

UK Guidance for Awarding Organisations wishing to issue the Certificate Supplement

Introduction

The Certificate Supplement is a document that is issued alongside a vocational qualification certificate. It provides information, and aids recognition, of the qualification within, and in particular outside, the country in which it is issued.

The Certificate Supplement makes qualifications more readily understood by employers and education institutions and will help an Awarding Organisation's qualifications be more widely recognised. The Certificate Supplement is already mandatory in many European countries and is widely issued in others¹. In an environment where mobility around Europe is becoming more prevalent, it is important that qualifications become more portable, and recognition is facilitated.

The Certificate Supplement document provides information on a qualification's:

- Content,
- The level of the qualification on the national qualification framework and potentially the European Qualification Framework (EQF),
- Potential occupations available to successful students,
- Information about the issuing Awarding Organisation,
- Accreditation information,
- Grading,
- Potential further education and training opportunities,
- Contextual information on the qualification and the national qualification framework.

In many European countries Certificate Supplements are mandated by law and issued from a central source. In the UK this is not the case, with Awarding Organisations retaining control over the issuance, and content of their Certificate Supplements.

Unlike the Diploma Supplement, which is a supplement for higher education qualifications that is personal to the student, the Certificate Supplement is issued *per qualification*. This has the benefit of reducing the administrative burden on Awarding Organisations as they do not need to incorporate additional IT solutions into their student record systems. It means that the documents can be made available from an online database for download when required.

¹The issuance of the Certificate Supplement is mandatory for all vocational qualifications in Romania, Denmark, Finland and Poland and for certain qualifications in Luxembourg and Slovakia. It is also optional, but widely issued, in Greece, Hungary, France, Spain and Estonia.

Background to these guidelines

These guidelines were written by the UK National Europass Centre (UK NEC) in consultation with the Federation of Awarding Bodies.

These guidelines may be updated from time to time, so please ensure that you check the [UK NEC website](#)² for the most up to date version. The version number and publication date is located at the foot of each page of the document.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the issuance and content of the Certificate Supplement in order to maintain consistency in the end product. Because the documents are produced independently by each Awarding Organisation, in order to maximise the effectiveness of the document, it is important to maintain consistency in the content and format of the document.

Existing Guidelines

There are already some guidelines governing the structure of the Certificate Supplement document, including a national template. These guidelines are found in the following documents:

1. [Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies \(Europass\)](#)³.

2. The national Europass Certificate Supplement Template

This is reproduced in the Appendix to this document. Electronic copies are available on request to the [UK National Europass Centre](#)⁴.

3. [The European Commission's Guidelines for filling in the Europass Certificate Supplement, 2003](#)⁵.

There are also guidelines in place for the translation of Certificate Supplements into other languages, these are:

4. [The European Commission's Guidelines for translating the Europass Certificate Supplement, 2003](#)⁶.

² www.uknec.org.uk

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:390:0006:0020:EN:PDF>

⁴ Email info@uknec.org.uk

⁵ http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1392/type.FileContent.file/CSGuidelines_en_GB.pdf

1. National Template

- 1.1 In order to maintain consistency on both a national and European level, Awarding Organisations should use the standard template that is available on request from the UK National Europass Centre (info@uknec.org.uk) and reproduced in the Appendix.
- 1.2 The template should have the Europass logo in the top left-hand corner of the first page, and the electronic icon with the national flag and text in the top right hand corner of the first page.
- 1.3 Awarding Organisations may also wish to insert their own logo as appropriate. The position and size is at the discretion of the Awarding Organisation.
- 1.4 The explanatory note should be included as a footnote at the bottom of the first page of the document.

2. The Recording of Information in the Sections of the Certificate Supplement

2.1 Box 1: Title of the Certificate

1. Title of the certificate ^(en)
⁽¹⁾ In the original language

- 2.1.1 The top section of this box should remain unchanged, save that the ISO 639-1 code for the language being used (which should correspond to the language of instruction and/or assessment) should be inserted into the brackets in the top box of this section. The codes for the main UK Languages are as follows:

Language	Code
Cornish	kw
English	en
Irish	ga
Scottish Gaelic	gd
Welsh	cy

⁶http://europassd.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1393/type.FileContent.file/CSGuidelinesTrans_en_US.PDF

A list of other relevant language codes can be found by going to <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm>.

If the Certificate Supplement is issued in a language other than English, it is recommended that the document also be made available in English and/or another major European language.

- 2.1.2 The middle cell should contain the title of the qualification in the original language. It should be identical to the title written on the final qualification certificate.
- 2.1.3 The bottom section of this box should remain unchanged.

