

Official Statement by the BIBB Board on the ongoing development phase of the German Qualifications Framework (GQF)

The members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) support the process of the 2nd development phase of a German Qualifications Framework (GQF) spanning all educational sectors. Against the background of the experiences gained thus far from the four working groups, compliance with the following fundamental positions is essential.

- The definitional stipulations listed in the glossary are binding.
- Occupational competence is the lead description category within a learning outcomes oriented GQF spanning all educational sectors.
- The “four-pillar structure” is central to the representation of comprehensive occupational competence in the GQF. The planned structure comprises “Professional competence”, subdivided into “Knowledge” and “Skills” and “Personal competence”, subdivided into “Social competence” and “Self-competence”. Any problems which may arise in respect of the alignment of competences, particularly with regard to differentiating between social competence and self-competence, must not lead to any calling into question of the four-pillar nature of the GQF.
- Qualifications profiles are fundamentally to be aligned in accordance with the same methods and principles on the basis of standardised criteria.
- The decisive factor in aligning the qualifications to a certain level is the validity of the qualifications as determined by the descriptors and not the educational pathway via which such qualifications are acquired. This corresponds to the outcome orientation stipulated by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- With regard to the alignment of qualifications within the GQF, the principle is that all levels must be achievable via various educational and career pathways. This is the only way of improving permeability and transparency between higher education and vocational education and training and of making such permeability and transparency more visible.
- Further development of the GQF must accord due consideration to the results of surveys on issues relating to the recognition of competences acquired by non-formal and informal means.

The question as to how the qualifications profiles of the general schools are to be aligned remains unresolved. This represents a hindrance to the further processing of the results of the working groups. The members of the BIBB Board expect that the alignment of the qualifications profiles of the general schools to individual levels will form part of the work conducted by the working groups and that a consensual approach will be adopted to the drawing up of proposals.

In addition to the issues to be tackled in the working groups, further tasks remain to be processed before a draft GQF can be adopted. Questions of an organisational and legal nature associated with the introduction and implementation of GQF are of considerable significance here. The members of the BIBB Board expect that the GQF will have consequences for the development of vocational training in Germany and will therefore also affect regulatory work. For this reason, departments responsible for the economy and labour must be integrated into the further coordination processes. The implementation of the GQF must then be established in a cross-departmental manner in conjunction with the federal states and with the educational stakeholders represented in the GQF Working Group.

The members of the BIBB Board emphasise the necessity of preparing a research evaluation project to be implemented in 2010. The main focus of such a project should be an anticipatory evaluation and assessment of the implications of a GQF for the educational system, the labour market, companies, career pathways and the occupational biographies of employees. The planning of the project should be coordinated within the GQF Working Group.