



 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Education, Science
and Research

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Agency for Education
and Internationalisation



Qualifications Frameworks for trust, transparency and diversity (QUATRA – TPG A)

Qualifications Frameworks for trust, transparency and diversity: activities of TPG A

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Bologna Hub Conference in the Western Balkans: Sharing Knowledge – Building Networks
19 October 2023, Belgrade, Serbia

Main objective of QUATRA – TPG A

01.05.2022 – 30.04.2025

Provide opportunities for the member states of TPG A for a **peer-to-peer support** in order to ensure the fulfilment of the **key commitments** that are essential for the functioning of the EHEA



A Three-Cycle System compatible with the QF-EHEA
and scaled by ECTS

Project team and TPG A co-chairs

Project partners

01.05.2022 – 30.04.2025

- Academic Information Centre, **Latvia** (project coordinator)
- **Austria's** Agency for Education and Internationalisation
- **Estonian** Ministry of Education and Research
- The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research of **Austria** (associated partner)
- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), **Georgia** (associated partner)

TPG A (2021-2024)

Co-chairs

- Austria
- Georgia
- Latvia

Members (29 countries)

- Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flemish Community, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Spain, Türkiye, United Kingdom (Scotland)
- EI-ETUCE, ESU, EURASHE, EC, CoE

Main activities

1. TPG A meetings (4 meetings)
2. Peer learning activities (4 PLAs):

Riga (LV)	20.10.2022	<u>The Place of Micro-Credentials in Qualifications Frameworks for Higher Education</u>
Vienna (AT)	25.04.2023	<u>How are learning outcomes perceived, transmitted, and implemented in daily practice of higher education institutions?</u>
Tbilisi (GE)	28.09.2023	<u>Self-Certification of National Qualifications Frameworks to the Overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA</u>
Tallinn (EE)	Spring 2024	Assessment of learning outcomes on programme level

3. Working groups on QF-related topics (3 groups)
4. Project dissemination (final conference)

Working Groups of QUATRA – TPG A

Setting **three working groups** on **qualification framework related topics** to ensure more intensive discussions in order to provide **specific recommendations** on the related topics

1. short-cycle higher education
2. self-certification
3. micro-credentials

Working Group on Short-Cycle Higher Education

(chaired by Academic Information Centre, Latvia)

Bulgaria, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flanders

Topics for discussion:

- Best practices on short-cycle qualifications including development and pathways
- Solutions to reach recognition by learners and labour market
- Main findings and recommendations from the discussions



Outcome:

Developed recommendation

Main activities:

- Fiche on short-cycle among the working group members
- Survey on short-cycle qualifications among the working group members
- Draft recommendation

Main conclusions of the survey

- Majority of the countries without SCQ **do not plan introducing** them
- The countries that have SCQ in HE use **different terms** to entitle these qualifications
- Duration and ECTS awarded for SCQ also **vary by country** (but 60 ECTS per year)
- In majority of countries, SCQ are **recognised by labour market** and QA criteria correspond to the ESG principles
- The most common **fields of ISCED** of SCQ – business and administration, engineering and ICT
- When introducing SCQ, they should be based on a **clear demand of the stakeholders** and transparent further pathways should be provided for the graduates

Draft recommendations: 7 elements to be considered

- **Access to short-cycle studies** – Paris Communiqué (25.05.2018): the SCQ “builds upon general secondary education”, need for adequate admission requirements
- **Duration and/or volume of study programmes** (e.g., ECTS credits) – Paris Communiqué: SCQ includes 90-120 ECTS credits
- **Access to further studies** (i.e., existing bridges to Bachelor’s studies) – ensure strong pathways to further higher education studies
- **QF level of SCQ** – correspond to EQF level 5 or QF-EHEA short-cycle to ensure their comparability and international recognition
- **Quality assurance** – implement according to the principles of ESG
- **Differentiation** – ensure between short-cycle qualifications and micro-credentials
- **Recognition of SCQ** (internal and international) – following the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary documents providing fair recognition of SCQ

Working Group on Self-Certification

(Chaired by: Georgia and Bulgaria)

Andorra, Armenia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Latvia

The purpose of the WG:

- To provide platform for discussions and experience sharing among the member countries
- To develop specific recommendations on self-certification

Main activities:

- Survey on self-certification among the TPG A members
- Draft recommendation

Main findings of the survey

- **Guidelines on self-certification** criteria content and procedure should be developed
- **Peer support** activities such as thematic seminars, discussions are very welcome to continue
- Platform for self-certification report presentation and **discussion** is needed
- Increase **publicity** of self-certification reports and all related information (EHEA website) is recommended
- Periodic **update** of the self-certification report is necessary

Draft recommendations on the self-certification

- Updating **criteria and procedures** for verifying the compatibility of qualifications frameworks with the QF-EHEA
- Development and **publication of procedure** for the self-certification process, e.g., in the form of BFUG note or recommendation
- **Updating** the self-certification reports
- Development **guidance material for international experts** providing support in self-certification process, which includes their review of the self-certification report and statement
- Recommendations for EHEA member states on the **steps within the self-certification** process
- Recommendations for EHEA member states on the **involvement of international experts**
- Recommendations on the **structure of the self-certification report**

Working Group on Micro-Credentials

(chaired by Latvia, Armenia)

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium Flanders, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Netherlands, Romania, UK Scotland, ESU

Topics for discussion:

- Inclusion of micro-credentials in national qualifications frameworks
- How ECTS can be used in the context of micro-credentials at other education levels and in other sectors
- How to use micro-credentials to improve access to lifelong learning opportunities
- Findings from the discussions



Outcome:

Developed recommendation

Main activities:

- SWOT analysis on MC among the WG members
- Survey on MC among TPG A
- Draft recommendations

Main findings of the survey on micro-credentials

- More targeted and comprehensive **regulation** of MC and other forms of smaller learning units in many countries may be necessary
- Need for **reference to the EQF/NQF or QF-EHEA level**
- Lack of uniformity in how qualifications are **classified and recognised** by different countries and HEIs leads to implications for the portability and comparability of MC
- Need for a **greater flexibility and responsiveness** in higher education, as well as the potential of MC to meet specific skills and learning needs in the labour market
- Need for **greater clarity and consistency** in quality assurance
- Need for improved **stakeholder understanding** and support for MC approach
- Need for continued **support and investment** in the area concerning MC
- Need for increased **international cooperation** and coordination in the development and recognition of MC
- Need to develop a more unified and widely accepted **definition of MC**

Mapping of draft recommendation on micro-credentials

National authorities	HE institutions	QA agencies
Involvement of stakeholders	Involvement of stakeholders	Involvement of stakeholders
Inclusion in the NQF		Inclusion in the NQF
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes
	Assessment	
	Design	
Recognition of prior learning	Recognition of prior learning	Recognition of prior learning
Level	Level	Level
	Workload	
Quality	Quality	Quality
Supplement to micro-credential	Supplement to micro-credential	
Transparency	Transparency	Transparency
Support to implementation		Support to implementation
Learning pathway	Learning pathway	



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Project website: <https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/quatra-tpg-a>



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