

# Self-certification of qualifications frameworks: background and challenges

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## Overview

- “ NQF . why bother/what’s the point?
- “ National context
- “ Self-certification . Why? What?
- “ ~~reality~~ reality of the framework?
- “ Credibility of self-certification
- “ The story so far ã
- “ Conclusions

## National context

- “ What do we need a NQF for?
- “ National context/link with QF-EHEA
- “ Diversity of NQFs
- “ What can a NQF achieve?
- “ Don't oversell NQF!!
- “ How long does it take?

## Why certify/verify?

- “ Purpose of national framework
- “ Purpose of QF-EHEA . need verification
- “ Mutual benefit to NQF and EHEA
- “ Provides evidence base to support trust/confidence
- “ International experts share experience, information, add to mutual knowledge

# National frameworks and EHEA framework

Bologna-Framework (HE/meta/virtual?)



Verification process

National Qualifications Framework  
(HE/operational/real)



quality assurance

Qualifications made by institutions in countries

## What is self-certification?

- “ Purpose is to verify that the NQF is compatible with QF-EHEA
- “ Evidence-based, international element, published report
- “ Procedures
- “ Criteria
- “ Thorough and transparent process

# Procedures

- “ Competent national body/bodies shall self-certify compatibility of NQF with EHEA framework
- “ Self-certification process shall include stated agreement of country's quality assurance bodies recognised through the Bologna process
- “ Self-certification process shall involve international experts
- “ Self-certification and supporting evidence shall be published and shall address separately each of the criteria set out
- “ ENIC and NARIC networks to maintain public listing of States that have completed self-certification
- “ Completion of self-certification shall be noted on Diploma Supplements by showing the link between NQF and EHEA framework.

(Report to Ministerial Conference, Bergen 2005)

## Criteria

- “ NQF for HE qualifications and responsible body designated by Government
- “ clear link between the qualifications in NQF and Dublin Descriptors
- “ NQF and its qualifications based on LOs & linked to ECTS/compatible credits
- “ Clear procedures for inclusion of qualifications in NQF
- “ National QA systems for HE refer to NQF and consistent with the Berlin Communiqué
- “ EDS refers to NQF and any alignment with the EHEA framework
- “ Responsibilities of domestic parties to NQF clearly determined and published

## Recommendations - Procedures

- “ Consider QF-EHEA when developing NQF
- “ Test/implement NQF before self-certification
- “ Useful to work with neighbouring countries or those with similar qualifications/frameworks
- “ Steering Group + stakeholder consultation
- “ Need clarity on arrangements for agreement
- “ Use of international experts has been exemplary
- “ More international expert support will be needed
- “ Format of Scottish & Irish reports exemplars
- “ Reports should include detailed document & summary

## How realistic NQF?

- “ Fit with national culture/context
- “ Must have universities and students on board
- “ More ownership = more implementation
- “ Guidance-based . more comprehensive
- “ Legislation-based . minimal
- “ Link between qualifications/NQF/EHEA

## Ministers' Commitments on NQFs

- “ Ministers encourage the member States to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile. (Berlin, 2003)
- “ We commit ourselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010, and to having started work on this by 2007. (Bergen, 2005)

## Credibility of self-certification

- “ Stocktaking v Trends v BWSE
- “ Evidence base, transparency
- “ Stakeholder engagement
- “ International experts
- “ Implementation of other Bologna action lines

## The story so far ã ..

- “ Implementation takes TIME
- “ Need shared understanding of NQF and its elements (LOs, descriptors, ECTS etc)
- “ Scotland & Ireland . pre-existing NQFs
- “ Other countries will have different challenges and opportunities
- “ Experience/expertise will grow as more countries/contexts included

Don't try this at home!!

- “ Feel free to draw on Scottish & Irish experiences and reports BUT
- “ Primacy of NQF and national context
- “ No one size fits all solution
- “ NQFs & implementation are dynamic
- “ Can't self-certify if you don't have NQF!

## Conclusion

- “ NQF shaped by national agenda/context
- “ Importance of ~~best~~ fit concept
- “ Importance of criteria & procedures
- “ Role of international experts
- “ QFs only part of the picture
- “ Don't ~~re~~-invent the wheel
- “ Don't import foreign practice if it is not appropriate to national context