2.2 Box 2: Translated Title of the Certificate

2. Translated title of the certificate ^(de)
⁽¹⁾ If applicable. This translation has no legal status.

- 2.2.1 This section should only be completed if the document is being produced as a translation into a language other than the original language (being the language of instruction and/or assessment).
- 2.2.2 Where 2.2.1 applies, the top section of this box should remain unchanged, save that the ISO 639-1 code for the language of *translation* should be inserted into the brackets in the top box of this section. A list of the relevant language codes can be found by going to <http://publications.europa.eu/code/pdf/370000en.htm>.
- 2.2.3 Where 2.2.1 applies, the translated title of the qualification should be inserted. In translating the qualification title, reference should be made to the [Guidelines for Translating the Europass Certificate Supplement](#)⁷
- 2.2.4 The bottom section of this box should remain unchanged.

⁷http://europassd.cedefop.europa.eu/img/dynamic/c1393/type.FileContent.file/CSGuidelinesTrans_en_US.PDF

2.3 Box 3: Profile of Skills and Competencies

3. Profile of skills and competences
Core Units:
Optional Units:

The profile of skills and competencies section will contain information on the content of the qualification. For many qualifications, particularly where the majority of the content of the qualification is prescribed, this section will be easy to complete.

Problems may arise where there are large numbers of optional units available for a course as this will mean that, if all the learning outcomes are listed for all of the possible combinations of units, the document may become excessively lengthy.

Whilst there is no limit to the length of the Certificate Supplement, if it is overly long, and contains superfluous information, then it will be of limited use to the end users and might discourage people from using it. Similarly a document that does not contain enough information will not be useful either.

Balancing these issues will, to some extent need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Awarding Organisation during drafting, but the following guidelines and recommendations are suggested:

- 2.3.1 The section should be filled in using learning outcomes.
- 2.3.2 For information on drafting learning outcomes, Awarding Organisations should refer to the appropriate national qualification and credit framework guidelines provided by the respective regulators.
- 2.3.3 Where a qualification contains a number of units which in turn comprises numerous learning outcomes, the units should be specified, and their learning outcomes listed.
- 2.3.4 Awarding Organisations should indicate which units / learning outcomes are mandatory, and which are optional. The titles “core units” and “optional units” can be deleted or replaced as appropriate.
- 2.3.5 Where credits are attributable to units, the number of credits should be indicated.

- 2.3.6 Where the number of units and learning outcomes are so numerous that listing them makes the document unwieldy, the UK National Europass Centre recommends that the box list:
- 2.3.6.1 all the core (mandatory) units and their learning outcomes.
 - 2.3.6.2 the unit headings for all the remaining optional units, and a link to an external source (either the Awarding Organisation’s website or the Ofqual register / Scottish Qualifications Authority’s Accredited Qualification Unit search) for the learning outcomes for those units.
 - 2.3.6.3 Contains a statement as follows “For the list of units actually attained by the holder of the qualification please refer to the original certificate / certificate of unit credit (or other such document) which was issued on successful completion of the qualification.

2.4 Range of Occupations Accessible to the Holder of the Certificate

4. Range of occupations accessible to the holder of the certificate ⁽¹⁾
(1) If applicable

- 2.4.1 The top and bottom sections of this box should remain unchanged.
- 2.4.2 The middle section should provide information on the range of possible occupations accessible to the holder.
- 2.4.3 Where the list is non-exhaustive, an additional statement should be inserted to indicate this, such as “or any other occupation within the XXXX sector”.
- 2.4.4 Where the qualification is a requirement for access to a regulated profession, a statement should be inserted to indicate this, such as “This qualification is legally required by national authorities for access to the regulated profession of XXXX”⁸.

⁸A “regulated profession” is one in which access to the profession/occupation is restricted by law to the holders of specific national qualifications. For example, a gas fitter in the UK must have either a Scottish/National Vocational Qualification (S/NVQ) in Gas Installation and Maintenance at level 2 or 3, or have followed the Nationally Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS) route.

(<https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk/Certification.aspx>) Therefore, a holder of an NVQ Level 3 in Gas Installation and Maintenance could be said to be able to access the “regulated profession” of gas fitter in the UK.

- 2.4.5 Where the qualification is of such a general nature that a list of possible occupations would be misleading, then a more general statement may be added, such as “Candidates will be able to utilise their skills in a variety of roles and industries”.

2.5 Official basis of the certificate

5. Official basis of the certificate

- 2.5.1 The top section of this box should remain unchanged.

Name and status of the body awarding the certificate

Address:

Telephone:

Facsimile:

Website:

E-mail:

(_____ is a recognised Awarding Organisation in the United Kingdom.)

