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EQF and Transversal Skills

What can be learned from Qualification Frameworks for the assessment of transversal skills

Research Conference TRANSVAL-EU

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Agenda

14:00 – 14:15	Welcome and Introduction
14:15 – 14:30	On the EQF, Learning Outcomes and Descriptors
14:30 – 14:40	Competences in the Common Transversal Competence Framework
14:40 – 15:10	Market Stands on Selected Competences
15:10 – 15:30	Plenary Discussion: Advantages and Obstacles

Getting to know each other

- Are you familiar with the EQF?
- Have you worked with descriptors before?
- What is your background with regards to EQF and/or Validation and/or Transversal Skills and Competences?
- What comes to mind when you think of common ground between EQF and validation?

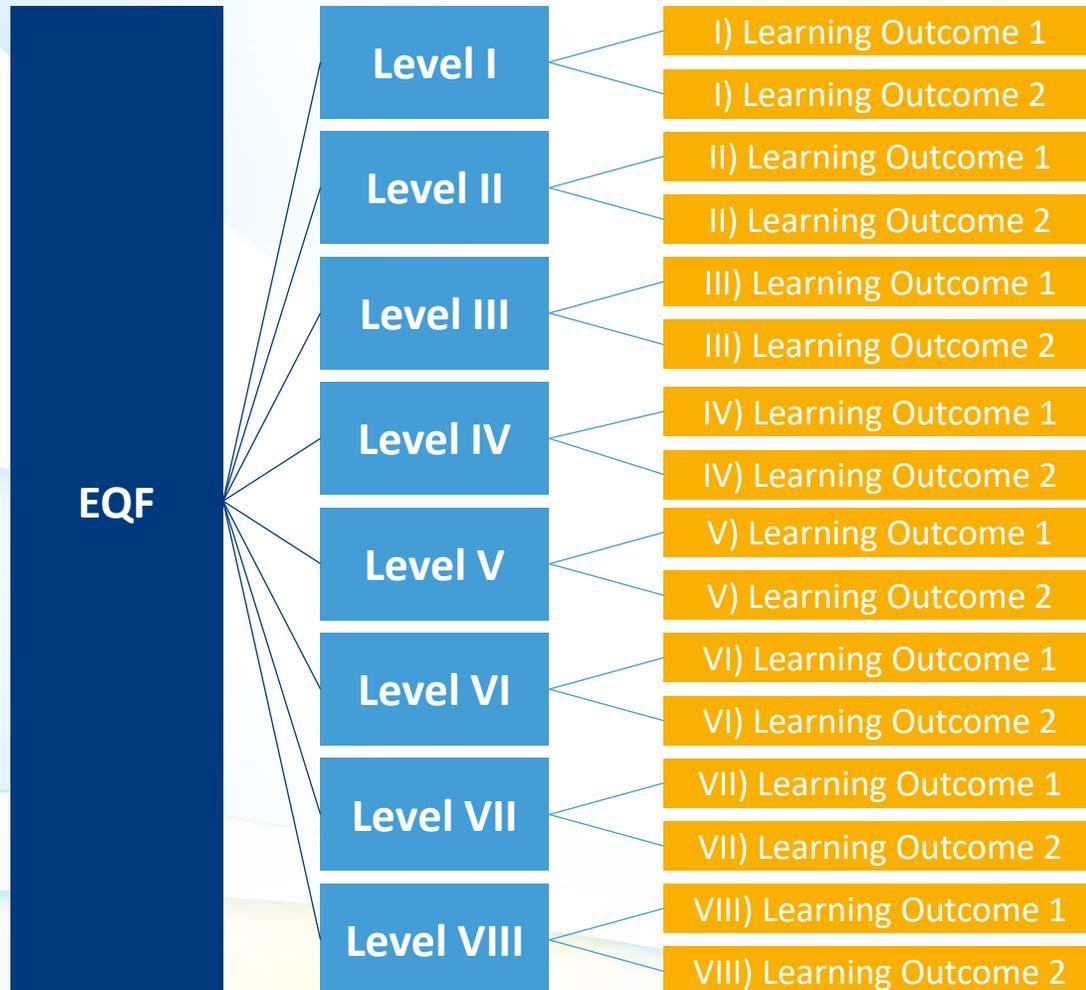
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From the European Dimension to the National: EQF and NQFs

