

EMPLOY

International Report

**on evaluation of transversal competences
and EQF comparison of national
qualification allocation**

Desk research

in Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the Netherlands

(Work Package 8)



Design Your Future Employability
EMPLOY your energy, skills and creativity to gain employment!



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FOREWORD

The following report is one of the outcomes of the project titled: *EMPLOY: Design your future employability – EMPLOY your energy, skills and creativity to gain employment!*, delivered under LLP-Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The main aim of the project is to help people in preparing for and finding a job.

The **aim of this document** is to deliver an extra input to the international research and decision making on qualification frameworks and European credit points in Vocational Education System (VET). This is a collaborative desk research of the present assessment of skills and competences and contains findings of the research done by the Project Partners in the following countries: Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom (in this report called *EMPLOY countries*). The report contains information on European and National Qualification Framework (EQF and NQF). Partners made research until June 2013.

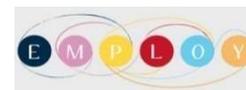
This report is an attempt made to propose the way to certify and suggest EQF for transversal competences such as positive attitude, communication, time management, learning to learn, problem solving, self-discipline, responsibility etc.¹ It also includes a proposal of a certificate of assessed transversal competences development and a suggestion of ECVET based on allocation of credits to the competences and skills transmitted in the project methodology.

The report consists of an introduction and three chapters. *The Introduction* describes common European Qualification Framework (EQF) in European Union while the *first chapter* presents the advancement of the work on this idea on the example of EMPLOY countries. *The second chapter* describes how the certificates and diplomas refer to EQF levels in those countries. There is also some information about grading systems and awarding qualifications in formal education, as well as institutions responsible for curriculum on the VET level.² *The third chapter* describes shortly the importance of evaluation of transversal competences and Project Partner suggestions on how to assess and prove these qualifications.

Digital version of this report can be downloaded for free from www.employ-project.com

¹ *These competences were typed by analysis of the results of research carried out by partners from Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey, Italy and the UK among employers, and on key competences necessary for job seekers and wishing to find employment in the modern workplace.*

² *The problem of certification of various types of skills or competences in the European Union has been discussed for many years. It is not easy to achieve one universal approach to this problem, due to the diversity of the organizations responsible for education in individual countries, education systems or experience in assessment, recognition and validation of learning outcomes. An updated research to this chapter was therefore necessary as the beginning of the next step: working on methods of evaluation of transversal competences and making a suggestion for such evaluation, which you can find in the third chapter.*



INTRODUCTION

The idea of common **European Qualification Framework (EQF)** in European Union was started in 2004 and it was followed by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23rd April 2008 as well as the decision of the conference of Ministers of higher education in the EU (2005) according to which countries participating in Bologna Process should implement Qualification Framework in European Higher Education System. Finally there was a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18th June 2009 concerning the establishment of European Credit System for vocational education and training (ECVET).

At present there are 3 systems of Qualifications Framework, which are interconnected and complementary:

1. European Qualifications Framework: consists of 8 levels that describe all stages of education, from the beginning of education in childhood to higher education;
2. Bologna Qualifications Framework: developed as one of the tools of Bologna Process, on three distinguished levels describes the ranks of higher education;
3. National Qualifications Framework: developed by each of the countries taking part in the Bologna Process, designed to reflect the character of the education system of each country, possible to refer to the EQF.

The aim of European Qualifications Framework is to facilitate the comparison of qualifications acquired in different time, places and forms, to adapt the qualifications to the needs of the labour market more efficiently and as a result to increase the mobility of workers, to promote and support lifelong learning.

All European countries voluntarily decided to implement National Qualifications Framework and then these should be referred to the eight levels of European Qualifications Framework. Thus, EQF should become a consistent reference point for NQF and should enable integrating learning outcomes at any place: within the education system and outside of it, in formal, informal and non-formal education, in general as well as vocational education, at schools, universities, courses of professional / vocational trainings. Ultimately all qualifications awarded in Europe (certified by diplomas, certificates, authorisations) will include reference to NQF and by means of those to EQF.

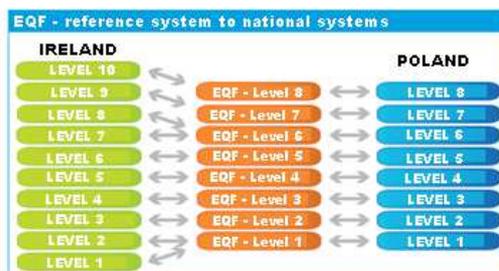
Therefore, every country develops its own model of NQF and then refers them to EQF. Linking the framework of the Member States drawn up in accordance with their own legislation and practice with the EQF should enable the comparison of qualifications between countries. Each country is responsible for its own education system, its assessment of the qualifications, and thus also for the fact how the practice will verify the quality they assign to their qualifications.

The EQF should support individual users as well as providers of education and training by increasing transparency of qualifications awarded outside the national systems, for example, by sectors and multinational companies. The adoption of a common reference framework based on learning outcomes should facilitate the comparison and potential linking together traditional qualifications awarded by national authorities and qualifications awarded by other stakeholders. The EQF should thus help sectors and individuals take advantage of this growing internationalization of qualifications.

The EQF is an ambitious and still far-reaching instrument which has implications for education and training systems, the labour market, industry and commerce as well as citizens.³

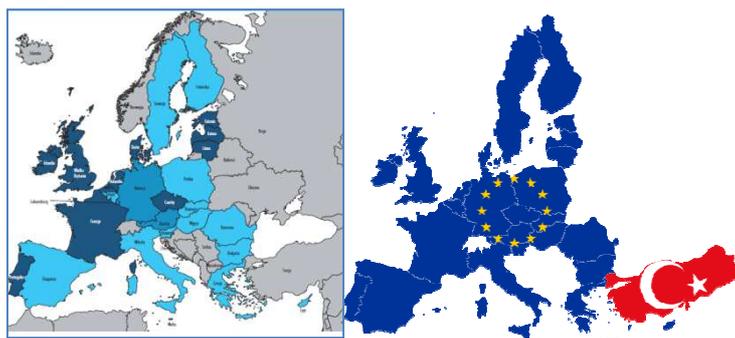
The figure below shows the idea of comparison of different systems of NQF on the example of Poland and Ireland which clearly proves how important it is to have a good point of reference. Polish system has the same 8 levels as EQF but Irish system has 10 levels which could be confusing without the reference to EQF.

Figure 1: An example of comparison of Irish and Polish NQF by means of reference to EQF



The following map shows the advancement of the work on EQF in EU.

