



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

The German Qualifications Framework (DQR)

Transparency, Comparability and Parity of Esteem

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

EQF Recommendation of April 2008, revised in May 2017

Member States were/are recommended to

- “use the European Qualifications Framework as a reference tool to compare the qualification levels of the different qualifications systems...”
- “relate their national qualifications systems to the European Qualifications Framework by 2010, in particular by referencing, in a transparent manner, their qualification levels to the levels set out in Annex II, and, where appropriate, by developing national qualifications frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice;”
- “adopt measures, as appropriate, so that, by 2012, all new qualification certificates, diplomas and ‘Europass’ documents issued by the competent authorities contain a clear reference, by way of national qualifications systems, to the appropriate European Qualifications Framework level; “

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

Structure of the EQF: 8 levels

Original level descriptors according to 2008 EQF Recommendation:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- **Competence**

Revised descriptors according to 2017 EQF Recommendation:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- **Responsibility and autonomy**

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

- EQF Governance: EQF Advisory Group (EQF AG) chaired by the European Commission
- 3-4 meetings per year
- Project groups and Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) on specific topics
- Members of the EQF AG: Member States, European Commission, Cedefop, ETF, European social partners, European students and youth organisations, European training providers' organisation
- Currently 38 countries (UK not included) are participating in the EQF process
- 28 EU Member States, 10 Non EU countries
- So far 36 countries have referenced their National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) to the EQF, Albania and Spain are expected to

reference by the end of 2020

DQR: The beginning

Main driver for the DQR development: **EQF**

In October 2006

- the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and
- the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Educations and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)

agreed to work together on the development of a German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (**Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für Lebenslanges Lernen: DQR**)

DQR Governance

Federal Government/*Länder* Coordination Point (Bund-Länder-Koordinierungsstelle: B-L-KS)

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)
- Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy (BMWi)
- Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (KMK)
- Standing Conference of the Ministers of Economics of the *Länder* (WMK)

- Jointly chaired by BMBF and KMK
- **Coordinates** the DQR-process
- Principle of **consensus** for decision making
- Acts as the EQF National Coordination Point (NCP)

DQR Governance

German Qualifications Framework Working Group (Arbeitskreis DQR: AK DQR)

- Members of the Federal Government/*Länder* Coordination Point
 - Social Partners, Federal Employment Agency
 - Stakeholders of all education sectors (formal, non-formal), e.g. German Rectors' Conference, Students' organisation
 - Other experts from research and practice
-
- Involves all relevant stakeholders
 - Jointly chaired by BMBF and KMK
 - Principle of **consensus** for decision making
 - **Co-ownership** of all stakeholders

DQR objectives and expectations

- Increasing **transparency** in the German education system
- Enhancing **comparability** and better understanding of qualifications in Germany and Europe
- Enhancing **visibility** of equivalences and differences of qualifications
- Fostering **parity of esteem** of vocational education and training (VET) and general, and higher education
- Supporting **quality assurance**
- Supporting **mobility** of learners and workers

DQR objectives and expectations

- Facilitating the **recognition/acceptance** of qualifications acquired in Germany in Europe
- Strengthening the **competence orientation** of qualifications and fostering the shift to **learning outcomes**
- Facilitating the **validation of non-formal and informal learning**
- Supporting **permeability** and **lifelong learning**

Character of the DQR: It ...

... is a **comprehensive framework** covering general education, VET and

higher education (so far only from formal education system)

... is a **transparency** instrument, not a regulatory instrument

... was developed not as a reform instrument but to mirror the existing education system and has become a driver for further developments

... does not replace existing access and admission regulations

... describes the **parity of esteem** of qualifications, not their sameness

... allocates qualifications, not individual competences

... shall permit the inclusion of qualifications acquired in non-formal settings but is not an instrument for their validation

is based on strong involvement of stakeholders (Principle of

The DQR structure

8 levels defined by learning outcomes and corresponding to the EQF

Level indicator			
Structure of requirements			
Professional Competence		Personal Competence	
Knowledge	Skills	Social Competence	Autonomy
Depth and breadth	Instrumental and systemic skills, judgement	Team/leadership skills, involvement and communication	Autonomous responsibility/responsibility, reflectiveness and learning competence

The concept of competence in the DQR

- **Competence** within the DQR describes the ability and readiness of the individual to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and methodological competences and to behave in a considered, individual and socially responsible manner. Competence is understood in this sense as the **comprehensive ability to act**.
- The DQR presents competence within the dimensions of **Professional competence** and **Personal competence**. Methodological competence is understood as a cross-sectional competence and for this reason is not separately stated within the DQR matrix. (In contrast, the EQF describes competence only in terms of the assumption of responsibility and autonomy.)



Level 4

Be in possession of competences for the autonomous planning and processing of technical tasks assigned within a comprehensive field of study or field of occupational activity subject to change.

Professional competence		Personal competence	
Knowledge	Skills	Social competence	Autonomy
Be in possession of deeper general knowledge or theoretical professional knowledge within a field of study or field of occupational activity.	Be in possession of a broad spectrum of cognitive and practical skills which facilitate autonomous preparation of tasks and problem solving and the assessment of work results and processes according consideration to alternative courses of action and reciprocal effects with neighbouring areas. Provide transfers of methods and solutions.	Help shape the work within a group and the learning or working environment of such a group and offer ongoing support. Justify processes and results. Provide comprehensive communication on facts and circumstances.	Set own learning and work objectives, reflect on and assess such objectives and take responsibility for them.

