A Comparison of the Content of Master Craft Qualifications (Carpentry and Hairdressing) in Five European Countries (Austria, France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland)

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# Foreword

This comparison of Master Craft qualifications in five countries has been carried out by Jens Bjørnåvold on behalf of the Norwegian Master Craftsman Committee (Mesterbrevnemnda). The conclusions made in the report are the responsibility of the author and are based on longstanding research and policy experience at European and international level. This experience is linked to the following functions and responsibilities:

* Member of the European Commission team responsible for the initial design of the European Qualifications Framework (2004-2008);
* Member of the Cedefop and European Commission team providing analytical support to referencing of national qualifications frameworks to the EQF 2009-22;
* Member of Cedefop team monitoring European national qualifications frameworks (2009-2018);
* Coordinator of Cedefop research on ‘Methodologies for comparing vocational qualifications’ (2016-21);
* Coordinator of Cedefop’s research on learning outcomes (2007-22);
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After retiring from his positions as Cedefop’s representative in Brussels (working in and with the European Commission, Directorate General of Employment and Social affairs), Bjørnåvold is working as an independent researcher/consultant.

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# Norsk sammendrag

Denne rapporten sammenlikner innholdet (kunnskaper, ferdigheter og generell kompetanse) i ti mesterbrevkvalifikasjoner i fem land, Frankrike, Norge, Tyskland, Sveits og Østerrike. Analysen bygger på eksisterende og oppdaterte nasjonale krav til læringsutbytte/kompetanse. Dette betyr at vi sammenlikner forventninger og mål, ikke den faktisk realiserte kompetanse slik den kommer til uttrykk i arbeidslivet ([[1]](#footnote-2)). Mesterbrev innenfor tømrer- og frisørfag er valgt ut som eksempler for slik å dekke forskjellen mellom håndverks- og industrifag på den ene siden og fag knyttet til tjenesteyting på den andre siden. Analysen støtter seg på metodikken som er utviklet av Cedefop over de siste to tiårene og bruker læringsutbyttebeskrivelse knyttet til det europeiske kvalifikasjonsrammeverket som referansepunkt.

Analysen av de ti europeiske mesterbrevkvalifikasjonene i fem land illustrerer betydelig samsvar i kravene til kunnskaper, ferdigheter og generell kompetanse, mens de ulike landene (og fagene) vektlegger ulike ting (for eksempel spesialiserte tekniske ferdigheter versus ledelse og markedsføring), observerer vi samsvar i behovsanalyse og mål på tvers av landegrensene. Dette kommer formelt til uttrykk gjennom at tre av landene har plassert sine mesterbrev på nivå 6 i det europeiske kvalifikasjonsrammeverket (og i sine respektive nasjonale kvalifikasjonsrammeverk). De franske BTS/BTM-kvalifikasjonene representerer unntaket og er formelt plassert på nivå 5. Reelt sett kan det argumenteres for at også de franske kvalifikasjonene tilfredsstiller nivå 6-kriteriene.

De to norske mesterbrevene som er analysert i rapporten bygger på mange av de samme prinsippene som er lagt til grunn for mesterkvalifikasjonene i de øvrige landene. De norske mesterbrevenes nivå og omfang (‘dybde’ og ‘bredde’) står ikke tilbake for hva vi observerer i Frankrike, Tyskland, Sveits og Østerrike. Dette gjelder både tømrer- og frisørfaget. Når det gjelder frisørfaget knytter det seg imidlertid en viss usikkerhet til den rent frisørfaglige spesialiseringen. Mens det ikke hersker tvil om at kravene til ledelse, økonomi og markedsføring er formulert på et høyt nivå (minst 6, til dels 7), er kravene til det rent frisørfaglige mer vage enn hva tilfellet er i for eksempel i Frankrike, Tyskland og Østerrike.

Den nylig avsluttede evalueringen av det norske kvalifikasjonsrammeverket aktualiserer spørsmålet om innplasseringen av mesterbrevene i det norske kvalifikasjonssystemet. Analysen i denne rapporten viser at de to utvalgte norske mesterbrevene ikke ligger tilbake for tilsvarende mesterbrev i Frankrike, Tyskland, Sveits og Østerrike. De norske mesterbrevene kombinerer teoretisk kunnskap med praktiske ferdigheter og generell kompetanse på en måte som er av stor verdi for enkeltpersoner, bedrifter og samfunnet som helhet. En formell innplassering av mesterbrevene i det norske kvalifikasjonsrammeverket vil være et viktig bidrag til å styrke arbeidslivsrelatert og praksisbasert utdanning og opplæring på høyt nivå.

# Introduction

The aim of this report is to compare the profile and level (“breadth” and “depth”) of Norwegian Master Crafts “qualifications” ([[2]](#footnote-3)) to relevant Master Crafts qualifications in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and France. Existing official descriptions of intended and expected learning outcomes and/or competences are used as sources for the comparison. The comparison is thus not of the actual learning outcomes/competences as experienced by individuals or groups of individuals in a work situation ([[3]](#footnote-4)). Master Crafts qualifications in Construction (specialisation in Carpentry[[4]](#footnote-5)) and Hairdressing have been selected for in-depth comparison.

The report builds on the conceptual and methodological insights gained over the last two decades related to the comparison of skills, competences and qualifications (Cedefop [2022a](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4109_en_0.pdf)). These insights are related to the development of learning outcomes-based qualifications frameworks (EQF and corresponding national qualifications frameworks); the development of methodologies for comparing the content of vocational and professional qualifications (Cedefop [2022b](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3090_en.pdf) and UNESCO [2017b](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2221_en.pdf)); as well as the general lessons gained from the shift to and application of learning outcomes in education and training (Cedefop [2017a](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4156_en.pdf), [2022a)](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4109_en_0.pdf). Based on this, the report provides insights along two main dimensions:

* The conceptual and methodological basis for comparing qualifications,
* The similarities and differences (depth and breadth) between Norwegian Master Crafts (Carpentry and Hairdressing) and equivalent qualifications in four European countries.

These insights support the discussions regarding the future positioning of Master Crafts in the Norwegian Qualifications system ([[5]](#footnote-6)) and (in particular) the Norwegian qualifications framework ([[6]](#footnote-7)). Findings of the report will be further developed in a follow-up report to be delivered in autumn 2023. This follow-up report will reflect on the challenges involved in developing higher, vocationally oriented education and training in Norway and the potential, future role played by Master Crafts qualifications in this context.

## 1.1 The Structure of the Report

The report is divided into three main sections:

Section one establishes the conceptual and methodological basis for comparing the selected Master Crafts qualifications. Following a short reflection on the application of the learning outcomes/competence-perspective in defining and describing qualifications, the report suggests using the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) descriptors as reference point for the comparison and elaborates how these can make it possible to capture the ‘breadth’ and ‘depth’ of the chosen qualifications. This detailed unpacking of the key EQF dimension is used to identify a limited set of critical factors – yardsticks - supporting the concrete comparison of Master Crafts qualifications.

Section two is introduced by short introductions to the role of Master Craft qualifications in the five countries covered, underlining that the institutional context in which Master Crafts operate differs significantly between countries. The question following from this is whether and to what extent institutional differences (for example inclusion or non-inclusion in formal qualifications systems; different placement in qualifications frameworks) reflects differences in intended and/or expected learning outcomes/competences? The main part of section two is devoted to the concrete comparison of the intentions expressed in the ten Master Craft qualifications selected ([[7]](#footnote-8)) (five Construction/Carpenter and five Hairdressing). This comparison builds on the principles outlined in section one and is structured according to the two main dimensions of ‘breadth’ and ‘depth’.

Section three summarises the discussion and returns to the question of the Norwegian Master Craft “qualification”, exemplified by ‘Tømrer’ and ‘Frisørfag’, can be compared to Master Craft qualifications in the other European countries covered by the report. Discussions in section 3 are preliminary and will be further developed in a separate report.

# 2. The Conceptual and Methodological Basis for Comparing Qualifications

Comparing vocational qualifications have traditionally been carried out by looking at similarities and differences between the institutions and systems delivering teaching and training. While this perspective (input orientation) is relevant for understanding the characteristics of qualifications, it must be combined with a focus on the outcomes and content of qualifications. Previous research ([Bjørnåvold and Chakroun 2017](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2221_en.pdf)) shows that while institutions and structures differ across countries ([[8]](#footnote-9)), content orientation vary to a lesser degree. This reflects that the skills needed in working life are not formed exclusively in national contexts, but evolves in relation to the requirements of the occupational tasks, influence of global technologies and impact from international markets.

Our starting assumption is thus that while European Master Craft qualifications vary in terms of institutional and legal set up, the content of the same qualifications are aligned according to tasks, functions, technologies and markets.

## 2.1 The Shift to Learning Outcomes/Competences when Defining and Describing Qualifications

In the last few decades, most European education and training systems have changed the way they define and describe qualifications (Cedefop [2016](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2221_en.pdf), 2017a op.cit., 2022a op.cit.). Focus is increasingly on what a learner is expected to know, be able to do and/or understand at the end of the learning period or process (the intended and expected outcomes), and to a lesser degree on the particulars of teaching method, location, and duration. The implications of this shift are important for several reasons. As expressed in Cedefop’s handbook on writing learning outcomes (Cedefop 2022a op.cit.):

*“(Learning outcomes resemble) a Swiss army knife, suitable for a variety of purposes, learning outcomes influence initiatives at different levels and in a wide range of areas. Learning outcomes are commonly used to define the levels of qualifications frameworks, orient curricula, set qualification standards, describe programmes, and define assessment specifications. Learning outcomes are also influencing teaching methods, learning environments and assessment practices. At European level, both in the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, learning outcomes are described as the ‘glue’ binding diverse policy initiatives and instruments together and is seen as a pre-condition for transparent and permeable education and training systems, such as supporting links between vocational and academic programmes. This growing influence of learning outcomes in most European countries, and in (almost) all education and training sectors, reflects a strong political consensus on the perceived usefulness of this approach.”*

The curricula used to describe Master Craft qualifications in Austria, France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland are all applying the learning outcomes approach, outlining what an individual needs to know, is able to do and understand to hold the title of Master Craftsperson. While the overall learning-outcomes principle is shared, countries differ in the way they define, describe and structure these outcomes. From a methodological perspective this is challenging and underlines the need for a shared and neutral reference point making it possible to not only identify any similarities but also get a grip on overall scope and level of this qualification type. ([[9]](#footnote-10)). The adoption (in 2008) of the learning outcomes-based European Qualifications Framework (EQF) provides us with such a shared and neutral reference point.

## 2.2 Articulating the ‘Breadth’ and ‘Depth’ of Expected Learning Outcomes

The EQF, as well as the corresponding national qualifications frameworks, is designed around a horizontal (‘breadth’) and a vertical axis (‘depth’). The following sections clarifies the logic underpinning the EQF's horizontal and vertical dimensions.

### 2.2.1 The Horizontal Dimension – ‘Breadth’

The horizontal dimension of the EQF descriptors clarifies the scope of the qualification, notably pointing to its borderlines. This means to specify the types of knowledge, skills, and general competences to be addressed and mastered by the candidate. The three domains used by the EQF are defined as follows (EU Council 21 May 2017):

* ‘Knowledge’ means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. It is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.
* ‘Skills’ means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive, and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).
* ‘Responsibility and autonomy’ mean the ability of the learner to apply knowledge and skills autonomously and with responsibility ([[10]](#footnote-11)).

In real life these domains will overlap. However, when defining and describing a qualification, this splitting up is useful and necessary as it draws attention to the aspects to be included (or not included). This is of particular importance when comparing qualifications – the splitting up of the intended learning outcomes makes it possible to distinguish what has been included and what has not been included. Based on experience, some aspects should be noted:

* For the knowledge-domain, the distinction between theoretical and factual knowledge is of importance. This refers to the knowledge source and whether the ‘assimilation of information’ takes place inside or outside a context of practice or work. It is also important to note the difference between general (basic) knowledge (for example related to numeracy, literacy, and languages) and specialised knowledge, emerging in relation to a limited task or function. Both these distinctions are at the core of the Master Craft qualification as they underline that knowledge acquisition happens in different settings and takes many forms (…and not only in classrooms, but extensively through work practice…).
* The skills-domain refers to the ability of the individual ‘to do’. The breadth of a Master Craft qualification very much depends on which instrumental, technical and functional skills to be addressed, the character of these skills also matter. While the distinction between cognitive (thinking) and practical (manual and instrumental) skills is important, the level of specialisation also matters. Some skills can furthermore be described as transversal in the sense that they are relevant across all areas of work and practice, others are related to sector or branch, and yet others are exclusive to a single task or function. These distinctions are important as they illustrate how the concept of ‘skills’, or the ability to do, can be articulated at different levels of precision.
* The responsibility and autonomy domain refers to overall ability of the individual to apply the full range of knowledge and skills in (often unpredictable) real-life situations. By many referred to as ‘competence’, the increasing ability to act in a responsible and autonomous way can be seen as an essential part of the travel from novice to expert and from apprentice to Master Craftsperson. This domain can be further specified by drawing attention to transversal (or key) competences. This term underlines the need to look beyond specialised and technical knowledge and skills and draw attention to (for example) self-management competences (time management, learning to learn etc.), communication competences (oral and written presentations etc.), as well as social skills and competences (teamwork, management of others etc.).

When describing the boundaries of a qualification it is essential to be aware of the distinction between skills and competences that can be directly and unambiguously observed (a bricklayer’s ability to put bricks on bricks) and those that are more complex to observe (a bricklayer’s ability to plan their work and cooperate with other trade professionals at the construction site). The ability of a curriculum to capture complex skills and competences varies. It can be noted that qualification authorities and bodies always run a risk in emphasising the easily observable. This is by some referred to as ‘the dumbing down’ of qualifications (Cedefop 2022), something which can be made even worse by testing and evaluation practices paying exclusive attention to what can be directly and ‘objectively’ measured and tested.

### 2.2.2 The Vertical Dimension – ‘Depth’

The vertical dimension of the EQF descriptors captures the complexity of the intended and expected learning outcomes and provides the basis for assigning a formal (EQF and NQF) level. These descriptors are essential when comparing qualifications. Master Craft qualifications can be seen as operating at a high level of complexity and will by function and according to national practices be located at the upper end (5 to 7) of the 8 descriptor levels. Table 1 shows the level descriptors for these levels.

**Table 1 EQF level descriptors levels 5-7**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Knowledge | Skills | Responsibility and Autonomy |
| Level 5 | The learning outcomes relevant to Level 5 are 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 | The learning outcomes relevant to Level 6 are 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 | The learning outcomes relevant to Level 7 are 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. |

Differences in complexity is key when distinguishing between different qualification levels and their intended and expected learning outcomes. The following factors are important to distinguish how complexity increases and can thus be seen to influence the travel an individual takes from novice to expert and from apprentice to Master Craftsperson.

