

## Exploring the Challenges of Permeability: EQF-5 and Higher Levels (Higher Education and Higher VET)

9 –10 December 2019, MCAST, MALTA



This interactive conference will focus on constructing flexible learning pathways through Levels 5 and higher of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)



### SUB-THEMES

In this memo a next sub-theme, as input for the conference in Malta.

### HIGHER EDUCATION – AND TRAINING

We know Vocational Education and Training (VET) as a sector within the international qualifications system. For the levels up to and including 4 of the EQF, we have formal education (VE), and non-formal education that therefore is examined under the name of training (T). Combinations of these sub-sectors are offered in many countries, looking at the focus of VET. This means that there are units within formal training (for a recognized diploma) that are based on training courses linked to topics and developments that are relevant for the labour market. This is important for the target groups involved, in order to make clear the link to the world of work and the way how to guarantee it.

#### *Link to non-formal qualifications*

For higher education in the international context, there is no sectoral link with 'training', i.e. with that type of non-formal education. That is why there is no mention of the sector HET.

Nevertheless, Higher Education Institutions and other providers of formal higher education can offer programmes of all types and sizes that fall under Business and Personal Training (see the system in the separate document, the box in which a cross (X) is stated). It is therefore about non-formal qualifications at the levels 5 and higher.

It may also be that the quality assurance is provided by external organizations such as professional bodies. But the qualifications have to be placed by their owners via a national coordination point (or a comparable agency or organisation) at the relevant level of the NQF (and therefore also the EQF).

For clarity's sake, in the international context this is not about formal higher education, even though the providers are institutions that provide formal training within the 'Higher Education Area'.

#### *International vs national*

During the conference we will examine whether this approach offers enough possibilities for an international approach, given the transparency of the system. Of course, for the national system each country can make its own choice in a number of aspects. There may be organizations that can provide a qualification independently of the government and guarantee the level and quality. These qualifications may have been added by the government to 'the National Higher Education Area' in a specific way, but not necessary being part of the Bologna Process, having its unique criteria in mind.

The discussion in Malta is emphatically about establishing an international system to guarantee the recognisability of a certain classification.

### **PROGRAMME**

#### ***Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December***

- 09:00 – 09:45 Registration and coffee  
09:45 – 10:35 Opening / Welcome addresses  
*CHAIN5, EfVET, MCAST, Ministry of Education and Employment*
- 10:35 – 10:50 Introduction to the theme and the aims of the conference – based on recent developments  
*EfVET*
- 10.50 – 11.15 A proposal for a model, including three sectors at the tertiary level – looking at the role of the EQF  
*CHAIN5*
- 11.15 – 11.35 Coffee break
- 11.35 – 12:15 The role of the EQF in making the system at the tertiary level more transparent  
- *General introduction*  
- *Developments in Norway in HE and VPE*  
*Plenary discussion*
- 12:15 – 12:30 Short introductions – concerning the key-issues and the workshops
- 12:30 – 13:45 Lunch
- Contributions to the workshops and sessions by:
- Suzanne Gatt, University of Malta
  - Hans Daale, CHAIN5
  - James Calleja, EfVET / MCAST
  - Marjolein van der Moolen and colleagues, NHL-Stenden, the Netherlands
  - Jo Baeyens, Flanders, Belgium
  - Roland van der Poel, Associate degrees Academy, Roosendaal, the Netherlands
- and others
- 13:45 – 14:40 Thematic Workshops – using the key-issues (round 1):
- permeability between a VET College and a Higher Education Institute
  - using international common names, for having more transparency
  - EQF and the role of this framework for qualifications at level 5 and higher
  - role of businesses in lifelong learning, using all qualifications at level 5 for workforce development (institutes)
  - using non-formal qualifications (professional qualifications) as basis for formal programmes at level 5
  - the need for standards and guidelines for permeability between VET and HE
  - role of international associations for VET and HE in having a new 'process'

- 14:40 – 14:50 Short break  
 14:50 – 15:45 Roundtable sessions – using the key-issues (round 2)  
 15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break  
 16:00 – 16:15 Plenary: a student’s vision of the theme of the conference  
 16:15 – 17:00 Plenary: reporting of the workshops and sessions – input for day 2  
*Moderation: CHAIN5 and EfVET*
- 17:30 Transport to the Institute for Tourism Studies  
 - tour and dinner
- 22:00 Transport back to the hotels and other central places

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

- 08:30 – 09:00 Registration and coffee
- 09:00 – 09:10 Welcome
- 09:10 – 10:00 The challenges... seen from a Maltese perspective...  
*Short presentations: VET, University, Employers, Ministry...*
- 10:00 – 10:50 Roundtable sessions: The way forward... what’s next...  
*Using the outcomes and recommendations from day 1*
- 10:50 – 11:05 Coffee break
- 11:05 – 11:45 Plenary: Reflections from an observer and feedback of the delegates
- 11:45 – 12:30 Plenary: Conclusions, recommendations...
- 12:30 – 12:40 Closing of the conference
- 12:40 Lunch
- 14:00 – 16:30 Option: Guided Visit to Valetta

**KEY-ISSUES FOR THIS CONFERENCE**

- How can qualifications be linked to each other for permeability between the two sectors, at the levels 5 and higher of the EQF (and the national frameworks):
  - Higher Education
  - Vocational Education (Vocational and Professional Education - also known as Higher VET)?
- How can we promote cooperation for learning pathways where institutions from those different sectors are involved, and how can they be filled in correctly?
- What is the role of the business community in promoting flexible learning pathways that are making use of both sectors?
- Is there a strong need for ‘international common names’ for qualifications in both sectors, to make the whole system for level 5 and higher levels more transparent for the stakeholders?
- Can common guidelines be drawn up for a strong approach to permeability procedures between the two sectors, to the benefit of students and adult learners?
- What can be the role in all this of the international associations and networks for both sectors, to initiate a process for this, and who can contribute to such an initiative?