

Student perspective on transparency in Self-Certification of Qualifications frameworks

Peer Learning Activity · Transparency as a key element for operational qualifications frameworks
· 28 April 2026, Riga

Student Union of Latvia, President, Luīze Monta Remese



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Why this topic matters to students?

For students, qualifications frameworks affect:

- Understanding of study programmes and qualifications
- Recognition of prior learning and mobility
- Trust in learning outcomes
- Employability and further studies
- Clarity of rights, expectations and progression routes

A qualifications framework is only useful if students can understand and use it.

Transparency Means More Than Publishing Documents

Accessible

Available to all users, not just experts

Understandable

Written in plain language for real audiences

Comparable

Clear links to European and national standards

Evidence-based

Backed by data, research and consultation

Relevant

Meaningful to students, employers and institutions

Open to Feedback

Explains how conclusions were reached

What students can bring to self-certification?

Students can help assess whether the framework is understandable in practice:

1. Are learning outcomes clear to students?
2. Do students understand qualification levels?
3. Is progression between levels visible?
4. Are recognition and mobility pathways clear?
5. Do programme descriptions reflect the real student experience?



**Students answer:
"Does this actually work in
practice?"**

Student involvement strengthens trust



Increases Legitimacy

The process becomes shared between institutions and students, not done for students.



Identifies Unclear Language

Students spot where technical wording loses real audiences.



Connects Policy to Experience

Students reflect on whether learning outcomes match actual teaching and assessment.



Strengthens Public Trust

Student input makes the final report more credible and complete.



Reveals Gaps

Uncovers differences between what policy says and what students experience.

What meaningful involvement should look like?

1 **Early** Involved from the start, not only at the final consultation stage

2 **Structured** Clear expectations: what to comment on and how input will be used

3 **Informed** Students receive explanatory materials and context before contributing

4 **Representative** Different study levels, fields, local/international, varied experiences

5 **Feedback Loop** Students learn whether and how their comments influenced conclusions

Practical ways to involve students

1

Student representatives in steering groups

2

Targeted consultations with student councils

3

Focus groups across study levels

4

Draft report review by trained student experts

5

Plain-language testing of key sections

6

Public summary for students and applicants

What should be transparent in the self-certification report?

Purpose

Why was the process carried out and what questions did it try to answer?

Who was involved

Specific stakeholders named, not just general terms

Evidence used

Policy documents, programme descriptions, learning outcome mapping, consultations

Student input

What students said and how it influenced the final conclusions

Link to outcomes

How qualifications are connected to learning outcomes

Remaining challenges

Honest about both strengths and areas for improvement

Common challenges in student involvement

Technical Language

Complex terminology excludes students unless context is provided

Short Deadlines

Insufficient time to properly review long, complex documents

Limited Capacity

Student representatives are often volunteers with many commitments

Lack of Training

Meaningful feedback requires at least basic knowledge of the process

Unclear Impact

When feedback is ignored without explanation, motivation decreases

Consultation Fatigue

Students lose trust if participation feels symbolic rather than real

How to make the process student-friendly

- 1 Provide a short explanatory briefing before asking for comments
- 2 Use clear guiding questions (e.g. Are levels understandable? Are outcomes clear?)
- 3 Separate technical annexes from user-friendly summaries
- 4 Allow enough time for student organisations to consult internally
- 5 Explain what changed after consultation and why
- 6 Keep student organisations involved even after the report is published

Recommendations for stronger cooperation

1 Involve students from the very beginning of the process

2 Define their role clearly - language, process, evidence or learning outcomes?

3 Provide training and accessible materials to enable meaningful contribution

4 Document student feedback to show that participation had real value

5 Create a public, student-friendly summary for every report

6 Treat transparency as an ongoing process - communication, implementation, review

Three questions students should be able to answer:

1. What does my qualification mean?

2. How can I trust that this is accurate?

3. How was the student voice considered?

Students are not only stakeholders.

They are users of the framework and partners in making it trustworthy.

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