* Complexity always reflects the context - are we speaking of a limited task or function, for example in a specialised field of expertise, or are we speaking of multi-faceted tasks and functions requiring oversight and multi-tasking?
* Complexity reflects the predictability of a situation, a task, or a function. Are we speaking of routine tasks which are clearly structured and predictable or are we facing unpredictability, uncertainty, and ambiguity?
* Complexity reflects the overall ambiguity of a situation where a task or function is to be carried out. The difference between a familiar and clear situation (clearly defined problems to be solved) and a situation characterised by incomplete information (the problem is not clearly defined or understood) is significant. Competing and contradicting information can add to this complexity, as can internal and external distractions.
* Complexity depends on cognitive (thinking) requirements and whether the individual operates according to predefined rules and methods, can combine rules and methods at the interface of tasks and functions, is able to question and improve rules and methods, is able to synthesise and evaluate and identify creative solutions and extend the boundaries of a field.
* Complexity reflects the level of autonomy (independence) demonstrated. The degree of self-management can be identified by looking at level of guidance and supervision required; the ability to take the lead and support and supervise others. The level of autonomy is further demonstrated in situations of uncertainty where change-management and innovation come to the fore. Autonomy is also demonstrated by the ability to form an express own opinion when following rules and taking instructions.
* Complexity reflects the level of responsibility expected and demonstrated. The decisive difference is whether responsibility is limited to individual and specialised tasks or functions, or whether it extends to colleagues and multiple tasks and functions.
* Complexity reflects the ability to be creative and shows whether an individual works within given boundaries or can go beyond these and generate new solutions.
* Complexity can also be seen as a function of engagement expected and demonstrated. Are we expecting a passivity or an active engagement, or something in between?

The ability to think critically and constructively question information, sources and decisions thus defines complexity but can also be seen as a quality fundamental at all levels. The same can be said of certain attitudes (for example accuracy, effectiveness, sense of quality etc.) which are relevant to novices as well as experts.

## 2.3 A Yardstick for the Comparison of Master Craft Qualifications

The terminological and conceptual framework outlined above provides the conceptual reference point for the comparison of the ten Master Craft qualifications addressed by this report. The descriptors introduced by the EQF provide the key reference to us. But as demonstrated by chapter 2.2, the complexity and abstraction of this framework requires us to reduce the number of factors to be accounted for. While this is not optimal, all factors would ideally be relevant, the actual mapping requires a reduction in factors to include. Table 2 and 3 below shows ([[11]](#footnote-12)) what we have been looking for when analysing and comparing the ten qualifications in question. The analysis has been carried out in two steps, starting with boundaries and the breadth.

**Table 2 Yardsticks for Comparing Master Crafts Qualifications – BREADTH.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Breadth – horizontal dimension Context complexity and predictability | | |
| Knowledge | Skills | Autonomy and responsibility – general competences |
| * Type of knowledge expected. * Characteristics of knowledge. * Source of knowledge expected. | * Type of skills expected. * Characteristics of skills expected. * Source of skills expected. | * Type of general competence (A&R) expected. * Characteristics of General competences expected. * Sources of General competences expected. |

Identifying the boundaries of the qualifications is important to get to the core of the two occupational fields chosen for this comparative exercise – Carpentry and Hairdressing. Establishing these boundaries of the Master Craft qualifications covering these two fields allows us to investigate the complexity and thus the level and depth of the qualifications (table 3).

**Table 3 Yardsticks for Comparing Master Craft Qualifications - DEPTH.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Depth – Vertical dimension  Context complexity and predictability |  | Knowledge | Skills | Autonomy and responsibility – general competences |
| 5 | Comprehensive within a field or function, awareness of boundaries. | Command of a comprehensive range of skills to solve problems within a field. | Manage self and others within the field and in view of unpredictable change. |
| 6 | Advanced knowledge within a field facilitating a critical understanding of theories and facts. | Advanced skills mastering innovation and development in complex and unpredictable situations and contexts. | Take responsibility for decisions in unpredictable and changing situations and contexts; manage professional development and learning. |
| 7 | Highly specialised knowledge at the forefront of field or function. | Specialised problem-solving skills facilitating development of better solutions and innovation; ability to combine solutions and integrate solutions from outside. | Ability to contribute to professional knowledge and practices and to review strategic performance of teams. |

Tables 2 and 3 show that the complexity and predictability of the situation directly influences skills and competence requirements. These dimensions are thus important for determining breadth as well as depth of a qualification.

# Master Craft Qualifications in Europe – a Comparison of Qualification Requirements in Carpentry and Hairdressing

The choice of Carpentry and Hairdressing is based on the following factors: Both Master Craft qualifications are numerically significant in the countries covered and can be seen as good examples of the Master Craft qualifications in general. Both qualification types reflect longstanding traditions and operate on the basis of strong professional identities. Finally, the choice of Carpentry and Hairdressing illustrates important differences between Craft and Service trades and what this implies for the breadth and depth of the knowledge, skills and competences addressed. It should be noted that when comparing the expectations to the 10 qualifications in the 5 countries, they will generally build on the completion of qualifications equivalent to level 4 of the EQF and the aligned national qualifications frameworks ([[12]](#footnote-13)). This does not mean that entry is exclusively based on completion of a formal vocational qualification at level 4, in some countries access can be granted based on validation of experiences or a combination of education and workexperience. It should be noted that all Master Craft qualifications covered here also presupposes extensive and relevant work experience. While the length of this work experience varies between the countries, the combination of formal education and work experience is indispensable and forms the basis for the skills and competences held by a proficient Master Craftsperson.

## 3.2 The Expectations of the Master Craftsperson in Carpentry – Breadth and Depth

The Swiss describe a Master Craftsperson in Carpentry (Holzbau) as somebody responsible for the overall management of an enterprise (or part of an enterprise) – taking care of technical, commercial as well as personnel issues (Holzbau Schweiz 2019). He or she is responsible for the daily running of the company as well as for its continuous development. This implies to overview planning and execution of projects and to ensure development of relevant solutions. It is furthermore underlined that the Master Craftsperson must relate actively to his or her employees, to business partners, customers as well the many trades involved in the field of construction. Although countries emphasise different aspects of knowledge, skills and general competences, this description captures the essence of the Master Craftsperson in carpentry as observed across the five European countries covered by this report.

### 3.2.1 Austria

The Austrian Master Crafts qualification in Carpentry (Holzbau Meister) is placed at level 6 in the Austrian national qualifications framework and builds on successful completion of initial vocational training in the relevant area, as well as at least five years of relevant work experience. Requirements to the candidate are listed in three areas, related to (i) knowledge on basic construction principles, (ii) skills related to construction stages (planning, execution and evaluation) and (iii) skills and competences related to legislation as well as project and company management.

**Table 4. Profile of Austrian carpentry Master Crafts qualification (Meister Holzbau)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Basic Construction principles and technology (module 1)** | -Theoretical foundations, mathematics, geometry.  -Knowledge of principles for wood constructions.  -Knowledge of construction types, measurements, company principles and styles. |  | The requirements underline that a Master Craftsperson needs to apply knowledge and skills in a self-directed, independent and responsible way at all relevant stages of construction, in planning as well as execution and final evaluation of projects. |
| **Construction processes (Module 2)** |  | -Project preparation with a focus on ability to produce relevant and detailed plans for all stages.  -Project execution with a focus on ability to measure ad calculate all stages, including the overall project management and cost calculation.  -Project management. |
| **Legal basis, project management and company management (module 3)** | Legal knowledge (in 10 specified areas covering construction, property, and company legislation. | -Project management skills related to calculations, cost calculations and measurement.  -Company management skills related to cost calculations and accounting, personnel management, and marketing. |

Source, Verordnung des Erweiterten Präsidiums der Wirtschaftskammer Österreich über die Befähigungsprüfung für das reglementierte Gewerbe Holzbau-Meister (Holzbau-MeisterBefähigungsprüfungsordnung), 1994/2015

**Breadth:** The Austrian qualification outlines in detail the construction-technical knowledge and skills expected to be held by a Master Craftsperson. The same detailed descriptions are used when describing the knowledge og laws and regulations applicable to the field. The skills and competences required to run and manage a company are referred to in less detail. While it is (initially) stated that a Master Craftsperson must be able to work independently, and in a self-directed and responsible way at all stages of construction, this is not elaborated in detail in the official document. Compared to other countries covered by this report, the Austrian Master is to some extent presented as a technical rather than a company manager.

