

**RECOMMENDATION ON THE  
SHARED COMPETENCES OF  
UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED  
SCIENCES AND THEIR  
APPLICATION**

2022



# RECOMMENDATION ON THE SHARED COMPETENCES OF UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND THEIR APPLICATION

Members of the working group

**Pekka Auvinen**

**Eveliina Asikainen**

**Anu Hakonen**

**Päivi Marjanen**

**Pekka Risku**

**Saija Silvennoinen**

January 2022

The Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene ry



## Contents

Introduction .....	4
Recommendation on competences shared by university of applied sciences degrees .....	5
European Qualifications Framework .....	9
Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules .....	10
Appendices .....	11

## Introduction

In Finnish universities of applied sciences, the competences of degrees have been defined as programme-specific competences and shared competences. Competences refer to extensive competence modules, which are combinations of individual knowledge, skills and attitudes. Programme-specific competences form the basis of a student's professional expertise. Shared competences are common competence areas for different programmes and degrees, and they create the foundation for operating in a workplace, cooperation and the development of expertise.

The aim of this recommendation on applying the shared competences of universities of applied sciences degrees is to promote a common view on how the descriptors presented in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are applied in curriculum work, the preparation of competence profiles and the assessment of competence.

The recommendation is based on the recommendation on competences shared by degrees issued by Arene ry in 2010 ([the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences 2010](#), in Finnish). In spring 2021, the decision to update the over-10-year-old recommendation was made, and a working group consisting of experts from different universities of applied sciences was appointed. In the update, the working group utilised applications of the national recommendation by different universities of applied sciences, a survey of the needs for changes in the 2010 recommendation for directors responsible for the education of universities of applied sciences and feedback on qualitative employment collected in 2019 and 2020 from graduates of universities of applied sciences that had graduated five years earlier. Feedback on the draft recommendation was requested from directors responsible for education at universities of applied sciences, the Arene Education Committee and field-specific groups and the University of Applied Sciences Students in Finland SAMOK ry. The recommendation was modified based on the feedback.

# Recommendation on competences shared by university of applied sciences degrees

## Recommendation on the shared competences of UAS Bachelor's degrees Graduating Bachelor's degree student...

### LEARNING TO LEARN

recognises the strengths and development areas of their competence and learning methods, and they utilise the opportunities communities and digitalisation provide in their learning.

### OPERATING IN A WORKPLACE

has versatile working life skills and is able to operate in a work community of their field.

### ETHICS

adheres to the ethical principles and values of their field of profession, taking the principles of equality and non-discrimination into account.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

is familiar with the principles of sustainable development, promotes their implementation and acts responsibly as a professional and a member of society.

### INTERNATIONALITY AND MULTICULTURALISM

is able to operate in a multicultural and international operating environment and network.

### PROACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

seeks solutions that anticipate the future of their own field, applying its existing knowledge and research and development methods.

## Recommendation on the shared competences of UAS Master's degrees Graduating Master's degree student...

### LEARNING TO LEARN

promotes their own and their community's continuous learning and competence development, drawing on knowledge from different fields and the opportunities of digitalisation.

### OPERATING IN A WORKPLACE

is able to develop and manage their work community and reforms working life.

### ETHICS

assesses and promotes the realisation of ethical principles and values of their field of profession in a work community, taking the principles equality and non-discrimination into account.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

develops and manages sustainable and responsible operating methods in their work and supports sustainable change in their work community and society.

### INTERNATIONALITY AND MULTICULTURALISM

is able to develop and manage multicultural and international operating environments and networks.

### PROACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

is able to manage the development of new solutions that anticipate the future and produces new information using different research and development methods.

