

NQF state of play



Slovakia 2022

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Overview

Stage of development: Activation stage

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:

The NQF includes all levels and types of qualifications from formal education and training, and a sub-framework of occupational qualifications awarded outside the formal education system.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Act on Lifelong Learning (2009) and amendments to certain acts (2012)
(in Slovak)

NQF/EQF website:

[Website](#)

Qualifications register/database:

[National qualifications register](#)

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

Slovakia is focusing on improving educational outcomes at all levels. In September 2021, compulsory pre-school education from age 5 was introduced, aiming to tackle low participation rates in early childhood education and care. The country is preparing a comprehensive school curricular reform to also address the relatively low performance of teenagers (when compared to the EU average) in PISA tests in reading, science and maths. The 2030 strategy for equality, inclusion and Roma participation is also adopted. Between 2010 and 2020 the tertiary educational attainment (age 25-34) has been significantly improved (by 15 percentage points, pps) reaching 39.0% (EU-27 40.5%) (European Commission and Directorate General for Education Youth Sport and Culture, 2021). In 2020, participation in upper secondary initial vocational education and training (VET) was significantly higher (67.3%) than the EU average (48.7%). At post-secondary level, vocational pathways are the only option for learners, while the same applies for short-cycle tertiary education ([1]).

Adult learning still requires policy attention (European Commission and Directorate General for Education Youth Sport and Culture, 2021), an issue which is expected to be addressed by the Strategy for lifelong learning and counselling 2021 – 2030 (EPALE Slovensko, 2021), approved in November 2021. A main area of focus of the strategy is the national qualifications system and SKKR. Further, the strategy brings in the forefront the system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning; ‘smaller’ qualifications and micro-qualifications (micro-certificates) as a mean to increase the flexibility of the qualifications system; and short-cycle tertiary programmes at SKKR level 5 (Cedefop, forthcoming). The strategy also suggests redefining the role and status of the national qualifications register (NQR) and that the proposal of new lifelong learning (LLL) Act, to be adopted in 2023, should define (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022):

- a. SKKR sub-frameworks;
- b. role and status of the national qualifications system (NQS) and qualification standards;
- c. updated procedures for the development of qualifications;

d. entities involved in the development of NQS.

1.2. NQF legal basis

Work on the SKKR started with a 2009 government decision on the EQF implementation. The 2009 lifelong learning Act, amended in 2012 ([2]), stipulated the legal background for the development of a national qualifications system and framework.

The 2018 Act on quality assurance in higher education ([3]) introduces internal rules for higher education institutions to ensure that their qualifications correspond to the relevant SKKR level (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020) (Section 4.4).

Policy objectives

The specific objectives of SKKR implementation are (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017):

- a. increased education system transparency, both for individuals and employers, as well as for international comparison;
- b. increased transparency of qualifications, through their description in terms of learning outcomes rather than inputs;
- c. better match between education and training and the needs of the labour market through a more demand-oriented education system;
- d. strengthened relationships between all stakeholders involved in education, and developing general principles for validation and recognition of qualifications;
- e. modernisation of education through the application of quality principles in the process of acquiring qualifications;
- f. increased quality in the processes of verification and recognition of qualifications.

In 2022, a main function of the national qualification system is to create a unified and transparent system based on the assumption that knowledge, skills, and competences needed to obtain a qualification can be acquired through different routes of education and learning. Among these lines, promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning, mainly through the System of Verification of Qualifications, plays an important role. The development of the occupational qualifications sub-framework fosters the flexibility of qualifications and the openness of the occupational sub-framework to combined qualifications and micro-credentials (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The SKKR ([4]) is an overarching framework that has eight learning-outcomes-based levels and includes qualifications from all subsystems. It is organised in four sub-frameworks (based on sectoral legislation): for general education ([5]), VET ([6]), higher education ([7]), and occupational qualifications (awarded outside the formal system, because of further education, adult education and validation of non-formal learning) ([8]). Qualifications in the first three sub-frameworks reflect both a level of qualification and a level of achieved education; occupational qualifications are not connected to an education level and usually respond to the needs of the labour market. Level descriptors are defined in terms of knowledge (general and vocational/professional), skills (cognitive and practical) and competence (responsibility, autonomy and social competences).

Qualifications were levelled to SKKR based on the ‘best fit’ principle, following analysis of learning outcomes defined in qualification standards and their comparison with national level descriptors. Qualifications issued by conservatories posed a challenge in terms of levelling ([9]). The expected Act on lifelong learning will introduce a new approach to the design of qualifications based on smaller components/ blocks of learning outcomes (Cedefop, 2020).

