



# EOSE INFONOTE

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*For skills matters!*

FEATURED IN THIS NOTE : # GENERIC  
INFORMATION ABOUT EQF #

## European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) helps all the countries in Europe to develop a national system of qualifications and also helps people to understand how qualifications in different countries relate to each other.

The EQF covers qualifications at all levels and types of education and training including adult education, vocational education and higher education. This is important to support cross-border mobility, the transferability and transparency of skills, and lifelong learning across Europe.

The core of the EQF is its eight reference levels defined in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes express what individuals should know, understand and be able to do at the end of a learning process.

The sport sector is becoming more aware and involved in qualifications frameworks both nationally and with reference to the EQF. Sport ministers of all EU Member States have expressed their support to implement the EQF in the field of sport. They have underlined the relevance of including sport-related qualifications in national qualification systems so that they can take advantage of referencing to the EQF. It is important to the sport sector to improve the validation and recognition of qualifications gained by athletes, volunteers and

those people certified by non-formal sport education providers, as well as qualifications required for sport-related professions.

There are three main types of sport qualifications: sport federation qualifications; other vocational qualifications; and Higher Education qualifications. Sport federations typically govern a specific sport in their country and their qualifications and are predominantly concerned with coaching and officiating. Other vocational qualifications could include those developed by social partners or from private providers, and across Europe there is a prevalence of higher education in the sport sectors in many higher education institutions.



### Implementation in the sport sector

The focus of the European Commission Sport Unit Expert Group on EQF, developments at European level through European associations and the variable pace of implementation at national level.

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### National examples

Examples from Finland and Hungary on their way to link sport qualifications to National Qualifications Framework.

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# Implementation in the sport sector

Following the adoption by the European Commission of a competence in Sport, there followed a period of preparatory Action (2011-2014).

During this period, the Sport Unit in DGEAC established Expert Groups, one of which focussed on education and training. This Group undertook a study on the progress of the implementation of the EQF and its potential impact on sport. The Group published a report at the end of this period which highlighted the variable pace of implementation at national level and highlighted that in the majority of Member States, sport qualifications still largely sat in their own system, revolving around the role and training provision of the Sport Federations and in many cases aligned to the best practice of the International Federations and outside the emerging National Qualifications Frameworks.

The Expert Group report made a series of recommendations, most notably to highlight the benefits to sport of coming inside the new National Qualifications Frameworks and to recommend to all Member States that this should be their approach to improve the quality,

transparency and transferability of qualifications.

Other developments at the European level around the EQF have been facilitated through European associations. EOSE has developed and promoted the Lifelong Learning Strategy for the sector, known as the 7 Step Model which supports the development of qualifications referenced to the EQF. The 7 Step Model has been implemented at the European level in the sport of golf and a new project will see implementation in sport administration. In the health and fitness sector there is a Sector Qualifications Framework at European level referenced to the EQF, developed by EuropeActive, and there have been further developments in the outdoors and coaching sectors.

At the national level, sport often has its own independent and specific education and training



structure that reflects the history and culture of sport in that country. The state of play across Europe with regard to sport federation qualifications and national qualifications frameworks is not uniform. The speed of progress nationally on implementation of national qualifications frameworks and EQF in sport depends on both the speed of developments in the national qualifications system and the commitment of the sports sector itself to reforms in vocational education.

As more and more qualifications are added to national frameworks this supports the implementation of EQF in the sport sector and supports cross-border recognition of achievements and mobility in sport.

## Milestones



- ⇒ 2002 – [Copenhagen Declaration](#). First agreement of Member States to aim to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training through enhanced cooperation at European level.
- ⇒ 2008 – EQF. The European Parliament and the Council adopted the Recommendation for the EQF in order to foster lifelong learning, social integration and employability skills.
- ⇒ 2008 – EOSE completes [EQF Sport project](#) to develop lifelong learning strategy for the sector and promote links to EQF.
- ⇒ 2010 – [Bruges Communiqué](#). Long-term strategic objectives for European cooperation in VET for the period 2011-20 set by Member States.
- ⇒ 2013 – European Commission Sport Unit Expert Group [report on inclusion of sport qualifications in national qualifications frameworks](#).

