

NQF state of play



Liechtenstein 2022

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Overview

Stage of development: [Activation stage](#)

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:

NQF for vocational and professional qualifications (NQF-VPQ) and NQF for higher education.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Ordinance on the national qualifications framework of the Principality of Liechtenstein for VET qualifications (2017)
[\(in German\)](#)

Qualifications framework for higher education (2013) and included in the Higher Education Act and in the Higher Education Ordinance
[\(in German\)](#)

NQF/EQF website:

[Website](#)

Qualifications register/database:

[Supplements \(with NQF/EQF levels\)](#)

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

The structure of the education system is characterised by the small size of the country, which makes it irrational to offer a complete education system at all levels. In VET and higher education, cooperation networks have been established with neighbouring countries, mainly Switzerland. At upper secondary level, for example, the entire school-based part of the basic vocational education takes place in Switzerland. Following the nine years of compulsory schooling (primary and lower secondary level), approximately 65% of young people attend basic vocational education and training (apprenticeship) with or without an integrated baccalaureate ([1]). Around 20 to 25% of learners attend a general upper secondary baccalaureate (*Gymnasium*) ([2]).

From the beginning, the development of NQFL has been closely coordinated with Switzerland, as the two countries have established a common VET system.

1.2. NQF legal basis

In 2011, the government laid the foundation for developing and integrating a national qualifications framework for lifelong learning, potentially covering all parts of education and training (Decree RA 2010/2909-4000). The legal basis for the NQFL-BBV is the decree adopted on 19 December 2017 and put into force on 1 January 2018.

Policy objectives

The NQFL aims at improving the transparency and comparability of qualifications from Liechtenstein and referencing them to the EQF.

More specifically, the NQFL aims to (Ministry of Education, 2017):

- a. describe adequately the education system, improving the transparency, the clarity and the comparability of qualifications in VET, higher VET and higher education;
- b. support, in terms of labour market needs, an employer's assessment of the skills of vocational graduates from Liechtenstein and enable a similar process for graduates with qualifications from abroad;
- c. improve the employability of Liechtenstein-educated specialists and managers in the country and abroad.

In the longer term, NQFL is seen as a tool to support lifelong learning through better understanding of qualifications and learning opportunities, improved access to and participation in education and training, and valuing all learning outcomes, in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The NQFL comprises eight levels. Competence-oriented descriptors detail the requirements for each level; these are closely aligned with the EQF descriptors, but also adjusted to suit specific national features. NQFL-BBV level descriptors ([3]) are identical to those of the Swiss NQF-VPQ.

Table 1. **The main elements of the descriptors in NQFL-BBV**

Knowledge	Knowledge
	Understanding
Skills	Procedural skills
	Sensorimotor skills
Competences	Professional competences
	Personal competences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● autonomy● social competences● leadership competences

Source: Adapted from Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein (2017).

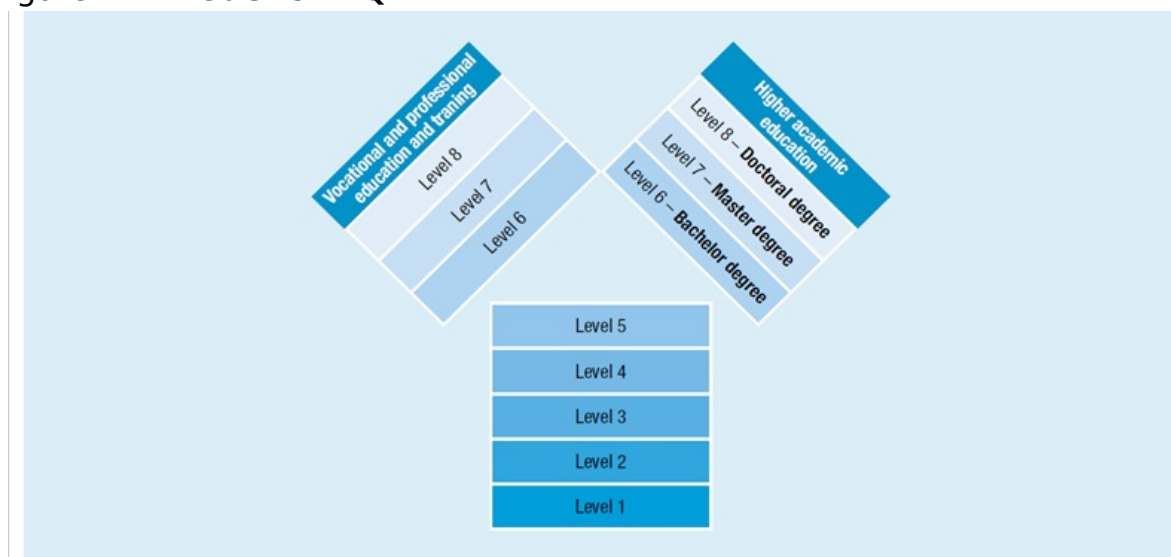
Level descriptors are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Knowledge refers to declarative knowledge and is further subdivided into knowledge and understanding. Skills refer to the capacity to apply knowledge and solve problems: a distinction is drawn between procedural and sensorimotor skills. Competences express application of knowledge and skills in the work context and are subdivided into professional and social competences.