From the beginning of the framework’s development, a distinction was made between full and partial qualifications, also reflected in the national qualifications register; a full qualification entitling the holder to perform all tasks within an occupation, and a partial qualification allowing performance of one or a limited set of tasks within that occupation ([10]).

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

The SKKR is a comprehensive framework, covering all sub-systems of formal education (VET, general and higher education) and including regulated training and qualifications awarded outside formal education (occupational qualifications). Qualifications included in the NQR are described by measurable and assessable learning outcomes. In this regard, SKKR does not make any distinction between qualifications acquired through formal education (academic, initial vocational) and non-

formal education and informal learning, but it allows comparing their levels by comparing learning outcomes (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017).

According to the Strategy for LLL and counselling, descriptors for SKKR level 0 should be introduced to cover low-skilled groups at risk, while the number of qualifications of the fourth sub-framework should be increased to make qualification routes more flexible. Flexibility of the national qualifications system should be further promoted by introducing 'smaller' qualifications and micro-qualifications (micro-certificates). Since, the occupational qualifications sub-framework has been designed to cover segments of current VET qualifications (units of learning outcomes), new such units, reflecting emerging labour market needs should be developed by practitioners, such as sectoral councils (Cedefop, forthcoming). In the future, this sub-framework will also include international qualifications and those of private awarding bodies (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

3.3. Use of learning outcomes

In general education, the shift to learning outcomes was marked by the 2008 Education Act. This strengthened quality assurance measures, introduced performance standards defined in knowledge, skills and competences, and a two-level model of curriculum for both general education and VET: State curricula and school curricula (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017). Assessment standards specify criteria and assessment procedures for achieving performance standards corresponding to the respective school environment (Cedefop and ReferNet Slovakia, 2019).

In VET, the learning outcomes approach has been reinforced through the 2009 ([11]) and 2015 Acts on VET. Since 2015, developing curricula for dual VET has been in progress, based on requirements from chambers and employers' representatives; companies offering practical training directly participate as co-authors of the respective school educational programmes. From 2019, the same educational programmes apply for school-based (with practical training in school workshops or facilities, or with contracted segments of practical training in companies) and dual VET (Cedefop and ReferNet Slovakia, 2019). In 2022, a revision of state curricula has been implemented, focusing on key competences.

The implementation of the Act on quality assurance of higher education has substantially promoted the use of learning outcomes in this sector (Section 4.4).

3.4. Quality assurance arrangements

According to the Education Act, quality of education and training is monitored and evaluated by the school or school facility, the State School Inspection, the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements ([12]) and the Ministry of Health ([13]). In adult education, the Accreditation Commission for Further Education ([14]) is an advisory body of the education ministry ([15]), which validates education institution ability to provide educational programmes and recommends that the ministry issues a certificate of accreditation of an educational programme if the requirements are met. There has been strong consensus and support to the SKKR from all quality assurance bodies and the Slovak community so far (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017).

Following the 2013 *Criteria for the accreditation of higher education study programmes* ([16]) an Act was adopted in 2018 ([17]), introducing a new system of accreditation in higher education institutions, which aims to increase the importance of quality assurance in line with the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA (European Commission, 2020). Further, the Act refers to internal rules of higher education institutions on the design, approval, delivery and modification of their study programmes. They ensure that the intended knowledge, skills and competences correspond to the relevant SKKR level. The Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education ([18]), operational since 2020, has developed relevant internal quality assurance standards and study programme standards. They are based on the 2015 Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European higher education area. By 2022, all Slovak higher education institutions and universities were successfully adapted to the new standards. They have put in place their internal control mechanisms to ensure the quality of the educational process and have reviewed all their study programmes. This process has resulted in the modification of most study programmes and almost 2 500 cancellations, bringing quality assurance closer to European standards. Additionally, study programmes focusing on professions will provide a better connection with the labour market (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020, 2022).

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The education ministry maintains overall competence and responsibility for the SKKR development and implementation and is the highest approval body for qualifications and the national qualifications register. The memorandum of cooperation, signed in 2014 with the labour ministry ([19]), aimed for better alignment between labour market needs and the education system ([20]) (ŠIOV, 2017). Since 2016, the SKKR governance structure has been simplified; it consists of the State Vocational Education Institute (ŠIOV), currently hosting the EQF NCP and playing a coordination, technical and methodological role, supported by 24 sector councils ([21]). ŠIOV is also the contact point for other EU initiatives (EQAVET, ECVET, European Agenda for Adult Learning).

