

Quality Assurance and Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education at national and EHEA-level

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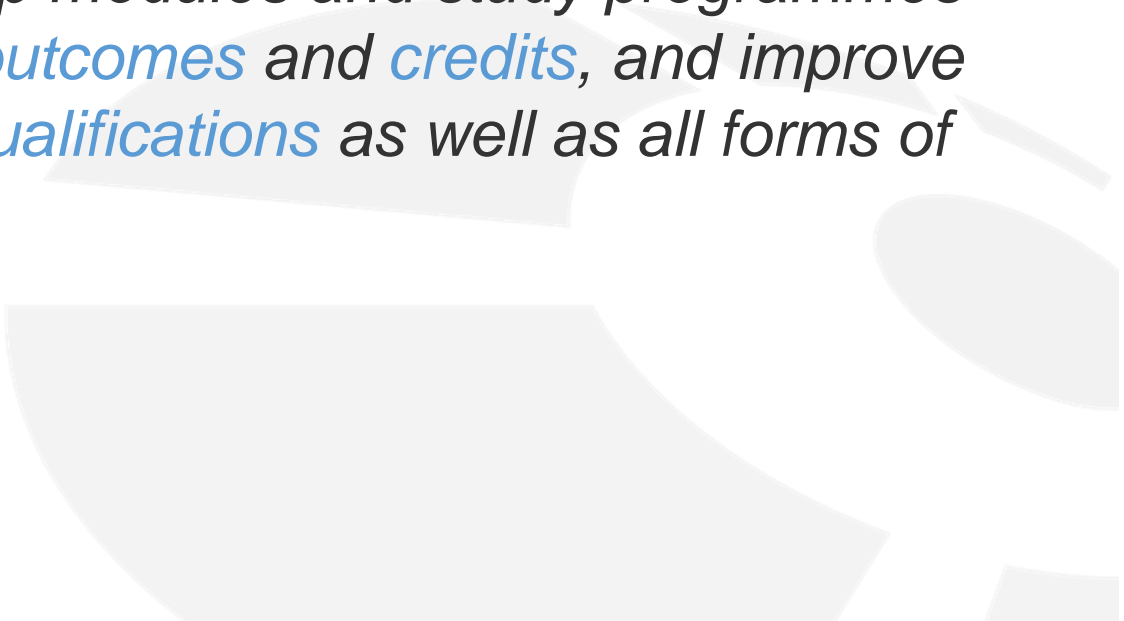
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Qualifications frameworks in EHEA (Bologna process)

- **Ministers Communiqué London 2007** : *“Qualifications frameworks are important instruments in achieving **comparability and transparency** within the EHEA and facilitating the **movement of learners** within, as well as between, higher education systems. They should also help HEIs to develop modules and study programmes based on **learning outcomes** and **credits**, and improve the **recognition of qualifications** as well as all forms of **prior learning**.”*
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Qualifications Frameworks

