



Colombia No. 1 (2017)

# Agreement

on the Mutual Recognition of Degrees between the United Kingdom of  
Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Colombia

London, 2 November 2016

[The Agreement is not in force]

*Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs  
by Command of Her Majesty  
October 2017*



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ISBN 978-1-5286-0059-0

CCS1017151046                      10/17

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by the APS Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

**AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DEGREES  
BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND  
NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA**

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Colombia, hereinafter referred to as “the Parties”,

Bearing in mind the provisions of the Cultural Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Colombia, signed in London on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1979,

With the purpose of strengthening ties between the two countries, cooperating in the education sector, and promoting bilateral academic mobility,

In order to establish efficient mechanisms of mutual recognition of degrees granted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Colombia,

**HAVE AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

ARTICLE 1

**Scope of the agreement**

1. The purpose of this Agreement is to facilitate the mutual recognition of the degrees referred to in Articles 1.3 and 1.4, based on the principle of reciprocity.
2. Each Party shall keep Designated Contact Points for the timely issue of official statements of comparability of degrees awarded by the other Party’s higher education institutions referred to in Articles 1.3 and 1.4.
3. In the case of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland the degrees included in this agreement are Bachelor (Honours) degrees, Master’s degrees and Doctoral degrees awarded by higher education institutions listed in the Education (Recognised Bodies) (England) Order 2013 (including any institutions listed in this Order, as it is amended or replaced from time to time), and those educational institutions for which the former Council for National Academic Awards was the degree-awarding body from 1964 to 1993.
4. In the case of the Republic of Colombia the degrees included in this agreement are the *Profesional Universitario* (degree certificates will read “*Título de [Profession]*”, “*Profesional en [Subject area]*” or “*Maestro en [Arts subject]*”), “*Magister / Maestría*” and the “*Doctor/a*” degrees, which have *registro calificado* (qualified registration status) and are granted by higher education institutions that are officially recognised by the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (Ministry of Education).

5. For the purpose of this agreement, this recognition must coincide with the registration date of the corresponding degree or institution on the relevant listings for each country.

6. The process for the recognition of degrees will be conducted on the basis of the regulations in force in each country, and according to the processes and criteria described in Annex 3 and Annex 4 of the present Agreement.

7. For degrees in fields where additional requirements exist for recognition in Colombia (listed in Annex 1), and other degrees that do not comply with the requirements outlined in Article 1.3 and 1.4, the procedure currently in effect in each country will continue to apply

8. For the recognition of partial or incomplete studies, decisions regarding recognition and credit transfer will be exclusively at the discretion of the admitting higher education institutions according to the regulations in force.

## ARTICLE 2

### **Government bodies responsible for the implementation of the Agreement and Designated Contact Points**

1. The Colombian *Ministerio de Educación Nacional* (Ministry of Education) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on its own behalf and on behalf of the Devolved Administrations, are the Designated Government Departments which shall decide on guidelines, adjustments and solution mechanisms related to this Agreement.

2. The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Colombia and the UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are the Designated Contact Points for the purposes of this Agreement. They will assist graduates whose degrees fall within the scope of Articles 1.3 and 1.4 of this Agreement, and they will be the official agencies for the application of and advice related to this Agreement.

3. In the event that the organisations referenced in Articles 2.1 and 2.2 undergo a change of name or responsibility or are abolished, this Agreement will continue to be valid, and the obligations of the agreement will continue to be upheld by the entity or body that each government defines for this purpose.

## ARTICLE 3

### Effects of the Agreement

1. The present Agreement will have exclusively academic purposes in accordance with the current legislation in each of the countries. The effects of the Agreement will be as follows:

2. Effects of Academic Recognition

2.1. The present Article lists the degrees eligible for mutual recognition, as indicated in Article 1.

2.2. Annex 1 and Annex 2 describe the higher education systems in both countries (including their degree structures, progression routes, accreditation and quality assurance systems), in order to provide the context to the following statements of comparability:

- a) The degree of “*Título de [Profession]*” / “*Profesional en [Subject area]*”, / “*Maestro en [Arts subject]*” awarded in the Republic of Colombia that complies with Article 1.4 is considered comparable to the Bachelor (Honours) degree awarded by a Recognised Body in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- b) The degree of *Magíster / Maestría* awarded in the Republic of Colombia that complies with Article 1.4 is considered comparable to the Master’s degree awarded by a Recognised Body in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- c) The degree of *Doctor/a* awarded in the Republic of Colombia that complies with Article 1.4 is considered comparable to the Doctoral degree awarded by a Recognised Body in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

2.3 For the recognition of degrees awarded prior to the existence of the current quality assurance systems, the procedure currently in effect in each country shall apply. For Colombian degrees the starting date is 28<sup>th</sup> December 1992, when the current Colombian Higher Education Law came into force. In the case of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the starting date of the quality assurance system corresponds to authorisation by Royal Charter or Act of Parliament given to the Recognised Bodies to award degrees, as set out in Article 1.3 of this Agreement. For degrees awarded by the former Council for National Academic Awards the starting date is September 1964.

### 3. Mechanisms for Professional Recognition

- 3.1 For degrees associated to the exercise of regulated professions in the country in which the degree is presented, it will also be necessary to fulfil the requirements imposed by the current legal provisions in each State on graduates from their own higher education institutions. Access to the exercise of regulated professions will be the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities.
- 3.2. In order to facilitate professional recognition in both countries, the Designated Contact Points for professional qualifications have been listed in the following clauses.
- 3.3 The entities or professional councils listed in Annex 1.4 are the Designated Contact Points for professional qualifications in the Republic of Colombia
- 3.4 The UK NARIC Centre for Professional Qualifications is the Designated Contact Point for professional qualifications in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

#### ARTICLE 4

##### **Information update or rectification**

To address any possible adjustments that may be implemented within the educational systems of the two countries, the Annexes are an integral part of this Agreement and can be reviewed and updated when one of the two Designated Contact Points deems it necessary by prior notification, with the exception of Annex 3 and Annex 4, which can only be modified by mutual agreement.

#### ARTICLE 5

##### **Settlement of Disputes**

In the event of any dispute regarding the interpretation or application of the present Agreement, this will be resolved by direct negotiation between the Designated Contact Points referred to in Article 2.

## ARTICLE 6

### **Coming into Force and Revision**

1. The Parties shall notify each other through diplomatic notes on the completion of the internal legal requirements necessary for the coming into force of this Agreement, which shall come into force 90 (ninety) days after the receipt of the last of the notices served by the Parties to that effect.
2. This Agreement may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties, executed through written communications. Such amendments shall come into force in accordance with the procedure set forth in the preceding clause.
3. There shall be a periodic process of review through the Designated Contact Points to further clarify the application of the terms of this Agreement, based upon the experiences of all stakeholders involved in the recognition process.

## ARTICLE 7

### **Term of the Agreement**

This Agreement shall have an indefinite term, but may be terminated by either Party by giving notice to the other, through a diplomatic note. This Agreement shall cease to be in force one year after the date of receipt of such notice.

Signed in duplicate in London, on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, in English and Spanish, both texts being equally authentic.

**For the United Kingdom of Great  
Britain and Northern Ireland:**

**For the Republic of Colombia:**

**JOSEPH EDMUND JOHNSON**

**MARÍA ÁNGELA HOLGUÍN  
CUÉLLAR**

**Minister of State for Universities,  
Science, Research and Innovation**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**ANNEXES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DEGREES**  
**BETWEEN**  
**THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA**  
**AND**  
**THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

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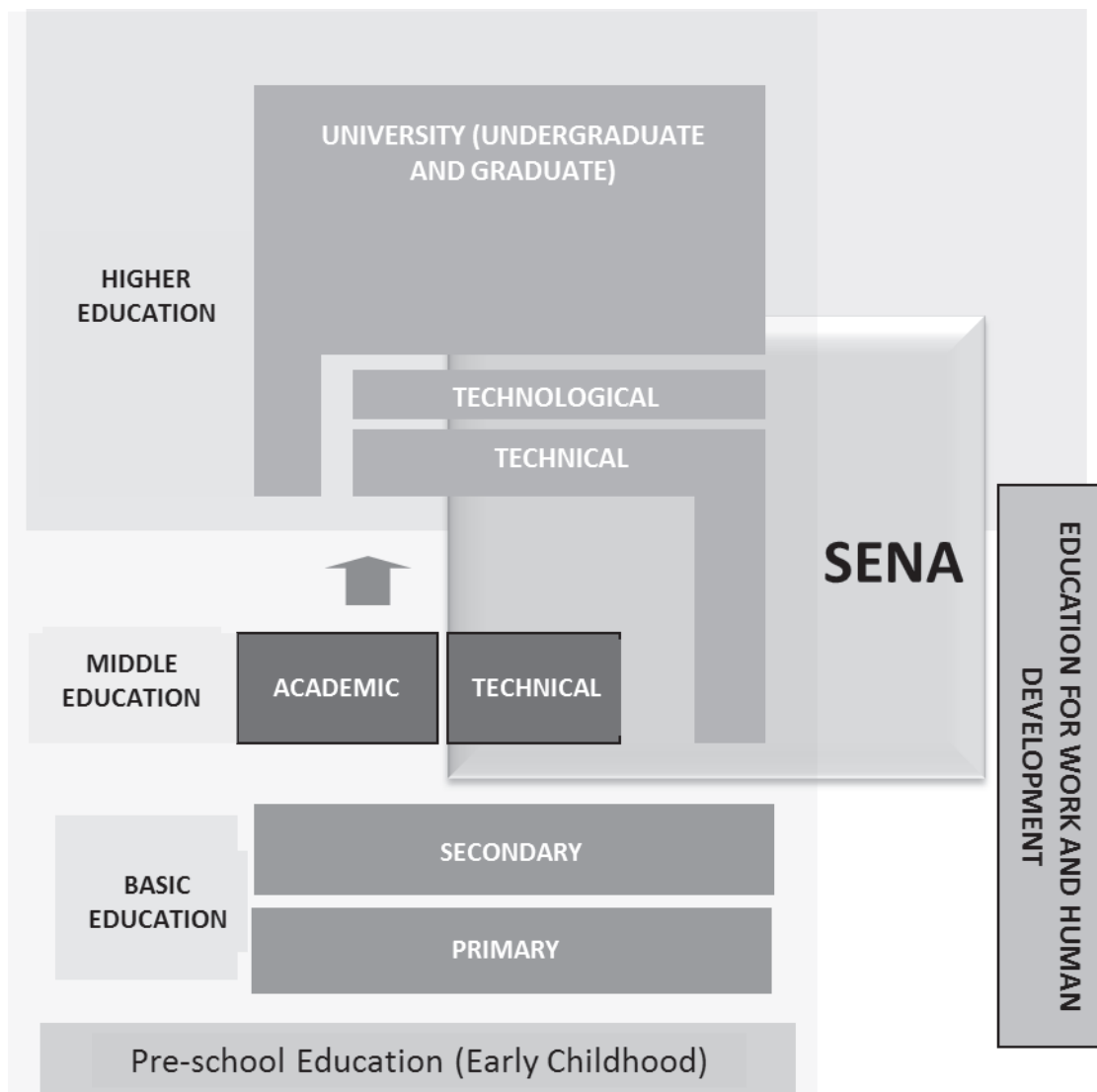
## ANNEX 1

### 1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN COLOMBIA.

In Colombia, education is defined as a process of permanent personal, cultural, and social training founded on an integral conception of the human person, his/her dignity, rights and duties.

