

Appendix 2: Glossary of key terms

This glossary of key terms is based on the terminological work of Cedefop.

awarding body

A body issuing qualifications (certificates or diplomas) formally recognising the achievements of an individual, following a standard assessment procedure.

certificate/diploma

An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure.

certification (of knowledge, skills and competences)

The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or skills and competences acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies.

comparability of qualifications

The extent to which it is possible to establish equivalence between the level and content of formal qualifications (certificates or diplomas) at sectoral, regional, national or international levels.

competence¹

Competence includes: i) cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; ii) functional competence (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they are functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity; iii) personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and iv) ethical competence involving the possession of certain personal and professional values.

continuing education and training

Education or training after initial education or 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.

curriculum

A set of actions followed when setting up a training course: it includes defining training goals, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers.

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. It typically does not lead to certification.

learning outcome²:

The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.

lifelong learning

All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

¹ The definitions of qualifications and competences provided in this note are compatible with those agreed by the European social partners in 2001: Competences are the knowledge, skills and know-how applied and mastered in a given work situation; Qualifications are a formal expression of the vocational or professional abilities of the employee. They are recognised at the national or sectoral level.

² This definition is based on elements provided by Cedefop (2004) and the Bologna working group on qualifications framework, February 2005, p 39

meta-framework

A meta-framework can be understood as a means of enabling one framework of qualifications to relate to others and subsequently for one qualification to relate to others that are normally located in another framework. The meta-framework aims to create confidence and trust in relating qualifications across countries and sectors by defining principles for the ways quality assurance processes, guidance and information and mechanisms for credit transfer and accumulation can operate so that the transparency necessary at national and sectoral levels can also be available internationally.

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), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It normally does not lead to certification.

programme (of education and training)

An inventory of activities, learning content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills or competences), organised in a logical sequence over a specified period of time.

qualifications

A qualification is achieved when a competent body determines that an individual's learning has reached a specified standard of knowledge, skills and wider competences. The standard of learning outcomes is confirmed by means of an assessment process or the successful completion of a course of study. Learning and assessment for a qualification can take place through a programme of study and/or work place experience. A qualification confers official recognition of value in the labour market and in further education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade.

qualifications framework

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The scope of frameworks may be comprehensive of all learning achievement and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector, for example initial education, adult education and training or an occupational area. Some frameworks may have more design elements and a tighter structure than others; some may have a legal basis whereas others represent a consensus of views of social partners. All qualifications frameworks, however, establish a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within a country and internationally.

recognition

a) *Formal recognition*: the process of granting official status to skills and competences either

-through the award of certificates or

-through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained skills and/or competences

and/or

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

regulated profession

professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms) is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications.

sector

The term sector is used either to define a category of companies on the basis of their main economic activity, product or technology (chemistry, tourism) or as a transversal/horizontal occupational category (ICT, marketing or Human resources).

Comment: the following distinctions are common:

(a) between *public sector* (government at various levels and government-controlled bodies) and *private sector* (private business)

(b) between *primary sector* (agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining and quarrying*), *secondary sector* (manufacturing industry, gas and electricity, water supply, construction*) and *tertiary sector* (services, e.g. transport, storage, communication, trade, financing and insurance, as well as the public sector*).

skill

The knowledge and experience needed to perform a specific task or job.

transparency of qualification

The degree to which the value of qualifications can be identified and compared on the (sectoral, regional, national or international) labour and training markets.

validation (of non formal and informal learning)

The process of assessing and recognising a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities.