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A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu>).

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1. Introduction

Cedefop's work on qualifications frameworks dates back to 2003. The Centre has contributed to the conceptual development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and has supported its further implementation, working alongside national authorities and stakeholders to introduce and develop national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). This report is part of the European inventory of NQFs, which systematically maps and analyses NQF developments in countries participating in the EQF process. The inventory is updated biennially in close cooperation with the EQF Advisory Group, the European Commission and the European Training Foundation. The report provides a detailed description of the structure of the Danish NQF (DKQF) and its institutional arrangements. It also examines the framework's implementation and its impact on broader policy areas, focusing on key developments since 2022.

The DKQF – Danish qualifications framework for lifelong learning (*Kvalifikationsrammen for Livslang Læring*) – was referenced to the EQF in 2011, with an addendum to the referencing report published in 2024. It is structured in eight levels and includes all levels and types of formal education and training, as well as qualifications awarded outside the formal system. The DKQF is operational and uses knowledge, skills and general competence as level descriptors. The national qualifications framework for higher education was self-certified against the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2010.

2. National context

2.1. Policy context

In Denmark, the rate of learners leaving education and training early (aged 18-24) has remained steady at 10.0% (2022). In 2022, the rate of tertiary education attainment was among the highest in the EU, at 49.0% for people aged 25-34, compared with the EU average of 42.0%. The employment rate of recent graduates from all qualification levels is also high, with little difference between higher and vocational education and training (VET) graduates. In 2021, public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 6.0%, compared to the EU average of 4.8% (European Commission. DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2023). In 2022, participation in initial VET was significantly lower than the EU average

(40.2% versus 49.0%) ⁽¹⁾. VET continues to be a high policy priority, with the government proposing a 10% increase in investments in VET by 2030 compared to 2022. The focus is on modernising equipment and supporting teacher training (European Commission, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2023). Since 2019, Denmark has started including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF. This aims to strengthen a lifelong learning culture among citizens and to create a coherent foundation, as well as a common language based on learning outcomes, for qualifications awarded within and outside the formal system (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

2.2. NQF legal basis

In 2009, the Minister for Higher Education and Science (*Uddannelses- og forskningsministeriet*), Minister for Children and Education (*Børne- og undervisningsministeriet*), and Minister for Culture (*Kulturministeriet*) approved the DKQF for lifelong learning. No specific legal act on the DKQF has been adopted. The framework is integrated into sectoral legislation. In higher education, it is implemented via the Accreditation Act ⁽²⁾. In March 2018, with the amendment of this act, it was formally decided that private and public non-formal qualifications could be included in the DKQF (Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024). At all other levels, it is integrated into educational orders.

3. NQF objectives

The overall objective of the DKQF, as expressed in the referencing report, is to support the transparency of qualifications and to promote opportunities for mobility and lifelong learning. More specifically, the framework aims to provide a comprehensive overview of qualifications approved by national authorities, while making routes through the education system visible, helping learners understand how to build upon the qualifications they already have.

The framework also aims to promote mutual recognition between national and international qualifications, support validation of prior learning and increase attendance at VET programmes. Since 2019, a key objective has been to include qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF, linking

⁽¹⁾ More information at [Eurostat \[educ_uoe_enra13\]](#), accessed 30 October 2024.

⁽²⁾ The Accreditation Act (*Akkrediteringsbekendtgørelsen*): [BEK nr 1558 af 02/07/2021: Bekendtgørelse om akkreditering af videregående uddannelsesinstitutioner og godkendelse af videregående uddannelser](#) (in Danish).

formal and non-formal parts of the system (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

4. Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

4.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The DKQF is a learning-outcomes-based framework with eight levels. The level descriptors are defined based on knowledge (*viden*), skills (*færdigheder*) and competences (*kompetencer*). Knowledge descriptors emphasise the type of knowledge (knowledge of theory, practice, a subject or a field within a profession), the complexity of knowledge, and understanding (the ability to place one's knowledge in context). Skills descriptors refer to what a person can do or accomplish, and they reflect, for instance, the type of skills (practical, cognitive, creative or communicative) and the complexity of the task/problem-solving to which these skills can be applied. Competence descriptors refer to responsibility and autonomy, and cover, for instance, the type of work/study context in which knowledge and skills will be used, the ability to take responsibility for one's own work and the work of others, and the complexity of the cooperative situations in which one engages (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2011). These level descriptors are used to address both full and supplementary qualifications (see Section 4.2), and for assessing the levels of qualifications awarded outside formal education.