The functions of the EQF NCP include the promotion of the SKKR, EQF and Slovak qualifications, managing the process of referencing the SKKR to the EQF, and maintaining the national qualifications register and its links to European portals (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017).

The main strength of the current governance structure of the SKKR is the active participation of stakeholders, including the Slovak Rectors' Conference and Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education; this requires effective communication strategies yet to be developed. ŠIOV participates directly in the QF-EHEA network and ensures information transfer to relevant bodies. ŠIOV cooperates with national and international stakeholders: the education ministry, national institutions in education, education providers and NGOs, and EQF NCP contact points in other Member States. The drafting and approval of the Strategy on LLL and counselling, as well as preparation of the expected Act on lifelong learning were supported by an extensive public consultation process with stakeholders (working groups, roundtables, expert groups, etc.) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020, 2022).

Sector councils play a key role in developing, monitoring and updating national occupation and qualification standards and proposing their allocation to SKKR levels, developing and monitoring the national occupations register and the national qualifications register, communication between the labour market and the world of education and establishing partnerships for validating and recognising non-formal

and informal learning. Defining learning outcomes in line with level descriptors has strengthened the cooperation between members of sector councils from the labour side and the education authorities (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Activities related to the introduction and implementation of the SKKR were mainly project-based. Since 2016, ŠIOV is financed by a yearly renewable contract with the education ministry and uses financial support from the Erasmus+ Programme to develop its activities (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020). One staff member of the department of lifelong learning is responsible for the running of the SKKR daily.

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

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

The 2009 lifelong learning Act (amended in 2012) introduced some of the necessary conditions for the gradual development of a validation system ([22]). Subsequently, the completion of the SKKR referencing process to the EQF in 2017, the description of more than 1 000 SKKR qualifications, with their related qualification standards defined in learning outcomes, and their inclusion in the national qualifications register, are completed preconditions for the development of a VNFIL system ([23]) (Vantuch, 2019). The 2021 strategy on LLL and counselling prioritised the development of a VNFIL system, while the ESF-funded project System of verification of qualifications (SOK) aims to propose and pilot the structure and procedures for such a system ([24]). The strategy also suggests the vocational *maturita* examination (SKKR 4) and qualification ‘technician-specialist’ (SKKR 6) to be achieved via VNFIL. The expected 2023 Act on lifelong learning, is planned to introduce a clear conceptual framework of VNFIL (Cedefop, forthcoming; European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). Qualifications required on the labour market and contained in the NQR are expected to be gradually placed into the information system of further education (ISDV) and made eligible for validation ([25]).

The system developed by the SOK project is based on the occupational qualifications framework of the SKKR (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). A manual for the creation of units of learning outcomes as well as assessment manuals for the validation procedures of 312 qualifications have been developed ([26]). They provide guidelines on the selection of the examination board members and their duties, as well as information on the criteria for the assessment of units of learning outcomes and the minimum criteria to be met by the candidate. In late 2022, the designed validation procedures will be piloted, focusing on qualifications at SKKR levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

According to the 2009 Lifelong Learning Act individuals with five years of workplace practice can apply to have their non-formal learning validated, assessed and certified without prior completion of an accredited programme, leading to a full or partial qualification. Validation practices

also refer to the verification of professional competence necessary for running a business (regulated by the Trade Licensing Act No 455/1991 Coll. based on assessing compliance with standards, for which a formal certificate of apprenticeship is required) ([27]). This certificate is not equivalent to the qualification certificate obtained through formal education; it aids access to the labour market, though not to continuing formal education (Vantuch, 2019).

Progress has been visible in the labour sector, where methodology based on the concept of *bilan de compétences* (skills assessment) has been implemented by public employment services. Labour office counsellors ([28]), serving the unemployed, have received training in the first two stages of validation (identification and documentation) ([29]). Extending this methodology to the education sector is under discussion (Vantuch, 2019).

5.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications

The recognition of a foreign diplomas and professional qualifications is under the competence of the Centre for recognition of diplomas (CRD), which is supervised by the education ministry. Professional recognition refers to professional qualifications necessary to perform a regulated profession. The academic recognition enables, for instance, individuals to continue their studies. It is possible to recognise only the level of education, or also the equivalence of the study field. The centre is part of ENIC (European Network of Information Centres) and NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) networks. The CRD is using the SKKR in its procedures (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

The SKKR has reached the activation stage. SKKR implementation structures, like a stable governance, working instruments (e.g. databases) and procedures for allocation of qualifications to levels are in place. The framework has also become a reference point for the use of learning outcomes. The SKKR and related services are communicated to end-users. Finally, it is gradually playing a role in improving transparency and comparability of qualifications and reforming the education, training and qualifications systems (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). Provided that SKKR implementation will stay on the same track it can soon reach the operational stage.

