

BFUG Board

EQF/LLL and the Bologna Qualifications Framework

10 June 2006

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning issued in June 2005 in a European Commission consultation paper and discussed intensively in the EU-member states and at a conference in Budapest in February this year is now undergoing a substantial revision.

Members of the Bologna working group on Qualifications Framework have been involved in this work: Seán Ó Foghlú has been member of the technical working group and I have had the opportunity to give some advises regarding relation to the Bologna Framework.

It is my personal opinion to bring to the Board that the result of the revision (see annex) is satisfactory from a Bologna point of view.

The first reason for that is that the new set of descriptors are much more simple than the previous ones. It makes them more general compared to the more specific Bologna descriptor for higher education.

The second reason is that a reference to the Bologna descriptors is now an integrated part of the EQF/LLL. The EQF-descriptors for the upper levels are general for all kinds of qualifications but for HE-qualifications there is a reference to the descriptors used in the Bologna framework.

The reason for not taking the text of the Bologna descriptors literally into the EQF is that in some countries you have high level qualifications, which are not HE-qualifications and that the EQF has to take that into account. It also builds on a slightly different methodology.

The Bologna working group will discuss the EQF descriptor set in its meeting in September probably on the basis of an official proposal from the European Commission. If the proposal follows the present draft I will ask the working group for a positive opinion to be taken into the final working group report.

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European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Grid of statements defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework, 180506

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of statements ('descriptors') indicating the learning outcomes relevant to the award of a qualification at that level in any system of qualifications.

	Knowledge	Skills	Competence [Autonomy and responsibility]
Level 1 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic general knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply basic skills to carry out simple tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the competence to work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
Level 2 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply basic cognitive and practical skills to use relevant information to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the competence to work or study under supervision with some autonomy
Level 3 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply a range of cognitive and practical skills in accomplishing tasks and solving problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the competence to take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study the competence to adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
Level 4 The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply expertise in a range of cognitive and practical skills in generating solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competence in self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change the competence to supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities

<p>Level 5* The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the limitations of that knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply expertise in a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills in developing creative solutions to abstract problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competence in management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change the competence to review and develop performance of self and others
<p>Level 6** The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, in solving complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competence in the management of complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts the competence to take responsibility for continuing personal and group professional development
<p>Level 7*** The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ability to apply specialised problem-solving skills in research and/or innovation to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competence in managing and transforming work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches the competence to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

<p>Level 8**** The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to apply the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competence at the forefront in work or study, including research contexts, demonstrating substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly or professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes
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Compatibility with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for cycles. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle.

* The descriptor for the higher education short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle), developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5

** The descriptor for the first cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 6

*** The descriptor for the second cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 7

**** The descriptor for the third cycle in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 8