NQF state of play

Lithuania 2024

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Overview

Stage of development: [Operational stage]

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:
The NQF includes all officially recognised qualifications in general (primary and secondary) education, vocational education and training (VET), and higher education.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Government resolution on approving the description of the Lithuanian qualifications framework (2010)
(in English)

NQF/EQF website:
⧉ Website

Qualifications register/database:
⧉ Qualifications database

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

In 2023, Lithuania's public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (4.9%) was slightly above the EU average (4.7%). Participation in early childhood education and care is on the rise, reaching 96.7% in 2023 (slightly above the EU-level 2030 target of at least 96%), while the rate of early leaving from education and training is significantly lower than the EU average (in 2023, 6.4% and 9.5% respectively). In 2023, tertiary education attainment (for those aged 25-34) (57.4%) was well above the EU-27 average and the EU-level 2030 target (respectively, 43.1% and 45%) (European Commission, DG Education, Youth, Sport &Culture, 2024). Participation in upper secondary VET is relatively low (27% in 2022 against 49% of the EU average), while vocational pathways are the only option for learners in post-secondary education ([1]). In 2023, the employment rate of VET graduates (25-34 years old) (71.3%) was below the EU average (81%) (European Commission, DG Education, Youth, Sport & Culture, 2024).

The LTQF is an important instrument for designing and updating sectoral qualification standards and higher education study field descriptors, introducing short-cycle study programmes, and developing the competence assessment and recognition system for VET (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

1.2. NQF legal basis

The LTQF was formally adopted through a government resolution in 2010, and further refined by amendments in 2011 (role and functions) and 2019 (updated classification of higher education short-cycle study programmes) ([2]) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Policy objectives

The LTQF was created to support the development and modernisation of education and training and alignment of the qualification offer with labour market needs. It aims to improve the transparency and comparability of qualifications, support their design and assessment, and make it easier to recognise and validate the learning outcomes that people achieve in formal, non-formal and informal settings. The framework also promotes a lifelong learning culture, national and international mobility (KPMPC, 2024). Its aims have remained unchanged over time (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The LTQF is a regulatory framework setting out the levels of the qualifications system and promoting the principle of validation of informal and non-formal learning. It is viewed as a prerequisite for the development of a unified national qualifications system. (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The LTQF combines the eight-level structure of the country's qualifications system with the descriptor principles introduced by the EQF. Level descriptors are defined according to two parameters: activity characteristics and types of competence.

Table 1. **Level descriptors in the LTQF**

Parameters		
Criteria	Characteristic of activities	Type of competence
	Complexity Autonomy Variability	Cognitive Functional General

Source: Adapted from KPMPC (2024).

The combination of the two parameters allows for detailed descriptions of each level: the types of competence correspond to the EQF distinction between knowledge, skills and competence (autonomy and responsibility in the 2017 EQF recommendation), while the characteristics of activities further develop the third EQF pillar. The strong relation of LTQF level descriptors to the EQF ones is documented in the updated referencing report. (KPMPC, 2024).

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

The LTQF has been designed as a comprehensive framework for lifelong learning. It currently includes qualifications from general (primary and secondary) education, VET and higher education. In 2023, the outcomes of the primary education programme were linked to LTQF level 1. The amendments have been embedded in relevant legislation, namely the order V-570 of 20 April 2023 that defines the description of primary, lower and upper secondary programmes and corresponding LTQF levels and legal documents regulating the issuing of general education certificates, including a matura certificate ([3]).

Qualifications awarded outside formal education and training and

international qualifications are not yet included into the LTQF. Progression in establishing links between non-formal qualifications with the LTQF can be observed in the order V- 1218 of 18 September 2023 defining the procedure for quality assurance in non-formal adult education and continuing training programmes relevant to the individual learning account (ILA) system ([4]). The order specifies that the LTQF level can be indicated in the programme information when, for instance, such programme is part of a formal VET or study programme (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). Legislative work in 2024 specified the conditions according to which foreign and international qualifications can be recognised to a corresponding LTQF level (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024; KPMPC, 2024).

The implementation of the comprehensive LTQF highlighted a gap at level 5. As a result, two types of qualifications were placed at this level: VET diplomas (*Profesinio mokymo diplomas*) acquired through post-secondary VET programmes ([5]), and short-cycle higher education programmes leading to a diploma *(Trumposios pakopos diplomas)*, were introduced in 2018 ([6]). In 2022, the first group of learners enrolled in programmes on tourism and leisure, and informatics engineering and programme systems. As stated by the law on research and higher education, study field descriptors and qualification standards offer the main guidelines for the development of short-cycle programmes, and consistency with them should be assured (KPMCP, 2024; European Commission & Cedefop, 2024) ([7]).

