

Qualifications assessment tool



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1) The European Qualification Frame (EQF)

The European Qualification Frame helps in comparing national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europa. It mainly serves to make vocational, continuing and tertiary education and trainings more transparent.

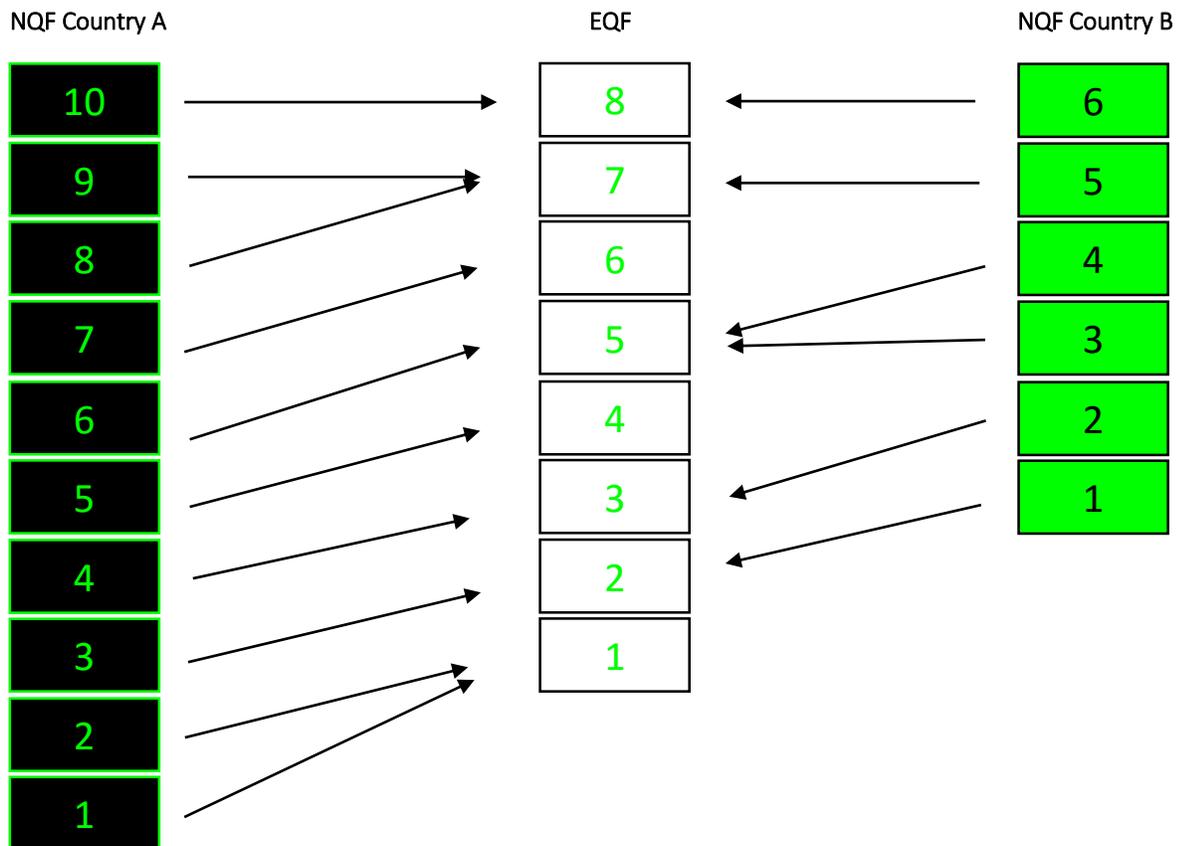
The EQF neither replaces nor defines national qualification systems nor qualifications. Its sole purpose is to make the Europe-wide educational levels and associated learning outcomes understandable and lead to more transparency.

In 2008 all member states of the European Union have committed them self to relate their various national levels qualifications (NQF) and levels to the eight levels of the European Qualification Frame (EQF) whereby the different NQF do not have to have eight levels but must be associated to the eight levels of the EQF.

The NQF in France e.g. only has five levels while Ireland has ten. As long as all member states associate their national qualification levels to the eight levels of the EQF, this allows any national qualifications systems, national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and qualifications in Europe to relate to the EQF levels. Learners, graduates, providers and employers can use these levels to understand and compare qualifications awarded in different countries and by different education and training systems.

