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Symfos for Youth Care Blended Learning Approach

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SYMFOS FOR YOUTH CARE

BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH

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INTRODUCTION

IO3 is aimed to establish the SYMFOS FOR YOUTH CARE BLENDED LEARNING APPROACH. This output sets the foundation for the development of a SymfoS for Youth blended learning course. It presents the project conceptions and options underlying the implementation of a blended learning programme focused on developing competencies and certifying SymfoS practitioners in youth work.

Based on the establishment of a Competencies Profile for SymfoS for Youth Care (SFYC) counsellors, and on a pedagogical framework for blended learning, the SFYC project developed within this intellectual output a blended learning course curriculum. Structure and lessons path were defined to potentialize the development of the key skills of an SFYC professional.

In the end, accreditation and certification for each partner country are addressed.

PART 1 - SYMFOS COUNSELLOR COMPETENCIES PROFILE

At the heart of the curriculum development is the competencies profile. This profile identifies the competencies SymfoS counsellors should have to be certified. It represents the course outcomes (*what and how should the trainee be able to do upon completion of the course?*) and, for this reason, is the reference baseline for all the subsequent pedagogical deconstruction process: pedagogical strategy, pedagogical path, pedagogical outcomes, contents, pedagogical activities and resources.

This profile refers to the specific competencies of the SymfoS counsellor/ practitioner, and it requires a previous certification and/ or strong experience in youth care counselling. Simultaneously, as a result of a European partnership, these competencies profile framework shall be used in association with each country's national practices of professional conduct and ethical codes.

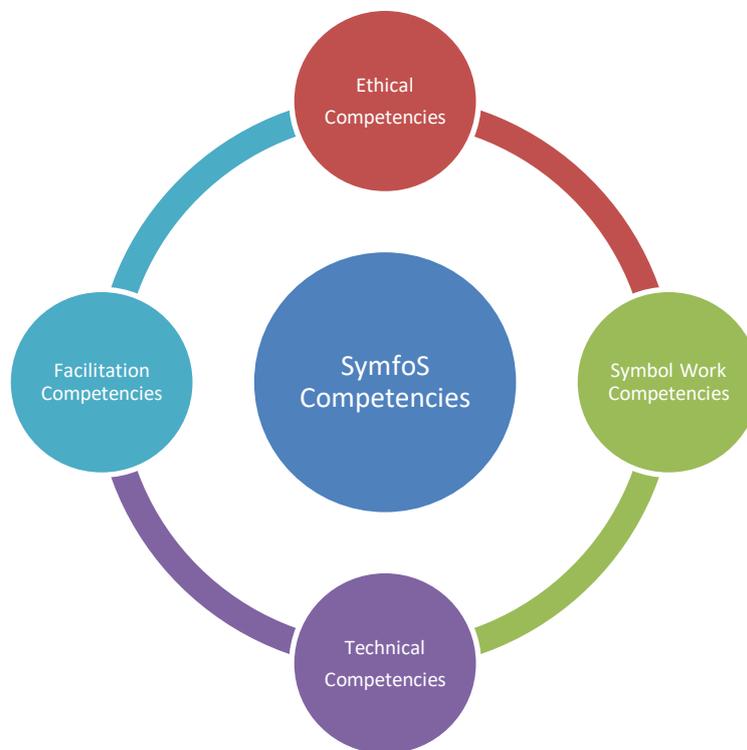
For a logical overview on SymfoS competencies profile, and considering that competencies are very complex elements [the result of a combination of multiple components (such as abilities, skills, knowledge, experience, motivations or traits) which become explicit in a specific behaviour (unique in space and time)], we present it in 3 different levels of hierarchical specification: (1) Clusters of competencies; (2)

Competencies by cluster (with description); and (3) Behavioural indicators by competency.

1.1. Clusters of competencies of SymfoS practitioner

The following summarizes the generic approach of the SymfoS competencies profile, by organizing competencies by “cluster” (similar competencies related to a common behavioural output set).

Figure 1 – *SymfoS Competencies Clusters*



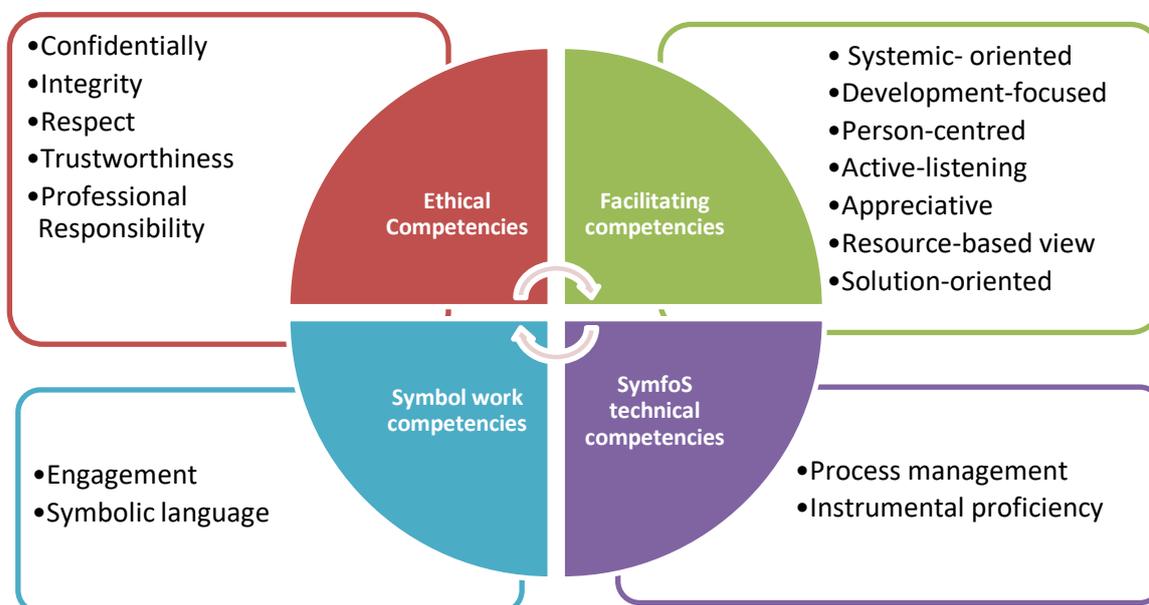
1. **Ethical Competencies** | These competencies refer to the ability to be aware of the SymfoS values and professional standards, as well as applying them appropriately to the SymfoS counselling process.
2. **Facilitating competencies** | These competencies refer to the SymfoS key transversal competencies for conducting a SymfoS counselling process.
3. **Symbol work competencies** | These competencies refer to the ability to use physical symbols as a language, and a core resource of the SymfoS counselling process.

4. **Technical competencies** | These competencies refer to the ability to apply SymfoS' method and using SymfoS' tools properly.

1.2. SymfoS competencies by cluster

Each cluster represents a highly interrelated set of competencies, which express a more detailed view of the SymfoS counsellor's profile. Figure 2 illustrates this deeper insight, and the subsequent description defines the competencies of each cluster.

Figure 2 – SymfoS Competencies (by clusters)



1. Ethical Competencies

- 1.1. **Confidentially** | To protect and secure clients' information, safeguarding privacy,
- 1.2. **Integrity** | To guarantee moral, honesty, and fairness in each step of the practice
- 1.3. **Respect** | To ensure the client's rights, dignity, and worth at all times of the work, mindful of the cultural, and individual differences, as well as their impact on values, attitudes, and opinions.
- 1.4. **Trustworthiness** | To clarify roles, aims and methods of the practice to the client, always honouring the trust placed by the client in the practitioner by developing a professionally accountable, and reliable rapport.
- 1.5. **Professional Responsibility** | Guiding practice to the primary interest of the client, and committing to excellence in performance, as guaranteeing to be

constantly attentive to any personal limitations or circumstances that may impair, conflict with or interfere technically in the practice or interpersonally in the professional relationship.

2. Facilitating competencies

- 2.1. **Systemic- oriented** | The ability to approach people and situations as complex and holistic systems made of interdependent elements within a wider environment with which is interactive.
- 2.2. **Development-focused** | The ability to orient the client to a belief and action planning towards an enhanced future situation.
- 2.3. **Person-centred** | The ability to set the client's autonomy, capacities, will, and self-determination as the centre of the counselling process.
- 2.4. **Active-listening** | The ability to focusing completely on the client's verbal and non-verbal communication, responding verbally or non-verbally in a thoughtful manner.
- 2.5. **Appreciative** | The ability to valuing everything the clients have and share within the counselling process
- 2.6. **Resource-based view** | The ability to identifying and mobilising resources
- 2.7. **Solution-oriented** | The ability to focusing on identifying positive outcomes, strategies, and plans to deal with a challenging situation rather than focusing on the situation-problem.

3. Symbol work competencies

- 3.1. **Engagement** | The ability to involve the client in the symbolic work context of the SymfoS counselling process.
- 3.2. **Symbolic language** | The ability to use symbols as an augmented and alternative communication strategy, valuing a broader conceptual representation of ideas, meanings, feelings, and emotions.

4. SymfoS technical competencies

- 4.1. **Process management** | The ability to use the method (steps, and peer buddy system) to enhance the counselling process and support its aims.
- 4.2. **Instrumental proficiency** | The ability to select the most appropriate SymfoS tool and being able to use it properly as support towards the aims of each session.

1.3. Behavioural indicators (by competency)

Behavioural indicators represent the observable output of a competency. Bellow, we present behavioural indicators for each competency of each competency cluster.

1. Ethical Competencies

1.1. Confidentially

- To protect and secure all the information associated with the client and the counselling process;
- To inform confidentially and safeguard privacy procedures to the client in advance.

1.2. Integrity

- To maintain high standards of honesty with the client at all times of the counselling process, and in all aspects of the counsellor work;
- To be mindful of any conflict of interests;
- To be coherent and consistent with the client and during the counselling process;
- To make hard decisions and communicate truly options and consequences.

1.3. Respect

- To consider at all-time client's dignity, rights, and limits;
- To acknowledge the client's right to decide which information they want to share at all times of the process;
- To fully respect the client's gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, language, age, cultural, socioeconomic or any other individual factors;
- To respect the client's options,

1.4. Trustworthy relationship ou Trustworthiness

- To provide clients with all the information about SymfoS counselling process and methods;
- To establish a trusting relationship with the client and an open and straightforward communication;

- To inform the client before the beginning of the process that they may withdraw from participation at any moment;
- To ensure that the client feels the counselling relationship as a safe and reliable context;
- To encourage clients to raise any concerns about the counselling process at the earliest possible opportunity, to give any concerns careful consideration and, when appropriate, to attempt to resolve them.

1.5. Professional Responsibility

- To start a SymfoS counselling process only upon informed consent free from coercion or pressure (in case of a child/ minor, an informed consent of a parent or guardian);
- To cease the SymfoS counselling process when the aim of the intervention is achieved or it's not expected to be achieved by SymfoS intervention;
- To commit to continuous learning and excellence-seeking practice;
- To ensure to work within the boundaries of self-competence, and within the limitations of self expertise;
- To consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of clients;
- To recognise personal limitations or circumstances that may impair, conflict with or interfere with the counselling practice or any professional relationship;
- To develop SymfoS process professionally only when certified (training and experience).

2. Facilitating competencies

2.1. Systemic- oriented

- To approach the client in a holistic way (the whole person);
- To approach the client's problem/ goal holistically;
- To consider solutions and action plans in a holistic perspective.

2.2. Development-focused

- To assume continuous learning, change, and development as a basic belief;
- To promote the client's perspective towards the future;
- To facilitate the client's belief in his/her possibility of change and development.

2.3. Person-centred

- To have the client's interests, values, and self-determination always as the main element of the counselling process;
- To empower the client as the owner of his/her own development process;
- To enhance the dignity of the person at all times.

2.4. Active-listening

- To be attentive to the whole (verbal and non-verbal) client's communication;
- To ask for clarification, guaranteeing a complete understanding of each message;
- To guarantee (verbal and/ or non-verbal) feedback to the client;
- To be empathic with the content and format (emotions) of the message.

