



EMPOWERING  
EHEA Paris 2018  
EUROPE'S YOUTH

Conférence ministérielle européenne  
pour l'enseignement supérieur



### Appendix III: Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (revised 2018)

## THE FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

The Paris Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education 24-25 May 2018 adopted the revised overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, implementing the commitment in the Yerevan Communiqué. The revised overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA comprises the short cycle, the first cycle, the second cycle and the third cycle generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the short cycle, first and second cycles. Ministers committed themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA. While recognising that each country decides whether and how to incorporate short cycle qualifications within its own national framework, the Paris Communiqué underlined the role ECTS-based short cycle qualifications play in preparing students for employment and further studies as well as in improving social cohesion.

| Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | Learning outcomes   | ECTS credits                           |
| Short cycle qualifications  | <p>Qualifications that signify completion of the higher education <b>short cycle</b> are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon general secondary education and is typically at a level supported by advanced textbooks; such knowledge provides an underpinning for a field of work or vocation, personal development, and further studies to complete the first cycle;</li> <li>- can apply their knowledge and understanding in occupational contexts;</li> <li>- have the ability to identify and use data to formulate responses to well-defined concrete and abstract problems;</li> <li>- can communicate about their understanding, skills and activities, with peers, supervisors and clients;</li> <li>- have the learning skills to undertake further studies with some autonomy.</li> </ul> | Typically include 90-120 ECTS credits  |
| First cycle qualification   | <p>Qualifications that signify completion of <b>the first cycle</b> are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study;</li> <li>• can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and have competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;</li> </ul>  | Typically include 180-240 ECTS credits |

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|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgments that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;</li> <li>• can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;</li> <li>• have developed those learning skills that are necessary for them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.</li> </ul>   |   |
| Second cycle qualification | <p>Qualifications that signify completion of <b>the second cycle</b> are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the first cycle, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;</li> <li>• can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;</li> <li>• have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgments with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments;</li> <li>• can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;</li> <li>• have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.</li> </ul> | Typically include 90-120 ECTS credits, with a minimum of 60 credits at the level of the 2nd cycle |
| Third cycle qualification  | <p>Qualifications that signify completion of <b>the third cycle</b> are awarded to students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;</li> <li>• have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;</li> <li>• have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which merits national or international refereed publication;</li> <li>• are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;</li> <li>• can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise;</li> <li>• can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.</li> </ul>   | Not specified   |