**Depth:** Expectations to theoretical knowledge and technical (construction related) skills are clearly falling with the range of level 6 of the EQF. It is harder to judge whether the general competences and requirements to autonomy and responsibility are expressed at this level. This may be linked to the way the requirements are articulated, operating with lists of theoretical knowledge and skills (technical and legal) to be remembered and reproduced, only indirectly and implicitly referring to the ability to act independently in complex and unpredictable situations.

### 3.2.2 France

The most precise French equivalent to a Master Crafts qualification is the Brevet Maitrise (BM). This arrangement is managed by the French Chambers of Commerce and Industry and includes for the moment 13 titles officially recognised by the French NQF. The Carpentry Master Craft qualification is not among these and is instead offered as a Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS). It is possible to access a BTS in different ways, but emphasis is on the combination of formal education and work experience. The qualification is also open to validation of prior learning, in principle making it possible to access via professional experience only. The BTS is levelled at EQF level 5 (French NQF level 5). A BTS in Carpentry emphasises the need to combine technical and commercial knowledge, skills and general competences. While the institutional context of the BTS differ from other countries covered by this report, the overall content orientation can be deemed equivalent. Notably the holder of this qualification must be able to identify and apply technical and commercial skills and competences at all stages of the construction process. It is further underlined that the holder must be aware of the wider economic and environmental context of the occupation and business.

**Table 5. Profile of French Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS) in Carpentry**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Technical requirements** | -To make use of knowledge and apply skills making it possible to plan, execute, quality assure and evaluate all types of construction projects and activities, including using IT solutions.  -Collaborate with other trades and partners in the construction process. | | -Ability to intervene at all levels and in all stages of the construction process, to take on overall responsibility for planning, execution, and evaluation of activities.  - Awareness of risk-avoidance and overall quality management and control. |
| **Commercial and management requirements** | -Ensure compliance with standards and norms  -Ensure a good relationship with customers in terms of price and quality.  -Be able to market business. | |

Source: France Competence 2023, Fiche RNCP18315 BTS Systemes constructifs bois at habitat

**Breadth:** The French Carpenter BTS sets clear requirements for the combination of technical and commercial knowledge, skills and general competences and is in this way equivalent in scope and breadth to other qualifications covered by this report. The holder of the qualification is responsible for the overall running of not only the technical but also the managerial and commercial activities. It should be noted that the French qualification document does not distinguish between knowledge and skills but treats them as an integrated whole under the term "competence".

**Depth:** While formally placed at level 5 of the EQF and the French NQF, some of the competence requirements, for example regarding overall technical and commercial responsibilities, seem to fit better with the descriptors used for level 6. It is also worth noting that requirements regarding use of IT-tools, responsibilities for overall quality management and attention to risk management are more explicit than what we find in the other countries covered by the report. It should be noted that the articulation of competence requirements in the French ‘fiche’ is held at a more general level than what we find in other countries. While this gives a good indication of the overall orientation of the qualification, details regarding (in particular) technical knowledge and skills requirements are less explicit than in other countries.

### 3.2.3 Germany ([[13]](#footnote-14))

Building on initial vocational training qualification at level 4 of the DQR/EQF, and relevant work experience, the Master Craft qualification is awarded to candidates who are able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and general competences related to (i) building/construction techniques, (ii) planning and preparation of building processes and projects, (iii) execution and running of building processes and projects, and (iv) management of a company, including the hosting of apprentices. It should be noted that ‘Handlungsfahigkeit’ (ability to act independently and self-directed in an occupational context) is a core principle influencing the way a future Master is trained. The overall objective is to train professionals able to make independent judgements in changing and unpredictable situations. Table 6 illustrates the requirements to knowledge, skills and general competences in the four areas indicated above.

**Table 6 Profile of German Carpentry Master Crafts Qualification**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to….** | **Skills, for example related to….** | **General competence – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to….** |
| **Building techniques** | -Know the physical and static requirements in construction.  -Know the combination of wood, concrete and steel constructions  -Be aware of technical norms. | -Plan, calculate and judge roofing solutions  -Choose and apply different forms of measurement.  -Choose and judge how prefabricated elements support energy consumption. | Overview and combine theoretical knowledge and practical skills in selecting, planning, executing, and monitoring/evaluating techniques. |
| **Work preparation and disposition of materials** | -Judge and order different building materials according to usage.  -Plan logistics.  -Calculate material needs.  -Plan work force requirements.  -Judge tolerances. | | Overview and combine theoretical knowledge and practical skills when judging, calculating, measuring and selecting and overall planning approaches. |
| **Execution and running of projects** | -Produce project offers and calculate project costs.  -Prepare division of work between trades.  -Account for legal regulations.  -Ensure quality control.  - Ensure management of personnel. | | -Overarching responsibility for projects and processes and their execution  -Account for risks. |
| **Management and organisation of company** | -Monitor and analyse costs.  -Marketing.  - Company quality control and management.  - Personnel management.  - Working conditions. | | - Overarching responsibility for the company and its development.  - Account for unpredictability and risks. |

Source: Verordnung uber das Meisterprufungsberufsbild und uber die prufungsanforderungen in den Teilen I und II der Meisterprufung im Zimmerer-Handwerk. 2008/2022

**Breadth:** The German Carpenter Master Craftsperson is expected to command a wide range of highly specialised technical knowledge and a wide range of analytical as well practical skills allowing him or her to apply, independently and with discretion, this knowledge in changing and unpredictable situations. Advanced autonomy and responsibility lie at the heart of the qualification. This combination of analytical and practical skills reflect that the Master Craft qualification grows out of a dual system combining theoretical education and work practice. The combination of technical and occupations knowledge and skills with broad management skills and competences lies at the heart of the qualification.

|  |
| --- |
| **Depth:** The German Carpenter Master Craft qualification is formally placed at EQF and DQR levels 6. Judging the profile illustrated in table 6 above, requirements and expectations to knowledge and skills fall comfortably with the range of level 6 descriptors. A German Master Craftsperson should be in command of advanced knowledge within his or her field and demonstrate skills relevant for the tackling of unpredictability and changing contexts. Overall, the general competence requirements are close to level 7. According to the standards set for the German Master Craftsperson, he or she would almost certainly be able to ‘…take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams’ (EQF descriptors, Responsibility and autonomy, Level 7). |

### 3.2.4 Norway

Building on the initial vocational qualification (Level 4) in Carpentry/Construction as well as at least five years of relevant work experience, the Norwegian Master Craft “qualification” is specified in three parts, one focusing on technical specialisation, the second on managing the construction process and a third addressing company management. Table 7 illustrates some of the requirements listed in the national curricula (Mesterbrevnemnda 2014, updated 2017).

**Table 7 Norwegian Master Crafts carpentry – core elements**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to….** | **General competence – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to….** |
| **Specialisation carpentry (faglig fordypning tømrerfaget)** | -Building processes.  -Products and services.  -Contractual issues.  -Calculations. | - initiating, developing and calculating projects.  - controlling quality and ensuring safety. | -Contribute to development of projects/company.  - Tackling unpredicted change.  - Identifying and using new products. |
| **Technical management Carpentry (Faglig ledelse Byggfag)** | Industryknowledge.  -Legal context.  -Legal procedures.  -Quality control issues  -Rules and regulations. | -Applying role as manager and leader  -Quality of management.  -Communicating with external partners, customers, and authorities. | - Accounting for environmental requirements. |
| **Company management (Bedriftsledelse Byggfag)** | -Legislation.  -Organisational theory  -Employer obligation.  -Trainee supervision.  -Marketing. | -Managing according to set objectives.  -Making decisions.  -Ensuring development and change. | -Avoiding risk.  -Ensuring company internal cooperation and teamwork.  -Ensuring external dialogue and communication.  -Instil a competitive culture.  -Drive innovation. |

Source: Mesterbrevnemnda 2015/2018

**Breadth:** The need to be in command of a wide set of knowledge, skills and general competences is underlined. While the need for technical specialized knowledge is stressed, there is also a strong emphasis on the ability to apply this knowledge in construction projects and processes. To this is added a strong emphasis on company management, including personnel management, and the complex challenges involved in this. This underlines the role of the Master Craft qualification in combining technical and occupational specialisation with advanced management training.