The LTQF does not include partial qualifications ([8]) or micro-credentials (KPMPC, 2024). There are ongoing discussions among national authorities involved in qualifications design on how to define a legal and operational framework for micro credentials, and mostly on how to relate them to the LTQF and, in the long term, to the ILA system launched in 2023 as a future repository of individual credentials and awards. The updated referencing report suggests to broaden the qualification offer, for instance thorough the introduction of micro-credentials and similar awards (KPMPC, 2024). A system for the use of micro-credentials (concept, legal and operational framework) and its relation with the LTQF is being discussed between the education ministry, KPMPC and education providers, mainly HE institutions (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The LTQF is open but doesn't currently include international qualifications. If international qualifications or qualifications awarded outside formal education and training were to be included in the LTQF,

they would have to be aligned with a specific qualification standard and meet the same requirements with other qualifications in terms of content and structure (KPMPC, 2024; European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

3.3. Use of learning outcomes

Level descriptors are considered the basis for formulating qualifications: the descriptors are used as an explicit reference point to improve consistency between qualifications and across education sectors. Qualification standards (nationally referred to as sectoral qualifications standards), modular VET programmes, higher education study field descriptors and higher education study programmes are in line with the LTQF level descriptors.

The 2019 reform of the general curriculum framework covering pre-primary, primary, lower and upper secondary education aimed to strengthen the competence-based curriculum orientation. The reformed curricula at all levels focus on the acquisition of seven key competences (cognitive, communication, cultural, creativity, citizenship, digital, and social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competences) and are developed across all programmes and subjects. (KPMPC, 2024).

Since 2020 measures bridging general education and VET have been established. General education learners in grades 9-12 may substitute the technology subject *(technologijų dalykas)* of the curriculum with a short VET module (5-10 credits); credits are recognised when enrolling in VET, shortening the programme duration. General education learners in grades 11-12 may enrol in individual VET modules (KPMPC, 2024; Cedefop & KPMPC, 2023; ReferNet Lithuania & Cedefop, 2023).

Even before 2010, the learning outcomes (competence) approach was broadly implemented in VET (Laužackas et al., 2009). All formal VET programmes are based on qualification standards, which are used for implementing and operationalising the LTQF by defining and describing qualifications at different levels of the framework. Standards are reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years, and the related VET programmes should be aligned within 12 months from the entry into force of the updated standard(s), all standards are publicly available online. By June 2023, 24 standards covering 608 qualifications at LTQF levels 2 to 8 were in place. (KPMPC, 2024; European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The learning outcomes approach supported the modularisation of VET curricula, which was initiated in 2015 and gradually implemented by

2020. Formal VET programmes consist of mandatory and elective modules expressed in learning credits, aligned with LTQF level descriptors. Depending on the qualification targeted, the volume of formal IVET is 30, 45, 60 (usual volume of one year programme), 90 or 110 credits and 20, 35, 50, 70 or 90 credits in formal CVET ([9]); the volume of a non-formal VET programme cannot be more than 30 credits (KPMPC, 2024).

In higher education, LTQF descriptors are used when defining study levels and study field descriptors. The learning outcomes approach is implemented using two key tools, the study cycle descriptors (order V-1012 of 16 November 2016) that define the learning outcomes to be achieved at each cycle (in terms of knowledge and application; research skills; special abilities; social abilities; and personal abilities) and study field descriptors which define the set of knowledge, skills and qualification requirements relevant to a study field. 53 study field descriptors were established by 2023. The Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (SKVC) coordinates the development and review of study field descriptors to develop new, for instance, short-cycle-programmes in emerging sectors (KPMPC, 2024). Higher education institutions use study field descriptors as reference points for the development, review and renewal of their programmes and qualifications. Study field descriptors are also used for external quality assurance of programmes, and to better link higher education with labour market needs (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

3.4. Quality assurance arrangements

The LTQF is underpinned by quality assurance arrangements, which cover development, management, assessment of competences and award of LTQF qualifications. The LTQF contributes to raising the quality of qualifications; it is one of the instruments used in external quality assessment. For example, experts evaluating higher education study programmes use the study field descriptors in external quality assurance procedures (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The National Agency for Education (NSA), established in 2019 after reorganising six institutions subordinate to the education ministry ensures quality assurance in the general education sector (pre-school, pre-primary and general education, except for higher education), including the organisation of curricula and *matura* examinations. Responsibility for quality assurance of formal VET is shared between the Qualifications and VET Development Centre (*Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras* (KPMPC)), Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher

Education (SKVC) and the NSA. The latter was also responsible for the external evaluation of providers of formal VET (order V-316), however, from 2024 this responsibility was delegated to KPMPC. Supporting higher education institutions to quality-assure their programmes falls under the responsibility of the Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (SKVC). KPMPC and NSA participate, together with the national ESF Agency and the Association of Lithuanian HE institutions for Joint Admissions, to the setting up -through the Learn for Life project- of the legal, quality assurance and operational framework of the individual learning account system of non-formal programmes, implemented by education institutions and labour market actors (KPMPC, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The education ministry ([10]) has assigned the LTQF's implementation and day-to-day coordination to the Qualifications and VET Development Centre (*Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras, KPMPC*). The KPMPC acts as the EQF national coordination point (NCP). Its tasks are to reference national qualifications levels to the eight levels of the EQF, while ensuring transparency, and to provide access to information and guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the LTQF. It also aims to promote the participation of stakeholders (education institution representatives, social partners, sector representatives and experts) in the process. The management of the LTQF is performed by the Qualifications Formation Unit (four people) within the KPMPC . LTQF-related activities such as the development and update of sectoral professional standards, consultation with stakeholders and dissemination activities are funded by the state budget, European funds and Erasmus+ programmes (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). The KPMPC is the ReferNet contact point and the European quality assurance in VET reference point.

Regarding the quality assurance of the LTQF and national qualifications system, the KPMPC works in close cooperation with the NSA and SKVC. In 2013, the SKVC was officially delegated to take part in the coordination and implementation of the LTQF, with a specific focus on universities and universities of applied sciences. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation oversees human resources development policy and recognition of regulated professions, and, together with the education ministry, is represented in all sectoral professional committees (SPCs).

Stakeholders have been actively involved in national qualifications system development since 2007, for instance in referencing the LTQF to the EQF and in setting up a framework of sector-based qualification standards. The 2017 law on VET introduced the SPCs, 18 advisory bodies ([11]) that operate under the KPMPC, covering all economic sectors and supporting the development of the national qualifications system/framework ([12]). Each SPC is composed of at least nine members, including representatives of national employer organisations and branch employer associations, trade unions, ministries, public organisations, and higher education and VET providers (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). The SPCs endorse qualifications, consider

and submit proposals on new qualifications (at any LTQF level) to the education ministry, and submit opinions regarding the need for short-cycle study programmes. They chair KPCMC committees examining the application of institutions wishing to perform assessment and recognition of competences and contribute to the external evaluation of VET institutions (KPCMP, 2024). Stakeholder involvement regarding LTQF implementation is more prominent in VET and higher education through the work of SPCs (employers constitute usually at least half of the SPC committee composition) on sectoral qualification standards design, and on aligning of short-cycle programmes with the needs of the economic sectors (KPCMP, 2024).

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 is an integral part of the lifelong learning system and is covered by multiple legal frameworks. According to the 2017 law on VET the results of validation should be recognised as a part of a whole formal qualification. Validation arrangements can provide access to all formal education programmes leading to VET diplomas (levels 1 to 5). When enrolling in VET, learners may validate their prior learning and receive credits/exceptions from parts of a VET programme. Acquisition of a partial or full VET qualification is possible through validation ([13]). There is no evidence on the use of validation in general education (Juskevicius, 2024). In higher education, prior learning can be recognised as part of a programme; the maximum credit is 75% of a total study programme (Juskevicius, 2024; European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Since September 2021, the governance and organisation of competence assessment and recognition procedures in VET have changed ([14]) with nominating competence assessment centres responsible for. In addition to supporting formal VET graduates, the new procedure promotes the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning (professional competences) acquired through apprenticeships, work experience and self-education (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Competence assessments for qualification are coordinated by the KPMPC in cooperation with nominated VET providers acting as competence assessment centres. Competence assessment tasks are prepared in line with sectoral qualification standards and LTQF level descriptors (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