2.5. Appreciative

- To consider and value every information clients share;
- To accept clients' perspectives;
- To focus and enhance positive elements.

2.6. Resource-based view

- To facilitate the client's identification of his/her resources;
- To support clients to value their resources;
- To facilitate clients to visualise how to mobilise their resources.

2.7. Solution-oriented

- To guide consistently the counselling process towards a positive outcome for the client;
- To support clients to face their challenges;
- To promote clients' resiliency;
- To enhance clients' positive attitude when approaching situations.

3. Symbol work competencies

3.1. Engagement

- To embrace the symbolic work as a key tool for the counselling practice;
- To facilitate the client's engagement in the symbolic work.

3.2. Symbolic language

- To use symbols as a key tool to enhance the communication of the counselling practice;
- To facilitate the clients' usage of symbols and symbolic language;
- To be attentive to the messages within the symbolic communication of the client:

- To respect the borders of the client's symbology.

4. SymfoS technical competencies

4.1. Process management

- To use the SymfoS method as the framework for the counselling process;
- To adjust the SymfoS method resources to enhance each counselling process, in particular;
- To follow, within the counselling process, the steps of the SymfoS method;
- To mobilise the peer buddy system whenever is appropriate, and potentiates the counselling process.

4.2. Instrumental proficiency

- To select the most adequate SymfoS tool for each purpose and context;
- To use each SymfoS tool properly.

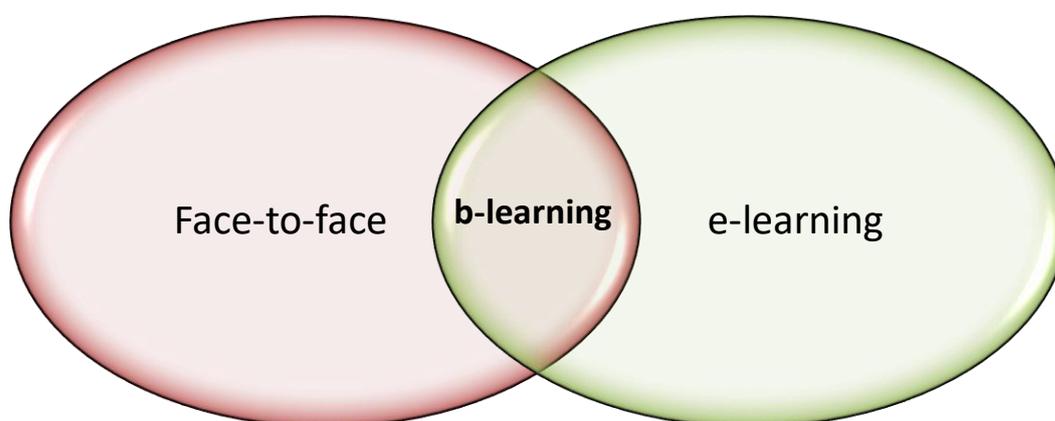
PART 2 - PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. B-learning Pedagogical features

Individuals pursue adult learning for a variety of reasons: to enhance their employment prospects, to develop professionally and to obtain transferrable skills. Adult learning, as an andragogy approach, seeks to understand the adult by considering psychological, biological and social aspects. Andragogy differs from pedagogy when compared to conservative pedagogical models.

Blended learning (b-learning) is a training that integrates training sessions in face-to-face and e-learning context. According to Peres, Mesquita and Pimenta (2015), the term b-learning appeared in the American business context at the beginning of the 21st century. As a "mixed education and training model" (Peres, Mesquita & Pimenta, 2015, p. 24), b-learning was positively received for most of the contexts. According to the authors, the adoption of learning models focused on b-learning modalities "implies the awareness that the teaching and learning process is assumedly rich and complex and that there is a myriad of methods and tools that can be integrated into educational and formative contexts" (Peres, Mesquita and Pimenta, 2015, p. 26).

Figure 3 – Blended learning approach



This is a flexible approach that is even more relevant in the pandemic times we are experiencing. Indeed, according to the European Commission (EPALE, 2020), even more, because of the COVID-19 crisis that is impacting the organisation of education and training systems. School, Training Centre, Higher Education communities had to return after to their activities “under new circumstances that require forward-planning and ongoing flexibility”. In this global context, b-learning seems to be a choice for teachers and trainers as a hybrid approach that combines learning in site with distance learning, including online learning. Blended learning is a flexible model that can support a course of learning to progress whilst not requiring teachers/trainers and learners/trainees to be in the same physical space at all times.

In this b-learning context, the role of the tutor/ trainer is very important and different from a conventional training adult course. The tutor has to guide the trainees in the achievement of significant learning by providing support and clarification when necessary. That’s why, it is expected that these professionals have specific and different competencies from the traditional trainers: orientation, communication, interpersonal competencies, high motivation, openness to online training, basic knowledge on technologies, or and master the contents. The tutor should thus have the sensitivity to understand the moments of "absence" of the trainees in the development of the formative act. Especially when it concerns on-line context, the tutor should be aware of the participation of trainees in the proposed activities, seeking to interpret questions and doubts.

The trainee in b-learning courses should take an extremely active role in the process of development of his/her learning. He/she should avidly put his/her doubts and questions,

to take precedence over research and self-training; participate actively in the activities proposed by the tutor and collaborate with her/his colleagues. The trainee in a b-learning context must also know how to use the technological resources available to boost the course.

The European Commission (EPALE, 2020) consider that the b-learning approach demands careful consideration of the pedagogical approach. In fact, it requires decisions about how and when to best use the different environments for independent learning, collaborative enquiry, social interaction, and practical application. Indeed, It is already highly recognized that blended learning can have several benefits, such as:

- i. trainee is a more active actor of his/her learning path;
- ii. trainer is not the only facilitator;
- iii. learning can be more individualised;
- iv. increase learners' autonomy, motivation and agency;
- v. training is based on learning and not contents;
- vi. learning can be more experimental.

2.2. B-learning terminology

Bellow, we present some essential b-learning terminology.

TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION
Adult learning	Adult learning refers to a range of formal and informal learning activities, both general and vocational, undertaken by adults after leaving initial education and training
Blended-learning – B-learning	Blended learning (b-learning) is a training that integrates training sessions in face-to-face and e-learning context
Competencies	Competency encompasses the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, professional qualities and behaviors that mobilize technical knowledge and allow action in solving problems, stimulating high professional performance
Learning aims	Learning aims are concise descriptions of the overall goals or purposes of a piece of learning (a programme, a module or even an individual lecture or seminar)

Module	Adult education courses are made up of training modules, which are sets of major thematic areas of learning
Lesson	Each module is organized in sequential lessons, each of them with specific learning aims
Online lesson	A lesson that is held in a Virtual Classroom which contains lessons that facilitate learning and the acquisition of competencies
Face-to-face (F2F) lesson	Face-to-face lessons are key moments to get into the course and to meet your learning peers and training team
Forum	Many online courses have some component of online forum for discussion about the course and to promote Community - give trainees an opportunity to facilitate (or lead) discussions in the forum.

2.3. SymfoS b-learning course

Based on the underlying approaches presented previously, Blended learning SymfoS course focus on an experiential learning approach, as a practice-oriented. All course will focus on promoting the development and application of competences and skills. The aim is to support the transfer from knowledge into experience and working competencies in a variety of domains. The transfer of knowledge created within an experiential learning environment to the job practice is fundamental to the effectiveness of the training process. The SymfoS competency-based curriculum describes the competencies that shall be developed to make SymfoS practitioners ready for a better current and future practice of SymfoS Method with young people. With the term 'competencies', we refer to a combination of values, skills, knowledge and attitudes, which may empower and enable practitioners both individually and collectively to deepen, update and expand their knowledge.

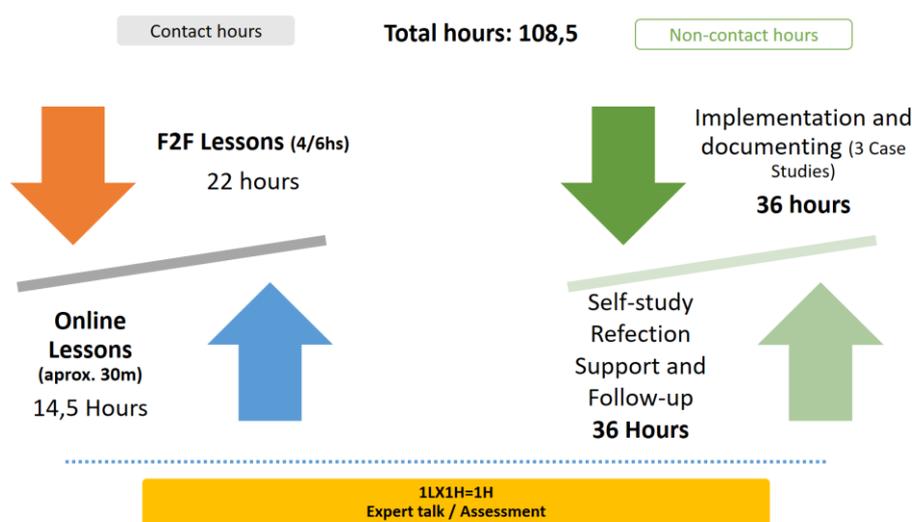
Figure 4 – *SymfoS Blended Learning Approach*



The course design approach is developed to support the communicative exchange of SymfoS practitioners. Specific occasions for peer-to-peer communication are created from the start (e.g. through an introductory day at the beginning of the b-learning course, threads and comments in the forums, etc.). Also, trainees are encouraged to share their previous experience and new knowledge in forums and thus create innovative solutions or collect good practice examples. Interactive multimedia elements such as practice-oriented videos, animations and diagrams, which build on the experience of the counsellors, are integrated into the b-learning course. Educational and technical support are important elements in providing high-quality e-Learning. Through learner-oriented support, the online course can be used effectively and in a variety of ways. As the target audience is comprised of people with little technical skill who do not routinely deal with computers, the elements of the course are as simple as possible.

In terms of operation mode, the SymfoS b-learning path will be blended, which means that trainee will be able to combine:

- his/her own learning rhythm by experiencing each lesson whenever it's more convenient to him/her, to scroll the lesson at their own pace, and go over the lesson as often as they like; with
- a social interaction. Each trainee will meet and practice with SymfoS practitioners and trainers, as well as their learning peers. This learning community will support the trainee whenever they need and practice the SymfoS method in person with him/her along his/her learning process.



The programme consists of six different **modules**, which aim different goals:

- Module 1 | **SymfoS B-learning Frame** is designed to get the trainee acquainted to the SymfoS framework, as well as to the b-learning approach adopted in this course;
- Module 2 | **Underlying Approaches** focuses on getting the trainee aware of the basic assumptions regarding the SymfoS counselling process;
- Module 3 | **SymfoS Method** has the purpose of introducing the trainee to the main features and phases of SymfoS method;
- Module 4 | **SymfoS Tools** aims to get the trainee to know to the main SymfoS interventions;

- Module 5 | **Concrete Fields of Application** targets to bring the trainee to understand more closely in which areas and aims SymfoS may be applied;
- Module 6 | **Assessment and Certification** has the goal to enable the trainee to a full practice within the SymfoS approach, as well as assessing and certifying his/her competence as a SymfoS practitioner.