	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Master's degree</b>
<b>Learning to learn</b>	<p><i>The graduating student recognises the strengths and development areas of their competence and learning methods, and they utilise the opportunities communities and digitalisation provide in their learning.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assesses and develops their competence and learning methods in different learning environments.</li> <li>- Is able to acquire, critically assess and appropriately apply the national and international knowledge base and practices of their field.</li> <li>- Also takes responsibility for group learning and sharing what has been learned.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student promotes their own and their community's continuous learning and competence development, drawing on knowledge from different fields and the opportunities of digitalisation.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to assess and develop their expertise diversely and in a goal-oriented manner at different stages of their career and life.</li> <li>- Is able to acquire, critically assess and produce information while taking into account the perspectives of different fields.</li> <li>- Is able to develop and manage goal-oriented, continuous learning in their community.</li> </ul>
<b>Operating in a workplace</b>	<p><i>The graduating student has versatile working life skills and is able to operate in work communities of their field.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to work constructively in a work community and promotes their own and their work community's well-being.</li> <li>- Is able to act professionally in communication and interaction situations at a workplace.</li> <li>- Utilises the opportunities offered by technology and digitalisation in their work.</li> <li>- Understands the complexity of changing working life and their own resilience in changing working life situations.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student is able to develop and manage their work community and reforms working life.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to develop and manage multi-disciplinary teams and work communities.</li> <li>- Is able to develop the communication and interaction culture of work communities.</li> <li>- Is able to develop and manage the comprehensive well-being of a work community.</li> <li>- Utilises the opportunities of technology and digitalisation in development and management.</li> <li>- Promotes the resilience of a work community.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has capabilities for an entrepreneurial approach.</li> </ul>	
<b>Ethics</b>	<p><i>The graduating student adheres to the ethical principles and values of their field of profession, taking the principles of equality and non-discrimination into account.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to take responsibility for their own actions and their consequences and reflects on them in accordance with the ethical principles and values of their field.</li> <li>- Takes others into account and promotes equality and non-discrimination.</li> <li>- Take into account the realisation of diversity and accessibility in their actions.</li> <li>- Understands the principles of responsible conduct of research and adheres to them.</li> <li>- Is able to influence society based on ethical values.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student assesses and promotes the realisation of ethical principles and values of their field of profession, taking equality and non-discrimination into account.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to promote ethically sustainable activities and the realisation of ethical reflection in their different operating environments.</li> <li>- Promotes the realisation of the ethical principles and values of their field.</li> <li>- Makes decisions taking individual, communal and societal perspectives into account.</li> <li>- Promotes the realisation of diversity and accessibility.</li> <li>- Implements the principles of responsible conduct of research and promotes their application in their work community.</li> <li>- Is able to manage societally influential activities based on ethical values.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable development</b>	<p><i>The graduating student is familiar with the principles of sustainable development, promotes their implementation and acts responsibly as a professional and a member of society.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to use information related to their field in finding, implementing and establishing sustainable solutions and operating models.</li> <li>- Understands sustainability challenges, their interdependencies and the various aspects of issues and problems.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student develops and manages sustainable and responsible operating methods in their work and promotes sustainable change in their work community and society.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to apply the knowledge and future visions of sustainable development comprehensively as a basis for sustainable solutions.</li> <li>- Is able to analyse and assess systemic dependencies of complex multidisciplinary problems and the different dimensions of solutions</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to manage the search, implementation and establishment of sustainable solutions and operating models in their work community.</li> </ul>
<b>International-ity and multiculturalism</b>	<p><i>The graduating student is able to operate in multicultural and international operating environments and networks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is familiar with the impacts of their cultural background on their activities and is able to develop operating methods that take multiculturalism into account in their work community.</li> <li>- Is able to monitor and utilise the international development of their field in their work.</li> <li>- Is able to communicate internationally in their work tasks.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student is able to develop and manage multicultural and international operating environments and networks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is able to develop operating methods that take multiculturalism into account in their work community.</li> <li>- Is able to anticipate the impacts and opportunities of global development and phenomena.</li> <li>- Is able to interact, communicate and develop activities internationally in their own field.</li> </ul>
<b>Proactive development</b>	<p><i>The graduating student is able to develop solutions that anticipate the future of their own field, applying existing knowledge and research and development methods.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solves problem situations creatively and reforms operating methods together with others.</li> <li>- Is able to work in projects in cooperation with actors of different fields.</li> <li>- Is able to apply existing knowledge in the field in development and utilises research and development methods.</li> <li>- Is able to seek customer-oriented, sustainable and economically viable solutions, anticipating the future of their field.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The graduating student is able to manage the development of new solutions that anticipate the future and produces new information using different research and development methods.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produces new information and reforms operating methods, combining competence in different fields.</li> <li>- Is able to implement research, development and innovation projects and apply different research and development methods.</li> <li>- Is able to develop new customer-oriented, sustainable and economically viable solutions, anticipating the future.</li> <li>- Is able to analyse the current situation and anticipate the future of their field and changes in the operating environment.</li> </ul>



# European Qualifications Framework

## [European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#)

The objective of the Bologna process has been to establish the European Higher Education Area. The aim of the unified higher education area has been to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education compared to other continents. The objective is to enable the consistency of education and curricula of higher education institutions in the member states so that the comparability of competence levels can be facilitated and the mobility of students and workers from one country to another can be made more flexible. In addition, the recognition of students' competence becomes clearer, and they do not need to repeat what they have learned before when their place of study changes.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common European reference system based on learning outcomes and competence that links together national qualifications systems and qualifications frameworks in different countries. The framework covers. The EQF's eight (8) levels cover all types and levels of European qualifications from basic to advanced. The framework also includes upper secondary and postgraduate degrees. Each level should in principle be achievable through different educational and career choices.

In the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), reference levels are based on learning outcomes described as knowledge, skills and competences. Each of the eight levels is defined by describing the learning outcomes that are essentially related to qualifications at that level in any qualifications system (Appendix 1). The EQF focuses on what a graduate of a specific qualification knows, understands and is able to do at the end of their learning process. According to the recommendation, shifting the focus to learning outcomes makes it possible to take into account the differences in European education systems, as comparisons solely based on inputs (e.g. study duration) are difficult.

The EQF can help individuals with plenty of experience in working life or other activities by facilitating the recognition of non-formal and formal learning. Setting the focus on learning outcomes helps in assessing whether the acquired learning outcomes correspond to official qualifications in terms of content and significance.

The EQF was established in 2008 and revised in 2017. In addition to the EU countries, the EQF includes Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway from the European Economic Area; EU candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; and potential EU candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Switzerland.