5.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications

The SKVC is responsible for the academic recognition of foreign and international qualifications. A 2024 legislative amendment formally recognised the SKVC as the national ERIC-NARIC centre ([15]) and broadened the scope of academic recognition of general and combined (general and vocational) programmes allowing access to tertiary education also to holders of VET qualifications issued by foreign and international VET institutions. NQF/EQF levels are key in assessing and

recognising foreign qualifications, and in implementing automatic recognition agreements. ([16]) The government resolution No 475 of 14 June 2024 regarding academic recognition of education and qualifications acquired according to educational programmes of foreign countries and international organisations specified that the outcome of recognition of foreign and international qualifications may be the recognition of these qualifications as equivalent to a qualification awarded in Lithuania or to the corresponding level of the LTQF (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024; ReferNet Lithuania & Cedefop, 2025). After the amendment, VET institutions acquired the right to carry out academic recognition and validation of foreign and international qualifications, when the applicants have an intention to learn according to VET programmes (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher education (SKVC) provides information online on the conditions for recognition of foreign qualifications, depending on the level and purpose (professional or academic) of the qualification gained, including on the recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

The LTQF is at an operational stage. It is an important element of the education, training and qualifications system, and provides a map of and references to all formal qualifications.

6.2. Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF

The process for registering LTQF qualifications and programmes leading to them into the Register of studies, training programmes and qualifications (RSTPQ) constitutes the formal process to include a qualification in the LTQF (order no V-1335). The National Education Agency (NSA) is appointed by the education ministry as the manager of the register. (KPMPC, 2024).

In VET, the KPMCP methodology defines the process for assigning qualifications to levels 1 to 5 following an analysis of the qualification descriptor (units of qualifications) and expected learning outcomes/competences against the LTQF level descriptors. The design of modular VET programmes is based on the qualification requirements defined in the sectoral qualification standards ([17]) ([18]); it is supervised by KPCMP experts and undergo external evaluation before submission to NSA for inclusion in the register (European Commission & Cedefop, 2025; KPMPC, 2024).

At tertiary level, higher education institutions are responsible for developing and awarding qualifications at LTQF levels 5 to 8, in line with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education and Research, the general requirements for conducting studies defined based on the qualification cycle/level (short-cycle, bachelor, master, doctorate), the LTQF level and study fields descriptors. The accredited study programme and the corresponding higher education qualification should be submitted to NSA and registered in the RSTPQ, for a programme to be implemented. Professional studies are outside the study cycles and cover teacher training programmes (at LTQF level 6, indicated in the study field descriptor) and residency studies in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine fields ([19]).

In general education, it is the learning outcomes that are referenced to the national framework. The alignment of primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary programmes to LTQF level is established by legal acts

governing the general education curriculum (KPMPC, 2024).

6.3. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

LTQF and EQF levels are indicated on primary (LTQF only) and lower and upper secondary general education certificates and VET diplomas ([20]) and Europass certificate supplements ([21]), as well as in higher education diploma supplements, apart from doctoral diplomas ([22]) and teacher study certificates (level 6). LTQF/EQF levels are indicated on qualifications in the register of study, training programmes and qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.4. NQF dissemination

Information on the LTQF and EQF is channelled through the dedicated website on the LTQF, established in 2022. The revamped website of the SKVC posts information on study fields descriptors assigned to different LTQF levels as well. A methodological guide for stakeholders and employers involved in preparing qualifications standards emphasises the LTQF's role in improving quality and consistency in qualification design at all levels, and between and within sectors, while recommendations (in Lithuanian) for referencing qualifications to LTQF levels and a guide for developing and introducing mastery qualifications are available. In 2023, no communication strategy was yet in place. A series of promotional videos were launched on TV and youTube to inform the public on the LTQF and EQF frameworks as well the areas of application in the national context. As part of the updated referencing report to the EQF and EHEA consultations with VET, HE stakeholders and social partners representatives and a conference to discuss progress achieved and challenges ahead took place (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

6.5. Qualifications databases and registers

The register of study, training programmes and qualifications (RSTPQ) includes VET and higher education ([23]) qualifications and new types of qualifications, such as the level 5 short-cycle higher education qualifications. It does not include yet general education and doctorate (level 8) qualifications. By September 2024, the register included 1 498 qualifications. The slight decrease compared to 2022 (1 574) is the result of deletion of outdated qualifications not compatible with the new qualification standards. During the same period, 15 level 5 qualifications were registered at post-secondary and tertiary levels.

The RSTPQ aims to provide individuals with information, in Lithuanian and

English, on qualifications, education programmes and standards. It targets individuals such as learners, employees and employers, as well as legal entities such as education institutions and other organisations. The information provided includes the title of qualifications, the LTQF/EQF level, the intended learning outcomes in an open text format, the awarding body and ways to acquire the qualification.

