

# Recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 PORTUGAL

## Timeline

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

ID number 28703

## Background

A national system for the validation of prior learning, called Recognition, validation and certification of competences, RVCC (*Reconhecimento, validação e certificação de competências*), was put in place in 2001, through RVCC centres. At that time, RVCC only validated school competences equivalent to the ninth year of schooling and was intended for adults aged 18 or more.

In 2006, RVCC was extended to upper secondary education and to professional competences. In the same year, the new opportunities centres (CNOs) were created. CNOs validated secondary school competences (equivalent to the 12th year of schooling) and professional competences, based on the standards established in the National catalogue of qualifications. In 2013, the CNOs were closed and replaced by the centres for qualification and vocational education (CQEPs), which extended their role to guidance and referral of young people aged 15 to 18.

## Objectives

To boost adults' and NEETs' qualifications and tackle the excessive structural qualification deficit of the Portuguese population.

To ease adults' and NEETs' access to further studies and boost their employability.

## Description

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.

The RVCC process comprises two paths, education and professional, each based on a different set of standards:

- (a) the key competence standards (for education validation);
- (b) the professional competence standards (for professional validation).

The RVCC process also utilises a set of specifically designed evaluation tools. Candidates following the education path can obtain a certificate of basic or secondary general education (EQF levels 1 to 3). The professional path leads to a professional certification. If candidates also hold the corresponding academic certificate, they obtain a double certification at EQF level 2 or 4. Candidates can follow the education and professional path simultaneously if they wish to acquire a double certification.

Since 2016, as part of the *Qualifica* programme, *Qualifica* centres have been tasked with carrying out RVCC; they target both adults (over 18 years) and young people, especially NEETs. In 2017, Decree-Law No 14/2017, amending Decree-Law. No 396/2007, changed the regulation of the National qualification system (SNQ), describing *Qualifica* centres as one of its structures. By the end of 2017 there were about 300 centres in Portugal.

*Qualifica* centres target learners with low and very low qualifications. Based on the profile and needs of each trainee, they seek to help them choose suitable qualification pathways, aiming to ease their access to further studies and boost their employability. To ensure higher quality training, the centres focus on the complementarity between recognition of prior learning and mandatory training (at least 50 hours of complementary classroom training). Some applicants can reach a qualification level only through validation of prior learning and attending the mandatory training. It is also common for someone to combine validation and certification of skills with attending training courses to achieve a qualification of basic or secondary level (including professional qualification).

<p><b>2016 Implementation</b></p>
<p><b>2017 Implementation</b></p>
<p><b>2018 Implementation</b></p>
<p><b>2019 Implementation</b></p> <p>Implementation is continuing.</p>
<p><b>2020 Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2020, there were 310 <i>Qualifica</i> centres with 127 504 enrolled learners. Approximately 27 000 individuals initiated a RVCC process and 13 658 RVCC certificates were issued (including partial).</p>
<p><b>2021 Implementation</b></p> <p>In 2021, 310 <i>Qualifica</i> centres had 145 742 enrolled learners. There were 27 983 referrals for an RVCC process, and 13 714 adults were certified, out of which 7 447 received to a total certification (school and professional).</p> <p>The Key competences framework for adult education and training – Basic level, was revised and updated.</p> <p>New legislation was published to regulate the RVCC with the aim of reinforcing the flexible nature of this approach and the need to adapt the process to the adult profile, specifically the possibility of obtaining a qualification at level 5 of the national qualifications framework (NQF). This change is aligned with the Agreement, vocational training and qualification: a strategic design for people, for companies and for the country. Another relevant change is the possibility of granting a financial incentive to adults who obtain a school or vocational certification under the RVCC. This possibility is framed in the Recovery and resilience plan (RRP).</p>
<p><b>2022 Implementation</b></p> <p>The measure is part of the NIP under the package Skilling and reskilling.</p>

In 2022, there were 316 Qualifica Centres with 156 584 enrolled learners. 34 317 adults initiated a RVCC process and 15 600 RVCC certificates were issued (including partial).

The measure Qualifica accelerator (Acelerador Qualifica) was created. It consists of an incentive addressed to the individual searching for a qualification, to increase the participation and certification in RVCC processes. This measure introduces, for the first time, the possibility to attribute a financial support to the participants in RVCC processes, possibility that until now only existed for the participants in training. The total amount of the Qualifica accelerator investment is EUR 55 million, for a target of 100 000 certifications in RVCC between 2021 and 2025.

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, 15 976 adults benefited from the support of Qualifica accelerator. 34 881 adults initiated a RVCC process and 15 420 RVCC certificates were issued (including partial).

### **2024 Implementation**

From January to December 2024, the number of certifications (total and partial) of adults in RVCC was around 20 500.

### **2025 Implementation**

From January to September 2025, 16 742 adults obtained certification (total and partial) in RVCC.

From 2021 to September 2025, 63 123 adults received support from the Qualifica accelerator. During that period, the investment already made by the Qualifica accelerator amounted to EUR 37.7 million.

## **Bodies responsible**

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

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Adult learners  
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)  
Unemployed and jobseekers  
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

## **Thematic categories**

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

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**

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

## European priorities in VET

### VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

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

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

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[Dispatch \[Despacho\] No 12126/2021, of 14 December 2021](#)

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[Key Competencies Framework](#)

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[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 61/2022, of 31 January 2022](#)

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

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[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 132/2022, of 30 March 2022](#)

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[Ordinance \(Portaria\) No 45/2023, of 10 February 2023](#)

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## Related policy developments

### 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

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

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.

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### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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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

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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 of trainers (RVCC-For)**

The Recognition, validation and certification of competences of trainers (RVCC-For) process, launched in 2019, targets professionals (including VET-school leaders) with proven experience as trainers or in other education and training activities, who wish to certify their pedagogical competences a

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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**2025 Implementation**

## **Competence-based qualifications in specific sectors**

In 2014, the Portuguese confederation of tourism (CTP) commissioned the project Competence-based qualifications for the tourism sector. It aimed to develop qualification standards based on a diagnosis of skills needs in the tourism sector.

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**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC): 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/28703>