The DKQF draws a clear distinction between levels 1 to 5 and levels 6 to 8. The latter are identical to the level descriptors of the qualifications framework for higher education and contain explicit references to research-related outcomes. A broader descriptor has been designed for DKQF level 5 than the corresponding descriptor for short-cycle degrees in the national qualifications framework for higher education; this makes it possible to include level 5 qualifications acquired through some VET and maritime VET programmes.

4.2. NQF scope and coverage

The DKQF covers all types and levels of qualifications awarded and quality-assured by public authorities (general education, VET, higher education and supplementary qualifications). It also includes qualifications awarded outside formal education and training, meaning private and public education programmes not under the remit of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the Ministry of Children and Education, the Ministry of Culture and the Royal Danish Defence

college ⁽³⁾. Since 2019, 55 such qualifications have been level-assessed by the [Danish Accreditation Institution](#) (*Danmarks Akkrediteringsinstitution*) and included in levels 4 to 7 of the DKQF (August 2024) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). Supplementary qualifications are acquired through adult education and training; they are particularly important for adult education and continuing VET. A supplementary qualification can be an addition to or a part (module) of a qualification ⁽⁴⁾, or an independent entity not related to any other qualification. Qualifications awarded outside formal education and supplementary qualifications can be microcredentials (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Table 1. **Danish qualifications framework (DKQF)**

NQF level	Certificate or degree	Certificate for supplementary qualifications (*)	Level-assessed private and public education programme (**)	EQF level
8	PhD degree (<i>Ph.d. grad</i>)			8
7	Master's degree – Candidatus (<i>Kandidat og masteruddannelser</i>) (***) Master's degree in arts/fine arts Master degree (****) Master of military studies		Master in management	7
6	Bachelor's degree (<i>Bachelor og diplomuddannelser</i>) Bachelor's degree in arts Professional bachelor's degree (<i>Professionsbacheloruddannelser</i>) Diploma degree Diploma of military studies		Copenhagen International School of Performing Arts: 3-year professional acting course Financial advisor wealth advisory (<i>for clients with large financial portfolios</i>) Diploma of military studies	6

⁽³⁾ In Table 1, they are mentioned as level-assessed private and public education programmes.

⁽⁴⁾ Supplementary qualifications can be partial qualifications.

NQF level	Certificate or degree	Certificate for supplementary qualifications (*)	Level-assessed private and public education programme (**)	EQF level
5	VET certificate Academy profession degrees (<i>Erhvervsakademi uddannelser</i>) Academy profession (AP) degree in military studies	Certificate for supplementary single-subject courses at academy profession level Adult VET certificate	Acupuncture (<i>AkupunkturAkademiet</i>) Nordic acupuncture education (<i>Nordisk akupunkturuddannelse</i>) Certified private client advisor within insurance (<i>certificeret privatkunderådgiver</i>)	5
4	Higher General Examination Programme, 3-year or 2-year programme (<i>stx, 2-årig stx</i>) Higher Technical Examination Programme, 3-year programme (<i>htx</i>) Higher Commercial Examination Programme, 3-year programme (<i>hcx</i>) Higher Preparatory Examination, 2-year programme (<i>hf</i>) VET certificate	Certificate for supplementary single-subject courses at upper secondary level Adult VET certificate Certificate for single subject VET	Danish sign language Hair dresser NCO (non-commissioned officer) programmes for the Danish military	4
3	VET certificate Certificate for preparatory basic education and training (FGU)	Certificates for supplementary, single-subject VET courses Higher preparatory courses, single-subject courses (<i>hf-enkeltfag</i>) General adult education level D Adult VET certificate Certificates for single-subject courses in VET		3

NQF level	Certificate or degree	Certificate for supplementary qualifications (*)	Level-assessed private and public education programme (**)	EQF level
2	Leaving certificate for primary and lower secondary school – 10th grade (<i>10. klasse afgangsprøve</i>) Certificate for preparatory basic education and training (FGU)	Basic VET certificates General adult education (levels E and F, approximately 10th grade) Adult VET certificate Basic programme VET		2
1	Leaving certificate for primary and lower secondary school (ninth grade) (<i>Folkeskolens afgangsprøve</i>) Certificate for preparatory basic education and training (FGU)	Certificate for preparatory adult education Certificate for general adult education (level G, approximates to ninth grade)		2

(*) Acquired in adult education and training.

