

THE FRENCH NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK



THE REFERENCEMENT PROCESS TO THE
EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK
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Qualifications in France



Three types of qualifications

- Qualifications awarded by the State and placed under the responsibility of ministries (education, higher education, employment, agriculture, health,...) – around 15000 degrees-
- Qualifications awarded by private and public educational institutions having received an agreement of the national body in charge and registered in a national list (CNCP) – around 1500 diplomas-
- Qualifications awarded by professional sectors having received an agreement from social partners, - around 500 certificates

The process

- Different for each type of qualification but having more or less the same steps
- Needs analysis
- Drafting a new programme leading to a qualification
- Consultation of employers and social partners (a French specificity) to verify the opportunity of the qualification (mainly for ministries and third sector)
- Decision of implementation

The organisation: 4 categories of institutions in charge of qualifications

- The CPC (Consultative Professional Commissions) for secondary diplomas awarded by ministries
- The National Commissions for HE (CNESER), engineers' diplomas (CTI) or for Business Schools
- The CNCP for qualifications awarded by private or public institutions without reference to a State degree
- The Commissions for employment (CPNE) for certificates awarded by sectors

An overall organisation

- **The CNCP: Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle**
 - Official body placed under the responsibility of the Prime Minister
 - 2 Commissions: a plenary Commission -16 representatives of ministries, 10 social partners, 3 representatives of Chambers of Commerce, 3 of Regions and 11 experts- (orientation and decisions) and a specialised Commission- 10 representatives of ministries and 10 social partners (technical advice on qualifications)
- A national common reference, the **RNCP: Répertoire National des Certifications Professionnelles** presenting on a website, on a common format all qualifications awarded in France

The French framework



Two nomenclatures (1967 and 1969)



- Identification of 5 levels
- Based for the first one on the hierarchy of qualifications
- With a first try for the second to establish a link with the level of activity

Levels

- V First level of vocational qualification (CAP – BEP)
- IV Level Baccalauréat
- III Level Technician degree
- II Level Bachelor or equivalent
- I Level Master/Engineer degree

The referencing process to the EQF
and its consequences on the French
Qualifications Framework

The 10 Referencing Criteria



It is required to demonstrate:

- The responsibility and/or legal competence of all relevant national bodies involved in the referencing process (N°1)
- That there is a clear and demonstrable link between the national qualifications framework and the level descriptors of EQF (N°2)
- That national frameworks and their qualifications are based on learning outcomes (N°3)
- That the processes for including qualifications in NQFs are transparent (N°4)
- That national quality assurance systems refer to NQFs (N°5)



- Agreement of Quality Assurance bodies (N°6)
- Involvement of international experts (N°7)
- Certification by the competent national body (bodies) of referencing of the national framework with the EQF (N°8)
- Registered in the official EQF platform public listing of countries having completed the referencing process (N°9)
- Clear reference to the EQF level on all new qualification certificates, diplomas and Europass documents (N°10)

Criteria for referencing to the EQF

- ✿ **Criterion 1 :** All documents linked to the NQF are discussed by competent bodies or institutions and published in the « Journal Officiel ».
- ✿ **Criterion 2 :**
 - A clear correspondence between descriptors of the EQF and descriptors of the NQF has been set up
 - However, as the French Qualifications Framework is based on the traditional framework, difficulties have been met in classifying some qualifications which were between two levels. A provisional decision has been taken by actors in charge of the referencing process to guarantee the relevant level.

- ✿ **Criterion 3**
 - Validation of non formal and informal learning is practiced since years, and especially since 2002 with a law making compulsory validation of experiential learning for all qualifications registered in the Repertoire. Partial or full qualifications can be awarded by this way
- ✿ **Criterion 4**
 - Registration in the Repertoire is based on an official document published in the “Journal Officiel”.
 - Decision criteria are public. Educational institutions may appeal to the administrative court.



✿ **Criteria 5 and 6**

- Quality assurance procedures in HE refer to EQF
- Regarding qualifications not presented by the ministries, the accreditation process of the CNCP is usually considered as a quality assurance procedure
- The positioning decision in NQF is of the responsibility of the CNCP
- The attachment of a qualification to a level needs an agreement from Quality Assurance Agencies when existing for this qualification.