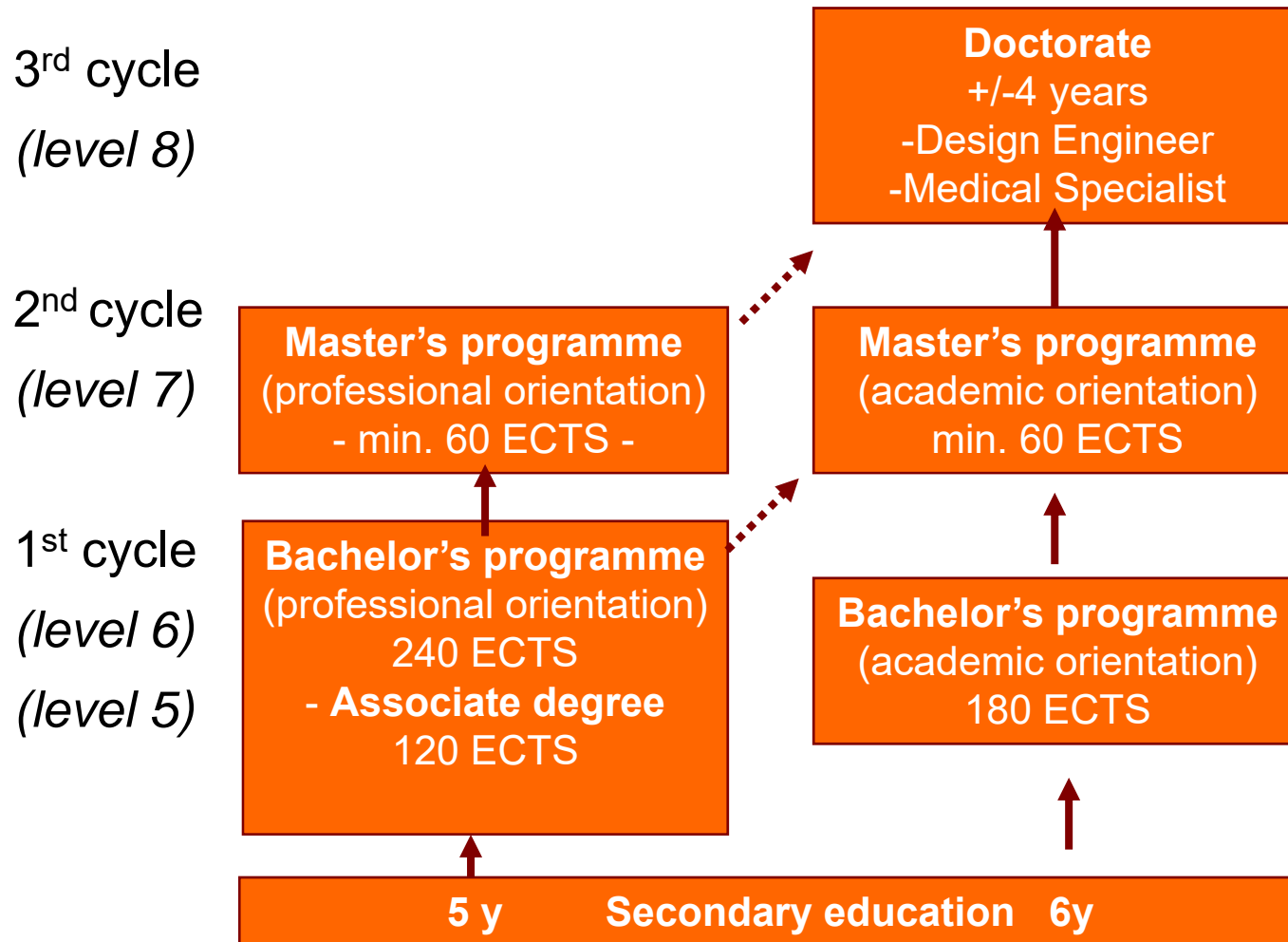
- Overarching European Qualification Framework for the EHEA
 - 3 cycles+: *short (Paris Communiqué)*, 1st (BA), 2nd (MA), 3rd (PhD)
 - Generic descriptors for each cycle (Dublin descriptors)
 - Credits ranges, ECTS (work load 25-30 hours; for 3rd cycle ECTS not specified); ECTS Users Guide 2015
 - Development of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)
 - Certification of NQFs to ensure that NQFs are in line with European framework
- EU framework for lifelong learning (EQF) has 8 levels
 - levels 5-8 equivalent to EHEA short, 1st, 2nd, 3rd cycles



Qualifications frameworks in EHEA (cont.)