The Colombian educational system is made up of, early childhood education, pre-school education, basic education (five levels of primary, and four levels of secondary), middle education (two levels leading to a high school degree), and higher education.

#### Structure of the Colombian Educational System



## Regulatory Framework

Political Constitution of Colombia
Law 30 of 1992
Law 115 of 1994
Law 749 of 2002
Law 1188 of 2008
Law 1324 of 2009
Law 1740 of 2014
<b>Decree 1075 of 2015. Unique regulatory Education Decree</b>

In Colombia, higher education is regulated by Law 30 of 1992, which, in Article 6 of Chapter 2, highlights the following goals for higher education and its institutions:

- a. To strengthen the comprehensive training of Colombians within the modalities and qualities of higher education, training them to fulfil the professional, research, and social service tasks required by the country.
- b. To work towards the creation, development, and transfer of knowledge in all its forms and expressions, and promote its use in all areas to help meet the country's needs.
- c. To provide the community with a quality service in terms of academic results, the means and processes employed, the institutional infrastructure, its qualitative and quantitative dimensions, and the conditions among which each institution develops.
- d. To be a factor of scientific, cultural, economic, political and ethical development at a national and regional level.
- e. To act harmoniously among each other and with other education and training structures.
- f. To contribute to the development of the educational levels that precede it in order to help achieve their corresponding goals.
- g. To promote national unity, decentralisation, regional integration and interinstitutional cooperation allowing the country's different regions to have the human resources and technologies required to successfully attend to their needs.
- h. Promote the formation and consolidation of academic communities, and their articulation with their equivalents at an international level.
- i. Promote the conservation of a healthy environment and ecological culture and education.
- j. Maintain and promote the country's cultural heritage.

Law 30 Article 7 defines technical and technological education, humanities, art and philosophy as the spheres of action relative to higher education, and it classifies higher education programmes as follows:

### Undergraduate

- a. Undergraduate programmes that prepare students for future occupations and jobs.
- b. Undergraduate programmes for the exercise of a specific profession or discipline, which can be technical or scientific or in the areas of humanities, arts and philosophy.
- c. Multidisciplinary undergraduate programmes also known as studies in the liberal arts, understood as general studies in the sciences, arts, or humanities, with an emphasis on some of the disciplines that are part of these areas.

### Graduate:

- a. *Specializations*: These are undertaken following an undergraduate programme and they allow students to perfect their skills for their occupation, profession, discipline or related or complementary areas.
- b. *Master's degrees*: The purpose of these programmes is to broaden and develop students' knowledge in order to solve disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and professional problems and to provide them with the basic instruments necessary to carry out research in specific areas of science or technology, or that allow them to strengthen their theoretical and conceptual knowledge in the field of philosophy, humanities and arts. At this level, students' work culminates in a research project.
- c. *Doctoral degrees*: These focus on training researchers at an advanced level based on their disposition, skills, and knowledge acquired in previous levels of training. Doctoral degrees culminate in a thesis.

### **Requirements to access higher education**

To access undergraduate level higher education in Colombia, candidates will need a high school degree that certifies that they completed middle education (grades ten and eleven) and the ICFES state exam, or its equivalent in other countries, as well as the requirements established by each higher education institution.

In Colombia, undergraduate degrees fall into three levels: Technical Professional, Technological, and University Professional. The system allows students to pass to the Technical Professional level after having completed ninth grade in educational institutions whose academic curriculum is articulated to that of higher education structures.

To access a graduate level (specialization, master's and doctoral degrees) in Colombian higher education structures, students have to have completed their undergraduate studies and have obtained the corresponding degree. The institution offering the programme will determine the degree required for this end.

## Higher Education Institutions

These types of Colombian education institutions were designed to reflect the three levels mentioned above: technical, technological, and professional. Professional degrees include master's and doctoral degrees, and can be run in disciplines related to the technical and technological fields as well as other academic areas. There is an additional graduate level degree in the technological field known as specialization.

There are four types of higher education institutions in Colombia:

- 1. Universities:** These offer undergraduate and graduate academic programmes leading to master's and doctoral degrees, and take part in scientific and technological research.
- 2. University Institutions:** These offer undergraduate programmes to bachelor degree level and a type of graduate programme known as a "specialization" (a career-related qualification, higher than undergraduate level, but lower than a master's degree).
- 3. Technological Institutions:** These offer programmes up to technological level (these are different from the technical professional level in that the latter has a scientific basis), and can go on to a professional level as long as the programmes are implemented as propaedeutic cycles. In the Colombian context, this means that students can complete their professional degree first with a technical qualification followed by a technological one progressively contributing greater and better knowledge in the same area.
- 4. Professional technical institutions:** These offer undergraduate programmes at technical/professional level for specific occupations or careers.

Type	Public	Private	Special regime	Total
Universities	31	50	1	82
University Institutions/Technological Schools	16	92	12	120
Technological Institutions	6	39	6	51
Professional Technical Institutions	9	26		35
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>288</b>

Source: SNIES-2015

## Degrees (Law 30 of 1992. Chapter V, Articles 24 to 26)

A degree is an academic recognition, granted to a natural person upon culminating a programme, for having acquired a specific knowledge in a higher education institution.

A diploma will be granted to the student as proof of such recognition. Diplomas and certificates may only be granted by higher education institutions, as stipulated in Law 30 of 1992.

- i. According to their field of action, upon culmination of their studies, students on academic programmes offered by Technical Professional Institutions are awarded a degree in a specific occupation or corresponding area. The degree certificate will read: "**Técnico Profesional en [subject area]**"
- ii. Students culminating programmes offered by university institutions, technological schools or universities are awarded a degree in a specific occupation. The degree certificate will read: **Técnico Profesional en [subject area]**".
- iii. When these degrees refer to academic professions or disciplines, the degree certificate will read: "**Profesional en [subject area]**" or "**Tecnólogo en [subject area]**". For undergraduate programmes in Arts, students will be awarded the title of "**Maestro en [subject area]**".
- iv. For specialization programmes, students will be awarded the title of "**Especialista en...**" followed by the respective related occupation, profession, discipline or area.
- v. Students culminating a master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral programme will be awarded a degree title of Master, Doctor, or the respective post-doctoral degree, which must refer to the respective discipline or an interdisciplinary area of knowledge.
- vi. Students culminating an undergraduate programme in Education will obtain a degree title of "**Licenciado en [subject area]**".

#### **State Exams (Law 30 of 1992. Chapter V, Article 27)**

Official academic tests aimed at:

- a) Checking the minimum levels of skills and knowledge.
- b) Verifying knowledge and skills for the issuance of titles to graduates of programmes, which do not have a valid approval status.
- c) Issue certification on the approval or not of courses undertaken in institutions in dissolution whose juridical personality has been suspended or cancelled.
- d) Validating higher education studies undertaken in foreign institutions, when pertinent according to the *Consejo Nacional para la Educación Superior – CESU* (National Higher Education Council).

#### **Colombia - UK Education Relations**

Between 2012 and 2015 a total of 217 British students followed higher education programmes in Colombia<sup>1</sup>.

BRITISH STUDENTS IN 2012-2015							
2012		2013		2014		2015	
SEMESTER I	SEMESTER II	SEMESTER I	SEMESTER II	SEMESTER I	SEMESTER II	SEMESTER I	SEMESTER II
17	21	23	24	32	34	35	31

**Source:** Ministerio de Educación Nacional (The Colombian Ministry of Education). Sistema Nacional de Información de Educación Superior (Colombian System for Higher Education Information). September 2016.

Besides the 217 British students who have followed higher education programmes in Colombia (mentioned in the introduction to this document), between January 2012 and October 2016, the Ministry of Education received a total of 219 requests for higher education degree recognitions from UK institutions, of which 215 have been approved and 4 denied.

Of the 215 approved requests, 21 are degrees granted by the University of London, followed by 18 granted by the London School of Economics and Political Science, and 16 by the University of Wales (Institute in Cardiff).

UNIVERSITIES FROM HIGHER TO LOWER NUMBER OF REQUESTS	
University Of London	21
London School Of Economics And Political Science	18
University Of Wales Institute Cardiff	16
The London School Of Economics and Political Science	14
The University Of Sussex	11
The University Of Manchester	10
University Of Wales Institute Cardiff	9
University College London	7
The University Of Birmingham	6
The University Of Sheffield	6

<sup>1</sup> No consolidated information is as yet available for 2016.

