

NQF state of play

 **Latvia 2024**

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Overview

Stage of development: Operational stage

NQF linked to EQF: 

Scope of the framework:

The NQF includes all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training, including professional qualifications, which can also be awarded through the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Regulation No 990 of the CoM on the education classification of Latvia (2010)

[\(in Latvian\)](#)

[\(in English\)](#)

Replaced by the Regulation No 322 of the CoM on the education classification of Latvia (2017)

[\(in Latvian\)](#)

NQF/EQF website:

 [Website](#)

Qualifications register/database:

 [Latvian qualifications database](#)

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

In 2022, public expenditure on education in Latvia as a percentage of gross domestic product was 5.3%, above the EU average of 4.7% ([1]). The percentage of tertiary education attainment in 2023 for those aged 25-34 was 45.1%, exceeding the EU average of 43.1% ([2]). Participation in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) was 41.1% in 2022, lower than the EU average of 49.0% ([3]). The employment rate of VET graduates aged 25-34 in 2023 was 74.8%, well below the EU average of 81% (European Commission, DG Education, Youth, Sport & Culture, 2024). In 2023, the participation in early childhood education and care was 95.5%, above the EU average of 93.1% for the same year. Finally, the rate of early leaving from education and training ([4]) remains at 7.7%, significantly lower than the EU average of 9.5% in 2023 ([5]).

1.2. NQF legal basis

The LQF is firmly embedded in legislation governing education and training. The legal basis of the LQF was amended in 2017 to adapt the framework to the requirements of the labour market and education sectors. The LQF level descriptors and the compliance of education programmes with LQF/EQF levels were first defined by a 2010 [Cabinet regulation](#). Following amendments to the [Vocational Education Law](#) (2015), the [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#) (2011), the [Education Law](#) (2015) and a number of regulations ([6]), the 2017 [Cabinet regulation](#) on the education classification redefined the descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to the LQF levels and the conformity of the types of education programmes with the LQF/EQF levels. The 2022 amendment to the [Vocational Education Law](#) ([7]), aligned the already existing five-level professional qualifications framework to an eight-level framework, corresponding to the LQF. This was achieved by aligning the learning outcomes of professional qualifications at each LQF level with the relevant level descriptors. The law also reformed secondary VET and higher professional education. Regarding secondary VET programmes, learners can obtain a 'Diploma of vocational secondary education' (LQF level 4) or a professional qualification at LQF level 3 or 4. Graduates may obtain either a diploma of vocational secondary education and a certificate of professional qualification (after passing centralised State exams in general subjects and professional qualification exams) or a diploma of vocational

secondary education (after completing a vocational secondary education programme and passing only centralised State exams). The amendments introduced a new type of qualification, the certificate for obtaining part of a professional qualification, which is awarded after achieving a set of units of learning outcomes (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

In 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers approved regulations regarding documents certifying the State-recognised vocational education and professional qualifications at LQF level 5. The regulations specified the template and procedure for issuing the certificate of acquisition of the module (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Policy objectives

The general aim of the LQF is to improve the transparency of qualifications by providing an unbiased reference for qualification levels and their learning outcomes. According to the first referencing report (Academic Information Centre, 2012), the framework aims to increase the international comparability of Latvian qualifications for further study and employability; improve learners' and employers' understanding of the education process and its outcomes; widen the possibilities for lifelong learning; support the development of learning-outcome-based education programmes; promote lifelong learning; strengthen the link between the labour market and education; and strengthen cooperation among those involved in the design and award of qualifications. The above aims, were also reaffirmed in the second referencing report, which stated that the primary objective of the LQF is to provide an impartial reference to the formal education qualification levels granted by educational institutions in Latvia, as well as the corresponding learning outcomes (Academic Information Centre, 2018a).

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The LQF is an eight-level framework. Its level descriptors are based on learning outcomes and are defined as knowledge (knowledge and comprehension), skills (ability to apply knowledge, communication and general skills) and competences (analysis, synthesis and assessment). These were developed in alignment with national education and occupational standards, as well as the EQF level descriptors (Academic Information Centre, 2018a).