- 2.5.2 As a minimum requirement Awarding Organisations should insert their name and address.
- 2.5.3 It is advised that Awarding Organisations should also insert other contact details such as telephone and fax numbers (including international codes), and website and email addresses.

Professions in which specific qualifications are “industry” standards, but are not required by law, are not deemed to be “regulated”. It would be inappropriate to state that the qualification gives access to a regulated profession in these cases, as this will potentially cause confusion and other authorities might believe a profession is subject to legal regulation when it is not (for example, while there are industry-standard qualifications for construction, construction occupations are not regulated by law in that there is no legal requirement for particular qualifications to be held before access to the occupation is permitted).

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- 2.5.4 It is further recommended that Awarding Organisations insert information on accreditation such as:
 - 2.5.4.1 XXXX is a regulated Awarding Organisation in the United Kingdom; or
 - 2.5.4.2 XXXX is accredited as an Awarding Organisation by XXXX to offer qualifications.
 - 2.5.4.3 where applicable, the legal basis of the qualification and reference to the regulator (see 2.6 below).
- 2.5.5 Awarding Organisations may also wish to provide other information, such as:
 - 2.5.5.1 Status (Government department / charity / limited company)
 - 2.5.5.2 Date of establishment
 - 2.5.5.3 Affiliations to other organisations
 - 2.5.5.4 Other relevant information about the Awarding Organisation that might be relevant to the holder of the certificate or end user.

2.6 Name and Status of the National/Regional Authority Providing Accreditation/Recognition of the Certificate

Name and status of the national/regional authority providing accreditation/recognition of the certificate

Name:
Address:

Telephone:
Facsimile:
Website:
E-mail:

- 2.6.1 The Awarding Organisation should insert the name and contact details of the appropriate regulator (including country codes for telephone and fax numbers).

2.7 Level of the Certificate

Level of the certificate (national or international)

- 2.7.1 Awarding Organisations should insert information on the national and (ideally) European (EQF) qualification frameworks in accordance with section 3 below.

2.8 Grading Scale / Pass requirements

Grading scale / Pass requirements

- 2.8.1 Where a grading scale exists this should be indicated together with the requirements (e.g. basic details of the grade boundaries) for attaining each level;
- 2.8.2 Where no grading scale exists, Awarding Organisations should indicate that qualifications are awarded on a Pass / Fail basis and the minimum requirements for a Pass;
- 2.8.3 Where the qualification requires the completion of a certain number of units, or the acquisition of a certain number of credit points, this should be indicated. If possible the specific number of credits required should be specified;
- 2.8.4 Information should also be provided, where applicable, on how units are assessed (practical assessment / written or oral examination / coursework / portfolio evidence / peer observation etc. or a combination).

2.9 Access to next level of education or training

Access to next level of education/training

- 2.9.1 Awarding Organisations should indicate whether successful completion of the qualification:
- 2.9.1.1 Allows *automatic* access to higher qualifications, and if so specify which qualification.
 - 2.9.1.2 Can allow access to higher qualifications *depending on specific factors*, and if so specify the qualification and the factors.
 - 2.9.1.3 Can allow access to higher qualifications *at the discretion of qualification providers*, and if so what qualifications.
 - 2.9.1.4 Provides a direct route into a profession or employment.
 - 2.9.1.5 Provides any professional rights and / or provides access into a regulated profession.

2.10 International Agreements

International agreements

- 2.10.1 Indicate any international agreements that might exist (if any), for example:
- 2.10.1.1 Regarding the recognition of the qualification outside of the UK.
 - 2.10.1.2 Regarding recognised international professional standards.
- 2.10.2 Please also insert the statement: “For more information on the recognition of qualifications overseas, please contact UK NARIC – www.naric.org.uk”.

2.11 Legal Basis

- 2.11.1 The legal basis for the issuance of vocational qualifications will vary depending on whether the issuing Awarding Organisation is based in England or one of the Devolved Administrations. It may also vary depending on the nature of the qualification itself. If you are unsure as to the legal basis on which the qualification is issued, please seek advice from the relevant regulator for completion of this section.

2.12 Officially recognised ways of acquiring the certificate

6. Officially recognised ways of acquiring the certificate		
Description of vocational education and training received	Percentage of total programme (%)	Duration (hours/weeks/months/years)
School/training centre-based		
Workplace-based		
Accredited prior learning		
Total duration of the education/ training leading to the certificate		hours

The European Commission's *Guidelines for filling in the Europass Certificate Supplement* indicate that this section should explain the different ways of acquiring the qualification and specify the forum in which the qualification is provided (training centre or workplace), the percentage of the total programme which takes place in each of these environments, and the duration of study. It proposes that this can be recorded using the table above *or* by replacing it with a description.

