

# Modular training courses

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 PORTUGAL

## Timeline

2022 Approved/Agreed

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

2025 Implementation

ID number 43302

## Background

To improve the qualification levels of the Portuguese population, it is necessary to strengthen the education and training system, which will leverage the productive potential of the economy and contribute to reducing socio-economic and geographic inequalities. The VET agreement foresees the political design of an integrated and consistent strategy to boost VET offers, valuing the role of vocational training as a mechanism to promote social, professional and academic mobility. With Portugal's lifelong learning as a strategic plan for the next decade, and reinforcing the goal of convergence with Europe, a set of reforms, investments and measures that contribute to increasing the participation of the Portuguese population in initial and continuing training was defined.

## Objectives

- (a) To achieve the specific training needs of the employed and unemployed.
- (b) To promote the return of the unemployed to the labour market through a rapid integration in training actions of short and medium duration.
- (c) To allow the acquisition of relevant competences, or the valorisation of competences already held, always allowing the continuity of the qualification pathway.
- (d) To enable the gradual acquisition of a professional qualification.

## Description

Modular training courses (*Formação Modular Certificada*) are addressed to adults aged 18 and over, employed or unemployed, who do not have the appropriate qualifications to enter or progress in the labour market, especially, those who have yet to complete basic or upper secondary education.

This is a modality that allows flexible training paths, through the realisation and certification of competence units and/or short duration training units (UFCD), that can be capitalised to obtain one, or more than one, qualification at level 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 of the NQF and EQF that reflect the National catalogue of qualifications (CNQ).

Whenever an adult completes a training course, he/she gets a certificate listing all the units

of competence or UFCD (short-term training units) successfully completed.

ANQEP has the responsibility for coordinating the implementation. The providers may be public or private schools of basic and secondary education; vocational training centres of IEFP; other entities such as municipalities, companies or business associations, trade unions and ONG, as long as they are part of the network of training entities of the national qualifications system.

### **2022 Approved/Agreed**

This measure is part of the NIP under the package Skilling and reskilling.

The new legal framework for certified modular training courses (Ordinance No 66/2022) promotes flexibility and complementarity of the modalities of adult education and training and expands the intervention of the SNQ in the non-higher post-secondary level. It aims to contribute to meeting the needs of the labour market in terms of specialised skills, at non-university level, and to encourage the participation of adults in lifelong learning, ensuring conditions for capitalising on the training undertaken to improve their qualification levels and for continuing their studies. In support of these aims, it introduces changes: the extension of this training modality to level 5 of the national qualifications framework (QNQ); and the removal of the ceiling of 600 hours for participation in certified modular training, which was one of the rules limiting the participation of adults. This creates the flexibility to adapt training to people's needs, by adopting the training pathways without the time limit. These pathways could be organised in a tailor-made way, and linked to different training units from the national qualifications catalogue.

The revision of these courses reinforces the complementarity of this modality with others, including adult education and training courses (EFA), Apprenticeship+, Technological specialisation courses (CET) and processes of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC).

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, Modular training courses had a strong impact on the qualifications of adults, particularly those who needed to complete qualifications, which resulted in 75 996 certifications of EQF/NQF level 5 through modular training courses.

Ordinance No 66/2022, of 1 February, was amended by Ordinance No 333/2023 of 3 November. Some aspects regarding the operationalisation of Modular training courses were clarified, establishing that certified Modular training courses can also be used to obtain the 1st cycle of basic education.

### **2024 Implementation**

From January to December 2024, 86 798 level 5 training unit certifications were obtained through modular training courses.

### **2025 Implementation**

A total of 86 026 individuals were certified in Level 5 training unit certifications through modular training courses until September 2025.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP)
- National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP)

## **Target group**

## Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)  
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)  
Learners with migrant background, including refugees  
Learners with disabilities  
Adult learners  
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)  
Unemployed and jobseekers  
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment  
Low-skilled/qualified persons  
Learners from other groups at risk of exclusion (minorities, people with fewer opportunities due to geographical location or social-economic disadvantaged position)

## Thematic categories

### Modernising VET offer and delivery

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses  
Expanding VET programmes to EQF levels 5-8

### Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Developing and applying qualifications smaller/shorter than full  
Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

### Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[Decree- Law \(Decreto-Lei\) No 396/2007 of 31 December 2007](#)

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[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 66/2022 of 1 February 2022](#)

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[Declaration of Retification \(Declaracao de Retificacao\) No 11/2022 of 14 March 2022](#)

## Related policy developments

2024 **Completed**

### Programme green skills and jobs

The programme Green skills and jobs (*Trabalhos & Competências Verdes*) comprises short and medium duration training courses, addressed to employees of companies directly or indirectly affected by the increase in energy costs, and to the unemployed, aged 18 or over, registered at PES.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

CVET

2025 **Implementation**

### VET agreement

The VET agreement is to be a common ground of a tripartite understanding, between the government and the social partners, in the following areas of intervention:

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

CVET

2025 **Implementation**

### Qualifica programme

The *Qualifica* programme is based on:

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Qualifica passport

The *Qualifica* passport is a guidance instrument and personalised register of all qualifications, achieved learning outcomes and competences acquired or developed by an individual.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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## 2025 Implementation

### Recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)

Ordinance No 232/2016 consolidated the rules of RVCC, introduced *Qualifica* centres, described a simple process of creating and authorising them, strengthened the teams of professionals in these centres and expanded the network.

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#### Type of development

Practical  
measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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