

# The Bulgarian National qualifications framework for lifelong learning (BQF)

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****REGULATION/LEGISLATION** BULGARIA

## Timeline

**2015 Approved/Agreed****2017 Implementation****2018 Implementation****2021 Implementation****2022 Implementation****2023 Implementation****2024 Implementation****ID number 28057**

## Background

The Bulgarian national qualifications framework for lifelong learning (BQF) was adopted in 2012. It is an eight-level framework that includes qualifications from all levels and subsystems of formal education and training, including pre-primary education. The framework was linked to the EQF (European qualifications framework) and QF-EHEA (qualifications frameworks in the European higher education area) in June 2013. EQF levels are to be indicated on qualifications from 2014-15 onwards.

## Description

Since the academic year 2017/18, the EQF/NQF level of the occupation in which the qualification is acquired is stated in the completion documents: the 'vocational qualifications certificate' and the 'vocational training certificate for part of the profession'. This applies both for young and adult learners. Changes to legislation are still needed to support the setting up of the BQF. A working group has to be established to prepare these amendments. The framework is not yet operational. The National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) has been involved in developing and updating the list of VET qualifications included in the BQF. For the BQF to achieve its aims, sustained implementation efforts are required. NAVET is responsible for coordinating VET institutions at national level; according to Art. 42 of the vocational education and training Act its functions are related to developing/updating the list of professions for VET and State education standards for professional qualifications, describing the relevant knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the BQF level descriptors. In this way NAVET promotes this important tool among different stakeholders, especially among pedagogical staff.

### **2015 Approved/Agreed**

A Pre-school and School Education Act was adopted in 2015, according to which amendments to the BQF were needed.

### **2017 Implementation**

Following the adoption of the amendments to EQF Recommendation (May 2017), a working group was mandated to update the BQF but there are no updates since then.

### **2018 Implementation**

As of 2018, all documents issued in VET (certificates for professional qualification obtained through training or validation, certificates for vocational training obtained through training or validation) included information about the respective EQF/BQF level.

### **2021 Implementation**

In 2021, a decision was taken to link all future competence profiles -developed under the project- Development of digital skills to the BQF/EQF levels.

### **2022 Implementation**

In 2022, the BQF continued to be in force, being a recognisable tool in the documents that are issued in the VET system - certificate of professional qualification and certificate of vocational training. Vocational training certificates were issued for the acquisition of part of the profession or partial qualification. After conducting a study on the introduction of micro-credentials in Bulgaria, it was established that the certificates for vocational training for partial qualifications are micro-credentials, because they bear all the characteristics described in the Council Recommendation of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, including showing EQF/BQF level.

### **2023 Implementation**

In 2023, all officially recognised professional qualification documents were issued with an indication of the qualification level at the Bulgarian qualifications framework(BQF) and at the European qualifications framework(EQF).

In March 2023, the Industrial Capital Association of Bulgaria (ICAB) developed and presented pilot models for the introduction of individual learning accounts and micro credentials as a solution to the problem of the low adult participation in lifelong learning. These three pilot models contained an analysis for the introduction of micro-credentials offering different solutions which were relevant to specific target groups and also had to do with the control of micro-credentials by public authorities. The labour ministry considered the possibility of testing the presented models through the *Human resources development* operational programme and allocated financial resources but no nationwide project began.

### **2024 Implementation**

In 2024, the concept of applying an approach to micro-credentials was tested on a project basis only (e.g. the *GreenMicred pathways* transnational project in which NAVET is a partner which isn't national in scope). No regulation or other type of guidance for the official introduction of this approach into the VET system was issued.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Education and Science
- National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Adult learners

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
Trainers  
School leaders  
Adult educators  
Guidance practitioners

### **Entities providing VET**

Companies  
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)  
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  
Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

## **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

### **Further reading**

[Pre-school and School Education Act. State gazette, No 79, 13 October 2015 In force since 1 August 2016](#)

[Pre-school and School Education Act. State gazette, No 79, 13 October 2015. In force since 1 August 2016. Bill No 354-01-88 amending and supplementing the law on vocational education and training. Available in Bulgarian at the National Assembly website](#)

[The International and European Cooperation Directorate in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science is designated as the EQF national coordination point](#)

## **Related policy developments**

2023 Completed

### **The Development of digital skills initiative**

The initiative is funded by the ESF under the operational programme (OP): Human resource development 2014-20, and is implemented through two components.



#### Type of development

Practical measure/Initiative

#### Subsystem

CVET

### 2024 Implementation

#### ECVET

The 2016 amendments of the VET Act regulate the structure of the State education standards for the acquisition of qualifications. The structuring of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes is the main principle of ECVET, providing flexible learning pathways.



#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

### 2024 Implementation

#### Amendments to the VET Act

The VET Act of 1999 was amended in August 2016 (entered into force in August 2017), confirming that apprenticeships should offer the possibility to acquire professional qualifications through practical training, organised in cooperation with enterprises.



#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

#### “ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28057>