Map 1. Work on EQF in EU



Legend:

- countries which have already implemented EQF
- countries which presented the reference report to the Advisory Group in 2012
- countries which are planning to present the reference report to the Advisory Group in 2013

Source: based on information from Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych (Institute for Educational Research): Historia ram w Europie (History of European framework) available on-line <<http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/pl/ramy-w-europie/135-historia-ram-w-europie>>

European Qualifications Framework (EQF) was established to ensure clarification on vocational qualifications among various systems of the member states of the European Union and the candidate countries, as well as ensuring the link and mutual recognition between them. As shown on map 1 (above), EU countries are at different levels of implementation in the education system. Some EMPLOY countries have already implemented EQF (Spain, the UK and the Netherlands) whilst others are still working on this (Italy) or are under development as a part of a broad reform of the qualification system (Poland). What is important, Turkey, a candidate country to the EU, has already established EQF for higher education (for other education stages it is still under progress).

³ More information: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html



I. NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN EMPLOY COUNTRIES⁴

The following qualification comparison aims to describe differences and similarities in grading systems and issuing diplomas for VET students in six partner countries: Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, England and the Netherlands.

The table below is an attempt to compare the advancement of introduction of NQF system in respect of VET as the basis for comparison with EQF.

Table 1. Systems of NQF in EMPLOY countries – comparison

Country	Is there a unified system of NQF in your country?	If 'yes', does the NQF apply to all courses in the VET curriculum in your country or only to some? If 'no', what system is used to verify qualifications?	Remarks
England	Yes ✓ No -	<p>There are two qualifications frameworks in use:</p> <p>a. Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) The QCF focuses on vocational and related qualifications developed to include all qualifications in England other than Higher Education (HE) qualifications. The framework comprises Levels 1-8 and an Entry Level (Levels 1-3). Based on learning outcomes, system of credit and therefore with a wider application as a unit-based credit framework.</p> <p>b. National Qualifications Framework (NQF) The NQF was the framework for general and vocational qualifications in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. All vocational qualifications accredited to the QCF will replace the NQF. General educational qualifications – principally the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and the General Certificate of Education at Advanced Level (A Levels) – will continue to be located in the NQF until a decision is made whether or not to move them into the QCF. The NQF and QCF use the same system of Levels (Entry 1-3 and Levels 1-8).</p> <p>The concept of 'qualifications' in the UK is used more narrowly to refer to a certificate attesting to learning or validated attainment. Since 2009, UK frameworks have been referenced to the EQF. EQF can be understood as a parallel referencing of NQF.</p>	The systems for the United Kingdom vary and it has been agreed that this report will cover England.
Italy	Yes ✓ No -	<p>There is a unified NQF system in Italy, applied to all courses in the VET curriculum. In December 2012, an agreement was signed for the adoption of "<i>Primo rapporto italiano di referenzedellequalificazioni al Quadro Europeo EQF</i>" (First reference report of the qualifications to the EQF), which shows the correspondences between the Italian qualification framework and the EQF. Since 1 January 2014, all the qualification certificates issued in Italy have to refer also to the EQF levels.</p>	-
The Netherlands	Yes ✓ No -	<p>NLQF applies to all Qualification courses (Dutch: 'Kwalificatie Dossiers'), as it is only allowed to use the dossier numbers in an official Qualification course. In case someone gathered parts of qualifications one can ask for an EVC-procedure (erkennenverworvencompetenties), in which an official and trained assessor will assess the delivered proof</p>	-

⁴ EMPLOY countries – Italy, Poland, Spain, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, Turkey

		of gained competences, knowledge and provide the person with an exemption of parts of the Qualification exams.	
Poland	Yes ✓ No -	Polish Qualifications Framework has been developed by the Educational Research Institute since July 2010. At present the work is continued and on the VET level so far the new system has been applied only for IT specialization. Since 2014 , all the qualification certificates issued in Poland have to refer also to the EQF levels.	-
Spain	Yes ✓ No -	There is a unified system, although it won't be fully adopted until 2014 as Spain is currently developing an NQF for lifelong learning (Marco Español de Cualificaciones, MECU), based on learning outcomes. It is linking and coordinating different education and training subsystems. The framework includes qualifications obtained in compulsory education, in post-secondary and higher education and integrates validation of non-formal and informal learning processes. It defines levels and level descriptors as the basis for referencing the MECU to the EQF levels. Through the NQF – it is expected – it will be easier to identify, validate and recognize all kinds of learning outcomes (including non-formal and informal learning), regardless of the way they were acquired. ⁵	-
Turkey	Yes ✓ No -	National Qualifications System in Turkey is composed of establishing proper relationship between education and employment and assessment and certification of vocational skills in a reliable, transparent way on an international level. The system aims to classify qualifications acquired through all technical and vocational training programmes designed according to Turkish conditions including primary, secondary and higher education and formal, non-formal programmes subject to the permission from relevant institutions and make them understandable. National Qualifications System ensures re-definition of vocational and technical training programmes based on needs; examination and certification of vocational skills of the labour force and recognition of vocational qualifications on national and international level. The system supports lifelong learning and enables certification of the skills of individuals who acquire a profession without getting official training. First steps in the structuring of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in Turkey were started by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) after Ministerial Summit held within Bologna Process in 2005 in Bergen deciding on the composition of national qualifications frameworks. In 2008 NQF for higher education according to the knowledge, skills and competences was defined (<i>European Higher Education Area: QF-EHEA</i>). Since then NQF work with a wider spectrum has been continued.	-

⁵ CEDEFOP: Analysis and overview of NQF developments in European countries, Annual report 2012, WORKING PAPER No 17 [on-line] http://www.google.es/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDYQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cedefop.europa.eu%2FEN%2FFiles%2F6117_en.pdf&ei=cIOnUciTcj5sgba4YHgAw&usg=AFQjCNGDUNEJ6idsx4pdgLz22indMeI5GA&bvm=bv.47244034,d.Yms

2. Assignment of certificates and diplomas

2.1. Introduction

After finishing each stage of education students get a document certifying this fact and also the results they gained. As these documents vary in EU countries, it should be clear what sort of qualifications they guarantee in reference to EQF.

2.2. Comparison of certificates in EMPLOY countries

The tables below show how the certificates and diplomas refer to EQF levels.