**Depth**: Given that Norwegian Master Crafts operate outside the national qualification framework, no formal level has been ascribed to it. It is difficult, based on the curricula, to assess the knowledge requirements. While clearly comprehensive within the field of occupation, it is open for consideration whether they can be defined at EQF level 5 (as merely comprehensive) or 6 (as advanced and as providing a basis for critical assessment and development). With regards to the skills, notably when combined with the requirements for general competence, the “qualification” operates clearly at level 6. For some aspects, related to company management and the responsibility and autonomy required to operate as a Master Craftsperson, requirements touch level 7 (in the same way as described for the German Master Craft qualification).

### 3.2.5 Switzerland

The Swiss Carpentry Master Craft qualification (Holzbau Meister) is placed at level 6 of the EQF and the Swiss NQF (within the category of ‘Hohere fachprufung’ qualification). As in the four other countries covered, the Swiss qualification combines the technical and commercial/management activities and underlines that the Meister takes on an overarching responsibility for planning, executing and evaluating these. As in other countries the Swiss Master Craft qualification builds on the combination of formal qualifications at level 4-5 with extensive and relevant practical experiences.

**Table 8. Profile of Swiss Master Craft qualification in Carpentry (Holzbau Meister)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Technical requirements** | -Requires knowledge and skills required for running all stages of a construction activity, including the recruitment and development of employees.  -Implementation of quality and safety measurements.  -The continuous development of technical solutions related to construction, including methods and materials. | | -The Master Craftsperson takes overall responsibility for technical, economic/commercial and personnel aspects of running a construction activity and company.  - Develop a commercial and visionary attitude.  - Build social competences relevant for leadership and management.  Be ready for heavy workloads.  -Be able to delegate to others. |
| **Company and commercial requirements** | -Organise the company in terms of resources and finances  -Develop marketing, work towards customers, build professional networks.  -The Master must be prepared for conflict management. | |

Source: Prufungsordnung uber die Hohere Fachprufung fur Holzbau-Meisterin/Meister. 21 August 2019

**Breadth:** As in other countries, the scope of the qualification is defined through the combination of technical and commercial/managerial skills and competences. More than in other countries, however, the Swiss qualification emphasises the commercial and managerial requirements. The Master must be prepared for heavy responsibilities (time and workload) and be able to communicate and collaborate internally in the company with colleagues and employees as well as externally with customers and collaborators. Skills and competences related to strategy development, risk aversion and conflict management are, to exemplify, listed as critical for exercising the role as Meister.

**Depth:** Emphasizing the principle of ‘Handlungskompetenz’ (ability to act independently and self directed), the Swiss qualification is firmly located at level 6 of the EQF. The holder of the qualification is in command of advanced knowledge and skills within his or her area and is also aware of the need for further developing and expanding these. It can be argued that the commercial and managerial requirements are pitched at a higher level than 6 (like for Germany and Norway).

### 3.2.6 The Carpenter Master Craftsperson in Five European Countries

The five cases presented and discussed above confirms that the Master Craft qualification operates within different institutional settings and structures. Three qualifications are placed at level 6 in the EQF, one is at 5 and one operates outside a formal qualification framework. While these differences of course matters, clear similarities exist between the five when it comes to the breadth of the qualifications. All, with some variation, combine a focus on technical skill with a focus on commercial and managerial skills and competences. With regards to the depth of the qualifications – and taking into account the descriptors presented in chapter 2 – the centre of gravity for these five qualifications is clearly at level 6. For some parts of the qualifications (for example the German, Norwegian and Swiss commercial and managerial requirements), the level seems to be ‘pitched’ higher than 6. As for the single qualification currently operating outside a qualification framework (Norway), this is overall within the ranges indicated by level 6 descriptors.

## 3.3 The Expectations of the Master Craftsperson in Hairdressing – Breadth and Depth

The Hairdressing Master Craftsperson must combine a wide range of knowledge, skills and general competences. Apart from the ability to provide high quality services to individual customers he or she must be able to apply knowledge and skills related to hygiene and safety, to know the characteristics of products and tools, and to be in command of the commercial and managerial skills and competences required to run a business. Overall, the Hairdressing Master qualifications must cover and combine skills and competences in three equally important areas: (i) the technical skills related to hairdressing as such, (ii) the communicative aspects related to the serving of customers with different needs, and (iii), the commercial and managerial requirements to somebody in charge of running and developing a business. This combination, reflecting the need to deal with complex and unpredictable situations, influences both breadth and depth of the qualification.

### 3.3.1 Austria

In the same way as for the carpenter Meister, the Hairdressing Meister is formally placed at level 6 of the Austrian National Qualifications Framework. This reflects the high level of trust and value attributed to this qualification in the Austrian context.

**Table 9. Profile of Austrian Master Crafts qualification Hairdressing (Meister Friseur)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Hair techniques/services (module 1)** | For treatment, cutting and colouring of women’s hair and treatment, cutting of men’s hair:  -Respect and relate to wishes of customers  -Offer innovative solutions respecting customers’ wishes as well as offer professional advice  -Precise and careful application of products, instruments, and methods  -Give impression of harmony and creativity | | The Master Hairdresser is overall supposed to be able to deal with complex occupational tasks and projects.  He or she must face unpredictable situations and be able to make decisions in situations with limited information. The Master must judge whether he or she delegates responsibilities to others. The Master has an overarching responsibility in managing employees and to observe when they need to be corrected or need further training. |
| **Management (Module 2)** | (i) General business management  -Set objectives  -Personnel management  -Calculations and costs  -Training and learning  -Service attitudes  (ii) Quality management  (iii) Safety management  (iv) Planning | |

Source, Verordnung Friseur-Meisterpruefung 1994/2020

**Breadth:** The Austrian Master Craft qualification combines advanced technical and occupational specific skills and competences (for example hairdressing techniques) with high requirements to business management and overall emphasis on responsibility and autonomy. As hairdressing is about providing personalised services, dealing successfully with customers is of key importance. Cutting and colouring must always be carried out in dialogue with the customer and his or her requirements. Social and communication skills and competences lie at the heart of the hairdressing occupation, providing the basis for customer relations but also indispensable for managing the business and the team of colleagues and apprentices.

**Depth:** The Austrian Master Craft qualification is placed at 6 in the Austrian NQF. The requirements expressed in the national curriculum are well aligned to the descriptors for this level, by emphasising not only the need for specialised technical skill, but also the skills and requirements required for dealing with matters of high complexity and unpredictability.

### 3.3.2 France

The French Master should be able to work with all types of cutting, styling and colouring, as well as have a thorough knowledge and understanding of relevant products and techniques. The holder of a BM should furthermore be able to take charge of a business and must have the skills and competences required to run this. The Hairdressing Brevet the Metier is one out of 13 Brevet de Metiers formally included, at level 5, in the French NQF.

**Table 10. Profile of French Brevet de Metier (BM) in Hairdressing**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Hairdressing techniques/technical requirements** | -Assist customers in selecting the colour/style best suited to them  -Cut and form in a creative and personalised style  -Know and apply different products  -Apply hygienic and safety standards throughout process  -Take into account different needs of customers, including disabled customers | | Particular emphasis is drawn to the ability to apply the full range of techniques and skills in a creative way which respects the client and relates to his or her needs and wishes. The Master Hairdresser is responsible for the overall service provided to customers by the company/salon. |
| **Commercial and management requirements** | Develop knowledge and skills related to  -Legal and regulation context  -Equipment  -Safety and hygiene regulations  -Continuously evaluate own business performance against the best  -Develop a commercial strategy  -Set objectives for business  -External communication  -Set training objectives and measures | |

Source: France Competence 2023, Fiche RNCP18315 BTS Systemes constructifs bois at habitat

**Breadth:** The French requirements underline the need to be in control of relevant cutting and colouring techniques, of applying hygienic and safety standards, to relate to and service the customer, and run the business according to rules and regulations and sound management principles.

