Enhancing Coaches’ Learning, Mobility and Employability in the European Union

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Development & Implementation Tool Series

Tool #2
European Education Landscape Fact Sheet
&
Frequently Asked Questions

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**Introduction**

Project CoachLearn is an Erasmus+ co-funded initiative led by Leeds Beckett University seeking to enhance sport coaches’ learning, mobility and employability in the European Union.

*The principal output of CoachLearn is the development of a European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF) to serve as a non-regulatory reference point for the development of coaching and coach education across Europe.*

In addition to the ESCF, CoachLearn has developed a suite of applied tools which aim to support those tasked with developing coaching systems and coach education and development opportunities. This suite contains the following applications:

| Tool #1 - Coaching System Mapping Tool | This tool will allow organisations involved in coaching to understand what is meant by a Coaching System. It will also support the process of mapping the system and the identification of the key stakeholders, their roles and their interdependencies.
| Tool #2 - European Education Landscape Factsheet and FAQ | This tool will provide an overview of the key features of the European Education landscape (i.e., EQF, ECTS, etc). It will support those embarking on the process of developing a coach education programmes ensure they are aligned with European policy.
| Tool #3 - Participant & Performer Data Collection & Segmentation Tool | This tool will allow system builders to better understand the current populations taking part in their sport (a model of the sport) and compare it with the desired future picture (model for the sport). The overall purpose is to determine the kind of environments we need to create for different populations and the types of coaches (and their skill sets) that will be needed.
| Tool #4 - Coaching Qualification Curriculum Builder | This tool will support coach developers to contextualise the 6 primary functions to different environments/domains. Therefore, it will allow for the identification of the skills, competencies and knowledge basis needed for a particular coach working in a particular context with a particular population of participants/athletes. The tool will also support the development of suitable curricula.
| Tool #5 - Qualification Mapping & Conversion Tool | This tool will allow system builders, coach developers and coaches to compare qualifications between sports and between countries by reference to roles in ESCF/ISCF and EQF.
| Tool #6 - Step by Step Guide to RPL&WBE | This tool will provide guidance as to how to set up effective and efficient RPL&WBE systems. |
ESCF Tool #2 - European Education Landscape Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions

Coach education and development does not sit in isolation. Since the 1980s, the education landscape in Europe has evolved significantly. Today, multiple frameworks and initiatives provide the rules and boundaries by which qualifications are built and regulated. Even if many of these reference documents do not have binding status, those working in coach education are advised to take them into account when developing their qualification provision (European Commission, 2014). Tool #2 provides an overview of the key features of the European education landscape and clarifies some of the frequently asked questions. It will therefore support those embarking on the process of developing coach education programmes to ensure they are aligned with current European policy.

The tool is divided into two sections.

- **Fact Sheet:** built as a comparative table, this fact sheet contains the main frameworks and initiatives that form part of the European education landscape and their central features.
- **Frequently Asked Questions:** a compilation of the most frequent questions asked in connection to the practical implications of these frameworks and how they interact with each other.

