

The Danish National Qualifications Framework and referencing of non-formal qualifications to the NQF

Allan Bruun Pedersen

Senior Adviser



The Danish NQF

- First Danish NQF for higher education in 2003
- EQF for Life Long Learning adopted in 2009
- Self-certification to the EHEA Framework in 2010
- EQF-LLL referenced to the EQF in 2011
- Including all state recognised, formal qualifications – Also state recognised “Micro-credentials”



Structure and set-up

- NQF steered by Coordination Committee of Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture
- No specific legal act on the Danish NQF
- NQF implemented indirectly in higher education via accreditation act
- NQF in all other levels implemented in educational orders

Structure and set-up

- www.nqf.dk
- 8 levels
- Descriptors are knowledge, skills and competences
- Types of certificates and degrees: Full degrees and supplementary qualifications
- Integration with national database of educational qualifications – www.ug.dk

Quality Assurance and referencing of qualifications

- Quality assurance of higher education qualifications is done via the accreditation act
- Referencing VET qualifications to the NQF is done according to guidelines from the MoE.
- Trade committees describe the learning outcomes of each programme and compare with the learning outcomes in the NQF – Best fit principle

Background for including non-formal, private qualifications

- Process started in 2018 by the National Coordination Committee for the Danish NQF – completed and implemented in 2019
- Strengthening life long learning
- Better integration of formal and non-formal learning and qualifications – avoiding double education
- Creating more alignment of formal and non-formal qualifications by assessing levels of learning and creating a common language of learning outcomes

Background for including non-formal, private qualifications

- A solid foundation for credit transfer decisions and for admission decisions to formal programmes
- Greater transparency for employers about the level and quality of non-formal programmes and for qualification holders about their educational achievements
- Strengthening the quality of non-formal programmes through prescribed criteria

The process: involving the stakeholders

- Scoping the demands of the stakeholders at informal meetings with representatives from the different stakeholder groups in the early phase.
- Formal consultation meeting in April 2019 (80 people attended with representatives from all the stakeholder groups). A proposal for requirements and a concept for assessments was presented. All interested parties had the opportunity to share opinions and ideas.
- Invitation for written consultation was sent to selected social partners.
- After the feedback: the final concept was approved by the relevant ministries.

Principles of referencing non-formal qualifications: Level assessments in 2 phases: phase 1

1. The purpose of the educational programme and its relevance to the labor market and/or the area of culture or leisure.
2. Learning outcomes described within the categories of the Danish NQF for Lifelong Learning.
3. Sustainability of the educational programme:
 - a) The educational programme should have been conducted from start to finish at least five times and offered for at least five years, or
 - b) For shorter educational programmes, they should have been conducted at least 30 times.
4. Description of how the educational programme conducts teaching evaluation, where the students as a minimum should be asked about the intended and achieved learning outcome and the teaching method.
5. Assessment of whether the student has reached the overall objectives for intended learning outcome by the completion.
6. Issuing of certificate with information on the learning outcomes, the educational programme's level in the Danish NQF and the programme's study load.

The principles behind the level assessments: Phase 2

- Phase 2: The **external expert** and the Accreditation Institution assess
 - learning outcomes
 - the teacher's academic qualifications
 - the teaching evaluation
- In case of positive outcome: Both the electronical certificate and the written assessment is available on the AI's website. The assessment is valid for four years, after which they will have to apply for renewal of the level assessment.

Status and statistics per June 2023

- 67 applications have been submitted
- 52 qualifications have received a level assessment, amongst others in the fields of:
 - health (acupuncture, clinical cosmetology, hairdressing and sign language),
 - finance and trade (shipping, finance and insurance),
 - arts (acting, film and clothes design)
 - And the public sector (prison guard and military qualifications).

NQF Level	Amount of assessed qualifications
4	13
5	19
6	14
7	1

The 2022 evaluation report from The Danish Evaluation Institute

Results of the evaluation report – positive feedback:

- Overall, the informants are positive
- A quality stamp that can contribute to both internal and external recognition, as well as marketing purposes
- The process has had a positive influence on the quality development of the educational programme with requirements to clarify choice of words and reflect on future practice in the application process
- Using terms of learning outcomes makes the qualification more compatible for comparison with the formal, state recognized programmes
- - Better integration of formal and non-formal qualifications

The 2022 evaluation report from EVA

Results of the report – wishes for improvement

- More communication from ministries and the AI about the qualification framework and the level assessments in order to spread the knowledge
- Clarification of the requirements for the various levels in the Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, so that they are sure that they are applying for the right level
- Wish for the renewal of an assessment to be cheaper

Adaptations implemented after the evaluation

- More communication has been initiated
- Cheaper renewal of the assessment

