



*QUATREC 2 – Comparing qualifications for reliable recognition*

# QUATREC 2 project

# Comparative report and results

Edmunds Labunskis  
Academic Information Centre

Peer learning activity, 2022

# Comparing qualifications for reliable recognition (QUATREC)

- **Project implementation period:** 1 March 2018 – 29 February 2020
- **Aim:** To encourage the use of learning outcomes in credential evaluation for improved recognition in line with existing and emerging qualification frameworks
- **Main objective:** To conduct horizontal comparison of qualifications and their learning outcomes and search whether learning outcomes of the same level qualifications have substantial differences and qualifications are comparable
- **Project partners:**
  - Academic Information Centre (coordinator) – Latvia
  - UK NARIC – United Kingdom
  - National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) – Bulgaria
  - Archimedes Foundation – Estonia
  - National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility – Armenia

# QUATREC conclusions and report

- In order to facilitate the automatic recognition, Diploma Supplement should be issued
- In order to ensure efficient use of learning outcomes in recognition, credential evaluators need to have thorough knowledge about reading, understanding, formulation and role of learning outcomes



# QUATREC 2 project

- **Project implementation period:** 1 October 2020 – 30 September 2022
- **Aim:** To facilitate the efficient use of learning outcomes in credential evaluation among higher education institutions (HEI) and employers to support a fair recognition
- **Main objective:** To elaborate and pilot recommendations for the use of learning outcomes in credential evaluation on basis of desk study and previous QUATREC project results
- **Project partners:**
  - Academic Information Centre (coordinator), Latvia
  - UK ENIC – United Kingdom
  - Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education – Lithuania
  - National Centre for Information and Documentation – Bulgaria
  - National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas – Romania
  - National Information Center for Academic Recognition and Mobility – Armenia
  - Vytautas Magnus University – International Cooperation Department – Lithuania

# Comparative report and results



# Methodology

Focus on learning outcomes of HE qualifications at **EQF levels 6 and 7**

## Country reports (6)

- Desk research
- Surveys of HEIs

National level  
*(project partners)*

## Comparative report

- Desk research
- Country reports

International level  
*(project coordinator)*



# Surveys of HEIs

**AIM** to gather information about **practices** as regards to formulation of learning outcomes

Questions:

- Guidelines/recommendations for formulation of learning outcomes
- Set procedures for writing learning outcomes and how often they are reviewed
- Categories/dimensions in which learning outcomes are expressed
- Number of learning outcomes used
- Assessment of learning outcomes
- Use of NQF/EQF level descriptors
- Labour market involvement
- Training of academic staff for writing learning outcomes

# Country Reports

## Structure:

- Legal framework for learning outcomes in higher education
- Categories/dimensions in which learning outcomes are expressed
- Quality assurance of learning outcomes
- Indication of learning outcomes in the Diploma Supplement
- Recommendations, guidelines, set procedures for writing learning outcomes
- Labour market involvement in the formulation of learning outcomes
- Good practice example of formulating learning outcomes



# Comparative report

## Structure:

- Review of current initiatives on the comparison of qualifications
- Methodology of the study
- Comparison of Country Reports
- Recommendations
- Example of good practice

# Review of current initiatives on the comparison of qualifications

## UNESCO World Reference Levels

- Facilitates international comparison of learning outcomes
- The tool helps authorities, institutions, employers and individuals to understand, compare and recognise skills, qualifications, credentials and learning achievements

## Horizontal comparison of qualifications carried out by EQF Advisory Group

- IT and social care qualifications were selected for comparison
- In total 32 qualifications were selected for analysis
- A fiche for comparison of qualifications was developed
- The grid for the analysis of the individual learning outcomes was developed

# Review of current initiatives on the comparison of qualifications

## Cedefop: Comparing Vocational Education and Training Qualifications: towards a European Comparative Methodology

- Healthcare assistant and ICT service technician occupational profiles were selected
- For qualitative comparison a Vocational Qualification Transfer System Competence Matrix was used which was developed by European Union project "HealthCareEurope"
- For quantitative analysis an automated system was developed to reduce the human workload

## Erasmus+ project "Comparing Qualifications for Reliable Recognition (QUATREC)"

- Bachelor's degree in Physics, Master's degree in Psychology and Master's degree in Business Administration were selected for comparison
- AntConc toolkit was used for quantitative analysis which focused on the frequency of words in the learning outcomes
- The qualitative analysis of the learning outcomes imparted several steps and use of various tools, which mostly relied on the content analysis
- A fiche for comparison of qualifications was developed

# Comparison of Country Reports

- Legal framework
- HE quality assurance in terms of learning outcomes
- Practical approaches towards formulation of learning outcomes

# Legal framework

Country	Use of LOs stipulated in laws and regulations
Armenia	X
Bulgaria	✓
Latvia	✓
Lithuania	✓
Romania	✓
United Kingdom	X

Country	Awarding DS	Inclusion of LOs in the DS
Armenia	✓	✓
Bulgaria	✓	X
Latvia	✓	✓
Lithuania	✓	✓
Romania	✓	✓
United Kingdom	X (issued by few HEIs)	X (not always)

# HE quality assurance in terms of LO

- Assessment of learning outcomes is an important aspect of study programme evaluation procedure for both internal and external quality assurance
- Learning outcomes are regularly reviewed and improved
- Many HEIs provide training for writing learning outcomes for their academic staff

	Armenia	Bulgaria	Latvia	Lithuania	Romania	United Kingdom
LOs are assessed in QA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment of LOs in internal QA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment of LOs in external QA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Autonomy of HEIs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# Practical approaches towards formulation of learning outcomes (1/2)

- Almost all surveyed HEIs in the partner countries have internal documentation for the formulation of learning outcomes
- The representatives of labour market are (highly) involved in the formulation of learning outcomes (to meet the requirements of the labour market)
- Number of learning outcomes used for study programmes greatly varied by country and study programmes in each HEI

## Number of LO

<b>Country</b>	<b>Most popular answers</b>
Armenia	7-10 (general LO, 18-20 subject LO)
Bulgaria	10 or more
Latvia	6, 5-7, 7-12
Lithuania	13 is recommended, varies from 10-12 to 12-17
Romania	6-7
United Kingdom	Varies by programme

# Practical approaches towards formulation of learning outcomes (2/2)

- When formulating learning outcomes (survey of HEIs), each HEI apply **different approach**:
  - the use of different dimensions for learning outcomes than those defined for NQF level descriptors
  - capacity (if any) at which the labour market is involved in the development of study programmes and other approaches
  - the number of learning outcomes
- **Common principles** may be observed among the surveyed HEIs in all the partner countries:
  - the reference to EQF/NQF level descriptors
  - the existence of national level legal documents regarding occupational fields, which stipulate certain learning outcomes, EQF level etc. (differ country by country), e.g., occupational standards (Latvia, Romania), Study field descriptors (Lithuania), Subject Benchmark Statements (the United Kingdom)
  - taking into account the standards and guidelines of ESG



# Conclusions

- Many of the good practice examples or recommendations provided by the surveyed HEIs were very similar and share common elements
- A common understanding among many representatives of HEIs may be observed on how to formulate learning outcomes in order for LOs to be understandable and comparable



## *QUATREC 2 – Comparing qualifications for reliable recognition*

PLA and project materials  
will be published on the project website  
<https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/quatrec-2>

# Thank you! Questions?

Peer learning activity, 25 May 2022, in Yerevan