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Qualifications and the EQF

“A Common Approach from the Sport and Active Leisure Sector to the Tools of Workforce Development and Worker Mobility”

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The KLM case – illustrating the complexity and changes in qualifications (1)

- A UK, University of Kingston, Degree in aircraft engineering;
- Awarded by an autonomous UK University;
- Directly regulated by the European Aviation safety organisation (EASA) and referring to European law;
- Is based on a combination of European, national and company based standards asking for specific outcomes.

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The KLM case – illustrating the complexity and changes in qualifications (2)

- Delivered in cooperation between Kingston University and KLM United Kingdom;
- Assessment very much focuses on the ability of candidates to combine theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

The KLM case illustrates current tensions in qualifications developments:

- National/International awarding bodies and institutions
- From learning input to learning outcomes
- Theoretical or practical basis; knowledge and/or skills



The qualification definition (1)

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

(EQF Recommendation 2008)

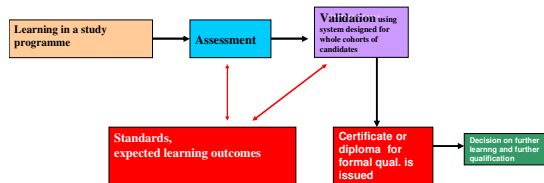


Qualifications – tip of the iceberg of learning






The certification process: Learning, assessment, validation and recognition



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Learning outcomes: the definition

.....statements of what a learner knows, understands or is able to do at the end of a learning process.....

A definition agreed in the context of the EQF Recommendation (2008)

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The black box of qualifications

Traditionally qualifications and their standards have been described on the basis of input

- Duration of a learning process
- The institution
- The programme
- Teaching methods

This only indirectly signals the content and profile of the learning outcomes represented by a qualification. This means poor transparency and weak accountability

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Reforming qualifications – The rapid development of National Qualifications Frameworks

NQFs are instruments for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning outcomes achieved.

integration and coordination of national qualifications subsystems and the improvement of transparency, access, progression and quality of qualification in relation to the labour market and civil society.



National Qualifications Frameworks responding to the EQF

- The EQF and its **8 learning outcomes based levels** has acted as a catalyst for the reform of national qualifications systems
- The big majority of EU countries are now developing overarching NQFs in response to the EQF
- Illustrates that EQF is seen as relevant



Towards overarching National Qualifications Frameworks (situation September 2008)

Having developed NQFs: France, Ireland, Malta, UK

Are developing NQF: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey

Are considering NQFs: Greece, Norway, Sweden



The Opening up of qualifications to learning outside formal education and training

- Lifelong learning requires that learning acquired in different settings (work, voluntary activities, family) is identified and valued
- Lifelong learning also requires lifelong recognition, allowing people to acquire qualifications on the basis of learning outside schools;
- Facilitating validation of non-formal and informal learning is a priority for the EQF and the emerging NQFs
- A shift to learning outcomes could facilitate validation

What matters is not where you have learnt something but what you have learnt



- A common concern that qualifications awarded on the basis of non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes is inferior in quality to traditional qualification;
- This can be countered by using the same standards and applying the same rigour to assessment.

Implementation

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Instruments

- EQF Advisory Group (32 countries and social partners): coordinates process of referencing NQFs/NQSS to EQF; ensures transparency;
 - Criteria and procedures for the referencing of national qualifications levels to the EQF
 - Sub-groups (B) on quality assurance and conditions of mutual trust, (C) on sectoral development related to the EQF
 - Internet platform being developed

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Instruments

- Guidance documents (Explaining the EQF, Guidelines for the validation of informal and non-formal learning, ...);
- EQF test and pilot projects (2006, 2007, 2008; 2009 expected)
- Recognition of Learning Outcomes Cluster working on development of NQFs and validation of non-formal and informal learning



Implementation in countries

- 2010: deadline for relating qualifications levels to EQF;
- 2012: deadline for each individual qualification to carry a reference to the EQF.
- The majority of EU countries are developing overarching NQFs, covering all levels of qualifications – mostly in response to the EQF
- The EQF doesn't require reform, but acts as a catalyst for the reform of national qualifications systems
- National Coordination Points (1st meeting March 2009)



Thank you for your attention

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