✿ **Criterion 7**

- Two international experts have been involved in the referencing process.



✿ **Criterion 9**

- The referencing report is sent to the EQF Advisory Group after the official presentation

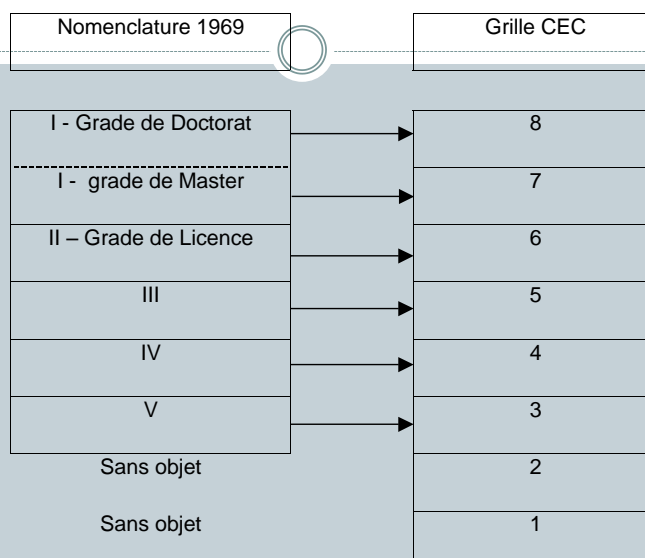
✿ **Criterion 10**

- All qualifications awarded will mention the level in NQF and the level in EQF.
- The diploma or certificate supplement is part of the file registered in the RNCP

First consequences

- The 5 levels are not covering the whole spectrum of the French qualifications
- The Bologna process obliges to establish a distinction between Master and Doctorate and to identify 4 levels for HE (3+1)
- Discussions on the introduction of approaches based on learning outcomes
- Links with credit systems.

FRENCH QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK REFERENCED TO THE EQF



CONCLUSION



Why a NQF? (1)



- The answer of a country to create an environment facilitating national and international mobility, from one sector to another, from companies or activities;
- To reinforce the links between the educational system and labour market, to make it more reactive to the needs;
- To modernise qualifications and their assessment;
- To facilitate validation of non formal and informal learning.

Why a NQF? (2)

- To present a general vision of the educational system including and articulating all options and making possible continuity and progression, reducing ruptures and dead-ends
- Integrating current reforms (for instance Bologna process in HE)
- To contribute to the quality of the system

What is a NQF

- A tool classifying all qualifications (transparency)
- According to a unique set of relevant criteria in a country (descriptors)
- Contributing at the identification of coherent levels of knowledge, skills and competences (each level has a single definition)
- Making possible continuity and progression (LLL)
- Guaranting quality of qualifications

What is not a NQF

- A copy of the EQF
- A tool:
 - Classifying employments
 - Assessing people
 - Creating a hierarchy of programmes
 - For social negotiations

What could we wait from a NQF?

- Not only the production of a national grid
- But a wide reflection:
 - On education and training system and its relationships with the labour market
 - On the shift from « inputs » to « learning outcomes »
 - A learner centred approach
 - On the recognition of non formal and informal learning
 - On building lifelong learning pathways with milestones (based on the accumulation of credits?)

The conditions to meet

- There is no NQF possible without questioning the whole educational system from the conception of qualifications to the awarding process
- Necessity to adopt a common language which is more than the adoption of the same vocabulary, integrating a conceptual dimension
- Necessity to adopt a shared definition of levels and descriptors
- Necessity to take into account the shift from programmes and contents to learning outcomes; from arrangements to learners
- The articulation between HE and other sub-systems remains a challenge (especially at EQF levels 5 and 6)
- The NQF must be conceived as dynamic and forecast

The expected positive effects

- **For individuals :**
 - Help for advice and counselling for pupils and students
 - Favour successful learning pathways for all
 - Favour progressive professional pathways
- **For companies and sectors:**
 - HR management
- **For the society:**
 - Better adequacy between education and training and labour market
 - Better international readability in a context of globalisation

Thank you for your attention

