# Polish qualifications framework (PQF) and Integrated Qualifications System (IQS)

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**    REGULATION/LEGISLATION    POLAND

## Timeline

2015 **Approved/Agreed**   2016 **Implementation**   2017 **Implementation**
2018 **Implementation**   2019 **Implementation**   2020 **Implementation**
2021 **Legislative process**   2022 **Implementation**   2023 **Approved/Agreed**
2024 **Implementation**

**ID number 28490**

## Background

The Polish qualifications framework (PQF) was referenced to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in May 2013. It is based on learning outcomes and has eight levels. It includes different layers of level descriptors (type of education and training and sector), which is an innovative approach allowing easier inclusion of qualifications awarded outside formal education and training, such as sectoral qualifications. The Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) describes and registers different qualifications in one publicly available register (Integrated Qualifications Register - IQR). It also establishes the standards and procedures of confirming qualifications, including quality standards.

Based on the IQS, sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQFs) may be created. A sectoral qualification framework is created by an industry for its own use, for example to serve as a tool for competence assessment in recruitment or staff evaluation. Each SQF translates the requirements of the PQF taking into account the specificities of the given sector.

## Objectives

The overall aim of the IQS is human capital development and support for lifelong learning, mainly by increasing the accessibility and quality of qualifications as well as allowing for qualifications to be compared and referenced to the EQF.

## Description

The PQF can be considered to have reached an operational stage: it was formally adopted by parliament on 22 December 2015 together with the establishment of the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) and Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) and came into force in January 2016.

While the Ministry of National Education is responsible for overall coordination, an advisory stakeholder council was set up in September 2016. An update on the referencing report

was presented in December 2016. In 2017, the Ministry of National Education established 14 bodies to act as external quality assurance institutions for awarding bodies.

In 2017, the IQS and IQR were further developed. The IQS is open to all types of qualifications, however, until 2018, it included almost exclusively only qualifications obtained in formal education.

In 2018, IQS implementation reached a more advanced stage, characterised by a change in its dynamic by the inclusion of non-statutory (market) qualifications in the system. In June 2018, the first IQS certificate for a market qualification (installing construction carpentry - *montowanie stolarki budowlanej*) was issued. The first 25 State-regulated (from outside of the school education/higher education systems) qualifications were added in December 2018. The inclusion of new qualifications was followed by the inclusion of relevant awarding bodies. In 2018, an additional eight external quality assurance entities were added to the system. By the end of January 2019, 41 market qualifications had been included and about 102 were undergoing the verification process.

While consultations on possible changes to the IQS Act have been conducted from the moment it was adopted, in 2018, a working group to propose amendments to the Act was established by the ministry. Further work on this issue was done in 2019, as well as a public debate on achieving goals and the future development of the Integrated Qualifications System.

As of the end of 2018, 11 proposals for sectoral qualifications frameworks had been developed, with the support of the Educational Research Institute, in the following sectors: banking, IT, sport, tourism, telecommunications, constructions industry, development services, fashion industry, public health, trade and automotive sector.

Implementation of the IQS and functioning of the IQR has been continuously supported by ESF co-funded projects implemented by the Educational Research Institute.

The development of NQS is mentioned in several strategic documents e.g. Human Capital Development Strategy and VET Action Plan.

| 2015 Approved/Agreed |
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| 2016 Implementation |
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| 2017 Implementation |
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| 2018 Implementation |
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**2019 Implementation**

In 2019, implementation of the Integrated Qualifications System continued - including the further development of the functional capacities of the system (e.g. support for the functioning and work of awarding bodies and validation processes, further development of quality assurance mechanisms and support for the IQS at ministerial level).

Substantial effort was made to support the process of describing market qualifications and their inclusion in the system. By the end of 2019, 61 market qualifications had been included in the system and about 226 were undergoing the verification process. Altogether, over 10 000 qualifications were included in the IQR.

