

To: Members of CHAIN5
Date: April 19, 2021

Questionnaire in the context of a survey by the OECD Center for Skills

Explanation CHAIN5

It is important to mention in this study that the OECD works with classifying qualifications on the basis of the ISCED framework. This is a fairly detailed framework to also be able to classify specific final levels or courses that have not been fully completed. We therefore work with the EQF, which involves eight levels, without further subdivisions.

Levels ISCED and EQF: differences to keep an eye on for the questionnaire

The ISCED also has eight levels, but with a view to completing the questionnaire, it is important to note the following:

- Tertiary Education at the OECD refers to Higher Education, as we see it in our community.
- In the ISCED level 5 is called: Short Cycle Tertiary Education, but in our approach it is Short Cycle Higher Education.
- Level 6 is the Bachelor, and level 7 is the Master, so that will be the same.
- In the ISCED it is assumed that level 3 can provide access to level 5 (i.e. the Short Cycle), with level 3 as Upper-Secondary Education, while in our approach with the EQF the highest entrance level is level 4 (among others with VET at level 4 and forms of general education).
- In the ISCED, level 4 is then - generally speaking - assigned to education that is seen as 'post-secondary/non-tertiary education' (which can be seen as interesting because tertiary is consecutive after secondary, but tertiary in the ISCED is just assigned to higher education, ISCED level 4 could also be 5 within the EQF, but under the heading we use: Higher Vocational-Professional Education (Higher VET, Higher Vocational Education, Short-Cycle Vocational Education ...).

Questionnaire is intended for ... (to be forwarded to the contact persons of the OECD)

Below you will find a general explanation, also on behalf of the OECD, of the research and the questionnaire.

Based on the above classification, this means that its target group consists of institutions that offer Professional Higher Education at level 5 and higher, so the Short Cycle in any case and the degrees at a higher level.

That could be the institutes that:

- only offer SCHE of this range;
- offering SCHE and higher levels, only with a professional orientation;
- likewise, but within a binary system;
- SCHE and higher levels, in a unitary system, i.e. with what we mean by a University.

But it can also be used for ... and then use for CHAIN5 (forward to daale@chain5.net)

The proposal is to give more of our members the opportunity to complete this questionnaire, partly based on the use of the EQF - and then to give us as CHAIN5 the opportunity to also perform a targeted analysis.

These are the members who are involved in an institute that does not offer courses in formal higher education, i.e. within a National HEA, with application of the requirements set within the Bologna process. These are therefore settings that provide HVPE - as indicated above - at level 5 or higher of the EQF (and the corresponding levels within the own NQF).

So carefully complete question 1 to indicate how your institution is involved in offering qualifications under the banner of HVPE. Any additional information can be stated in question 8.

In that case, send your completed form to daale@chain5.net.

CCC code of the questionnaire

Make sure to change the name of the file by replacing CCC with the three letters of your country (see in the next section where that IBAN code can be found).

Explanation OECD and CHAIN5

We are reaching out to you to seek your collaboration for a project on Professional tertiary education, funded by the European Commission and conducted within the OECD Centre for Skills (<https://www.oecd.org/skills/centre-for-skills/>). The OECD would greatly appreciate receiving your input to the questions included in the attached document, the information will enrich the evidence base of the project and may be used in the final report of this project (to be published in 2022 – and of possible to have a presentation on the early results during our EL5W, in Maribor) as examples of policy and practice.

It would be appreciated if you could modify the title of the document and replace 'CCC' by your alpha-3 country code (see: <https://www.iban.com/country-codes>) and send it back to Viktoria.KIS@oecd.org and Simon.NORMANDEAU@oecd.org by 7 May 2021. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you need clarifications on any item included in the questionnaire.

More about the project

Background

The international landscape of professionally-oriented programmes at ISCED levels 5 and above is hugely diverse – seeing a world of diplomas, certificates, professional examinations, advanced apprenticeships, professional bachelor and master degrees among others.

Programmes sometimes prepare young upper secondary graduates for entry into the labour market, develop higher level or specialised skills for adults in their mid-careers, or offer re-training opportunities for those in need of a major career shift. Some countries have a neatly defined system with a corresponding set of institutions, while in others one type of institution may offer both professionally-oriented and academic programmes.

Some countries do not use a binary label of programme orientation and offer programmes within a unified system of tertiary education. What should be considered as 'professional' is subject to debate: is professional orientation defined by the form of delivery, academic content, or whether it targets a particular occupation? How to classify degree apprenticeships' that lead to an academic qualification? Or programmes that train neurosurgeons, providing advanced academic education and leading to a specific occupation?

Currently countries have not yet agreed on a common definition, which creates hurdles for comparative analysis and data collections.

Objectives

This project aims to improve our understanding of tertiary level programmes with professional orientation across OECD countries. In particular, it will look at the rationale underpinning the definition (or the lack of it) of professional orientation at tertiary level in different countries, the role of programmes that are (or could be) considered as professional in national skills systems, as well as key challenges and policy tools.

Specific issues in focus include trends in participation and the profile of students; access and equity; finance; forms of delivery (work-based learning, online provision); targeted skills and quality. The in-depth analysis conducted in this project will feed into efforts to develop an internationally agreed definition for programme orientation at tertiary level.

With many thanks in advance for your collaboration to this important work.