



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

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)

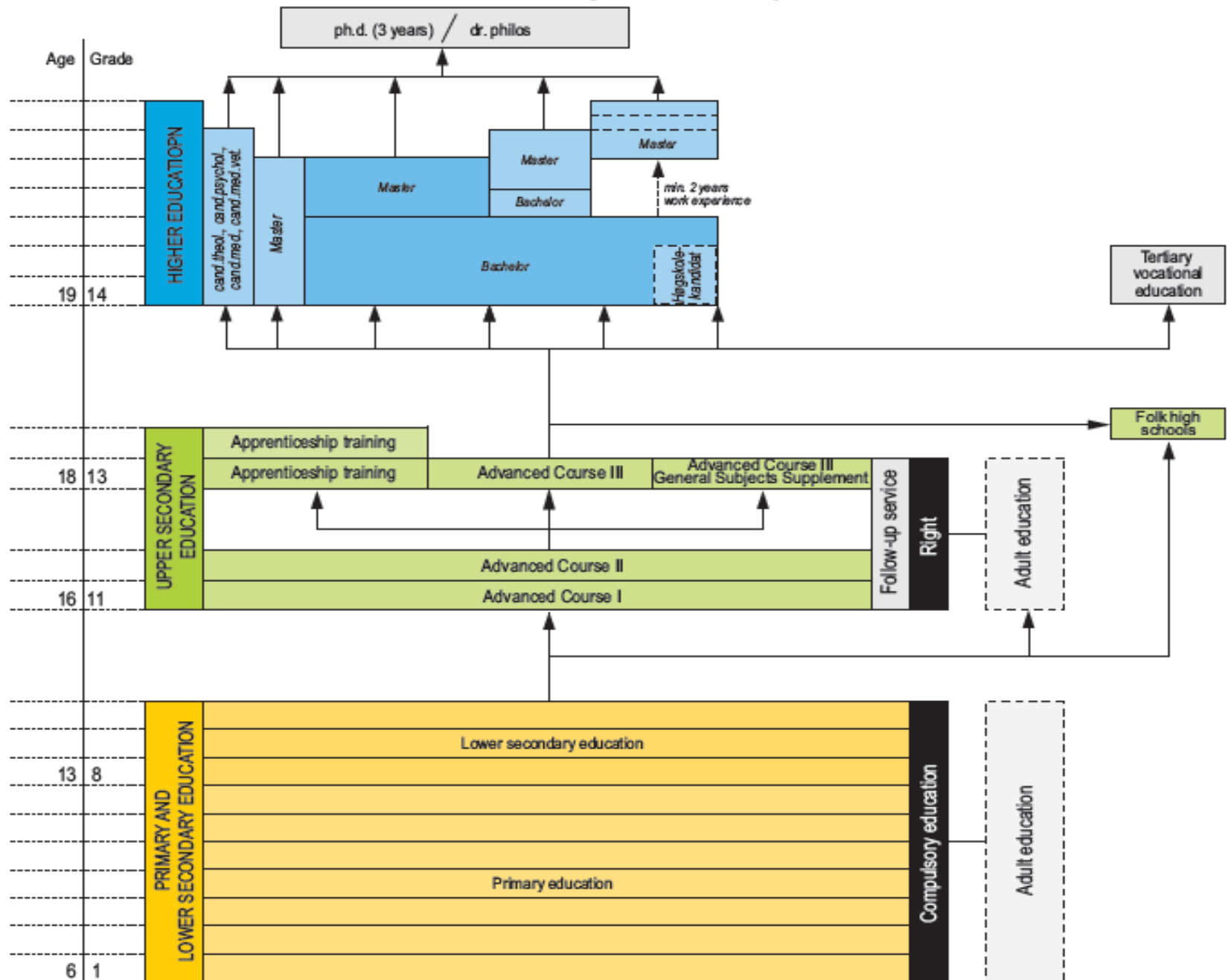
The Norwegian Qualifications Framework for LLL

- 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



Correspondence between the NQF and the EQF

| NQF | EQF |
|--|----------------|
| | |
| Level 2: Primary and secondary qualifications | Level 2 |
| Level 3: Partially completed upper secondary education and training | Level 3 |
| Level 4a and 4b: Upper secondary qualifications | Level 4 |
| Level 5.1: Tertiary vocational qualifications | Level 5 |
| Level 5.2: Tertiary vocational qualifications | Level 5 |
| Level 6.1: Høgskolekandidat (“university college degree”) | Level 6 |
| Level 6.2: Bachelor ‘s degree (1st cycle) | Level 6 |
| Level 7: Master ‘s degree (2nd cycle) | Level 7 |
| Level 8: PhD (3rd cycle) | Level 8 |

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