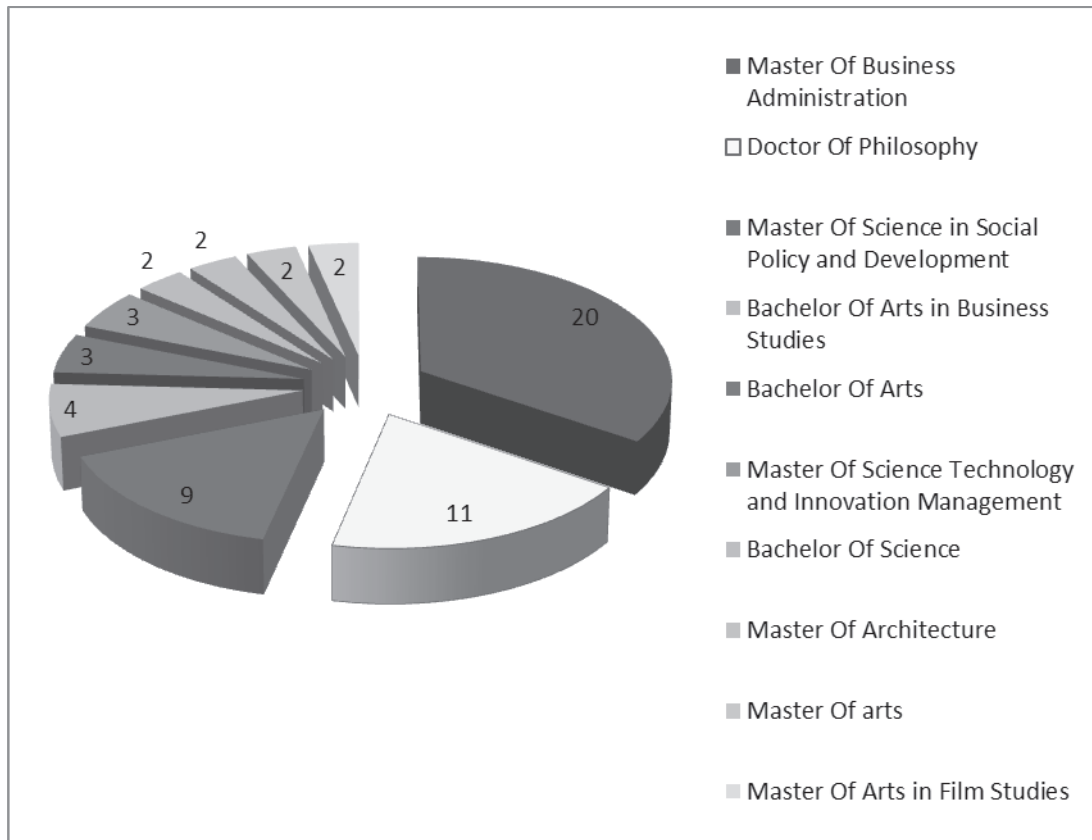
**Source:** Ministerio de Educación Nacional (The Colombian Ministry of Education). Subdirección de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (Sub directorate for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). September 2016.

In terms of educational level, most recognition requests correspond to master's degrees (160 in the 2012-2016 period), followed by 55 university degrees recognition requests.

<b>RECOGNITIONS PER ACADEMIC LEVEL</b>						
<b>Academic level</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Sept. 2016</b>	
Doctoral degrees	2	1	4	3	5	
Master's degrees	16	28	37	35	44	
Specialization	0	1	3	0	1	
University Education	6	3	14	8	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>	
						<b>215</b>

**Source:** Ministerio de Educación Nacional (The Colombian Ministry of Education). Subdirección de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (Sub directorate for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). September 2016.

The three main categories with the greatest demand for recognition are Business Management (20), Doctorates in Philosophy (11), and Master's degrees in Social Policy and Development (9).



**Source:** Ministerio de Educación Nacional (The Colombian Ministry of Education). Subdirección de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior (Sub directorate for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). September 2016.

**In the perspective of the construction and implementation of the Sistema Nacional de Educación Terciaria - SNET (Colombian System of Tertiary Education)**

For many years, the country has been facing challenges in terms of education, particularly in post-middle education:

- Disarticulation
- Lack of vocational and/or socio-occupational orientation
- A lack of pathways to post-middle education
- Lack of relevance
- Low appreciation of lifelong learning
- Lack of a comprehensive quality assurance system
- Low social, cultural and economic recognition of technical and technological education, and education for work and human development

Furthermore, the country presents a gap between education and the labour market. Businesses and employers from different sectors repeatedly express a need for qualified human capital to meet the country’s social and productive needs and expectations.

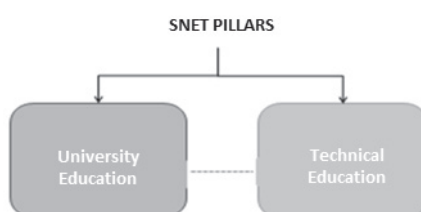


Faced with this situation and considering the following national and international recommendations:

- Acuerdo por lo Superior 2034 (Agreement for the Superior 2034)
- UNESCO
- OECD
- CONPES 3674 of 2010

And according to that which is stipulated in Article 58 of the National Development Plan 2014 - 2018 “Todos por un nuevo País”, the Ministry of Education has been building a pathway to a more inclusive, equal, and competitive country: the *Sistema Nacional de Educación Terciaria* - SNET (Colombian System of Tertiary Education).

The SNET is conceived as the organisation and recognition of the post-middle educational offer, based on two pillars: **technical and university education**, which allows us to map routes through each pillar and through different levels of specialisation, and the connections between them and the previous levels of tertiary education.



These two pillar complement and recognise each other. They do not compete with each other nor is one subordinate to the other. Students have the possibility to transit between the two and they are mutually recognisable.

University education includes programmes within the scientific disciplines, exact, natural and social, technological, humanistic, and artistic disciplines, which can be basic and applied.

Technical education includes an educational offer that involves training with a highly practical component aimed at specific occupations in the labour market.

The two pillars have the following in common:

- A theoretical-scientific foundation component and another practical-applied component, which articulate knowledge and practice
- The development of competencies in students
- The achievement of qualifications

And they differ in:

- The scope or focus of the qualifications to be developed
- The nature and complexity of the problems to be solved
- The type of knowledge and research developed

The SNET involves educational institutions in the recognition of other ways of learning, the modernisation of their regulations, a single quality system differentiated for each pillar, and an institutionality that allows a pertinent connection between the educational offer and the social and labour demands, with a perspective of international comparability and mobility.

The system configures new relationships between the different components of the educational system and social system in general with a view to strengthen human capital in order to increase the country's levels of inclusion, equity, competitiveness and productivity.

The system is expected to dignify people's social and economic conditions through the recognition of learnings, by providing greater opportunities of access to education and training processes, fostering clearer and appropriate information for better decision-making in terms of education and work.

The system also contemplates the strengthening of the relationship between the educational and productive sectors, consolidating design and innovation and structuring qualifications as a basis to improve human capital.

The main SNET goals are as follows:

- i) Offer and facilitate educational options that are differentiated according to regional and national needs and interests.
- ii) Design and implement training processes from the perspective of a joint construction between the educational and productive sectors.
- iii) Facilitate pathways and alternatives for permanent, quality and pertinent updating.
- iv) Guarantee mobility through the recognition of learnings.

The SNET articulates with the Marco Nacional de Cualificaciones MNC (Colombian Qualifications Network), which classifies qualifications into levels of complexity, which can be obtained and certified by students.

The SNET is also working on articulating with the *Sistema Nacional de Calidad de la Educación Terciaria - SISNACET* (the Colombian Tertiary Education Quality Assurance System) and with the *Sistema Nacional de Acumulación y Transferencia de Créditos - SNATC* (Colombian System for the Accumulation and Transfer of Credits).

All information concerning the SNET policy guidelines can be found in the document presented by the Minister for Education, Gina Parody, on the 31st of May 2016 (available at: <http://aprende.colombiaaprende.edu.co/snet>).

## **1.2 DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES IN COLOMBIA.**

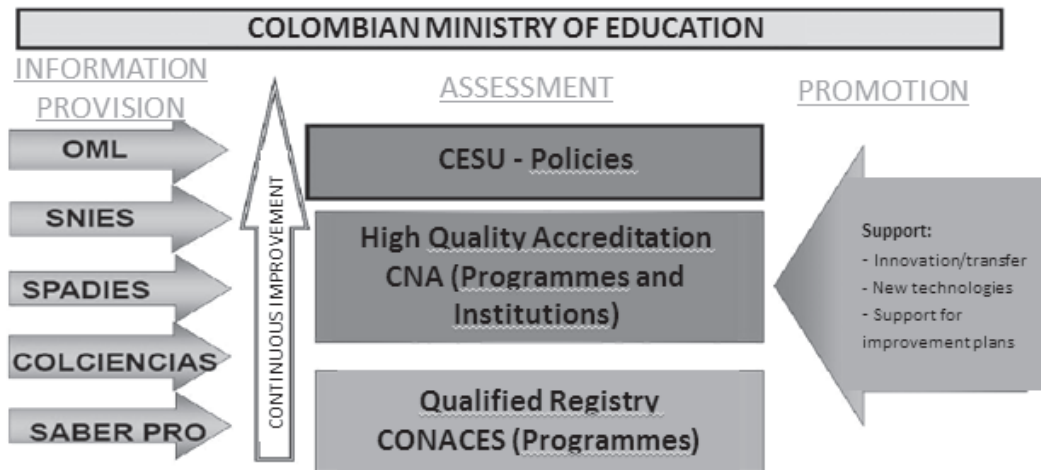
The current quality assurance system is based on two processes subsequent to the granting of legal recognition to an institution: the obtainment of **qualified registry** (*registro calificado*), which allows the educational offer to be implemented, and **accreditation**, which consists of the recognition of strict quality conditions. Advisory and assessment bodies intervene in these two levels of quality assurance. These include the *Comisión Intersectorial para el Aseguramiento de la Educación Superior – CONACES* (Intersectorial

Commission for Higher Education Quality Assurance) and the *Consejo Nacional de Accreditation* – CNA (National Accreditation Council), both advisory bodies of the Ministry of Education - MoE. Based on the recommendations of both, it is the MoE, which through an administrative act formalizes the final decision regarding the **Qualified Registry for programmes or High Quality Accreditation** for institutions and programmes. Similarly, the *Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior* – CESU, (National Council for Higher Education), as a government body linked to the MoE undertakes the tasks of coordinating, planning, and advising.

