Referencing the Norwegian Qualifications Framework (NQF) to the EQF

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Norwegian Qualifications Framework

- The Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education was adopted in March 2009.

- The Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQF) was adopted in December 2011.

- It covers all levels of the formal education and training system.

- The QF for Higher Education is integrated in the NQF.
NQF – main features

• Main outline: 7 levels numbered 2-8

• The descriptors are divided into the three categories *knowledge, skills* and *general competence*

• Each category is described by the use of learning outcomes
The process towards the NQF

The Norwegian Qualifications Framework for Higher Education

- A working group (WG) with members from the Ministry and relevant stakeholders was established in 2005.

- The WG’s proposal for a QF for higher education was sent on public consultation, resulting in a substantial revision of the draft.

- The framework was adopted in March 2009.

- The intermediate qualification *høgskolekandidat* was included in the framework in December 2011 following public consultation.
The process towards NQF (II)

The Norwegian Qualifications Framework for LLL

- The development of a framework for the remaining levels started in 2006

- All relevant stakeholders were involved through participation in a large consultation group

- Following a public consultation in 2010, the NQF was adopted in December 2011.
The referencing process

• January 2011: Establishment of a referencing and self-certification group with members from the Ministry, relevant stakeholders and national and international experts

• Spring 2011: The University of Oslo conducted a technical review on the compatibility between the NQF and the EQF, and on the comparability between the NQF and the QF-EHEA
The Norwegian education system 2014

Age | Grade
--- | ---
19  | 14
18  | 13
16  | 11
13  | 8
6   | 1

Upper Secondary Education
- Apprenticeship training
- Advanced Course I
- Advanced Course II
- Advanced Course III
- General Subjects Supplement

Higher Education
- Bachelor
- Master
- Ph.D. (3 years) / Dr. Philos

Tertiary vocational education
- Folk high schools

Primary and Lower Secondary Education
- Lower secondary education
- Primary education
- Compulsory education

Adult education
## Correspondence between the NQF and the EQF

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<th>EQF</th>
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<td>Level 3: Partially completed upper secondary education and training</td>
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Criterion 1
Responsibilities and Involvement

The referencing process has involved:

• A steering group
• A referencing and self-certification group with relevant stakeholders
• The National Coordination Point (NCP)
• Consultation meeting with stakeholders
• Consultation with other ministries
Criterion 2
Correspondence between NQF and EQF level descriptors

- Technical reports from the University of Oslo used as support for the referencing group’s examination of comparison between the NQF level descriptors and the EQF descriptors

- The referencing group’s analysis and conclusions were mainly made on the basis of the national context:
  - learning outcome descriptors in the NQF
  - national legislation on education and training.
Criterion 3 (I)
Learning outcomes and validation of non-formal and informal learning

- NQF learning outcome descriptors are categorised as **knowledge, skills, and general competence**

- All formal programmes are based on the LO and the descriptors in the NQF

- The LO in formal education and training programmes are used as reference for validation of non-formal and informal learning
Criterion 3 (II) Credit systems

- Qualifications at NQF levels 6, 7 and 8 are credit based and ECTS compatible (60 credits per year)

- Qualifications at NQF level 5 are credit based (60 credits per year)

- ECVET is not yet implemented in VET education and training level 4
Criterion 4  
Procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF  (I)

*Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Qualifications:*

- The Ministry of Education and Research approves national curricula, which are the main instruments for quality assurance.

- VET qualifications and curricula are developed through tripartite cooperation to ensure relevance for working life
Criterion 4
Procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF (II)

Tertiary vocational qualifications:

- New programmes are recognised following application, expert assessment and other formal requirements

- Inclusion takes place when a programme is recognised by NOKUT, or when a provider approved for a specified discipline area establishes a new programme
Criterion 4 Procedures for inclusion of qualifications in the NQF (III)

Higher Education

• Higher education must be accredited.
• Accredited higher education institutions are free to establish and provide programmes at certain levels, depending on institutional category, without applying for external accreditation.
• Programmes at a level not covered by the institutional accreditation must have programme accreditation.
• All external accreditations are carried out by NOKUT.
• Private HEIs without institutional accreditation have to apply to NOKUT for all new programmes.
Criterion 5 Quality Assurance (QA)

Levels 2 – 4
National quality assessment system levels 2-4:
- Statutory part: School-based assessment and annual status report from school-owner to County governors
- County governors responsible for external QA
- The QA mechanisms are linked to the NQF through national regulations.

Levels 5 – 8
- Institutions are required to have quality assurance systems
- NOKUT is responsible for external quality assurance
- NOKUT is member of ENQA and EQAR and QA at levels 6 – 8 is in line with ESG
Criterion 6
Stated agreement of the relevant quality assurance bodies

The report has been agreed by the following bodies:

- Ministry of Education and Research
- Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) – levels 5 – 8
- Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training – levels 2 – 4
Criterion 7 International experts

Two international experts have been involved in the referencing process as full members of the referencing group. These are:

- Carita Blomqvist, The Finnish National Board of Education, Finland
- Jim Murray, Institutes of Technology Ireland
Criterion 8
Certification of the referencing

• The referencing group has verified and documented the referencing between the NQF and the EQF.
• The Ministry of Education and Research is the competent body for referencing
• The report addresses each of the ten criteria and procedures agreed on by the EQF Advisory Group
Criterion 9 Publication and completion of referencing

The referencing report will be published on NOKUT’s website
www.kvalifikasjonsrammeverket.no
Criterion 10
Reference to EQF on qualification documentation

• There is no decision as yet on the reference to EQF on certificates, diplomas, or other qualification documents

• Regulations to this effect will be sent for public consultation
Main challenges and next steps

• Challenges:
  – Implementation in practice at all levels at all institutions
  – Writing good learning outcomes linking properly to the NQF
  – Assessment of achieved learning outcomes

• Next step:
  – A committee has been appointed to look into the possible inclusion of non-formal learning