The information is transferred to Europass certificate supplements. The register is hosted within the national Online Open Information and Guidance System (*Atvira Informavimo Konsultavimo Orientavimo Sistema, AIKOS*), which is an entry point to qualifications, education and training programmes, and also offers data on learning opportunities (i.e. through the database of study and training programmes). There is interoperability with the European learning model v.3 (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.6. Awareness and use of the NQF

The LTQF is well known to (and extensively used by) education and training providers, quality assurance bodies and authorities involved in recognition processes and, to a lesser extent, to sectors and other stakeholders.

Policies on the development of learning outcomes for VET and higher education treat the LTQF as an overarching principle. LTQF descriptors are embedded into methodological guidelines for developing and updating qualifications standards, VET curricula and higher education study descriptors. System changes introduced by the progressive implementation of the VET reform boosted employers' involvement in designing, developing and assessing VET qualifications and programmes in line with the LTQF principles. LTQF levels are mentioned in job openings (mainly in the public sector) and in the Europass CV, which is widely used when applying for a job.

The LTQF is also used by guidance and counselling practitioners when presenting education systems, and training, study and career opportunities. The national public employment service (PES) uses the framework to define the level of 'competences and qualifications that create high added value' ([24]), which can be obtained through PES training programmes for the (un-)employed (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The LTQF has simplified the procedures for recognising foreign qualifications and older Lithuanian qualifications (e.g. by indicating

LTQF/EQF levels on diplomas). The LTQF is also used in the quality assurance of qualifications, in validation procedures and is mentioned in the decisions confirming the recognition of a foreign or international qualification (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.7. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

The KPMPC has assessed the impact that referencing the LTQF to the EQF had from 2012 to 2020 ([25]). The study examined the role of the LTQF in strategic projects and policy initiatives in VET and higher education.

The study concluded that the LTQF has affected the design and development of VET and higher education curricula; in higher education, it has also supported quality assurance. Furthermore, the LTQF level descriptors made it easier to compare national and foreign VET and higher education qualifications. The study also identified actions areas, such as improving permeability between education institutions, enhancing the capacity of education providers to recognise competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning; assigning LTQF levels to qualifications awarded outside formal education and training and completing the legal framework regulating EQF level 5 qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

As part of the KPMPC Erasmus+ programme 2021-23 project on the implementation of the EQF in Lithuania, the joined referencing report of the LTQF to the EQF and the QF-EHEA was updated to better reflect changes in education and training over the past decade and to better support the implementation of the LTQF in all sectors, providing specific recommendations for future actions, including opening up the framework to diverse qualifications and supporting the recognition of non-formal learning as well as periodical assessment of the framework and its impact (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.8. Impact of the NQF

The LTQF has been conceived and developed as a tool to classify qualifications per level according to their learning and/or study outcomes. It ensures the development of a unified national qualifications system to improve the quality, comparability and relevance of qualifications to existing economic needs but also support continuity of learning for professional mobility (KPMPC, 2024).

The compliance of qualification standards and higher education study field descriptors with LTQF descriptors and levelling criteria ensures that qualifications are expressed in terms of learning outcomes, thus

promoting their comparability and transparency. In addition, the LTQF is one of the instruments used to perform the external quality assessment in higher education (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The framework has contributed to the standardisation of qualifications delivered at the same level and ensures consistency of qualifications issued at different levels. The (early) implementation of the LTQF facilitated the promotion of the learning outcomes approach in qualification and programme design across education sectors and levels; this in turn has positively impacted horizontal and vertical permeability in general education, VET and higher education It also contributed to increasing parity of esteem between VET and higher education and has led to the development of level 5 qualifications offered in post-secondary VET as well as in short-cycle higher education programmes.

Both, the regular operations of the framework in qualification design, assessment of competences of qualifications and the updating of the referencing report in 2023, create the space for dialogue and cooperation among national authorities and stakeholders, for instance, through the network of sectoral professional committees operating under the KPMPC.

The systematic use of qualification levels in VET diplomas and HE diploma supplements facilitates recognition of qualifications, international mobility for work or study and international recognition of qualifications.

