

## Suggestions for extending the catalogue of referencing criteria

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Prepared by:	Gerald Thiel, DEKRA Akademie GmbH (DE)		
With contributions from:	/.		

As stated in the conclusions of Deliverable 22, the employability grid can be further developed in order to become a full-fledged tool for explicating the implicit logic of the EQF in a way that it can be used for assessing the adequacy of referencing attempts according to their degree of *work orientation*. This creates the possibility to judge referencing attempts with regard to EQF immanent criteria in terms of *content*, thereby reducing ambiguity and arbitrariness of level assignments.

It is therefore suggested to extend the catalogue of *criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications level to the EQF*. This list comprises currently the following 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.
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.
3. The national qualifications framework 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.
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.
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 ...
6. The referencing process shall include the stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies.

7. The referencing process shall involve international experts.
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.
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.
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.

It is obvious that this catalogue is oriented to quality assurance measures in the narrower, but also in the wider sense of the word. As work in the project *Common Grounds for Referencing NQFs and SQFs to the EQF* showed, the quality of referencing is not only threatened by uncertainties with regard to the backing and transparency of referencing procedures, but also by inconsistencies of level assignments as such i.e. by determining levels mainly based on general *decisions* made a priori in national environments.

In order to reduce this risk, it is recommended to extend Topic 2 of the list of criteria and procedures as follows:

2. There is a clear and demonstrable link between the qualification levels in the national framework or system and the level descriptors of the European Qualifications Framework. ***This link has to be demonstrated with the help of analytical instruments that can identify the basic characteristics of frameworks and compare them with the relevant elements of the EQF, thereby applying the right criteria for selecting the appropriate level assignment.***