**Depth:** While placed at level 5 in the French NQF, competence requirements are very closely aligned to descriptors at EQF level 6. The level of autonomy and responsibility required reflect high level of complexity and the need to address uncertainty and unpredictability. The Master Craftsperson must also pay attention to the strategic development of the business and pay attention to the training and competence development of his or her team.

### 3.3.3 Germany

As for the Carpentry Master Craft qualification, the Hairdressing Master Craft qualification fundamentally rest on the concept of ‘Handlungsfahigkeit’; or the ability to apply knowledge and skills in all situations, in an independent and self-regulated way. This underlines the importance of work-based and practice-oriented learning where the individual gradually develops his or her ability to take responsibility. This is understood in relation to the term ‘Handlungsfeld’. According to this concept, attention is given to an area of activity, not to a discipline or specialisation. The latter will always have to be applied and understood in relation to this ‘Handlungsfeld’, not the opposite.

**Table 11 Profile of German Hairdressing Master Crafts qualification**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to….** | **Skills, for example related to….** | **General competence – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to….** |
| **Hairdressing techniques/technical requirements** | -In dialogue with customer indicate possible styles, solutions, and possibilities  -Judge character of hair and skin  -Describe and judge relevant products and techniques for colouring and structuring of hair  -Describe and judge products and techniques for make-up  -Describe and judge products and techniques for nail care. | | The Master Craftsperson should be able to independently run a business and take on leadership on working techniques, finances and personnel management and marketing. The Master takes the overarching and autonomous responsibility for developing the business, in relation to a continuously changing and unpredictable requirements and opportunities. |
| **Management of business (salon)** | -Know and apply regulations relevant to accident, employment, health and environment  -Develop a concept for business/salon  -Set prices in relation to costs and existing market-situation locally and regionally  -Develop marketing approach.  -Put in place quality assurance management systems.  -Introduce and use relevant IT-solutions.  -Develop a personnel management approach. | |

Friseurmeisterverordnung 2001/2022.

**Breadth:** The German Master Craft qualification combines in-depth skills related to cutting and colouring techniques, product knowledge and customer service with extensive skills in business management and development. The latter require knowledge on regulation and legalislation, accounting and budgets, marketing, quality assurance as well as overall strategy approachs and development.

**Depth:** The German Master Craft qualification is placed at level 6 in the EQF and in the German NQF. Existing requirements fit overall well with the learning outcomes descriptions applied for this level. Regarding the requirements for business management and strategy development it can be argued that they touch/overlap level 7 descriptors.

### 3.3.4 Norway

The Norwegian Hairdressing Master Craft qualification differs from that of the Carpentry Master Craft (see 3.2.4) by focusing on managerial aspects rather than advancing the technical Hairdressing skills[[14]](#footnote-15).

**Table 12 Norwegian Master Crafts Hairdressing “qualification” – core elements**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to….** | **General competence – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to….** |
| **Occupational (Fag) management (For crafts, including Hairdressing)** | -Industryknowledge.  -Market trends.  -Numbers and calculations  -Service concepts.  -Logistics.  -Ethics.  -Quality and quality assurance.  -Quality control issues.  -Rules and regulations. | -Counselling and advisory techniques.  -Leadership and management.  -Develop offers.  -Contract negotiations and regulations.  -Service development.  -Plan, control and document work.  -Plan and document products.  -Establish quality management.  -Lead execution of work. | -Analyse developments and contribute to further improvements.  -Develop a company culture.  Consider commercial and environmental consequences of products and services.  -Communicate new services and products to customers.  -Deal with unforeseen incidents and developments.  -Evaluate complete work and projects. |
| **Company management (Bedriftsledelse crafts, including hairdressing)** | -Laws and regulations. relevant to business  -Theory on organisations and management.  -Employee relations.  -Conditions for learning and development.  -Economic management and leadership.  -Marketing principles. | -Ability to lead a company.  -Ability to set up a company.  - Evolve own leadership style.  -Decision-making ability.  Deal with unpredicted situations and problems.  -Update oneself on developments.  -Plan and steer economy.  -Develop budget and calculate costs.  -Lead marketing. | -Ability to independent and critical reflection related to articulation and solving of problems  -Cooperate and communicate with employees, customer, authorities and collaborators in general  -Establish the basis for development and innovation  -Analyse business performance and economy together with relevant others |

Mesterbrevnemnda 2014/17

**Breadth:** The focus of the “qualification” is on team and business management and not explicitly on trade/occupational specific skills (techniques). This differentiates the Norwegian approach from that of Austria, Germany and France, where in-depth skills and competences related to the core cutting and colouring is given much attention.

**Depth:** The depth of Norwegian skills and competence requirements are overall equivalent to those we find in other countries and are comfortably placed within the range of descriptors at level 6, although in some areas touching descriptors at level 7 (in dealing with unpredictability and being responsible for development and innovation).

### 3.3.5 Switzerland

The Swiss Master Craft qualification in Hairdressing is structured partly in the same way as the Norwegian qualification by giving emphasis to managerial aspects rather than technical (‘cutting and colouring’) specialisation.

**Table 13. Profile of Swiss Master Craft qualification in Hairdressing (Meister Coiffeur/Coiffeuse)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Knowledge, for example related to…** | **Skills, for example related to…** | **General competences – responsibility and autonomy, for example related to…** |
| **Business management and strategy development** | -Principles related to leadership and management.  -Strategy development and implementation.  -Definition and development of processes and structures.  -Tailoring and adjustment of structures and processes.  -Leading projects. | | Taking on the overall responsibility of a business, the Master craftsperson must continuously evaluate and reflect on the relevance and efficiency of the chosen techniques, approaches and strategies; and be open to implement changes and seek innovation. The Master needs to communicate and collaborate skilfully and efficiently internally as well as externally. |
| **Personnel management** | -Recruiting personnel.  -Introduction of personnel/employees to their tasks.  -Employee dialogue.  -Set frame for style and aesthetics.  -Ending employee contracts.  -Administer personnel. | |
| **Financial management** | -Create a budget and implement it.  -Investments.  -Accounting.  -Acquisition of materials and products. | |
| **Marketing** | -How to attract customers.  -How to relate to customers professionally.  -Win back customers.  -Introduce innovations.  -Internal and external communication. | |

Source: Lernziele Coiffeur/Coiffeuse 2014

**Breadth:** While not explicitly covering the ‘techniques of the trade’, the Swiss qualification is covering a broad range of managerial skills and competences, notably strategy development, personnel management, financial management and marketing.

**Depth:** The Swiss Master Craft qualification is placed at 6 in the EQF and the Swiss NQF. The detailed learning outcomes listed for various managerial specialisations are comfortably placed within the range of level 6 descriptors, occasionally (in particular related to overall responsibilities) touching/overlapping level 7 descriptors.

### 3.3.6 The Hairdressing Master Crafts Qualification in Five European Countries

The five Hairdressing cases presented and discussed above shows, like for Carpentry, that the Master Craft qualification operates within different institutional settings and structures. Three of the qualifications are placed at level 6 in the EQF, one is at 5 and one operates outside a formal qualification framework. We observe both similarities and differences between the five when it comes to the breadth of the qualifications. Three (Austria, Germany and France) combine a focus on technical skill with a focus on commercial and managerial skills and competences. Two countries, Norway and Switzerland, emphasize the commercial and managerial skills and competences as an add-on and extension to already existing technical skills acquired through prior initial vocational training and work experience.