The LTQF offers a common language linking education and the labour market ([26]); for instance, the employment authority uses the LTQF in evaluating the diplomas and qualifications of jobseekers. In parallel, the LTQF helps employers to evaluate the competences that employees have and lack, plan training needs and design job descriptions. (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Referencing to the EQF

The LTQF was referenced to the EQF in November 2011, with an integrated report covering both the EQF and the QF-EHEA, published in 2012. An updated referencing report to the EQF for lifelong learning and the EHEA was presented in early 2024; it was published in August 2024. The report is a comprehensive overview of LTQF-related developments since 2012 (e.g. the inclusion of general education qualifications at primary and lower and upper secondary levels and the implementation of level 5 qualifications in post-secondary VET and short-cycle HE programmes) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024; Cedefop & ReferNet, 2025).

Important lessons and future plans

Since 2012, the framework supported the VET and higher education curriculum and quality assurance reforms and has been gradually embedded into national legislation in different education sectors, which in turn supports and routes its implementation, for example through the alignment of the general education curriculum to the LTQF levels and their use in general education certificates. The framework ensures the development of a unified national qualifications system. The use of the same criteria to define qualifications at different levels and across sectors supports their transparency and comparability and alignment to existing needs in the economy. The LTQF level descriptors are considered the basis for developing and updating VET and higher education qualifications, strengthening trust among education sectors and levels. Its conceptual approach, capturing the increase in the complexity, depth and breadth of activities and competences, has proved to be effective, and is well regarded by education providers and labour market actors. Furthermore, the LTQF has set up a platform for cooperation between various stakeholders, especially VET and higher education representatives; the SPCs promote dialogue on the LTQF between education and labour market actors. Interinstitutional cooperation has in turn helped the sustainable operationalisation of the LTQF across sectors with different governance (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Although legislation on the validation of prior learning is in place, there is room for the LTQF to contribute significantly to this area, as implementation of the legislation has not significantly progressed. It is important to raise awareness of the LTQF beyond the education sector, to improve stakeholders' understanding of the LTQF's underlying principles (e.g. levels and level descriptors), and to further promote parity of esteem between qualifications (e.g. bachelor's degree and professional bachelor's degree). The role of labour market actors and trade unions in qualification development also needs to be intensified (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

More needs to be done to increase trust in qualifications awarded outside formal education and training, and assure their quality in order to open up the framework to them. It would be useful to strengthen and increase the responsibilities (and human capital) of institutions involved in awarding such qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The updated referencing report (2024) has captured the main future

priorities. In general education, the report highlights the need to raise the awareness of the LTQF among career counsellors and teachers (for instance through targeted campaigns), learners and their families. In VET, it is recommended to better align qualifications standards, programmes and LTQF levels, to develop a systematic quality assurance model and intensify the work of the SPCs in new qualifications and standards design. In the tertiary sector, it is envisaged to widen the spectrum of qualification types to include microcredentials, qualifications with narrow professional focus and qualifications delivered in interdisciplinary studies. Broadening the scope of the framework correlates with parallel developments regarding validation of non-formal learning and the setting up of the ILA system. Other suggestions include periodical assessment of the LTQF implementation and its impact; increased permeability among education programmes at the same or different LTQF levels; and faster delivery of level 5 qualifications through validation processes (KPMPC, 2024; European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Main sources of information

[URLs accessed 24/7/2025]

KPMPC.

LTQF/EQF website.

Qualifications register.

KPMPC. (2024). *Referencing the Lithuanian qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for the European higher education area - updated national report December 2023*.

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	**Doctoral diploma (Daktaro diplomas)**	8
7	**Master diploma (Magistro diplomas)**	7
6	**Bachelor diploma (Bakalauro diplomas)** **Professional Bachelor diploma (Profesinio bakalauro diplomas)** **Study Certificate - Teacher training programmes (Pedagogas)**	6
5	**VET diploma, level 5 (Profesinio mokymo diplomas)** **Short cycle diploma - short-cycle HE programmes (Trumposios pakopos diplomas)**	5
4	**VET diploma, level 4 (Profesinio mokymo diplomas)** **Matura certificate (on completion of the upper secondary education programme and passing matura examinations) (Brandos atestatas)** The learning outcomes of primary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 1, the learning outcomes of lower secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 3, whereas the learning outcomes of upper secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 4. Level 1 qualifications are not currently awarded.	4

