



FINNISH NATIONAL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Development and main contents of the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning

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Recognition and International Comparability of Qualifications

Finnish National Board of Education

www.qualificationsframework.fi

www.oph.fi/recognition

Preparation of the framework

- ◆ Development Plan for Education and Research 2007–2012: A national framework based on the description of competence produced by qualifications and other learning will be prepared by 2010.
- ◆ An extensive preparatory committee (NQF Committee) appointed by the Ministry of Education, term from 1.9.2008 to 30.6.2009.
- ◆ The Committee submitted its report in August 2009.
- ◆ Consultation process on the committee proposals 8–10/2009 (86 opinions were submitted).
- ◆ The framework was endorsed; proposals for changes concerned details.
- ◆ The report formed a basis for the Government Proposal to Parliament for an Act on the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning.
- ◆ NQF Committee was involved in preparation of the Government Proposal.



Involvement of stakeholders

The Finnish NQF process has been organised to include as broad a range of stakeholders as possible (strong ownership from the start).

NQF Committee was chaired by the Ministry of Education and consisted of the following representatives:

1. The Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Defence Command Finland (Ministry of Defence)
2. Finnish National Board of Education
3. Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland, Confederation of Finnish Industries, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Finnish Confederation of Professionals
4. The Association of Vocational Adult Education Centres, Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences, Vocational Education Providers in Finland, Finnish Association of Principals, The Finnish Council of University Rectors, Finnish Adult Education Association, the National Union of University Students in Finland and the Union of Finnish upper secondary students.

Objectives of the framework (1)

- ◆ To increase national and international transparency and comparability of qualifications
- ◆ To improve the effectiveness and clarity of the qualifications system:
 - describes Finnish qualifications and other competence modules in a coherent, understandable and comparable manner
 - harmonises the terminology used
- ◆ To define the relationships between qualifications and other competence modules
- ◆ To increase the visibility of the Finnish qualifications system
- ◆ To facilitate international mobility from Finland to other countries and vice versa
- ◆ To facilitate mobility within the education system and to promote transition to further and supplementary education

Objectives of the framework (2)

- ◆ To enhance identification and recognition of prior learning
- ◆ To support lifelong learning
- ◆ To focus more attention on the learning outcomes required by qualifications
- ◆ To assist educational institutions and higher education institutions to focus more on learning outcomes when developing their curricula and programmes
- ◆ To improve the quality of Finnish education
- ◆ To support quality assessment



Key content of the Government Proposal (1)

- ◆ Enacting an Act on the National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning
 - The qualifications included in the Finnish national education and qualifications system will be classified into eight levels on the basis of their respective learning outcomes.
 - Provisions on the descriptors of the requirements levels and placement of qualifications, syllabi and other competence modules at different levels will be laid down by Government Decree.
- ◆ The National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning will describe the learning outcomes required by Finnish qualifications and competence modules by means of criteria agreed through European co-operation, in terms of knowledge, skills and competences: a holistic description of learning will be given.



Key content of the Government Proposal (2)

- ◆ In the first phase, the framework will only encompass the qualifications specified in the legislation of the educational administration and other administrative sectors.
- ◆ The framework is not intended to include (in this phase):
 - continuing education or other education not leading to a qualification
 - any procedures and requirements used by various authorities to grant rights to practise a profession or perform certain work duties
 - any competence modules extending or consolidating qualifications that fall outside the qualifications system.
- ◆ The intention is to expand the qualifications framework into a wider framework for learning at a later date.
- ◆ The Act would subsequently apply to extensive competence modules comparable with qualifications.

Key content of the Government Proposal (3)

- ◆ Accreditation of prior learning: the aim is primarily to include prior learning as part of the qualifications within the national qualifications system and framework in accordance with current practice.
- ◆ Laying down provisions on the framework will not:
 - affect the contents of existing qualifications
 - harmonise the contents of qualifications placed at the same level
 - change the eligibility for further studies provided by different qualifications.



Key content of the Government Proposal (4)

- ◆ The Ministry of Education and Culture will be responsible for:
 - development of the framework
 - preparation of legislative amendments related to the framework
 - consultation with other ministries and stakeholders during the legislative preparation phase.
- ◆ The mapping of the development and updating needs of the framework in co-operation with stakeholders will be integrated into the existing forms of stakeholder co-operation and preparation of the qualifications structure proposals.
- ◆ The expertise of National Education and Training Committees will be utilised in mapping development and updating needs.
- ◆ The Ministry of Education and Culture has designated the Finnish National Board of Education as Finland's national co-ordination point in 2008.

Draft Decree: descriptions of the requirements levels and placement principles

- ◆ The descriptors are based on the EQF and specified from a national perspective.
- ◆ The level descriptors are general and should be further specified by field in the national core curricula and qualification requirements and other curricula.
- ◆ The qualifications and syllabi will be placed in the framework according to their learning outcomes in such a way that although a qualification may include elements from several requirements levels of the framework, it is placed at the most suitable level overall (the principle of ‘best fit’).



