

Glossary of Select Terminology Associated With Qualifications Frameworks

Accumulation and transfer of qualifications¹

Accumulation and transfer of qualifications means that training programmes or parts [units] of programmes are interchangeable or can replace each other and that validated learning outcomes can exempt a person of whole or part of a training programme. Accumulation and transfer of qualifications require that learning outcomes acquired in different contexts and at different times are compared as regards equivalence and relative value.

Accreditation of programmes and institutions

The process of accrediting an institution of education and training, a programme of study, or a service, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative and professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.

Apprenticeship²

Apprenticeship is the systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

Assessment

The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how, skills and competences) of an individual, and typically leading to certification.

Awarding body

An awarding body issues qualifications (certificates or diplomas) formally recognizing the achievements of an individual, following a standard assessment procedure.

Bologna process

The Bologna process initiated by the Bologna Declaration of European Ministers of Education in 19th June 1999 is a commitment by all EU Member States to harmonize the architecture of the European higher education system by improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability.

Certificate/Diploma

An official document issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following the successful completion of a training programme or a course of studies.

¹ MQC, *Glossary of Terminology Associated with Qualifications Framework*

² Cedefop, *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy: A Selection of 100 Key Terms*. (Luxembourg 2008)

Certification (of knowledge, skills and competences)

A formal record of achievement based on a standard assessment of knowledge, skills and competences. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies.

Competence

'Competence' is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and other abilities to perform a function against a given standard in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the EQF, 'competence' is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Comparability of qualifications

The extent to which it is possible to establish parity of esteem between the level and content of all formal qualifications at sectoral, regional, national or international levels.

Continuing education and training

Education or training after initial education or entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to: *improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining; continue their personal or professional development.*

Copenhagen Declaration.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational education and Training and the European Commission convened in Copenhagen on the 29th and 30th of June 2002 is a declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.

Credits

Credits are one of the tools designed to facilitate the implementation of credit transfer systems at national and European level. They are used by authorities, education and training providers, competent bodies and learners to support arrangements for accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes towards a qualification and for Trans-National mobility. Credits [credit points] are allocated to the qualifications and to the units of which a qualification is made up.

Curriculum

A set of actions followed when setting up a training course: it includes defining training goals, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers.

Distance Learning

Education and training imparted at a distance through communication media: books, radio, TV, telephone, correspondence, computer or video.

Employability

The combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during career

EQF

EQF stands for the European Qualifications Framework which is a *meta*-Framework to support *translation* and communication between national qualifications systems and Frameworks.

Formal learning

Learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification.

Human Capital

Knowledge, skills, competences and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate personal, social and economic well-being.

Informal learning

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organized or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.

Initial education/training

General or vocational education carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life.

Key Competences

The knowledge, skills and competences needed to function in contemporary society, e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital competence and mathematics among others.

Knowledge

'Knowledge' is the outcome of the collection and assimilation of information through learning. In the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

Knowledge Society

A society whose processes and practices are based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge.

Learning

'Learning' is a process by which individuals acquire and assimilate information, ideas and values as well as practical and cognitive skills and other personal and social competences. They learn through personal reflection and reconstruction and through social interaction. This process takes place in formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

Learning outcomes

'Learning outcomes' are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

Level descriptors

Level descriptors express the level of knowledge, skills and competences in relation to higher or lower levels of achievements by the individual.

Lifelong learning

The rationale behind lifelong learning is continuous personal and professional development, with no age limit.

National Qualifications Framework

A National Qualifications Framework is a common reference point to all nationally recognized qualifications indicating level of education and training and progression from one level to another.

National Qualifications System

Qualification systems include all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalizing national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent.

Meta-Framework

A meta- Framework' like the EQF is a classification instrument for levels of qualifications designed to act as a translation device between different national and sectoral qualifications systems. For this purpose, the criteria for levels in a meta-Framework are written in a highly generalized form and the EQF does not take over any of the established roles of national systems.

Mutual trust

Mutual trust is a term used in the context of qualifications to indicate quality assurance support measures and accountability in the awarding of certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Non-formal learning

Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It normally does not lead to certification.

Programme (of education and training)

An inventory of activities, learning content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills or competences), organized in a logical sequence over a specified period of time.

Quality assurance

A transparent and clearly defined process to assure that quality education and training and quality deliverables will be built in institutions, training programmes and programmes of studies before the work is done.

Qualification

A 'qualification' is achieved when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. A qualification is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process.

Qualifications Framework

A qualifications Framework provides a system of coordination and for comparing qualifications by relating qualifications to each other, for promoting the quality of education and training provisions, for establishing standards of knowledge, skills and wider competences and for introducing and maintaining procedures for access to learning, transfer of learning and progression in learning. The scope of Framework may be comprehensive of all learning achievement and pathways in a country or may be confined to a particular sector.

Recognition

Formal recognition is the process of granting official status to skills and competences either through the award of certificates or through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained skills and/or competences. Social recognition is the acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders such as employers or national or international institutions.

Referencing Process

The referencing process involves the alignment of the levels of the NQFs to the EQF. This alignment involves the comparison of the level of difficulty established by the learning outcomes detailed in the level descriptors of the two (or more) frameworks with which the NQF is aligned.

Regulated profession

Professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms) is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications.

Retraining

Retraining is a kind of training that enables individuals to acquire new skills giving access either to a new occupation or to new professional activities.

Sector

A 'sector' is a range of professional activities on the basis of their main economic activity, product, service or technology (e.g. chemicals) or as a transversal professional category (e.g. marketing).

Sectoral qualifications system

A 'sectoral qualifications system' is concerned with the qualifications process confined to a specified sector and may exist at national and international level.

Sectoral qualifications Framework.

A 'sectoral qualifications Framework' is defined as the structures and processes established by a sector for the development and implementation of qualifications, including institutional arrangements, quality assurance, assessment and awarding procedures, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market.

Skills

A skill is the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Social Partners

Social partners include employers' associations and trade unions forming the two sides of social dialogue.

Translation device

In the context of qualifications, the term is used to denote the language or methods of verifying the equivalence between one qualification and another. An NQF for example is a translation device to verify whether one qualification carries the same weight of another in terms of content, level of education and training and assessment.

Transparency of qualifications

Qualifications are transparent if their value is readable by, comparable and transferable to other Frameworks: sectoral, regional, national or international. Transparency gives Trans-National value to qualifications.

Transferability of learning outcomes

The degree to which knowledge, skills and competences can be used in a new occupational or educational environment, and/or to be validated and certified.

Upskilling

Short-term targeted training typically provided following initial education or training, and aimed at supplementing, improving or updating knowledge, skills and/or competences acquired during previous training.

Validation (of non-formal and informal learning)

The process of assessing and recognizing a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities.

Valuing learning

All learning is valued when there is the recognition of achievement in formal, informal or non-formal learning.