Each of the eight levels of qualification is in the following defined via descriptors for the three categories **“Knowledge”**, **“Skills”** and **“Competences”** on different levels. Each EQF level has its own descriptors on the associated level.

Assignment of National Qualification Frames to the European Qualification Frame



2) EQF Level Examples

For better understanding the entire process concerning the descriptors and assignments, the official EQF descriptors¹ as well as a brief instruction of the EQF levels is to be found here.

EQF Level 1 (Elementary Level)

Knowledge: Basic general knowledge

Skills: Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks

Competence: Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context

¹ Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
Online: <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page> (16.03.2016)

Description of Level 1:

People with level 1 qualification know simple cultural tools, have a basic general education and knowledge and are used to the standard social conventions of the respective culture.

They have basic skills to carry out simple tasks and can work or study under direct supervision in a structured context.

EQF Level 5 (Vocal Education Level beyond that of a Skilled Worker)

Knowledge: Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.

Skills: A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.

Competence: Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others.

Description of Level 5

People with level 5 qualification are able to independently carry out tasks and functions assigned to them as well as lead own tasks, projects and teams. They are characterised by a capacity of critical thinking and a high problem-solving attitude.

EQF Level 7 (University Master Degree)

Knowledge: Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.

Skills: Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.

Competence: Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Description of Level 7

People with level 7 qualification are experts in their field and able to acquire knowledge from different fields interdisciplinary. They understand complex situations, develop new knowledge required in research or innovation and take responsibility for strategical decisions.

3) CO Game – Target Group

The target group of CO Game are young people aged 16 and young adults. Some of them might currently be in an education or training. Therefore, not all members of the target group have completed some sort of vocational training.

This educational level of the target group is the basis for designing the curriculum and all learning materials. Due to the target group favoured by the CO Game it refers to level 4 of the EQF. People of this level come with a deeper general as well as theoretical knowledge in fields of their training or education. Furthermore, they are able to perform work assignments independently. In detail:

Knowledge: Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study.

Skills: A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.

Competence: Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.

CO Game – Fact Box

The CO Game curriculum as well as all learning materials has to be created in a manner to address people with level 4 knowledge, skills and competences as mentioned above. This affects in particular the formulation of learning outcomes.

4) EQF - NQF

All member states of the European Union provide national qualification frames (NQF) including all vocational trainings to be associated to the EQF.

Austria

Like the EQF, the Austrian NQF consists of eight levels. One special characteristic is the “Y - Model“ dividing level 6-8 into academical as well as vocational and further education.

At level one to five qualifications from all areas of education are assigned to the NQF descriptors. At level six to eight two different sets of descriptors are valid: Qualifications and skills acquired at university are assigned to the Bologna architecture (Bachelor, Master and PhD) plus diploma studies are assigned to the Dublin descriptors². The assignment of all other qualifications is based on the NQF descriptors. Basically in this way both sets are to remain as a possibility for the levels six to eight. (Dornmayr/Löffler 2014: 73)

NQF Levels	Reference qualifications		EQF Levels
8	Doctoral degree		8
7	Master degree	Master builders Civil engineers	7
6	Bachelor degree	Master craftsperson qualification	6
5	VET college Reifeprüfung certificate and VET diploma		5
4	VET school qualification Apprenticeship diploma		4
3	Secondary home economics school qualification (two-year course)		3
2	Secondary home economics school qualification (one-year course) Pre-vocational school qualification		2
1			1

Source: CEDEFOP National Qualifications Framework Developments in Europe, Anniversary Edition 2015: 19

2 The Dublin Descriptors are the cycle descriptors (or "level descriptors") presented in 2003 and adopted in 2005 as the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. They offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each of a (Bologna) cycle or level. The descriptors are phrased in terms of competence levels, not learning outcomes, and they enable to distinguish in a broad and general manner between the different cycles. Source: [European Commission](#) Glossary Online 17.03.2016

Hungary

Hungary designed and adopted a comprehensive Hungarian qualifications framework (HuQF) for lifelong learning in 2012. It has eight levels of learning outcomes defined in four categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and autonomy and responsibility. The HuQF embraces all national qualifications that can be acquired in general and higher education and those vocational qualifications in the national vocational qualifications register (NvQr). The inclusion of other formal qualifications (mainly CvEt qualifications, master craftsman qualifications, and postgraduate specialisation programmes) will be assigned to levels in the next stage of HuQF implementation. One of the main objectives of the HuQF is to improve transparency, transferability and comparability of national qualifications and promote harmonisation of the different subsystems, helping the national qualification system to become more coherent and supporting national policy coordination. (Source: CEDEFOP National Qualifications Framework Developments in Europe, Anniversary Edition 2015: 44)