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

The NQFL covers qualifications from VET, higher VET and higher education (HE). General education is currently not included in the framework. The first phase of implementation has focused on formal

education in VET and HE. Two sectoral qualifications frameworks have been developed: one encompassing HE qualifications (NQFL-HS), adopted in 2013 and included in the HE law, and one for VET (NQFL-BBV), in force since January 2018. The latter has been a major step towards the full implementation of the framework. An important characteristic of the NQFL is that levels 6 to 8 are also open to higher vocational qualifications awarded outside higher education as a separate strand next to higher education qualifications.

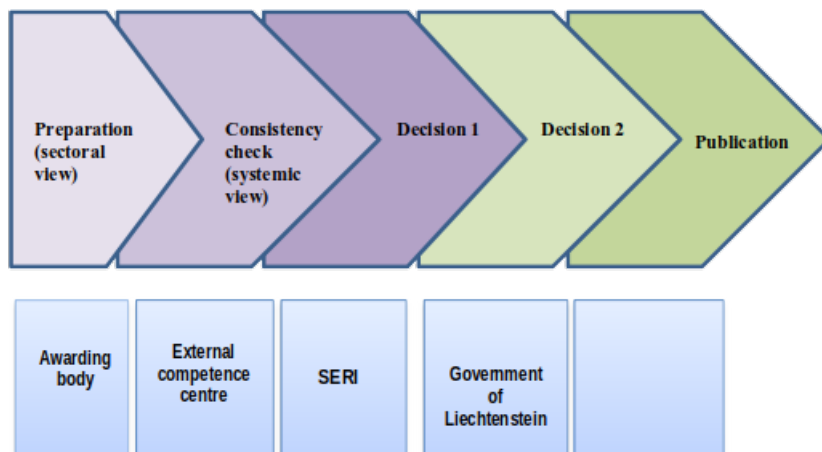
Figure 1. **Y-Model of NQFL**



*Source:*Ministry of Education (2017).

As defined in the ordinance on NQFL-BBV (Article 7), the government must approve the inclusion and the level of a qualification, in a separate procedure, and can take into account those qualifications assigned by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) in Switzerland. So far, the Liechtenstein Government has approved almost all out of the 120 [qualifications](#) ([4]). Figure 2 outlines the main steps in the levelling process.

Figure 2. **Main steps of the levelling process**



NCP

*Source:*Ministry of Education (2017)

The [process](#) of assigning vocational and professional qualifications a level is carried out by Switzerland.

3.3. Use of learning outcomes

All education subsystems have taken important steps in implementing the learning outcomes approach, but to varying degrees. In general education, standards were introduced in 2010 and subsequently tested for grades 3, 4, and 8. A competence-based approach is being strengthened in teaching and evaluating of general education. In line with the amended VET law in 2008 ([Article 6](#) of the Vocational Training Act), qualifications and curricula have been revised with a stronger focus on competences and equipping students with the competence to act (*Handlungskompetenz*) (Cedefop, 2016). Learning outcomes already play an important accreditation role in higher education.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The NQFL is supervised by the Ministry of Education. The [National Agency for International Educational Affairs \(*Agentur für Internationale Bildungsangelegenheiten, AIBA*\)](#) - an independent institution, supervised by the Ministry of Education - has been appointed as the EQF national coordination point (NCP) to carry out administration and coordination tasks connected with the NQFL.

