

EUROPEAN INSTRUMENTS FOR COMPETENCIES AND CERTIFICATION



EQF **European Qualifications Framework**

Describes and compares qualification levels in national, international or sectoral qualification systems

EUROPASS **European Passport**

Makes skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe

ECVET **European Credit System for VET**

Facilitates the development and the recognition of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning

ECTS **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System**

Helps to design, describe, and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications

INTRODUCTION

This brochure was produced under the Leonardo da Vinci Partnership Project "**PLACET - Supporting PLacement Companies in European Training**" with the aim to summarize in a unique document the main information regarding the documents and tools available at European level for validation of competencies, as well as for the certification process, in order to support hosting organizations.

EQF - European Qualifications Framework

EQF is a reference tool for the description and comparison of qualification levels in qualifications systems developed at national, international or sectoral level. The EQF's main components are a set of 8 reference levels described in terms of learning outcomes (a combination of knowledge, skills and/or competences) and mechanisms and principles for voluntary cooperation. The eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications from those recognizing basic knowledge, skills and competences to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional and vocational education and training. EQF is a translation device for qualification systems.

Definition CEDEFOP:

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference framework. It acts as a translation grid which links countries' qualifications systems/framework. It covers qualifications at all levels and in all sub-systems of education and training (general and adult education, vocational education and training as well as higher education). Its main role is to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems. In close cooperation with the European Commission, CEDEFOP provides analytical and coordination support for the implementation of the EQF and carries out a number of comparative studies and analysis on issues related to the implementation of the framework at EU, national and sectoral level.

The main role of the European Qualifications Framework is to make qualifications more understandable across different countries and systems, in order to support cross-border mobility of learners and workers and lifelong learning across Europe.

For more information see <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page>.

CEDEFOP has played a key role in all EQF activities since 2003. It has carried out a number of comparative studies and analysis on issues related to the implementation of the framework at EU, national and sectoral level. It cooperates closely with the European Commission and provides technical and analytical support to the EQF Advisory Group - the main body at European level, responsible for providing coherence and transparency of the process of relating national qualifications systems to the EQF.

An important part of the implementation of the EQF is the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQF). NQFs are developed by all countries, being important tools to support the referencing of national qualifications systems to the EQF and are increasingly considered by Member States as tools supporting national reforms and coherent lifelong policies. NQFs play a key role in promoting the use of a learning outcomes approach as well as in addressing barriers between vocational education and training and higher education.

Tip: As a tutor you can better understand the level of training of the interns you will receive, by requiring the EQF and/or NQF level of the trainee/intern, as well as the study plan.

EUROPASS - European Passport

The five Europass documents aimed to make ones skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe are:

• Europass Curriculum Vitae

- a brief biographical summary of a person's education, qualifications and previous jobs made by each individual and usually sent with a job application or with a request for an internship.

Tip: For a tutor this document can be very useful to better read and compare CVs of potential or effective trainees, being this way able to make the training & working plan better and more appropriate to their needs and skills, as well as with the requirements in your company.

For guidance on how to make your own Curriculum Vitae see the dedicated section on CEDEFOP webpage <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>.

• Europass language passport

- a self-assessment description based of the language skills and competences of an individual in that your language proficiency regardless of whether that proficiency was attained formally or informally.

For instruction for completing your own Europass Language Passport see the dedicated section on CEDEFOP webpage <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/language-passport/templates-instructions>.

• Europass mobility

- a personal document, which is used to record an organised period of time (a mobility experience) that a person spends in another European country for the purpose of learning or training.
- a document to record knowledge and skills acquired in another European country, in one of the following situations:
 - a work placement in a company;
 - an academic term as part of an exchange programme;
 - a voluntary placement in an NGO.

Tip: As a tutor hosting trainees under the Erasmus+ Programme or other international programmes, it is very likely that your cooperation will be required to fill this kind of document. The model already filled in with an European number should be handed to you by the sending or intermediary organizations. It will only be a real Europass if the EC serial number is included, it means that it was validated by the national Europass centre.

Your task will be to help listing all the competences and to validate them, as you are the one how observed if the trainee masters competences and at which level. This is also why we recommend on our checklist to have a daily or weekly record of the tasks and competences put into practice.

For information on how to obtain the Europass mobility document one has to contact his/her sending organisation entitled to contact the National Europass Center <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about/national-europass-centres>.

• Europass Diploma Supplement

- an European Union document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving international transparency and facilitating the academic and professional recognition of qualifications;
- is issued to graduates of higher education institutions along with their degree or diploma.

• Europass Certificate Supplement

- is provided to people who hold a vocational education and training award;
- provides additional information regarding the award which is not available on the official certificate such as the skills and competences acquired, the level of the certificate, entry requirements and access opportunities to the next level of education etc. in order to make it more easily understood, especially for employers and institutions outside the issuing country.