Milestones of the DQR-Implementation

- October 2006: Joint decision of the Federal Government and the *Länder* to develop a German qualifications framework
- 2007-2009: development of the framework
- 2009: first draft of the DQR with 8 levels followed by a testing phase
- March 2011: Adoption of the framework
- January 2012: Agreement on allocations of „anchor“ qualifications of the formal education system (VET and higher education, general education was postponed)
- 2012: Referencing of the DQR to the EQF. Presentation of the German referencing report to the EQF Advisory Group in December 2012

Milestones of the DQR-Implementation

- May 2013: Official implementation of the DQR based on a joint resolution between the Federal Government and the *Länder*
- May 2013: Launch of the DQR-database indicating DQR-/EQF-levels of allocated qualifications
- Gradually as of January 2014: Indication of DQR-/EQF-levels on certificates and certificate supplements of VET qualifications and on diploma supplements for higher education qualifications
- March 2017: Allocation of general school leaving certificates on levels 2, 3 and 4
- February 2018: Start of a pilot to test a possible procedure for the inclusion of non-formal qualifications; Linking the DQR-database with the *Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal* (Now: *Europass*)

Coverage of qualifications

- **VET (IVET + CVET)**

- Vocational training preparation schemes on level 1 and 2
- Dual VET (apprenticeship) 2-year training courses on level 3
- **Dual VET (3-year and 3½ -year) + school based VET on level 4**
- CVET: Further vocational training qualifications according to Vocational Training Act (BBIG) and Handicraft Code (HwO) on level 5-7
e.g. Master Craftsperson “*Meister*” or Senior clerk “*Fachwirt*” on level 6; Certified business economist “*Betriebswirt*” or Certified vocational training specialist “*Berufspädagoge*” on level 7

Coverage of qualifications

- **General education**

- *Hauptschulabschluss* = Lower secondary school leaving certificate (level 2)
- *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* = General education school leaving certificate obtained on completion of grade 10 at *Realschule* (level 3)
- *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* = Upper secondary general education school leaving certificate (higher education entrance qualification) (level 4)

- **Higher education**

- Bachelor (level 6), Master (level 7), Doctoral + equivalent artistic studies (level 8) – included as “types” (individual study programmes/courses are not listed in the database, approx.

Target groups

- Learners
- Workers
- Employers
- Education and training providers

Impact of the DQR so far

General remarks:

- So far, no „formal“ evaluation of the DQR has been carried out in Germany (too early, implementation takes time!)
- The impact depends on the particular character and objectives of a particular national framework
- While the European dimension (transparency and mobility in Europe) was an initial driver for the DQR development, the DQR has become a driver for developments on national level

Impact of the DQR so far

Benefits of the DQR (and the EQF) so far:

- Increased **communication, understanding** and **trust** across education sectors
- Increased **transparency** and better **understanding** of qualifications
- **Visibility** and increased **acceptance of parity of esteem of VET and higher education**, especially through the learning outcomes based **comparison** of qualifications and the indication of DQR-/EQF-levels on qualifications documents/database
- Further implementation of the **learning outcomes approach** in curricula as well as in training and assessment ordinances and thus fostering the **competence orientation**
- VET seems to benefit most from the DQR

Impact of the DQR so far

- Better **visibility of further vocational training (higher VET)** showing that German VET is not only the „dual system“ but a comprehensive system of initial and further training covering qualifications from DQR-/EQF-level 3 to 7 (e.g. Master craftsmen on level 6, Certified technical business management specialist on level 7)
- Building awareness that success in a professional career is not only possible with an academic degree thus promoting the attractiveness of VET
- Further structural development of further vocational training (3 level system corresponding to DQR-/EQF-levels 5-7) triggered by communication and comparison with higher education
- Profile building of VET and higher education

Impact of the DQR so far

Study on how the DQR can be used by different target groups
(December 2016, financed through NCP-Grant)

Focus on

- employers
- education and training providers in different education sectors

The objective was to find out how the DQR is/can be used by the target groups and identify best practices .

Impact of the DQR so far

Some findings:

- DQR can have a clear added value for different target groups
- There is a wide range of possible usages for different target groups
- Added value is seen in
 - **transparency and comparability of qualifications** ,
 - **transparency of competence levels**,
 - **learning outcomes approach** for describing qualifications,
 - **visibility of personal competence**
 - **comparability/parity of esteem of VET and higher education**
- Especially **SMEs** can use and benefit from the DQR as a **competence model/framework** in human resources management
- DQR has reached target groups but still needs communication

DQR Website and Database www.dqr.de

- DQR website incl. Database launched in 2013
- First version financed by national funds
- Content: Information on DQR, database, information on benefits for target groups, service with downloads etc.
- Enlargement according to Annex VI of EQF Recommendation 2017 financed by EU grant with further information (e.g. learning outcomes)
- Languages: German, partially English
- 1,225 individual qualifications are listed in the database (August 2020) with the largest numbers at level 4 (627) and level 6 (453)
- Visits in 2019: 287,458

Referencing the DQR to the EQF

- Referencing took place in 2012
- Main purpose: Establishing the correspondence between levels of DQR and EQF
- Quality assurance plays a central role as well as the methodology of allocating qualifications to the levels of the NQF
- Drafting of the referencing report involving European experts from Austria, Finland, UK and EUAPME („critical friends“)
- Content of referencing reports: Description of the education system (part I) meeting the 10 referencing criteria (part II)
- Two meetings with European experts
- Presentation of the German referencing report to the EQF Advisory Group in December 2012

Current Issues of the DQR/EQF Development

Current issues of the DQR development

- Development and agreement on a procedure for the allocation of qualifications from the non-formal sector (qualifications which are not regulated by the state)

Current issues of the EQF development:

- Taking transparency one step further
- Allocation of qualifications from the non-formal sector
- Allocation of international (sectoral) qualifications
- Third country dimension of the EQF

Thank you for listening!

Contact:
Sabine Schüller
Federal Ministry of Education and Research
Email: sabine.schueller@bmbf.bund.de