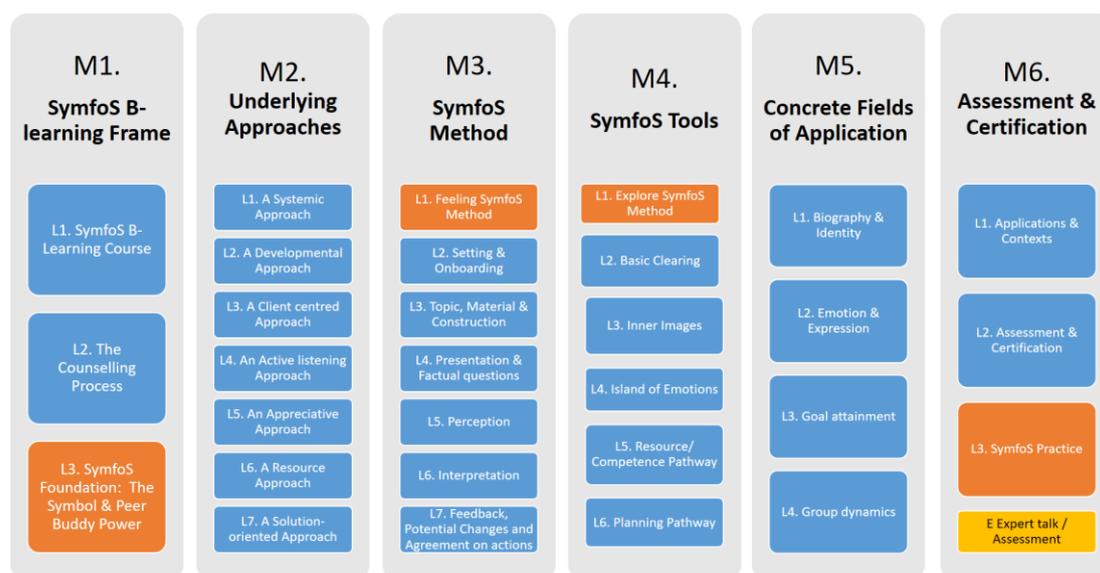
Each module is then organized into sequential **lessons**, each of them with specific learning goals. For this reason, it is important that trainees don't miss any lesson (neither online nor face-to-face) and that they always respect the sequence of the course structure (which represents the logical learning path). Face-to-face lessons are key moments to get into SymfoS approach. Only in the face-to-face setting trainee will be able to feel the power of symbols, of the method and become effectively familiar with the SymfoS physical tools. That's why the face-to-face lessons are mandatory. In the online lessons, it will be presented the learning aims at the beginning of each lesson, so that trainees may direct correctly their learning focus. In each lesson, it will have a multimedia resource, a written resource, and some action exercises to make the best of each learning step. At the end of each lesson, it will also be available a forum, where trainees may post all their (content or technical) questions and interact with both learning peers and SymfoS training team.

It is expected that the **blended learning trainee** has a highly active role on the online learning process.

- Time Management;
- Priorities Management;
- Personal organisation;
- Commitment;
- Self-motivation; and
- Solution seeking to any difficulties that may arise in the process will be determinant factors for your success in this learning and certification process.

PART 3 – CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK

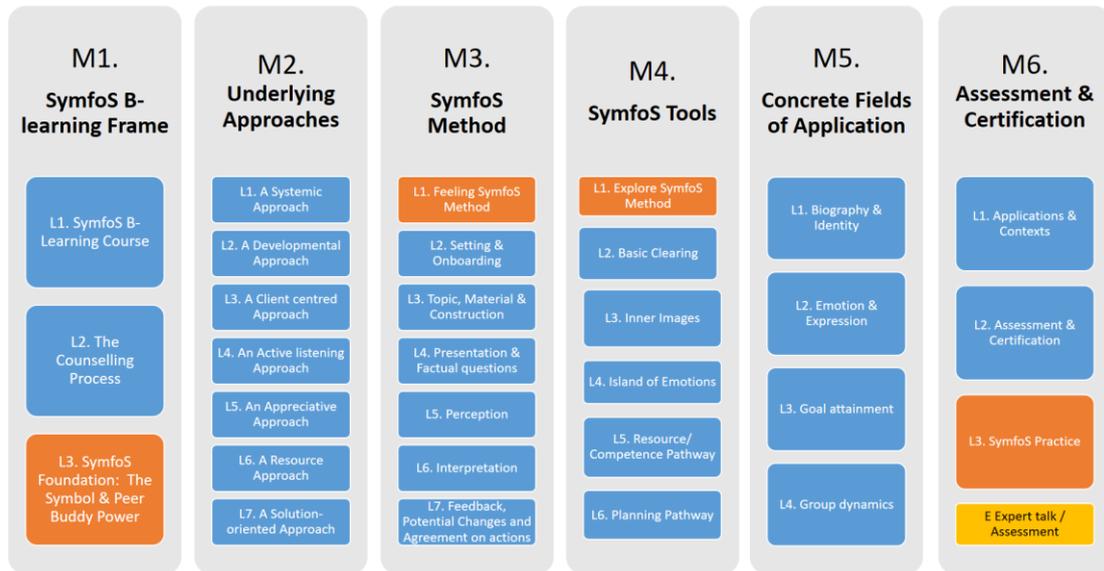
The curricular framework of the SymfoS b-learning course is organised in 6 modules. Each module is composed of several lessons: online lessons (in blue in the figure) and face-to-face (F2F) lessons (in orange in the figure).



Thereafter, we will present each lesson by module, with the type of lesson (online or F2F) and the learning aims.

3.1. Module 1 –SymfoS B-learning Frame

Module 1 | **SymfoS B-learning Frame** is designed to get the trainee acquainted to the SymfoS framework, as well as to the b-learning approach adopted in this course;



M1. SymfoS B-learning Frame

- L1. SymfoS B-Learning Course
- L2. The Counselling Process
- L3. SymfoS Foundation: The Symbol & Peer Buddy Power

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. SymfoS B-Learning Course	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to understand the process of the SymfoS learning course on a blended learning mode; - to recognise the specificities of the blended learning trainee role; and - to get eager to enrol on the SymfoS b-learning apprenticeship path;
L2. The Counselling Process	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to have a broad understanding of what the counselling process is; - to visualise how the counselling may be applied to SymfoS

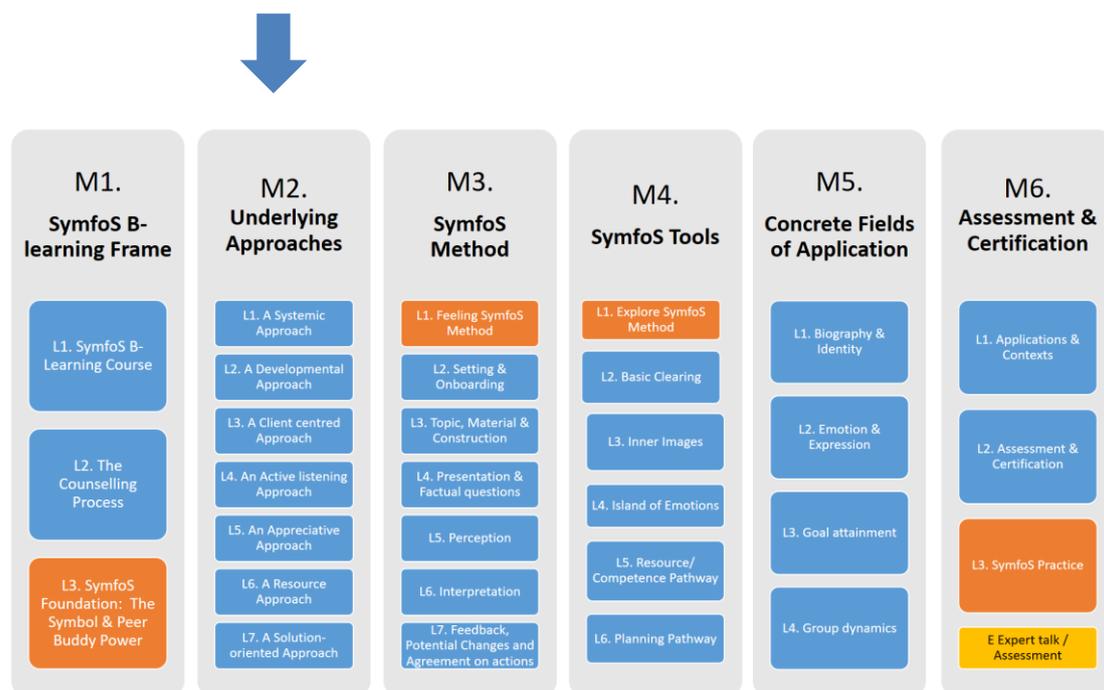
L3. SymfoS
Foundation: The
Symbol & Peer Buddy
Power

F2F

- To meet your learning peers and SymfoS training team;
- To get introduced to SymfoS approach as a whole;
- To get physically in touch with SymfoS toolset and symbols;
- To sense the peer buddy system role;
- To experience a SymfoS counselling session;
- To raise and clarify all your questions about the SymfoS b-learning course.

3.2. Module 2 – Underlying Approaches

Module 2 | **Underlying Approaches** focuses on getting the trainee aware of the basic assumptions regarding the SymfoS counselling process;



M2. Underlying Approaches

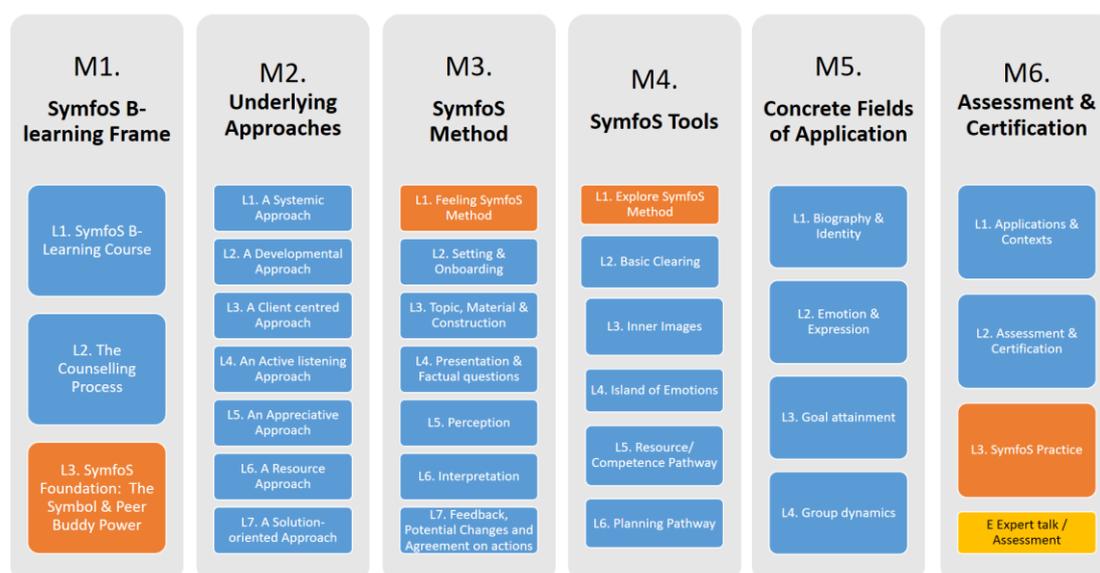
- L1. A Systemic Approach
- L2. Developmental Approach
- L3. A Person centred Approach
- L4. An Active Listening Approach
- L5. An Appreciative Approach
- L6. A Resource Approach
- L7. A Solution Approach
- L8. Peer Buddy System

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. A Systemic Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the systemic approach is; - To visualise how the systemic approach may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having a systemic approach in a SymfoS session.
L2. Developmental Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the developmental approach is; - To visualise how the developmental approach may be applied within the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having a developmental approach in a SymfoS session.
L3. A Person-centred Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what a person-centred approach is; - To visualise how the person-centred approach may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having a person-centred approach in a SymfoS session.
L4. An Active Listening Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what active listening is; - To visualise how active listening may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; -To recognise the significance of having an active listening approach in a SymfoS session.
L5. An Appreciative Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what an appreciative approach is; - To visualise how the appreciative approach may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having an appreciative approach in a SymfoS session.

L6. A Resource Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the resource approach is; - To visualise how the resource approach may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having a resource approach in a SymfoS session.
L7. A Solution Approach	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the solution approach is; - To visualise how the solution approach may be applied to the SymfoS counselling process; - To recognise the significance of having a solution approach in a SymfoS session.
L8. Peer Buddy System	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the role of the peer buddy system in the SymfoS method; - To become aware of how to apply the peer buddy system within a SymfoS session.

