Ministry of Higher Education and Science Denmark

Qualifications Frameworks, Recognition and Substantial Differences



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Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition

- National Qualifications Frameworks are important transparency tools used in recognition
- NQFs display the architecture of national education systems and pathways through an education system
- NQFs have advanced the transition from a workload- and input-based qualifications system to a system based on learning outcomes: what a qualification holder knows, understands and is able to do



Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition

- The EQF-LLL and the QF-EHEA work as important qualifications converters, once NQFs have been referenced to the EQF and/or self-certified to the QF-EHEA

- The use of international experts in referencing and self-certification procedures affirms the validity of the referencing of qualifications to the different levels of an NQF and subsequently to the referencing of NQF-levels to the EQF-levels and QF-EHEA cycles

The subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention: Recommendation on the use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications - 2013

- Recognition is usually based on the five elements of a qualification: Level, quality, learning outcomes, workload and profile

- ”use of qualifications frameworks are important information and transparency tools in the recognition of higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education.”

- “Level: If a National Qualifications Framework has been self-certified or referenced, there is, as a general rule, no need for the competent recognition authority to investigate the level of qualifications further”

- Learning outcomes: “The learning outcomes of National Qualifications Frameworks and of overarching qualifications frameworks are generic and provide a reference point for recognition”

The subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention: Recommendation on the use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications - 2013

- “If a National Qualifications Framework has been self-certified or referenced, there is an assumption that the individual qualifications included in the framework by the competent authority are quality assured. Therefore as a general rule there is no need for the recognition authority to investigate the quality of the qualification.”

“Workload: While recognising that qualifications should as far as possible be assessed on the basis of learning outcomes, competent recognition authorities may also be guided in their assessment by the workload learners are assumed to require in order to obtain the given qualification”

The subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention: Recommendation on the use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications - 2013

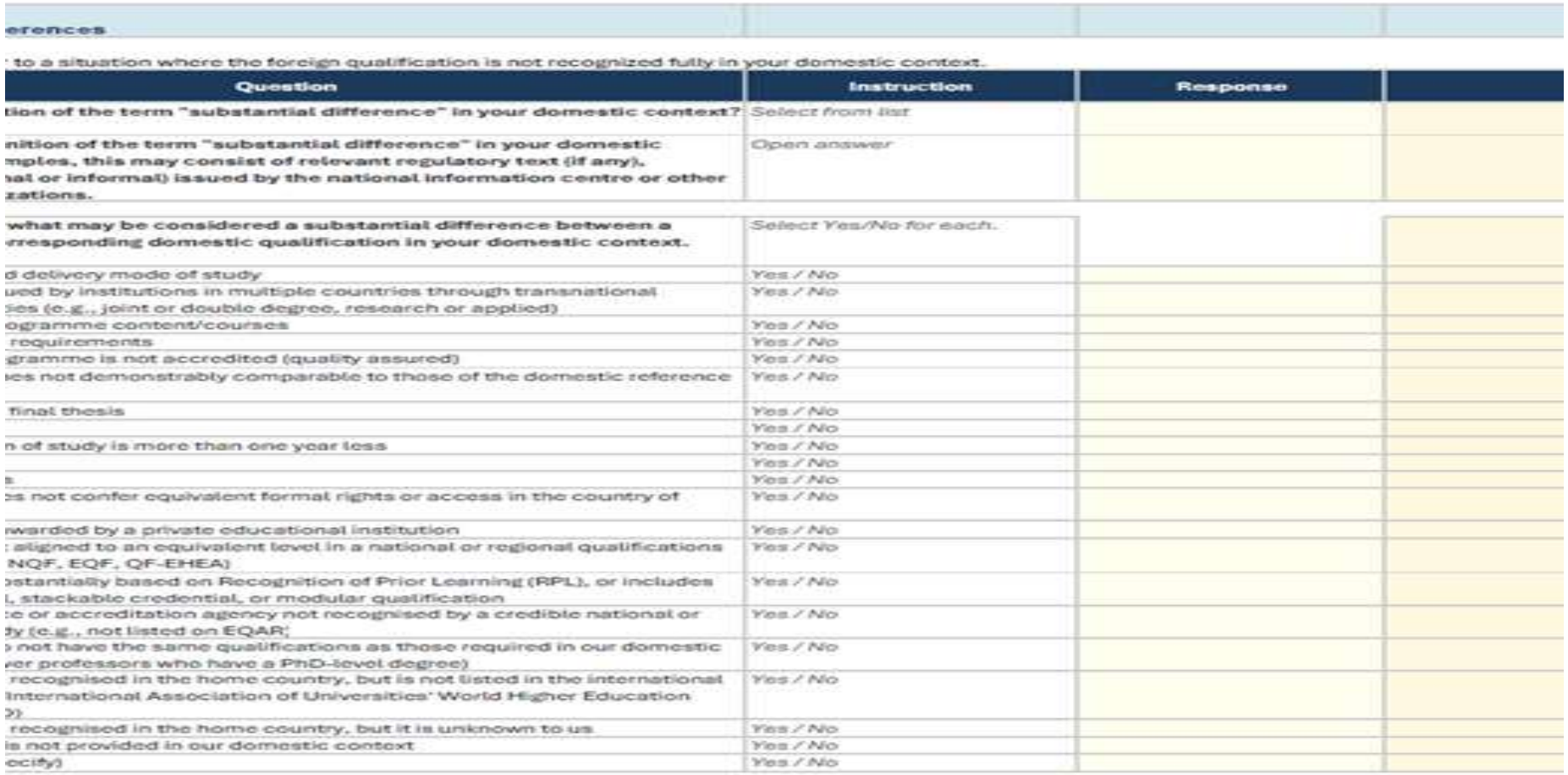
- "Qualification frameworks provide limited information to support the recognition process when it comes to the profile of a qualification"

