Using the
ESQF
in practice

EASO

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CONTENTS

You plan training

How can you use the ESQF during the needs analysis phase?

1 **To identify competency gaps which reveal a need for training.**

You can map the existing training offer to the ESQF. This will help you to identify areas where no training is currently available.

You may need to develop new training:

▶ When a new group of target learners are identified

▶ When the situation, mandate or organisational strategy changes and training is needed. Gaps may appear due to a situational change or changes to CEAS

▪ Once you have identified the training need, decide on the target learners. Use the ESQF to position them according to competence area and complexity of their tasks.

▪ Then use the educational standards to understand what the learners need to know or be able to do before they can start the training (in order for them to have the best likelihood of reaching the required learning outcomes). Have a good idea of the learning outcomes, so that you can instruct the designers.

■ The next step is to understand the resources available (human, technological, time…) and some ideas about the method of delivery to be able to discuss with the designers.

2 **To identify changes that need to be made to existing training.**

After an evaluation shows that existing training could be improved. The ESQF can be used to help evaluate whether:

▶ the training had targeted the correct learners

▶ was developed at the correct level of complexity

■ Crosscheck that the intended learning outcomes match the duties and tasks that you wanted the learners to be able to perform on successful completion of the training.

■ If the training has been assessed and the results of the assessments show a problem with the level of complexity (too easy or too difficult), it is a good idea to double-check the learning outcomes against the educational standards and your knowledge of the learners' capacity (previous training and experiential learning).

Training needs may be identified thanks to the use of the ETNAT tool or from Member States identifying gaps in their training offer. It may also be informed by identifying highly specialised training that could be delivered at European level rather than national level due to the limited target audience. In such an event, Member States should contact EASO to find out the extent of the training need.

You design training

How can you use the ESQF during the design phase?

The ESQF will provide invaluable support for designing outcomes-based training. When designing vocational training, the first stop is to identify the duties and tasks that the learner will be performing and then you can design the appropriate learning that will enable them to perform efficiently.

1 The first thing to do is identify the competence area and then the occupational standard(s) that covers the duties and tasks. The training will not necessarily cover the whole occupational standard(s), so just identify the tasks within the standard that are relevant.

- Define the level of complexity by looking at the standards at a lower and higher complexity to position correctly (according to the existing knowledge and skills of the learners).

- Once the occupational standard(s) have been selected, refer to the corresponding educational standard. This provides the high-level outcome that the learners should strive for when they have completed all relevant training at that level.

2 Now comes the most important phase: defining the learning outcomes for the training. These will inform every part of the development process and are essential for designing the assessments.

- When the overarching learning outcomes have been written, it is a good idea to cross-check again with the tasks/occupational standard(s).
- Next, it must be ascertained that the learning outcomes can be assessed. An assessment strategy should be defined (once again referring to the occupational standard(s) to make the assessment tasks as authentic as possible to the actual task that the learner will perform).

3 Once you have the outcomes, and the methods to assess if the outcomes have been reached, it is time to design the logical stages of the learning process. These are the steps that will take the learners from where they are at the beginning of the learning sequence in terms of knowledge and skills to where they are expected to be at the end. It is also good practice to indicate where essential knowledge/skills should be formatively assessed. This helps check that the learner has acquired what they need to progress further and to develop formative feedback when gaps exist.

- Decide on the method of instruction that is most adapted to the learning (online, face-to-face, webinar, work-based learning…)

4 Let the developer know how long the training should be (including any essential reading time or assessment preparation).

5 If the training leads towards a qualification, calculate how it will contribute to the accumulation of credits.

You develop training

How can you use the ESQF during the development phase?

The ESQF is a very useful tool for you to keep in mind the complexity level and where the training 'sits' in the bigger picture.

- Use the educational standards to keep in mind the competences that need to be developed – knowledge, skills or autonomy and responsibility. This will inform the type of activities that you develop. When developing vocational training, all activities should be as authentic as possible to the duties and tasks of the learners. If a learner will have to write a report, then such an activity should be included. Activities to acquire skills should be as practical as possible and applied in a situation that is as close to real life conditions as possible.

- Use the ESQF to define the boundaries of what you are developing. This means, understanding what the learner should already know and be able to do (so as not to repeat learning) and what training will come next (to prepare them adequately for the next level of complexity).

- Make sure that during the review process the level of complexity is checked and that learners can give feedback about the perceived usefulness for the performance of their jobs. If not, go back to the outcomes! It is also essential to test any assessments to ensure that they are pitched at the right level and that they adequately test the outcomes.

You deliver training
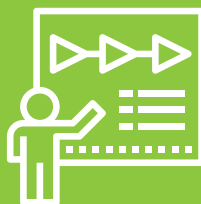
How can you use the ESQF during the delivery phase?

Learners should have all the information available to ensure that the training suits their needs and that they meet the entry requirements. The trainer's job is to guide the learners through the learning journey, identify any gaps in knowledge or skills that become apparent and provide relevant formative feedback to help the learners to progress and meet the learning outcomes.

- As a trainer of vocational training, you should always have in mind that you are preparing the learners to carry out their duties and tasks. The training should have been designed and developed to meet that outcome. However, during the implementation phase, you can ensure that the training is truly targeted to your specific learners by choosing activities that are the most authentic to their job tasks.

- You can consult the ESQF to position the training in terms of complexity. This will help you to explain to learners the boundaries of the training. In other words, refer them to training which will enable them to fill any gaps in knowledge or suggest further learning if they want to deepen their knowledge.

How can you use the ESQF during your learning journey?

The ESQF will give you an excellent overview of all the occupational standards in your sector and the corresponding educational standards. You can position yourself according to your current job and ask the following questions:

? Which areas am I interested in for professional development?

? What do I want to do - broaden my knowledge and skills or specialise?

? Are there competence areas where I wish to develop (further) knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy?

? Are there areas of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that I have already acquired through experiential learning that I would like to validate through recognition of prior learning?

When you are following training (or planning to), you can also use the ESQF to understand the boundaries of the learning. You can check that you have undertaken the prior learning necessary. You can also use the educational standards to understand the level of complexity of the learning.

You evaluate training

How can you use the ESQF during the evaluation phase?

New training should be evaluated prior to implementation. There should be a thorough verification that the training content satisfies the specifications set out during the design process. Most importantly, whether the content and the learning strategy will enable the learners to meet the learning outcomes and whether the assessment method will check that those learning outcomes have been met. The level of complexity should match the relevant educational standard.

When evaluating implemented training, the ESQF can be used as a support to check whether the training met its vocational aim.

? Do the learners perceive that the training helped them improve job competences (occupational standards)?

? Do the assessment results show that the training/assessment was at the correct level of complexity (educational standards)?

Post-training, can performance indicators show that the newly acquired knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy indicate positive behavioural change and increased efficiency in the workplace?

You develop training strategy

How can you use the ESQF for strategic planning?

The ESQF will give you an excellent overview of the sector. You can map the duties and tasks of your staff to the occupational standards and then use the educational standards to see what training you already offer and what training may be useful in the future.

- At any time of change, the ESQF can be used to rethink priorities in training (or recruitment).
- When considering building responsibility and autonomy, moving towards a work-based learning approach may be envisaged (coaching, for example).
- Opportunities for continuing professional development can be informed by the ESQF, as can opportunities for recognition of prior learning.

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