



Education and Culture DG

**Bologna Seminar – Aligning national qualification frameworks:
the principles of self-certification
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Referencing of national qualifications against the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

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Linking together



European
Qualifications
Framework

Facilitating mobility
and communication



EQF development and legal basis

É **Development started in 2004 following requests from EU Member States, social partners and stakeholders for a reference tool to make qualifications more transparent**

É **Blueprint, wide consultation =>
=> Commission proposal 2006**

É **Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the EQF for LLL**



EQF objectives and approach

- É **Aims: enhance mobility and lifelong learning**
- É **An overarching framework: 8 levels covering general, HE and VET – i.e. LLL**
=> **facilitating bridging between sub-systems**
- É **A common reference framework to act as a translation device between qualifications systems and levels**
- É **Based on learning outcomes**
=> **thus also promoting validation of non-formal and informal learning**



EQF - Qualification

É “Qualification” means a formal outcome of an assessment and validation which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards



EQF - Structure

**É A grid of descriptors
defining 8 levels of qualification
in terms of learning outcomes
related to knowledge, skills, competence**



EQF - Structure

In the context of the EQF,

***Knowledge* is described as theoretical and/or factual**

***Skills* are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).**

***Competence* is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.**



EQF - Structure

The 8 EQF-levels are distinguished by

- É the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding**
- É the degree of necessary support or instruction**
- É the degree of integration and independence required**
- É the range and complexity of practise/application**
- É the degree of transparency and dynamics of situations**



Example: EQF level 5

	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
L E V E L 5	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others



Example: EQF level 6



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	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
L E V E L 6	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts- take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:
É Relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010 by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualifications levels to the EQF levels



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:
É Ensure that all new qualification certificates, by 2012, contain a clear reference – by way of national qualification systems – to the appropriate EQF level



The EQF process

É It is not expressly recommended that Member States set up national qualifications frameworks



The EQF process

Member States are recommended to:

É Use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications

É Promote the validation of non formal and informal learning

É Promote and apply principles of quality assurance in education and training



EQF ó Implementation

Actors

- É The EQF Advisory Group (Education & Training countries, Council of Europe, social partners, stakeholders)**
- É The national coordination points**



The EQF implementation

- É Referencing – through a transparent methodology – is the first task of the national coordination points
- É The AG provides coherence and promotes transparency of the referencing process



The EQF implementation

É In particular, the AG has agreed on a set of criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications to the EQF



EQF ó Referencing criteria

Criteria and procedures in 10 points

to ensure that

the information made public

- is validated by the competent authorities,**
- is relevant and transparent,**
- can be compared**
- generates trust.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

The referencing criteria and procedures

- indicate the general direction of the referencing process;**
- have to be proved through practice, supported by guidance and exchange of experiences – also drawing upon test projects.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

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- indicate the general direction of the referencing process;**
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EQF ó Referencing criteria

The EQF referencing criteria and procedures have been developed taking into account and drawing upon the EHEA qualifications framework and its criteria and procedures for self-certification



EQF ó Referencing criteria

- 1. The responsibilities and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process, including the National Coordination Point, are clearly determined and published by the competent public authorities.**

**Clarity about actors and their role.
Cf EHEA Crt 7.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

2. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the national qualifications framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework.

Cf. EHEA Crt 2.



EQF ó Referencing criteria

3. The NQF or system and its qualifications are based on the principle and objective of learning outcomes and linked to arrangements for validation of non-formal and informal learning and, where these exist, to credit systems.

The learning outcomes approach is fundamental.

Cf. EHEA Crt 3



EQF ó Referencing criteria

4. The procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the national qualifications framework or for describing the place of qualifications in the national qualification system are transparent.

Transparency is a fundamental requirement.

Cf. EHEA Crt 4. (EQF does not require NQF to be established.)



EQF ó Referencing criteria

5. The national quality assurance system(s) for education and training refer (s) to the national qualifications framework or system and are consistent with the relevant European principles and guidelines (as indicated in annex 3 of the Recommendation).

Cruciality of QA recognised through specific annex to the EQF Recommendation. Cf. EHEA Crt 5.



