



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
EDUCATION AND YOUTH BOARD

Levels of the qualifications frameworks and functions of the qualifications for academic purposes

EPER Online Peer Learning Activity: “Qualifications framework in the recognition of foreign educational qualifications”

26 May 2021

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Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (2013)

Terms for qualifications are the same as used in the LRC, incl. 'academic recognition'

Focuses on the use of QFs as important information and transparency tools in the recognition of higher education and access qualifications.

QFs should be used to make it easier for authorities to assess foreign qualifications.

QFs should be used while considering the five key elements in recognition – **level, learning outcomes, quality, workload and profile.**

Five key elements of qualifications

Level – level itself indicate the level of qualification (Level 4; Level 5; Level 6; etc) in the QF, and as a general rule, no need to investigate the level further.

Learning outcomes – provide reference point for recognition.

Quality – transparent link between recognition, QF and quality assurance.

Workload – while recognising that qualifications should as far as possible assessed on the basis of learning outcomes, authorities may also be guided by in assessment by the workload.

Profile – comparing the nature of the qualification, particularly in the binary higher education systems.

Level and academic recognition

Level of the qualification in the QF is an important **indicator to identify the qualification concerning learning outcomes.**

Reference to the EQF-LLL and QF-EHEA is a **transparency of the qualifications in terms of levels.**

But for academic recognition additional information is always needed – what is the **function of the qualification**, the formal (academic) right the qualification gives to the holder In home system.

National QF together with the reference to the EQF-LLL **may include professions and/or other qualifications not part to the formal education system.**

Qualification framework itself does not facilitate automatic recognition.

Level and recognition for academic purposes

The main concept of academic recognition is to give the same academic right for further study as the qualification gives in home education system.

Qualifications referenced on the **same EQF level** may have **no same academic right** for access to next level or cycle.

Qualifications with the same academic level in the educational system and with the **same academic right for access** to next level or cycle, may be referenced on **different level on EQF**.

In case the **professions or other qualifications outside of the educational systems** referenced on EQF, may have **no academic value** for further study on next level or cycle.

Examples (1)

Same level, but different functions for academic purposes (qualifications may be on different levels on NQF if there are more than 8 levels in the NQF):

Example 1: In addition to a Master's degree, EQF level 7 may include other postgraduate higher education qualifications that doesn't correspond to the Master's degree and doesn't give access to a PhD programme. For example *Postgraduate Diploma*, *Graduate Certificate*.

Example 2: In some countries 2-year Master's programme is divided to M1 and M2 cycles, and both are referenced as EQF level 7 qualifications. But M1 indicate the completion of 1st year of the 2-year programme, and M2 is a complete Master's degree that gives access to a PhD programme.

Example 3: National qualifications *Bachelor (Honours)* and *Bachelor (Pass)* both may be referenced on EQF level 6, but *Pass* degree may have no access to a Master's programme.

Examples (II)

Same level, but different functions for academic purposes (qualifications may be on the same level on NQF as well):

Example 4: General secondary and professional secondary qualifications may have same level (level 4) in the QF, but professional secondary qualification gives access to the certain type of HEIs or programmes only.

Example 5: 'Professional Bachelor' and 'Professional Master' may have the same levels with 'academic' Bachelor (level 6) and Master degrees (level 7), but may not give direct access to next cycle.

Example 6: Qualifications on EQF level 5 are not always 'short-cycle higher education qualifications'. In some systems EQF level 5 qualification is a post-secondary vocational, not part of HE with no any credit transfer to higher education programme.

Examples (III)

Different levels, but with the same academic right for access to the next level or cycle (same function):

Example 7: General secondary education may be referenced by different countries on EQF level 3; 4 or 5.

Example 8: Vocational education and training qualification that gives access to higher education may be referenced on EQF levels 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

For the purposes of academic recognition, the level is an important factor, but most important is to know whether the qualification giving access to higher education or not in the system of foreign education.

Thank you!