Table 2. Comparisons between EQF levels and the Qualification Frameworks in England

Main stages of education/employment	EQF Level	Qualifications and Credit Framework/National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. www.ofqual.gov.uk		Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/AcademicInfrastructure/Pages/default.aspx	
	Level	Level		Level	
Professional or postgraduate education, research or employment	8	8	Doctoral Degrees Vocational qualifications Level 8	8	Doctoral Degrees
Higher education Advanced skills training	7	7	Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Fellowships, NVQ Level 5, Vocational Qualifications Level 7	7	Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas , Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Postgraduate Certificates
Entry to professional graduate employment	6	6	Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Vocational Qualifications Level 6	6	Bachelor's Degree with Honours, Bachelor's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates
				5	Foundation Degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE) Higher National Diplomas (HND),
Specialised education or training	5	5	NVQ Level 4, Higher National Diplomas (HND), Vocational Qualifications Level 5	4	Higher National Certificates (HNC), Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE),
		4	Vocational Qualifications Level 4 Higher National Certificates (HNC),		
Progression to skilled employment Continuation of secondary education	4	3	NVQ Level 3 Vocational Qualifications Level 3 GCE AS and A Level, Advanced Diplomas		
Progression to skilled employment Continuation of secondary education	3	2	NVQ Level 2, Vocational Qualifications Level 2 GCSEs at grade A* to C, ESOL skills for life, Higher Diplomas, Functional Skills Level 2 (English, Maths and ICT)		
Secondary education Initial entry into employment or further education	2	1	NVQ Level 1, Vocational Qualifications Level 1 GCSEs at grade D to G, ESOL skills for life, Foundation Diplomas, Functional Skills Level 1 (English, Maths and ICT)		
	1	Entry 3	Entry Level Certificates (sub-level 3)		
	No EQF equivalent level	Entry 2	Entry Level Certificates (sub-level 2)		
		Entry 1	Entry Level Certificates (sub-level 1)		

Source: adapted from: *Referencing the Qualifications Frameworks of the United Kingdom to the European Qualifications Framework* <http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/eqf/ukreport_en.pdf>

Table 3. Comparisons between EQF levels and the NQF in Italy

EQF	NQF	Diploma/Certificate gained
8	8	1) PhD (Dottorato di ricerca) 2) Research academic diploma (AFAM = Alta Formazione Artistica, Musicale e Coreutica) (Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca) 3) Post-graduate specialization diploma (Diploma di specializzazione) 4) 2 nd level Master degree (Master universitario di 2° livello) 5) Specialization academic diploma II (Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II)) 6) Master degree II (AFAM) (Diploma di perfezionamento o master (II))
7	7	1) Master's degree (Laurea magistrale) 2) 2 nd level academic diploma (AFAM) (Diploma accademico di 2° livello) 3) 1 st level Master degree (Master universitario di 1° livello) 4) Specialization academic diploma I (Diploma accademico di specializzazione (I)) 5) Master degree (AFAM) (Diploma di perfezionamento o master (I))
6	6	1) Degree (Laurea) 2) 1 st level academic diploma (AFAM) (Diploma accademico di 1° livello)
5	5	Higher technical education diploma (Diploma di tecnico superiore)
4	4	1) Professional technician diploma (Diploma professionale di tecnico) 2) Maturity (Diploma liceale) 3) Technical education diploma (Diploma di istruzione tecnica) 4) Vocational education diploma (Diploma di istruzione professionale) 5) Higher-level technical education and training certificate (Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore)
3	3	Professional operator certificate (Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale)
2	2	Certificate of Basic skills acquired in completion of compulsory education (Certificazione delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione)
1	1	Lower secondary school leaving diploma (Diploma di licenza conclusiva del 1° ciclo di istruzione)

In the Netherlands, in November 2010, the Ministry of Education published the proposed National Qualification Framework / Netherlands Qualification Framework NLQF. It was expected that in the course of 2011 the document would be made official and EQF implemented. It was foreseen that as from 2012 all national qualifications would mention the EQF level.

The NLQF draft-document is a description of the current educational situation and levels in the Netherlands and is to be used as a reference or "bridging framework" document to EQF.

For VET: NLQF levels 1 to 4 correspond directly with the EQF levels 1 to 4, **UNLESS** it is proven otherwise, some NLQF levels 4 correspond more to EQF level 5 (specialists qualifications).

Table 4. Comparisons between EQF levels and the NQF in the Netherlands

EQF	NQF	Diploma/Certificate gained
1	1	Basic education 2, MBO 1 Assistentenopleiding (assistant training - VET 1)
2	2	Basic education 3 Vmbo kb/ gl/ tl (pre-vocational training on 3 levels) MBO 2 (Basic vocational training - VET 2)
3	3	MBO 3 (Vocational training - VET 3)
4	3/4	HAVO (higher secondary education), VWO (Lyceo), Vavo (adult secondary education), MBO 4 (Middle Management training - VET 4)
5	4/5	Associate Degree
6	6	Bachelor
7	7	Master
8	8	PhD

Table 5. Comparisons between EQF levels and the NQF in Poland

EQF	NQF	Diploma/Certificate gained
8	8	PhD (Dyplom doktora)
7	7	Master degree (Dyplom magistra)
6	6	Bachelor/Engineer degree (Dyplom licencjata)
5	5	Some professional certificates
4	4	Secondary school leaving certificate and “matura” certificate (secondary school leaving exam) (Świadectwo ukończenia szkoły średniej, świadectwo maturalne)
3	3	Certificate of completion of vocational school (Świadectwo ukończenia zasadniczej szkoły zawodowej)
2	2	Lower secondary school leaving certificate(Świadectwo ukończenia gimnazjum)
1	1	Primary school leaving certificate (Świadectwo ukończenia szkoły podstawowej)

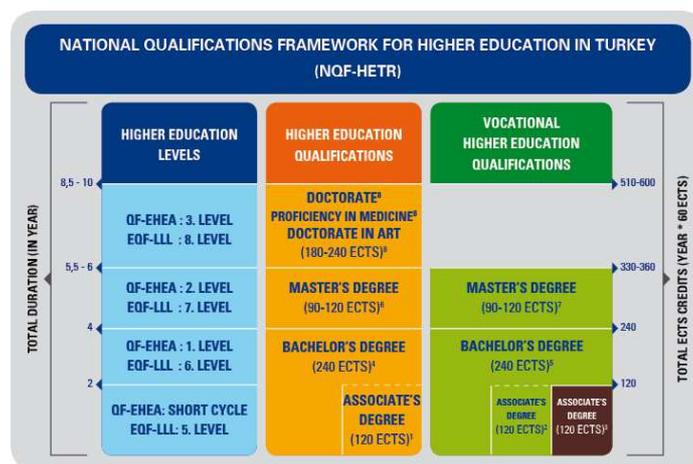
Table 6. Comparisons between EQF levels and the NQF in Spain

EQF	NQF SPAIN	Diploma/Certificate gained
8	8	Doctorate PhD (Postgraduate)
7	7	Master (Postgraduate)
6	6	Undergraduate Degree (Diploma Universitario)
5	4-5	Advanced Level Vocational Educational Diploma (CFGS: Ciclo Formativo Grado Superior)
4	3	Medium Level Vocational Educational Diploma CFGM: Ciclo Formativo de Grado Medio School Leavers Certificate: Bachillerato
3	2	School Leavers Certificate: Bachillerato
2	2	Obligatory Secondary Education: Certificado de la ESO – Educación Secundaria obligatoria
1	1	Primary Education

TURKEY

National Qualifications Framework For Higher Education NQF-HETR is completed. Yet studies are underway for other education steps. Current structure of Turkish Higher Education is already compatible with the 3-cycle system (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral) provided within Bologna Process.