- **Ministers Communiqué Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009:**
*“The development of national qualifications frameworks is an important step towards the implementation of lifelong learning. We aim at having them **implemented and prepared for self-certification** against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA **by 2012**. This will require continued coordination at the level of the EHEA and with the **European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning**.”*
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Qualification Frameworks: example Netherlands



Level	qualification	Higher Education Law - Flanders	Dublin descriptor	EQF descriptor			
Level 6	Bachelor minimum 180 credits	<i>Bachelor's programmes with a professional orientation</i>					
		<i>general</i>	<i>specific</i>				
		Professional orientation implies that the programmes are aimed at (bringing students to) a level of general and specific knowledge and competences, based upon the application of scientific or artistic knowledge, creativity and practical knowledge	general competences such as the capacity for logical thought and reasoning, the ability to acquire and process information, the ability for critical reflection and project-based work, creativity, the ability to perform simple supervision tasks, the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialists as well as laymen, and a positive attitude towards life-long learning		have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study		
		Bachelor's programmes with a professional orientation aim to bring students at the level of general and specific knowledge and competencies that are needed for the independent practice of a profession or a cluster of professions	general professional competences like the ability to work together as part of a team, a solution-oriented attitude in the sense of being able to define and analyse independently complex problematic situations in professional practice, and the ability to develop and apply effective strategies to solve them, and to develop a sense of social responsibility in connection with the professional practice		can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study	<i>knowledge</i> advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	
			specific professional competences at the level of a newly-qualified professional		have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues	<i>Skills</i> advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	
		<i>Bachelor's programmes with an academic orientation</i>					
		<i>general</i>	<i>specific</i>				
		Academic orientation implies that the programmes are aimed at (bringing the students to) a level of general knowledge and the acquirement of academic or artistic knowledge and competences, based upon the application of scientific or artistic knowledge, creativity and knowledge. Bachelor's programmes with an academic orientation are scientific research based	general competences such as the capacity for logical thought and reasoning, the ability to acquire and process information, the capacity for critical reflection, creativity, being able to perform simple management tasks, the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialists as well as laymen and a positive attitude towards life-long learning;			can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences	<i>Competence</i> - manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts;
		Bachelor's programmes with an academic orientation aim to bring students to the level of knowledge and competences that are needed for scientific or artistic functions in general and specifically, with as aim the access to the Master's programme	general academic competences such as a research attitude, knowledge of research methodologies and techniques and the ability to apply them adequately, the ability to collect the relevant data that can influence the formation of an opinion about social, scientific and ethical issues, appreciation of uncertainty, ambiguity and the limits of knowledge, and the ability to initiate problem-driven research;			have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy	- take responsibility for managing professional developments of individuals and groups
			an understanding of basic academic, discipline-related knowledge inherent to a certain domain of the sciences or the arts, systematic understanding of the key elements of a discipline which includes acquiring coherent and detailed knowledge that is inspired partly by the most recent developments in the discipline, and an understanding of the structure of the specialisation and its inter-relatedness with other specialities				



Overall progress NQFs (2017, Cedefop)

- **35 countries** have **officially established or formally adopted** their national qualifications frameworks (NQFs); 4 **countries** are still working on the design and/or the formal adoption of their NQFs;
- **Cedefop considers 21 NQFs to have reached operational status:** Austria, Belgium (FL), Czech Republic (partial framework for vocational qualifications - NSK), Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.
- **35 countries are working towards comprehensive NQFs** covering all types and levels of qualification from formal education and training (VET, HE, general education); and increasingly opening towards qualifications awarded outside formal education and training (e.g. Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden)
- **35 countries had formally linked** ('referenced') **their national qualifications frameworks to the EQF:** Austria, Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales). The remaining countries are expected to follow in 2018, which means that the first stage of EQF referencing is nearly finished.
- **29 countries** participating in the EQF implementation **have also self-certified their framework against the Bologna framework (QF-EHEA)**, 20 jointly with the EQF referencing.



Learning outcomes

- “Bologna” definition (for EHEA)

“statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.”

(Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, p. 29)

“Be able to do”

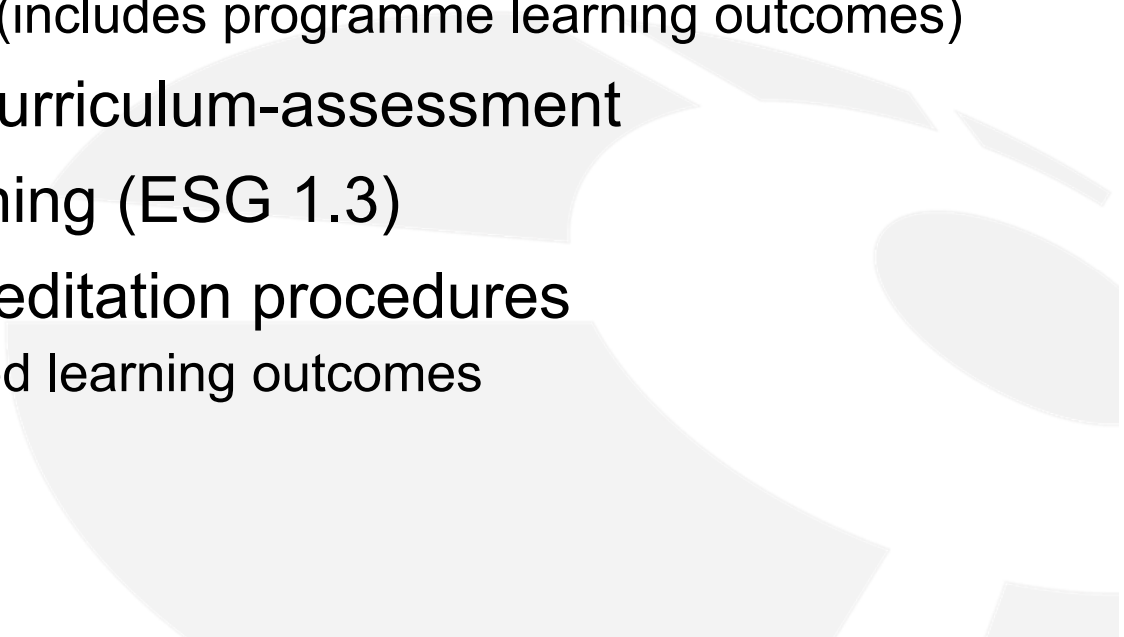
→ This implies: achievable and assessable

“A period of learning”

→ This can be a course, module, programme, ...




Relevance of Learning Outcomes

- Direct window on what a programme wants to achieve
 - Facilitates international comparability
 - Open to other developments in HE
 - E-learning
 - Prior Experiential Learning / Acquired Competences
 - Recognition of degrees
 - Diploma supplement (includes programme learning outcomes)
 - Learning outcomes-curriculum-assessment
 - Student-centred learning (ESG 1.3)
 - Assessed in QA/accreditation procedures
 - Intended and achieved learning outcomes
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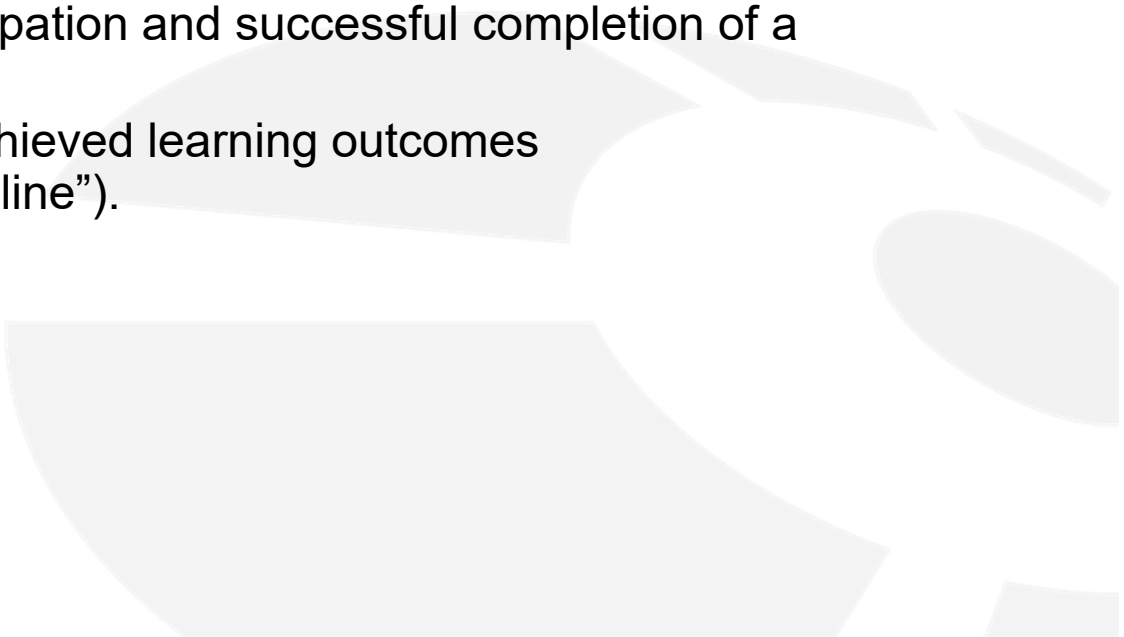
From Teacher-Centred to Student-Centred (1/3)

