

Network of national qualifications databases – newsletter

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I. Network of National Qualifications Databases: a tool for comparing qualifications from EU and non-EU countries

Explore the ETF tool for comparing qualifications from EU and non-EU countries

The ETF has developed a tool that allows for search and comparison of qualifications between EU and non-EU countries. Currently, it features qualifications from Germany, Moldova, Tunisia, and Ukraine, with a focus on the construction, hospitality, and care assistance sectors.

This initiative supports better understanding, portability and recognition of skills and qualifications of non-EU country nationals. It further facilitates access to information on qualifications giving priority to the EU candidate and Talent Partnership countries.

Built in line with the ETF's [Network of National Qualifications Databases](#) initiative, it allows users to:

- Search for qualifications using different parameters, including search by skills.
- View information on qualifications in a structured format.
- Find similar qualifications, including suggestions on correspondence between qualifications of EU member states and non-EU countries.
- Compare qualifications.

The tool can allow:

Employers to

- Identify qualifications comparable to a national qualification that they are looking for.
- Identify qualifications that match the desired skills.

Recognition bodies to

- Identify national qualifications, skills and occupations that match a foreign qualification.

Third-country nationals/ migrants to

- Better present their qualifications and skills, including before departure.
- A free service to suggest correspondence with EU qualifications.
- Better understand qualifications required for employment in the host country.

Qualifications Authorities

- Comparing with similar foreign qualifications for updating national qualifications (standards).

Training centres

- Consulting qualifications data for updating curricula and training programme, including for migrants/refugees.

We invite you to access the platform at: <https://etf-qd-dev.cogni.zone/qualification/search>

For more information on how to use the platform, please see the User Guide: [https://etf-qd-dev.cogni.zone/assets/files/User_Guide_\(Minimal\).pdf](https://etf-qd-dev.cogni.zone/assets/files/User_Guide_(Minimal).pdf)

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European Training Foundation

Network of National Qualifications Databases

QUALIFICATIONS MONITORING

Home > Qualifications

Network of National Qualifications Databases

This platform brings together qualifications data from selected EU and non-EU countries and sectors to support comparison and transparency.

Currently, it features qualifications from Germany, Moldova, Tunisia, and Ukraine, with a focus on the construction, hospitality, and care assistance sectors. For more information on how to use the platform, please see the [User Guide](#).

58 Qualifications

Search keywords

Country Language Field of education and training Skills

II Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course

The Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases course is a comprehensive training program designed to equip national policymakers, qualification experts, IT experts, and stakeholders with the skills and knowledge to develop, manage, and implement national qualifications databases.

This course is part of the [European Training Foundation's \(ETF\)\(opens in a new tab\)](#) initiative "Network of National Qualifications Databases" to support partner countries in developing interoperable qualifications databases that increase understanding and comparability of qualifications across countries.

This training course equips you with the knowledge and skills to design, implement, and manage effective national qualifications databases. Following the European Interoperability Framework, the course explores four key dimensions in developing interoperable qualifications systems:

- **Regulatory:** Legal foundations and trust in qualification data
- **Organisational:** Governance, quality assurance, and structured processes
- **Semantic:** Ensuring data clarity and consistency using the European Learning Model
- **Technical:** Core functionalities like data verification, publication, and export

With five interactive modules, this course prepares you to modernise qualifications systems, enhancing the digitalisation of qualifications and boosting interoperability across borders. Your work will directly support recognition and mobility for learners and workers in a more connected education and training landscape.

- **Module 1: Introduction to National Qualifications Databases (NQDs)**

Discover the essentials of national qualifications databases and their networks, crucial for enhancing mobility and recognition in a globalised education landscape.

Explore the fundamental concepts of National Qualifications Databases, the challenges and opportunities that drive the need for better qualifications comparison and recognition

- **Module 2: Regulatory Foundations**

Discover the critical legal and policy frameworks that empower qualifications databases, transforming data into trusted public resources. Learn to build strong regulatory foundations for effective systems.

Module 2 will dive deep into the critical area of governance - the regulatory and organisational foundations that determine whether qualifications database systems succeed or fail, examining specific legal frameworks and policy approaches

- **Module 3: Organisational Strategy and Structure**

Learn how to create a strong organisational strategy and structure, ensuring the long-term success of your qualifications database. Explore how qualifications databases fit into broader education and labour market policies.

Module 3 will unpack organisational strategies, covering stakeholder coordination and implementation processes in detail.

- **Module 4: Semantic Interoperability**

Explore a common language for qualifications data that can facilitate cross-border recognition and opportunities.