Figure 2. Qualifications' Profiles for NQF-HETR Levels



1. Academically-oriented associate's degree educational programmes which are related to or within undergraduate programmes.
2. Vocationally-oriented associate's degree educational programmes which are related to or within undergraduate programmes.
3. Vocationally-oriented associate's degree educational programmes of Vocational Higher Schools
4. Academically-oriented programmes
5. Vocationally-oriented bachelor's degree programmes
6. Academically-oriented master's degree programmes with or without thesis
7. Vocationally-oriented master's degree programmes with thesis or without thesis
8. Doctoral programmes

Students graduating from secondary school must finish schooling and have the *Lise Diploması*, *Meslek Lise Diploması* or *Teknik Lise Diploması*. Students are then eligible to sit for a centralized two-stage university entrance examination administered by the Student Selection and Placement Center (OSYM)⁶, affiliated with and supervised by YÖK.

Table 7. The summary of certified levels in Partner countries with reference to EQF.

EQF	NQF England	NQF Italy	NQF The Netherlands	NQF Poland	NQF Spain	NQF Turkey
8	8	8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6	6	6
5	4-5	5	4-5	5	4-5	5
4	3	4	3-4	4	3	-
3	2	3	3	3	2	-
2	1	2	2	2	2	-
1	Entry 3	1	1	1	1	-

⁶ <http://www.osym.gov.tr/ana-sayfa/1-0/20120920.html>



2.3. Awarding qualifications – grading system

ENGLAND

At EQF Levels 2 to 4 qualifications recognize the ability to gain, and where relevant apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Level 4 involves obtaining detailed knowledge and skills. It is appropriate for people wishing to go to university, people working independently, or in some areas supervising and training others in their field of work. There is considerable freedom for institutions to choose their own mix of qualifications based on how best they want to meet the needs of their students, and the requirements of employers. Apprenticeships are offered at these levels and are work-based programmes each comprising a range of qualifications that all have to be achieved for the apprenticeship to be completed. The main aim of qualifications at these levels is to enable people to progress into work (or in work if it is professional updating) and/or progress into ‘higher education’.

At EQF Level 5 most of the vocational programmes are offered by colleges and universities. Many are available on a part-time study basis to enable people in work to enhance their knowledge and skills whilst still working. Level 5 qualifications recognize the ability to increase the depth of knowledge and understanding of an area of work or study to enable the formulation of solutions and responses to complex problems and situations. Learning at this level involves the demonstration of high levels of knowledge, a high level of work expertise in job roles and competence in managing and training others. Qualifications at this level are appropriate for people working as higher grade technicians, professionals or managers. Level 5 qualifications are at a level equivalent to intermediate Higher Education qualifications such as Diplomas of Higher Education, Foundation and other degrees that do not typically provide access to postgraduate programmes.

Most programmes at EQF Levels 6 to 8 are offered by universities, although an increasing number of colleges are able to offer Level 6 programmes – usually in partnership with a higher education institution.

ITALY

One can enroll a VET-school after the conclusion of the compulsory schooling.

There are 2 macro-areas:

- 1) professional schools (5 years without intermediate specializations), qualification awarded after the successful conclusion of the 5-years cycle; diploma gives access to the University;
- 2) Regional professional training centers – *Centri di formazione professionale* – after 2-3 years of studies and a final exam one gets a professional certificate.

Grading system:1-10 (lowest-highest).

The final professional qualification exam: common subjects (like in upper secondary schools), an exam focused on the skills and knowledge needed for a specific professional career.

THE NETHERLANDS

Since competence-based learning became mandatory in September 2013, qualifications are awarded by ‘pass’. Some schools may still use grades (1-10) but this is no longer the norm.

POLAND

In Polish system there are internal and external exams. Internal exams are prepared and evaluated in each institution and the grading system is from 1 (fail) to 6 (excellent). External exams are prepared by the Examination Centre in Warsaw and they are the same in all Poland. There are no grades but percentages: 50% required to pass the theoretical part (professional knowledge) and 75% to pass the practical part. A student gets a separate certificate for each qualification, but needs all 3 certificates to get a diploma stating that he/she is a professional, e.g., IT Technician. This system was introduced only this year – in June .

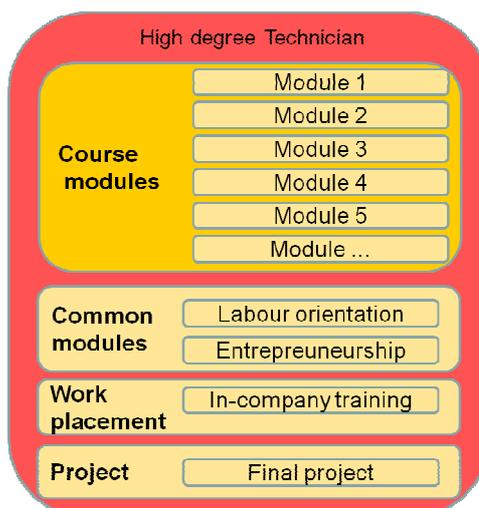
SPAIN

Students must show they have achieved the learning outcomes through continuous evaluation and/or internal exams.

All qualifications - made up of different modules, need to be passed by the students to achieve a diploma.

Each Learning Outcome accompanied by assessment criteria for validation. Students must show that they have achieved those learning outcomes: grading system from 1 (the worst) to 10 (the best); except for the Training Period in a Company module that is only marked with a “pass” or “not pass”. This Training (about 400h) takes place at the end of their studies and students can only get it once they have passed all the other modules.

Figure 3. Spanish system



TURKEY

The points system rates a student's work results with grades from 1 to 5. In order to pass classes, the second term grade should be a minimum of 2 (passing) or 3 (satisfactory).

