Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

**Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.**

|  | **Knowledge** | **Skills** | **Responsibility and autonomy** |
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|  | **In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.** | **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).** | **In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility** |
| Level 1The learning outcomes relevant to Level 1 are | Basic general knowledge | Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks | Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context |
| Level 2The learning outcomes relevant to Level 2 are | Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study | 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 | Work or study under supervision with some autonomy |
| Level 3The learning outcomes relevant to Level 3 are | Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study | A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information | Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study; adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems |
| Level 4The learning outcomes relevant to Level 4 are | Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study | A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study | 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 |
| Level 5[[1]](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page#footnote1)The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are | Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge | A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems | Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others |
| Level 6[[2]](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page#footnote2)The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are | Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles | Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study | 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 |
| Level 7[[3]](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page#footnote3)The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are | 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 researchCritical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields | 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 | 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 |
| Level 8[[4]](https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page#footnote4)The learning outcomes relevant to Level 8 are | Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields | 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 | 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 |

**Compatibility with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**

The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area provides descriptors for three cycles agreed by the ministers responsible for higher education at their meeting in Bergen in May 2005 in the framework of the Bologna process. Each cycle descriptor offers a generic statement of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with qualifications that represent the end of that cycle.

1. The descriptor for the short cycle developed by the Joint Quality Initiative as part of the Bologna process, (within or linked to the first cycle), corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5.
2. The descriptor for the first cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 6.
3. The descriptor for the second cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 7.
4. The descriptor for the third cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 8.

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