(**) Outside the remits of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, Ministry of Children and Education, and Ministry of Culture.

(***) The master's degrees are research master programmes, giving direct access to doctoral programmes.

(****) The master degree is the adult and further education degree not giving direct access to doctoral programmes. The master's degrees are research master programmes in the ordinary education system giving direct access to doctoral programmes.

Source: European Commission & Cedefop (2024).

4.3. Use of learning outcomes

The DKQF has promoted the use of learning outcomes, especially in higher education and, following the opening up of the framework in 2019, among qualifications awarded outside formal education and training. Learning outcomes have been used in VET long before the adoption of the DKQF. Education programmes are designed to cover the intended learning outcomes of the different DKQF levels (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). Further, learning outcomes increase the transparency of qualifications and promote lifelong learning.

The learning outcomes approach is widely accepted in all segments of education and training, and is increasingly being used to define and describe curricula and programmes. However, the descriptions are often divided by subject, meaning that there is not always a comprehensive presentation of the overall learning outcome for the entire qualification. For example, in VET, learners must meet both defined learning outcomes and competence objectives to gain

admission to the main course after the basic course, and to be awarded a VET certificate. In higher education, all qualifications are clearly described using learning-outcomes-based terminology. This shift from input- to output-based steering is supported by the country's quality assurance approach to accreditation. Learning outcomes are an important reference point for the accreditation of new and existing programmes (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2011).

4.4. Quality assurance arrangements

The Accreditation Act establishes that the Danish Accreditation Institution evaluates whether higher education institutions have consistent measures to ensure that intended learning outcomes at different degree levels can be achieved through their study programmes (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022). For each degree level, there is a typological description of required learning outcomes. Higher education institutions must design learning outcomes following this typology and ensure that graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes upon completing the study programme.

When including qualifications in the DKQF, there are procedures for accreditation and/or approval of new qualifications, as well as quality assurance procedures for levelling qualifications from each education subsystem (see Section 7.2) ⁽⁵⁾. The opening up of the DKQF to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training has adopted a balanced approach to quality assurance. It secures solid quality assurance mechanisms in line with the EQF recommendation and those applied to other DKQF qualifications. At the same time, it does not impose burdensome quality assurance procedures that might demotivate providers from applying or exclude smaller ones. The requirements that providers must meet (see Section 7.2) ensure transparent quality assurance of these qualifications. The 2022 evaluation (see Section 7.7) showed that the non-formal providers that applied for a level assessment found that participating in this procedure stimulated them to improve the quality of their qualifications (Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024).

5. Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The interdepartmental national coordination committee for the DKQF, set up in 2006, has overall responsibility for the DKQF. The committee comprises representatives from the education (two persons), culture (one) and higher

⁽⁵⁾ More information on [quality assurance procedures](#).

education ministries (two), the Danish Accreditation Institution (one), and the Royal Danish Defence college (two) ⁽⁶⁾ (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). The coordination committee for the DKQF meets at least three or four times a year.

At the operational level, the higher education ministry is the [EQF national coordination point \(NCP\)](#) ⁽⁷⁾, responsible for day-to-day implementation, while the education ministry represents the country in the EQF Advisory Group. Two people work for the EQF NCP – one full-time equivalent – one person from the education ministry and one from the culture ministry (as a member of the committee). The activities are mainly funded through the EQF NCP contract and the ministries (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022).

The EQF NCP functions as the information office for questions relating to the EQF and the correlation between the EQF and the DKQF, including how the DKQF levels align with the EQF levels. It also provides information on the background of the EQF and the purpose of establishing it and administers and develops the DKQF website. One of the main tasks for the EQF NCP, in addition to coordinating the stakeholders involved in the DKQF's implementation, is disseminating information to the wider public. Responsibility for other areas, such as levelling qualifications to the DKQF and quality assurance of qualifications, lies with the education, culture, and higher education ministries (see Section 4.4). The Danish Accreditation Institution is responsible for the process of levelling qualifications awarded outside formal education and training to the DKQF (see Section 7.2).

The committee consults stakeholders such as rectors' conferences, trade committees and social partners on all developments regarding the framework's implementation, including its regular updates. All stakeholders have, for example, been consulted on the principles and procedures used for the inclusion in the DKQF of qualifications awarded outside formal education and training. Regarding higher education, the main stakeholders are the rectors' conferences. In VET, the main stakeholders are the social partners, who are involved in designing VET programmes and in levelling VET qualifications to the framework, mainly by participating in trade committees (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022).