3.3. Module 3- SymfoS Method

Module 3 | **SymfoS Method** has the purpose of introducing the trainee to the main features and phases of SymfoS method;



M3. SymfoS Method

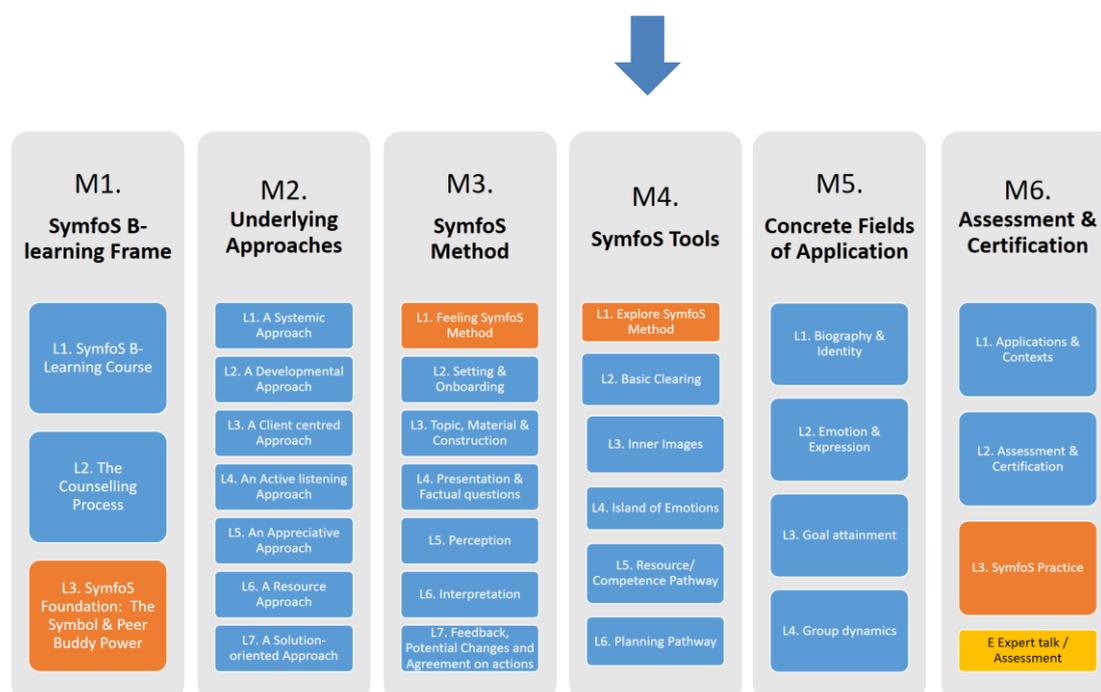
- L1. Feeling SymfoS Method
- L2. Setting & Onboarding
- L3. Topic, Material & Construction
- L4. Presentation & Factual questions
- L5. Perception
- L6. Interpretation
- L7. Feedback, Potential Changes and Agreement on actions

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. Feeling SymfoS Method	F2F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To have a structured overview of the SymfoS method steps; - To be presented with the different SymfoS tools: bigger and smaller interventions and possibilities of adaption; - To have a guided experience through the implementation of a SymfoS session.
L2. Setting & Onboarding	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To identify strategies to create a safe and comfortable environment for a SymfoS session; - To know the basis to get ready for a SymfoS session; - To identify onboarding strategies for the client and peers.
L3. Topic, Material & Construction	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To become aware of strategies to facilitate a client's topic clarification; - To identify how to present SymfoS materials to the client; - To know how to explain the construction phase to the client.
L4. Presentation & Factual questions	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the "Presentation" and "Factual questions" steps are; - To be able to identify the different roles that facilitator, client, and peers play in those steps; - To distinguish factual questions from interpretation questions.
L5. Perception	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the concept of perception; - To become aware of how to facilitate the Perception stage during a SymfoS session.
L6. Interpretation	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand what the "Interpretation" phase is; - To identify the different roles that facilitator, client, and peers play in this phase; - To distinguish between Perception and Interpretation.

L7. Feedback, Potential Changes and Agreement on actions	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be aware of how to guide the last phase at a SymfoS session; - To know how to facilitate the client's action plan decision.
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3.4. Module 4- SymfoS Tools

Module 4 | **SymfoS Tools** aims to get the trainee to know to the main SymfoS interventions;



M4. SymfoS Tools

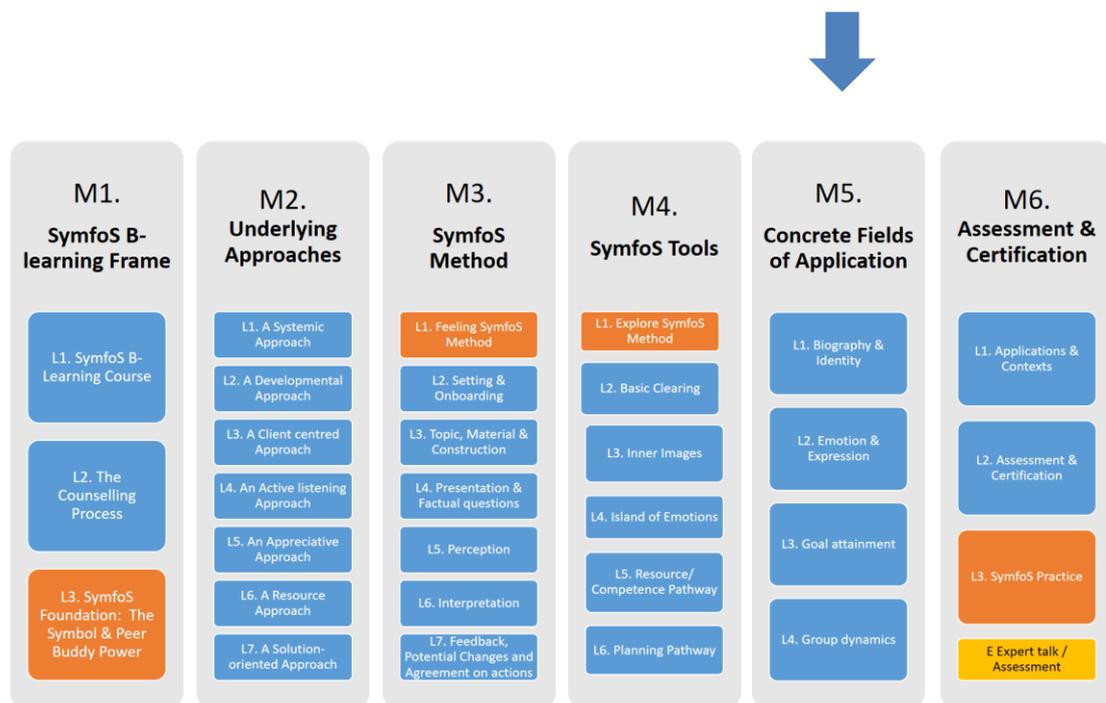
- L1. Explore SymfoS Method
- L2. Basic Clearing
- L3. Inner Images
- L4. Islands of Emotions
- L5. Resource / Competence Pathway

- L6. Planning Pathway

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. Explore SymfoS Method	F2F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to have a structured overview of the SymfoS tools; - to get to know the specificities of different SymfoS tools; - to have a guided experience through the implementation of different SymfoS tools;
L2. Basic Clearing	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the specificities of Basic Clearing tool; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of working with Basic Clearing tool; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Basic Clearing tool.
L3. Inner Images	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the specificities of Inner Images tool; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of working with Inner images tool; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Inner Image tool.
L4. Islands of Emotions	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the specificities of Islands of Emotions tool; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of working with Islands of Emotions tool; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Islands of Emotions tool.
L5. Resource / Competence Pathway	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the specificities of Resource/Competence Pathway tool; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of working with Resource/Competence Pathway tool; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Resource/Competence Pathway tool.
L6. Planning Pathway	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to know the specificities of Planning Pathway tool; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of working with Planning Pathway tool; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Planning Pathway tool.

3.5. Module 5 - Concrete Fields of Application

Module 5 | **Concrete Fields of Application** targets to bring the trainee to understand more closely in which areas and aims SymfoS may be applied;



M5. Concrete Fields of Application

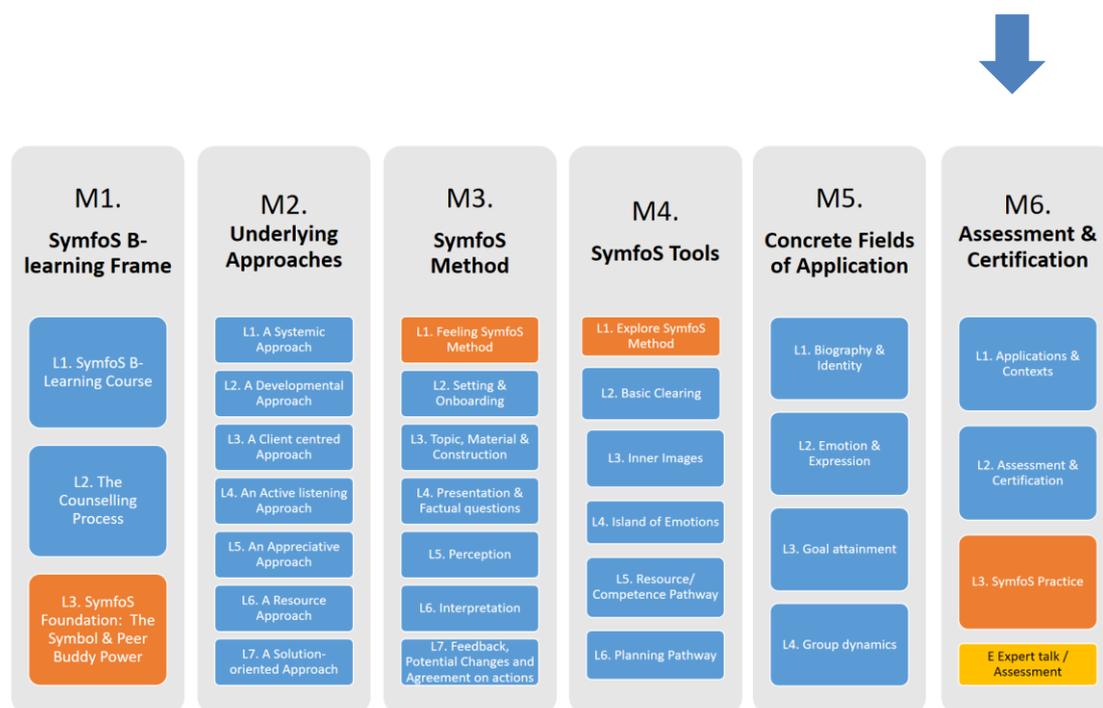
- L1. Biography and Identity
 - a) Biography
 - b) Identity
- L2. Emotion & Expression
 - a) Emotions & Feelings – basic understanding
 - b) Emotions & Feelings - clarifying feelings
- L3. Goal attainment
 - a) Goal attainment: finding goals
 - b) Goal attainment: formulating goals
 - c) Goal attainment: planning goals

- L4. Family & Group dynamics
 - a) Family & Group dynamics – Family Dynamics
 - b) Family & Group dynamics – Group Dynamics

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. Biography and Identity	Online	- to know the specificities of Biography work; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of Biography work; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Biography work.
L2. Emotion & Expression	Online	- to know the specificities of Emotions & Feelings work; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of Emotions & Feelings work; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Emotions & Feelings work.
L3. Goal attainment	Online	- to know the specificities of Goal attainment work; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of Goal attainment work; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Goal attainment work.
L4. Family & Group dynamics	Online	- to know the specificities of Family & Group dynamics work; - to recognize the benefits and contexts of Family & Group dynamics work; - to apply SymfoS method approach into Family & Group dynamics work.

