

Allocating qualifications to the German qualifications framework

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 GERMANY

Timeline



ID number 28136

Background

The National qualifications framework for lifelong learning in Germany (*Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen*, DQR) has eight levels and is based on learning outcomes. The DQR was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in 2012 and was given official status in May 2013. VET qualifications are present on nearly all DQR/EQF levels except level 8; three-year apprenticeships lead to level 4.

The DQR was developed under the joint responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK). To develop the DQR and coordinate the process, they set up a Federal-Länder Coordination Group DQR (B-L-KG DQR), which also included the Federal Ministry of Economics and Climate Action (BMWK) and the Conference of Ministers of Economics. Other relevant stakeholders are also involved in the development and implementation of the DQR, such as higher education and VET institutions, social partners and business organisations, as well as experts from academia and practice.

Objectives

The German qualifications framework (DQR) was developed to make the German education system more transparent. Referencing the DQR to the European qualifications framework (EQF) makes it easier to compare qualifications, in Europe and in Germany. This supports the mobility of learners and workers.

Description

In 2016, 21 qualifications from regulated further training were allocated to the DQR. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) commissioned a study on the use of the DQR by main target groups: learners, employees, employers, and education providers. The final report with recommendations for action was published in December 2016.

In 2017, for the first time, further vocational training qualifications were assigned to DQR levels 6 and 7. General education qualifications were assigned to Level 2 (lower secondary school leaving certificate), Level 3 (intermediate secondary school leaving certificate), and Level 4 (higher education entrance qualification). Thus, in addition to the equivalence of vocational and higher education, the equivalence of vocational and general education was made visible. Criteria and procedures to include non-formal (not State-regulated) qualifications in the DQR have been developed and tested since 2017. The DQR is updated every year; the updates reflect the creation of new qualifications and changes in the existing qualifications. For example, training and further training ordinances that are uniformly regulated throughout Germany or vocational qualifications that are regulated by State law are modernised or new ones are created to meet the current requirements of business, politics and society.

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

At their meeting in April 2019, the DQR committees decided on further allocations of further training qualifications assigned to DQR levels 5 and 6.

In August 2019, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated.

2020 Implementation

In June 2020, the BIBB published a position statement on the DQR. The President of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) spoke in favour of making the German qualifications framework (DQR) more binding and more effective, thereby supporting equivalence, permeability and lifelong learning in the entire education system. VET, in particular, will become more attractive.

2021 Implementation

In August 2021, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated.

2022 Implementation

In August 2022, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated. The discussion about formalising the qualifications framework has gained new impetus.

2023 Implementation

In August 2023, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated.

2024 Implementation

In August 2024, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated.

In addition, a non-formal qualification was assigned for the first time, namely Business Economist from the Academies of Administration and Economics (VVA), level 6, bachelor level. VVAs are neither state nor public institutions. Their educational programmes and qualifications are aimed at people who already have professional qualifications and are closely aligned with the qualifications of the formal education system.

2025 Implementation

In August 2025, the list of qualifications assigned to the DQR was updated.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (until 2025)
- Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) (until December 2021)
- Federal States (Länder)
- Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) (until 2025)
- Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) (since 2025)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Adult learners
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[DQR portal \(German qualifications framework\)](#)

[English website of the DQR portal](#)

[BIBB position statement on DQR \(06/2020\)](#)

[Position of the employers' association \(BDA\) on the legalisation of the German qualifications framework \(2022\)](#)

[BIBB President Esser: We should make the German qualifications framework more binding? \[Wir sollten den Deutschen Qualifikationsrahmen verbindlicher machen\] \(in German only\)](#)

“ … ” **Cite as**

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