

# **The Employability Grid: An Instrument for Eliminating Ambiguity of References to the EQF**

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# Partnership

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# Project Background

- National bodies as well as international sectoral organisations were originally encouraged “to relate their qualifications systems to the EQF and thus show the relationship between international sectoral qualifications and national qualifications systems” (Rec. of Europ. Parl.)
- The EQF *as such* does not deliver enough criteria for assessment and comparison of qualifications: There is a lot of space for controversial views on qualifications with regard to the EQF levels to be chosen and the relative value with regard to other qualifications.

**Under these circumstances, it is even possible that the same qualification/profile is assigned to different EQF levels, depending on whether the link to the EQF is established via a NQF or a SQF ...**

# Overall Objective

- *To create common grounds for referencing national qualifications frameworks and sectoral qualifications/competence frameworks to the EQF, thereby providing for comparability of qualifications on the basis of learning outcomes defined in terms of abilities required by work processes*

# Key Activities

- Create an *employability grid* used as a yardstick for referencability of NQFs and SQFs
- Check referencability of **national qualification frameworks**
- Check referencability of **sectoral qualifications, qualifications frameworks and competence frameworks**
- Initiate collaboration of **public and private stakeholders** on this basis
- Overcome the **EQF information divide**

# The *Employability Grid*

- An approach for mirroring the work process within a holistic model of *abilities* required for working as a professional.
- A grid usable for judging the **work process orientation** of frameworks, thereby delivering ***criteria for referencing them to the EQF***

## Starting Point: The Work Objective

- All work processes can be assembled to each other under the umbrella of a common goal: the **work objective**
- This can be understood as the intention *to create a specific product or to deliver a specific service*

## The Reference Point: The Core Work Objective

- Work objectives might *differ* not only with regard to **content**, but also with regard to organisations who want to deliver the **difference from the work results of the competitor**
- Nevertheless, the work of all refers to a **core work objective based on the state of the art**

## Requirements for Achieving the Work Objective

- The specific **character of the work subject**
- The **scope of the work subject** in relationship to other ones
- The needs of **those who use products or services**
- The **needs of the organisation** which arise from her specific character as an *enterprise* or a *public institution*.
- The needs of **individuals who work for the organisations** intending to deliver a product or service.
- Needs which arise from the **environment** within which the work objective has to be achieved
- The way how work within an organisation is **organised**

## The Way how Work is Organised

- *Organisation is a tool to relate work processes best to the work objective* which implies that the specific character of the requirements<sup>1 – 6</sup> has to be taken in account for this purpose.
- This tool relates work processes to each other via hierarchical relationships between individuals.

## The Definition of an Individual's Work

- *A contribution to achieve the work objective according to the individual's position in the organisational structure.*

If we want to set up a model for this kind of description, we should use *terms for actions which imply the above described reference to an overall work objective*

## The Definition of EQF Descriptors

- (g) 'knowledge' means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;
- (h) 'skills' means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- (i) 'competence' means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

# The Hierarchy between EQF Descriptors

- *Competence steers Skills and Knowledge*

## The Ruling Category: *Competence*

- *Competence* allows for comparison of levels on the basis of a criterion which is related to a couple of complementary concepts relevant for the position of an individual's work in an organisational structure: *responsibility* and *autonomy*.

## The Implicit Logic of Levelling *Competence*

### *Procedure of Identification:*

- All parts of the descriptions which only allow for assumptions and are not differentiated in terms of content, shall be left aside.
- The topic "development of performance" shall for the time being be ignored.
- The *actions* to which *competence* refers and their *context*, shall be considered in order to identify **hierarchical relationships based on a uniform principle**.
- For this purpose, at first *key terms* shall be identified which can be assigned to *actions* and *context*, putting them into a hierarchical order.

## Competence Levels Described by Actions and Contexts: General Approach

**Actions** and **contexts** are described by categories which allow for *oppositions* thus better confining levels from each other.

## Competence Levels Described by Actions and Contexts: Oppositions

With regard to **action** the opposition **subject/object** is suggested:

- in terms of the *relationships to actions of other individuals* this opposition can be formulated as *steering/steered*;
- with regard to the *context* as *determining/determined*.

With regard to **context** the category **change** is suggested which allows for the basic opposition *changing/not changing*.

## On this Basis: A More Formalised EQF Levelling

1. **Ai - , Ac - , C - (s+)**
2. **Ai - , Ac - , C - (s-)**
3. **Ai 0, Ac - , C -**
4. **Ai +, Ac -, C -/+**
5. **Ai +, Ac -, C +**
6. **Ai +, Ac -, C +**
7. **Ai +, Ac +(t), C+**
8. **Ai +, Ac + (t/r), C+**

Ai = Action with regard to action of others

Ac = Action with regard to context, t = transforming,  
r=replacing

C = Context

(s+/-) = structured/not structured

## Format for Describing Competences

*Competences to contribute to the work objective* could then be described referring to the actions of the above indicated table, according to the following scheme:

- *Ability to take [action] thereby contributing to achieve the [work objective]*

[action] would include one of the descriptions of the above indicated ones with a concretised context.

- Work descriptions for qualifications, profiles, etc., of course, do not have this form. Applying the *employability grid* means to *translate available descriptions into this format* in order to be able to assign them to levels.
- This is being done by using a series of **key questions** related to the employability grid.

- You are kindly invited to discuss with us our e-Competence Framework related work!
- Please check our website at <http://www.project-nqf-sqf.eu> and/or contact me under [gerald.thiel@dekra-akademie.com](mailto:gerald.thiel@dekra-akademie.com) or [gerald.thiel@t-online.de](mailto:gerald.thiel@t-online.de)

**Thank you!**