If any subject grade does not meet the minimum requirement then the overall year average is considered.

The minimum overall year average should be:

- 3.50 for science and social science schools
- 3.00 for Anatolian or similar schools
- 2.50 for ordinary, technical and vocational schools

A student who does not meet the average grade requirements may pass if they have no more than two subjects with failing grades in their school career. If not, the year is repeated.

Some universities use a scale of 0-100, "100" being the highest, whereas others use the typical American A-F scale where GPA is calculated on a scale of 4.00. The student's achievement is measured in the form of a Grade Point Average (GPA). The total credit points for a course are obtained by multiplying the coefficient of the final grade by the credit hours. In order to calculate the GPA for any given semester, the total credit points are divided by the total credit hours.

At the secondary level, most schools follow the ministry-approved 1-5 grading scale. Grading in Turkish secondary education is somewhat stringent, and grades tend to cluster in the twos and threes. Given the grading distribution common to Turkish secondary education, WES considers both grades '4' & '5' as equivalent to a U.S. 'A' grade. The '5' grade is not commonly awarded in Turkey.

Students graduating from secondary school are eligible to take university entrance examinations. Typically, university entry is reserved for students graduating from the general academic secondary branch, with graduates from technical and vocational schools pursuing further studies at technical institutes.

Entry to institutions of higher education is based on a student's grade point average from secondary school combined with scores in the *YukseÖgretimGecisSinavi* (Higher Education Transition Exam – YGS) and the *LisansYerlestirmeSinavi* (Undergraduate Placement Exam – LYS).

2.4. Institutions responsible for creating the program of studies on the VET level in EMPLOY countries

ENGLAND

There is no one body responsible for creating the basic programme of studies on VET level. It varies by subject.

EQF Level 3: schools are responsible for planning the whole curriculum.

Qualifications on level 4 are provided by centrally regulated awarding organisations, external to the school or college within a qualifications system common to England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Following the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009, the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) was published by BIS and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) in 2011. It sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognized English Apprenticeship framework to which compliance is now a statutory requirement.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) EQF level 5 (and lower) and above HEIs are private bodies which are independent of government. Institutions are free to design their own programmes and awards and to determine the conditions on which they awarded, subject to the status of their degree-awarding powers. However, all institutions structure their programmes along broadly similar lines within a three cycle framework, which conforms to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) qualifications framework.

ITALY

MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research)

THE NETHERLANDS

The regional educational centres for VET and adult training: ROCs and AOCs. Educational teams.

POLAND

Ministry of Education

SPAIN

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport

TURKEY

Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education; Council of Higher Education

2.5. Institutions responsible for issuing diplomas / certificates on VET level in EMPLOY countries

ENGLAND

The quality assurance processes for EQF levels 3, 4 & 5 applies to the majority of VET providers.

Institutions responsible for issuing diplomas are:

- **Centres**, meaning educational institutions, training organisations, employers and other bodies that provide learning and assessment opportunities leading to recognised qualifications;
- **Awarding organisations**, meaning bodies that award credit and qualifications, set assessment requirements, monitor assessments and issue certificates.

ITALY

MIUR (Ministry of Education, Universities and Research) through VET schools.

THE NETHERLANDS

The regional educational centres for VET and adult training: ROCs and AOCs, Vocational Training Centres.

POLAND

In Poland, it is the ministerial level - Ministry of Education

SPAIN

The authorized VET school or training centre. Validation in Spain is conferred by the corresponding regional Labour and Educational Ministry (The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport). There are two official recognition processes; on the one hand the *Professional Certification* and on the other, *Vocational Educational Certificates*. Given that both are based on formally recognized qualifications (NQF), a person can pass from one to the other by doing complementary training. For example, a worker can present his/her professional certificates when they matriculate to obtain a VET certificate and have several modules “convalidated” or recognized.

TURKEY

Republic Of Turkey Ministry of National Education; The Council of Higher Education

3. Evaluation of Transversal Competences

3.1. Experience in evaluation competences in EMPLOY countries

Employers consider competences as important as technical knowledge, both for their employees and those applying for a job. It is obvious, that to assess someone’s specific competence is not an easy task. Transversal competences so far have been usually neglected. Debate about the importance of transversal competences assessment has started recently. Many educators are discussing the problem and some attempts to work on creating such a system of competences assessment have been made in different countries. However, most of the methods already developed have proved to be subjective and too complicated to be applied either by the facilitators, participants or employers. EMPLOY Project is one of these initiatives suggesting a more practical approach to the competence assessment. After their experience with the project methodology, EMPLOY Partners focused on a proposal of developing and evaluating competences of high interest for employers. The suggestions came out after piloting EMPLOY approach in 4 countries: Poland, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands in 2013-2014.

So far, as the table below shows, in some EMPLOY countries (Italy and Turkey) there is no system of assessment of competences, some evaluate only certain aspects like ‘being entrepreneurial’ (Spain, Poland), two countries have more experience in life skills assessment (the UK and the Netherlands).

Table 8. Present approach to evaluation in EMPLOY countries

Country	Evaluation of Transversal Competences
England	The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families published the first national standards for adult literacy and numeracy in 2000. The following qualifications, achieved by adult learners, aged 16 years and older, count towards the <i>Skills for Life</i> target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Adult literacy and numeracy certificates (based on the 2000 national standards) o Key Skills qualifications in 'Communication' and 'Application of Number' o GCSE Maths and English
Italy	There is no such system.
The Netherlands	The NLQF is based on learning outcomes, includes foreign languages and <i>non formal learning</i> and refers to the EQF. In case someone gathered parts of qualifications one can ask for an EVC-procedure, in which an official and trained assessor will assess the delivered proof of gained competences, knowledge and provide the person with an exemption of parts of the Qualification exams. ECVET , In the Netherlands regional educational centre for VET and adult training ROCs and Centres of Expertise have joined international pilot projects concerning ECVET. Outcomes are very diverse and varied, and need more study.
POLAND	Secondary schools curriculum provides only education in respect of entrepreneurship. It is a one year course. Only soft skills are discussed during the lessons but they are not assessed. There are only attempts to work on evaluation of competences in informal education, e.g., in international projects.
SPAIN	There are transversal/common modules to all the different VET courses such as labour orientation and entrepreneurship. Within these modules life skills and competences are trained and assessed.
TURKEY	There is no such system.

Resource: Based on information from Project Partners

As the above table shows, so far, despite the attempts, there is no clear system of competence assessment in formal education.