⁽⁶⁾ *Source:* Internal communication with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

⁽⁷⁾ More information on the [EQF NCP](#).

6. Recognition and validation of prior learning

6.1. Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

At the national level, the legal framework for validation of prior learning (VPL) has been in place since 2007 ⁽⁸⁾. The implementation is decentralised at the provider level, carried out by VET, higher education and adult education and training providers. The framework has introduced common principles for almost all formal adult education and training. However, an evaluation of VPL has shown that awareness among the broader public is still relatively low (Husted, 2024).

Learning outcomes are used in recognising and validating prior learning throughout the education system. The descriptions of learning outcomes of education programmes are based on the DKQF level descriptors, which serve as a reference point in VPL. The results of the validation are guaranteed by the linkage to the DKQF. The certificates issued as a result of the VPL are the same as those obtained for completing the relevant formal programme (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). VPL related to the DKQF enables learners to progress to different education levels and/or subsystems and to obtain a qualification by combining validation credentials (Husted, 2024).

Validation arrangements can provide access to programmes leading to formal qualification at levels 5, 6 and 7 and/or credits or exemptions towards such qualifications. In relation to the links between validation and formal qualifications below level 4, the landscape is more diverse; nevertheless, validation arrangements can provide access to programmes leading to general, vocational and adult education qualifications and/or exemptions towards a qualification. Validation arrangements can lead to a full VET certificate (levels 3-5) and according to Husted (2024) more frequently, to a full adult VET certificate (levels 2-5). It is not so common for qualifications awarded outside formal education and training to be linked to validation arrangements (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications

The EQF-NCP is also the designated ENIC-NARIC Office. The DKQF is used daily in the recognition of foreign qualifications to reference them to its levels and compare their learning outcomes with the DKQF level descriptors (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024). As of 2020, recognition decisions include references to the DKQF level of the Danish qualification to which a foreign

⁽⁸⁾ Law on changes of different laws under the merit of the Ministry of Education ([Lov om ændring af forskellige love på Undervisningsministeriets område](#)) (in Danish).

qualification is compared ⁽⁹⁾. The ENIC-NARIC Office widely uses a [subsidiary text](#) to the Lisbon Recognition Convention on the use of qualifications frameworks in recognition.

6.3. Promoting lifelong learning

The DKQF supports lifelong learning by providing transparency and indicating existing learning pathways in the education and training system. The opening up of the DKQF to qualifications awarded outside formal education and its use in VPL are seen as key elements in promoting lifelong learning (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

7. NQF implementation and impact

7.1. Stage of implementation

The DKQF is operational and has already undergone a review (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022). DKQF/EQF levels are indicated on certificates. There is also a qualifications database (see Section 7.5).

7.2. Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF

Including qualifications in the DKQF follows specific principles and procedures. Qualifications and supplementary qualifications at levels 1 to 5 are assigned according to a 'best fit' principle ⁽¹⁰⁾. The minister for education determines the inclusion of general education and adult general education qualifications into the DKQF. The level of each (adult) VET qualification is assessed by the relevant trade committee, consisting of social partner representatives; the committee then submits its recommendation to the education minister, who takes the final decision on levelling the qualification. Higher education qualifications at levels 5 to 8 are assigned according to the 'full fit' principle ⁽¹¹⁾. The Danish Accreditation Institution examines whether higher education qualifications provide learning outcomes at a given DKQF level and meet the legal requirements set by national authorities and

⁽⁹⁾ *Source:* Internal communication with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The learning outcomes of a qualification fit better (in terms of knowledge, skills and competences) with the level descriptors of a given DKQF level than with those of other levels.

⁽¹¹⁾ The learning outcomes of a qualification should completely correspond to the level descriptors of a given DKQF level.

the qualifications framework for higher education ⁽¹²⁾ (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

A two-phase process for including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF, lasting approximately three months ⁽¹³⁾, was established in 2019 and evaluated in 2022 (see Section 7.7). Providers apply to the Danish Accreditation Institution for a level assessment of a qualification. In the first phase, the institution evaluates each qualification against the following requirements:

- (a) a clear description of the purpose and relevance of the qualification to the labour market and/or an area of culture or leisure;
- (b) a clear description of the qualification's learning outcomes in relation to the specific DKQF level descriptors (knowledge, skills and competence);
- (c) the sustainability of the education programme, in terms of the times it is carried out;
- (d) a description of how teaching evaluation is conducted, including student evaluation;
- (e) a description of how the learning outcomes are assessed;
- (f) the issuing of a certificate indicating the achieved learning outcomes, the DKQF level and the study load.