European Education Landscape Factsheet

Please turn overleaf

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework/Tools Title (Start Year)</th>
<th>Lead Organisation</th>
<th>Main Function/Objectives/Consequences</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Associated Resources</th>
<th>Additional Comments/Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Academic Recognition Information Centres Network (1984) NARIC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>Provide advice regarding recognition of foreign qualifications and periods of study abroad Stimulates the mobility of students and staff between higher education institutions Lifelong learning</td>
<td>Advice centres in every country. Designated by national governments Their role and scope varies between countries Normally advisory not decision-making</td>
<td>Higher education institutions, students and their advisers, parents, teachers and prospective employers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Linked to ENIC Network and Lisbon Recognition Convention of 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (1988) ECTS</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
<td>Facilitates the transfer of credits via the comparison and recognition of learning outcomes Greater student mobility and more flexible routes to gain degrees – Lifelong Learning Help design, describe, and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications. It aids quality assurance. Applicable to all kinds of learning. Create a stronger link between the education system and the labour market</td>
<td>ECTS credits based on the workload students need to complete in order to achieve expected learning outcomes. Learning outcomes state what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after completing the learning process. One year of FT education=60 Credits. One credit = 25-30 hrs</td>
<td>Higher education institutions</td>
<td>ECTS Guide</td>
<td>Fundamental to the Bologna Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| of Europe & UNESCO | To help citizens communicate their skills and qualifications effectively when looking for a job or training;  
To help employers understand the skills and qualifications of the workforce;  
To help education and training authorities define and communicate the content of curricula | European citizens | Diploma Supplement  
Europass Language Passport  
Europass Mobility  
European Skills Passport (e-folder)  
National Reference Points for Vocational Qualifications (NRPs) |  
European Council  
Mobility of workers | A set of rules according to which a Member State has to recognise professional qualifications which allow access to specific regulated professions from another member state and allow the qualification holder to pursue such professions in its territory  
Automatic Recognition vs Case by case models  
Adaptation periods |  
European citizens  
European Commission  
Creation of a European Higher Education Area based on the establishment of a common framework for higher education qualifications | Three cycles  
Generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences  
Credit Ranges  
- First Cycle = 180-240 Cdt  
Higher Education Institutions |  
European Commission  
Creation of a European Higher Education Area based on the establishment of a common framework for higher education qualifications | Three cycles  
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Higher Education Institutions |
| Standards & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2005, reviewed in 2015) | European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and partners | Increase quality in higher education through a system of quality assurance | An agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance:  
- Internal quality assurance  
- External quality assurance  
- Quality assurance agencies  
Focus on teaching, learning and the learning environment  
Links to research and innovation | Higher education institutions and quality assurance organisations | Published standards | Flexibility and proportionality (adaptation to different national contexts)  
Broad acceptance of all standards is a precondition for creating common understanding of quality assurance in Europe.  
The ESG need to be at a reasonably generic level in order to ensure that they are applicable to all forms of provision |
A translation device which makes qualifications easier to understand and compare.  
Support a better match between the needs of the labour market (for knowledge, skills and competences) and education and training provision | 8 Levels  
Based on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) as per ECTS  
Levels differ in the degree of complexity, responsibility and autonomy  
Knowledge can be theoretical and/or factual  
Skills can be cognitive or practical | Aimed at bodies in charge of national and/or sectoral qualification systems and frameworks | EQF guides | The EQF promotes a paradigm shift from using length of study or type of institution as the key parameters to evaluate a qualification, to actually what the person who has gained the qualification knows and is able to do.  
EQF is not a legislative framework. Its adoption by member states and awarding bodies is voluntary. |
| **European Credit System for Vocational Education & Training (2009)** | **European Parliament and Council** | Facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of credits of individuals who are aiming to achieve a vocational qualification. Improve general understanding of learning outcomes as well as their transparency, mobility and portability. Create ‘a borderless lifelong learning area’ across Europe and within Member States. Recognise all types of learning | Based on learning outcomes. By contrast to ECTS, ECVET’s learning outcomes are described in terms of units of learning. Units of learning are coherent sets of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated with a number of associated ECVET points. Learners can achieve a qualification by accumulating the required units, achieved in different contexts or countries providing they comply with the respective national legislation. Units can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications. The points allocated to a unit provide an indication of the relative weight of the unit for the qualification, its VET institutions and employers | Memorandum of Understanding between organisations Learning agreement Personal transcript of records Multiple websites User Guide |
complexity or the effort needed to acquire it.

The convention is that a full time year of VET corresponds to 60 points (European Commission, 2014).

Units and qualifications should be referenced according to EQF levels and where appropriate to national qualification frameworks.

| European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (2009) | European Parliament | Provide common principles and reference points for the evaluation and improvement of VET qualifications across Member States. EQAVET strives to develop a culture of quality at European and national level. | A framework and a collaborative network. Takes into account the ‘Common Principles for Quality Assurance in Education and Training’ that are included in the EQF. Common quality criteria and indicative descriptors to support Member States when implementing the Framework. Formulated both at VET-system level and VET-provider level. Four main areas: • Planning • Implementation • Evaluation • Review. | National agencies for VET and VET providers. | Should be regarded rather as a ‘toolbox’, from which the various users may choose those descriptors and indicators that they consider most relevant to the requirements of their particular quality assurance system. Voluntary adoption. The responsibility for monitoring the quality of VET remains entirely with the Member States. |
| European Skills/Competences, European Commission | Support individuals match their skills with jobs or identify gaps leading to Multilingual database. | European citizens and VET and HE institutions. Website. |
| Qualifications and Occupations (2012) | further education and training  
Help education and training institutions describe the output of their qualifications with the skills terminology provided by the professions strengthening the relationship between the labour market and the education sector, | Focused on skills specific to a job  
Open platform than can be tapped into by any search engine  
Three interrelated pillars covering i) occupations; ii) skills/competences; and iii) qualifications. |
Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs and their answers have been obtained from the official guidance documents and websites of the most relevant initiatives and frameworks.

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning

• Why was the EQF established?
  o The EQF Recommendation responds to requests from member states and social partners for an instrument to promote transparency of qualifications, to facilitate workers and learners’ mobility across the European Union.