- Vision on curriculum design
 - T-C: ... starts from the content of the courses/modules
 - S-C: ... starts with the intended result, the anticipated achievements of the students.

 - Vision on teaching activities
 - T-C: What do I want/have to teach?
 - S-C: What do the students need to know, understand and be able to demonstrate (in my discipline, in the professional field, on the labour market)?
- 



From Teacher-Centred to Student-Centred (2/3)

- Vision on the educational process
 - T-C: ... is expressed and calculated in workload and measures of time (hours, semesters, years)
 - S-C: ... is expressed in credits that combine workload and learning outcomes
 - Vision on the degree
 - T-C: ... proves participation and successful completion of a programme.
 - S-C: ... is proof of achieved learning outcomes (“a master in a discipline”).
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From Teacher-Centred to Student-Centred (3/3)

- Vision on the recognition of foreign degrees
 - T-C: What did you have to do to get your degree (courses, years, ...)?
 - S-C: What do you know and can you do (your achieved learning outcomes)?





How to write learning outcomes?

- Focus on what you expect students to be able to demonstrate upon completion of the module or programme
- Start each outcome with an active verb: e.g. know, understand, learn, be familiar with, be exposed to, be acquainted with, be aware of
- Should be simply and clearly described
- Should be student-focused rather than teacher-focused
- Needs to be associated with workload (credits)
- Needs to be obtainable, measureable and validly assessed
- 5– 8 learning outcomes per module
- Link module LOs to programme LOs

