

**Official Statement by the Board of the
Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB)**

**Evaluation of the Resolution adopted by the Conference of the Ministers of
Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)
with regard to the German Qualifications Framework (DQR)**

The aim of the German Qualifications Framework (DQR) is to operate within an environment where German and European educational policy are harmonised in order to foster transparency and mobility, increase permeability between the various educational areas and achieve the equivalence of general, higher and vocational education. During the development process of the DQR, a broadly based consensus was reached between the Federal Government, the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the German Rectors' Conference, the Conference of the Ministers of Economic Affairs of the Federal States, the social partners, the major trade and industry organisations and other important stakeholders in the German education and training system. The DQR Matrix is accepted by all the above participants as a suitable foundation for further development.

Within the scope of the alignment of qualifications, the Federal Government, the Conference of the Ministers of Economic Affairs, the social partners and the major trade and industry organisations have all used the DQR Matrix to adopt a substantive specialist position. The intention is that general educational qualifications and initial vocational education and training qualifications should be aligned to levels 1 to 4. Continuing training qualifications and academic qualifications should be aligned to levels 5 to 8. This alignment is in accordance with European developments.

At its Plenary Meeting held on 20 and 21 October 2011, the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted the Resolution that the upper

secondary school leaving certificate/general higher education entrance qualification and the subject-specific higher education entrance qualification should be aligned to Level 5 of the DQR. This also reflects a clear intention that vocational education and training should be largely valued at a lower level than the general higher education entrance qualification and represents a conscious move away from the position of the other stakeholders involved in the development process on the part of the KMK.

The alignment proposal made by the KMK is absolutely unacceptable. It is not justified in terms of content and not clearly substantiated. The upper secondary school leaving certificate does not correspond to the criteria described at Level 5 of the DQR Matrix. Pupils who have completed the upper secondary school leaving certificate do not exhibit the employability skills as defined at Level 5 of the German Qualifications Framework or of the European Qualifications Framework (they do not, for example, possess the skills and knowledge required to lead a team). The upper secondary school leaving certificate often simply acts as the basis for the commencement of company-based vocational education and training or of a course of higher education study. The proposal of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs also fails to take the associated consequences for the German qualifications and employment system into account. Should their Resolution be retained in unaltered form, extremely negative consequences will occur for the securing of young skilled workers across all areas and sectors of trade and industry. Dual vocational education and training will suffer a loss of attractiveness. The danger is that fewer and fewer young people in possession of a university entrance qualification will opt for vocational education and training if it is implied to them that their school leaving qualification is superior to a vocational qualification. This is an alarming notion when seen against the background of demographic change and the shortage of skilled workers which is already a reality. Germany will need to continue to rely on good skilled workers with vocational qualifications in future if it is to retain its status as an economic location.

The position adopted by the KMK that the upper secondary school leaving certificate/general higher education entrance qualification and the subject-specific

higher education entrance qualification are qualitatively superior to the bulk of training occupations also calls endeavours to promote the equivalence of educational areas within the educational system into question and thwarts the consensus thus far achieved within the scope of the development of the DQR with regard to equivalence and permeability between academic and vocational education. This affects, for example, the equivalent alignment of Bachelor degrees and master craftsman qualifications to level 6 and of Masters degrees and Strategic Professional qualifications to Level 7.

The members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training call for all qualifications to be aligned to the DQR in accordance with the descriptions of the reference levels and irrespective of any access entitlements. Companies, employees, teachers and learners will not accept a higher alignment of the upper secondary school leaving certificate/general higher education entrance qualification and the subject-specific higher education entrance qualification to Level 5 of the DQR. The members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training call upon the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal States not to jeopardise the previous achievements of the DQR, particularly with regard to the transition from the educational system to the employment system. They appeal to the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs to reconsider and correct their decision in the light of their overall educational policy responsibility. The common interest of all those in a position of responsibility needs to be to use the DQR as a coherent alignment system which serves the further development of the educational system as a whole as well as providing guidance for all companies, learners and employees. The decision to align the upper secondary school leaving certificate/general higher education entrance qualification, the subject-specific higher education entrance qualification and the University of Applied Sciences entrance qualification to different levels also needs to be reconsidered.

The members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training expressly support the position adopted by the Federal Government and the Conference of the Ministers of Economic Affairs in stating that the upper secondary school leaving certificate should be aligned to Level 4 in the DQR, and

request these two parties to continue to represent this position robustly. During the further development of the DQR, they expect that the KMK will once again accord proper consideration to the route of consensual agreement previously pursued by all stakeholders.