

Strasbourg, September 7, 2020

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EHEA
NETWORK OF NATIONAL COORDINATORS FOR
QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS 2021 - 24**

Distribution: NQF Network

INTRODUCTION

In the draft Rome Communiqué, it is suggested the Network of national correspondents for qualification frameworks (NQF network) continue in the 2021 – 24 work period. In the current version of the draft Communiqué, the paragraph on the network reads:

*We [the Ministers] commit to completing and further developing the **National Qualifications Frameworks** compatible with the **Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)** and ask the BFUG to continue to update the criteria for self-certification to include a stronger element of peer review of national reports. We mandate the **Network of QF correspondents** to continue its work in the coming period, contributing to the further development of the QF-EHEA and the self-certification of national qualification frameworks against it.*

The BFUG has decided to consider draft ToRs for all groups and Networks in the current work program that cover areas included in the draft Communiqué at its meeting on September 24 – 25. It is understood that the groups will only be established if the relevant work area is included in the Communiqué as adopted by the Ministers, and the BFUG may adopt the final version of the ToRs by circulation or in an online meeting soon after the Ministerial conference. The intention with this procedure is to ensure that implementation of the work program can begin immediately after the Ministerial conference, in view of the time lost due to the COVID pandemic. ToRs for any new groups may be considered at the first meeting of the BFUG in spring 2021.

Draft ToRs for the NQF Network will be found in the Appendix, for consideration by the Network. The ToRs are similar to those for the current period, with the addition of two important points:

- developing proposals for arrangements to strengthen the peer review of national self-certification reports and processes;
- advising on how and to what extent smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed and implemented within the QF-EHEA and national qualification frameworks.

The first corresponds to what has been a main topic in discussions over the past year or two, while the second covers a relatively new topic that will be included in the Rome Communiqué, as far as such units – including micro-credentials – can be related to NQFs.

ACTION

The NQF network is invited to advise on the draft ToRs.

APPENDIX

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EHEA NETWORK OF NATIONAL COORDINATORS FOR QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS 2021 - 24

Name of the Network EHEA Network of National coordinators for qualifications frameworks
Coordinator Council of Europe
Composition Coordinators of national qualifications frameworks for higher education of all EHEA member states, European Commission, EHEA consultative members.
Purpose and/or outcome <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To exchange experience and offer advice in the development, implementation, and review of national qualifications frameworks2. Further coherence between national QFs and the Overarching Frameworks of Qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA)3. Further coherence between the QF-EHEA and the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)4. Advice EHEA members and the BFUG on issues related to the QF-EHEA and national qualifications frameworks.
Reference to the Rome Communiqué <p>[Current version of the Communiqué; to be adjusted if the relevant parts of the Communiqué are modified.]</p> <p><i>We commit to completing and further developing the National Qualifications Frameworks compatible with the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and ask the BFUG to continue to update the criteria for self-certification to include a stronger element of peer review of national reports. We mandate the Network of QF correspondents to continue its work in the coming period, contributing to the further development of the QF-EHEA and the self-certification of national qualifications frameworks against it.</i></p> <p><i>Flexible and open learning paths, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of student-centered learning and are in increasing demand in our societies. In addition to full degree programmes, many higher education institutions are offering or may offer smaller units of learning, which enable learners to develop or update their cultural, professional, and transversal competences at various stages in their lives. We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed and implemented by our institutions using EHEA tools.</i></p>
Specific tasks

The Network shall act as a forum for debate and advice on issues related to the QF-EHEA and national frameworks, in particular with a view to:

- ensuring coherence between national frameworks and the QF-EHEA;
- ensuring coherence between the QF-EHEA and the EQF;
- advising on the development and implementation of ECTS-based short cycle qualifications as stand-alone higher education qualifications within the QF-EHEA in countries that wish to develop and implement which short cycle qualifications;
- advising on how and to what extent smaller, flexible units, including those leading to micro-credentials, can be defined, developed and implemented within the QF-EHEA and national qualification frameworks;
- encouraging periodic reviews of the implementation of national qualifications frameworks for higher education;
 - encouraging and providing advice on renewed self-certification of national frameworks for which developments make this necessary or desirable;
 - developing proposals for arrangements to strengthen the peer review of national self-certification reports and processes.
 - encouraging reflection on how national qualifications frameworks can best help education systems fulfill all major purposes of higher education.

Working method

Annual meetings of the Network with the participation, as far as possible, of representatives of all EHEA members and consultative members. The meetings will normally be held in September/October.

When desirable, joint activities with the EQF Advisory Group or national contact points may be organized.

The Network is coordinated by the Council of Europe, which brings the outcome of its work to the attention of the BFUG as well as the EQF Advisory Group.

Reporting

Reports will be submitted to the BFUG and Board in writing.