

Resolution adopted by the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) on 18 December 2008 on organising a trial phase for the German Qualifications Framework (GQF)

The members of the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) support and organise the process for developing a German Qualifications Framework (GQF) that spans all education sectors. They expect this to generate important impetus with regard to the permeability of the education system and the parity between general and vocational education. The BIBB Board supports conducting a trial phase for the continued development work in 2009 for the purpose of testing how suitable the first draft GQF submitted by the GQF Working Group is for use by the education policy field and practitioners in the education sector and, if necessary, to correct objectives.

The one-year trial phase should give insight into whether the descriptors used in the working draft of the GQF enable the desired classification of skills and qualifications and whether the GQF's compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) has been ensured. The GQF Working Group should take the findings from the trial phase into consideration as an additional source for finishing the work on the GQF.

Based on this, the following priorities should be set for the work to be done during the trial phase:

1. When formulating the GQF, attention should be paid to ensuring that fundamentally all of the GQF skill levels can be achieved via school-based, in-company, university and vocational education pathways and career paths and that forms of informal learning can also be taken into sufficient account.
2. The descriptors should be examined with regard to their function of enabling the scaling of qualifications and thus ensuring that qualifications can be appropriately assigned to their respective level.
3. Proposals for optimising the set of descriptors should be developed and conclusions should be drafted for the handling of informally acquired skills in the GQF.
4. The compatibility between the classifications used in the draft GQF and the levels in the EQF should be examined.
5. Proposals should be developed for anchoring the GQF as a frame of reference in the German education system.

The members of the BIBB Board call upon the German government to take these points into account in its upcoming resolution. In light of the particular importance that the GQF has for the German education and employment systems, the members of the BIBB Board recommend that the German government structures the implementation of the GQF to be cross-departmental.

The work done during the trial phase should also ensure that

- fundamentally all of the GQF skill levels can be achieved via the different education pathways and career paths,

- it is basically not possible to reserve certain levels for certain qualifications,
- the same methods and procedures for assigning skills and qualifications to the various levels within the GQF apply to all qualifications.

A project team comprised of experts from the research field, day-to-day vocational training practice and specific domains should organise the trial phase as part of a government-funded project.

The GQF Working Group should coordinate which experts are to participate. In the process, it should be ensured that representatives from the BIBB Board's GQF / ECVET Working Group directly participate in the planning and implementation of the trial phase.

The GQF Working Group should be informed about the planning for the project prior to the start of the actual trial phase. Corrections that become necessary should be coordinated with the Working Group. The GQF Working Group should assess the project plan on a consensual basis.

The GQF Working Group should be informed about the project's progress at least twice during the trial phase. The dates for the submission of a project progress report to the GQF Working Group should be set when planning the project.

The GQF Working Group should coordinate a concrete implementation procedure for the actual implementation of the GQF. The focus here should be on developing a guide as a recommendation for the implementation and thus the use of the GQF in day-to-day practice and education policy on the labour market and in human resources development.

Parallel to the trial phase, an accompanying research project should be organised and subsequently conducted starting in 2010. This project should revolve around evaluating and assessing the impact the GQF has on the education system, labour market, enterprises and the occupational paths and occupational biographies of workers. The planning for the project should be coordinated by the GQF Working Group.