Assessing learning outcomes

Intended learning outcomes

Teaching and learning

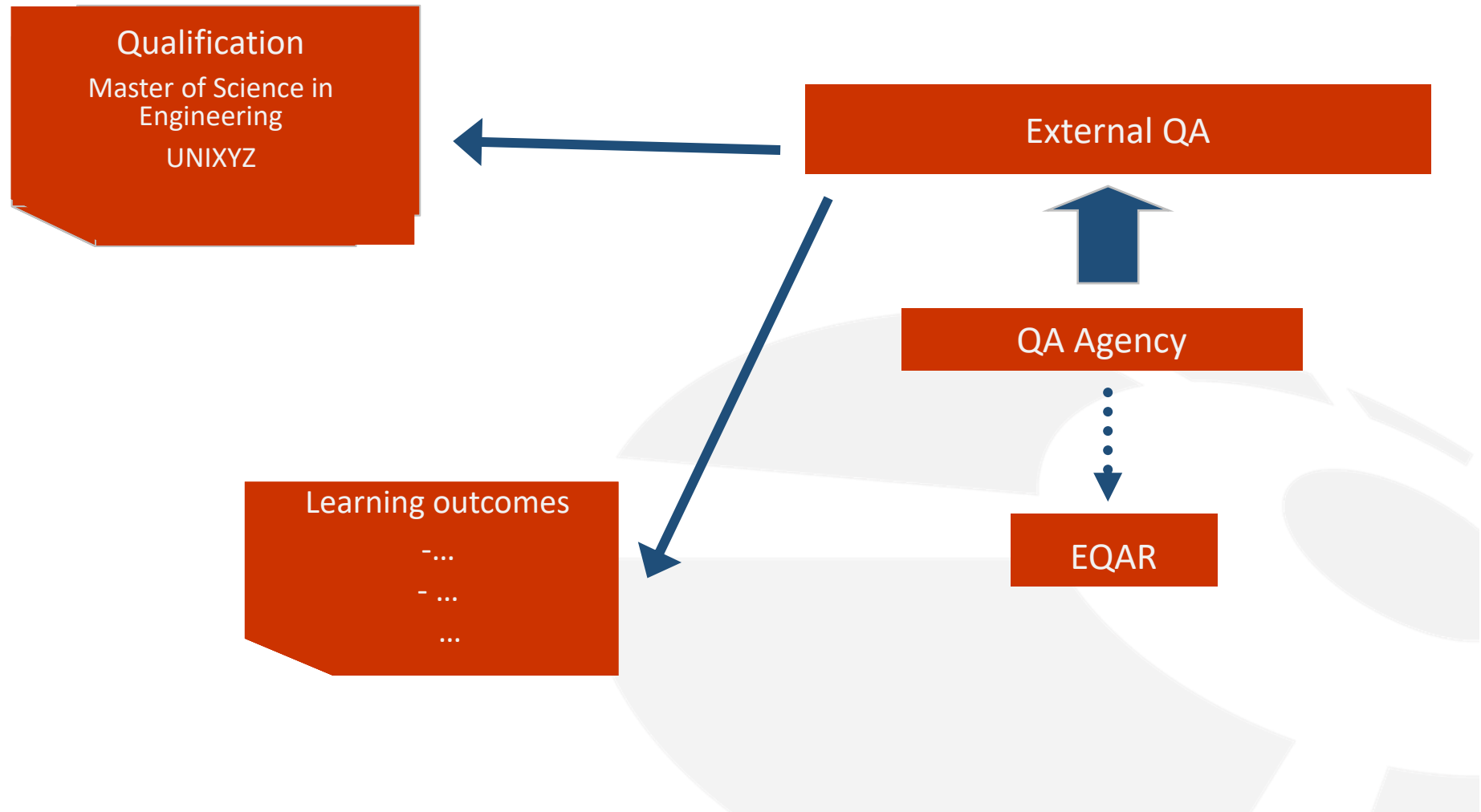
Achieved learning outcomes

Programme	Module x	Module y	Module z	...	
Intended LOs			X		Achieved?
Intended LOs	X	X			Achieved?
Intended LOs		X	X		Achieved?
Intended LOs	X				Achieved?
...					...
	LOs	LOs	LOs		
	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	...	

ECTS Course catalogue

Learning Outcomes, External QA, Recognition

Recognition of degrees





ESG connect learning outcomes, student-centred learning, recognition etc

ESG Part 1. Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

1.5 Teaching staff

1.6 Learning resources and student support

1.7 Information management

1.8 Public information

1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance



ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Standard:

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.



Conclusion

- QFs, LOs, QA and recognition are all interlinked and interdependent
- Student-centered learning approach has a significant impact on QA
- Intended and achieved learning outcomes
- Student assessment methods in line with intended LOs
- LOs linking pin between ECTS, Diploma Supplement, recognition, Qualification Frameworks, QA

Thank you very much!

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NVAO

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