6.2. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

NQF and EQF levels are indicated either on Europass or diploma supplements of all qualifications included in the SKKR. They are also indicated on all qualifications included in databases. NQF/EQF levels are not indicated on higher education diplomas and certificates at levels 6, 7 and 8. Certificates of qualification at levels 6 and 7 do indicate NQF/EQF levels (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022) ([30]).

6.3. NQF dissemination

ŠIOV has been disseminating information about the framework to increase its visibility. Tools were developed to facilitate the use of the framework by different stakeholders ([31]). The main communication channels include sector councils, seminars and conferences for stakeholders, training courses for teachers, other national and international events, information materials, the SKKR webpage and social media. Employers and education staff are the main target groups. ŠIOV has established cooperation with the Euroguidance centre, mainly in relation to the System of verification of qualifications (SOK) project.

6.4. Qualifications databases and registers

The SKKR together with the national qualifications register (NQR) ([32]) are the two main pillars of the national system of qualifications. Their development was closely related. Qualifications are included in the NQR ([33]) in the form of qualifications cards. Each card contains, in Slovak, general information on the qualification, for instance the title, field of

study, learning pathway and SKKR level; a qualification standard, describing the learning outcomes expressed knowledge, skills and competences; an assessment standard, and guidelines for validation and certification of learning outcomes). Further, the NQR includes data on entry requirements and the relationship to occupations or occupational fields for each qualification. 1 000 qualifications at levels 2 to 8 are described in learning outcomes, and included in the NQR; of these, approximately one third can be obtained in formal education and two thirds through non-formal and informal learning ([34]). Only general education qualifications at level 1 are not yet included in the register, although they are levelled on the SKKR (European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV), 2017). The learning outcomes descriptions published on the NQR are also used on Europass certificate and diploma supplements ([35]) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). According to the 2021 strategy for LLL and counselling, next steps include connecting the NQR to the Europass platform via the Qualifications dataset register (by the end of 2023) (Cedefop, forthcoming).

The education ministry has also created the National classification of education, which is a list of current and withdrawn education and training study fields and programmes, including higher education. The classification contains 7 597 qualifications offering limited information on each one, including NQF/EQF level; it was last updated in 2018. The two registers are not interconnected. All SKKR qualifications are published in these registers.

6.5. Awareness and use of the NQF

Education and training and recognition authorities and bodies are already fully aware of the framework; so are labour market stakeholders related to sector councils, professional associations, and other organisations that have been engaged in its development. Learners and education and training providers are getting aware of the framework through the indication of EQF/SKKR levels on diplomas, certificates and supplements, and activities organised by the EQF NCP/Europass national centre. The SKKR is only partly known to other labour market stakeholders and to guidance and counselling practitioners (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020, 2022).

6.6. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

No evaluation of the SKKR has been carried out so far (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

6.7. Impact of the NQF

The SKKR acts as an enabler for introducing a VNFIL system in the country. Apart for supporting the development of the necessary preconditions, the VNFIL system developed and currently piloted by the SOK project is based on the occupational qualifications framework of the SKKR. The SKKR is used to further promote quality assurance in higher education. The relevant 2018 Act aims to ensure that the intended knowledge, skills and competences of higher education programmes correspond to the relevant SKKR level. In 2022, most programmes were modified accordingly (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

The influence of the framework is evident in the transparency and comparability of qualifications, and the design of qualifications standards and curricula in terms of learning outcomes. Further, the SKKR does not make any distinction between qualifications acquired through formal and non-formal education and informal learning, allowing comparing their levels by comparing learning outcomes. Thus, it supports parity of esteem between different types of education and training and qualifications.

The cooperation between the members of sectoral councils from labour side and the education authority in setting up the qualification standards has been also strengthened as the SKKR provides the platform for cooperation.

Since 2009, the SKKR has been a core element of policies promoting LLL. This role is reinforced by the recently adopted Strategy on LLL and counselling and the upcoming Act on lifelong learning.

Referencing to the EQF

The SKKR was referenced to the EQF in 2017. An updated referencing report will follow:

- a. the finalisation of the pilot phase of the validation system and the legal adoption of the relevant changes;
- b. the full implementation of the new system of accreditation in higher education institutions.

