

ANNEX I

Glossary Quality in education and training (CEDEFOP 2011)

access to education and training

Conditions, circumstances or requirements (qualification, education level, competences or work experience, etc.) governing admission to and participation in educational institutions or programmes.

Comment: access of vulnerable groups to education is conditioned by outreach activities, availability of information, motivation, vocational preparation and guidance, financial support and targeted VET offer.

Source: based on Unesco, 1995.

accreditation (quality) Formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks.

Source: ISO – Glossary.

Accreditation of an education or training provider

Process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c, based on Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, 2003.

apprenticeship

Systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation.

Comment:

- in French, the term ‘apprentissage’ relates to both apprenticeship and the process of learning (see ‘learning’);
- the German ‘dual system’ is an example of apprenticeship.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

assessment of learning outcomes

Process of appraising knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria (learning expectations, measurement of learning outcomes). Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification.

Comment: In the literature, ‘assessment’ generally refers to appraisal of individuals whereas ‘evaluation’ is more frequently used to describe appraisal of education and training methods or providers.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

awarding body

Body issuing qualifications (certificates, diplomas or titles) formally recognising the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual, following an assessment and validation procedure.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

certification of learning outcomes

Process of issuing a certificate, diploma or title formally attesting that a set of learning outcomes (knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual have been assessed and validated by a competent body against a predefined standard.

Comment: certification may validate the outcome of learning acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

certification (quality) Process by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.

Source: ISO.

certification body

Body that gives written assurance that a (quality) product, process or service conforms to specified requirements following assessment against predefined criteria.

Source: ISO.

common principles for quality assurance in higher education and VET

Quality assurance – to ensure accountability and improvement of higher education and vocational education and training – should be carried out in accordance with the following nine principles:

- quality assurance policies and procedures should underpin all levels of the European qualifications framework;
- quality assurance should be an integral part of internal management of education and training institutions;
- quality assurance should include regular evaluation of institutions, their programmes or their quality assurance systems by external monitoring bodies or agencies;
- external monitoring bodies or agencies carrying out quality assurance should be subject to regular review;
- quality assurance should include context, input, process and output dimensions, while giving emphasis to outputs and learning outcomes;
- quality assurance systems should include the following elements:
 - clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, including stakeholder involvement,
 - appropriate resources,
 - consistent evaluation methods, associating self-assessment and external review,
 - feedback mechanisms and procedures for improvement,
 - widely accessible evaluation results;
- quality assurance initiatives at international, national and regional levels should be coordinated to ensure overview, coherence, synergy and system-wide analysis;
- quality assurance should be a cooperative process across education and training levels and systems, involving all relevant stakeholders, in Member States and across the Community;
- quality assurance orientations at Community level may provide reference points for evaluations and peer learning.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2008.

competence

Proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

Source: European Commission, 2006a.

or

Ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development).

Comment: competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (involving technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organisational skills) and ethical values.

Source: Cedefop, Tissot, 2004; European Commission, 2006a.

continuing education and training

Education or training after initial education and training – or after entry into working life aimed at helping individuals to:

- improve or update their knowledge and/or skills;
- acquire new skills for a career move or retraining;
- continue their personal or professional development.

Comment: continuing education and training is part of lifelong learning and may encompass any kind of education (general, specialised or vocational, formal or non-formal, etc.). It is crucial for the employability of individuals.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

education or training provider

Any organisation or individual providing education or training services.

Comments:

- education and training providers may be organisations specifically set up for this purpose, or they may be others, such as employers, who provide training as part of their business activities. Training providers also include independent individuals who offer services;
- certification of providers is a key element of quality in education and training.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

Europass

A framework of five documents helping citizens better communicate their skills and competences to move to work or study in Europe. The Europass CV and the Europass language passport are completed by citizens themselves; the three other documents can be issued to citizens who experience mobility (Europass mobility) or formal vocational education or training (Europass certificate supplement) or higher education (diploma supplement).

Comment: Europass promotes adequate appreciation of learning outcomes acquired in formal, non-formal or informal settings.

Source: Cedefop.

European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)

Technical framework for transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes to achieve a qualification. ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in units of learning outcomes with associated points, a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements, transcripts of records and ECVET users' guides.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2009.

or

Device in which qualifications are expressed in units of learning outcomes to which credit points are attached, and which is combined with a procedure for validating learning outcomes. The aim of this system is to promote:

- mobility of people undertaking training;
- accumulation, transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes (either formal, non-formal or informal) acquired in different countries;
- implementation of lifelong learning;
- transparency of qualifications;
- common trust and cooperation between vocational training and education providers in Europe.

Comment: ECVET is based on describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences), organised into transferable and accumulable learning units to which credit points are attached and registered in a personal transcript of learning outcomes.

Source: European Commission, 2006b.

European qualification framework for lifelong learning (EQF)

Reference tool for describing and comparing qualification levels in qualifications systems developed at national, international or sectoral levels.