Module 4 will focus extensively on semantic interoperability, including hands-on exploration of ESCO, European data model ELM, and structuring qualifications data.

- **Module 5: Technical Considerations**

Dive into the technical architecture and essential functionalities of qualifications databases, ensuring they meet real-world demands effectively.

Module 5 will provide comprehensive technical guidance, from system architecture to API integration and security protocols, and real-world examples through platform demonstrations.

II.1. lesson 3

Module 1: Introduction to National Qualifications Databases (NQDs)

In today's increasingly interconnected world, the ability to understand, compare, and recognise qualifications across different countries has become essential. Whether you're a policymaker, a qualifications expert, or an IT specialist working in education, this module will provide you with the foundational knowledge needed to understand the importance and functionality of national qualifications databases and their networks.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the fundamental concepts and processes behind the national qualifications database.
- Understand the benefits of national qualifications databases for different user groups, including learners, employers, education and training providers and recognition authorities.
- Recognise the value of interoperable qualifications databases for cross-border portability and recognition of skills and qualifications.
- Identify the key stakeholders involved in national qualification databases and their respective roles and interests.
- Identify common challenges in implementing national qualifications databases and understand how these relate to regulatory, organisational, semantic, and technical considerations.

[Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

II.2. lesson 13

Module 2: Regulatory Foundations

Technology alone isn't enough; successful systems require thoughtful governance, clear legal frameworks, and strong organisational support.

Regulatory foundations are the backbone of any qualifications database system that gives the system its legitimacy and authority. It's these legal frameworks that make the data trustworthy and authoritative. Formal legislation, governance structures, and policy mechanisms work together to create an environment where qualification data can be properly collected, managed, and trusted.

In this module, first, we'll examine how to establish proper legal authority for qualifications databases through appropriate legislation. Next, we'll look at regulatory

frameworks for data collection - how to ensure all relevant data is collected consistently and with appropriate quality controls. We'll then explore how subsidiary legislation and technical regulations can standardise data formats while maintaining flexibility for evolution. Finally, we'll address open data principles and licensing, balancing accessibility with appropriate protections.

Throughout the module, we'll examine real-world examples from countries that have successfully implemented these frameworks, providing practical recommendations you can adapt to your own context.

Learning Outcomes:

- Comprehend the legal and regulatory frameworks necessary for qualifications databases
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in data collection process
- Identify regulatory considerations for data collection, data protection and sharing
- Recognise the importance of the publication of information on qualifications as open data

[Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

II.3. *lesson 20*

Module 3: Organisational Strategy and Structure

This module focuses on how to organise the people, processes, and governance systems that will maintain and develop your database long after the initial technical implementation.

Many qualifications database projects struggle not because of technical limitations, but because of unclear roles, disconnected processes, or governance gaps. In this module, we'll explore seven essential components of effective organisational strategy:

First, we'll examine why clear organisational structures are vital for NQD management. You'll learn how to establish governance frameworks, define operational roles, facilitate cross-institutional collaboration, allocate resources, and manage change as your system evolves.

Next, we'll focus on building competent teams with the right mix of skills. This includes defining key roles from data management and technical support to governance and quality assurance, establishing critical responsibilities, and developing essential competencies for each position.

We'll then explore documenting and aligning business processes, creating efficient workflows that connect qualification design, verification, publication, and monitoring. You'll learn practical approaches to document existing processes and align them across stakeholders, leading to significant improvements in efficiency and data quality.

The fourth component addresses the critical choice between centralised and distributed data collection models. We'll compare different approaches – from fully centralised national systems to distributed regional or sectoral models, and hybrid approaches that combine elements of both. You'll understand the implications of each choice for governance, interoperability, and implementation.

We'll also cover data governance principles that ensure transparency and accountability. This includes establishing clear data ownership, quality management frameworks, access controls, lifecycle management processes, and compliance mechanisms.

The sixth component focuses on quality assurance and control, how to ensure the trust in the qualifications database, that the qualifications in your database are actually representing quality assured qualifications from credible institutions.

Finally, we'll explore strategies for effective stakeholder engagement – identifying and mapping stakeholders, establishing consultation mechanisms, developing tailored communication approaches, creating participation opportunities, and building sustainable partnerships.