3	**VET diploma, level 3 (Profesinio mokymo diplomas)**	3
	Lower secondary education certificate (completion of lower secondary education programme and testing learning outcomes) (grades 5–10) (Pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas) The learning outcomes of primary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 1, the learning outcomes of lower secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 3, whereas the learning outcomes of upper secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 4. Level 1 qualifications are not currently awarded.	
2	**VET diploma, level 2 (Profesinio mokymo diplomas)**	2
1	**VET diploma, level 1 (Profesinio mokymo diplomas)** The learning outcomes of primary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 1, the learning outcomes of lower secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 3, whereas the learning outcomes of upper secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 4. Level 1 qualifications are not currently awarded. **Primary education certificate, level 1 (Pradinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas)** The learning outcomes of primary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 1, the learning outcomes of lower secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 3, whereas the learning outcomes of upper secondary education programmes are referenced to LTQF level 4. Level 1 qualifications are not currently awarded.	1

Acronyms

EQF	European qualifications framework
KPMPC	Qualifications and VET Development Centre [*Kvalifikacijų ir profesinio mokymo plėtros centras*]
LTQF	Lithuanian qualifications framework
NARIC	the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
NSA	National Agency for Education [*Nacionalinė švietimo agentūra*]
SKVC	Centre for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
SPC	sectoral professional committee
VET	vocational education and training

References

[URLs accessed 24/7/2025]

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Notes

[1]More information at Eurostat [educ_uoe_enra13], accessed 18/3/2025.

[2]Resolution No 535 of the Government of Republic of Lithuania of 4 May 2010 on the description of the Lithuanian qualifications framework (in Lithuanian).

[3]Order V-2001 of 23 December 2022 amending order ISAK-236 of 20 February 2007, and subsequent amendments V-785 of 2 June 2023 and V-308 of 18 march 2024).

[4]More information on the establishment of the ILA system is available online.

[5]In December 2023, 10 qualifications at level 5 were taught in modular CVET programmes (KPMCP, 2024).

[6]Between 2018 and 2023, the short-cycle higher education programmes delivered a study certificate (Studijų pažymÄjimas).

[7]From 2022 to September 2024, 15 short-cycle programmes have been included in the Register of Studies, training programmes and qualifications For more information, see the qualifications register (in Lithuanian).

[8]Units of qualifications defined in the qualification descriptor of qualifications standards. When developing a VET programme, a unit typically becomes a module of the programme. Partial qualifications are not registered separately in the Register of Study, Training Programmes and Qualifications.

[9]'A learning credit is a unit of learning volume that measures learning outcomes and a learner's working time' (KPMPC, 2019). In the national context, initial VET programmes are those delivered at lower and upper secondary, and post-secondary levels. Continuing VET programmes are available that enable adults to acquire a second qualification in formal VET.

[10]The official title is Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

[11]More information on the SPCs (in Lithuanian).

[12]Joint Order No V-610/4-401 of 28 June 2018 of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economy on the description and approval of the composition, tasks and financing of the sectoral professional committees (in Lithuanian).

[13]Credits/exceptions apply to some level 3 and 4 VET diploma programmes only; a full VET diploma level 4 cannot be acquired through validation alone (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

[14]Order No V-1480 of 30 September 2020 on the approval of the description of the procedure for the assessment of acquired

competencies (in Lithuanian).

[15]amendment No 475 of 12 June 2024 of the 2012 resolution on the procedure for the recognition of international qualifications and qualifications acquired in a foreigner country.

[16]For example, see the Agreement among the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the automatic academic recognition of qualifications concerning higher education (in English).

[17]SPC committees review and discuss the LTQF levels proposed in the sectoral qualifications standards before endorsing them.

[18]Formal VET programmes include core modules, which are based on LTQF-levelled qualification units; and optional modules, which undergo levelling procedure. In December 2023, 629 modular VET programmes were included in the RSTPQ. The register includes also 13 non-modular VET programmes designed to provide specific competences for statutory functions.

[19]Professional studies were introduced with 2017 amendments to the Law on HE and Research; they can be referenced to level 6 or 7 (KPMPC, 2024)

[20]Order No V-231 of 23 March 2015 on the description of the content, form and issuing procedure of VET diplomas and certificates and VET diploma template (in Lithuanian).

[21]See the example of a Europass certificate supplement on the Online Open Information and Guidance System website (in Lithuanian).

[22]Order No V-362 of 15 May 2017 concerning the recommendations for filling in diploma supplements (in Lithuanian).

[23]Not all LTQF level 8 qualifications are included; general education qualifications at levels 1 to 4 were included in the LTQF, however implementation was pending in 2024.