Supervision of vocational education and training is carried out by the [Office of Vocational Training and Career Counselling \(*Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung, ABB*\)](#). The educational part of dual training, vocational education at school and professional tertiary education are conducted at Swiss institutions and are therefore the responsibility of these authorities. In addition, the concept of VET includes an obligation of internal quality assurance for the providers of vocational training.

Responsible bodies in higher education are the Government and the higher education institutions themselves. The Government is the supervisory body of the higher education institutions and is supported by the [Office of Education \(*Schulamt*\)](#). The country does not have its own agency of accreditation. The necessary accreditations and evaluations in connection with the granting or recognition procedures and quality assurance are formed in cooperation with foreign agencies (Eurydice, 2020).

Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

5.1. Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

Validation approaches have been developed in initial VET and higher education, considering different target groups, responsibilities and methods ([5]). The Vocational Training Act determines that admission to any examination or qualification that does not depend on undertaking specified education programmes; those who have at least five years' work experience can participate in the final examinations. The validation process in VET is based on a similar process to that developed by Switzerland, following a similar series of steps. However, due to the small size of the country, only the first step (information and advising) is performed within the country; after that the candidates are referred to Switzerland.

The Education Authority (*Schulamt*) regards development of the national qualifications framework for higher education (NQFL-HS) as an opportunity for anchoring lifelong learning more within higher education, and for improving validation and recognition of prior learning achieved outside the higher education system. The legal basis for admission to higher education have been formalised. The Law on higher education regulates the conditions and process of admission without a *matura* certificate ([6]) and limitation of crediting learning acquired outside the higher education system. It is possible to recognise non-formal and informal learning as a contribution to achieving a qualification, up to a maximum of one sixth of the necessary workload (European credit transfer and accumulation system credit points) for the whole qualification.

Standards used in VET and higher education for validation are those of existing programmes. Although, the NQFL could offer opportunities to integrate further non-formal and informal learning outcomes, the NQFL-BBV was adopted in 2017 with no plans to include non-formal and informal learning.

5.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications

NQFL plays an important role for comparability and transparency of qualifications with the other European countries. It supports the

recognition of foreign qualifications, as Liechtenstein recruits 50% of the workers from the neighbouring countries (European Commission and Cedefop 2020).

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

The NQFL has reached an activation stage; implementation structures are in place and main working methods and instruments are being developed. The framework and its related services are communicated to raise end-users' awareness. The NQF for higher education (NQFL-HS) is already operational.

6.2. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

The NQFL/ EQF levels are indicated on certificates/diplomas and supplements in initial VET and higher education.

6.3. NQF dissemination

For public involvement and information, the [NQFL website](#) was established in spring 2013, providing information and updates.

6.4. Qualifications databases and registers

The country does not have a fully-fledged qualifications database or register yet. On the NQFL website there is a section where vocational qualifications are registered, providing links to [certificate supplements](#).

6.5. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

An evaluation of the NQFL is not yet planned as the framework is quite new. An analysis, however, is foreseen after the framework has been used for some time.

6.6. Impact of the NQF

The NQFL is a reference point for the use of learning outcomes and plays a role in improving transparency and comparability of qualifications at national and international levels. Education providers particularly benefit from the greater transparency the NQFL provides. With its focus on competences, the NQFL supports transparent descriptions of expected learning outcomes in programmes and assessment and can thus make an important contribution to quality assurance in education. As the education market is international, EQF and NQFL also open new options for international offers and cooperation in education.

Referencing to the EQF

The NQFL was referenced to the EQF in October 2016 (the referencing report was published in 2017). In 2013, the qualifications framework for higher education was self-certified against the QF-EHEA; it forms an integral part of the NQFL.