CONACES, created through Decree 2230 of 2003 and reorganized through Resolution 16460 of 2015, is made up of three groups. One General Chamber, integrated by the Colombian Minister of Education and the Director of the *Departamento Administrativo de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación* – COLCIENCIAS (Department of Science, Technology and Innovation); the Evaluation Chambers, integrated by academic experts divided according to their areas of knowledge or fields of action in higher education, who participate in the assessment process and present the recommendations on the conditions for the granting and renewal of the qualified registry (there are currently 10 assessment chambers); and the Coordinators' Chamber integrated by a coordinator from each of the Evaluation Chambers as designated by the MoE.

On the other hand, the CNA, created through Law 30 of 1992, is made up by 7 active academics from different institutions. These representative members are designated by the *Consejo Nacional de Educación Superior* – CESU (National Higher Education Council), which also defines the regulation, the functions, and the integration of the CNA. Agreement No. 04 of 2010, which modified Agreement No. 02 of 2005 establishes the requisites for the selection of CNA members.

Both CONACES and CNA, have a database of academic peers, selected based on their experience and recognition in their areas of knowledge, who are in charge of the external assessments required for the processes of the two assessing bodies, with the criteria corresponding to their respective processes.



Source: MoE-2015

### Creation of the Higher Education Institutions – Recognition of the Legal Entity

Colombian law differentiates between the procedures that need to take effect to create a higher education institution - HEI, according to their nature (whether it is private or public). For public higher education institutions, their creation corresponds to the *Congreso Nacional* (National Congress), the *Asambleas Departamentales* (Departmental Assemblies), the *Consejos Distritales* (District Councils), or the *Consejos Municipales* (Municipal Councils), depending on each case. The corresponding legislative acts through which these institutions are created must be accompanied by a socioeconomic feasibility study, which must be approved by the MoE, on the issue of a favourable concept by the CESU (Law 30 of 1992, Art. 58). Law 30 also establishes that for private institutions, recognition and cancellation of the legal entity of private higher education institutions corresponds only to the MoE, on the issue of a favourable concept by the CESU (Art. 95). In practice, these processes are very similar and the assessment of the corresponding studies is the responsibility of the MoE, with support from the CONACES Institutional Procedures Chamber. It is important to point out that a different process is required for each type of HEI: Private institutions are subject to the recognition of legal entity, whereas public ones have to have an approved socioeconomic feasibility study.

Given the number of elements to be assessed, the HEI creation process can be lengthy and is aimed at verifying the fulfilment of all the requirements of the current legislation. In particular, this procedure reviews the financial conditions, physical plant, internal regulation conditions, among others. Most of the academic assessment is carried out by verifying the conditions of the Qualified Registry of the programmes that the institution will offer in its initial stages.

### Qualified Registry (*Registro Calificado*)

The first step to offering a programme consists in the institution obtaining qualified registry. Once the institution is recognized and registered by the MoE, every programme that it intends to be made available to the public must complete the procedures to obtain qualified registry. The evaluation of the institutions and programmes' quality conditions that lead to their qualified registry is the responsibility of CONACES, which, since its creation in 2003, was conceived as an obligatory process. The assessment consists in the verification of 15 conditions which are divided into 9 programme quality conditions, and 6 institutional quality conditions. In some cases, specific characteristics are assessed. These are defined by the MoE subject to that which is established in the current legal provisions. The Qualified Registry has to be renewed every 7 years.

According to the guidelines for the request, granting and renewal of the qualified registry from the MoE (2013), in order to verify the initial conditions, the following aspects are considered:

1. The existence of constitutional and political documents such as statutes and the *Proyecto Educativo Institucional* (Institutional Educational Project), the regulations, and procedures to implement the policies in the daily workings of the HEI.
2. The existence of specific plans and programmes that deal with budget and financing, university well-being, work with alumni, a culture of self-assessment that the HEI has been developing, its academic and administrative structure, and selection and assessment of teachers and students.

The link below lists all the programs offered by the Colombian Educational Institutions that have their respective qualified registry and can therefore be offered:

<http://snies.mineducacion.gov.co/consultasnies/programa>

### High Quality Accreditation

High quality accreditation was established by Law 30 of 1992 as a voluntary process for higher education institutions which is the responsibility of the *Consejo Nacional de Accreditation* CNA (National Accreditation Council). This Council highlights that the accreditation of undergraduate programmes "is an opportunity to compare the training which is being imparted with that which is recognized as desirable in relation to the nature and characteristics of the area of knowledge. It is also an instrument to promote and recognize the dynamic of quality improvement and to establish institutional and programme development goals" (CNA, 2016). The assessment process is based on 8 quality factors related to the 15 quality conditions for the qualified registry, which are also associated with higher quality standards.

The assessment leading to accreditation involves three phases:

1. Self-assessment: Every institution or academic programme carries out a study based on the tools consolidated by the CNA as guides and indicators. The final report delivered by the institutions consists in the identification of the strengths and weaknesses, the corrective measures taken, or proposals for improvement.
2. External or peer evaluation: The CNA designates academic peers to evaluate the institution or programme, based on the self-assessment report delivered. The peer report consists in the validation of the information delivered in the self-assessment and on what the peers find on their visit and analysis.
3. Final evaluation: The CNA is in charge of this and its evaluation is based on the two reports and their reactions to them. The CNA's technical concept includes the issuing of its final notion, recommendations and accreditation time-span (between 4 and 10 years). Once issued, the concept is transferred to the Ministry. If the MoE decides to accept the recommendation for accreditation, it issues an accreditation resolution, in which it defines the time for which the accreditation is granted.

The programmes that obtain voluntary accreditation may be offered in any part of the country without requiring a verification process prior to the granting of qualified registry. When an institution uses this prerogative, both the accredited programme and its extensions are subject to assessment for the renewal of the accreditation (Decree 1075 de 2015, Art. 2.5.3.2.3.2.).

The CNA link below presents the lists of both the higher education institutions and programmes with high quality accreditation: <http://www.cna.gov.co/1741/article-186367.html>

### Information systems

The *Sistema de Aseguramiento de Calidad* – SAC (Quality Assurance System) is supported by different information systems that support the *Registro Nacional de Educación* – RENE (National Educational Registry). In particular, the SAC supports the *Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior* – SNIES (National Higher Education Information System) (which, in turn, includes information from the *Sistema de Información para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad* – SACES and SACES-CNA, the *Sistema de Información de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de Educación para el Trabajo* – SIACET (Education for Work Quality Assurance Information System), the *Observatorio Laboral para la Educación* – OLE (Labour Observatory for Education), the *Sistema de Prevención y Análisis de la Deserción en las Instituciones de Educación Superior* – SPADIES (System for the Prevention and Analysis of Desertion in Higher Education Institutions), among others) as an instrument of transparency for Colombian society that provides reliable information on the quality of higher education in the country.

A number of the SAC processes are supported by the *Modelo de Indicadores del Desempeño de la Educación* – MIDE (Education Performance Indicators Model), as a supporting mechanism for the analysis of the performance of higher education institutions. This model associates a group of variables with quantitative indicators considered central



aspects of quality.

Below is a list of the main information systems that are part of the quality assurance system for higher education in Colombia:

**SNIES** - *Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior* (National Higher Education Information System). The purpose of this system is to consolidate and disseminate information to guide the community in terms of quality, quantity and characteristics of the system's institutions and programmes.

**SPADIES** – *Sistema de Prevención y Análisis de la Deserción en las Instituciones de Educación Superior* (System for the Prevention and Analysis of Desertion in Higher Education Institutions). This system is used to monitor the desertion rates of higher education students.

**SACES and SACES-CNA** – *Sistema de Información para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad* (Information System for Quality Assurance). This system was created for higher education institutions to carry out the necessary procedures for qualified registry and other institutional procedures.

**OLE** - *Observatorio Laboral para la Educación* (Labour Observatory for Education). Provides strategic statistical information on the employment situation of higher education graduates to those interested and those involved in the sector (candidates, parents, professionals, tertiary education institutions, the productive sector and society in general).

**ICFES** - *Instituto Colombiano de Fomento a la Educación Superior: Sistema de evaluación de la Educación Superior - Saber Pro* (Colombian Institute for the Promotion of Higher Education: higher education evaluation system). This system allows interested parties to look up the results of the higher education quality exams applied by ICFES to students that finalise their academic programmes.

*Sistema de evaluación de la educación básica y media - Saber 11* (Basic and middle education assessment system). This system allows interested parties to look up the results of the middle education quality exams applied by ICFES to students that finalise their high school programmes.

**COLCIENCIAS:** *ScientiCol* - (Researchers CV System – CVLac; Research Groups – GrupLac; and Research institutions - InstituLac)

**SIGP** - *Sistema Integrado de Gestión de Proyectos* (Integrated Project Management System)

*Publindex* - National System for Specialist Science and Technology Journal Indexing and Approval)

### Inspection and supervision

These equally important components of the quality assurance system constitute an important pillar that articulates with the assessment.

According to article 31 of Law 30 of 1992 and to articles 67 and 189, points 21,22 and 26 of the Colombian Political Constitution, the promotion, inspection and supervision of education, which correspond to the President of the Republic and are delegated to the Ministry of Education, are aimed at:

- a) Protecting the freedom of teaching, learning, research, and lecturing.
- b) Ensuring the full and integral fulfilment of the constitutional guarantee of university autonomy.
- c) Guarantee the rights of people to establish higher education institutions in accordance with the law.
- d) Adopt measures to strengthen research in higher education institutions and offer the special conditions for its development.
- e) Enable competent people access to knowledge, science, technology, art and other cultural goods, as well as the financial mechanisms that make this viable.
- f) Create incentives for people and institutions that develop and promote technology, science, humanities, philosophy, and arts.
- g) Promote the production of knowledge and the country's access to the world of science, technology and culture.
- h) Promote the creation of assessment mechanisms for the quality of higher education institutions' academic programmes.
- i) Promote the development of scientific and pedagogical thought in the directors and teachers of the higher education institutions.