As regards the depth of the qualifications - and reflecting the descriptors presented in chapter 2 - the centre of gravity of these five qualifications is at level 6, including the French qualification which is formally levelled at 5.

As for the single qualification currently operating outside a qualification framework (Norway), requirements to commercial and managerial skills and competences fall firmly within the range of EQF level 6 descriptors. The omission (compared to Austria, Germany and France) of advanced technical skills and competences as an explicit qualification element/module makes it difficult to judge the level of technical mastery of Norwegian candidates (the same applies to Switzerland).

## Concluding Remarks - the Content of Norwegian Master Craft “Qualifications” in Relation to European Equivalents

The analysis of the ten European Master Craft qualifications illustrates a significant level of similarity as regards expectations to knowledge, skills, and competences. While we observe differences in emphasis (for example regarding emphasis on knowledge versus skills and technical versus managerial competences), qualifications seem to pursue the same objectives and be designed according to similar needs. This is confirmed by the placing of 3 of the qualifications at level 6 of the EQF, only the French BTS/BM is formally at 5. But as pointed to in the previous chapter, according to the agreed EQF descriptors, the French qualifications seem to fit well within the range of level 6 descriptors.

The Norwegian Master Craft “qualification” is built on many of the same principles as those applied by the four other countries covered in this report. Both breadth and depth can be compared to qualifications in these countries. This applies to both the Carpentry and Hairdressing qualifications, although some unclarity remains regarding the technical/instrumental specialisation of the Norwegian Master Hairdresser. When it comes to the business and personnel management aspects of the qualifications, requirements are close to those set for level 7 (in the same way as for Germany and Switzerland).

This being said, and as illustrated by France, the formal levelling of a qualification is not exclusively dependent on the level of expected learning outcomes. In some countries level assignments reflect existing education and training (input) structures rather than skills and competence (outcome) expectations. The mix and balancing of input and outcome factors boil down to political considerations in each country.

Given that the Norwegian NQF is now being evaluated and potentially reformed, the formal inclusion and placing of the Master Craft qualifications should be carefully considered. This report shows that the content and profile of Norwegian Master Craft qualifications can be seen as equivalent to similar qualifications in the four countries covered, both with regards to breadth and depth. Overall, the Norwegian Master Craft qualification combines theoretical knowledge and practical skills and competences in a way which adds value to individuals, companies, and society in general. This should now be appropriately recognised in the formal qualifications system and by the Norwegian Qualifications Framework.

# ANNEX 1 Terminology

The brief definitions provided by [ESCO](https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en) for the two trades – and in the four languages covered – illustrate terms used by the four languages when addressing the occupational areas covered by this report.

**ESCO basic, multi-lingual definitions of occupations (Beruf, Fag)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Carpenter/Charpentier/Zimmerer/Tømrer** | **Hairdresser/Coiffeur/Friseur/Frisør** |
| **English** | Carpenters cut, shape and assemble wooden elements for the construction of buildings and other structures. They also use materials such as plastic and metal in their creations. Carpenters create the wooden frames to support wood framed buildings. | Hairdressers offer beauty services such as cutting, colouring, bleaching, permanent waving and styling clients' hair. They ask their clients about their hairstyle preferences in order to provide customised services. Hairdressers use clippers, scissors and razors. They provide hair and scalp treatments and shampoo, condition and rinse hair |
| **French** | Les charpentiers/charpentières coupent, façonnent et assemblent des éléments en bois pour la construction de bâtiments et de structures diverses. Ils/Elles utilisent également des matériaux tels que le plastique et le métal dans leurs créations. Ils/Elles construisent les charpentes en bois destinées à soutenir les bâtiments à ossature en bois | Les coiffeurs/coiffeuses offrent des services de beauté tels que la coupe, la coloration, la décoloration, l’ondulation permanente et le coiffage des cheveux des clients. Ils/Elles demandent les préférences des clients en matière de coiffure pour pouvoir fournir des services personnalisés. Ils/Elles utilisent des tondeuses, des ciseaux et des rasoirs. Ils/Elles fournissent des soins capillaires et du scalp au moyen de shampoings et d’après-shampoings, et rincent les cheveux. |
| **German** | Zimmerer sägen, formen und montieren Holzelemente für Gebäude und andere Bauwerken. Sie verwenden für ihre Arbeit auch Materialien wie Kunststoffe und Metalle. Zimmerer fertigen die Rahmen für nach der Holrahmenbauweise errichtete Häuser. | Friseure bieten Dienstleistungen im Bereich Schönheitspflege an, beispielsweise das Schneiden, Färben und Frisieren von Haaren oder Dauerwellenbehandlungen. Sie befragen die Kunden zu ihren Frisurwünschen, um sie individuell zu bedienen. Friseure verwenden Haarschneidemaschinen, Scheren und Rasierapparate. Sie bieten Haar- und Kopfhautbehandlungen und behandeln das Haar mit Shampoo, Pflegeprodukten und Spülungen. |
| **Norwegian** | Tømrere kapper, former og monterer treelementer for bygging av bygninger og andre konstruksjoner. De bruker også materialer som plast og metall under byggingen. Tømrere lager trerammene for å støtte bygninger med trerammer. | Frisører tilbyr skjønnhetstjenester som klipping, farging, bleking, permanentkrøller og styling av klientens hår. De spør kundene sine om frisyrepreferanser for å tilby tilpassede tjenester. Frisører bruker klippemaskiner, sakser og barberkniver. De gir hår- og hodebunnsbehandlinger, og bruker sjampo og balsam under hårvask. |

# Annex 2 The Institutional Context of Master Craft Qualifications in Austria ([[15]](#footnote-16)), France, Germany ([[16]](#footnote-17)), and Switzerland

## Austria

The Master Craftsperson (Meister) qualification is an examination, which forms part of the optional continued professional development offering in Austria. It is intended for those who intend to run their own business in their trade or craft sector and upgrade their skills (the Meisterprüfung for those who work in a regulated crafts and the Befähigungsprüfung in regulated non-craft trades). The objective of the Meister qualification in Austria is to develop specialist competences, enabling holders to work in an executive position carrying out complex tasks, or being able to manage a company and train apprentices. This can currently be taken for 79 skilled crafts (Meisterprüfung) and in 39 Befähigungsprüfung (regulated non-craft trade. This means that they are offered in more than half of the dual VET pathways currently on offer in Austria (there are approximately 215 dual VET routes). People can take the Meister route straight from school-based VET or an apprenticeship. However, in practice, exam candidates hold a relevant specialist professional qualification, usually an apprenticeship diploma, and relevant specialist practical experience. In 2015 a survey of Meister candidates showed that the vast majority (82%) acquired an apprenticeship diploma as their initial VET (IVET) qualification before taking the Master craftsperson examination (MCE). For over 88% of respondents, the specialist area of their MCE was the same or related to their IVET qualification (IBW, 2016). Furthermore, many candidates also have a substantial amount of experience; 90% had at least one year of professional experience, and 27% did not take the examination until they had acquired ten years of practice (ibid), despite there being no legal obligation to acquire professional practice as an access criterion.

Financing: The fees for proof of competence examinations (Befähigungsprüfungen) are on average €550, and for master craftsperson examinations on average €371. The examination fees are paid for by the candidate.

## France

The closest equivalent to a Master Crafts qualification in France is the Brevet de Maîtrise (BM) which is placed at level 5 in the French NQF. These qualifications are formally included in the national registry of qualifications and they are offered and delivered by the Chambers arts and crafts ([Chambre de Métiers et de l’Artisanat](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chambre_de_m%C3%A9tiers_et_de_l%27artisanat_en_France)). These qualifications are considered to offer the highest levels of professional skills and competences within arts and crafts and prepare the holder to run a business. For the moment 13 BMs are recognised by the [RNCP (Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%A9pertoire_national_des_certifications_professionnelles" \o "Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles). Le brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS) can also be seen as an equivalent to the Master Craft qualifications as found in Germany and Norway. Levelled at 5 in the French NQF, and the EQF, the candidate has to pass a national exam with clearly expressed competence requirements. The BTS can be acquired in different ways, but notably through a combination of theoretical education and work practices. It is also possible to acquire the title through validation of experiences ([Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Validation_des_acquis)). There are currently 122 specialisations of BTS ([Onisep](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_national_d%27information_sur_les_enseignements_et_les_professions" \o "Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions)).