The EQF is compatible with the framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and its cycle descriptors. This framework was agreed upon at the meeting of ministers responsible for education in connection with the intergovernmental Bologna process in 2005.

[The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.](#)

# Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules

## [Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules \(FiNQF\)](#)

The Finnish qualifications framework describes the degrees, syllabi and other extensive competence modules included in our national education system. The framework covers general education, vocational training and higher education, among other things.

Degrees, syllabi and other extensive competence modules have been allocated on eight levels based on the competence required by them. The competence acquired at each level is defined in the Government Decree, and the descriptors correspond to the requirement levels of the European Qualifications Framework. University of applied sciences Bachelor's degrees are allocated on level 6 and Master's degrees on level 7 (Appendix 1).

The purpose of the national framework is to:

- Increase national and international transparency and comparability of qualifications.
- Improve the functionality and clarity of the qualifications system.
- Facilitate mobility in the education system.
- Unify and increase the recognition of prior competence.
- Concretise the principle of lifelong learning and emphasise the perspective that highlights learning orientation and learning outcomes in education.

Different dimensions of competence may be emphasised in qualifications or competence modules on the same level. Education providers state on which level the degree, syllabus or other competence module is allocated in the national and European qualifications framework in the qualification certificate, diploma or qualification certificate's supplement intended for international use given to a student.

The Finnish qualifications framework is based on the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council to establish the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in order to promote lifelong learning. The Finnish qualifications framework is also in line with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) qualifications framework.

Provisions on the Finnish National Framework for Qualifications and Other Competence Modules are laid down in the Act (93/2017) and the Government Decree (120/2017).

## Appendix 1

Finnish National Qualifications Framework

European Qualifications Framework

The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

### DESCRIPTORS

[https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/tutkintojen\\_viitekehysten\\_osaamis-tasokuvaukset\\_fi\\_sv\\_en.pdf](https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/tutkintojen_viitekehysten_osaamis-tasokuvaukset_fi_sv_en.pdf)

### LEVEL 6

#### **Bachelor's degrees (universities of applied sciences) and Bachelor's degrees (universities)**

Finnish National Qualifications Framework	European Qualifications Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has a good command of comprehensive and advanced knowledge of his/her field, involving a critical understanding and appraisal of theories, key concepts, methods and principles.</li> <li>- Understands the extent and boundaries of professional functions and/or disciplines.</li> <li>- Has advanced cognitive and practical skills, demonstrating mastery of the issues and the ability to apply knowledge and find creative solutions and applications required in a specialised professional, scientific or artistic field to solve complex or unpredictable problems.</li> <li>- Works independently in expert tasks of the field and in international co-operation or as an entrepreneur.</li> <li>- Manages complex professional activities or projects. Can make decisions in unpredictable operating environments.</li> <li>- In addition to evaluating and developing his/her own competence, he/she takes responsibility for the development of individuals and groups. Has the ability for lifelong learning.</li> <li>- Considers communal and ethical aspects when dealing with different people in learning and working communities and other groups and networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles</li> <li>- Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study</li> <li>- Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts</li> <li>- Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="813 1444 1452 1556">The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area</p> <p data-bbox="813 1556 1452 1646">Qualifications that signify completion of the first cycle 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> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicates to a good standard verbally and in writing in his/her mother tongue both to audiences in the field and outside it.</li> <li>- Communicates and interacts in the second national language and is capable of international communication and interaction in his/her field in at least one foreign language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <li>- have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements 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>
--	---

**LEVEL 7**

**Master's degrees (universities of applied sciences) and Master's degrees (universities)**

Finnish National Qualifications Framework	European Qualifications Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understands comprehensive and highly specialised concepts, methods and knowledge corresponding to the specialised competence in his/her field, which are used as the basis for independent thinking and/or research.</li> <li>- Understands issues that are at the interface between his/her field and different fields and evaluates them and new knowledge critically.</li> <li>- Solves demanding problems, also creatively, in research and/or innovation, which develop new knowledge and procedures and applies and combines knowledge from various fields.</li> <li>- Works independently in demanding expert tasks of the field and in international co-operation or as an entrepreneur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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 research</li> <li>- Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields</li> <li>- 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</li> <li>- Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches</li> <li>- Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Manages and develops complex, unpredictable and new strategic approaches.</li> <li>- Manages things and/or people.</li> <li>- Evaluates the activities of individuals and groups. Accumulates knowledge and practices in his/her field and/or takes responsibility for the development of others.</li> <li>- Has the ability for lifelong learning.</li> <li>- Considers communal and ethical aspects when dealing with different people in learning and working communities and other groups and networks.</li> <li>- Communicates to a good standard verbally and in writing in his/her mother tongue both to audiences in the field and outside it.</li> <li>- Communicates and interacts in the second national language and is capable of demanding international communication and interaction in his/her field in at least one foreign language.</li> </ul>	<p>reviewing the strategic performance of teams</p>
	<p>The framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area</p>
	<p>Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle 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 judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements</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>

**RECOMMENDATION ON THE SHARED  
COMPETENCES OF UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED  
SCIENCES AND THEIR APPLICATION**

2022

