

Ofqual – EQF

Qualifications Frameworks in the UK

EQF – European Qualifications Framework

NARRATOR: The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, EQF, is a reference framework that allows learners and employers to understand how qualifications from different countries compare to each other.

It will help to develop a Europe-wide workforce that is mobile and flexible and will help learners and workers who are moving between countries from job to job and from one education or training establishment to another.

Employers will be better able to assess the skills of potential employees from other countries, while the qualifications of learners and job applicants will be more easily recognised across the European Labour Market, which will support a much better match between workforce supply and demand.

The EQF uses eight levels that are based on knowledge, skills, and competence. Each of the eight levels are defined by a set of descriptors, indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level. Each level should be achievable through a variety of education and career paths.

The focus is on learning outcomes: what a person holding or studying a particular qualification actually knows and is able to do. Qualifications across the UK are already described in these terms.

At present, an enterprise in France may hesitate to recruit a job applicant from say, Sweden, because it does not understand the level of the qualifications presented by the Swedish candidate. The French authorities will have already determined the level of their own national qualifications, so the French enterprise would use the EQF reference to get a better idea of how the Swedish qualification compares to the French qualifications.

Laura Hogger

Catering student, Westminster Kingsway College

LAURA HOGGER: If I was going to take my qualification abroad, what would hold me back would be if the country didn't recognise my unit board, or they didn't understand the type of qualification that I've taken in the UK. So I'd have to retake my exams when I go to that country.

William Budden

Catering student, Westminster Kingsway College

WILLIAM BUDDEN: What holds me back from taking my qualification abroad is other employers in other countries may not understand the qualification I'm taking, and may not understand how qualified I am to take a role in a kitchen.

LAURA HOGGER: The EQF benefits me because it enables me to go to a different country using the same qualification that I've taken in this country and use it abroad and work in that country as well.

WILLIAM BUDDEN: The benefits will be the fact that I have a bit of peace of mind. Other employees in other countries will be able to understand my qualification and I'll be able to show how much hard work I put into it and how qualified I am for a role.

Jez Langhorn

Vice-president of people, McDonalds

JEZ LANGHORN: At McDonalds, we hire people based on their qualities, not just their qualifications, which means we attract a diverse mix of people into our restaurants. Having the right qualifications is really important, particularly for specific roles in our corporate functions.

We've seen an increase in the number of applicants from all the markets across Europe. And, of course, people are becoming more economically mobile, so being able to recognise and contrast qualifications from across Europe is really important for employers. So, I believe the introduction of the EQF is a really positive move. It will help employers to both compare and contrast qualifications from markets right across Europe.

NARRATOR: All of the qualifications frameworks in the UK have now been referenced to the EQF. Moving forward, the EQF will form part of a range of European initiatives for vocational education and training to strengthen and help to make European mobility a reality for many more people.

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For more information please contact one of the UK, EQF National Coordination Points Ofqual, CCEA, SCQF Partnership and Welsh Government.

Or visit http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare_en.htm