The referencing should be combined with the report on the fulfilment of self-certification criteria against QF-EHEA. It is not planned before 2025 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

Important lessons and future plans

A comprehensive framework with a clear structure and ambitious objectives has been put in place. It has reached activation stage and has been populated with a significant number of qualifications, described in learning outcomes and included in the NQR. Important steps have been taken regarding promoting VNFIL, which is a main function of the SKKR. Quality assurance policies in higher education are now explicitly linked to the SKKR. Through the sector councils, the SKKR implementation has provided the appropriate platform to strengthen cooperation between the labour market and the world of education.

One of the key challenges in developing and implementing the SKKR is its division into four sub-frameworks (for general education, VET, higher education and occupational qualifications). Establishing adequate relationships between them would help minimise any barriers that might occur between the different parts of education, training and qualification and would support individual progression. Strengthening the learning outcomes approach remains a key challenge in the implementation of the SKKR; deeper understanding of the impact of learning outcomes on learner performance is needed, as well as adequate expertise, teaching materials and professional assistance. Cooperation between the education and labour ministries should be deepened (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

Plans include strengthening the role of the SKKR in promoting permeability and reducing barriers between sectors and institutions. The main impact is expected with the full implementation of the VNFIL system. Other priorities of the Strategy on LLL and counselling, like introducing descriptors for SKKR level 0, extending the general and vocational school leaving examination to adult education, and introducing professional technician specialist at level 6 and professional engineer at level 7 of the SKKR point to the same direction. In line with the strategy's goals, introducing 'smaller' qualifications and micro-qualifications (micro-certificates) to increase the flexibility of the qualifications system and short-cycle tertiary programmes at SKKR level 5 is needed (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

Main sources of information

[URLs accessed 08.11.2022]

- [Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania \(ŠIOV\) \(EQF NCP\)](#)
- [Website of the national qualifications system](#)
- [National qualifications register \(NQR\)](#)
- European Union, Europass and Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania (ŠIOV) (2017). *EQF referencing report of the Slovak qualifications framework*.

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	<p>Diploma + Certificate of State exam + Diploma supplement (Vysokoškolský diplom + Vysvedčenie o štátnej skúške + Dodatok k diplomu)</p>	8
7	<p>Diploma + Certificate of State exam + Diploma supplement (Vysokoškolský diplom + Vysvedčenie o štátnej skúške + Dodatok k diplomu)</p> <p>Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)</p>	7
6	<p>Diploma + Certificate of State exam + Diploma supplement (Vysokoškolský diplom + Vysvedčenie o štátnej skúške + Dodatok k diplomu)</p> <p>Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)</p>	6
5	<p>Maturita certificate + Certificate of apprenticeship (Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške + Výučný list)</p> <p>Maturita certificate (Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške)</p> <p>Certificate of final post-secondary exam + Absolutorium diploma (Vysvečenie o absolventskej skúške + Absolventský diplom)</p> <p>Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)</p>	5

4	Maturita certificate + Certificate of apprenticeship (Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške + Výučný list) Maturita certificate (Vysvedčenie o maturitnej skúške) Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)	4
3	Certificate of final exam + Certificate of apprenticeship (Vysvedčenie o záverečnej skúške + Výučný list) Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)	3
2	Lower secondary education certificate with supplement (Vysvedčenie s doložkou) Certificate of final exam + Certificate of apprenticeship (Vysvedčenie o záverečnej skúške + Výučný list) Certificate of qualification (Osvedčenie o kvalifikácii)	2
1	Primary education certificate with supplement (Vysvedčenie s doložkou)	1

Acronyms

CRD	Centre for recognition of diplomas
EHEA	European higher education area
EQF	European qualifications framework
EQF NCP	National coordination points of European qualifications framework
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ESF	European Social Fund
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISDV	Information system of further education
LLL	lifelong learning
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NQF	National qualifications framework
NQR	National qualifications register
QF- EHEA	Qualifications framework in the European higher education area
ŠIOV	State Vocational Education Institute [Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania]
SKKR	Slovak qualifications framework [Slovenský kvalifikačný rámec]
SOK	ESF-funded project System of verifying qualifications [Systém overovania kvalifikácií]
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning

References

[URLs accessed 25.5.2023]

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

Notes

[1]More information at [Eurostat \[educ_uae_enra13\]](#) [accessed 2.12.2022].

