

**International Conference on Occupational Radiation Protection:
Strengthening Radiation Protection of Workers –Twenty Years of Progress
and the Way Forward**

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DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIATION PROTECTION EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS IN THE UAE

Since the establishment of the Working Group on the “National Strategy on Education, Training and Qualification in Radiation Protection in the UAE”, as a follow-up to the 2017 IAEA EduTA to the UAE, various developments took place in the United Arab Emirates to enhance and further develop the infrastructure for the competency of Radiation Protection Professionals.

First and foremost, the UAE established in 2019 the “National Strategy on Education, Training and Qualification in Radiation Protection in the UAE”, according to the IAEA guidance, as a reference framework for the coordinated developments of all subsequent actions.

In close collaboration with the “National Qualifications Center” (formerly known as “National Qualifications Authority”) of the UAE Ministry of Education, a Committee was also established in 2018 between FANR and various UAE governmental and commercial Stakeholders, to develop detailed and comprehensive national vocational Qualifications for five categories of Radiation Protection Professionals: the Qualified Expert (QE), the Radiation Protection Officer (RPO), the Medical Physicist (MP), the Exposed Worker (EW) and the Emergency Worker (EmW).

Three National Workshops have been organized in 2015, 2017 and 2019, to publicly discuss of the roles, responsibilities, mutual interaction and formal qualifications of QEs, RPOs and MPs: a fourth Workshop, initially planned in 2020 -and rescheduled due to the global pandemic-, will conclude the current development phase of the Qualifications, presenting the overall framework to Professionals and Training Institutes.

To cope with the absence of formal recognition for Qualified Experts in the UAE, and to respond to a specific EduTA Recommendation, the Working Group also established criteria for interim qualification, and set up, in 2019, a first Temporary List of Qualified Experts in the UAE, to be used in Licensing and Occupational Radiation Protection practices in the Country.

The Working Group also fostered the creation of two Academic Master Degrees, able to cater for the growing needs of young graduates with an interest towards the field of Radiation Protection and Medical Physics.

The Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation, FANR, is considering to propose new Regulation and Guidance for Education, Training and Qualifications in Radiation Protection, in the near future, given the importance of these topics, and their complexity.

Thanks to the initial guidance of the IAEA EduTA Mission and the coordinated efforts that FANR and its Stakeholders have deployed in these years, the quality, level and harmonization of Education, Training and Qualification for Radiation Protection Professional have been greatly improved, and represent a cornerstone of the modern and comprehensive Radiation Safety regime that FANR is fostering in the UAE.

A future follow-up review of the IAEA EduTA Mission is already planned, to acknowledge the significance of the efforts undertaken by the UAE, and to indicate final improvements to the System, also based on the experience gained by other Member States in the cyclic implementation of the National Strategy.

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