NQF Levels	Qualifications	EQF Levels
8	DLA/PhD	8
7	MA/MSC	7
6	BA/BSc Higher-level NVQR vocational qualification (built on HE diploma)	6
5	Higher-level NVQR vocational qualification Higher education short cycle vocational qualification	5
4	Secondary school-leaving certificate Upper secondary NVQR vocational qualification	4
3	Lower secondary NVQR vocational qualification 3 (10th grade of primary school)	3
2	Primary school leaving certificate 2 Lower secondary NVQR vocational qualification	2
1	(6th grade of primary school)	1

Source: Hungarian Educational Authority, 2015

Spain

Spain has developed its qualifications framework for lifelong learning (ESQF) known as Spanish qualifications framework (Marco Español de Cualificaciones) (MECU). It is based on learning outcomes and aims to link and coordinate different education and training subsystems. The framework will include qualifications obtained in compulsory, post-secondary and higher education, and will integrate validation of non-formal and informal learning processes.

The higher four levels of MECU will be linked to the qualifications framework for higher education (Marco Español de Cualificaciones para la Educación Superior) (MECES), which has been put in place separately (Source: CEDEFOP: European inventory on NQF 2014 Spain).

NQF	Education System	EQF Level
M E C E S	PhD	Level 8
	Master	Level 7
	Bachelor	Level 6
	VET Higher Level	Level 5
M E C U	VET Medium Level	Level 4
	Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO)	Level 3
	Primary Education	Level 2
		Level 1

Belgium

Due to its federal structure, Belgium developed three NQFs, linked to the Dutch-, French- and German-speaking communities respectively. Despite adaptation to the needs of each community, the three frameworks share important common features, supporting interoperability. An amendment to the Belgian Federal Law on General structure of the Education system was adopted in 2012, stating that European qualifications framework (EQF) levels will be used as a common reference for the three communities in Belgium; this addresses the challenge of linking the three frameworks, and potentially eases mobility of Belgian citizens within the country. The three frameworks will be referenced separately to the EQF: the Flemish- and French speaking communities have completed this process, the German-speaking community is expected to do so in the near future. (Source: CEDEFOP National Qualifications Framework Developments in Europe, Anniversary Edition 2015: 20)

Belgian qualifications framework of the Flemish-speaking community (FQF)

NQF Levels	Educational qualifications	Professional qualifications	EQF Levels
8	Doctor		8
7	Master (January 2014, 55 included) Master after master (January 2014, two included)	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, one included)	7
6	Professional bachelor (January 2014, 19 included) Academic bachelor (January 2014, 21 included) Bachelor after bachelor	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, one included)	6

	(January 2014, six included)		
5	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, two included)	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, 17 included)	5
4	Upper secondary general education Technical secondary education (third stage) Artistic secondary education (third stage) Supplementary general adult education	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, 38 included)	4
3	Secondary vocational education, second year (third stage)	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, 41 included)	3
2	Adult basic education Second stage of secondary vocational education	Recognised professional qualifications (January 2014, 18 included)	2
1	Primary education		1

Source: CEDEFOP National Qualifications Framework Developments in Europe, Anniversary Edition 2015: 21

Belgian qualifications framework of the French-speaking community (CFC)

The Belgian French-speaking education (in Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles) is organised according to the 8 levels of the EQF, translated as Cadre francophone des certifications (CFC).

The first level consists of elementary and primary school (age 3 to 12). Level 2 corresponds to the lower professional secondary school and level 3 is middle professional secondary school. Level 4 comprises general as well as artistic, technical and higher professional secondary school, which normally ends at 18 years old. Youngsters can follow a complementary professional secondary year, which corresponds to level 5, the same level applied to adult training and upward mobility. Level 6 is the bachelor's degree, either at university or in higher education institutions (called Hautes Ecoles). Level 7 and 8 correspond respectively to the master's and doctor's degrees. (Source: CCFEE 2016, EPALE 2015)