In terms of the inspection and supervision component, Law 1740 of 2015 points out that its purpose is to establish the regulations for inspection and supervision of higher education in Colombia. This, in order to ensure the quality of this public service, its continuity; the best moral, intellectual and physical training of the students; the achievement of its goals; adequate service coverage; and for higher education institutions to maintain their incomes and duly apply them, guaranteeing the constitutionally established university autonomy.

For this reason, the following points were added to article 31 of Law 30 of 1992.

- a) Ensure the quality and continuity of the public service of higher education.
- b) Encourage the best moral, intellectual, and physical training of the students, as well as the fulfilment of the higher education objectives.
- c) Ensure the adequate coverage of the higher education public service.
- d) Ensure that private education institutions constituted as common utility legal entities, maintain their incomes and duly apply them and that the will of the founders is respected, without any profit-making intention of any kind.
- e) Ensure that public higher education institutions fully consider their nature as a cultural public service and the social function inherent to them, that the legal and statutory provisions that rule them are adhered by, and that their income is maintained and duly applied.

### **1.3 RESOURCES TO IDENTIFY THE COLOMBIAN QUALIFICATIONS COVERED BY THIS AGREEMENT OTHER RELEVANT LINKS**

#### **What is SNIES?**

The *Sistema Nacional de Información de la Educación Superior SNIES* (Colombian System for Higher Education Information) is an information system that has been created to respond



to the information requirements of higher education in Colombia.

The system gathers and organizes information pertaining to higher education, allowing planning, monitoring, assessment, counselling, inspection and supervision of the sector to be carried out.

The system is a source of information related to the academic institutions and programmes approved by the Ministry of Education. It consolidates and provides data, statistics and indicators which are:

**Relevant:** because the information responds to the sector requirements according to the target public.

**Reliable:** the information is provided by a responsible source and is consolidated and validated by the Ministry of Education.

**Timely:** The information is consolidated and shared within an established time frame.

To find out more, please visit:

<http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/sistemasdeinformacion/1735/w3-propertyname-2672.html>

Consult Higher Education Institutions:

<http://snies.mineducacion.gov.co/consultasnies/institucion>

Consult academic programmes: <http://snies.mineducacion.gov.co/consultasnies/programa>

#### 1.4. LISTINGS OF ENTITIES AND PROFESSIONAL COUNCILS THAT GOVERN PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

Profession	Regulating Law	Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition
Business Management  Requires a professional license	Law 60 de 1981.  Law 20 of 1988.  Decree 2718 of 1984	<a href="http://www.cpae.gov.co/index.php">http://www.cpae.gov.co/index.php</a>
Business Management for agriculture and livestock industry, agricultural management or agriculture and livestock management	Law 398 of 1997	<a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a>

Requires a professional license		
Management for agroindustrial development  Requires professional registration	Law 605 of 2000	<a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a>
Public administration  Requires a professional license	Law 1006 of 2006  Decree 221 of 2006	<a href="http://ccap.org.co/index.php/tarjetas-profesionales/matricula-en-el-runap">http://ccap.org.co/index.php/tarjetas-profesionales/matricula-en-el-runap</a>
Agronomic and Forest (Agronomic engineering, Forest engineering, agricultural engineering, agrology and agronomy)  Requires a professional license and professional registration.	Law 842 of 2003	<a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a>

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Regulating Law</b>	<b>Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition</b>
Anaesthesiology  Must be a physician and certify his/her specialization	Law 6 of 1991 Decree 97 of 1996	<a href="http://www.colegiomedicocolombiano.org/tarjetaprofesional">http://www.colegiomedicocolombiano.org/tarjetaprofesional</a>  <a href="http://www.medicolegal.com.co/pdf/esp/2011/2/Requisitos%20para%20contratar%20a%20profesionales%20-%20Normatividad.pdf">http://www.medicolegal.com.co/pdf/esp/2011/2/Requisitos%20para%20contratar%20a%20profesionales%20-%20Normatividad.pdf</a>
Architecture, engineering, and auxiliary professions  Requires a professional license	Law 842 of 2003	<a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a>
Bacteriology  Requires a professional license	Law 841 of 2003	<a href="http://www.cnbcolombia.org/tarjeta-profesional.html">http://www.cnbcolombia.org/tarjeta-profesional.html</a>
Librarianship	Law 11 of 1979 Decree	<a href="http://www.cnb.gov.co/">http://www.cnb.gov.co/</a>

Degree registration and professional registration.	672 of 1981 Regulatory decree 865 of 1988	
Biology Requires professional registration	Law 22 of 1984 Decree 2531 of 1986	<a href="http://consejoprofesionaldebiologia.gov.co/">http://consejoprofesionaldebiologia.gov.co/</a>
Public accounting Requires a professional license	Law 43 of 1990 (added to Law 145 of 1960) Decree 1510 of 1998	<a href="https://www.icc.gov.co/">https://www.icc.gov.co/</a>
Law Requires a professional license	Decree 196 of 1971 Law 583 of 2000	<a href="https://sirna.ramajudicial.gov.co/Paginas/Inicio.aspx">https://sirna.ramajudicial.gov.co/Paginas/Inicio.aspx</a>
Industrial design Requires a professional license	Law 157 of 1994 Decree 264 of 1995	<a href="http://www.mincit.gov.co/publicaciones.php?id=15977">http://www.mincit.gov.co/publicaciones.php?id=15977</a>
Ecology Requires a professional license	Law 1284 of 2009 Decree 3861 of 2005	<a href="http://colnade.org/index.htm">http://colnade.org/index.htm</a>

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Regulating Law</b>	<b>Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition</b>
Economics Requires professional registration	Law 37 of 1990 (modifies Law 41 of 1969) Decree 2928 of 1980	<a href="http://www.conalpe.gov.co/v2/main-index">http://www.conalpe.gov.co/v2/main-index</a>
Nursing Requires a professional license	Law 266 of 1996 Decree 825 of 2003	<a href="https://registro.oceinfo.org.co/">https://registro.oceinfo.org.co/</a>  <a href="http://www.anec.org.co/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=48&amp;Itemid=92">http://www.anec.org.co/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=48&amp;Itemid=92</a>
Physiotherapy Requires a professional license	Law 528 of 1999	<a href="http://colfi.co/">http://colfi.co/</a>
Speech therapy	Law 376 of 1997	<a href="http://www.ccfonoaudiologos.co/">http://www.ccfonoaudiologos.co/</a>

Requires a professional license		
Geography  Requires a professional license	Law 78 of 1993  Decree Number 1801 of 1995	<a href="http://cpg-colombia.acoge.net/index.html">http://cpg-colombia.acoge.net/index.html</a>
Geology  Requires professional registration	Law 9 of 1974  Decree 743 of 1976	<a href="http://cpgcolombia.org/">http://cpgcolombia.org/</a>
Tour guide  Requires a tour guide card	Law 300 of 1996 (Art. 94)  Decree Number 503 of 1997	<a href="http://www.guiasdeturismodecolombia.com.co/tarjeta.php">http://www.guiasdeturismodecolombia.com.co/tarjeta.php</a>
Engineering and its related and auxiliary professions (forest, electrical, agronomical and agricultural engineering)  Requires a professional license	Law 842 of 2003	<a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a>

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Regulating Law</b>	<b>Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition</b>
Petroleum engineering  Requires a professional license	Law 20 of 1984	<a href="https://www.cpip.org.co/">https://www.cpip.org.co/</a>

<p>Transport and roads engineering</p> <p>Requires a professional license</p>	<p>Law 33 of 1989</p>	<p><a href="http://consejoprofesionalitvc.org/demo/">http://consejoprofesionalitvc.org/demo/</a></p>
<p>Electrical and mechanical engineering and related professions</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 51 of 1986</p>	<p><a href="http://www.consejoprofesional.org.co/inicio/">http://www.consejoprofesional.org.co/inicio/</a></p>
<p>Naval engineering and related professions</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 385 of 1997</p>	<p><a href="http://www.consejoprofesional.org.co/inicio/">http://www.consejoprofesional.org.co/inicio/</a></p>
<p>Chemical engineering</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 18 of 1976</p>	<p><a href="https://www.cpiq.org.co/">https://www.cpiq.org.co/</a></p>
<p>Fishing engineering</p> <p>Requires a professional license</p>	<p>Law 28 of 1989</p>	<p><a href="https://copnia.gov.co/">https://copnia.gov.co/</a></p>
<p>Surgical instrument technician</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 6 of 1982</p> <p>Decree 2435 of 1991</p>	<p><a href="http://www.secretariasenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley_0784_2002.html">http://www.secretariasenado.gov.co/senado/basedoc/ley_0784_2002.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf">https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf</a></p>

Medicine and surgery	Law 14 of 1962  Law 23 of 1981 (Medical code of ethics)  Decree 1465 of 1992	<a href="http://www.colegiomedicocolombiano.org/tarjetaprofesional">http://www.colegiomedicocolombiano.org/tarjetaprofesional</a>
Requires a professional license		

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Regulating Law</b>	<b>Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition</b>
Nutrition and dietetics	Law 73 of 1979	<a href="https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf">https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf</a>
Requires professional registration		
Dentistry	Law 35 of 1989	<a href="https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf">https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf</a>
Requires a professional license	(Code of ethics)	
Optometry	Law 372 of 1997	<a href="http://ctnpo.gov.co/tarjeta_profesional">http://ctnpo.gov.co/tarjeta_profesional</a>
Requires a professional license	Decree 825 of 1954	
Psychology	Law 1090 of 2006	<a href="http://www.colpsic.org.co/inicio">http://www.colpsic.org.co/inicio</a>
Requires a professional license		
International and related professions (International relations; Finance, government, and International relations; Finance and International relations; International	Law 556 of 2000  Decree 1147 of 2001  Decree 717 of 2006	<a href="http://presidenciaconpia.wixsite.com/conpia1">http://presidenciaconpia.wixsite.com/conpia1</a>