In 2018, 15 [sectoral qualifications frameworks](#) were officially adopted. Professional qualifications from a specific economic sector were levelled to the relevant sectoral qualifications framework (SQF), which in turn was referenced to the LQF (Cedefop & ReferNet, 2023). The development of the SQF took place in three phases: the initial development (2011-2015), the development of the regulatory framework (2015-2016) and the improvement and approval (2017-2018). The 2022 amendment to the Vocational Education Law, in addition to opening up all LQF levels to professional qualifications, included a brief definition of each of the eight levels of professional qualifications to be aligned with those of the LQF. For example, according to the amendment, holders of level 3 professional qualifications have a theoretical and practical background, which enables them to perform the work of a qualified employee independently. Further, the amendment reorganised sectoral qualifications frameworks; modular VET programmes can lead to professional qualifications at different LQF levels ([8]) (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022). Sectoral expert councils can propose level descriptors for the sectoral qualifications frameworks, for occupational standards and for professional qualifications requirements, in line with LQF levels and level descriptors (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020).

The qualifications framework for higher education is founded on the basis of the Bologna cycles and integrated into the LQF. Each qualification is described on the basis of its expected learning outcomes and its workload in credit points ([9]).

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

The LQF includes all levels and subsystems of formal education (general,

initial and continuing VET, and higher education), including professional qualifications, which can also be awarded through the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Non-government-regulated qualifications awarded outside the formal education and training system are not yet included.

The development of the LQF was divided into two phases. Qualifications from formal education (VET, higher education and general education) were included in the first phase of implementation, which was concluded in 2012. The second phase focused on revising LQF levels 1 to 4, broadening the scope of the framework to include professional qualifications, increasing the quality of VET, and developing sectoral qualifications frameworks and linking them to the LQF. This resulted in the updated EQF referencing report in 2019. Discussions were held on also levelling master craftsperson and journeyman qualifications to the LQF ([10]). The 2022 amendments to the Vocational Education Law and the Law on Higher Education Institutions changed the titles of the sectors of professional higher education to short cycle, first cycle, second cycle and third cycle (leading to LQF levels 5 to 8 respectively).

Currently, there are 23 types of qualifications, four of which were recently added following Cabinet of Ministers regulations ([11]) by introducing the certificate of professional qualification at LQF level 1 and LQF levels 5 to 7, and changing the title of the LQF level 5 qualification from 'Diploma of first level professional higher education' to 'Diploma of short-cycle professional higher education'.

Among the new qualifications introduced, there are three qualifications leading to partial professional qualifications (certificate on the acquisition of professional qualification part referenced to the LQF levels 2 to 4). The issued certificate includes reference to the relevant professional qualification level, which corresponds to the relevant LQF level (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

3.3. Use of learning outcomes

There is a growing emphasis on learning outcomes at both policy and practice levels. The development of the LQF has increased awareness of learning outcomes among stakeholders and prompted discussions on their role in education. This led to amendments to the Education Law in 2015, and to regulations on education content, the State examination system, and the licensing and accreditation of higher education institutions (HEI) and study programmes.

Subject-based outcomes in general education are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Two regulations on general basic and secondary education standards and education programmes ([12]) were adopted in 2018 and 2019 (in force since 2020) and include updated learning outcomes in line with the new content of basic and general secondary education. The shift to learning outcomes is now complete and implemented for all grades ([13]).

Since 2007, a learning outcome-based approach has been in place in VET, while content-related reforms are ongoing ([14]). VET institutions must use learning outcome-oriented occupational standards, which set out the knowledge, skills and competences needed for relevant professional activities, when developing new vocational education programmes or changing accredited programmes (Cedefop, 2016). In addition to occupational standards or requirements for professional qualifications, and descriptors of the sectoral qualifications frameworks, the content of VET programmes is defined by the State vocational education standards specified by the relevant cabinet regulations. The modularisation of vocational education is a policy priority, reflected in amendments to legal regulations. Implementation of modular education programmes is not mandatory, but schools may choose to offer new programmes in modular form.

The Law on Higher Education Institutions defines and uses the term 'learning outcomes'. The State standards for academic and professional higher education set the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in line with EQF levels ([15]). Learning outcomes are included in the aims and content of study programmes, learning processes and assessment principles.

Since 2016, the learning outcomes of formal education qualifications have been available in the [Latvian qualifications database](#). In higher education, all institutions publish the learning outcomes for each study programme on an [e-platform](#), which is a registry for information on the assessment of HEI, the accreditation of study fields and the licensing of study programmes.

3.4. Quality assurance arrangements

Quality assurance is specified at various levels in the education system: policy, programme and institutional levels.

In general education and vocational education, aligning aims, objectives, and learning outcomes with the EQF/LQF levels is of great importance.

