

Qualifica programme

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN

 PORTUGAL

Timeline

2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation
2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

ID number 35826

Background

At national level, the main political priorities regarding lifelong learning are:

- (a) revitalising adult education and training as a central pillar of the qualifications system;
- (b) ensuring the continuity of lifelong learning policies;
- (c) constantly improving quality in education and training.

The *Qualifica* programme promotes training programmes that lead to an effective qualification, as opposed to very short duration training.

Objectives

The *Qualifica* programme is a flagship integrated strategy promoting adult training and qualification. It also aims to:

- (a) raise employability;
- (b) promote digital and literacy competences;
- (c) link training with labour market needs.

Description

The *Qualifica* programme is based on:

- (a) cooperation and coordination among education, labour and higher education ministries in the development and implementation of policy tools and instruments;
- (b) combining adult education and professional training with recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC process);
- (c) promoting the coherence of the network of training courses;
- (d) promoting tailor-made training.

2016 legislation introduced *Qualifica* centres as a key tool of the programme, regulating their organisation and set-up. The centres cover low-skilled or unemployed adults (18 or over) and, exceptionally, NEETs (not in education, employment or training). They implement the RVCC process combined with mandatory attendance of certified training; training is tailor-made according to the trainees' profiles and individual needs. They also offer personalised information and guidance to NEETs. The *Qualifica* passport and the National credit system for VET are also important instruments linked with the programme and used in these centres.

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No 32/2019 approved the *Qualifica* AP programme. This programme aims to train and value public administration employees with low qualifications; currently there are more than 150 000 that have not completed compulsory education (12th year of school). The first *Qualifica* AP centres were created in three different governmental areas: national defence; finance; and labour, solidarity and social security.

2020 Implementation

Qualifica centres reorganised their activities to provide their services online, as in RVCC process and EFA programmes, and also promoted online events such as workshops and dissemination activities. The digital conference Adult education and training in times of confinement was held in July 2020.

Dispatch No 5182/2020 gives the possibility to new entities (e.g. municipalities, training centres, public clusters of schools, professional schools) to develop *Qualifica* centres; it also renews the operating licence of existing ones.

2021 Implementation

The Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) *Qualifica* centres invested in the development of a digital platform to develop RVCC processes online. IEFP also worked on developing a platform to allow sharing training materials used by *Qualifica* centres with their network of vocational training centres.

Legislation 11427/2021 created five *Qualifica* AP (Public Administration) centres, with territorial vocation and another specific *Qualifica* AP Centre for Local Administration (municipalities), responding to the qualification needs of central and local administration workers. At the end of 2021, there were 310 *Qualifica* centres plus nine *Qualifica* centres AP.

Legislation No 62/2022 amended the regime for the creation, organisation and functioning of *Qualifica* Centres, focused on:

- (a) the need for greater autonomy and accountability of the *Qualifica* centres;
- (b) the importance of developing the establishment of territorial or sectoral partnership networks;
- (c) the creation of the assessment and certification commissions that assume centrality in the effective conclusion by adults of incomplete qualification paths;
- (d) the possibility of the centres to develop their activity at distance, always bearing in mind the need to ensure an individualised and quality intervention.

2022 Implementation

The quality framework of *Qualifica* Centres (*Carta da Qualidade dos Centros Qualifica*) was published. It is the reference for the activity of *Qualifica* centres, regarding the

provision of quality services, the efficiency and effectiveness levels achieved and for the intervention of National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP) in the management and regulation of the network.

2023 Implementation

Ordinance No 23/2023, of 9 January, introduced the first amendment to Ordinance No 62/2022, of 31 January, which regulated the organisation and operation of specialised adult qualification centres. The amendment defined the composition of the staff to include an administrative technician with the following duties, among others:

- a. participating in the implementation of information and dissemination actions aimed at mobilising adults for lifelong learning processes;
- b. assisting the coordinator in supporting the work of the Assessment and certification commission;
- c. supporting the coordinator and the technicians on recognition and validation of competences.

In November, the *Qualifica* Programme reached one million enrolments since its creation in 2017.

2024 Implementation

A call for tenders was launched to support the operation of the Qualifica centres in the North, Centre, and Alentejo regions. EUR 100 million was allocated, 85 million of which will be invested by the ESF+. The application deadline was 29 April 2024.

At that time, the operations, scheduled to last 36 months, were in the process of implementation.

2025 Implementation

Starting in 2025 and scheduled for completion in 2026, a specific evaluation was initiated to provide a clearer understanding of the initiative's implementation. The evaluation was developed by EY Parthenon and coordinated and funded by PESSOAS 2030.

A comprehensive multiplatform communication campaign was launched in September 2025 to highlight the importance of the Qualifica centres in promoting lifelong learning, reskilling, and upskilling. The campaign included TV, radio, social media with influencers, centre visits, and an event with 200 participants.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security (MTSSS)
- Ministry of Education (until April 2024)
- National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Innovation (MECI) (since April 2024)

Target group

Learners

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

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

Thematic categories

Modernising VET infrastructure

Improving digital infrastructure of VET provision

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Developing and updating learning resources and materials

Acquiring key competences

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Ordinance \[Portaria\] No 232/2016, of 29 August 2016](#)

[Decree-Law \[Decreto-Lei\] No 14/2017, of 26 January 2017](#)

[Ordinance \[Portaria\] No 47/2017, of 1 February 2017](#)

[Resolution of the Council of Ministers No 32/2019, of 14 February 2019](#)

[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 5182/2020, of 5 May 2020](#)

[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 11427/2021, of 19 November 2021](#)

[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 62/2022, of 31 January 2022](#)

[Quality Framework of Qualifica Centres](#)

[Qualifica initiative](#)

[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 23/2023, of 9 January 2023](#)

[Notice \(Aviso\) PESSOAS-2024-6](#)

[Strategically Important Operations - Qualifica centres \(Operacoes de Importancia Estrategica - Centros Qualifica\)](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Local projects promoting qualifications level B1/B2/B3

The local projects promoting qualifications - an adult education and training offer tailored to the needs of the different territories - focus on the motivation of citizens with a low level of education and literacy, which are generally more difficult to engage in training or schooling activities

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

Technological specialisation courses

Technological specialisation courses (CET) are a modality of education and training at post-secondary non-tertiary levels that enables specialised training paths in different technological areas, developing professional skills.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Modular training courses

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

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Adult education and training courses

Adult Education and Training courses (EFA) are a flexible training pathway of variable duration, according to the certification level.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET 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:

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

2025 Implementation

National anti-poverty strategy

The approach underlying the National anti-poverty strategy goes far beyond the definition of poverty as the deprivation of monetary resources, avoiding approaches focused solely on the analysis from a monetary point of view and seeking to make poverty reduction dependent only on economic growth.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

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.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

National credit system for VET

In 2017, Portuguese legislation introduced a National credit system for VET in line with ECVET principles, which was intended to support permeability between VET pathways and higher education, as well as mobility within Europe. A major priority is that the system supports adult qualifications.

 PORTUGAL

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Qualifica* programme: Portugal. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update)

[Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/35826>