Throughout this module, we'll provide practical examples and case studies.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to structure teams and processes for the successful management of qualifications databases
- Understand organisational dynamics involved in database implementation and the lifecycle of qualification data
- Explore strategies for effective stakeholder coordination and engagement
- Identify data collection models and quality assurance frameworks that fit your national context

[Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

Module 4: Semantic Interoperability

Semantic Interoperability in qualifications systems refers to the ability of different systems to exchange qualification data while maintaining meaning, context, and interpretability across organisational and technical boundaries. This encompasses the standardisation of information models, ontologies, and data structures that support cross-border recognition and mobility.

This module opens the world of semantic interoperability - perhaps the most complex but crucial aspect of modern qualifications systems. You'll master European data model, explore ESCO's role in connecting qualifications to labour markets, understand the DNA-like importance of learning outcomes, and see how framework integration creates coherent, connected systems.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of structuring qualifications data
- Recognise the importance of learning outcomes in qualifications data
- Identify the core components of the European learning model (ELM) and how these ensure shared understanding of data across different qualifications systems
- Explore the process of mapping data to ELM
- Explore ESCO's role in enhancing comparability and connecting qualifications to labour markets
- Learn approaches for mapping learning outcomes to ESCO
- Understand the role of interoperable qualifications databases in integrating qualifications with other systems

[Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

Module 5: Technical Considerations

This module will bring you to technical implementation - the practical skills needed to build, operate, and improve qualifications databases.

We'll start with data foundations - understanding how qualification data moves through its entire lifecycle from creation to retirement, and the common challenges that arise when managing semantic data in real systems.

Then we'll dive into standards implementation, both semantic and technical. We'll see how the frameworks we've discussed in other modules actually get implemented in code and configurations.

Next comes system integration - this is where we explore APIs and the practical aspects of making different systems talk to each other.

Finally, we'll get hands-on with practical demos. We'll explore the QDR platform to see how the European qualification dataset register actually works, and we'll look at the ACQF platform to understand how these principles apply in the African context.

By the end of this module, you'll have moved from understanding concepts to seeing how they work in practice. You'll be equipped to make informed technical decisions about your own qualifications database implementation.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore the technical aspects of developing, integrating, and managing qualifications databases
- Learn about essential tools, technologies, and methodologies for database development
- Understand best practices for database integration, security protocols, and system scalability
- Identify common technical challenges and solutions for databases implementation
- Explore the technical implementation of the European learning model

[Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

III Mapping qualification data to the European Learning Model (ELM)

Countries use different formats for describing qualifications, employ varied terminology, and take different approaches to defining learning outcomes. Many systems also contain legacy data in non-standardised formats that weren't designed for international comparison. Effective mapping transforms this heterogeneous data into a common format, enabling meaningful qualification comparison across borders, supporting recognition processes, and creating the foundation for secure digital credential exchange.

When mapping qualification information to the ELM, you need to align your qualification data fields with corresponding ELM properties.

Discover how to effectively map national qualification data to the European Learning Model (ELM), ensuring meaningful qualification comparison across Europe and beyond. Explore methodologies, tools, and best practices for successful implementation in **lesson 35 “Mapping data to the European Learning Model” (Module 4)** of the [Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

IV Mapping learning outcomes to ESCO

Learning Outcomes (LOs) describe what learners know, understand, and can do upon completion of a qualification. However, for these outcomes to be truly valuable in the labour market, they need to be connected to employment opportunities. This is where the European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations ([ESCO](#)) classification becomes crucial.

A qualification described in the database can be mapped to ESCO skills for international comparability, job matching and career guidance services, and Labour Market Information systems.

Explore **Manual Skills Search Using the ESCO Platform** and **automated tools for mapping learning outcomes to ESCO** in lesson 37 **“Tools for mapping learning outcomes to ESCO” (Module 4)** of the [Introduction to the National Qualifications Databases Course](#)

See how ESCO mapping helps to compare qualifications in the **ETF tool for comparing qualifications** [Home | ETF](#)

V Resources:

- **ETF Policy Briefing on the Network of National Qualifications databases**

This policy briefing provides insights about the role of qualifications databases, why it is crucial to make them interoperable, and the use of existing European tools to support interoperability and information exchange between the countries

[Network of national qualifications databases | ETF](#)

- **ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP)**

The ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform (QCP) is a continental multilingual platform to serve as a trusted, authoritative source of information on qualifications across Africa.

Visit the ACQF website to follow the development of Africa's emerging qualifications platform. [Qualifications Platform \(QCP\) — ACQF](#)

Visit the ACQF QCP platform [ACQF Qualifications and Credentials Platform](#) (currently in development, data entry phase is ongoing)

eLearning courses on QCP and qualifications databases:

<https://acqf.academy.knowledgeinnovation.eu/>