Two SQF proposals were also prepared (chemical industry and agriculture).

Informational activities at central and regional level also continued and a public debate on achieving the goals and the future development of the Integrated Qualifications System was initiated in March 2019. In 2019-20, 10 public debates were organised throughout the country. They were intended to be an opportunity to summarise and reflect on the public activities planned for the future development and implementation of the IQS.

**2020 Implementation**

Actions related to the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) included:

(a) developing five sectoral qualifications frameworks (SQF);
(b) preparing recommendations on the functioning of the certifying authority/awarding body in the IQS;
(c) preparing descriptions of 109 qualifications outside the education and higher education system, which have been included in the IQS.

The updated version of the Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) was launched. Additional qualification functionalities were implemented in the register, in particular for ministries, including extra information on the professional careers of graduates awarded full qualifications in higher education.

### 2021  Legislative process

On 18 August 2021, the draft regulation of the education minister on the sectoral qualifications framework (SQF) for the trade sector was passed, incorporating the SQF for the trade sector into the integrated qualifications system. The draft was prepared by the Educational Research Institute in consultation with a consortium of industry stakeholders. The framework was created with the purpose of establishing a tool defining the knowledge, professional skills and social competences needed for work in the trade sector.

### 2022  Implementation

The Regulation of the education minister of 12 January 2022 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the trade sector entered into force on 23 February 2022.

On 2 August 2022, the draft regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on the sectoral qualifications framework in the energy sector entered into consultation stage. It includes the sectoral qualifications framework in the energy sector in the Integrated Qualifications System.

### 2023  Approved/Agreed

The Minister for Education and Science Regulation of 5 July 2023 on the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the energy sector entered into force on 16 August 2023.

In 2023, 64 market qualifications were added to the register, mainly in the sports and IT sectors, with most below EQF level 6. Additionally, three sectoral frameworks were developed in IT and agriculture.

### 2024  Implementation

The regulations were operational and ran as a regular practice.

## Bodies responsible

- Educational Research Institute (IBE)
- Ministry of National Education
- Ministry of National Education (until 2021)

## Target group

**Entities providing VET**

Companies
VET providers (all kinds)

**Other stakeholders**

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)

# Thematic categories

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

Comprehensive national qualification frameworks

**European and international dimensions of VET**

International qualifications

# European priorities in VET

**VET Recommendation**

VET agile in adapting to labour market
challenges

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of
VET

VET underpinned by a culture of quality
assurance

**Osnabrück Declaration**

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

# Subsystem

IVET CVET

# Further reading

The Unit of Strategy and Integrated Qualifications System (in the Department of Strategy,
Qualifications and Vocational Education) of the Ministry of National Education acts as EQF
NCP

IQS portal

The integrated qualifications register

Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016,
item 64 with further amendments)

Draft regulation of the Minister for Education and Science on the sectoral qualifications
framework in the trade sector, 18 August 2021

Regulation of the Minister for Education and Science of 12 January 2022 on the sectoral
qualifications framework for the trade sector (Journal of Laws 2022, item 310)

Regulation of the Minister for Education and Science of 5 July 2023 on the sectoral
qualifications framework for the energy sector (Journal of Laws 2023, item 1488)

# Related policy developments

## 2024 **Pilot**

### Badge+ application (Odznaka+)

A tool for issuing and collecting digital credentials, the *Odznaka+* (Badge+) application, was created in 2021 as part of the project.

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**Type of development**

Practical
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## 2024 **Implementation**

### Human capital development strategy

The strategy update was coordinated by the ministry responsible for family, labour and social security. The final version of the document was adopted in 2019.

POLAND

**Type of development**

Strategy/Action
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## 2024 **Implementation**

### Vocational education and training action plan for 2022-25

The action plan includes the following five specific measures:

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**Type of development**

Strategy/Action
plan

**Subsystem**

IVET CVET

> **Cite as**
>
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