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Europass and Qualifications Across Borders

The EUPA perspective

Passporting Academic Qualifications:
The Role of the EQF and NQFs in the European Higher Education Area

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Europass: Communicating Qualifications

- Europass helps people present their qualifications and skills for learning and work across Europe.
- The profile and CV provide an overview of an individual's qualifications.
- The Diploma Supplement gives detailed information about a higher education award.
- The portal also provides framework comparisons and qualification information.



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How Europass Conveys EQF and NQF Levels

- The national framework places the qualification within its home education system. In Malta, this is the MQF.
- The EQF provides eight reference levels for comparing national systems.
- Europass communicates these references alongside information about the qualification.
- A national level number can differ from its EQF reference. Both need clear labels.

The Diploma Supplement: Reading the Evidence

- Level: the national framework and relevant European reference.
- Content: programme learning outcomes, modules, credits and results.
- Function: access to further study and any professional function.
- Context: the awarding institution, certification and national education system
- The supplement accompanies the original diploma and supports assessment abroad.

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EUPA's Role and the Limits of Oversight

- EUPA coordinates Europass in Malta and supports access to information.
- The awarding higher education institution issues the Diploma Supplement.
- MFHEA manages the national framework and relevant accreditation functions. MQRIC provides recognition advice.
- Europass coordination does not itself authorise EUPA to assign qualification levels or decide recognition abroad.

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A Qualification Presented Abroad

- Illustrative example: a Maltese graduate presents an MQF 6 / EQF 6 bachelor's award.
- The Europass CV introduces the qualification. The diploma and supplement provide supporting evidence.
- The receiving university examines the applicable recognition and admission requirements.



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A Qualification Presented Abroad

- A regulated profession may require a separate decision by its competent authority.
- The framework level informs the assessment. The purpose determines the relevant procedure.



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Benefits for Learners and Receiving Organisations

- A shared document structure helps readers understand unfamiliar qualifications.
- National and European levels provide a reference point for comparison.
- Learning outcomes explain what the graduate knows and can do.
- System information helps readers interpret award titles and progression routes.

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Shortcomings and Practical Barriers

- A shared EQF level does not establish identical content, volume or access rights.
- Incomplete or unclear supplements reduce the value of comparison.
- Users may mistake a Europass document or level for a guarantee of recognition.
- Digital credentials can support authenticity checks. Recognition still depends on applicable arrangements.



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Feedback and Recognition Difficulties

- Students: can they obtain and understand the documents needed abroad?
- Institutions: is the level and programme information complete and clear?
- Employers: can they interpret the qualification and its learning outcomes?
- Cross-border cases: what decision occurred, for what purpose, and for what documented reason?
- Delays, admission refusals and qualification recognition refusals need separate analysis.

Recommendations for Discussion

- Issuers: provide consistent level references and clear programme information.
- Europass support: explain how to use the documents and identify the appropriate recognition route.
- Receiving bodies: use framework evidence and explain any further requirements.
- Partners: record documented difficulties and outcomes to identify recurring barriers.
- Digital credentials: improve verification while keeping support accessible.

Europass and the Passporting Ambition

- Europass helps qualification information travel across borders in an understandable form.
- EQF and NQF references give that information a basis for comparison.
- The supplement supports a recognition decision without replacing it.
- Success should mean fair, understandable outcomes with a reasonable administrative burden.



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