

# Introducing the learning outcomes approach to VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 PORTUGAL

## Timeline

2015 Implementation	2016 Implementation	2017 Implementation
2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation
2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation
2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation	

**ID number 28699**

## Background

The National qualifications system (SNQ) states that the National qualifications catalogue (CNQ) shall include competence-based qualifications. Identifying for each one their corresponding competence and training standards and qualification level in accordance with the national qualifications framework. SNQ contributed to:

- (a) improved matching of qualifications with labour market needs;
- (b) a greater opening of education and training systems in recognising learning, regardless of the context in which it is acquired;
- (c) a greater attention to what the learner knows, understands and is able to do, irrespective of the learning process;
- (d) the use of a common language, which allows better understanding of learning and eases the dialogue between the actors in the system;
- (e) the existence of clearer and more explicit qualification standards.

Additionally, it was decided that qualifications should be designed based on the learning outcomes approach. Introducing the learning outcomes approach has organisational, technical and pedagogical implications. It required analysis of:

- (a) the type of learning outcomes that learners should achieve;
- (b) teaching methods and curriculum design to motivate learners to achieve them;
- (c) tasks and evaluation criteria;
- (d) formative and summative methods of assessment.

If teaching and learning are not aligned to the learning outcomes approach, intentions are unlikely to turn into concrete outcomes.

## Objectives

To develop qualifications based on the learning outcomes approach.

## Description

In 2015, the National Agency for Qualification and VET (ANQEP) introduced a new methodology for designing qualifications based on learning outcomes. It applies to VET qualifications at levels 2, 4 and 5 of the NQF.

Since 2016, ANQEP has been organising and monitoring several training courses for coordinators and trainers from professional schools where qualifications will be developed according to this new methodology. It has also been carrying out training sessions for the different VET providers on the operationalisation of learning-outcomes-based qualifications. These sessions allow teachers and trainers to: understand the concepts and innovative principles of competence-based curriculum design methodology; identify and apply the principles of competence-based training and learning outcomes approach; plan curricular units organised in learning outcomes; and describe and apply the main assessment techniques and tools for the training based on learning outcomes. To maintain coherence in the process, the training provided was based on a teacher/trainer competence framework designed under the learning outcomes paradigm.

In 2016, three training courses were carried out, with the participation of 20 providers, five in 2017, with the participation of 34 providers and two in 2018, with the participation of 13 providers.

Following training sessions, ANQEP organised a workshop to share and reflect upon the implementation of qualifications based on learning outcomes, allowing input to redesign the national methodology and to identify best practice.

### 2015 Implementation

### 2016 Implementation

### 2017 Implementation

### 2018 Implementation

### 2019 Implementation

In 2019, three training courses were carried out, with the participation of 21 providers.

### 2020 Implementation

In 2020, two training courses were carried out, with the participation of 31 VET providers.

ANQEP published a new methodology for the design of qualifications.

### 2021 Implementation

The methodology for the design of qualifications was revised.

ANQEP launched an international tender in order to carry out studies to diagnose skills and qualifications needs and to design competence and training standards and instruments for the recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC).

### 2022 Implementation

The measure is part of the NIP under the package Innovation and resilience.

In 2022 ANQEP began a comprehensive update of the CNQ, to design a catalogue more focused on competences and learning outcomes. This work implies the development of diagnostic studies of competence and qualification needs, of sectorial scope, as well as the design of competence standards, training standards and assessment instruments that support the professional RVCC. The work started in 21 sectors. Some of these

sectors are, for instance, energy and environment; informatics, electronics and telecommunications, culture and heritage; handicrafts and gold smithery; food industries; sea economy; tourism and leisure.

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, 21 studies diagnosing skills and qualifications needs were completed, and the respective skills standards started to be developed.

### **2024 Implementation**

The process of designing qualifications, including competence standards and assessment tools for professional recognition of vocational competence (RVCC), was completed in 2024. These competence standards were structured around specific learning outcomes, following the 'Methodology for updating and designing qualifications organised into competence units and described in learning outcomes'. ANQEP began harmonising the competence standards and assessment tools across the 21 sectors.

### **2025 Implementation**

ANQEP continued the process of harmonising the competence standards and assessment tools across the 21 sectors. Based on this process, new qualifications were added to the national catalogue of qualifications.

The methodology for the design of qualifications was published.

At the beginning of 2025, ANQEP prepared a training plan for education and training entities. These sessions constituted the initial training for trainers on the methodology for designing qualifications based on learning outcomes and the implications of this approach for curricular and pedagogical management. The first training session took place in July for a group of trainers from the IEF network. Two further training sessions were held in September, one for these trainers and another for the network of trainers from Turismo de Portugal. A total of 71 trainees participated in these training sessions.

## **Bodies responsible**

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

## **Target group**

### **Entities providing VET**

VET providers (all kinds)

## **Thematic categories**

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

Modernising VET standards, curricula, programmes and training courses

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation

### **Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications**

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

### **Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences**

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

## 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

[Methodological Guide: Designing Qualifications Based on Learning Outcomes](#)

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[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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[New methodology for the design of qualifications](#)

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[Methodology for updating and designing Qualifications organised into competence units and described in learning outcomes \(Metodologia de atualizacão e de desenho de Qualificacoes organizadas em unidades de competencia e descritas em resultados de apre](#)

## Related policy developments

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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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