3.6. Module 6 - Assessment & Certification

Module 6 | **Assessment and Certification** has the goal to enable you to a full practice within SymfoS approach, as well as assessing and certificating your competence as SymfoS practitioner.



M6. Assessment & Certification

- L1. Application and Contexts
- L2. Assessment & Certification
- L3. SymfoS Praticce
- L4. Expert talk / Assessment

Lesson	Type	Learning aims
L1. Application and Contexts	Online	- to identify different applications of the SymfoS method (such as individual or group; several sessions or only one; several tools/interventions or only one; as part of a continuous process with a client); - to identify different contexts for application.
L2. Assessment & Certification	Online	- to clarify the modalities of the assessment - to clarify the certification process of the SymfoS method.
L3. SymfoS Praticce	F2F	- to apply the knowledge developed on the SymfoS method; - to train the implementation of SymfoS method.
L4. Expert talk / Assessment	Online	- to reflect about the SymfoS b-learning pathway; - to discuss the individual case studies; - to share difficulties and strategies to implement SymfoS method.

PART 4 - APPLICATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

4.1. European Qualification Framework (EQF)

“The EQF is common reference for European education that allows the qualification systems of several countries to be matched, acting as a conversion device to make qualifications clearer and more understandable between different countries and systems in Europe. It has two main objectives: to promote the mobility of citizens between countries and to facilitate their lifelong learning.” (European Commission, 2009).

This recommendation came into force in April 2008, aiming that in 2012 the certification of individual qualifications contains a reference to the EQF level. It provides a comprehensive overview of qualifications in the 39 European countries currently involved in its implementation. The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications obtained through education and general, professional and academic training; either initial or continuing education and training. The approach is based on learning outcomes, to allow comparison between the different education and training systems. Learning outcomes are defined by three categories: knowledge, skills and competence (Idem, 2009).

Table 1 – Descriptors defining levels in the European Qualification Framework

Each of the 8 levels is defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system of qualifications.			
	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
	In the context of EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.	In the context of EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).	In the context of the EQF responsibility and autonomy is described as the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility
Level 1	Basic general knowledge	Basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Work or study under direct supervision in a structured context
Level 2	Basic factual knowledge of a field of work or study	Basic cognitive and practical skills required to use relevant information in order to carry out tasks and to solve routine	Work or study under supervision with some autonomy

		problems using simple rules and tools	
Level 3	Knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts, in a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to accomplish tasks and solve problems by selecting and applying basic methods, tools, materials and information	Take responsibility for completion of tasks in work or study Adapt own behaviour to circumstances in solving problems
Level 4	Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study	A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study	Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change Supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change Review and develop performance of self and others
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7	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 Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	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	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
Level 8	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Source: Adapted from Official Journal of the European Union (2017). "Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of

the European Parliament and of the council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning”.

4.2. Certification

Accreditation of an education or training programme is a process of quality assurance through which a programme of education or training is officially recognised and approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities following assessment against predetermined standards (CEDEFOP, 2014).

4.3. National accreditations

4.3.1. The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in Austria

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) is an instrument for mapping qualifications from the Austrian education system. The aims are to provide a transparency tool to facilitate the orientation within the Austrian education system and to support the comparability and comprehensibility of Austrian qualifications in Europe.

The objective of the NQF-Act is to use the National Qualifications Framework as a tool for encouraging the transparency and comparability of qualifications in Austria and Europe and to promote lifelong learning, which comprises formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

According to the European Quality framework, the Austrian NQF is based on 8 different levels.

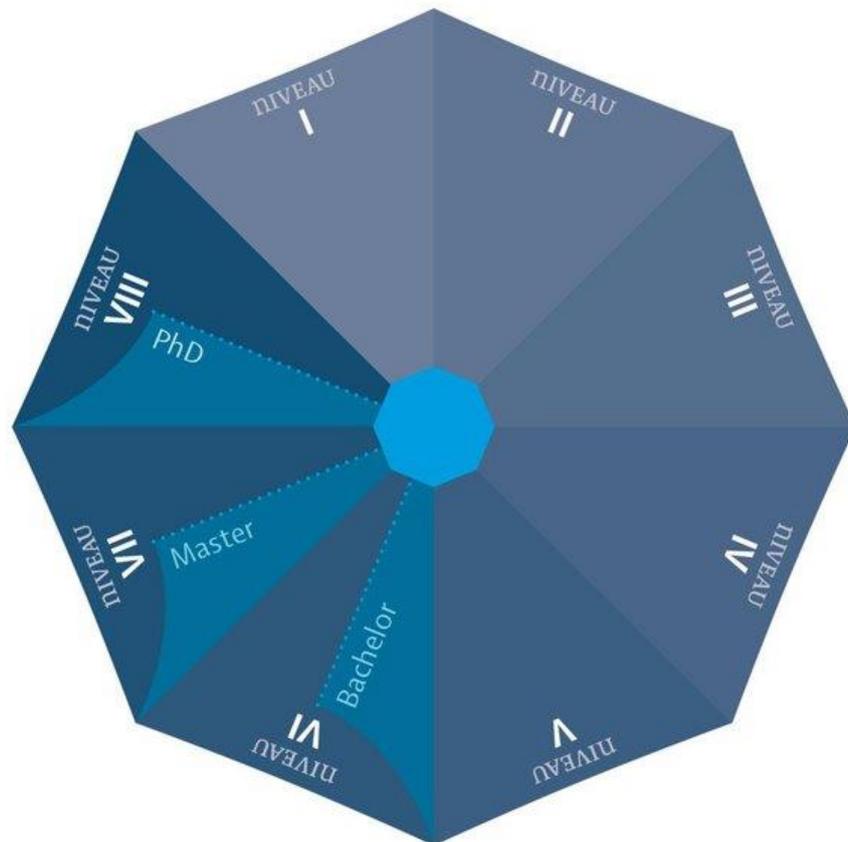


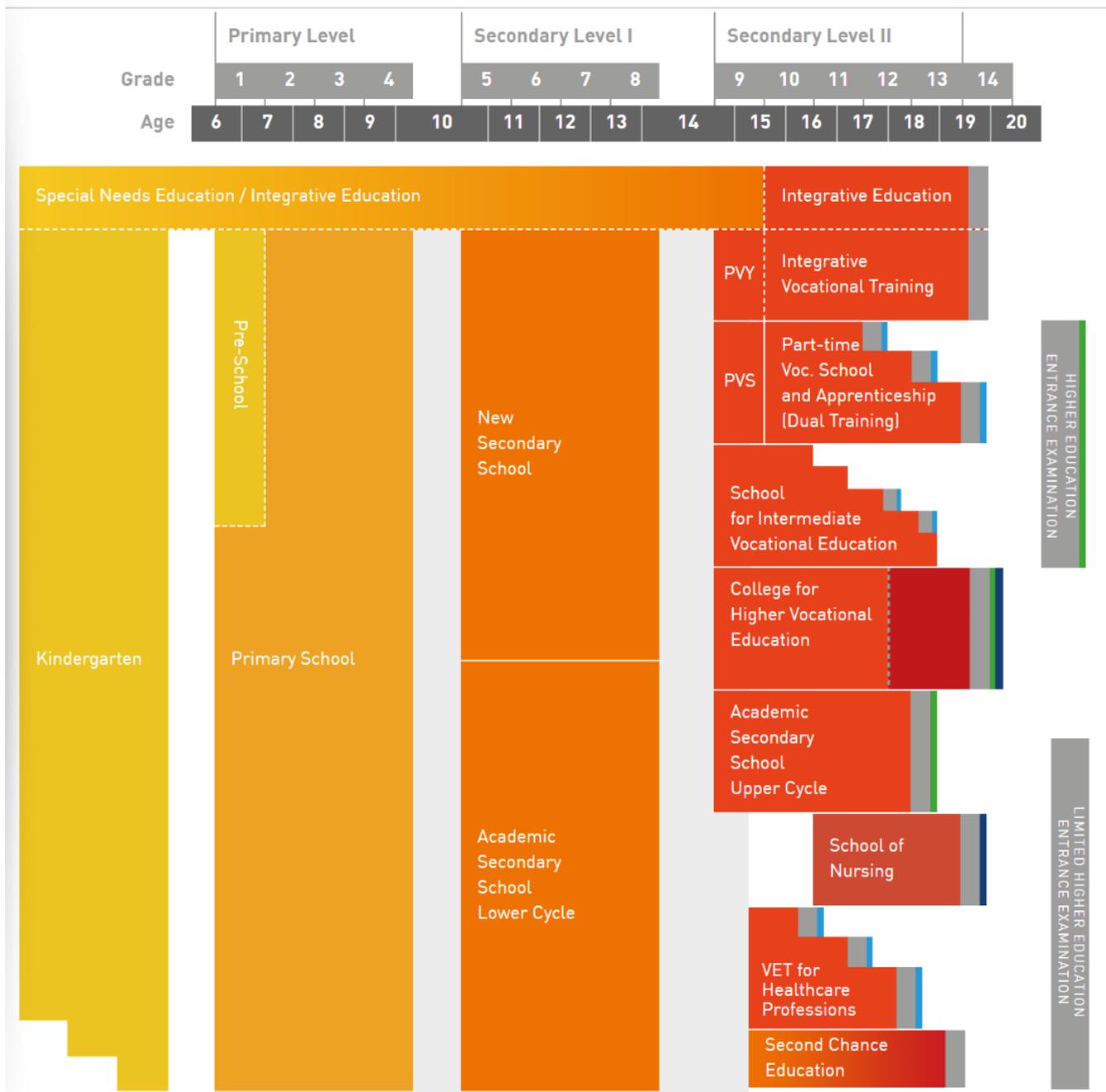
Table x – Austrian National Qualification Framework (NQF-AT)

While levels 6-8 are clearly addressed to Higher Education Institutions (Bachelor, Master, Doctoral, Degree) levels 1-5 might be addressed by School System or Further Education Institutions. (see further: <https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/en/>)

1- Austrian Educational System

To explain the Austrian Situation at a Glance, we hereby present a chart on the Austrian education system in its entirety. This illustration is only exemplary.

Please visit the official site on <https://www.bildungssystem.at/en/> where you get very detailed information on all grades, age groups and educational levels via the interactive map of the screenshot below.



The Austrian Education System, official website of the Ministry of Education in cooperation with OEAD: <https://www.bildungssystem.at/en/>

In Austria, compulsory schooling starts at the age of six and lasts for nine years. One nursery or school year lasts for ten months (from September to June). There are private and state schools; in state schools, no tuition fees are charged. The Austrian school

system provides for a variety of education and training options which are designed to meet the needs and interests of children and their parents.

PRIMARY LEVEL

In Austria, every child 's education starts with four years at primary school (Volksschule) [ISCED 1]. Pre-primary education [ISCED 0] is provided for children who have reached compulsory school age (i.e. at the age of six) but are not yet mature enough for school (e.g. because they have difficulties following instruction). Children with special educational needs can attend either a special needs school (Sonderschule) [ISCED 1] that is tailored to their needs or primary school classes that are run in an integrative (inclusive) scheme.

LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

The first differentiation of the school system is at the beginning of the lower secondary level. Schoolchildren have a choice between two types of school that last for four years each: these are the lower secondary school (Neue Mittelschule) and the lower cycle of secondary academic school (allgemein bildende höhere Schule or AHS - Unterstufe) [both ISCED 2]. Schoolchildren with special educational needs can continue attending special needs school [ISCED 2] from the fifth to the eighth year.

UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL

For the majority of Austrian schoolchildren, the first school year at upper secondary level is the final year of compulsory schooling at the same time. Then they can decide between a vocational (VET) and a general education pathway. VET programmes are provided within the framework of apprenticeship training (dual system), at VET schools (BMSs) and VET colleges (BHSs). General education is imparted at the upper cycle of AHS. Depending on their interests and inclinations there is the choice between a classical, business, science, musical and artistic, or language focus. Some 80% of schoolchildren opt for a VET programme after completing lower secondary level.