## Key ideas and facts



The European Commission, Member States, and the social partners, have established common European tools and principles for vocational education and training. Namely:

- ⇒ European Qualifications Framework (EQF)
- ⇒ European credit system for VET (ECVET)
- ⇒ Europass
- ⇒ European quality assurance framework for VET (EQAVET)
- ⇒ Principles and guidelines for identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning
- ⇒ Principles on lifelong guidance and counselling

These tools and principles constitute an integrated framework, their implementation will increase transparency of qualifications, support mobility and benefit citizens by providing a systematic way to validate and document their knowledge, skills and competence. All are based on learning outcomes which make it easier to understand what the holder of a certificate or diploma knows, understands and is able to do.

The EQF and ECVET operate at the systemic level to make easier the recognition of

qualifications across Europe. By supporting quality assurance, EQAVET provides a basis for confidence and trust in national VET qualifications and their international comparison through the EQF. Europass, ECVET, validation and guidance support individuals looking for a job or applying for training.

All of these tools and principles have had an impact on the sport sector at the European and national level.

## National examples

### Finland

The Finnish National Board of Education is the National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The National Framework for Qualifications and Other Learning was adopted in Finland in 2013.

In the field of sport education in Finland the NQF has partly been adopted. The vocational and higher education qualifications fit very well in the NQF system, but shorter courses and diplomas e.g. in coaching are not fully embedded in the system yet.



### Hungary

Higher education sport qualifications have been linked to the national qualifications framework, most vocational qualifications in sport are also mapped to the framework, sports management and sports administration are included.

Sport federation qualifications in subjects including coaching are not yet mapped on to the NQF as there has been no funded project or mechanism.

As with many countries the issue of links to international federations is also an important factor.



### FOR MORE INFO

EOSE has developed a State of Play report in 2015. Available on demand.

GET IN TOUCH WITH EOSE SECRETARIAT :  
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## To go further

VET European Ministers and the European Commission (2002), *The Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training*:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:ef0018>

European Commission (2008), *Explaining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning*:

[https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/brochexp\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/brochexp_en.pdf)

Cedefop (2014), *Analysis and overview of national qualifications framework developments in European Countries*:

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/6127\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/6127_en.pdf)

Cedefop (2014), European inventory on NQF (available for all EU countries):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/european-inventory-on-nqf>

EOSE Lifelong Learning Strategy for Sport and Active Leisure (7 Step Model)

<http://eose.org/approach/7-step-model/>



## Latest developments

### *European Commission Sport Unit Expert Group*

With the introduction of the new EU Work Plan for sport 2014 - 2017, the Sport Unit in DGEAC of the European Commission updated its structure and set up five reformed expert groups to look at particular areas related to sport policy. One of the Expert Groups is for Human Resource Management in Sport, which deals with education, training, employment and volunteering in sport. This Expert Group continues to take an active interest in the implementation of national qualifications frameworks in the sport sector and the relationship between national sport federations and requirements for education from international federations.

### *Sector Skills Alliances (SSAs)*

Sector Skills Alliances are an initiative designed to promote European cooperation within a specific sector of the economy. SSAs develop vocational skills from the perspective of labour market needs, ensuring cooperation between education and employment.

In the sport sector EOSE led a Consortium supported by the Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs to carry out a feasibility study on setting up a Sector Skills Council for skills and employment for the sport and active leisure sector in the EU (the designation of council later changed to alliance with the launch of a new funding programme under Erasmus+ KA2 in 2016). This was supported by the whole sector.

### *European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)*

The EC through the DG Employment and Social Affairs has launched a new portal and database to support employment and recruitment services in all member states as they seek to tackle unemployment and assist job seekers. The system is called ESCO.

The ESCO classification system identifies key occupations in the labour market and categorises the skills, competences and qualifications relevant for the EU labour market and the education and training pathways.

In the sport and active leisure sector 25 occupations have been defined under the headings of: Sports coaches and instructors; Sport managers and operations; Sportspeople, Fitness; and outdoors. This work would be greatly enhanced by the work of an SSA.



## EOSE INFONOTE

EOSE is an international organisation working towards the development of the sport and active leisure sector, expert in building bridges between the worlds of education and employment and ensuring the development of a competent workforce with the right skills.

Its vision has been defined as "A sport and active leisure sector that is playing its full part in the economic, health and social development of Europe and its member states." And its mission consists in "facilitating and supporting the development of the sport and active leisure sector workforce, to ensure people working and volunteering in the sector have the right skills to perform and enable the sector to fulfil its potential as a social, health and economic driver".

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