Important lessons and future plans

The NQFL integrates two sectoral qualifications frameworks: for higher education (NQFL-HS) and VET (NQFL- BBV). Levels 6 to 8 are also open to higher vocational qualifications as a separate strand next to higher education qualifications. Although the country is closely following developments in the recognition of qualifications awarded outside the formal system in the neighbouring countries, there are no plans for the NQFL-BBV to include non-formal and informal learning.

As a next step, the country intends to indicate the NQFL level on diplomas and certificates, including the link to the framework's webpage, aiming to make the NQFL more visible.

Main sources of information

[URLs accessed 9.6.2023]

- [National Agency of International Education Affairs \(AIBA\).](#)
- [NQFL website.](#)
- Ministry of Education (2017). *[The EQF referencing report for the Principality of Liechtenstein.](#)*

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	Advanced federal diploma for higher education (tertiary federal examination) (Eidgenössisches Diplom (Höhere Fachprüfung))	8
7	Advanced federal diploma for higher education (tertiary federal examination) (Eidgenössisches Diplom (Höhere Fachprüfung))	7
6	Advanced federal diploma of higher education (tertiary federal examination) (Eidgenössisches Diplom (Höhere Fachprüfung)) Standard level for this type of a qualification. Advanced federal diploma of higher education issued by a college of higher education (Diplom HF ausgestellt von einer Höheren Fachschule) Standard level for this type of a qualification. Federal diploma of higher education (tertiary federal examination) (Eidgenössischer Fachausweis (Berufsprüfung))	6
5	Federal diploma of higher education (tertiary federal examination) (Eidgenössischer Fachausweis (Berufsprüfung)) Standard level for this type of a qualification. Federal VET diploma (three- or four-year dual VET programmes) (Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis (drei-und vierjährige duale Berufsbildung))	5
4	Federal VET diploma (three- or four-year dual VET programmes) (Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis (drei-und vierjährige duale Berufsbildung)) Standard level for this type of a qualification.	4

3	Federal VET certificate (two-year VET programmes) (Eidgenössisches Berufsattest (zweijährige Berufsausbildung)) Standard level for this type of a qualification.	3
2	(not available)	2
1	(not available)	1

Acronyms

ABB	<i>Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung</i> [Office of Vocational Training and Career Counselling]
AIBA	<i>Agentur für Internationale Bildungsangelegenheiten</i> [National Agency for International Education Affairs]
EQF	European qualifications framework
NQFL	national qualifications framework for Liechtenstein
NQFL-BBV	<i>Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen des Fürstentum Liechtenstein für Abschlüsse der Berufsbildung</i> [national qualifications framework for vocational education]
NQFL-HS	<i>Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen Fürstentum Liechtenstein für den Hochschulbereich</i> [national qualifications framework for higher education]
NQF-VPQ	Swiss national qualifications framework for vocational and professional education and training
QF-EHEA	Qualifications framework for the European higher education area
SERI	<i>Staatssekretariat für Bildung, Forschung und Innovation</i> [State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation]
VET	vocational education and training

References

[URLs accessed 9.6.2023]

Cedefop (2016). *Application of learning-outcome approaches across Europe: a comparative study*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 105.

European Commission and Cedefop (2020). *Survey on implementation, communication and use of NQF/EQF* [unpublished].

Eurydice (2020). *Liechtenstein overview*.

Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein (2017). *Verordnung über Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen des Fürstentums Liechtenstein für Abschlüsse der Berufsbildung (NQFL-BBV)* [Decree on national qualifications framework for vocational qualifications].

