup>6</sup> in South Africa, with similarity in areas including to:

- Respect the diverse needs of learners and adapt teaching practice accordingly
- Engage with colleagues and the wider community to enhance teaching and learning
- Monitor and assess learning to inform next steps and generate constructive feedback

<sup>6</sup> South African Council for Educators, 2020. Professional Teaching Standards. [pdf] Published by: South African Council for Educators. Available at: <[https://www.sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace\\_31561-2020-10-12-Professional%20Teaching%20Standards%20Brochure.pdf](https://www.sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace_31561-2020-10-12-Professional%20Teaching%20Standards%20Brochure.pdf)>.

## UAE

### Qualifications Framework

National Qualifications Framework for the UAE (QF Emirates)

### Teacher Standards

Teacher Standards for the UAE

### *Academic Comparability*

The PDQ Certificate was found to be comparable to QF *Emirates* Level 5, through the development of broad knowledge of concepts and theories and their application to teaching practice within the programme. Furthermore, the development of evaluation and analysis skills involved in reflecting challenges in a teaching context were other key areas that aligned with Level 5 descriptors.

The PDQ Diploma was found to be comparable to QF *Emirates* Level 6 as the programme reflects the greater scope of knowledge and skills that are expected at Level 6, and alignment in areas related to critical thinking skills such as critical analysis and critical evaluation. Whilst the review found some areas of partial alignment to the QF *Emirates* Level 6 descriptors regarding supervisory or management requirements, and numeracy skills, these the PDQ Diploma demonstrates overall comparability to Level 6.

### *Teacher standards*

The Cambridge Teacher Standards reflect a range of the 'Teacher Standards for the UAE'<sup>7</sup>, with similarity in areas including to:

- Establish positive and productive relationships with students to support their learning and achievement
- Use a range of assessment strategies to inform next steps in the teaching and learning process
- Monitor progress and adjust teaching to ensure the progress of different groups of learners
- Demonstrate awareness and effective use of digital technologies
- Involve parents and carers in school life.

<sup>7</sup> National Qualifications Authority, n.d. Teacher Standards for the UAE. [pdf] Published by: National Qualifications Authority. Available at: <<https://tls.moe.gov.ae/Downloads/SNSC%20standards%20teachers%20English.pdf>>.



## Credit evaluation for Cambridge PDQs to international credit systems

The credit allocation for Cambridge PDQs in the context of national/international credit systems was informed by the recommended total learning hours for the PDQ Certificate and Diploma, which have been set as 150 and 300 hours respectively. The learning hours per credit in the comparator credit systems were used to calculate the credit allocation for the PDQ Diploma and Certificate.

The findings of the credit evaluation for Cambridge PDQs to the ECTS and credit systems in UK, India, Oman, and the UAE are as follows:

Country / Credit System	Certificate	Diploma
ECTS	5	10
UK (CATS)	15	30
India (CBCS)	6-7.5	12-15
Oman	15	30
UAE	10	20

## Methodology

Based on Ecctis' well established methodology for credential evaluation, this independent evaluation and benchmarking study comprised a review of the Cambridge PDQs in terms of:

- Entry requirements
- Duration
- Content and structure
- Modes of learning
- Learning outcomes
- Methods of assessment
- Associated outcomes.

A 2018 analysis of the Cambridge PDQ's focused on national qualification framework levels for upper secondary qualifications and above, with the report identifying that the Cambridge PDQ Certificate was comparable to RQF and FHEQ

Level 4 and the Cambridge PDQ Diploma comparable to RQF and FHEQ Level 5.

Therefore, the approach to the 2024 analysis also focused on framework levels for upper secondary education awards and above to the UK and other national qualification frameworks.

In particular, the Cambridge PDQ learning outcomes were compared against the level descriptors of national qualification frameworks. The comparative analysis was further supported by the Cambridge PDQ assessment criteria at 'Pass' level.

Quality assurance and control mechanisms and processes were also considered for the purposes of Ecctis determining comparability.

## Mapping the Cambridge Teacher Standards to the teacher standards in each country

A 'best fit' approach was used for the mapping process, that is based on identifying the best fit between the competencies rather than the direct equivalence; recognising the differences between the two systems including variations in the level of specificity and terminology that are used. For the mapping process, the principal source was the Cambridge Teacher Standards.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cambridge International Education, 2023. Cambridge Teacher Standards. [pdf] Published by: Cambridge University Press & Assessment. Available at: <<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/466465-cambridge-teacher-standards.pdf>>.