Baseline Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Different educational systems across Europe• Existence of a vast variety of qualifications
Establishment of the EQF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in 2004• Response to the quest of a common reference point and transparency tool for qualifications
Creation of NQFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EQF Recommendation for the development of National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) in 2008• Member states started to develop NQFs by allocating national qualifications from different educational and professional backgrounds to the NQF based on learning outcomes
Overall Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EQF and NQFs provide greater clarity and comparability, support mobility• Learning outcomes are measured against standards and criteria

At the Heart of the EQF: Learning Outcomes



- Qualification frameworks consist of competences that are based on learning outcomes
- Hierarchical levels are described with a set of level descriptors using a learning outcome language
- EQF defines comparable standards for learning outcomes
- Learning outcomes are measured against standards and criteria, ensuring synergy effects

The Learning Outcomes Principle

- The common reference to learning outcomes is also intended to improve links between education and labour markets, to promote learners' vertical and horizontal mobility (respectively, between education levels, and across sectors and geographical areas) and to support learner-centred approaches. (Looney, Janet, Santibañez, Barbara et al. (2021): Validation of transversal skills across Europe. European State-of-the-Art Report, p. 24f. [D2.1 State-of-the-Art-Report EN public.pdf \(transvalproject.eu\)](#))
- While key policy documents have established the importance of holistic, learner-centred approaches to VNFIL, the frameworks and tools used to support validation processes are not consistently clearly aligned with this approach. (idem, p. 25) How learning outcomes are defined and used within different policy frameworks (European and national levels) and guidance and validation tools has a clear impact on the degree to which transversal skills and competences are captured within VNFIL processes.

Behaviourist Approaches

Focus on outwardly observable behaviours and reliable forms of assessment → standardized, observable (suitable for tasks, basic knowledge). Bloom's taxonomy / strong influence on EQF. Methods: questionnaire, tests

Constructivist Approaches

Learning seen as contextualized and intertwined with the learner's social identity, values and relationships (process of constructing meaning) → process oriented, diversity of individual experiences; captures biography, motivation, goals. Methods e.g. portfolios, dialogues, interviews

Descriptors: Levels of Learning Outcomes

Levels of Learning Outcomes

- Emphasis on the content and profile of qualifications
- Increase of overall transparency of qualifications systems → support to mobility and lifelong learning.

Definition of Competence

- overarching category referring to the ability of individuals to apply knowledge and skills
- descriptors limited to 'autonomy' and 'responsibility'.
- Integration of additional aspects like 'critical thinking', 'creativity' and 'entrepreneurship', 'learning to learn', 'communication' and 'cooperation' (see EU key skills)

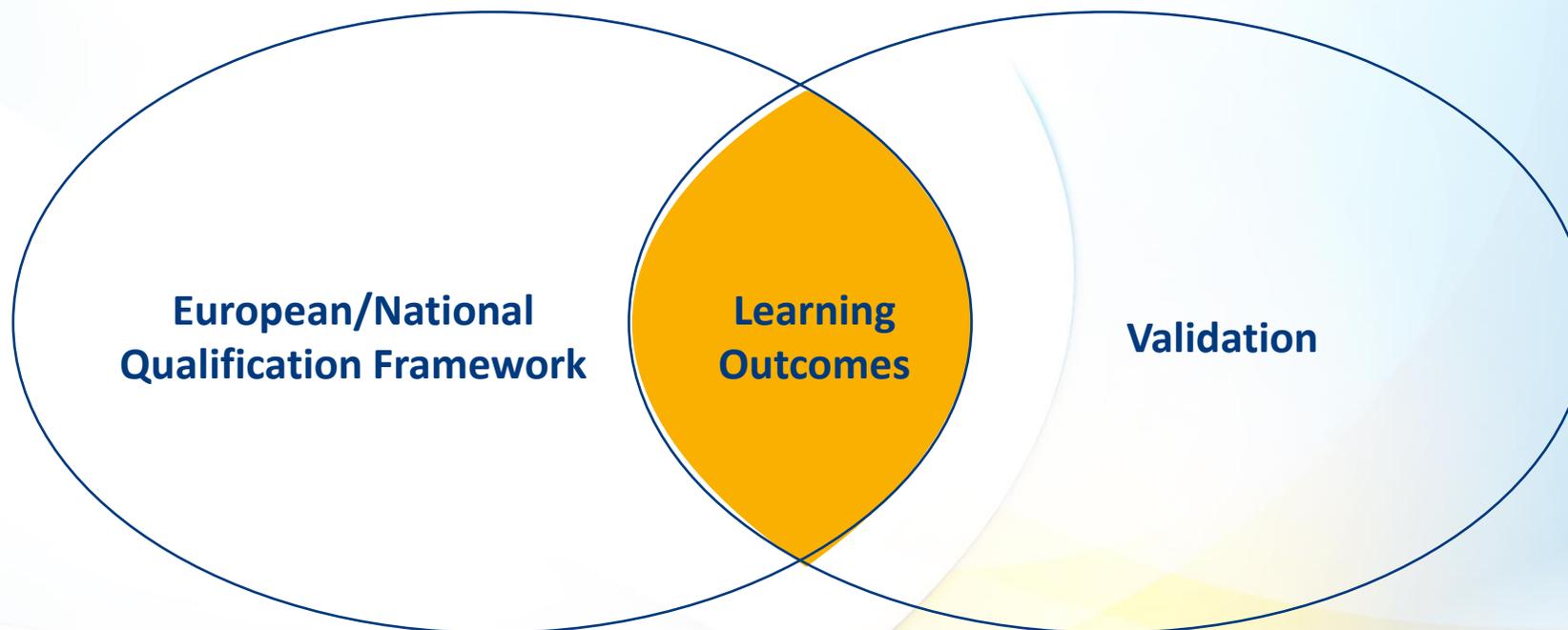
Transversal Skills and Competences (TSC)