Therefore, during quality assessment and accreditation, the compliance of programme content with these requirements is examined, as is the fulfilment of quality requirements for the education institution offering each programme. The quality assessment is carried out by the State Education Quality Service (SEQS), which also coordinates the introduction of European Quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET). Common vocational education quality assessment indicators are used in vocational education quality assurance (Academic Information Centre, 2018b).

The establishment of the LQF has helped HEI to define expected learning outcomes more clearly, guiding the development of study course content and assessment criteria. The Council of Higher Education (*Augstākās izglītības padome*) is responsible for the accreditation of HEI. Since 2015, one aspect of internal quality assurance is ensuring that study programmes align with their aims and learning outcomes, clearly define the qualification, and correspond to the appropriate level of the LQF and the European Higher Education Area (Academic Information Centre, 2018b). The study programmes and study fields are licensed and accredited by the Academic Information Centre - Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) ([16]) in line with amendments to the [Law on Higher Education Institutions](#) and Cabinet regulations ([17]). The shift from accreditation based on study fields to cyclic accreditation of HEI has begun. The reform will be supported by a European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) project, and the shift is scheduled to be completed in 2027.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The education ministry leads the development and implementation of the LQF. Since 2008, the [Academic Information Centre \(AIC\)](#) has been the designated [EQF national coordination point \(NCP\)](#) and has played a key role in preparing and updating the referencing report and sharing information with all stakeholders. It also serves as the Latvian ENIC-NARIC, the national Europass centre and the Quality Agency for Higher Education. The AIC has the following tasks in relation to the LQF/EQF:

- a. to reference the national qualification levels to the EQF using a transparent methodology;
- b. to provide access to information and guidance to stakeholders on how national qualifications relate to the EQF through the LQF;
- c. to support stakeholders in using the LQF as a tool for comparing European qualifications, in line with national legislation and practice.

The EQF NCP is jointly funded by the Erasmus+ programme and the education ministry. The human resources available depend on financial resources and planned activities. Three to four full-time equivalents run the EQF NCP, including one to two project experts, a coordinator, a project manager and a secretary (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020, 2022).

The AIC ensures that all relevant parties - policymakers, learners, employers' organisations, quality assurance agencies, education bodies and other relevant institutions, depending on the topic - are involved in discussions, events and research activities (such as preparing the updated referencing report, one-off validation reports, etc.). Since 2008, this has been part of the NCP's communication strategy (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020).

Sectoral expert councils include representatives of sectoral employers' organisations, trade unions, the education ministry and other relevant ministries. Their main tasks are to develop occupational standards, define the content of vocational qualifications and vocational examination requirements, and enrol students in VET programmes (European Commission & Cedefop, 2018).

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 system for validating non-formal and informal learning consists of several frameworks covering different sectors and levels of education and training. Validation arrangements are closely linked to the LQF using learning outcomes. The validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes cannot lead to a full qualification in a regulated profession or to a full general education qualification, including qualifications in higher education. Certificates issued through validation are indistinguishable from those issued by formal education and training (Rusakova, 2024).

Currently, validation arrangements can lead to a partial or full qualification for professional qualifications at NQF level 2 to 4. The same validation arrangements, and arrangements that give credits, exemptions, or access to programmes leading to qualification, are planned for professional qualifications at NQF level 5 to 7. There are validation arrangements that give credits/exemptions towards a qualification or give access to programmes leading to a qualification for almost all qualifications, except for the certificate of general basic education at NQF levels 1 to 2, and for the certificate of general secondary education at NQF level 4 (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

There are two separate procedures for validation of prior learning in place: one for professional qualifications at LQF levels 2 to 4, and one for professional higher education and higher education qualifications at LQF levels 5 to 8 (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The procedure for validating non-formal and informal learning outcomes at LQF level 2 to 4 is set by the Cabinet of Ministers regulations ([18]). The regulations define the requirements and procedures by which an individual's competence for admission to later educational stages of the vocational education programme is validated, and the requirements and procedures by which the professional qualification or its part may be validated. The validation follows the requirements of the relevant occupational standard and is ensured by various types of vocational institutions (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The procedure for validating non-formal and informal learning outcomes at LQF levels 5 to 7 is also set by the [Cabinet of Ministers regulations](#). For LQF level 5 to 7 qualifications, the validation of learning outcomes is referenced to the learning outcomes of formal study programmes or specific courses (Rusakova, 2024). The learning outcomes are validated based on the compliance of knowledge, skills, and competences acquired in previous learning or professional experience, as well as learning outcomes achieved in the respective study programme of the higher education institution or college by awarding the respective number of credits. There is no HE qualification that can only be awarded through validation arrangements (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

5.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications

Evaluators from the AIC (the Latvian ENIC/NARIC) state the Latvian education document or degree or the LQF level to which each foreign qualification corresponds.