The information contained on the Europass Certificate Supplement is provided in a standardized format and is supplied by the relevant awarding body which makes the award.

For more information on how to receive the Europass Certificate Supplement it is recommended to check the National inventories of Certificate Supplements <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement/national-inventories> or contact your National Reference Point <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement/national-reference-points>.

ECVET - European Credit System for VET

ECVET facilitates the development of flexible and individualised pathways and also the recognition of those learning outcomes which are acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

The Council and the European Parliament have placed a strong emphasis on the necessity to test ECVET, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, in practice, done in view of creating a pool of information and experience with the practical application of the tool on national level, which would eventually feed back into future policy strategies – both on national and EU-level. Among other initiatives, a series of transnational European pilot projects was established.

In 2008, the European Commission issued a call for proposal to finance international partnerships under the Lifelong Learning Programme, whose aim was to test the implementation of the ECVET process in the context of learners' geographical mobility in the period 2009-2012. As a result, eleven pilot projects with lead partners from five countries (Belgium-fr, France, Germany, Italy, and Luxembourg) were selected.

In 2010, the European Commission issued a new call for proposals to finance a new generation of pilot projects. A specificity of this call for proposals was its focus on supporting national implementation. Eight projects with lead partners from five countries (Belgium-fr, France, Germany, Italy, and Malta) were funded in the period 2011-2014. The projects were required to include the support of system-level implementation of ECVET in their objectives. Moreover, the projects were regarded as an important part of Member States' efforts to create the necessary conditions to develop and test measures for the gradual implementation of ECVET.

(source <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/>) - we kindly recommend to visit this page, it being full of examples.

For applying ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal learning context, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.

The main challenge for the introduction of a common methodological framework like ECVET in the European VET environment is the broad range of bodies involved with the different functions of qualifications systems such as: national or regional ministries, social partners, VET providers.

To overcome this complexity, ECVET refers to the different functions of a qualifications system rather than to the types of institutions involved. Institutions involved in implementing and running ECVET are referred to as competent institutions.

The aim of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is:

- ✓ to make it easier for people to get validation and recognition of work-related skills and knowledge acquired in different systems and countries – so that they can count towards vocational qualifications;
- ✓ to make it more attractive to move between different countries and learning environments;
- ✓ to increase the compatibility between the different vocational education and training (VET) systems in place across Europe, and the qualifications they offer;
- ✓ to increase the employability of VET graduates and the confidence of employers that each VET qualification requires specific skills and knowledge.

IMPORTANT!!

ECVET points are not to be confused with credit. While credit designates the learning outcomes the learner has achieved, ECVET points provide information about the qualification and the units. In other words while credit is related to a person and his/her personal achievement, ECVET points are linked to the qualification structure and description (independent of whether someone has achieved the qualification or not).

Credit can be transferred and accumulated if the competent institution recognises that the credit the learner has achieved is relevant and can be taken into account as part of the qualification the learner is preparing (or seeks recognition for). ECVET points provide information about the credit the learner has transferred and accumulated (e.g. what is the relative weight of units the learner has already achieved).

Being a hosting organisation cooperating with a sending institution that uses ECVET, implies that you cooperate in the certification effort. Therefore, please keep in mind the three fundamental moments and instruments that you should agree on and work with:

1. Memorandum of understanding, as a document in that both parts agree on the participants and company profiles, the competencies, skills and knowledge to be educated, developed and evaluated.
2. Learning Agreement, as a document to be signed for each participant; it gives further detail than the Memorandum of understanding and tailors it to the concrete participant, time of the year and tutor assigned; additionally, the document lists all that is expected to be mastered by the participant.
3. Evidence recording, as a check list record for the learning outcomes/units expected and how they can be proved. This will be the evidence to be used by the sending organisation in order to recognize the qualifications, skills and/or competencies gained by the trainee and to provide him/her with a diploma his/her arrival.

ECTS - European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is a tool that helps to design, describe, and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications. The use of ECTS, in conjunction with outcomes-based qualifications frameworks, makes study programmes and qualifications more transparent and facilitates the recognition of qualifications.

The credit transfer and accumulation is supported by the following documents:

- ✓ course catalog
- ✓ learning agreement
- ✓ transcript of records
- ✓ diploma supplement

ECTS makes teaching and learning in higher education more transparent and facilitates the recognition of all studies.

CONTACTS

TALK TO US:

This document was developed by QUARTER MEDIATION on behalf of the PLACET partnership. For more information please feel free to contact us at info@qmediation.eu.

VISIT THE WEBSITES:

<http://www.placet.org/>

<http://www.quartermediation.eu/>

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- National inventories of Certificate Supplements <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement/national-inventories>
- National Reference Point <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/european-skills-passport/certificate-supplement/national-reference-points>
- ECVET projects <http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/>
- ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/index_en.htm
- EDUCATION, AUDIOVISUAL AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE AGENCY https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en