<p>economic relations; International finance and trade; Foreign finance and trade; International trade; and International business management)</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>		
<p>Chemistry</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 53 of 1975</p>	<p><a href="https://cpqcol.gov.co/">https://cpqcol.gov.co/</a></p>

<b>Profession</b>	<b>Regulating Law</b>	<b>Professional council/entity that certifies professional recognition</b>
<p>Certified Electrician</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 19 of 1990</p>	<p><a href="http://www.conte.org.co/">http://www.conte.org.co/</a></p>
<p>Electricity, electro-mechanics, electronics, and related technologist</p> <p>Requires professional registration</p>	<p>Law 392 of 1997 Decree 3861 of 2005</p>	<p><a href="http://www.conaltel.org/index.php">http://www.conaltel.org/index.php</a></p>
<p>Occupational therapy</p> <p>Requires a professional license</p>	<p>Law 949 of 2005</p>	<p><a href="https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf">https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/TH/abece-registro-unico-nal-talento-humano-rethus-20160104.pdf</a></p>

Topography Requires license	Law 70 of 1979 Decree 690 of 1981	<a href="http://www.cpnt.gov.co/">http://www.cpnt.gov.co/</a>
Social work Requires a professional license	Law 53 of 1977	<a href="http://www.consejonacionaldetrabajosocial.org.co/">http://www.consejonacionaldetrabajosocial.org.co/</a>
Veterinary medicine Requires professional registration	Law 576 of 2000	<a href="http://www.comvezcol.org/">http://www.comvezcol.org/</a>

## ANNEX 2

### 2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UK

#### 2.1.1 Description of Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>, higher education institutions are independent, self-governing bodies active in teaching, research and scholarship. They are established by Royal Charter or legislation and most are part-funded by government.

Higher education (HE) is provided by many different types of institution. In addition to universities and university colleges, whose charters and statutes are made through the Privy Council which advises the Queen on the granting of Royal Charters and incorporation of universities. There are a number of publicly- designated and autonomous institutions within the higher education sector. Publicly funded higher education provision is available in some colleges of further education by the authority of another duly empowered institution. Teaching to prepare students for the award of higher education qualifications can be conducted in any higher education institution and in some further education colleges.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is responsible for advising the Privy Council on applications for university title.<sup>2</sup> In order to apply for a university title, the applicant must already be in possession of at least Taught Degree Awarding Powers.

Degrees and other higher education qualifications are legally owned by the awarding institution, not by the state.

The names of institutions with their own degree awarding powers (“Recognised Bodies”) are available for download at: <https://www.gov.uk/recognised-uk-degrees-recognised-bodies>



Higher education institutions, further education colleges and other organisations able to offer courses leading to a degree of a Recognised Body are listed by the English, Welsh and Northern Irish authorities, and are known as “Listed Bodies”. View the list at: <https://www.gov.uk/recognised-uk-degrees-listed-bodies>

### Qualifications

The types of qualifications awarded by higher education institutions at sub-degree and undergraduate (first cycle) and postgraduate level (second and third cycles) are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). This also includes qualification descriptors that were developed with the HE sector by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA - established in 1997 as an independent UK-wide body to monitor the standard of higher education provision - [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)). The FHEQ was self-certified as compatible with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, the qualifications framework adopted as part of the Bologna Process, in February 2009. Foundation degrees, designed to create intermediate awards strongly oriented towards specific employment opportunities, were introduced in 2001. In terms of the European Higher Education Area they are “short cycle” qualifications within the first cycle. Higher Education is one component of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). Ofqual, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, the Welsh Government and the Council for Curriculum Examination and Assessment, Northern Ireland (CCEA) regulate a number of professional, statutory and other awarding bodies which control vocational education and training (VET) and general qualifications at all levels. These qualifications sit on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF, which replaced the Qualifications and Credit Framework in 2015. Regulated learning is also recognised within the CQFW (e.g. QCF, NQF and RQF qualifications). There is a close association between the levels of the FHEQ and the RQF (as shown below), and other frameworks of the UK and Ireland.

### Credit Systems

A framework of national guidelines for the use of credit, the Higher Education Credit Framework for England, was launched in 2008 in order to facilitate credit accumulation and transfer in the HE sector. A significant number of higher education institutions in England belong to one of two main credit consortia, which promote the use of credit and the sharing of good practice. Credit is also an integral part of the CQFW and the RQF. It may be possible for credit awarded in one framework to be recognised by education providers whose qualifications sit within a different framework, although higher education institutions, as autonomous bodies, have the right to decide whether to accept credit. HE credit systems in use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for accumulation and transfers within the European Higher Education Area, enabling learning gained by students in institutions elsewhere in Europe to be recognised.

## Admission

The most common qualification for entry to higher education is the General Certificate of Education at 'Advanced' (A) level. Other appropriate RQF level 3 qualifications and the kite-marked Access to HE Diploma may also provide entry to higher education. Level 3 qualifications in the CQFW, including the Welsh Baccalaureate, also provide entry, as do Scottish Highers, Advanced Highers or qualifications at the same levels of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Part-time and mature students may enter higher education with these qualifications or alternatives with evidenced equivalent prior formal and/or experiential learning. Institutions will admit students whom they believe to have the potential to complete their programmes successfully.

<sup>1</sup> The UK has a system of devolved government, including for higher education, to Scotland, to Wales and to Northern Ireland. This description has been verified by representatives of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Universities UK (UUK), and the National Recognition Information Centre for the UK (UK NARIC).

<sup>2</sup> The Privy Council is not involved in applications for University title from institutions who are not eligible for HEFCE funding. Here, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is responsible for making the award in respect of such applications.

**TABLE 1**

**Diagram of higher education qualification levels in  
England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) <sup>1</sup>		FQ-EHEA cycle	Credit	
Typical Qualifications	Level		Typical UK	Typical ECTS credit ranges <sup>2</sup>
Doctoral Degrees (eg PhD, DPhil, EdD)	8	3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle	Typically not credit rated <sup>3</sup>	Typically not credit rated <sup>4</sup>
Masters Degrees Integrated Masters Degrees Postgraduate Diplomas Postgraduate Certificate of Education Postgraduate Certificates	7	2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle	180	60-120
Bachelors Degrees with Honours Bachelors Degrees Professional Graduate Certificate in Education Graduate Diplomas Graduate Certificates	6	1 <sup>st</sup> cycle	360	180-240
Foundation Degrees Diplomas of Higher Education Higher National Diplomas	5	Short cycle	240	120
Higher National Certificates Certificates of Higher Education	4		120	
Entry to HE via equivalent experiential or prior learning				

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> For students with the necessary prerequisites, entry to each FHEQ level is possible from the next lower level in the RQF or Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

<sup>2</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credit is typically worth 2 UK credits

<sup>3</sup> PhD and DPhil qualifications are typically not credit-rated. Newer doctoral degrees, such as the Professional Doctorate, are sometimes credit rated, typically 540 UK credits.

<sup>4</sup> A range of 90-120 ECTS is typical of most awards

## 2.1.2. Description of Higher Education in Scotland<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Scotland's distinctive higher education system has 19 higher education institutions (HEIs)<sup>2</sup> (See <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/>). The 15 universities, as well as the Open University in Scotland, a specialist art school, a conservatoire and a land-based college are funded primarily by the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council ([www.sfc.ac.uk](http://www.sfc.ac.uk)).

The HEIs are independent, self-governing bodies, active in teaching research and scholarship. They decide the degrees they offer; the conditions on which they are awarded and the admissions arrangements. Degrees and other higher education qualifications are legally owned by the awarding institution, not by the state.

The HEIs offer qualifications at undergraduate (Bologna first cycle) and postgraduate (Bologna second and third cycle) levels. In Scotland, the law distinguishes the power to award degrees on the basis of completion of taught programmes from the power to award research degrees. Universities have powers to award taught and research degrees. Some other HEIs have powers to award degrees while others offer programmes leading to degrees awarded by HEIs with degree awarding powers.

Lists of institutions with powers to award degrees and institutions recognised by authorities in Scotland as being able to offer courses leading to a degree of another HEI may be found at

<http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/uploads/campus-locations.pdf>

A small number of Degrees are available in colleges of further education by the authority of a duly empowered HEI.

### Qualifications

The types of qualifications awarded at undergraduate (first cycle) and postgraduate level (second and third cycles) in Scotland are described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Scotland which includes qualifications descriptors, developed with the higher education sector (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>). The Framework is an integral part of a wider national framework: the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework that covers all forms of programmes and qualifications from school to Doctorates (see table 1 and [www.scqf.org.uk](http://www.scqf.org.uk)).

Institutions use SCQF credit points for students entering or transferring between programmes or institutions, and use ECTS for transfers within the European area.

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<sup>2</sup> Scotland has a distinctive higher education system and also operates under a devolved government, including for higher education

## Admission

Requirements for particular programmes are set by the HEIs which offer a range of routes for entry and/or credit transfer into their programmes, and admit students whom they believe have the potential to complete their programmes successfully. The Open University is an open entry institution.

The most common qualification for entry to higher education is the Higher or Advanced Higher or, for entrants from the rest of the UK, the General Certificate of Education at 'Advanced' level (including the "advanced supplementary") or comparable qualifications. Four or five Highers are normally taken in the 5th and 6th year of secondary school or at a college of further education and studied in considerable depth, involving coursework and final examinations. Advanced Highers are taken in the 6th year. A major route into Degrees, often with transfer of credit, is from Higher National Qualifications offered in colleges of further education.