[2][Act No 568/2009 on lifelong learning and modifying and supplementing certain laws](#) (in Slovak). The Act No 315/2012 Coll. amending and supplements the Act No 568/2009 is in force since 1 January 2013.

[3][Act No 269/2018 on quality assurance in higher education](#) (in Slovak).

[4][Website of the national qualifications system, including the SKKR](#) (in Slovak). More Information on the [SKKR and the national qualifications register](#) (in Slovak).

[5]General education qualifications are governed by the Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (the Education Act), assigned to SKKR levels 1, 2 and 4.

[6]Vocational qualifications are governed by the [Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training \(the Education Act\)](#) awarded in formal VET (secondary and post-secondary), assigned to SKKR levels 2, 3, 4 and 5.

[7]Higher education qualifications are governed by the Higher Education Act, assigned to SKKR levels 6, 7 and 8.

[8]Occupational qualifications are governed by [Act No 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning](#), amended in 2012 and awarded outside the formal education system, as a result of further education, adult education and validation of non-formal learning, assigned to SKKR levels 2 to 7.

[9]Conservatories provide both upper secondary vocational education (ISCED 2011: 354) and higher professional education (ISCED 2011: 554) in integrated programmes focused on music and drama (six-year programme) or dance (eight-year programme). The programmes of conservatories lead to vocational qualifications at SKKR levels 4 (maturita) and 5 (absolutorium).

[10]This approach is considered as reducing flexibility in the provision of qualifications. Thus, the term âpartial qualificationâ is expected not to be included in the expected Act on lifelong learning (Vantuch, 2019).

[11][Act 184/2009 on VET](#) and amendments to certain acts (in Slovak).

[12]More information about [NIVAM](#) (in Slovak).

[13][Ministry of Health](#) is responsible for the professional part of healthcare programmes at secondary healthcare schools.

[14][Accreditation Commission for Further Education](#) (in Slovak).

[15][Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport](#).

[16][2013 Criteria for the accreditation of higher education study programmes](#) (in Slovak).

[17][Act No 269/2018 Coll. on quality assurance of higher education](#) (in Slovak).

[18][Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education](#) was introduced by the Act No 269/2018 as a public institution carrying out external quality assurance activities.

[19][Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family](#).

[20]Stakeholder involvement from the world of work was vital, including employers' chambers, unions, confederations and other professional associations.

[21]The role of sector councils is defined by [Act No 5/2004 on employment services](#) and on amendment of certain laws (in Slovak).

[22]These include the introduction of the national qualifications system, with a new approach to the description of qualifications based on learning outcomes, and the development of the SKKR.

[23]The qualifications included in the NQR were identified in cooperation with the sectoral stakeholders as those most demanded in the labour market. However, the SKKR contains more than 7 000 qualifications, most of them placed in the formal system education system.

[24][System of verification of qualifications \(SOK\)](#) (in Slovak).

[25]According to the Strategy for LLL and counselling and the upcoming Act on lifelong learning, which is expected to be submitted to the government for approval in June 2023, the NQR is expected to be merged with ISDV.

[26]The manual is also expected to ease the decomposition of existing formal qualifications into units of learning outcomes. These smaller qualifications should enrich the fourth sub-framework of the SKKR (Cedefop, forthcoming).

[27]Article 17 on the verification and assessment of professional competence.

[28][Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family](#) (in Slovak).

[29]They were trained to assess basic skills in low-skilled adults under the [Blueprints for basic skills development in Slovakia \(BLUESS\)](#) project in 2020.

[30][2019 Decree No 124/2019](#) refers to the indication of NQF/EQF on certificates of occupational qualifications issued by accredited educational institutions (in Slovak). [Decree No 123/2019](#) on the level of NQF/EQF on diploma supplements issued by universities and higher education institutions (in Slovak).

[31][Cedefop's European handbook on defining, writing and applying learning outcomes](#) (Cedefop, 2017) was translated in Slovak, [see here](#). [Guidelines for the experts in qualifications development](#) (2020, in Slovak) is based on the new findings of the EQF Advisory Group and the working group for the horizontal comparison of qualifications.

[32]Access to the [national qualifications register \(NQR\)](#) (in Slovak).

[33]NQR is closely related to the [national occupations register \(NOR\)](#),

including occupational standards composed of professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences, that has been under development in parallel. NOR is also accessible through the [ISTP portal](#).
[34]More information on the [statistics page](#) of the NQR (in Slovak).
[35]More information on [Europass certificate and diploma supplements](#) (in Slovak).

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