



Mobility of graduates and the development of suitable national qualification frameworks

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Structure

- The beginnings of the European Higher Education Area
- The Dublin Descriptors
- The emergence of European and national qualifications frameworks
- The QF for German Higher Education
 - its relation to the German NQF-LLL
 - reasons for its current revision
- Perspective

The beginnings of the European Higher Education Area

- Bologna, 1999: Greater mobility of students and graduates was one of the corner stones of the vision of a European Higher Education Area.
- Most continental European countries had since the 19th century replaced the traditional degrees Bakkalaureus and Magister by national degrees: Kandidaat, Magister, Licence, Maîtrise, Licencjat, Laurea, Inzynier, Diplom...

Achieving compatibility and comparability

Returning to the European roots seemed like a logical remedy to this situation, not least because the differentiation into Bachelor and Master studies is by far the most common structure world-wide.

Bologna Declaration, second bullet point:

“Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate.”

Structural changes: only the first step

Mobility (both credit and degree mobility, but also that of graduates) requires trust and mutual understanding:

What does a Bachelor in business studies from a Portuguese university know and understand, what is he or she able to do, and is it comparable to a Bachelor from a Finnish university?

In other words: How can we shift from comparing input (titles of study programmes, duration) to comparing learning outcomes and competences?

First step: the Dublin Descriptors, 2004

Very generic descriptions of competences at Bachelor, Master and doctoral level.

E.g. Bachelor:

“Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle are awarded to students who have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study; can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study; etc...”

Dublin Descriptors:

Catalyst for the emergence of qualifications framework in Europe and at national levels

- The QF for the European Higher Education Area (2005)
- The European QF for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL, 2008)
- The QF for German higher education degrees (2005)
- The German NQF-LLL (2012)

The QF for German higher education degrees (2005)

- Jointly developed by **HRK** and **KMK** (Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs), in consultation with academics, students, social partners
- Strongly influenced by **Dublin Descriptors**
- 2 main **categories**:
 - Knowledge and Understanding
 - Applying knowledge (instrumental, systemic and communication competences)
- The HE-QR became the basis of programme accreditation in Germany

In 2012 the German NQF-LLL was adopted – why did it not replace the HE QF?

- The **German NQF (or: DQR)** covers **all** levels of qualifications, including general (school) education, vocational ed. and HE
- Elaborated by an expert group representing the governments, social partners, representatives of general, vocational, higher, and non-formal/informal education
- For **levels 6, 7 and 8** it refers to the formulations of the **HE-QF**
- The HE-QF defines competences that are **specific to academic education** and it forms the basis for accreditation decisions.

The task and the unique features of HE

- Unlike Vocational Education, **HE does not prepare for a specific job** (exceptions: medicine, law, teacher education)
- HE makes graduates **employable in a wider sense** by providing them with competences such as critical thinking, problem solving, dealing with the unexpected or with incomplete data, citizenship, etc.
- The **HE-QF** spells out what competences are needed for this
- Defining the specific objectives of HE on the one hand and of VE on the other is the **basis for recognition of prior learning**, more mobility between the sectors, lifelong learning
- Currently we are **updating the German HE-QF**

The revised HE-QF tries to highlight the specificities of HE...

... by refining the categories:

- **Knowledge and understanding:** competences acquired with regard to subject-specific knowledge; the broadening, deepening and reflection of knowledge, problem-solving abilities
- **Use, transfer and creation of knowledge:** application of knowledge, knowledge transfer to new and unexpected situations. Includes the research-oriented and research-based creation of knowledge.

Categories, continued:

- **Communication and cooperation:** the competences needed to discuss how to solve problems, to cooperate with colleagues and others, to reflect on the perspective of others
- **Academic personality, professional conduct:** professional awareness and self-reflection, ability to argue and reason within the range of one's own responsibility, to reflect repercussions on society

Next Steps

- Include the highest level of competences in **arts and music** in HE-QF (still missing)
- Have the revised HE-QF **adopted by HRK and KMK**
- Present it to all stakeholders in the **German QF working group**
- Inspire disciplines to use the revised HE-QF as a starting-point for the development or the review of **sectoral QF**, which in turn can help in competence-oriented curriculum development

Perspective

By defining quite clearly the specific features of higher education, the new HE-QF has the potential to

- increase trust among all stakeholders,
- further improve quality assurance procedures and decisions,
- facilitate the recognition of competences acquired in another higher education institution or in vocational education, and
- thus foster the mobility of students, graduates, lifelong learners from various backgrounds.

HRK

**Thank you very much
for your attention!**