Inclusion of transversal skills and competences in the descriptors allows to strengthen the national relevance of the descriptors and to promote policies

Learning Outcomes: Quality Assurance

- On policy level, the focus lies on the **transparency of qualification**, whereas at a pedagogy level, the focus on learning outcomes provide an important shift to a **learner-centered view**.
- “**Peer learning** among countries is an important aspect of learning outcomes approaches, providing a forum for sharing **insights on the principles of effective practices**, and opportunities to develop a **shared language**.” (Cedefop 2016: 53).
- Accountability and **quality assurance** are vital to ensure “the credibility of assessment tools measuring the achievement of learning outcomes among individuals and institutions” (Cedefop 2016: 168) and also raising trust which is, as stated in the peer review methodology, the currency in validation processes.

Building Bridges: EQF/NQF and Validation



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Definition of Transversal Skills and Competences (TSC)

“Transversal skills and competences (TSCs) are learned and proven abilities which are commonly seen as necessary or valuable for effective action in virtually any kind of work, learning or life activity. They are “transversal” because they are not exclusively related to any particular context (job, occupation, academic discipline, civic or community engagement, occupational sector, group of occupational sectors, etc.).” (Noack, 2021)

Starting Point: RecTec (RecTec+)

- **Key Action 2 “Knowledge Alliances” Erasmus+ project (2016-2019):** Reconnaître les compétences transversales en lien avec l'employabilité et les certifications (**Identifying transversal skills for employability and certifications**) – conducted in France, Belgium, Luxembourg with the aim of career exploration, training, certification and HR management
 - Transversal Competence Framework (each proficiency level, 1-4 EQF, was determined according to the criteria of responsibility and autonomy): 12 transversal skills
- **2019-2021: RecTec+ → Aim:** Professional recruitment, retraining and integration / Recognition and validation of experience for orientation or certification purposes / Support for professional and student mobility / Professionalisation and initial training in a university context or the public service / Professionalisation and continuous training with an international dimension and skills linked to European projects
 - Transversal Competence Framework (each proficiency level, 5-8 EQF, was determined according to the criteria of responsibility, autonomy and complexity): 12 transversal skills

Competences in the Transversal Competence Framework (TCF)

TRANSVAL-EU		TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK (TCF)	
EQF Level I	→	Managing and organizing activities	
EQF Level II		• Solving problems and reacting to the unforeseen	
EQF Level III		• Cooperating and fostering cooperation	
EQF Level IV		• Resource Management	
EQF Level V	→	Using oral communication in one or several languages	
EQF Level VI		• Taking professional, social and cultural norms into account	
EQF Level VII		• Using written communication in one or several languages	
EQF Level VIII		• Communicating using digital technologies	
		• Managing information and critical thinking	
		• Building one's career path	
	→	Developing one's competences and profile	
	→	Self-Reflection	

Five Competences mandatory for all Field Trial Countries (in orange) / one additional competence to be chosen from the ones marked with an arrow

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Please spend respectively ten minutes on the selected transversal competence, discussing

- how self-explanatory or complex you find the competence
- how useful the adaptation of EQF descriptors seems to be in order to describe proficiencies in transversal competences
- how you estimate the transferability to your respective contexts

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THANK YOU

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