Since 2018, the AIC, in cooperation with partner countries has worked on implemented two, mapping qualifications, and developing a testing methodology for comparing qualifications (EQF levels 6 to 7) and their learning outcomes. The aim is to understand whether these qualifications could be recognised automatically (through Erasmus+ projects in [2018-2020](#), [2020-22](#) and [2022-24](#)). In 2022-24, the AIC, in cooperation with corresponding authorities from nine countries ([19]) and the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, mapped qualifications leading to higher education and developed recommendations for ENICs/NARICs and HEI for their automatic recognition. The LQF and EQF were core elements in facilitating automatic recognition (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

In 2019, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania agreed that qualifications leading to higher education (EQF level 4) and higher education qualifications (EQF levels 6 to 8) are automatically recognised. In 2024, an agreement signed by the Baltic and Benelux countries stipulated that higher education qualifications (EQF levels 5 to 8) that meet the conditions of this agreement are automatically recognised without additional administrative procedures.

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

The LQF is operational. It improves the transparency and comparability of qualifications by providing a map of all recognised qualifications. The framework serves as a reference point for developing and reviewing standards and curricula, and is also used by quality assurance mechanisms. The Latvian qualifications database includes extensive information on all LQF-levelled qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022).

6.2. Procedures for including qualifications in the NQF

Qualification types included in the LQF are determined by the legal framework ([20]), so any new qualifications can only be introduced through legislative action. More specifically, the [Education Law](#) states that the Cabinet of Ministers is responsible for determining descriptions of knowledge, skills, and competences corresponding to the levels of the LQF. As mentioned in Section 4.2, the development of the LQF was implemented in two phases. The initial referencing process (Academic Information Centre, 2012) was a crucial milestone for including qualifications in the LQF and led to the inclusion of all formal qualifications from general, vocational and higher education sectors. The process was transparent, with participation from all relevant stakeholders, and included the following activities:

- a. setting-up the referencing working group;
- b. setting-up expert groups (monitored by the referencing working group) to develop the LQF level descriptors;
- c. drafting and approving the relevant regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers;
- d. organising an advisory conference;
- e. developing the referencing report;
- f. carrying out a public consultation on the report.

The second phase included a review of the original referencing report (2013-19) based on the new Vocational Education Law, the Law on Higher Education Institutions, and the outcomes of several pilot projects implemented during this period. SQF qualifications (i.e. professional qualifications) are referenced to the respective LQF level, in compliance with the 2015 amendments to the Vocational Education Law (Academic

Information Centre, 2018b). Referencing the SQF to the LQF was a milestone for the further development of the LQF.

6.3. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

LQF levels are indicated on the certificates and diplomas of vocational qualifications at levels 1 to 7 ([21]). Higher education institutions (providing qualifications at LQF levels 5 to 8) may choose to indicate LQF, EQF or QF-EHEA levels on qualifications. Since 2013, it has been compulsory to indicate the LQF/EQF level on diploma supplements in higher education (levels 5 to 8) ([22]). Although [Europass certificate supplements](#) have not been officially introduced, the certificate supplements for VET qualifications (LQF levels 2 to 4) that are being developed indicate LQF and EQF levels, noting that awarding bodies are not legally obliged to issue them (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024) ([23]). Professional qualification certificates are now available in digital format, with plans in progress to transition all VET diplomas and certificates to a fully digital format (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport & Culture, 2024).

6.4. NQF dissemination

To disseminate the LQF/EQF to wider audiences, the EQF-NCP has produced an [animated video](#) and a printed leaflet on the LQF, and each year publishes at least one or two translated international publications on qualifications-related topics (Kato et al, 2020; Oliver, 2019; Cedefop, 2019a, 2019b; Cedefop & European Training Foundation, 2020; European Commission & Cedefop, 2022). An [interactive tool](#) provides a visual representation of the LQF. The [Latvian qualifications database](#) also promotes LQF dissemination. [Social media](#) are used to share and provide information on topical issues regarding LQF and EQF related topics (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

In addition, the EQF NCP organises events on EQF/LQF-related topics and current developments, such as lifelong learning, the validation of non-formal and informal learning, learning outcomes, [transparency of qualifications and facilitation of recognition](#), [qualifications](#) and [microcredentials](#). These events are well attended by education and training providers, guidance counsellors, regional education authorities, policymakers, employers and other social partners, and a large amount of information is perceived as being exchanged. The 2020 impact study showed that, in addition to these activities, individuals also inform themselves about the LQF by consulting laws and regulations on their own initiative (Academic Information Centre, 2020).