The UK National Europass Centre is aware that, because of the flexible, modular, unit based approach adopted for VET qualifications in the UK, in the vast majority of cases it will not be possible to provide specific information in the form of the table. It is therefore recommended that:

- 2.12.1 Where the structure and content of the course allows, provide information in the table format provided in the template. Additional information such as that outlined in 2.12.2 should be provided in the section above the table.
- 2.12.2 Otherwise delete the table and provide more general information such as:
- 2.12.2.1 Information on the providers that can offer the qualification – please make reference to an external list of approved providers if available.
 - 2.12.2.2 Information on quality assurance of qualification provision, for example information any quality criteria imposed on the provider by the Awarding Organisation and details of independent inspection organisations (e.g. OFSTED, ESTYN, Education Scotland, Education and Training Inspectorate).

- 2.12.2.3 Information on assessment methods. The information provided should be as specific as the qualification content allows.
- 2.12.2.4 Information on quality assurance of assessment practice.
- 2.12.2.5 Information on the method of delivery (taught theory / taught practical / workplace based etc.)
- 2.12.2.6 If possible, an indication of the recommended number of Guided Learning Hours and / or Notional Learning hours to complete the programme.

2.13 Entry Requirements

Entry requirements

- 2.13.1 Enter the education level requirements for entry to the qualification.
- 2.13.2 Where specific entry requirements exist, please indicate them.
- 2.13.3 Where there are no specific entry requirements, indicate any specific or general selection methods or guidelines that are used.

2.14 Additional Information

Additional information

- 2.14.1 This section should be used to provide any information that might aid in the recognition of the qualification, or the understanding of the level of the qualification within the national qualification framework referenced elsewhere in the document.
- 2.14.2 By way of example, Awarding Organisations may wish to provide a web link to a reference point or document that provides information on the national qualification framework.

2.15 More information (including a description of the national qualifications system is available at:

More information (including a description of the national qualifications system) available at:

- 2.15.1 Please include the following links:
 - 2.15.1.1 UK NARIC www.naric.org.uk
 - 2.15.1.2 Qualifications can cross boundaries
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quals_cross_boundaries.pdf
 - 2.15.1.3 The Refernet: *VET in Europe* Country Report
<http://www.ecctis.co.uk/ReferNet/publications.aspx>
 - 2.15.1.4 Eurydice
<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/>
 - 2.15.1.5 The higher education description diagrams available at
<http://www.uknec.org.uk/Organisations/Documents/Diploma%20Supplement.aspx>

2.16 National Reference Point

- 2.16.1 Please insert the following statement: “The National Reference Point for Vocational Education and Training is within the remit of UK NARIC – www.naric.org.uk”.

3. Referencing of National and European Qualification Framework levels

- 3.1 Awarding Organisations should, as an absolute minimum, provide a reference to the appropriate national qualification framework(s) along with a link to the *Qualifications Can Cross Boundaries* leaflet (http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Quals_cross_boundaries.pdf).
- 3.2 The UK NEC also highly recommends that Awarding Organisations provide a reference to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) in order to aid recognition internationally. Reference should also be made to a source of information explaining the EQF such as the OFQUAL website: <http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-assessments/eqf>.
- 3.3 The information at 3.1 and 3.2 above should be provided in the “Level of the certificate (national or international)” section of Box 5 – see 2.7 above.

4. Authority to issue the Certificate Supplement

There is no specific guidance provided at European level on whom can issue the Certificate Supplement. Following consultation with the Federation of Awarding Bodies and Awarding Organisation representatives, the UK NEC considers that, in order to perform its function effectively and maintain an element of quality assurance, the following criteria should be met by organisations wishing to issue the Certificate Supplement:

- 4.1 The issuing organisation should be a UK recognised Awarding Organisation; and
- 4.2 The Certificate Supplement should relate to a nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification.

5. Enforcement of Point 1 above and Sanctions

There is a concern that the Certificate Supplement could, in theory, be used to give credibility to unaccredited qualifications. This is clearly not the remit of the document, or the intention of the European Commission.