• Is the EQF compulsory?
  o No. The EQF is a voluntary framework, but all member states have committed to aligning their qualifications to it in due course.

• What does it mean in practical terms?
  o It means that National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) will progressively be aligned with the EQF and therefore facilitate the comparison of qualifications achieved in different countries.
  o Over time, all new qualifications should bear a reference to the EQF so that employers or educational institutions can easily identify a candidates’ skills, knowledge and competences.

• What are learning outcomes and why does the EQF use them?
  o Learning outcomes are what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after a course of learning, as opposed to learning inputs such as the length of a learning experience or the type of institution etc. The EQF uses learning outcomes - defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences – because only this basis would enable it to connect the different national systems. An inputs basis could not accommodate the
great diversity in Europe’s education systems, for example the duration of training courses varies significantly between countries.

- **Does the EQF award qualifications?**
  - No, the EQF describes levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. The awarding of qualifications will remain a matter for national qualifications and other bodies.

- **How can the EQF benefit industry and commerce?**
  - The EQF will support labour market mobility in Europe both between and within countries and sectors by simplifying comparisons between qualifications and enabling a better match between supply and demand for knowledge, skills and competences. For employers, the EQF will make it easier to interpret the qualifications of foreign applicants. In particular, once qualifications bear a reference to the EQF, this will make qualifications more understandable.
  - The social partners (employers and trades unions) have been involved in developing the EQF from its earliest stages. In particular, social partner representatives helped draft the descriptors for the 8 reference levels.
  - Additionally, the EQF aims to facilitate the development of sectoral frameworks and qualifications, which reflects the growing internationalisation of qualifications.

- **What is the relationship between the EQF and the Bologna process in higher education?**
  - The EQF’s four highest levels correspond to higher education levels as defined within the European Higher Education Area: EQF level 5 corresponds to the descriptor developed for the higher education short cycle, EQF level 6 to the descriptor developed for the first cycle (Bachelor level), EQF level 7 to the descriptor developed for the
second cycle (Masters level) and EQF level 8 to the descriptor developed for the third cycle (PhD level).

- However, the EQF is an overarching lifelong learning framework, incorporating vocational and other qualifications as well as more academic qualifications.

- **What is the relationship with “Europass”?**
  - Europass introduced a portfolio of documents to be used by individuals to describe their qualifications and competences. Europass does not, however, ensure the comparability of levels of qualifications. The further development of Europass will need to reflect the establishment of the EQF. In the future, all relevant Europass documents, in particular the Europass diploma supplement and the Europass certificate supplement, should contain a clear reference to the appropriate EQF level.

**The Bologna Process**

- **What are the goals of the Bologna Process?**
  - The three original priorities of the Bologna process are: introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate); quality assurance; and recognition of qualifications and periods of study.
  - In 2012, three priorities were identified: mobility, employability and quality

- **If the Bologna process concerns only Higher Education, how does it relate to Vocational Education?**
  - Vocational Education is guided by the Copenhagen Process.
  - Synergies between the Bologna and Copenhagen processes are achieved through the medium of the EQF which is itself linked to other tools like Europass, ECTS and ECVET.

**The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)**

- **What are the main similarities and differences between ECTS and ECVET?**
  - Table 2 below offers the main similarities and differences between the two systems
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>ECTS</th>
<th>ECVET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning</td>
<td>Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and validated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>Allocated to entire qualifications or study programmes as well as their educational components/learning activities (e.g. modules, course units, dissertation work, work placements and laboratory work). Credit allocation to educational components is based on their weight in terms of the workload needed for students to achieve the learning outcomes in a formal context</td>
<td>Allocated to units of learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on programme or qualification</td>
<td>▶ Modularisation of degree programmes</td>
<td>▶ Qualification structured in units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Smoother recognition of the achieved qualification and/or its part</td>
<td>▶ Number and size of the units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Higher permeability in European higher education</td>
<td>▶ Rules of combining units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Better balance workload/content</td>
<td>▶ Rules and processes for the assessment, validation and accumulation of learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Structure and comparability: number of credits/workload per year, modules...</td>
<td>▶ Design of the assessment, validation and accumulation (AVA) of outcomes processes (including learning outcomes achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Design of the learning/teaching/training programme - improved curricula; improved organisation</td>
<td>▶ Enhanced transparency of VET qualifications in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Improved recognition procedures</td>
<td>▶ Possible basis for recognition of prior learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▶ Possible basis for recognition of prior learning</td>
<td>▶ Enhanced transparency of VET qualifications in Europe</td>
</tr>
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References


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