Many organizations understanding the need to identify, develop, assess and prove the competences have worked on creating a universal approach for many years. After the thorough desk research on the initiatives and a variety of proposed solutions it turned out how different the approach to this subject can be. Consequently, it seems it is very difficult to propose the common approach which could be used in different environments (countries, education systems, target groups) without objections. Some solutions are proposed on different levels, by i.e. one organization, individual person or international consortium. For example, in Spain, there is a transversal competence evaluation tool used by one of the EMPLOY Partners – Txorierra. It is a 3-level description of each competence (see annex 4). There is also a holistic learning approach including planning and "delivery" of learning and not just "validation" (assessment and evidence) - the "LEVEL5" software proposed by one of the international project consortium working on this issue. This approach is the result of many years of work on measuring the competences by a variety of educational organisations.⁷ It can be used for instance to plan self-learning of a certain competence (e.g. teamwork) at the workplace. Both examples prove how different the approach to measure the competences progress can be. EMPLOY portfolio, described below in this report, is another proposal for evaluation of competences.

3.2. Experience from EMPLOY pilots and suggestions on how to evaluate transversal competences

Work on competences is very close to vocational guidance. The difference between career counseling and evaluation of the competences required by employers lies in the question of how to diagnose this type of competences. To evaluate whether someone has a specific competence and on what level is by no means easy or transparent. It should definitely take place in several stages in order to avoid the randomness and define the most important competences of a particular person.

From our experience it is a complicated subject. As with any other skill it would be useful to evaluate transversal competences in a standardized way. However, some competences are in fact impossible to measure in an objective way. In case of punctuality it is clear: somebody is on time or not, but as far as positive thinking is concerned it is not possible to give any reliable 'grade'. Any evaluation would be subjective. For example, someone can be considered to have positive attitude by one person, but not necessarily by another. The same doubts concern, e.g., communication or time management skills and many other competences. We also have to take into consideration intercultural aspects. There may be different 'definitions' or understanding of the same competence in particular countries.

Therefore, when thinking of assessment of any competence, **the following steps are suggested**. The first step: to identify competences to be assessed, the second step: to specify what is meant by possessing a particular competence and the third: to decide how to evidence progress and possession of competences. Finally, to certify the possession of the competence.

⁷ To learn more: <http://vita-eu.org/index.php?id=1>

A variety of instruments (quizzes, tests, on-line questionnaires providing objective feedbacks) are already used in different countries to assess competences. These seem to be useful for both individuals seeking employment and employers. Over the years they have been implemented in various organizations, so sometimes they are treated as standardized procedures, principles and methods of their use. They allow you to explore the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the potential employee, as well as to estimate the level of motivation to work and identify areas with which a person copes.

However, there is not one tool which could be freely used to identify, develop and prove possessing the above mentioned competences by youth, adults, long term unemployed or other groups. EMPLOY Partners created a toolkit: “EMPLOY Toolkit - Developing Competences for Employability”⁸ which was tested on different target groups.⁹

At the beginning of the EMPLOY Pilots, **Personal Competence Card** was used for gathering opinions about the participants’ skills. The Card is the diagnosis of the following competences: Positive Attitude, Communication skills, Problem solving, Flexibility, Work under pressure, Learning to learn, Discipline, Team Working, Responsibility, Time management, Networking skills, CV- writing, Interview skills. Other competences chosen by the participant can be assessed, too.

After the introduction of a particular competence by a pilot facilitator and common discussion about the importance of these skills to get a job, Participants reflected on their own competences using the Personal Competence Card (First Self-Assessment). To get a more objective assessment of the participant’s competences, **360 degree feedback form called Mini Competence Card**, was used as an integral part of the Personal Competence Card. It provided information from the participant’s environment, e.g., colleagues, friends, teachers etc.

All the material was then collected and analyzed by facilitators and participants in order to select the most important competences to work on. At the last phase of the EMPLOY Pilot training, competences were assessed again, not only for certification purposes, but also to give the possibility to include this information in the **Participant’s portfolio**.

After the experience with the Personal Development Card it turned out that, first of all, the Participants’ awareness of the competence importance increased. Consequently, it proves to be a very good start for competence development and assessment. Additionally, the Card indicates the level of self-esteem and self-image of Participants.

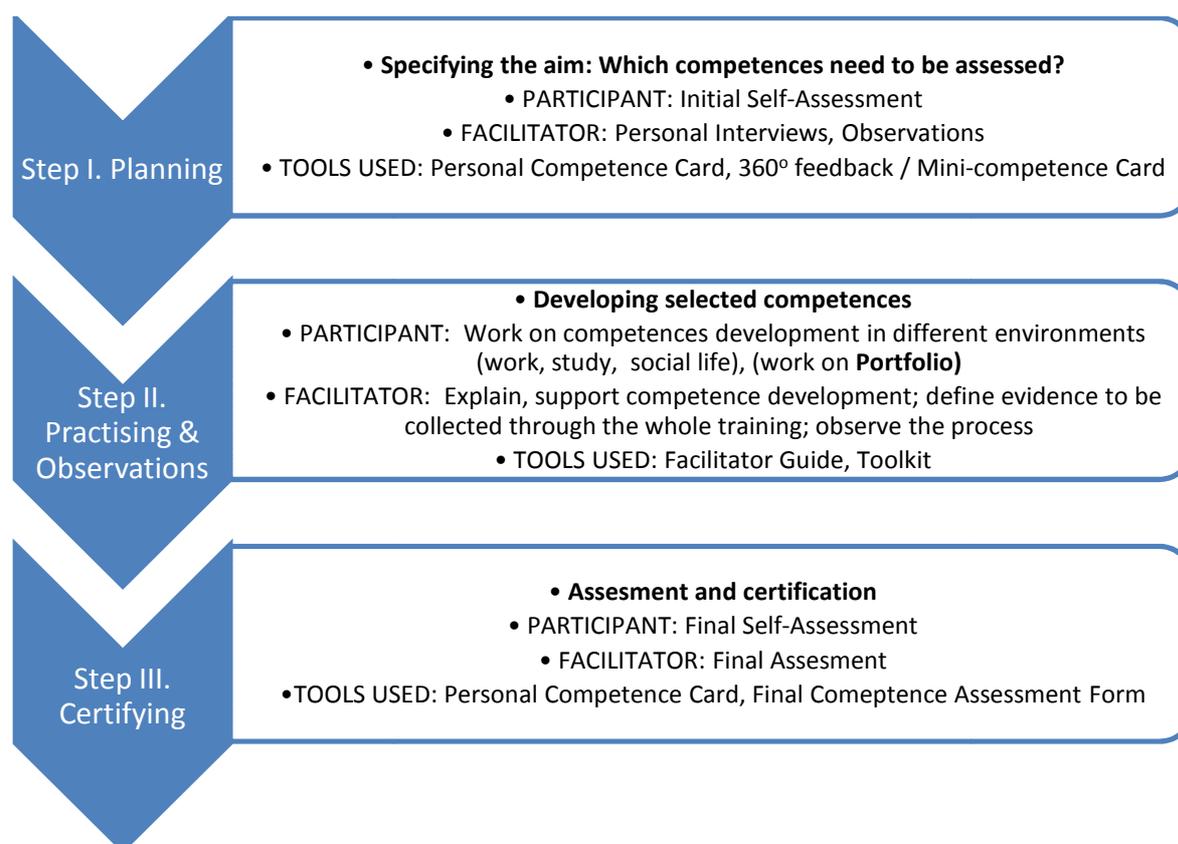
The Participants worked on creating their own portfolios in which they included proofs for development of particular competences. The way how to measure the portfolio progress can be a little controversial and discussed in different contexts. Although the progress showed by portfolio will be subjective to measure, both the portfolio and the EMPLOY methods worked well in some countries and with different target groups. Below you will find three possible recommendations on how to measure the progress in developing competences.