- The subsidiary text provides very strong indications that qualifications should be recognized once they through referencing and self-certification have been referenced to the same level and cycle of the EQF and QF-EHEA

Substantial differences

- The LRC: Competent authorities should recognise a foreign qualification unless a substantial difference can be shown between the qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the Party in which recognition is sought.

Monitoring substantial differences



erences

to a situation where the foreign qualification is not recognized fully in your domestic context.

Question	Instruction	Response	
tion of the term "substantial difference" in your domestic context?	Select from list		
nition of the term "substantial difference" in your domestic nples., this may consist of relevant regulatory text (if any), al or informal) issued by the national information centre or other zations.	Open answer		
what may be considered a substantial difference between a rresponding domestic qualification in your domestic context.	Select Yes/No for each.		
d delivery mode of study	Yes / No		
ued by institutions in multiple countries through transnational ses (e.g., joint or double degree, research or applied)	Yes / No		
ogramme content/courses	Yes / No		
requirements	Yes / No		
gramme is not accredited (quality assured)	Yes / No		
es not demonstrably comparable to those of the domestic reference	Yes / No		
final thesis	Yes / No		
	Yes / No		
n of study is more than one year less	Yes / No		
	Yes / No		
s	Yes / No		
s not confer equivalent formal rights or access in the country of	Yes / No		
warded by a private educational institution	Yes / No		
aligned to an equivalent level in a national or regional qualifications NQF, EQF, QF-EHEA)	Yes / No		
ostantially based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), or includes l, stackable credential, or modular qualification	Yes / No		
e or accreditation agency not recognised by a credible national or y (e.g., not listed on EQAR;	Yes / No		
not have the same qualifications as those required in our domestic er professors who have a PhD-level degree)	Yes / No		
recognised in the home country, but is not listed in the international International Association of Universities' World Higher Education);	Yes / No		
recognised in the home country, but it is unknown to us	Yes / No		
is not provided in our domestic context	Yes / No		
ecify)	Yes / No		

Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition: Challenges

- Competent recognition authorities' interpretation of substantial differences from a legal text vs recommendations from a subsidiary text

- NQFs are developed in a national context: some with a view to international mobility and recognition – others from a national perspective to outline the national education system, pathways and learning outcomes

- Referencing of upper secondary qualifications and non-higher qualifications to the same level as higher education qualifications: Danish VET and German qualification as examples

Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition: Challenges

- Uneven referencing of comparable qualifications: E.g. the German Abitur

- Short cycle qualifications referenced to level 6 in some countries

- Professionally oriented bachelor programmes referenced to the same level as research-based bachelor qualifications – different profiles

- Master's level qualifications referenced to level 7/ second cycle not giving access to doctoral programmes – different formal rights

- Non-formal qualifications referenced to e.g. level 6

Qualifications Frameworks and Recognition:

- Automatic recognition: NQFs play a vital role in recognition, since it is a prerequisite for AR that NQFs are self-certified to the QF-EHEA and/or referenced to the EQF + quality assured, but also here there are other elements to consider: Ratification of the LRC, implementation of a three-cycle structure

- In conclusion: while NQFs are very important transparency tools for recognition and drivers for a learning-outcomes-based qualifications system, competent recognition authorities still have to examine whether substantial differences can be proved

