

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

Developed in the Project *Common Grounds for Referencing NQFs and SQFs to
the EQF (NQF-SQF)*

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Partnership of the Project NQF-SQF

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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”. (Recommendation of European Parliament)
- 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 was* even possible that the same qualification/profile was assigned to different EQF levels, depending on whether the link to the EQF was established via a NQF or a SQF.

* The EQF Advisory Group now suggests to reference qualifications only via NQFs.

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 of the Project

- To create an *employability grid* used as a *yardstick* for referencability of NQFs and SQFs
- To set up *typologies* of NQFs and SQFs based on the application of the employability grid
- To draft *recommendations* for improving the referencability of frameworks
- To initiate *collaboration of public and private stakeholders* on this basis

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 assessing 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

1. The specific **character of the work subject**
2. The **scope of the work subject** in relationship to other ones
3. The needs of **those who use products or services**
4. The **needs of the organisation** which arise from her specific character as an *enterprise* or a *public institution*.
5. The **needs of individuals who work for the organisations** intending to deliver a product or service.
6. Needs which arise from the **environment** within which the work objective has to be achieved
7. 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^{1 – 5} 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 *relationship to actions of other individuals* this opposition can be formulated as *steering/being steered*
- With regard to the *context* as *determining/being determined*

For the description of the **context** as such, the category **change** is suggested which allows for the opposition *changing/not changing*

This covers nearly all differences between levels:

A Table for Less Ambiguity of *Competence*

Level	Competence in EQF terms	Action with regard to action of others	Action with regard to context	Context
1	work or study under direct supervision in a structured context	Steered by action of others	Determined by context	Not changing <i>Structured</i>
2	work or study under supervision with some autonomy	Steered by action of others	Determined by context	Not changing <i>Not structured</i>
3	take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems	neutral	Determined by context	Not changing <i>Including changing circumstances</i>
4	exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities	Steering action of others	Determined by context	Not changing/changing
5	exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change review and develop performance of self and others	Steering action of others	Determined by context	Changing
6	manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decisionmaking in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups	Steering action of others	Determined by context	Changing
7	manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams	Steering action of others	Determining context <i>Transforming</i>	Changing
8	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research	Steering action of others	Determining context <i>Transforming and replacing</i>	Changing

.. described in a more formal way

1. $A_i - , A_c - , C - (s+)$
2. $A_i - , A_c - , C - (s-)$
3. $A_i 0 , A_c - , C -$
4. $A_i + , A_c - , C -/+$
5. $A_i + , A_c - , C+$
6. $A_i + , A_c - , C+$
7. $A_i + , A_c + (t) , C+$
8. $A_i + , A_c + (t/r) , C+$

A_i = Action with regard to action of others

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

C = Context

(s+/--) = structured/not structured

If you want to get more information

- ... about the project: Have a look at <http://www.project-nqf-sqf.eu>
- ... about *referencing* : Visit the Qualification Platform of the European Training Foundation (ETF) <http://www.etf.europa.eu> .
A forum dealing with this subject will be opened there at short notice.

Thank you!