2- Entities in charge for certification and accreditation

During further implementation of the NQF, qualifications earned through formal training as well as qualifications acquired outside of the formal qualifications system (for example, through vocational and adult education) can be mapped to one of the eight levels. In the long term all qualifications included in the NQF will also be able to be acquired through validation. The focus on learning outcomes is the link between NQF and validation.

<https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/en/der-nqr/validierung/>

NQF service points

are quality assurance sectoral bodies between providers of non-formal qualifications and the Coordination Point for the NQF in Austria. The reason for the establishment of such bodies lies in the variety of non-formal qualifications on offer in adult education, continuing education and out-of-school child and youth work, as well as in the high degree of freedom in organising these offers. NQF service points have two central tasks: On the one hand, they are to perform an evaluation function in the assignment process with regard to the NQF compatibility of the respective qualification and the appropriateness of the assignment proposal, on the other hand, they are to assist the qualification providers in preparing an assignment request.

Specifically, the NQF service points offer various service packages in addition to a free initial consultation - from the basic package (review of the assignment request) to the development package (further development of the qualification to establish NQF compatibility). Here is an example:

NQR Service Point at ibw:

There are various forms of cooperation with the NQF service centre at ibw. The type and scope of cooperation depends on the wishes of the qualification provider and the degree of NQF compatibility of the qualification. In principle, the NQF service centre at ibw offers two service packages:

Basic package: Lump sum of EUR 2,100 invoiced.

Developer package: lump sum of EUR 10,500 invoiced.

Further services (e.g. supplements not covered by the two packages) will be charged separately on the basis of a daily rate of EUR 680.

see <https://ibw.at/resources/files/2020/1/10/1991/leitlinien-nqr-sst-01-01-2020.pdf>

The recognition of SymfoS_Youth Training by professional associations

Individual professional associations and public institutions of youth welfare in Austria have an obligation to provide further training, which can be completed in courses at recognized training institutions.

It is possible to apply for recognition from individual associations or institutions.

The recognition of SymfoS_Youth Training as formal education in Austria at University Level

If the SymfoS for Youth Training is provided by an Austrian Full University or Applied University in the framework of existing Bachelor or Master Programme, it can be recognized (as part of the study programme) based on the ECTS System. As the total training programme (self learning, online learning, face to face and transfer into practice equals at least 140 hours, this could be acknowledged as 5 ECTS points.

4.3.2. The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in Germany

“National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training” (BiBB),

According to a binding statement by the German "National Agency at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training" (BiBB), a general recognition of the SymfoS Training as a non-formal education programme in Germany is not possible because it is a Key Action 2 (KA 2) project, which belongs to the sector of continuing education and training for adults.

This is currently only possible for educational programmes in the sector of Key Action 1 (KA 1). However, the new Erasmus+ programme holds out the prospect of possibilities in this regard, but these have not yet been further specified. We hope that in the future this will open up the possibility of general recognition of SymfoS Training as a non-formal vocational education.

Accreditation by Universities of Applied Sciences

During the project, SymfoS training was successfully implemented and established at two universities of applied sciences in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and thus receives accreditation within the higher education programme of these universities.

- **Catholic University of Applied Sciences NRW, Aachen (discipline: Social Work)**

“The Catholic University of Applied Sciences of North Rhine – Westphalia is Germany’s largest church-sponsored university with state certification. It has campuses in Aachen, Cologne, Münster and Paderborn, and it offers over twenty undergraduate and graduate degrees, training students in social services, health science, and practical theology. In addition to its traditional academic programme, the Catholic University of Applied Sciences pursues research projects in each of its disciplines and offers a variety of postgraduate and further education courses.”

- **Hochschule Niederrhein in Mönchengladbach – University of Applied Sciences**

“Studying at the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences

Our degree programmes are designed to meet academic and practical demands so that you can achieve the best performance in your working life. Lectures and seminars will provide basic and specific knowledge - based on relevant social science theories and current research findings - as well as methods and didactics so you can perform professionally within the various fields of Social Work, Education and Management in non-profit organisations. Specific training activities in small groups will help you develop your professional role and apply your skills to a variety of different user groups and institutional contexts.

Academic standards are based in social work science, in interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical research and social work principles as well as in a commitment to the joint dissemination of theory and practice.”

The seminar 'Symbolic Work in Social Work' will be offered as a regular seminar at both universities in future and is thus an integral part of the curriculum of the Social Work programme (Methods of Professional Action).

4.3.3. The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in Portugal

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the only reference used in Portugal to classifying all qualifications awarded in the Portuguese education and training system. Established by Decree Law No 396/2007, published in 2009 and came into force in October 2010. As the EQF, different levels classify learning outcomes, maintaining the categories: knowledge and skills. However, the NQF uses the term attitude instead of competence, incorporating levels of responsibility and autonomy in the ability to perform tasks and solve problems with a greater or lesser degree of complexity (Cedefop, 2017).

Table 2 – Portuguese national qualification framework (NQF)

Portuguese national qualifications framework (QNQ)

NQF levels	Qualifications	EQF levels
8	Doctoral degree (<i>Doutoramento</i>)	8
7	Master degree (<i>Mestrado</i>)	7
6	Bachelor degree (<i>Licenciatura</i>)	6
5	Diploma in technological specialisation (<i>Diploma de Especialização Tecnológica</i>)	5
4	Secondary education and professional certification (<i>Ensino secundário obtido por percursos de dupla certificação</i>)	4
4	Secondary education and professional internship; minimum six months (<i>Ensino secundário vocacionado para prosseguimento de estudos de nível superior acrescido de estágio profissional — mínimo de seis meses</i>)	4
3	Secondary education (<i>Ensino secundário vocacionado para prosseguimento de estudos de nível superior</i>)	3
2	Third cycle of basic education (<i>3º ciclo do ensino básico obtido no ensino regular</i>)	2
2	Third cycle of basic education and professional certification (<i>3º ciclo do ensino básico obtido por percursos de dupla certificação</i>)	2
1	Second cycle of basic education (<i>2º ciclo do ensino básico</i>)	1

Source: ANQ, 2016.

Source: National Agency for Qualification (2016)

The NQF is based on the 8 levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to which it joined in 2011. The conclusion of Basic education corresponds to level 2, Secondary (for pursuing higher education) to level 3, Higher (Degree, Masters and PhD) levels 6 to 8. A highlight for the certification of levels 4 and 5, in which there have been structural reconfigurations and currently include: Secondary Education with minimum 6 months internship (continuation of studies), Secondary Education done in double certification courses (adds professional certification to the school diploma) and Diploma of Technical Specialisation. In fact, level 5 needs further clarification due to its nature of connection between Secondary and Higher Education. To reach this level there are 2 ways; one linked to Higher Education (CTeSP - higher professional courses lasting 2 years and 120 ECTS) and the other linked to post-secondary non-higher education (CET - technological specialization courses aimed to train middle managers).

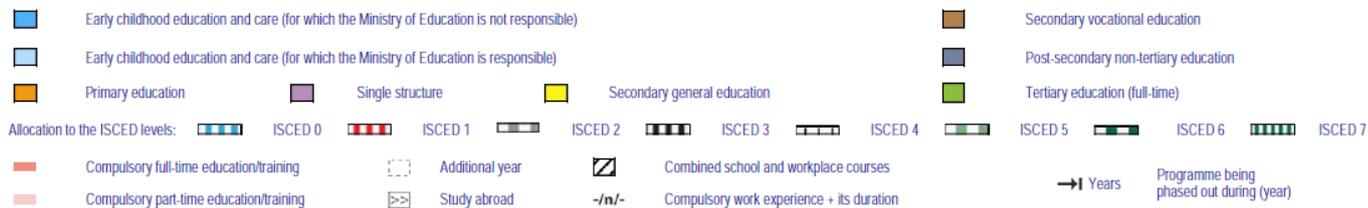
In 2017, Portugal introduced a national credit system for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in line with the principles of the European credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) that promotes the connection between VET courses and Higher Education as well as mobility in Europe. It applies to levels 2, 4 and 5 of the QNQ, as well as to the certification of trainings that are registered on the Integrated Information and Management System of the Educational and Training Offer (SIGO in portuguese), in accordance with the quality assurance criteria in force. For individual routes, the “Qualifying Passport” was also created (Cedefop, 2020).

This approach to the EQF aims to increase the comparability and transparency of Portuguese qualifications at European level, as well as to promote the recognition of non-formal education and support double certification (Cedefop, 2017).

3- Portuguese Educational System



Note: Students can joint ISCED 4 programmes at different ages.



Source: Comissão Europeia/Eurydice (2018). "The Structure of European Education Systems 2018/2019".

Table 3 – Portuguese Education System by level of education

	Level	Grades	Age	Years
Primary	Basic First Stage	1-4	6-10	4
	Basic Second Stage	5-6	10-12	2
Middle	Basic Third Stage	7-9	12-15	3
Secondary	Secondary	10-12	15-18	3
	Professional Secondary	10-12	15-18	3
Vocational	Specialized Tech./Voc.		15-18	3
	Polytechnic			3
Tertiary	Graduate			3-6
	Master			2
	Doctorate			3
	Post Doctorate			1

Note: the grey background corresponds to cells outside compulsory education

Source: Adapted from “TRY OUR STUDY – Study of Vocational Education and training teaching approaches and management practices”

“Primary and secondary education is compulsory in Portugal. Children aged 6 are required to enrol in primary education (*Ensino Básico – 1º Ciclo*) where they take a spread of academic subjects through grades 1 to 4 plus personal and social education. Study content is more advanced during *Ensino Básico – 2º Ciclo*, at the end of which they have completed 6 grades and are prepared for middle school.” (Scholaro)

“The 7th and 8th grades known as *Ensino Básico – 3º Ciclo* correspond to middle school. Subjects include Portuguese and two foreign languages, plus mathematics, natural sciences, physics, chemistry, social sciences and a choice of art. Physical, moral and civic education completes the curriculum, plus light technical orientation to perhaps unlock a talent for a vocation.” (Scholaro)

“At grade 9, the education system divides. Students choose between an academic or a more practical program (multimedia, electronics, computing and so on). Both share the same core subjects of Portuguese, philosophy, physical education, foreign languages and moral / religious education, with the balance of their schooling directed towards achieving their work goals in life.” (Scholaro)

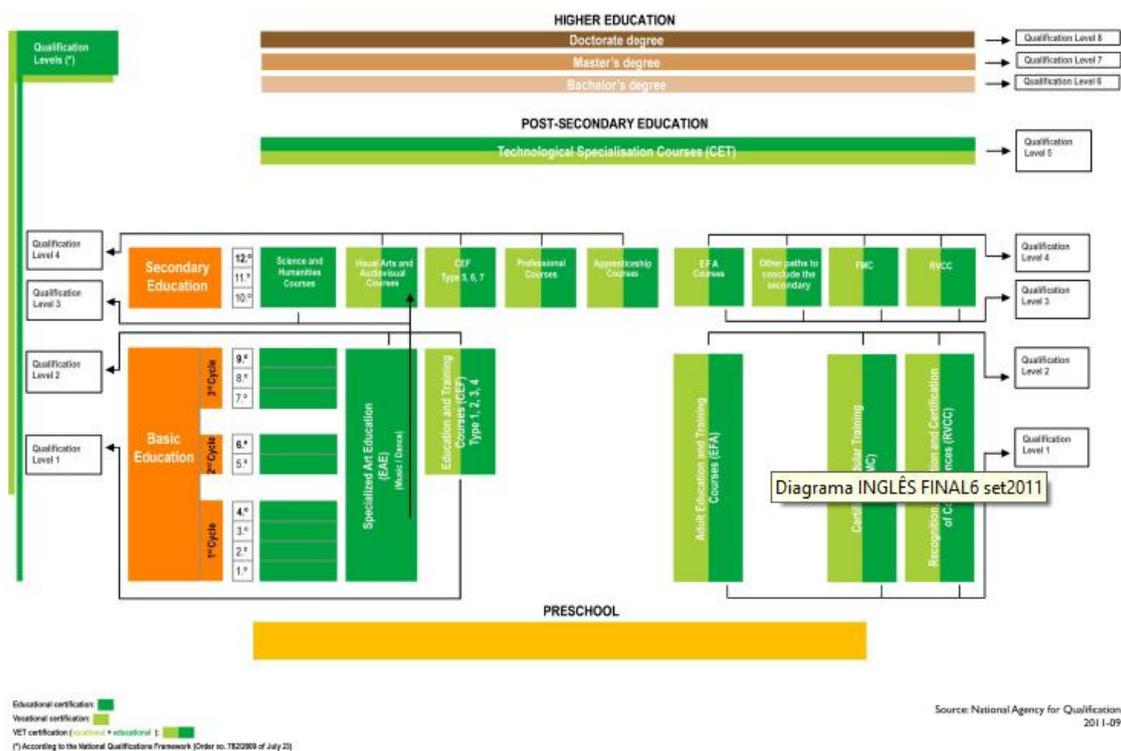
“In Portugal, initial vocational training is effectively a third stream of secondary education. Following middle school, pupils enrol for three year vocational certificates. These include practical skills in technical and artistic crafts. Outside of this formal system, numerous vocational colleges offer short and longer-term training too.” (Scholaro)

