

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

As input for the conference in Malta, in this memo more attention for the role of the world of work, knowing that in the private and non-formal sector a lot of qualifications are offered. The role of the so-called Business Academies and the Professional Bodies (representing employees in certain professions) is important, and that's why we have to look at this.

BUSINESS AND PERSONAL TRAINING (BPT)

In more and more countries it can be observed that qualifications that fall under 'non-formal education', will be recognised at a national level. To make their position clear to as many as possible target groups, they are then linked to a level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and therefore also indirectly to the EQF. This is not always necessary... if the value of the qualification is linked to a company, a group of functions, a professional group - and can therefore be seen as a tailor-made programme for employees in a clear working environment. The level is then not always relevant, but it is about the content of the program and its quality - often guaranteed by an own or external organization.

The system, here presented as a proposal for having a greater transparency and which serves as the basis for various discussions and also workshops at the Malta conference, assumes that the procedure for linking a qualification to a level of the NQF has taken place. This allows an organization or institution that offers training in another sector to quickly determine whether a certain qualification can be used for a next step within the entire system. This may include:

- Using the learning outcomes for a procedure for Recognition or Prior Learning
- Including such a non-formal qualification in a programme that leads to a formal diploma, as a way to offer students current competences and learning outcomes.

In any case, it means greater recognisability among all parties that offer qualifications at the tertiary level. The use of the exact 'level' increases the chance of acceptance of each other's offer throughout the entire system. The learners can therefore rely more on being able to organize more flexible learning pathways, without being refused by another provider of qualifications when it comes to being able to enter at an equal or higher level.

As can be seen in the system (also attached here), various sub-sectors can be mentioned under BPT. Institutions for HE and VPE may also be involved in offering qualifications within non-formal education, for instance by using a (private) 'Vocational Training Centre'. What then remains are the training programmes that are explicitly focused on personal development and the competencies that are needed to continue to function within a work environment. For this, (large) companies can have their own Business Academy, but there are many (large and small) private institutions that provide a customized training at the request of employers.

If those qualifications are offered for a longer period, it is worthwhile to link them to the NQF. It can also be indicated that the owners can use the certificate (or diploma) in a better way if they opt for a formal diploma.

During the conference, the relationship between the qualifications that are explicitly linked to the business community will be discussed. Names are used for this such as: professional qualification, business training, but also: in-company training and course.

If they are linked to the NQF, to a level of the framework, these qualifications can also be used for a learning pathway that leads to other qualifications, also in HE and VPE. Having an eye for each other's offer thus leads to more transparency and mutual trust.

PROGRAMME

Monday 9th 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
- Knut Erik Beyer-Arnesen, Norway
- 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)
 - Higher Vocational Colleges: 5 and also 6...
 - 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 10th 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?