[24]AukÅ¡tÄ pridÄtinÄ vertÄ kurianÄiÅ³ kvalifikacijÅ³ ir kompetencijÅ³ Ä¯gijimas, in Lithuanian. The order V-294 of 22 September 2022 specifies the list of 40 qualifications and 590 competences at LTQF level 4 or higher in research and development (R&D) priority areas established by the Government of Lithuania.

[25]The evaluation is intended for internal purposes, and is not published.

[26]VET institutions report that former graduates contact them to confirm the level of their qualifications or training programmes, which can be levelled using the LTQF principles.

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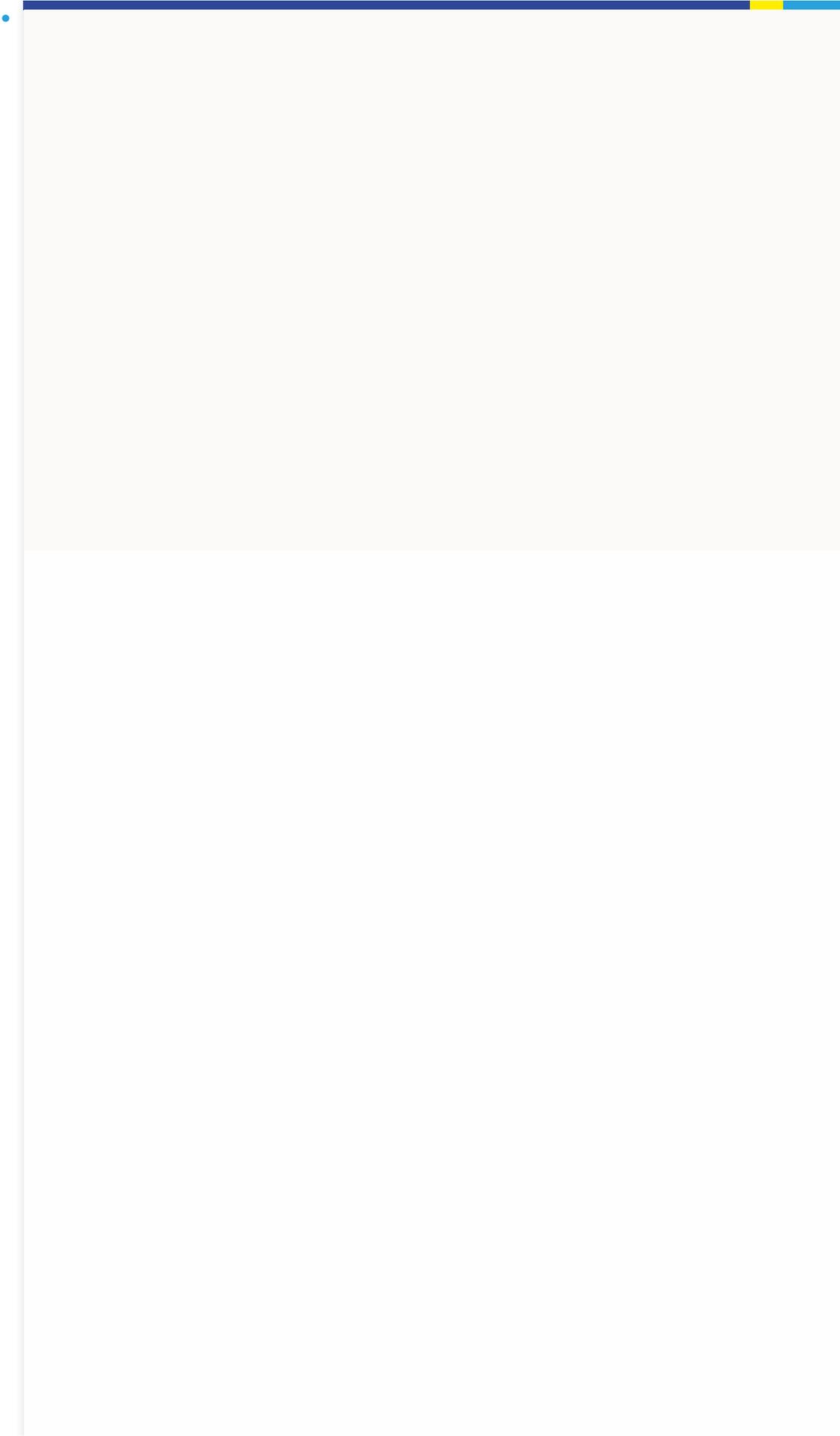
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