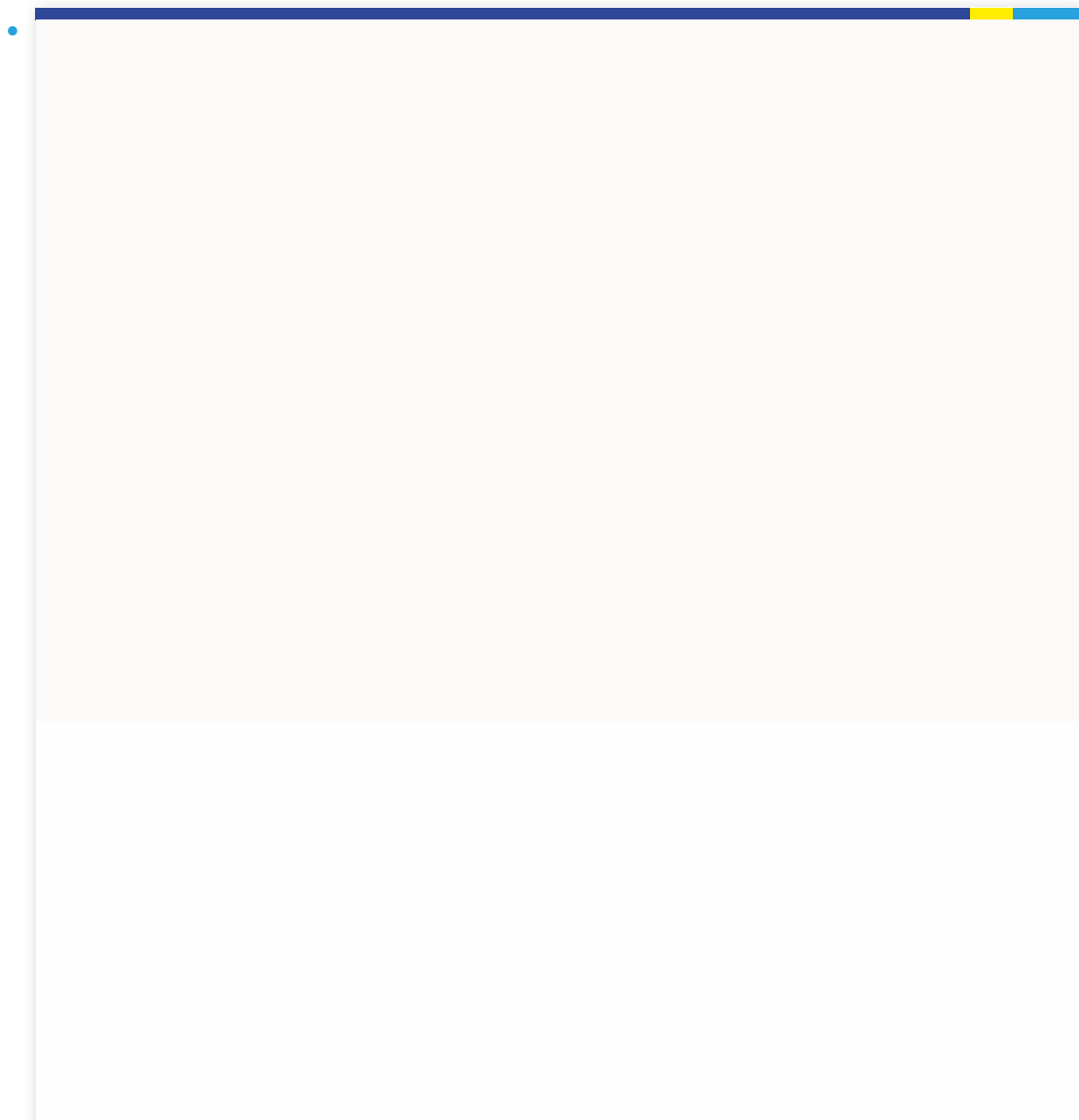
Ministry of Education (2017). *The EQF referencing report for the Principality of Liechtenstein*.

Puukka, J. (2019) *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update: Liechtenstein*.

Notes

- [1] Examination that certifies access to higher education.
- [2] More information in [Eurydice](#).
- [3] Level descriptors are included in Annex 1 of the ordinance on NQFL-BBV.
- [4] Source: internal communication with AIBA the national EQF â NCP.
- [5] This section draws mainly on input from Puukka (2019).
- [6] Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein (2005). [Gesetz Ã¼ber das Hochschulwesen \(Hochschulgesetz; HSG\)](#) [Law on higher education (Higher Education Act; HSG)], Article 24 on bachelor studies.

Related content



2022

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European inventory of NQF



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