Once the applicant passes the first phase, the institution, in cooperation with an external expert, performs a thorough assessment of whether the qualification's learning outcomes align with the DKQF level applied for, whether the employed teachers hold the necessary academic qualifications, and whether the teaching evaluation is adequate. The procedure follows the best-fit principle, while the requirements are determined by the National Coordination Committee for the DKQF. Inclusion in the DKQF does not provide formal rights to the qualification (e.g. automatic recognition and transfer of credits). An assessment is valid for four years, and the provider can apply for a renewal (Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024). As of November 2024, 72 applications had been received; 56 had been included in the DKQF, and three were still in progress. Moreover, seven applications for renewal had been successfully completed, while two had been rejected ⁽¹⁴⁾.

⁽¹²⁾ The DKQF page provides [detailed information](#) on these procedures.

⁽¹³⁾ This is a revenue-covered activity.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Source:* Internal communication with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

7.3. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

Most VET formal qualifications at levels 1 to 5, including adult VET qualifications, indicate DKQF levels on the certificate or diploma and on the Europass certificate supplement. Formal qualifications at levels 6 to 8 have DKQF and EQF levels indicated only on the diploma supplements. Qualifications awarded outside formal education and training that are levelled to the DKQF have DKQF and EQF levels on the certificates; in some cases, they also have learning outcomes described on diploma supplements (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

7.4. NQF dissemination

The communication actions primarily target experts, such as qualification developers and those who use the DKQF in their daily work. The main communication channel disseminating information on the DKQF is its [web page](#), which provides information for national and international target groups, presenting the DKQF and the qualifications it covers. The website for the national database (see Section 7.5) addresses a national target group. This website also provides comprehensive information on the DKQF, explaining the concept of learning-outcomes-based levels and how learners can use them. The Danish Accreditation Institution has a [web page](#) explaining the procedures for applying for accreditation of non-formal qualifications. Since 2022, the main focus of communication activities has been on promoting the procedure for including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF (e.g. through [online news items](#)). Webinars have been held for providers of such qualifications. Relevant information has also been sent (through [letters](#) and emails) to all State-recognised education institutions. The aim was to raise awareness among these institutions of the level and quality of DKQF qualifications to ensure informed decisions regarding credit transfers and the admission of applicants holding these qualifications ⁽¹⁵⁾ (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

7.5. Qualifications databases and registers

The database [UdannelsesGuiden](#) has a high level of awareness among learners and education stakeholders. Coordinated by the education ministry, it describes all study programmes leading to a DKQF qualification. It provides information in Danish on the awarding institution of each qualification (including a link), the field of study, DKQF/EQF level, credit points, entry requirements, relationship to occupations or occupational fields, possible study grants, related legal documents, and content descriptions (not in learning outcomes), as well as a link to relevant supplements. Providing information on other characteristics of each DKQF

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Source:* Internal communication with the Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

qualification is optional, for example, internal and external quality assurance. Some qualifications are registered without a DKQF/EQF level. This applies to a few programmes outside the formal education system that are eligible for study grants ⁽¹⁶⁾. Learning outcomes are described in diploma supplements and Europass certificates. The database is connected to the [website](#) for foreign learners, which provides information in English. The database is also an important tool for job centres. The country plans to carry out a feasibility study to explore ways to connect the database with the Europass platform and make it interoperable with the European Learning Model v.3 (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

[Uddzoom](#) is a digital tool that enables users to compare up to three programmes (without a reference to the DKQF). For example, it provides information on the mode of delivery, workload, study environment, students' wellbeing, dropout rate, and employment and salary expectations (measured at graduation and 10 years after).