**TABLE 2**

**The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)**

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of HEIs	SVQs/MAs	
12			Professional Development Award	Doctoral degree	Professional Apprenticeship	
11				Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship, SVQ 5	
10				Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship	
9				Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Technical Apprenticeship, SVQ 4	
8		Higher National Diploma		Diploma of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship, SVQ 4	
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	National Certificate	Certificate of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ 3	
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher				Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ 3	
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5			National Progression Award		Modern Apprenticeship, SVQ 2
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4					SVQ 1
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work					

	National 3				
2	National 2, Awards				
1	National 1, Awards				

For the official SCQF diagram, please refer to: <http://www.scf.org.uk/framework-diagram/Framework.htm>

## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES IN THE UK

### Quality Assurance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Academic standards are established and maintained by higher education institutions themselves using an extensive and sophisticated range of shared quality assurance approaches and structures. Standards and quality in institutions are underpinned by the universal use of external examiners, a shared set of expectations and other reports, by the activities of the higher education funding bodies and QAA, and in professional areas by relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. This ensures that institutions meet a set of baseline regulatory requirements, including national expectations set out in the Quality Code, which includes the qualifications frameworks the subject and qualification benchmark statements. Regulatory activity is targeted on those institutions that represent greater risk to the student interest or to the reputation of the sector.

The operating model consists of three core elements:

- Baseline regulatory requirements, with a single gateway for entry to the higher education system and a period of closer engagement and monitoring for recent entrants
- Risk-based and context-sensitive review arrangements for established providers, with rapid, tailored intervention when things go wrong
- Protection of the international reputation of UK higher education, including the quality assurance of transnational education.

The Quality Code published by QAA forms part of the baseline regulatory requirements. It sets out the expectations that all UK higher education providers are required to meet and is structured in three parts:

Part A: setting and maintaining threshold academic standards (which includes national reference points and descriptors for qualifications and subjects/programmes)

Part B: assuring and enhancing academic quality

Part C: Information about higher education provision

Further information on the new approach to quality assessment can be found at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/reg/QualityAssessment/>

QAA's quality code can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

## **Quality Assurance in Scotland**

Standards of qualification and the quality of the student learning experience are maintained by the HEIs using a range of processes including extensive use of external examiners. In some subject areas, Professional and Statutory Bodies have a role to ensure that programmes meet the needs and standards of the particular profession.

HEIs in Scotland demonstrate their public accountability for quality and standards through a national quality assurance framework that has a strong focus on enhancement as follows:

HEIs take account of a QAA published U.K.-wide code of practice for quality assurance, and U.K. subject level 'benchmark statements' on standards (see [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)).

Subject level issues are addressed by HEIs internal reviews conducted in accordance with guidance issued by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) (see [www.sfc.ac.uk](http://www.sfc.ac.uk));

External reviews are conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Scotland (QAA). The Agency is an independent body established to provide public confidence in the quality and standards of higher education. It involves students in its quality enhancement activities. The Agency publishes reports on the outcomes of reviews and the confidence that can be placed in the HEIs' arrangements for assuring and enhancing standards and quality, and for ensuring that they provide public information that is complete, accurate and fair (see [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)).

A national development service supports students in their role as active participants in assuring and enhancing quality and standards (see [www.sparqs.org.uk](http://www.sparqs.org.uk)).

Further details on the Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/scotland/development-and-enhancement>

## **Qualifications frameworks**

QAA is the 'custodian' of frameworks and reference points for UK higher education qualifications which apply to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards granted by a higher education provider with degree awarding powers. The relevant qualifications frameworks are:

- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ, which forms a part of the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales)*
- *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS, part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)*

## **UK degrees**

Each degree must be awarded by a legally approved degree-awarding body (known as a Recognised Body) that has overall responsibility for the academic standards and quality of



the qualification. There is a strong process in place to ensure that degree awarding powers and the right to be called 'university' (university title) are only granted to higher education providers which properly merit the powers they seek.

In the UK the Privy Council is a formal body of advisers to the Queen and one of its responsibilities is the granting of degree awarding powers and university title. QAA advises the appropriate Government Department for each of the four nations, who will then make a recommendation to the Privy Council on applications for degree awarding powers. All applications are rigorously scrutinised against guidance and criteria. There are different sets of guidance and criteria for the three types of degree awarding powers which also vary across the four nations of the UK:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs>

**Foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP)** give further education colleges in England and Wales the right to award Foundation Degrees at level 5 of *the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

**Taught degree awarding powers (TDAP)** give higher education providers the right to award bachelor's degrees and other taught higher education qualifications up to level 7 of *the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and to level 11 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*

**Research degree awarding powers (RDAP)** give UK higher education providers with TDAP the right to award doctoral degrees and master's degrees where the research component (including a requirement to produce an original work) is larger than the taught component when measured by student effort. These are higher education qualifications up to level 8 of *the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and to level 12 in the *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*.

The broad relationship of the qualifications and credit frameworks across the UK and Ireland is summarised in a document produced and agreed by the custodians of the frameworks. It is reviewed regularly through joint meetings of the framework owners and the most recent version, published in September 2014 is at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/publications/documents/qualifications-can-cross-boundaries.pdf>

### **2.3 Resources to identify the UK qualifications covered by this agreement and other relevant links**

The UK Government maintains a list of recognised bodies here:

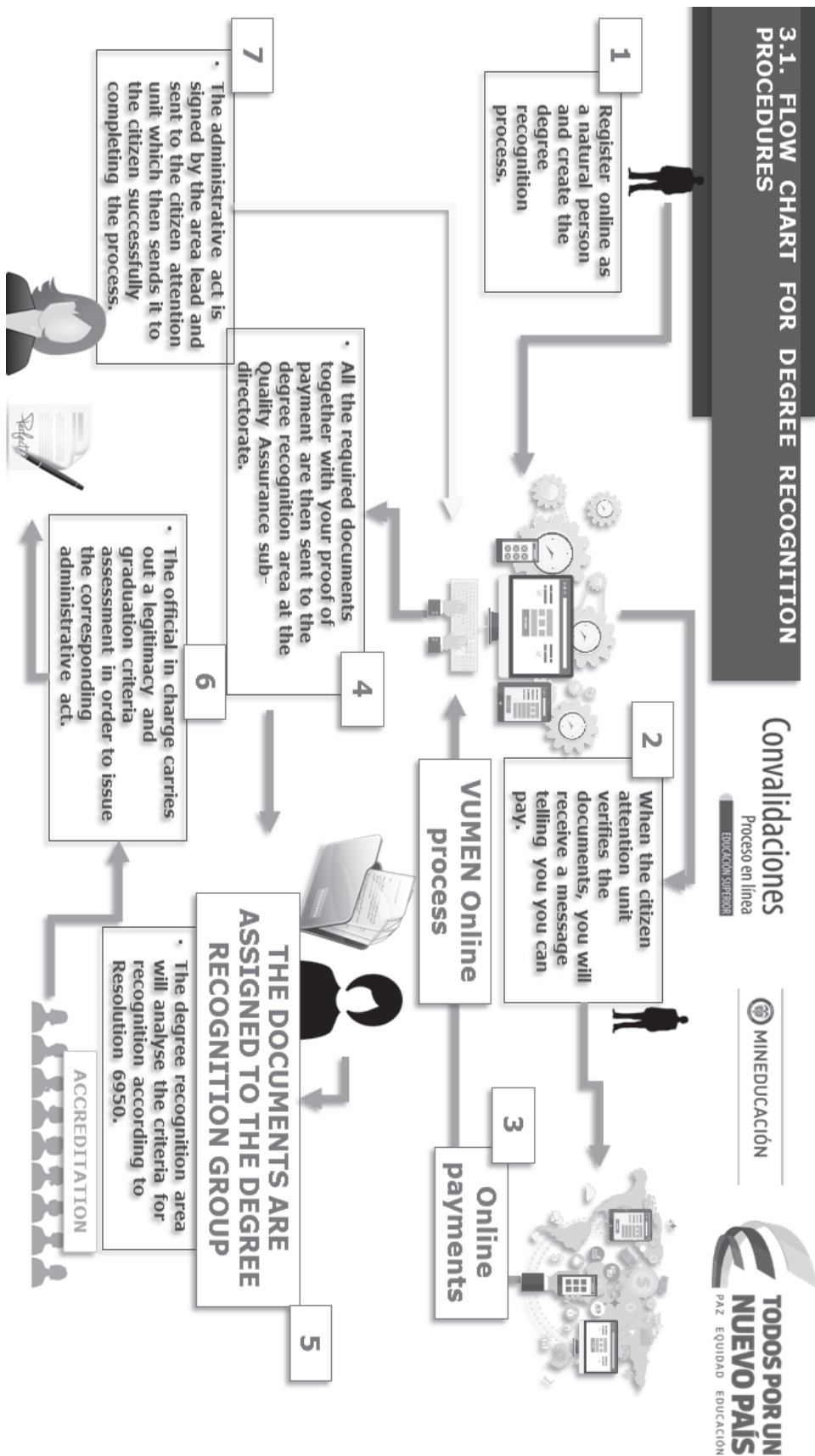
<https://www.gov.uk/check-a-university-is-officially-recognised/recognised-bodies>

Information on professional recognition, including a list of regulated professions is available here:

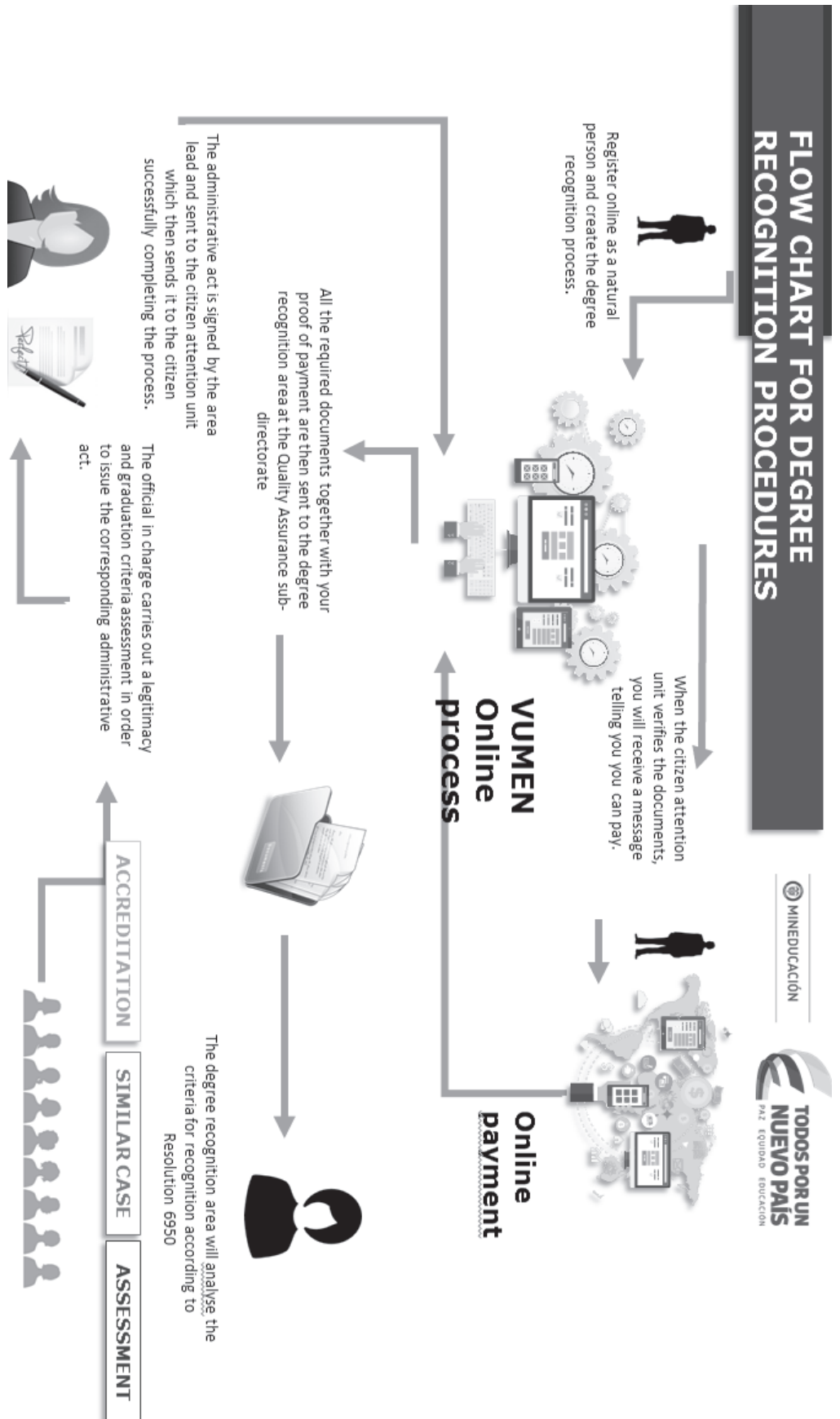
<https://www.naric.org.uk/cpq/>

ANNEX 3

3.1 FLOWCHART SHOWING RECOGNITION PROCESS IN COLOMBIA FOR QUALIFICATIONS WHICH FORM PART OF THIS AGREEMENT



### 3.2 FLOWCHART SHOWING RECOGNITION PROCESS IN COLOMBIA FOR QUALIFICATIONS WHICH DO NOT FORM PART OF THIS AGREEMENT



### 3.3 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR RECOGNITION IN COLOMBIA.

#### Requisites

The requisites for degree recognition are stipulated in Resolution 06950 of 2015. They include general requisites that are applicable to all applicants, and special or complementary requisites for certain areas of knowledge.

#### General requisites:

- A photocopy of ID documents: Valid national ID, foreigners' ID or passport.
- A photocopy of the degree to be recognised. This must be duly legalised and issued an Apostille Certificate in the country of origin. For the recognition of graduate degrees the undergraduate degree will have to be annexed if national, or its recognition resolution if international.
- Qualifications certificate for the programme corresponding to the degree to be recognised, duly legalised and issued an Apostille Certificate in the country of origin.

#### Special requisites:

The following areas of knowledge must meet the following requirements as well as the general ones listed above:

##### *Accounting*

- Certify specific studies in: Commercial, fiscal and labour law. Accounting standards and concepts on International Financial Reporting Standards – IFRS.

These studies will have to be undertaken, approved, and certified by a Colombian higher education institute, which runs a programme in Public Accounting with a valid qualification issued by the Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education).

##### *Law*

- Certify specific studies in: Colombian Constitutional law, administrative law, civil procedural law, criminal law, and labour law.

These studies will have to be undertaken at a Colombian higher education institute which runs a Law programme with a valid qualification issued by the Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education) and subsequently approved and certified by the same institution.

##### *Health*

The following documents will have to be presented:

- Curriculum for the undergraduate and graduate health degrees.

For undergraduate degrees:

- Proof of the fulfilment of a rotating internship, duly legalised and issued an Apostille Certificate in the country of origin.

For graduate degrees:

- Surgical or outpatient record issued by entities or institutions authorised to carry out academic activities or aid activities in the area of health.
- Documents that provide evidence of academic and aid activities.

## Translation and Apostille

All documents must be duly translated, legalised and issued an Apostille Certificate.

For a list of authorised translators, please go to:

<https://tramites.cancilleria.gov.co/ciudadano/directorio/traductores/traductores.aspx>

## Online procedure

<http://convalidacion.mineducacion.gov.co/newcs/validacion.asp?idusuario=>

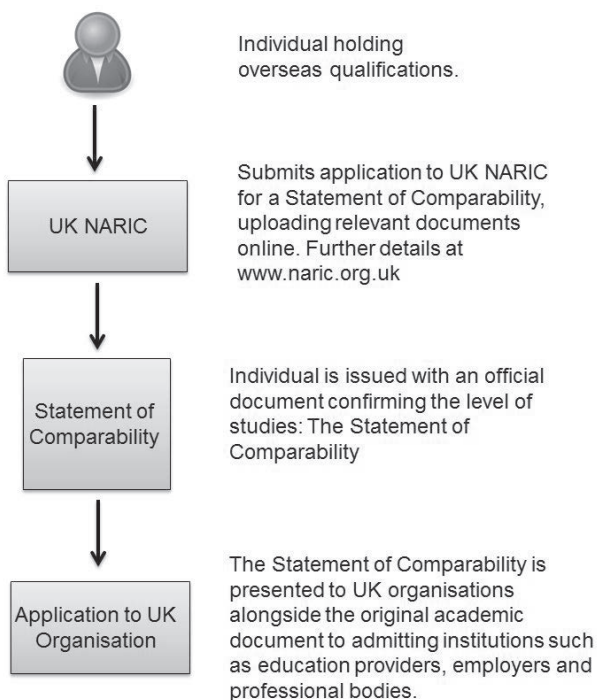
For more information, please go to:

<http://www.mineducacion.gov.co/1759/w3-article-350670.html>

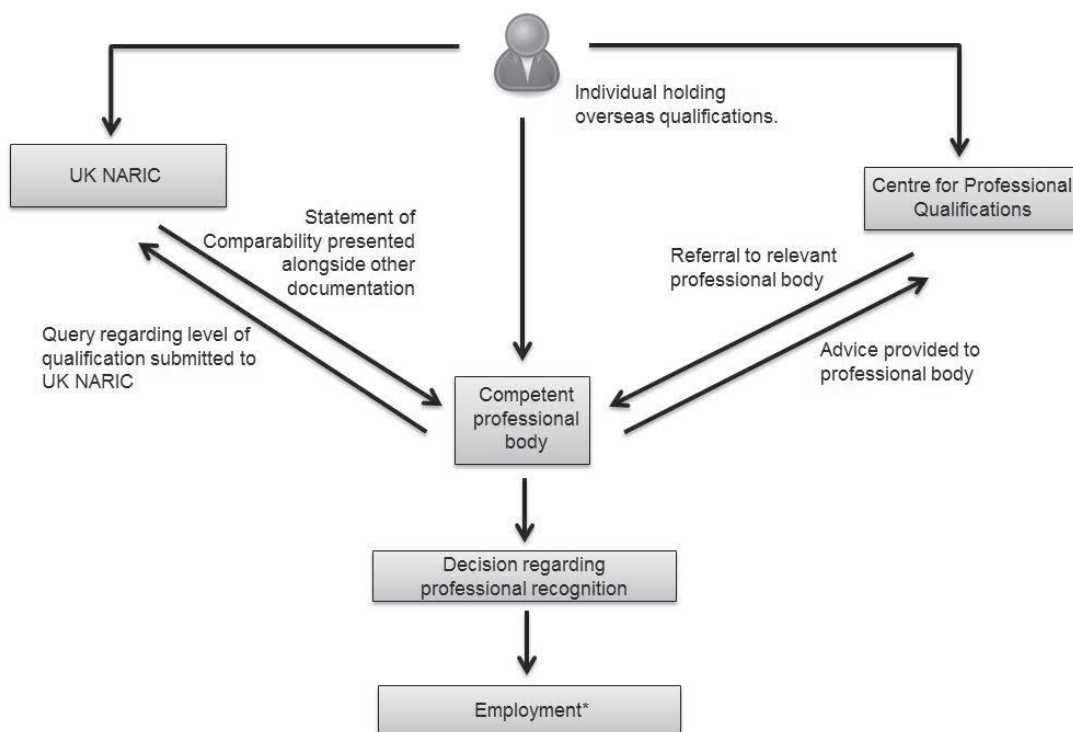
## ANNEX 4

### 4.1 FLOWCHART SHOWING ACADEMIC RECOGNITION PROCESS IN THE UK

For purposes of academic recognition:



#### 4.2 FLOWCHART SHOWING PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION PROCESS IN THE UK



\* Qualifications may also be presented directly to employers for professional recognition

#### **4.3 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR ACADEMIC RECOGNITION IN THE UK**

**The following documents, duly legalised, are required for purposes of academic recognition:**

- a) The final degree certificate/diploma
- b) Academic transcript showing modules taken and grades obtained
- c) Translations of the above documents where necessary. See [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk) for further details.

#### **4.4 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION IN THE UK**

**The following documents, duly legalised, are typically required for purposes of professional recognition. \***

- a) The final degree certificate/diploma
- b) Academic transcript showing modules taken and grades obtained
- c) Translations of the above documents
- d) Evidence of professional status in country of origin
- e) Evidence of background checks

\*Individuals should verify documentary requirements with the relevant competent authority.