



# Referencing your NQF to EQF

The opportunity to maximise transparency and international trust in your NQF



HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT MEMBER STATES:

1. use the European Qualifications Framework as a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems and to promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in the knowledge-based society, as well as the further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems;
2. relate their national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010, in particular by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualification levels to the levels set out in Annex II, and, where appropriate, by developing national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice;
3. adopt measures, as appropriate, so that, by 2010, qualification certificates, diplomas and other titles issued by the competent authorities...



Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels

The EQF Recommendation invites countries to refer their qualifications levels to the EQF by 2010. To meet this deadline and to ensure that the referencing process is designed in such a way that it can be understood and trusted by stakeholders in all countries involved, the EQF Advisory Group has agreed on a set of criteria and procedures to guide this process. In addition to listing the 10 criteria/procedures agreed by the EQF Advisory Group, this note contains a brief explanatory part clarifying context and intentions. Further clarification will be brought by debate within the EQF Advisory Group, based on work by its thematic subgroups and on the experience gathered through the practice of referencing.

## 2008 Recommendation

Member States should relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010, in particular by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualification levels to the levels of the EQF and where appropriate, by developing NQFs in accordance with national legislation and practice.

2008

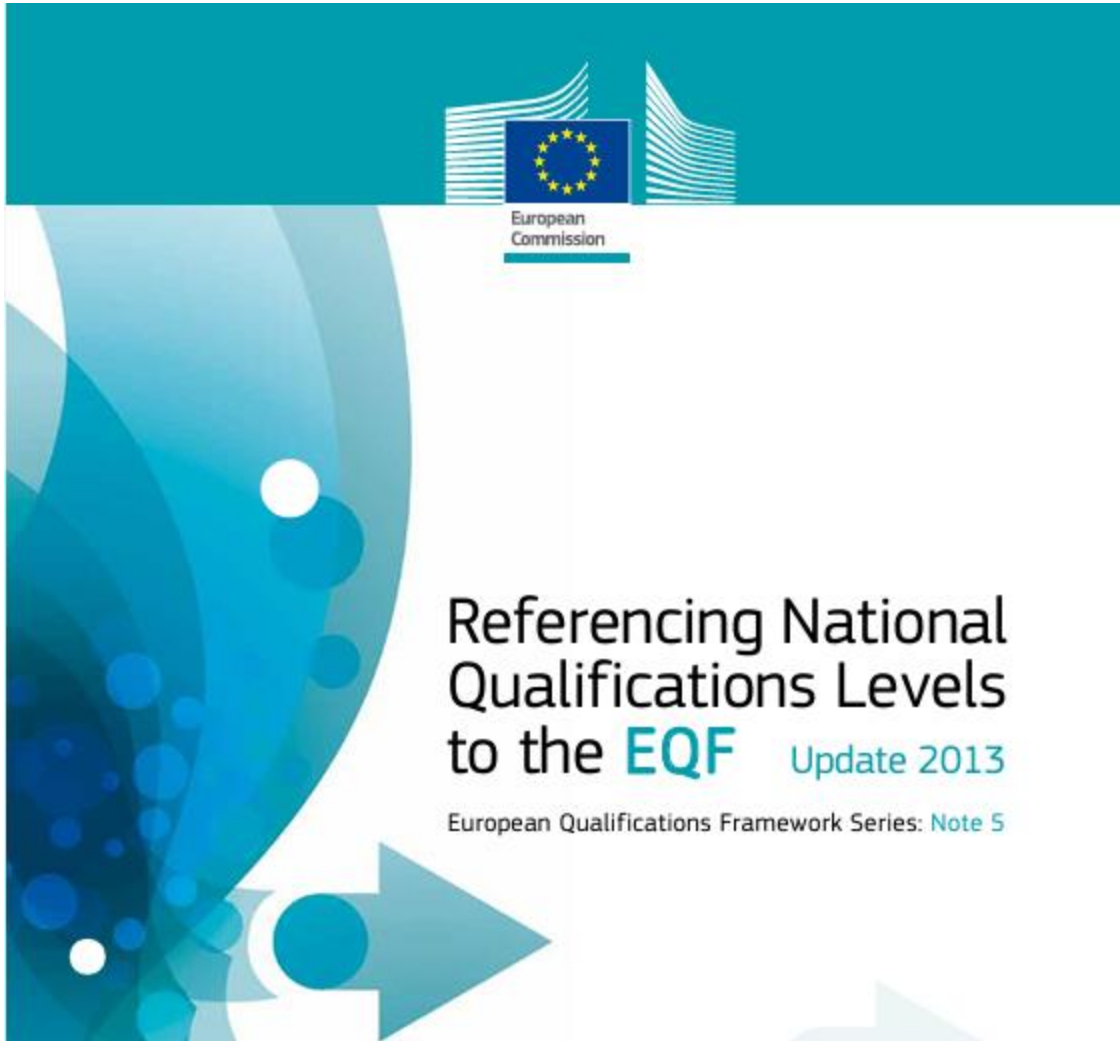
published and integrated in the

**We have seen an evolution from good will towards transparency, quality assurance and trust - Reports have professionalised**

where the relevant national authorities agree on the appropriate link between national qualifications levels and the EQF levels.

is to decide which EQF level is the closest to a national level.