Draft Decree: descriptions of the requirements levels and placement principles

- ◆ Qualifications or competence modules placed at the same level may focus on different dimensions of learning.
- ◆ All qualifications of a certain type would primarily be placed at the same level in the framework (excl. individual vocational qualifications).
- ◆ Instead of placing individual qualification modules separately in the framework, these will be placed at the same level as the entire qualification.

Placement of qualifications at the NQF levels (Government Proposal)

National level = EQF level	Qualification, syllabus, special qualification
1	
2	
3	Basic education syllabus
4	General upper secondary school syllabus and matriculation examination, upper secondary vocational qualifications (VQ), further vocational qualifications (FQ) Basic Examination in Prison Services, Diploma in Police Studies, Fire Fighter Qualification, Response Centre Operator Qualification
5	Specialist vocational qualifications (SQ), VQ in Air Traffic Control, FQ in the Construction Industry, Finnish Police Sergeant's Examination, Sub-Officer Qualification (fire and rescue services)



6	Polytechnic Bachelor's degrees, lower university degrees (Bachelor's), SQ in Management, SQ in Business Management, SQ in Psychiatric Care, SQ for Construction Site Managers, SQ for Riding Instructors
7	Higher polytechnic degrees (Master's), higher university degrees (Master's)
8	Universities' scientific and artistic postgraduate degrees (licentiate and doctorate degrees), universities' professional postgraduate degrees (Specialist Degree in Medicine, Specialist Degree in Dentistry and Specialist Degree in Veterinary Medicine), General Staff Officer's Degree



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF- level 4

- ◆ Possesses the knowledge base in broad contexts in his/her field and certain cognitive and practical skills and expression skills and is capable of making use of such knowledge and skills to solve specific problems in his/her field and to carry out tasks in the field. Works independently in operating environments that are usually predictable, but are subject to change.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 4

- ◆ Takes responsibility for completion of his/her tasks and works safely and responsibly within a working community. Is capable of economical, productive and systematic action and of organising work. Is capable of supervising routine tasks performed by others. Possesses the capabilities to work in an entrepreneurial manner in someone else's service or as an independent entrepreneur. Assesses his/her competence and improves actions relating to work or studies. Develops himself/herself and his/her work.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/ NQF-level 4

- ◆ Possesses the capability for continuous learning. Knows how to communicate diversely and interactively in various situations and to produce varied and also field-specific texts in his/her mother tongue. Is able to deal with different people in learning and working communities and other groups and networks, complying with ethical principles. Can communicate at an international level and interact in both national languages and at least one foreign language. Complies with sustainable working and operating practices.



Government Proposal

Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 5

- ◆ Possesses comprehensive and/or specialised knowledge in his/her field and cognitive and practical skills and expression skills and is capable of making use of such knowledge and skills when solving abstract problems creatively and performing tasks in the field. Understands the interfaces between vocational functions and within the field and between different fields.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 5

- ◆ Is capable of managing and supervising operating environments that change unpredictably. Is capable of supervising tasks performed by others. Possesses good capability to work as an independent entrepreneur in the field. Assesses and develops his/her own as well as others' performance and work.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 5

- ◆ Possesses the capability for continuous learning. Knows how to communicate verbally and in writing in his/her mother tongue both to audiences in the field and outside it. Is able to deal with different people in learning and working communities and other groups and networks, complying with ethical principles. Is capable of communicating at an international level and interacting in his/her field in both national languages and at least one foreign language. Complies with sustainable working and operating practices.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 6

- ◆ Possesses comprehensive and advanced knowledge of his/her field, involving a critical understanding and appraisal of theories, key concepts, methods and principles. Understands the extent and boundaries of professional functions and/or disciplines. Possesses advanced cognitive and practical skills, demonstrating mastery of the issues, the ability to apply knowledge and develop creative solutions and applications required in a specialised professional, scientific or artistic field to solve complex or unpredictable problems.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 6

- ◆ Is capable of managing complex professional activities or projects or is capable of working independently in expert duties in the field. Is capable of making decisions in unpredictable operating environments. Possesses at least basic prerequisites for working as an independent entrepreneur in the field. Is capable of taking responsibility for development of other individuals and groups, as well as for assessment and development of his/her own competence.



Government Proposal Learning Outcomes EQF/NQF-level 6

- ◆ Possesses the capability for continuous learning. Knows how to communicate to a good standard verbally and in writing in his/her mother tongue both to audiences in the field and outside it. Is able to deal with different people in learning and working communities and other groups and networks, taking account of communal and ethical considerations. Is capable of communicating at an international level and interacting in both national languages and at least one foreign language. Complies with sustainable working and operating practices.



How to proceed?

- ◆ Government Proposal under consideration by Parliament from 10/2010 to ?/2011. The expert consultation process is underway.
- ◆ The Decree will be finalised when the Education and Culture Committee of the Parliament submits its report.
- ◆ At the same time as the consideration of the Government Proposal and the finalisation of the Decree, a referencing report will be prepared for international use.
- ◆ New preparatory committee to determine other extensive competence modules to be included in the Framework by 2012?