7.6. Awareness and use of the NQF

Awareness of the DKQF is very high among those who design study programmes and learning outcomes, including teachers and those working in quality assurance and recognition authorities. It is used in the accreditation process in higher education, while trade committees responsible for the quality of upper secondary VET programmes check the level of learning outcomes and include the relevant qualifications in the DKQF. DKQF/EQF levels are actively used in designing qualifications. Any new qualification must align with the DKQF, and it is used daily in recognising foreign qualifications (see Section 6.2) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024). Guidance and counselling practitioners are aware of the DKQF but use it to a moderate extent, mainly to promote international mobility of learners. Learners, workers, and jobseekers are less familiar with the framework. Learners and recent graduates are potentially aware of the level of their qualification as it is mentioned on their certificates. DKQF awareness is very low among workers and jobseekers. Learners use the DKQF mostly for cross-border mobility. Awareness and use of the DKQF are low among labour market stakeholders (employers, trade unions, employment services); it is rarely used in job advertisements. Only trade union representatives involved in developing the framework or in the process of including qualifications in it have high awareness of the DKQF (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

⁽¹⁶⁾ The providers of these programmes can also apply for referencing of their programmes through the non-formal route.

7.7. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

The first evaluation of the framework was completed in 2013, examining its implementation and assessing the need to review it ⁽¹⁷⁾. In 2022, an evaluation of the process and principles of levelling qualifications awarded outside formal education and training to the DKQF was completed ⁽¹⁸⁾. This evaluation involved qualitative interviews with providers that had applied for level-assessing their qualifications, providing positive overall feedback. The key findings were that the level assessment process had a positive impact on the quality of qualifications (one participant described how the process has created an increased focus on internal evaluation), and that it forced providers to use learning outcomes when developing their programmes, thus promoting comparability with formal ones. It also revealed the need to better communicate the DKQF and, more specifically, the impact of levelling these qualifications to the framework. This facilitates progress to the formal system and credit transfer (Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024).

Both evaluations concluded that information on the DKQF should be better communicated to reach a wider audience, and raise awareness of the framework's purpose and use.

7.8. Impact of the NQF

All qualifications must be designed, and learning outcomes written, to adhere to the DKQF. This has promoted the use of the learning outcomes approach, especially in higher education and qualifications awarded outside formal education and training (see Section 4.3) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

The DKQF has reinforced the transparency of qualifications, and improved understanding of qualification levels and progression pathways in education and training. It has also eased progression – both horizontal and vertical – in education and training, reducing barriers between the formal education sector and non-formal and informal learning. Opening up the framework to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training has increased their transparency and made them more comparable with formal qualifications. Consequently, State-recognised education institutions have a solid basis for making decisions on admission and credit transfer for graduates of non-formal programmes. According to the 2022 evaluation, including qualifications awarded outside formal education in the DKQF often acts as a quality stamp, increasing both internal and external recognition, and attracting more learners to these programmes. This suggests that this

⁽¹⁷⁾ More information about the [qualifications framework's background](#) (in Danish).

⁽¹⁸⁾ For more information (in Danish), see Danish Evaluation Institute (2022).

procedure can help build trust in these qualifications, improving permeability and parity of esteem between the formal and non-formal education sectors (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024; Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024).

The DKQF helps build trust in VPL, as validation results are linked to the DKQF, and validation certificates are identical to those obtained by completing the formal programmes (see Section 6.1). The DKQF has also supported the international mobility of learners and migrant workers by facilitating the recognition of foreign qualifications and learning outcomes acquired abroad through mobility schemes. Employers can better assess job applicants holding these qualifications. Further, some qualification providers are encouraged to design qualifications at a higher DKQF level, offering more advanced learning outcomes than those typically included in their qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024; Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024).

8. Referencing to the EQF

The national qualifications framework for higher education was self-certified against the QF-EHEA in 2010. The DKQF was referenced to the EQF in May 2011 (Danish Evaluation Institute, 2011). An addendum to the referencing report, which outlines the principles and procedures for including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF, was published in 2024. This addendum complements the original report, which remains valid (Danish Agency for Higher Education & Science, 2024).

9. Reflections and plans

Including qualifications awarded outside formal education and training in the DKQF has been a significant development, ensuring the quality of such qualifications while strengthening links between the non-formal and formal education subsystems. Overall, the framework has improved the transparency of qualifications, become an important tool for validation, and played a crucial role in recognising foreign qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024). Evaluations of the framework have triggered discussions on improving communication about the DKQF. A key challenge is raising awareness among learners and employers. The country's main priority is to connect qualifications awarded within and outside formal education and training better (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Acronyms

DKQF	Danish national qualifications framework
EQF	European qualifications framework
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
VET	vocational education and training
VPL	validation of prior learning

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