⁸ Dutch, English, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Turkish versions of the toolkit and teacher guide showing why and how to work with the toolkit can be downloaded from www.employ-project.com

⁹ i.e. youth, adult students, unemployed

As it was mentioned above, the methodology worked out by EMPLOY Partners was positively assessed by both facilitators and participants of Pilots from different countries. In four countries (Poland, Spain, the Netherlands and the UK) 143 people of different profile (aged from 17 to 55, with different education levels, students or unemployed) took part in the Pilots.¹⁰ Toolkit and Teacher's Guide were improved according to the feedback collected. On the basis of the above experience, the following procedure of development and evaluation competence is proposed (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Approach to the development and evaluation of EMPLOY competences



The assessment of EMPLOY competences is not easily measurable and **can be based on more or less subjective opinions**. Therefore clear focus on the participant's portfolio and investment of time for working on it - combined with the final competence assessment card - is very important.

The moment that a participants' portfolio is about to be shown to a coach or tutor some actions will be needed as a follow up:

1. **To count hours – ECVET:** It is suggested that the participants (when possible) keep track of the hours they spend on improving their competences. Combined with the hours in class or group work (for instance: competence 1, 3, 6 and 9 take 50 hours during the work placement + 10 hours in the classroom = 60 hours covered in semester 1 and 2 of school year 2013/2014 = 3 ECVET points (1 pont for each 20 hours of learning)

¹⁰ *Employ Internation Pilot Report – Findings, Results & Recommendation for Change can be downloaded from www.employ-project.com/*

2. **To make connection to qualification / subjects:** The participants should keep track of the subjects during which they also worked on activities from the EMPLOY toolkit.
3. **Individual improvement per competence:** Coaches / trainers or tutors should be aware of the fact that participants are working on improvements based on a self assessment.

Example:

Student A scores their self overall with a 4.3. Now the 360 degrees feedback forms give an overall score of 2.6. The student now knows that his personal assessment was too positive. But then again, the student can decide which competences to work on. However, afterwards he can still measure his improvement again.

An important problem which appeared in some cases during the piloting of EMPLOY methodology (e.g. in Poland and Spain), was too high or too low initial assessment of participants’ competences. It can happen! As a result of subjective opinions (either their own or those coming from the feedback), sometimes their progress was negative (i.e., at the beginning some participants assessed their competence at 5 and then marked 4 in the final assessment). It was a clear result of their better understanding of the issue at the end of the pilot, so it should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the solution could be to recommend the facilitators to specify as clearly as possible what is meant by a particular competence. Moreover, it can be helpful to specify what is meant by scale 1-5 on the Personal Competence Card, taking into consideration, that the competence assessment is not easily measurable, and it can be based on the subjective opinions. It is suggested to specify what is meant by scale 1-5 on the Personal Competence Card (see Table 9). It is important to mention that the below **table can be used optionally** together with other mentioned recommendations and the levels proposed there do not refer to EQF or any other official qualification levels proposed.

Table 9. Example of the Personal Competence Card scale for “Positive attitude”

Level	Competence Level description	Explanation
1	I do not apply it	I always look at the negative aspects first
2	I apply it very seldom	I sometimes happen to see positive aspects but I am aware that it is rare and unusual for me
3	I sometimes apply it	I have positive attitude, but only in some situations, e.g., when I find the task easy
4	I apply it independently but with self-control	I am fully aware that positive attitude is crucial for better efficiency, so if I happen to have negative thoughts I try to think it over and find positive aspects
5	I apply intuitively with autonomy	I always look at the positive aspects first

The above specification together with Personal Competence Card could be used instead of the available detailed and time-consuming descriptions of the gained competences and their levels.

Instead of describing each competence and creating similar evaluation tips for them it is proposed to use a more general specification which should be applicable to all of the competences.

Another conclusion after the pilots is to adapt activities suggested in the toolkit depending on the group profile (e.g. teenagers or adults; their educational background). For individual work only some activities can be used. Depending on the Participants’ profile, EMPLOY toolkit provides a good source of materials to identify, work with and assess competences. Facilitators can adapt the Toolkit and

Teachers' Guide according to their needs: they can use all or only some activities; they can also add other activities, e.g. quizzes or tests.

For the final assessment the certificate can be used. A proposal of a formal certificate of assessed outcomes for course participants can be found in Annex 1. It can be easily adapted to the country, organization or participant's needs.

Moreover, as it has already been described, EMPLOY Partners suggest awarding credits for competence development. It is suggested to assign **1 credit (as the equivalent of ECVET) for each 20 hours of time dedicated to their work on a certain competence**. Although this will not provide the employers with clear information as to the competence of a potential employee they would expect, it will certainly show how seriously this person treats the development of competences, which are nowadays so highly valued by the employers.¹¹

¹¹See: *results of international research in Needs Analysis available on <http://www.employ-project.com/>*

Annex 1.Certificate



European Certificate



EMPLOY- Design Your Future Employability
Training aimed at developing competences and creating a portfolio of competences to improve employability



(name of the participant)

is awarded this certificate for their participation in hour Programme

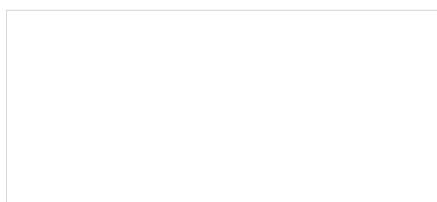
(no of hours)

from: to:

(duration of activities)

Equivalent (ECVET) credit points suggested:.....