Given that there are no specific guidelines at European level on whom can issue the Certificate Supplement, no authority is given to enforce misuse or alleged misuse of the Certificate Supplement or to impose sanctions, therefore:

- 5.1. With regard to the development of the Certificate Supplement, the UK NEC will only provide assistance to those organisations meeting the criteria set out in point 4.1 above.
- 5.2. Where there is concern about misuse of the Certificate Supplement, the UK NEC will report the alleged misuse to the relevant contact within the European Commission.
- 5.3. For the purposes of point 5.2 above, misuse will be the use of the Certificate Supplement for any other purpose other than the intended use of the document as set out in Annex VI of the *Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies (Europass) and the Guidelines for filling in the Europass Certificate Supplement.*

6. Making the Certificate Supplement available to individual students and/or the general public

There are no specific guidelines on how the Certificate Supplement should be issued. The Europass Decision states at Annex VI, section 1.3:

“Certificate Supplements are produced by the competent authorities at national level and issued to citizens who hold the corresponding certificate in accordance with procedures agreed at national level”.

- 6.1 The UK NEC recommends that Certificate Supplements are made available either:
 - 6.1.1 By issuing paper copies of the Certificate Supplement alongside the qualification certificate itself; or
 - 6.1.2 Electronically via a database contained on the Awarding Organisation’s website; or
 - 6.1.3 Both
- 6.2 For the purposes of 6.1.2 above citizens should be made aware of the existence of the Certificate Supplement either by providing a link on the qualification certificate, or by some other means.
- 6.3 For the purposes of 6.1.2 above, where Awarding Organisations develop a web based database, they should inform the UK National Europass Centre (info@uknec.org.uk) of the existence of the database and provide a link. The UK National Europass Centre will provide a web link from the Certificate Supplement page of its national internet site.

7. Languages

- 7.1 The language the Certificate Supplement is issued in should correspond to the language of instruction and/or assessment of the qualification.
- 7.2 If Certificate Supplements are issued in a language other than English, a translation in English should be made available.
- 7.3 Ideally Certificate Supplements should also be offered in another major European Language, however given the administrative burden this imposed on Awarding Organisation, this is a suggestion rather than a guideline.

8. Statistics

8.1 Due to the reporting requirements of the UK National Europass Centre, they would be grateful if Awarding Organisations could collect and communicate statistics:

8.1.1 Where documents are issued in paper form pursuant to 6.1.1 above:

8.1.1.1 The total number of certificates issued per academic or calendar year.

8.1.1.2 The number of qualifications that the Certificate Supplement is issued for.

8.1.1.3 The number of Certificate Supplements issued per qualification per academic or calendar year.

8.1.2 Where documents are made available electronically via an online database, that the database records:

8.1.2.1 The total number of documents downloaded per academic or calendar year.

8.1.2.2 The number of Certificate Supplements downloaded per qualification per academic or calendar year.

8.1.3 That the statistics be communicated to the UK National Europass Centre on request. Such request will usually be made in January each year by the Europass Coordinator.

9. UK National Europass Centre Contact Details

For any queries, advice or to request the electronic template, please contact:

UK National Europass Centre
Oriel House
Oriel Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 1XP

T: +44 (0) 1242 260225

F: +44 (0) 1242 258611

E: info@uknec.org.uk

W: www.uknec.org.uk

Europass certificate supplement ^(*)

1. Title of the certificate ^(en)
⁽¹⁾ In the original language

2. Translated title of the certificate ^(de)
⁽¹⁾ If applicable. This translation has no legal status.

3. Profile of skills and competences
Core Units:
Optional Units:

4. Range of occupations accessible to the holder of the certificate ⁽¹⁾
⁽¹⁾ If applicable

⁽¹⁾ **Explanatory note**

This document is designed to provide additional information about the specified certificate and does not have any legal status in itself. The format of the description is based on the following texts: Council Resolution 93/C 49/01 of 3 December 1992 on the transparency of qualifications, Council Resolution 96/C 224/04 of 15 July 1996 on the transparency of vocational training certificates, and Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers.

More information available at: <http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>

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5. Official basis of the certificate	
Name and status of the body awarding the certificate Address: Telephone: Facsimile: Website: E-mail: (is a recognised Awarding Body in the United Kingdom.)	Name and status of the national/regional authority providing accreditation/recognition of the certificate Name: Address: Telephone: Facsimile: Website: E-mail:
Level of the certificate (national or international)	Grading scale / Pass requirements
Access to next level of education/training	International agreements
Legal basis	

6. Officially recognised ways of acquiring the certificate		
Description of vocational education and training received	Percentage of total programme (%)	Duration (hours/weeks/months/years)
School-/training centre-based		
Workplace-based		
Accredited prior learning		
Total duration of the education/ training leading to the certificate		hours

Entry requirements**Additional information**

More information (including a description of the national qualifications system) available at:

<http://www.uknec.org.uk>

National reference point

<http://www.uknnp.org.uk>