- Criteria and procedures in 10 points to ensure that
  - the **information made public**
  - is **validated by the competent authorities**
  - is **relevant and transparent**
  - **can be compared**
  - **generates trust**
- Similar to QF-EHEA criteria and procedures



Referencing provides information in two main areas.

1. The **scope of the framework** (VET, general education, HE, qualifications outside the formal system), the **criteria and procedures used for inclusion of qualifications** in the framework and **how learning outcomes are understood and used** in the framework;

NQF, Education and Training and Lifelong Learning

2. The **referencing of NQF levels to the EQF levels** including the **methodologies used to link NQF levels to the EQF levels**, **stakeholders' involvement** in the referencing process (including quality assurance bodies), the selection and **involvement of international experts** and **particular challenges and strengths in the referencing process**.

How the NQF can be linked to the EQF

## Our national context and our NQF – possible issues for describing your context and the rôle of the NQF

What is the **purpose of our NQF**? To what extent is it a tool to support lifelong learning, to link different sub-systems, to open up alternative pathways, support career development and personal development, strengthen trust in qualifications?

How is the **education and training system** organised? What are the progression routes? What is the **role of learning outcomes** in education and training? How open is the education and training system for **lifelong learning**? Are adult learning and formal education linked? Are there **alternative pathways**?

**Which types of qualifications are part of the NQF**? Are they covering all formal qualifications from general, VET and higher education? What about adult learning? Which ‘non-formal’ qualifications part of the NQF? Are only full qualifications, included?

**How are qualifications included in the NQF**? What are the criteria? What is the role of learning outcomes?

How are the national levels and domain descriptors defined? **How are learning outcomes understood and used in the framework**? How are they used? Are they used to define or classify qualifications? Are they used for learning and assessment? Are they used in the labour market?

How are qualifications and the certification process **quality assured**? Is the NQF a tool for **recognition**?

QUALITY ASSURANCE –LEARNING OUTCOMES -RECOGNITION

Agree among ourselves how our NQF works and relates to the EQF

Make sure that outsiders can understand our NQF and how it relates to EQF



1. **Setting up the bodies** that will manage the referencing process.
2. A **proposal for the level-to-level linkages** between the NQF and the EQF is made.
3. **National consultation** takes place on the basis of the proposal.
4. A **referencing report is written** that **takes into account the national consultation and the views of international experts.**
5. The **relevant responsible bodies endorse the referencing report.**
6. The **referencing report is presented to the EQF Advisory Group and a discussion follows.** This is normally done in two stages 1. State of Play presentation, 2. Referencing report presentation
7. **Clarifications and further evidence** is provided to questions and comments made by the EQF Advisory Group, and Cedefop
8. When changes in the NQF and relationship between the NQF and the EQF occur, the **report is updated and the EQF Advisory Group informed.**

- **Getting organised**

1. Setting up a steering committee
2. Managing the process – allocate responsibilities, planning, funding, linking EQF referencing – QF EHEA self-certification
3. Identify stakeholders who should be consulted – public authorities, providers, awarding bodies, QA agencies, social partners, learners
4. Making a first proposal for the referencing for consultation
5. Identify and involve international experts and ETF

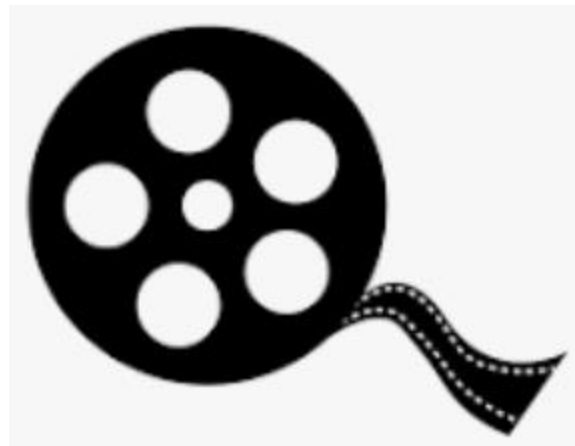
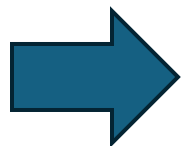
- **Consult nationally, with international experts and ETF – make sure you are ready before you start writing**

1. Decide how to communicate about NQF-EQF referencing
2. Carry out consultations
3. Resolve issues and consolidate decisions on the level to level comparison and other aspects
4. Prepare a State of Play – that can be presented in the EQF AG
5. Agree a structure of your report



- **Prepare the report and consult with EQF AG**

1. Reporting
2. Presentations to the EQF AG
3. Manage queries and comments, including from Cedefop
4. Finalise the report



- **Follow up**

1. General communication of the outcomes
2. Publication of the Report
3. Ensure new qualification certificates, diplomas and 'Europass' documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level;
4. Link the national database of qualifications with the QDR under Europass
5. Update the referencing when the substantial changes in the NQF take place
6. Keep in touch with the Community of Practice through the EQF AG; participate actively

# Sources of information

EQF Recommendation 2008

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>

Criteria and procedures for referencing national qualifications levels to the EQF, 2009

[https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-06/criteria\\_en.pdf](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-06/criteria_en.pdf)

Note 5 on Referencing National Qualifications Levels to the EQF Update 2013

<https://www.nok.si/sites/www.nok.si/files/dokumenti/note5-en.pdf>

EQF Recommendation 2017- Annex III

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01))

EQF referencing reports

<https://europass.europa.eu/en/eqf-referencing-reports>