



Guidelines for assessing substantial differences

***Recognition of qualifications and
substantial differences***

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Categories of substantial differences

- ⊕ Elements of qualifications
- ⊕ Elements of the national HE system
- ⊕ How the qualification was obtained

Guidelines/1

Key question:

Does the qualification that the applicant has obtained enable him to follow a given study programme or take up a given employment?

- Accept differences that are not substantial
- Consider whether a **single criterion** in the recognition decision can constitute a substantial difference which is sufficient to justify withholding full recognition
- Look at **learning outcomes**: output based VS input based
- Consider if criteria are substantial in the light of recognition **purpose**



Guidelines/2

- The **mode of delivery** should not be regarded as a **substantial** difference if the programme is officially recognised
- Look more at **formal rights** of a qualification instead at the duration of the programme
- If a substantial difference has been proved, seek to establish whether **alternative**, partial and/or conditional recognition may be granted.

Guidelines/3

- The ENIC and NARIC Networks promote **flexible** attitudes
- ENIC-NARIC recommends to **move away from rigid and legalistic interpretations**
- Encourage the **flexibility and willingness to recognize qualifications** unless.... We can the proof the existence of a substantial difference that could be a major obstacle for successfully pursuing the desired activity



High level – substantial:

- Belonging to different levels
- The course/institution is not accredited in the system of reference
- The course/institution is not official
- Different nature and scope (academic, professional, research)
- Absence of academic rights/it does not give access to similar courses
- In the national system, there is no corresponding/analogue qualifications

Medium level – substantial according to the aim of recognition:

- Distinctive elements of the qualification (i.e. the thesis)
- Duration/workload: it is substantial only in cases where nostrification is needed
- Disciplinary field and contents (two elements that have to be taken in consideration according to the scope)

Low level – not substantial:

- Absence of an exam
- Different names of the courses

Levels of substantial differences





Thank you

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