“Higher tertiary education is provided by polytechnics and universities. The former have a practical bias while the latter are more academic. There have been numerous complaints that poor controls have seen tertiary education standards fall and protests by students and academics have been vociferous. Notwithstanding this, Portugal boasts many fine academic institutions. The first medieval universities were established in the 13th Century.” (Scholaro)

Source: Scholaro (2019). Scholaro – International Experts in “TRY OUR STUDY – Study of Vocational Education and training teaching approaches and management practices”.

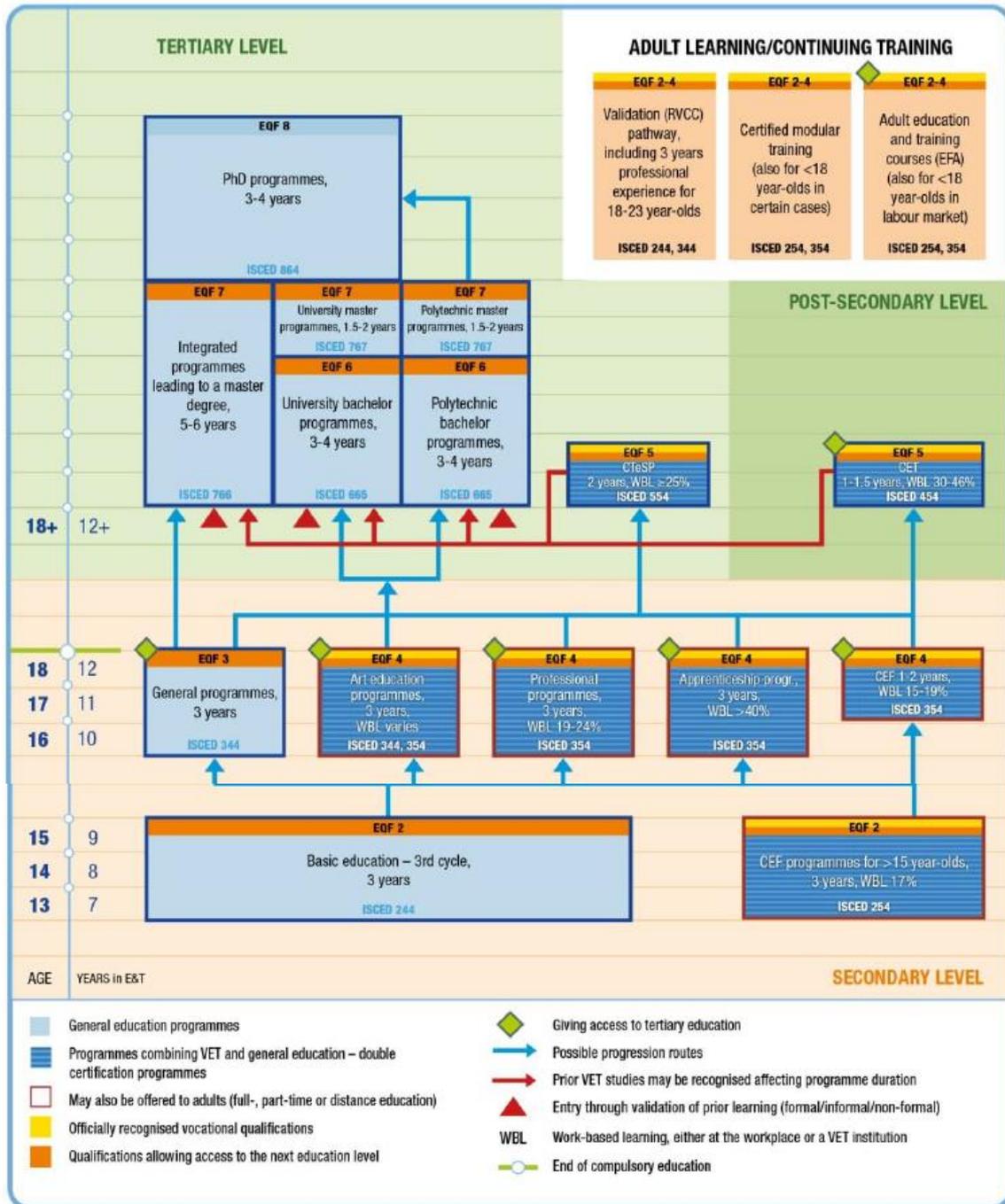
Table 4 – VET in Portugal’s education and training system

FIGURE 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM IN PORTUGAL



Source: ReferNet Portugal (2011). Portugal. VET in Europe – Country Report 2010.

Tabela 5 - Educação e formação vocacional em Portugal 2



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Portugal.

Fonte: DGERT (2019). Vocational education and training in Europe – Portugal. Cedefop ReferNet VET in Europe reports 2018.

3- Entities in charge for certification and accreditation

The national authority that coordinates the link between the NQF and the EQF is the National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education (ANQEP) whose mission is to contribute to the improvement of the qualification levels of young people and adults in Portugal, promoting an increasing demand for academic and vocational qualifications (double certification) at non-higher level, as well as an offer of initial and lifelong training that is widely attractive, with quality and relevance to the labor market.

ANQEP works in partnership with the Directorate-General for Education (DGE) to implement policies with a pedagogical and didactic component from pre-school to secondary level; with the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES) to implement policies at higher education level; with the Directorate-General for Employment and Labor Relations (DGERT) for the design of employment and vocational training policies as well as the recognition of professional qualifications and the certification of training providers; with the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (A3ES) for the assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and their study cycles and also the insertion of Portugal in the European higher education quality assurance system.

Regarding the certification of training providers, DGERT is responsible for the certification of all entities in the area of professional training; whether it is mandatory certification for the exercise of the activity or related to the quality policy of the services provided. A3ES, on the other hand, is a private law entity that carries out the assessment and accreditation of study cycles and higher education institutions, guaranteeing its quality standard and promoting the internationalization of the Portuguese system.

4- Insertion of Blended Learning Courses in training courses

The first step to identify the entity that certifies the training is to choose the level of education on which the course will focus. To higher level, the entity responsible for accreditation and assessment is A3ES, and the certification will be issued by the educational institution. Then it becomes necessary to distinguish whether we are talking about the creation of a course unit inserted in a cycle of studies that corresponds to a certain number of ECTS, the creation of a complete cycle of studies or the insertion within a course unit (UC), with a reduced number of hours. In the latter case, it is necessary to make a survey curricular units of the higher study cycles, identifying in which course units this training offer could be integrated. We have the example of the Polytechnic Institute of Coimbra this school year (2020-2021), with the course unit “Non-formal education with

specific populations” directed to the areas of Psychology and Educational Sciences, taught in person in the 3rd year of the degree with the value of 3 ECTS. It would also be possible to integrate the UC of “Pedagogical Practices”, usually optional (as in the Degree of Primary Education at the University of Évora) and the UC of courses related to the health area, more specifically in Occupational and Speech Therapies (see UC's in study plan of the Escola Superior de Saúde do Porto – link below).

If we think about non-formal education and outside the scope of Higher Education, the whole process from qualifying to certification is carried out by DGERT. Taking into account the National Qualifications System (SNQ), which integrates structures, instruments and arrangements for VET, and excluding the main structures (such as IEFP, DGE, Qualifica Centres, etc.); each education and training provider has its own teaching and professional training.

Certification must meet the comparability between the NQF and the EQF. In general education, diploma and certificates follow an identical layout until secondary education, and the NQF/EQF levels are expected to be indicated. In VET and qualifications acquired through non-formal/informal learning, the NQF level is indicated in all certificates and diplomas. In higher education, each educational institution is free to create its own models of diplomas and the indication of the level of NQF is only mandatory in the diploma supplement (Cedefop, 2017), making it difficult to disseminate information regarding the levels of NQF and the external comparability.

4.3.4. The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in Spain

In 2008, the European Qualifications Network was established, “a common European reference framework which enables linking the qualifications of the Member States and calls upon the Member States to set their own national qualification frameworks” (EURYDICE, 2020). Within the European Qualifications Framework, the Spanish Government ordered for the development of its own –*Marco Español de Cualificaciones* (MECU)— in 2009. The framework includes “qualifications obtained through compulsory, post-secondary and higher education, and will integrate validation of non-formal and informal learning processes” (Cedefop, 2017). There are eight NQF levels and they are based on the levels from the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

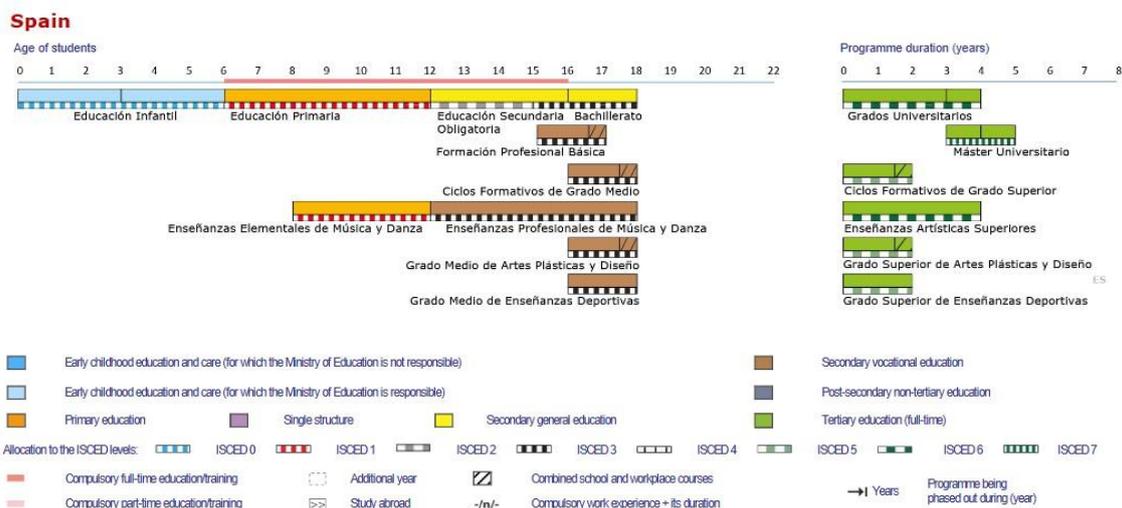
- Level 1. The first level corresponds to the completion of primary education, which goes up until 12 years old.
- Level 2. A certificate for completing two years of Compulsory Secondary Education and a certificate for Vocational training for students with special needs.
- Level 3. This level has two sublevels.
 - 3A includes a certificate for completing Compulsory Secondary Education (4 years) and a certificate as Basic VET Technician.
 - 3B is for professional certificates that do not allow students to access programmes in level 4.
- Level 4. It has three sublevels.
 - 4A. Certificate for Bachillerato (Baccalaureate), Intermediate VET Technician, and Professional Music, Dance, Plastic Arts and Design and Sports Technician.
 - 4B is for professional certificates that do not allow students to access programmes in level 5.
 - 4C includes programmes with academic and professional validity for which you need 4A qualification.
- Level 5. It has three sublevels.
 - 5A. Certificate for Higher VET Technician, and Professional Plastic Arts and Design and Sports Technician.
 - 5B. It includes professional certificates that do not allow students to access programmes in level 6.
 - 5C includes programmes with academic and professional validity for which you need 5A qualification.
- Level 6. A certificate for a Bachelor's degree.
- Level 7. A certificate for a Master's Degree.
- Level 8. A certificate for a Doctorate programme.