1. *Elementary and primary school*
2. *Lower professional secondary school*
3. *Middle professional secondary school*
4. *General / artistic / technical / higher professional secondary school*
5. *Complementary professional secondary degree & adult upward mobility*
6. *Bachelor, University & higher education*
7. *Master, University*
8. *Doctor, University*

Italy

Italy does not have a NQF for lifelong learning in place but there has been technical work pointing in this direction in recent years. since 2003, reforms have been implemented in education and training (upper secondary general education and WET) and higher education, pre-empting the principles of a learning-outcomes-based NQF. The Italian qualifications framework for higher education (QTI) was published in 2010 and self-certification against the QF-EHEA is ongoing. Italy faces a challenge of integrating different levels of lifelong learning systems into a coherent national qualification system. It is a complex system, governed by different legislation and weighing the competences of regional and national authorities in designing and awarding qualifications. The absence of an explicit and adequately regulated national system of qualifications (even if there are regional qualifications systems) is seen as a barrier to taking forward coherent lifelong learning policies, to validation of non-formal and informal learning, making learning pathways for lifelong learning more visible, and wider recognition of skills. Responsibility for taking forward this initiative is shared between the Ministry of Labour and social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and research; the process is supported by regions and social partners. An important milestone in this work is the recently adopted Law 92/2012 on labour market reform that contains provisions on lifelong learning, approaches to a national system of certification of competences, and services for validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Despite not having a NQF in place, Italy has referenced its formal qualifications (general education, VET and higher education qualifications), which are awarded by the Ministry of Education and University, and those awarded by the regions in the framework of the state-regions agreement directly to the eight EQF levels, using the EQF level descriptors. Other qualifications awarded by the regions, licences for regulated professions and private qualifications, are not included and will be dealt with in the second stage of referencing. (Source: CEDEFOP National Qualifications Framework Developments in Europe, Anniversary Edition 2015: 50)

EQF Levels	Italian formal qualifications
8	<i>Research doctorate Academic diploma for research training Specialisation diploma Second level university master Academic specialisation diploma (II) Higher specialisation diploma or master (II)</i>
7	<i>Master degree Second level academic diploma First level university master Academic specialisation diploma (I) Higher specialisation diploma or master (I)</i>
6	<i>Bachelor degree First level academic diploma</i>

5	<i>Higher technical education diploma</i>
4	<i>Professional technician diploma Upper secondary education diploma Licei Upper secondary education diploma – technical schools Upper secondary education diploma – vocational schools Higher technical specialisation certificate</i>
3	<i>Professional operator certificate</i>
2	<i>Compulsory education certificate</i>
1	<i>Lower secondary school-leaving diploma</i>

Source: Italian Ministry of Labour and ISFOL, 2012

CO Game – Fact Box

Since the general curriculum is based on the EQF target group it has to be translated into the national languages. In the process all members have to determine the equivalent level of their NQF.

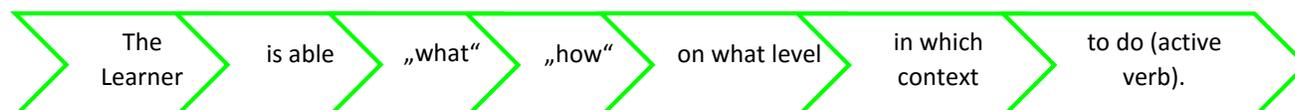
5) Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes serve to describe the output of an education or further education. For EQF this means a qualification (as e.g. a profession) is described as an outcome to define, what one skills are to be after the education. Generally, one can say there is no standardized or normed form of description of the learning outcome. However numerous recommendations exist. The following must always be observed:

- use active verbs
- context specification (independently, under guidance, taking into account, comprehensive...)
- context specification of the subject (object description, methods, tools..)
- avoidance of vague or rather unspecified verbs

Levels

Associated with the EQF as well as with the curriculum the interaction of the descriptors (knowledge/skills/competences) are of great significance. They determine the level on which the learning outcomes are described.



6) Learning Outcomes for Curricula's

During the last years, curricula are no longer described by their input. Instead of input ("Which contents should be learned?") the output is in the foreground ("What are the results after the training?"). This is the reason why curricula in the last years are always described in "Learning Outcomes".