Comment: the EQF's main components are a set of eight reference levels described in terms of learning outcomes (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 recognising 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.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c, based on European Commission, 2006a.

or

Reference tool to compare the qualification levels of different qualifications systems and promote both lifelong learning and equal opportunities in a knowledge-based society, as well as further integration of the European labour market, while respecting the rich diversity of national education systems.

Source: European Commission, 2008b

European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET)

New reference framework to help EU Member States and participating countries develop, improve, guide and assess the quality of their own vocational education and training systems.

formal learning

Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

informal learning

Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Comments:

- informal learning outcomes do not usually lead to certification but may be validated and certified in the framework of recognition of prior learning schemes;
- informal learning is also referred to as experiential or incidental/random learning.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

key skills / key competences

Sum of skills (basic and new basic skills) needed to live in a contemporary knowledge society.

Comment: in their recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, the European Parliament and the Council set out eight key competences:

- communication in mother tongue;
- communication in foreign languages;
- competences in maths, science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;
- interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence;
- entrepreneurship;
- cultural expression.

Source: Cedefop, Tissot, 2008c; European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2006.

knowledge

Outcome of assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a field of study or work.

learning outcome(s) / learning attainments

Set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal.

Source: Cedefop 2008c.

or

Statement of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.

Source: European Commission, 2008b.

level of qualification

The term covers two aspects:

a) the level of attainment in education and training recognised in a qualification system or in a qualification framework;

or

b) the learning outcomes acquired through education and training, work experience or in informal/ non-formal settings.

Comment: the level of qualification:

- is often determined against a standard in a qualification system or against a level descriptor in a qualification framework;
- can be determined against an occupational profile (for example, description of learning outcomes required to perform the tasks attached to a job at a specific level of responsibility and autonomy);
- may also refer to education and training attended but not validated and certified.

Source: Cedefop.

non-formal learning

Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Comments:

- non-formal learning outcomes may be validated and lead to certification;
- non-formal learning is sometimes described as semi-structured learning.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

open method of coordination

New framework for cooperation between Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives.

Comments:

- the open method of coordination (OMC), is an intergovernmental method, in which Member States are evaluated by one another, with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance.
- the open method of coordination takes place in areas which fall within the competence of Member States, such as employment, social protection, social inclusion, education, sport, youth and training;
- it is based principally on:
 - jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council);
 - jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines);
 - benchmarking, comparison of Member States' performance and exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission).

Source: European Commission. Europa glossary.

outcome (quality)

Positive or negative longer-term socioeconomic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output.

Source: based on Johnson Center for Philanthropy; Cedefop, Descy and Tessaring, 2005.

output (quality)

Immediate and direct tangible result of an intervention.

Source: Cedefop, Descy and Tessaring, 2005.

qualification

Qualification covers different aspects:

- (a) formal qualification: the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. A qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade (OECD);
- (b) job requirements: knowledge, aptitudes and skills required to perform specific tasks attached to a particular work position (ILO).

Sources: Cedefop, 2008c; based on Eurydice, 2006; European Commission, 2008; ETF, 1997; OECD, 2007; ILO, 1998.

qualification framework

Instrument for development and classification of qualifications (at national or sectoral levels) according to a set of criteria (such as using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes.

Comment: A qualification framework can be used to:

- establish national standards of knowledge, skills and competences;
- promote quality of education;
- provide a system of coordination and/or integration of qualifications and enable comparison of qualifications by relating qualifications to one another;
- promote access to learning, transfer of learning outcomes and progression in learning.

Source: based on European Commission, 2008;

OECD, 2007.

quality assurance in education and training

Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that education and training (content of programmes, curricula, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.

Comments:

- QA contributes to better matching of education and training supply and demand;
- QA covers the macro-level (educational system level), meso-level (level of individual educational institutions) and micro-level (level of teaching-learning processes).

Source: Cedefop.

quality audit

Systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve quality objectives.

Source: ISO, 1994.

quality indicator for assessing quality in VET

10 quality indicators which can be used to support evaluation and quality improvement of VET systems and/or VET providers are:

- relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers;
- investment in training of teachers and trainers;
- participation rate in VET programmes;
- completion rate in VET programmes;
- placement rate in VET programmes;
- utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace;
- unemployment rate according to individual criteria;
- prevalence of vulnerable groups;
- mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market;
- schemes used to promote better access to VET.

Source: European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2009).

recognition of learning outcomes

(a) Formal recognition: process of granting official status to skills and competences either through:

- award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); or
- grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers, validation of gained skills and/or competences.

and/or

(b) social recognition: acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

skill

Ability to perform tasks and solve problems.

Sources: Cedefop, 2008c; European Commission, 2008.

social dialogue

Process of exchange between social partners to promote consultation, dialogue and collective bargaining.

Comments:

- (a) social dialogue can be bipartite (involving representatives of workers and employers) or tripartite (also associating public authorities and/or representatives of civil society, NGOs, etc.);
- (b) social dialogue can take place at various levels (company, sectoral/cross-sectoral and local/regional/national/transnational);
- (c) at international level, social dialogue can be bilateral, trilateral or multilateral, according to the number of countries involved.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.

validation of learning outcomes

Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Source: Cedefop, 2008c.