Spanish National Qualifications framework

NQF levels	Qualifications	EQF levels
8	<i>Doctorado</i> (Doctorate)	8
7	<i>Máster</i> (Master's degree)	7
6	<i>Grado</i> (Bachelor's degree)	6
5	<i>Técnico Superior de Formación Profesional</i> (Higher VET Technician)	5
4	<i>Bachillerato</i> (Baccalaureate) <i>Técnico de Formación Profesional</i> (Intermediate VET Technician)	4
3	<i>Educación Secundaria Obligatoria</i> (Compulsory Secondary Education) <i>Técnico profesional básico</i> (Basic VET Technician)	3
2	<i>2º curso de educación secundaria</i> (2nd Year of Secondary Education) <i>Formación profesional para alumnos/-as con necesidades especiales</i> (Vocational training for special needs students)	2
1	<i>Enseñanza primaria</i> (Primary Education)	1

Source: adaptation from draft Royal Decree for the Spanish NQF

Spanish Educational System



Source: Eurydice (2018): "The Structure of European Education Systems 2018/2019".

	Level	Grades	Age	Years
Primary	1st cycle	1-2	6-8	2
	2nd cycle	3-4	8-10	2
	3rd cycle	5-6	10-12	2
Secondary	1st cycle	1-3	12-15	3
	2nd cycle	4	15-16	1
Basic Vocational	Basic VET	1-2	14-16	2
Upper Secondary	Bachillerato			2
	Intermediate VET			
Vocational	Higher VET			2
Tertiary	Bachelor's degree			4
	Master's degree			2
	Doctorate			3

Source: Adapted from the Portuguese Education System by level of education table above.

Primary and secondary education are compulsory in Spain. Children start primary education at 6 years old and finish when they are 12. It is divided in 3 different cycles, each one of them consisting of two school years. In order to receive a certificate for secondary education, students must complete 6 grades.

Secondary education is generally for students between 12 and 16. It is divided into two cycles: the first cycle are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade, while the second cycle is the 4th grade. Before starting 4th grade, students must choose between general or vocational education. General education will lead them to *Bachillerato*, while vocational education will prepare them for Intermediate VET.

Among Upper Secondary education, there are two options: General (*Bachillerato*) and Vocational Upper Secondary Education. These are not part of compulsory education in the country. *Bachillerato* is for students between 16 and 18. It has three branches depending on the students' interests: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Sciences. Vocational Upper Secondary Education has a wide offer of studies, and they are usually taught in secondary education schools and training centres.

Higher tertiary education is divided between university and non-university studies. University studies can be offered by both public or private universities. Non-university

studies are taught, like Vocational Upper Secondary Education, in secondary education schools and training centres. Students also have the possibility to study Plastic Arts and Design and Advanced Vocational Education in Sports.

A Bachelor's degree has a duration of 180-240 credits, while a Master's degree has 60-120 ECTS credits and a duration of 1 or 2 years. In order to be admitted to a Doctorate's programme, the student must hold a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree, having completed 300 ECTS credits.

Entities in charge of certification and accreditation

On a national level, the Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones (National Institute of Qualifications - INCUAL) "is responsible for defining, drawing up and updating the National Catalogue of Occupational Standards - CNCP and the corresponding competence units and learning modules, in active cooperation with VET stakeholders" (Sancha & Gutiérrez, 2016: 41). This Catalogue assesses and certifies professional competences acquired through work experience and non-formal education. INCUAL's mission is to achieve the goals of the *Sistema Nacional de Cualificaciones y Formación Profesional* (National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training).

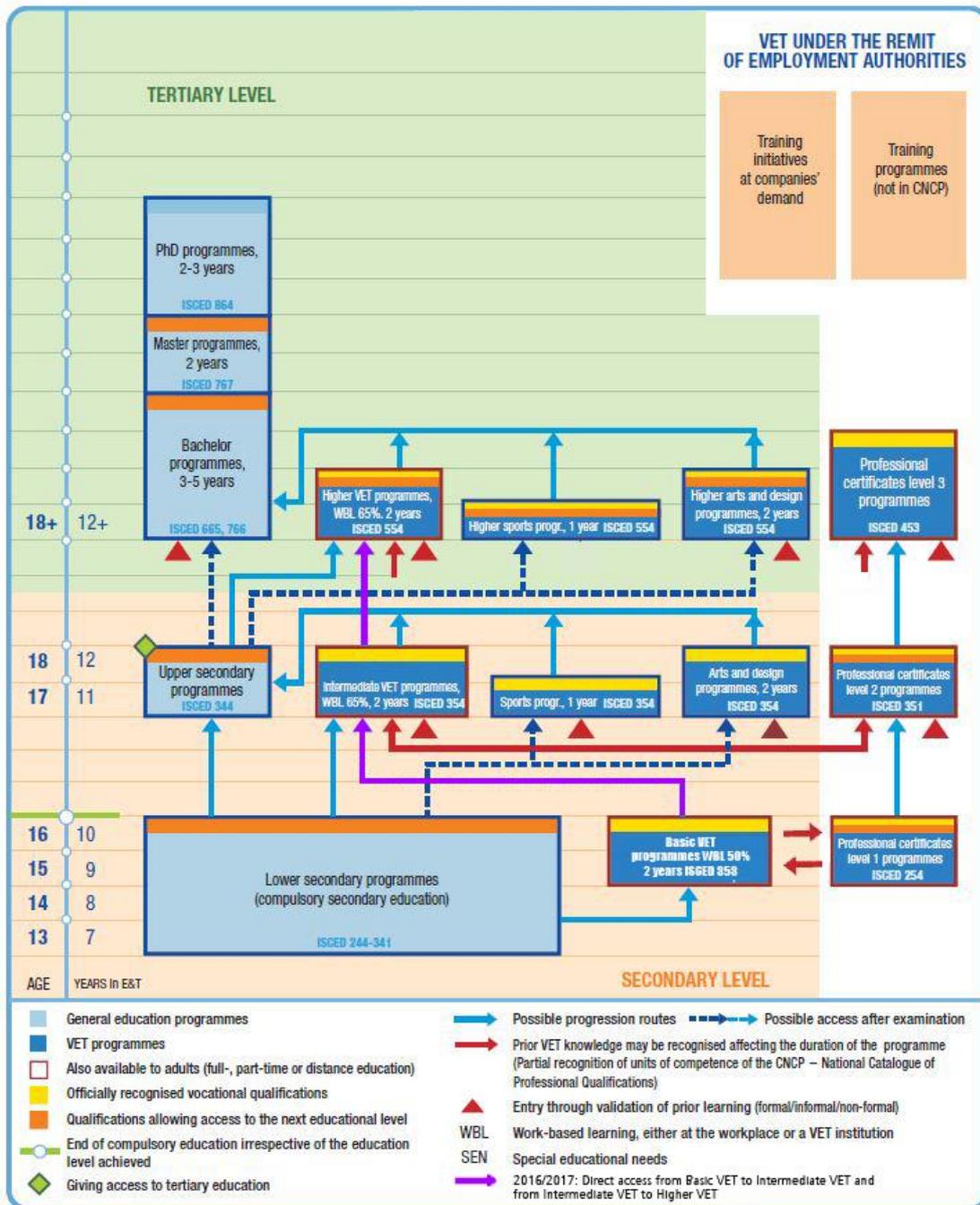
The Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation – ANECA) is authorized by the Spanish government to contribute to the improvement of the Spanish educational system through external quality assurance. It does so with evaluation, certification and accreditation. ANECA helps workers get their necessary experience certificates to certify their professional competences.

Acredita enables a person with professional experience to get an official certificate when that experience has been acquired through non-formal education. Each autonomous community in Spain has its own Acredita programme, it being Acredita Andalucía in the region where Caminos works. It is dedicated to those who live in Andalusia. It is valid on a national level and is carried out through general and specific calls. It is possible to acquire two types of qualification:

- Complete professional qualification. A person can prove that they have the knowledge and competences of an occupation on three levels -depending on their degree of knowledge, autonomy, and responsibility within that occupation.

- Individual units of a vocational qualification. A person can prove that they have certain knowledge and competences of an occupation. This means that a complete qualification would be composed of several individual units.

Education and professional training in Spain



Source: LOMCE – TodoFP

4.3.5. The recognition process of SymfoS Training as non-formal education in the UK

Regulatory Agencies

There are several agencies that regulate qualifications within the UK:

Ofqual for England

CCEA for Northern Ireland

Qualification Wales for Wales

Scottish Qualifications Authority for Scotland

Though there are differences between these agencies, they work together whenever possible. For instance, the SQA is accredited by Ofqual and across 'England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the conditions are broadly similar – although there are some differences reflecting our policy, legislative and national contexts. There are also conditions that differ across regulators as a result of different policy decisions of each regulator' (Ofqual, 2020).

These agencies regulate all qualifications, examinations and assessments, maintaining the appropriate standards and confidence in the qualifications framework. The available qualifications can be academic, vocational or skills-related and are grouped into levels – 9 in total in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and 12 in Scotland. For instance,

- GCSEs
- A levels
- AS levels
- Vocational and Technical qualifications

In Higher Education, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) oversees how universities, colleges and alternative providers of UK higher education maintain their academic standards and quality. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ),

published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) describes the qualification levels

The Qualifications and Credit Framework is a published document of level descriptors, which is used by organisations to accredit their courses and qualifications at the appropriate level. This allows learners, awarding bodies, employers and the public to understand the range of knowledge and skills required to complete a particular level. Level descriptors indicate the outcome of learning and do not deal with the process of learning, but are used to guide the development of units, ensuring the learners' knowledge and skills at completion of a particular level meet the standards of the QCF.

The Symfos programme would be considered, within this overarching framework, as a vocational qualification.

As stated above, these qualifications have different levels, ranging from the Entry Level to Level 8. For example, a Level 2 vocational qualification is equivalent to range of passes at GCSE (the general qualification framework used in formal education up to 16 years old). A Level 3 qualification is equivalent to an A Level (used in post-16 formal education).

All vocational qualifications consist of units, each of which has a credit value that allows the learner to roughly predict how long they would study (1 credit equals approximately 10 hours of learning). A Certificate qualification is awarded to learners with 13 to 36 credits (roughly 130 to 360 hours of learning). A Diploma has a minimum of 37 credits (370 hours of learning). The title of qualification thus reveal the size of learning and also reveals the qualification level and the subject that was studied ie Level 3 Diploma in Symfos.

Awarding Bodies

A range of organisations across the UK have been set up to accredit learning using the above framework – OCN; City & Guilds, ABC, etc.

Each organisation will have its own processes that closely follow the national policy framework. The information provided on the Symfos website would be used to identify the appropriate level and then a monitoring and verification process would be undertaken. Trainers and assessors would need to undertake appropriate qualifications as stated by the Awarding Body.

Recognition within Higher Education

TAG: The Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work

is a member organisation that represents the interests of academics, educators and researchers in the field of youth and community work. The association supports and represents more than 250 educators at over 50 institutions and agencies in the UK (TAGPALYCW, 2020).

A consultation process found that these institutions would use elements of Symfos within their modular courses and would also signpost learners to the organisations providing the full vocational qualification experience.

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