Financing: The BTS/BTM are publicly financed educational programmes and certifications. Tuition and fees vary by type of institution: public secondary schools (registration fee only); private secondary schools under contract with the government (between €300 and €900 annually), and other institutions not under government contract (€1,500 to €6,000 annually).

## Germany([[17]](#footnote-18))

A completed apprenticeship qualification in a craft or in exceptional circumstances working in the craft for many years is necessary to embark on a Meister examination. Higher vocational education in Germany specifies a progression starting from a vocational qualification at level 4 EQF and then moving on to craft specialist at Level 5 EQF, Bachelor Professional (e. g. Meister) at Level 6 EQF, and Master Professional (e. g. Conservator / Restorer) at Level 7 EQF. This vocational pillar of the German education and training system builds on the principle that young people learn the profession or the craft during their apprenticeships before they learn how to run a business or train other apprentices. This approach is considered critical for developing high level vocational skills and competences. A revision of the Vocational Training Act in 2020 gave all Meister Craftsmen the new title “Bachelor Professional“. This title distinguishes bachelor in VET from the academic bachelor’s degrees but signal the same level. For example, a Meister craftsman in carpentry can also use ‘Bachelor Professional in Carpentry’ on their business card. One of the reasons to link Meister to the EQF was to signal international customers and competitors the level of competencies Bachelor Professionals have. In some countries a degree level qualification is often needed to secure a job or contract, for example, building an organ, and this latest development ensures German craftsmen’s formal competitiveness in the international economy. In Germany, there are occupations where Meister qualifications are necessary for independent practicing of a craft, and to set up and run their own business. Meister qualifies to employ and train apprentices and offers access to crafts academies, universities of applied sciences and universities. The list of Meister qualifications is defined by law (see Appendix 5/B). Currently there are 53 such crafts, similar number as apprenticeships in craft. Crafts are regulated by law and the Vocational Education and Training Act is mirrored in the crafts’ act. Chambers’ regulations are based on the Vocational Training Act.

Financing: Meister usually costs between Euro 8-12000 a year (depending on sector), which includes the programme costs and examination Statutory entitlement to financial support is available in the form of grants (this does not need to be paid back if the qualified Meister starts their own business and employs someone.) Scholarship programmes are also available.

## Switzerland

The Meister qualification in Switzerland is a vocational training program that prepares individuals for skilled trades. It is a professional qualification (Höhere Fachprüfung) that is recognized throughout Switzerland and is equivalent to Master Craftsperson’s certificates in Austria and Germany. [The Meister qualification is organized by the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) and is offered in various fields such as construction, engineering, and manufacturing**1**](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/apprenticeships/publications/toolkit/programme-and-project-level/transitions-and-evaluation/transition/steps-and-tips/lang--en/index.htm). The requirements for obtaining the Meister qualification in Switzerland vary depending on the field of study. However, in general, individuals must have completed an apprenticeship and have several years of work experience in their field.

Financing: Since 2018 will learners aiming for Höhere Fachprüfung (equivalent to Master craftsperson) receive public financial support (Bund). This amounts to 50% of tuition costs, normally maximum 10500 CHF for Höhere Fachprüfungen.

1. () OECD is currently exploring the possibility of an international assessment of achieved VET skills and competences (“PISA” for Vocational Education and Training). Whether this kind of assessment will be realised on a larger scale is still uncertain and will be decided after finalisation of current pilot study 2024/25. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. () Norwegian Master Crafts currently operate outside the formal national qualifications system and is thus not defined as part of the Norwegian national qualifications framework (NKR). This is signalled in this report by using “……”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. () See footnote (1) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. () According to [ESCO](https://ESCO.EC.Europa.eu) the English term Carpenter is used as synonym to the Norwegian Tømrer, the German Zimmerer/Holzbau and the French Charpentier. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. () Qualification system is defined (Cedefop [2023](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-glossary)) as ‘…the organised range of mechanisms, structures and activities which enable citizen access to education and training, leading to qualifications adapted to needs and giving access to employment, recognition of skills and qualifications, lifelong guidance and lifelong learning.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. () Qualification framework is defined (Cedefop [2023](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-glossary)) as ‘…an instrument for developing, classifying and issuing qualifications at international, national, regional or sectoral levels according to a set of criteria (such as descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. () The English term curriculum is in this report refers to the official documents issued at national level to express what a candidate is expected to know, understand and be able to do when having passed a final test or examination. A curriculum will also to some extent express the requirements to teachers in terms of teaching methods and structuring of learning. The term curriculum is not widely used in the countries covered by the report but captures the function of the documents. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. () This observation is based on a comparison of expected outcomes for 4 vocational qualifications in 26 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin-America, see Bjørnåvold and Chakroun 2017b op.cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. () An alternative would be to use one of the selected national curricula as reference point and observe similarities and differences in relation to this. This would lock the comparison to the content and profile of the country chosen as reference point, not only introducing a bias but also making it difficult to judge the overall scope and level of the qualification type. The EQF provides a shared and neutral basis for comparison (and has demonstrated its ability to serve as such since its introduction in 2008) and thus informs this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. () When EQF was adopted in 2008 this third domain was identified as competence. This was changed to Responsibility and autonomy in the updated version of the EQF in 2017, signalling that competence is an overarching concept signalling how individuals can apply knowledge, skills in a responsible and autonomous way. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. () The transparent simplification suggested in 2.3 opens up to future improvements and demonstrates the limitation as well as the strength of the approach applied for this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The countries addressed here all operate with 8 level NQFs and with the main, initial vocational qualification certificate at level 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. () The original decision (after the adoption of the EQF in 2008) to level of the German Meister Craft qualification at 6 was important as it stressed the equivalence of work based to academic qualifications. The level, or depth, of a qualification should thus refer to the learning outcomes required, not the type of institution delivering it. The German decision has later been adopted also by other countries, as illustrated by Austria and Switzerland in this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. () The Norwegian case is interesting as outlines managerial skills and competence requirements to be shared across a wide range of Aesthetic occupations, crafts and trades (a total of 21 specialisations). While these general skills and competence requirements have to be contextualised by the candidate, they illustrate that many skills and companies are shared across occupational specialisations and can be termed cross-sectoral and in some cases as transversal (See Bjornavold et.al. 2022) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. () Source for this section is: Laczik, A., Emms, K., Dabbous, D., Quyoum, A. (2022). Master Craftsperson Qualifications across Four European Countries: Austria, Germany, Slovenia and Sweden. London: Edge Foundation) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. () Source for this section is: Laczik, A., Emms, K., Dabbous, D., Quyoum, A. (2022, op.cit.) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. () The following definition of Meister is provided by <https://www.juraforum.de/>

    *Unter einem Meister versteht man einen höheren Berufsabschluss in verschiedenen Berufen, darunter handwerkliche, künstlerische und landwirtschaftliche Berufe. Um sich Meister nennen zu können, muss eine Meisterprüfung erfolgreich abgelegt werden, § 51 HandwO. Durch diese wird die [Befähigung](https://www.juraforum.de/lexikon/befaehigung" \o "Befähigung) des Prüflings festgestellt, ein zulassungspflichtiges Handwerk meisterhaft auszuüben und selbstständig zu führen. Im Rahmen der Meisterprüfung wird ebenfalls überprüft, ob der Prüfling befähigt ist, Lehrlinge ordnungsgemäß auszubilden.* [↑](#footnote-ref-18)