After the units of a curriculum are named the learning outcomes have to be formulated. To formulate learning outcomes, it requires several things:

- 1) The choice, which contents (including the conditions) are needed in your unit.
- 2) Then, you have to think about the formulation of learning outcomes with the right words and descriptions.
- 3) After that, you have to divide the learning outcomes into Competences, Skills and Knowledge.
- 4) Last but not least you have to write assessment criteria's for all the learning outcomes .

Preparation

Before start working on learning outcomes, the target group should be set (in our case adolescents and young adults). Further an intensive research on the subject has to be done. Only then can be decided, which subjects will be included in the curriculum (in what intensity and accuracy).

Therefore, always the following questions have be included also in your research and selection of the content:

- What is my target group?
- Do I really start from a clear point (for all)?
- Do I go from easy to difficult?
- Do I always focus the starting point?
- Think always to the needs of the target group.

7) ECVET - European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training

With certain expectations the ECVET system is to be seen as an equivalent to the ECTS in the field of training. In the long term both systems might merge. Generally, one can say the ECVET system acts as a communication or rather translation medium between institutions, to enable the European-wide recognition of defined qualifications.

The ECVET system consists of three elements:

- 1) **Learning Outcomes** – quality description of the content of a qualification (e.g. a curriculum)
- 2) **ECVET Points** – reflection of the workload of an education/part of an education (presence sessions, duration)
- 3) **Transfer Process** – documents like: learning agreement, MoU...

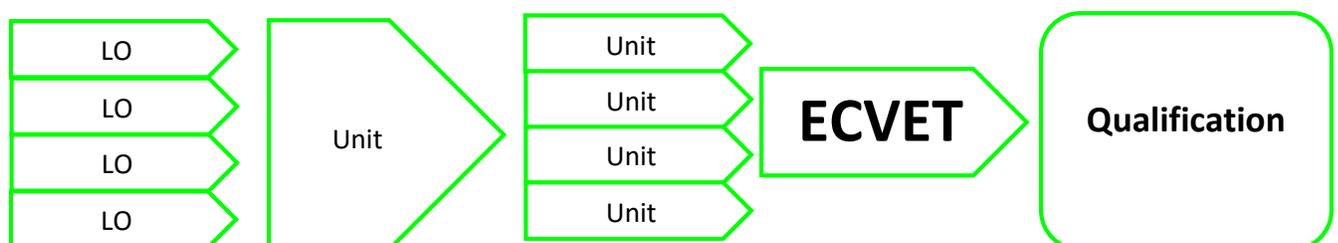
In detail

Qualified defined learning outcomes are bundled (ECVET recommendation is 4-6 units) and represent units of learning outcomes. Several units can be accumulated to a qualification (vocational qualification...).

All learning outcome units are to be weighted numerically. Question is, what temporal expenditure is connected with the education or further education. This workload is measured in hours and transferred to ECVET points. The allocation key applies to 25 – 30 working hours per ECVET point viz. an education accredited to 5 ECVET points comes with about 125 – 150 contact hours or online lessons. Per semester no more than 30 ECVET points can be fulfilled.

For the transfer process relevant documents are important to regulate communication and rules between home institution, learners and hosting institution (Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreement, Personal Transcript...)

Simplification ECVET System



Many learning outcomes make a learning unit – Many units summed in a curriculum make a qualification (measured in ECVET).

Sources:

CCFEE (2016): Cadre francophone des certifications (CFC). Online : (30.04.2016) : <http://ccfee.be/fr/europe/education-et-formation/cadre-francophone-cfc>

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Annex

Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

<i>EQF Level</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>	<i>Competence</i>
	<i>In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.</i>	<i>In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking), and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)</i>	<i>In the context of EQF, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.</i>
1	<i>Basic general knowledge</i>	<i>Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks</i>	<i>Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context</i>
2	<i>Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study</i>	<i>Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine problems using simple rules and tools</i>	<i>Work or study under supervision with some autonomy</i>
3	<i>Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study</i>	<i>A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information</i>	<i>Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems</i>
4	<i>Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study</i>	<i>A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study</i>	<i>Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities</i>
5	<i>Comprehensive,</i>	<i>A comprehensive range of</i>	<i>Exercise management</i>

	<i>specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge</i>	<i>cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems</i>	<i>and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others</i>
6	<i>Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles</i>	<i>Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</i>	<i>Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</i>
7	<i>Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</i>	<i>Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields</i>	<i>Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams</i>
8	<i>Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields</i>	<i>The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</i>	<i>Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research</i>

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>