EQF ó Referencing criteria

6. The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.

**Completes and specifies EQF Crt 5.
Cf. EHEA Prc 2.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

7. The referencing process shall involve international experts.

Possibly reflecting a variety of stakeholders ó it is about generating mutual trust as well as about cooperation.

Cf. EHEA Prc 3.



EQF ó Referencing criteria

8. The competent national body or bodies shall certify the referencing of the national qualifications framework or system with the EQF. One comprehensive report, setting out the referencing and the evidence supporting it shall be published by the competent national bodies, including the National Coordination Point, and shall address separately each of the criteria.

**One country, one voice. Important to stress for an overarching framework.
Cf. EHEA Prc 4.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

9. The official EQF platform shall maintain a public listing of member states that have confirmed that they have completed the referencing process, including links to completed referencing reports.

**The EQF platform will be managed centrally.
Cf. EHEA Prc 5.**



EQF ó Referencing criteria

10. Following the referencing process, and in line with the timelines set in the Recommendation, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level.

The process is achieved when the outcome indicated by the Recommendation is available ó each single qualification is related to the EQF. Cf. EHEA Prc 6.



EQF and EHEA

The EQF referencing criteria were developed to be compatible with the EHEA self-certification criteria.

Countries should be able to choose not to repeat the exercise – though they might prefer to self-certify through EHEA qualification levels already referenced to the EQF, and the other way around.



EQF and EHEA

The EQF levels 5-8 correspond to the three cycles of the EHEA.

However, EQF levels 5-8 are also relevant to

- institutions not covered by the EHEA framework;**
- qualifications not included in the HE NQFs.**



EQF ó Referencing tools

The referencing process is supported through

- **thematic AG subgroups;**
- **specific guidance documents;**
- **research and reports (e.g. by Cedefop);**
- **the results of the EQF test projects (2006, 2007, 2008 calls, 33 projects);**
- **cooperation (EHEA, ENQA) – namely through subgroups;**
- **events (conference June 2008, ETF conference January 2009 on international dimension).**



EQF ó Referencing tools

A dedicated EQF web based tool

- first, to allow exchange of communication on the referencing process among all countries (working tool, restricted access);**
- second, to make the referencing results public (multilingual information tool, open access).**



Compare qualification types - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.eqf-reference-nqf.net/comparequalificationtypes2.aspx?countries=15,34

CEDEFOP
Referencing National Qualifications to the EQF

European Qualification Frameworks

Home

How do national qualifications frameworks relate to the EQF?

How do national qualifications frameworks compare?

About the EQF

Key terms

Links

How do national qualifications frameworks compare?

Selected the countries you wish to compare. This page allows you to display up to four countries together.

Drill down on the levels and qualification types for more details.

Data are only available on the prototype for Ireland, UK - Wales, UK - Scotland and Malta.

Qualification Types	Ireland	UK - Wales
LEVEL 6	NQFI Level 8 Higher Diploma ; Honours Bachelor's Degree ;	CQFW Level 6
	NQFI Level 7 Ordinary Bachelor's Degree ;	
LEVEL 5		CQFW Level5
	NQFI Level 6 Advanced Certificate ; Higher Certificate ;	CQFW Level 4

Prototype



and Culture



EQF ó to keep in mind

- **The EQF is about transparency and mutual understanding, not about recognition of qualifications
(academic recognition is a national competence,
recognition of professional qualifications is regulated by Directive 2005/36/EC)**



EQF ó to keep in mind

- **The EQF does not aim at reforming education and training systems. It does require that all qualifications are defined and described in terms of learning outcomes, a radical change of attitude in many systems.**



EQF - to keep in mind

- **EQF does not require that countries establish national qualifications frameworks. However, most have expressed their intention to do so. (All Member States committed to establish HE NQF anyway, as parties to the EHEA.)**



EQF - to keep in mind

- **The EQF is about all qualifications, including those developed and awarded by international sectoral organisations. This issue needs further thinking.**



EQF - to keep in mind

- **Informing and involving stakeholders – education and training institutions, social partners, sectors – is part and parcel of the process of implementing the EQF.**



EQF - to keep in mind

- **Qualifications are by definition formal, but the learning process that leads to them can be non formal or informal. This is a strong element of the EQF approach.**





European Qualifications Framework

The work is just about starting
Thank you for your attention

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