

## **The European framework for key competences**

The European framework for key competences for lifelong learning, released at the end of 2006, identifies and defines the key abilities and knowledge that everyone needs in order to achieve employment, personal fulfillment, social inclusion and active citizenship in today's rapidly-changing world.

The framework includes competences in 'traditional' subjects, such as mother tongue literacy, numeracy, knowledge of foreign languages, science and IT skills. But it also covers other skills, such as learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative-taking, entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and self-expression.

Initial education and training systems across the EU should support the development of these competences in all young people, and adult education and training need to give real opportunities for all adults to continually build and maintain their skills.

## **The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)**

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning.

The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems.

Agreed upon by the European institutions in 2008, the EQF is being put in practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. An EQF national coordination point has been designated for this purpose in each country.

The core of the EQF concerns eight reference levels describing what a learner knows, understands and is able to do – 'learning outcomes'. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8). This will enable a much easier comparison between national qualifications and should also mean that people do not have to repeat their learning if they move to another country.

The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. This approach shifts the focus from the traditional system which emphasizes 'learning inputs', such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also encourages lifelong learning by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

This reflects a wider shift within which the EQF is acting as a catalyst for reforms: most Member States are now developing their own National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) based on learning outcomes. Several countries (IE, MT, UK, FR and BE-Flanders) already have one in force.

### **Easier comparison**

At present, an enterprise in France may hesitate to recruit a job applicant from, say, Sweden, because it does not understand the level of the qualifications presented by the Swedish candidate. But once the EQF is fully implemented, a Swedish person's certificates will bear a reference to an EQF reference level. The French authorities will have already decided where their own national certificates in the field concerned lie, so the French enterprise would use the EQF reference to get a better idea of how the Swedish qualification compares to French qualifications.

## Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Countries around Europe are increasingly emphasising the need to take account of the full range of an individual's knowledge, skills and competences – not only those acquired at schools, universities or other formal education and training institutions. Recognizing all forms of learning is therefore a priority of EU action in education and training.

Learning that takes place in formal education and training systems is traditionally the most visible and recognised in the labour market and by society in general. In recent years, however, there has been a growing appreciation of the importance of learning in non-formal and informal settings. New approaches are needed to identify and validate these 'invisible' learning experiences.

However, definitions and understandings of what counts as formal, non-formal and informal learning can vary between countries. At European level, the following definitions are used:

- Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support. It is intentional on the part of the learner and leads to certification.
- Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. However, it is intentional on the part of the learner and has structured objectives, times and support.
- Informal learning results from daily activities related to work, family life or leisure. It is not structured and usually does not lead to certification. In most cases, it is unintentional on the part of the learner.

## Looking beyond formal education and training

The validation of non-formal or informal learning is a key element in the EU's actions to support education and training, although individual countries are at different stages in supporting this validation. Some have established systems, while others are only beginning developments in this field.

There are a number of steps at European level. In 2009, the '[European guidelines on the validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)' were published by Cedefop, the EU's reference centre for vocational education and training. Based on common principles adopted by the Council in 2004 and work of the cluster on the recognition of learning outcomes (now the Learning Outcomes Group), they provide a support tool for the development of validation practices.

The European Commission and [Cedefop](#), have also produced an [inventory of validation of non-formal and informal learning](#) with a detailed survey of developments in European countries.

The implementation of the [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) and the development of national qualifications frameworks are also expected to promote validation of non-formal and informal learning throughout Europe.



### **Ziele des NQR**

- Erhöhung der Transparenz von Bildungssystemen;
- Erleichterung der Vergleichbarkeit von Qualifikationen;
- Weiterentwicklung der Lernergebnisorientierung;
- die Förderung größtmöglicher Mobilität von Studierenden, Lehrenden, Wissenschaftler/-innen und Verwaltungspersonal;
- Förderung der Durchlässigkeit innerhalb und zwischen den formalen und nicht-formalen Bereichen des Bildungssystems und damit die Stärkung von Prinzipien und Methoden der gegenseitigen Anerkennung und Anrechnung von Qualifikationen;
- Förderung der europäischen Dimension im Hochschulbereich.

### **Keine Berechtigungen durch Niveau-Zuordnung;**

- Zuordnung zu einem bestimmten Niveau ermöglicht nicht automatisch Zugang zum Erwerb einer Qualifikation der nächsthöheren Ebene;
- ausschließlich orientierende und keine regulierende Funktion.