

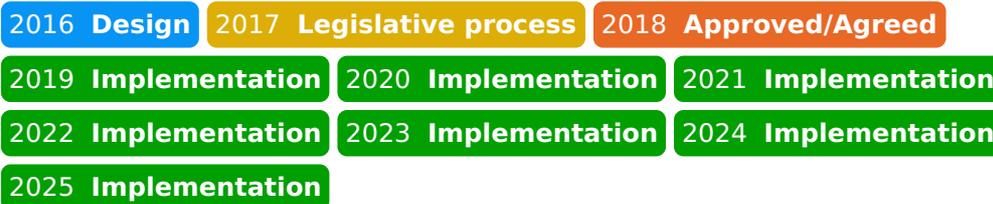
# 2018 Decree on learning outcomes for compulsory education

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BELGIUM-FL

## Timeline



ID number 28011

## Background

The learning outcomes (LO) principle is systematically promoted in the EU policy agenda for education, training and employment since 2004. At national level, the LO form the basis on which the national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) are built and therefore they have an influence on the definition and writing of qualifications and curricula. With the Act on the qualification structure, the Flemish parliament and government adopted in 2009 a comprehensive qualifications framework based on learning outcomes and covering all types and levels of qualifications from formal education and training and from the professional qualifications system. The 2006 EU key competences framework served as one of the reference documents. As a result, delegates provided the Flemish Parliament with their recommendations on improving key competences. The competences referred to included self-knowledge; personal development; social and human skills; self-reliance; knowledge and use of languages; critical thinking and problem solving; knowledge and handling of political and social challenges; skills in ICT, new media, arts and culture; learning-to-learn; and scientific and research competences. Two reports were produced for the Department of Education, underlining the importance of joint ownership of the curriculum and a shared meaning attributed to it.

## Objectives

At the end of a stage, learning outcomes determine what a secondary school learner must know and be able to do. The final attainment levels in secondary education date from the mid-1990s and so were more than 20 years old; there was a need to update them. For specific subjects, this means that the learning outcomes are adapted to, amongst other things, new knowledge about or new applications of, for example, mathematics or economics.

## Description

The public debate on the attainment targets/learning outcomes for secondary education,

including vocational-oriented secondary education (initial VET), took place in between February and June 2016. It involved around 40 000 participants, half of which were young learners. In January 2018, the Decree on the renewal of the learning outcomes for compulsory education (for all pupils) was adopted by the Flemish Parliament. The decree was set up by the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and stipulates 16 key competences, based on the results of the public debate.

- (a) Physical and mental well-being,
- (b) Dutch,
- (c) Other languages,
- (d) Digital and media literacy,
- (e) Social competences,
- (f) Maths, sciences, technology and STEM,
- (g) Civic competences,
- (h) Historical awareness,
- (i) Spatial awareness,
- (j) Sustainable development,
- (k) Economic and financial competences,
- (l) Judicial competences,
- (m) Learning and research competences (critical thinking, problem solving, creativity),
- (n) Self-consciousness and self-expression,
- (o) Entrepreneurial competences,
- (p) Cultural consciousness and expression.

In Dutch, mathematics, financial and digital literacy, each learner will have to achieve 'basic literacy' by the end of the first degree of secondary education (lower secondary education). All these key competences need to be considered as broad thematic domains, which will be further operationalised in attainment targets. For that reason, development committees, comprising representatives of education networks, teachers and academics, were established.

In preparation for formulating the learning outcomes, relevant frames of reference were sought per (cluster of) key competence(s). Eventually, the learning outcomes were drawn up by experts organised by, and together with, the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (AHOVOKS) in development committees.

To keep study programmes up to date, all programmes are screened at least every five years and if necessary, adjustments will be made. The educational goals will also be periodically screened for their topical value and to keep them in line with the challenges and expectations of society.

#### **2016 Design**

#### **2017 Legislative process**

#### **2018 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2019 Implementation**

The gradual implementation of the attainment targets started in September 2019 in the first year of the first degree of secondary education.

#### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, further gradual implementation of the attainment targets for the first degree of secondary education continued.

#### **2021 Implementation**

On 10 February, 2021, the new attainment target for the second and third degrees of secondary education were adopted by the Flemish Parliament. They were developed based on the same key competences as mentioned above, to guarantee a continuous and logical learning process. They will be gradually introduced in secondary education

starting from 1 September 2021.

### **2022 Implementation**

In 2022, the Constitutional Court has overturned the new attainment targets for second and third grade secondary education. New (reduced but ambitious) minimum targets are being developed in consultation with the education umbrella organisations. Meanwhile, the overturned attainment targets can remain in force.

### **2023 Implementation**

After the decision to overturn the attainment targets in 2022, new targets were set that were approved in March 2023. These new targets concern the first degree of secondary education and the final (7th) year of vocational secondary education.

### **2024 Implementation**

The new attainment targets for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd degrees of all forms of secondary education were implemented starting from the 1. September 2024.

### **2025 Implementation**

The attainment targets were set on the 1st of September 2024. No update of the targets needed to be made in 2025.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Flemish Department of Education and Training
- Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Allowances (AHOVOKS)

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Young people (15-29 years old)

### **Education professionals**

Teachers  
School leaders

## **Thematic categories**

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

Using learning-outcome-based approaches and modularisation  
Acquiring key competences

## **European priorities in VET**

### **VET Recommendation**

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

# Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

Decree regarding the educational goals for the second and third degree of secondary education and various other related measures

### “ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). 2018 Decree on learning outcomes for compulsory education: Belgium-FL. 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/28011>