(1 credit point for 20 hours of learning)



Stamp of the organisation

On behalf of the project consortium:

Place & date; name, position & signature



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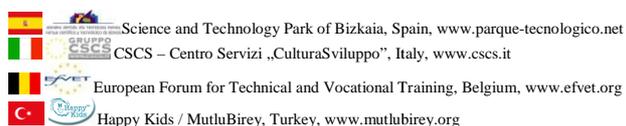


PROGRAMME

List of competences in the programme	✓ - if developed	Proof of improving a competence can be found in my portfolio under the number(s)
Positive Attitude		
Problem Solving		
Communication		
Work under pressure		
Learning to learn		
Flexibility / adaptability		
Discipline		
Time Management		
Team Working		
Responsibility		
..... <i>Another chosen competence, if applicable</i>		
..... <i>Another chosen competence, if applicable</i>		
Networking skills		
CV-writing		
Interview skills		

Facilitator:
(name and signature)

EMPLOY Partnership



Annex 2. Questionnaire used for desk research

Partner organization:

Logo:

Country:

Author:

Please fill in the information for your country and send it back to Polish partner.

1. Is there a unified system of NQF in your country? If yes, does the NQF apply to all courses in the VET curriculum in your country or only to some? If not, what system is used to verify qualifications?
2. Are certificates/diplomas assigned according to the specific framework of qualifications? Fill in Table 1 below. (Please refer to EQF – explanation in Table 2).

Table 1.

EQF	NQF	Diploma/Certificate gained
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

3. How are qualifications awarded? (What is the grading system?) Describe briefly in 1-2 paragraphs and/or a table.
4. Who is responsible for creating the program of studies on the VET level? (i.e. what material has to be covered in courses?)
5. Who issues the diplomas/certificates on VET level?
6. Is there any system of assessment of life skills and/or competences in your country? If **Yes**, describe briefly.

Annex3. EQF descriptors

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications		KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
LEVEL 1	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are:	Basic general knowledge	basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
LEVEL 2	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are:	basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools	work or study under supervision with some autonomy
LEVEL 3	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are:	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	1. take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study 2. adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
LEVEL 4	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are:	factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
LEVEL 5	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are:	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	1. exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change 2. review and develop performance of self and others
LEVEL 6	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are:	advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	1. manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, 2. taking responsibility for decision making in unpredictable work or study contexts stake responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
LEVEL 7	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are:	1. highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research 2. critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	1. manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches 2. take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
LEVEL 8	The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are:	knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Annex 4. Evaluation of transversal competences – Spanish example

	3	2	1
Implication	The majority of times accepts to undertake the task set	Sometimes accepts to undertake the task set	Rarely accepts to undertake the task set
	Normally participates actively in the task and shows enthusiasm	Sometimes participates actively in the task and shows enthusiasm but not always	Hardly ever participates actively in the task or shows enthusiasm
	Usually undertakes the task in a responsible and committed way	Sometimes (but not always) undertakes the task in a responsible and sometimes lacks commitment	Doesn't show commitment or take responsibility for the task
Autonomy	Almost always seems independent in undertaking tasks	Is sometimes independent in undertaking proposed tasks	Shows difficulty in undertaking tasks independently
	Frequently undertakes to help others with tasks and collaborates well	Sometimes collaborates with others y helps when asked needed	Normally needs help from other colleagues or the teacher
Adaptation to Change	Shows an open and positive attitude to change, valuing the proposals of others	Presents few alternatives (may be unrealistic) and doesn't really value alternative proposals	Doesn't offer alternatives, lets others lead or rejects alternatives from others
Resolving Conflicts	Usually shows decisiveness, confidence and clear ideas which lead him/her to select an adequate proposal (from among various options) in time	Sometimes, indecisive, insecure and it takes time to reach a decision; sometimes doesn't manage to solve the problem.	Very indecisive person, insecure and unable to select an adequate alternative in time.
	Adopts opportune measures when faced with different possibilities (promotes dialogue, tries to avoid tensions, knows when to give in...)	Sometimes adopts measures, not always adequate when faced with different possibilities.	Almost never adopts measures, not always adequate when faced with different possibilities.
	Almost always helps to find satisfactory solutions for everyone	Sometimes helps to find satisfactory solutions for everyone	Rarely helps to find satisfactory solutions for everyone
Communication	Usually expresses him/herself orally clearly and in a coherent way	Sometimes expresses him/herself clearly and coherently	Rarely expresses him/herself clearly and coherently
	Usually expresses him/herself in writing clearly and coherently	Sometimes expresses him/herself in writing clearly and coherently	Rarely expresses him/herself in writing clearly and coherently
	Normally tries to understand others' point of view	Sometimes tries to understand others' point of view	Rarely tries to understand others' point of view
Team work	Sometimes listens with respect, gives opinions and ideas, reaches agreements, respects the opinions of other team members	Sometimes listens with respect, gives opinions and ideas, reaches agreements, respects the opinions of other team members	Almost never listens with respect, gives opinions and ideas, reaches agreements, respects the opinions of other team members
	Almost always plans a task in an orderly, clear way (in writing), distributes tasks and undertakes the part corresponding to him/her	Sometimes plans a task in an orderly, clear way (in writing), distributes tasks and undertakes the part corresponding to him/her	Almost never plans a task in an orderly, clear way (in writing) or distributes tasks and undertakes the part corresponding to him/her
	Almost always fulfills the agreed task in the agreed time frame; brings dynamism, encourages and promotes improvements in the group meetings	Sometimes fulfills the agreed task in the agreed time frame; brings dynamism, encourages and promotes improvements in the group meetings	Almost never fulfills the agreed task in the agreed time frame; does not usually bring dynamism or encourage and promote improvements in the group meetings
Leadership	Almost always accessible to colleagues	Sometimes accessible to colleagues	Almost never accessible to colleagues
	Almost always helps to achieve the objectives and encourages team work	Sometimes helps to achieve the objectives and encourages team work	Almost never helps to achieve the objectives and encourages team work
	Almost always brings dynamism, motivates and demands responsibility from colleagues	Sometimes brings dynamism, motivates and demands responsibility from colleagues	Almost never brings dynamism, motivates and demands responsibility from colleagues
	Almost always encourages creativity and innovation	Sometimes encourages creativity and innovation	Almost never encourages creativity and innovation
	Almost always recognizes the work well done by others	Sometimes recognizes the work well done by others	Almost never recognizes the work well done by others

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