Since 2022, closer collaboration on communication activities (e.g. informative materials and events) with the National Europass Centre (NEC) has been established. More events that reach the general public and education institution staff have been organised, such as participation in education fairs and events for teachers and career counsellors, thus raising awareness among learners and students. Representatives of trade unions are also members of, or involved in the work of Sectoral Expert Councils, which develop and may review sectoral qualifications frameworks that are referenced to the NQF. They also participate in the implementation of modular vocational education programmes leading to qualifications referenced to the LQF. Therefore, due to their roles in the councils, trade unions have a clear understanding of the LQF. Also, in cooperation with the NEC, a closer collaboration with the State Employment Agency, which is the main national authority providing employment services in all regions of the country, has been developed. This involves activities to disseminate information on the NQF to employees of the State Employment Agency (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

6.5. Qualifications databases and registers

In 2016, the [Latvian qualifications database](#) was developed by the AIC and provides information on all of the qualifications obtained in the country's education system. Information is provided in both Latvian and English about all LQF-levelled qualifications issued since 2016. In October 2024, the database included information for 2 707 such qualifications. It is updated monthly through the State Education Information System, which provides data on accredited education programmes and institutions, and is also interconnected with the National Education Opportunities Database, the National Education Information System (NEIS), and the Europass ([24]) and ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) portals. The database contains a general description of qualifications, including the LQF/EQF level, education field, awarding body, credit points, entry requirements, ways to acquire the qualification, relationship to occupations or occupational fields and links to relevant diploma supplements, along with further information such as the education sector, whether the qualification is obtained through an education and training programme or validation and whether it is a partial or full qualification. Learning outcomes are described either as a bulk text that does not distinguish between knowledge, skills and competences (usually for academic higher education and general basic and secondary education) or as knowledge, skills and competences (usually for VET and professional higher education qualifications)

(European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

6.6. Awareness and use of the NQF

Awareness of the LQF is high among education and training providers. According to the results of a 2020 impact study on the LQF, the highest level of awareness was observed among representatives of higher education institutions. Employees of vocational education institutions and general education institutions also showed high awareness of the LQF (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020; 2024).

The lowest level of awareness of the LQF, based on the study's results, was observed among employers and the public (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). Various activities and initiatives are organised and implemented by the NCP in cooperation with NEC, including participation in education fairs and events for teachers and career counsellors, to raise awareness among learners and students (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Trade unions representatives have a clear understanding of the LQF due to their involvement in the work of Sectoral Expert Councils, which develop and may review SQFs referenced to the NQF (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

The framework is used daily by managers and directors or deputy directors of institutions, especially in higher education compared to other education sectors. According to study participants, the LQF is mainly used for recognising diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad, and in developing occupational standards and higher education curricula (Academic Information Centre, 2020).

The State education standards for general basic and secondary education, and other education documents, are created with reference to the LQF level descriptors. Quality assurance bodies use the framework for licensing and accrediting study programmes. It is considered by the Latvian ENIC/NARIC when recognising foreign qualifications. LQF level descriptors help to understand both the education sector and the labour market needs, and employers are starting to use LQF levels in vacancy descriptions (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020; 2022).

6.7. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

In 2020, the EQF NCP published a study report evaluating the use, visibility and impact of the LQF in education and the labour market (Academic Information Centre, 2020). The research methods included

desk research, surveys and semi-structured interviews (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022).

Previous studies include two evaluations of the LQF. The 2013 [study](#) led to changes in regulations regarding LQF levels 1 to 4. The 2014 study [International Qualifications in Latvia](#) described existing practices for international qualifications and their possible inclusion in the LQF. It highlighted the need to introduce and use learning outcomes to assess international qualifications appropriately. A 2016 [study](#) explored [terminology in the context of the LQF and EQF](#). The results of these studies informed the preparation of the updated EQF referencing report in 2018 (Academic Information Centre, 2018b).

6.8. Impact of the NQF

The establishment of LQF led to greater focus on formulating learning outcomes, especially in vocational education at NQF levels 2 to 4, and later in general education with the introduction of a competence-based approach in the 2020/2021 study year. It has also strengthened progression, especially in vocational education (LQF levels 2 to 4) through the establishment of sectoral qualifications frameworks (including LQF levels 2 to 7). Enhanced progression is particularly evident in vocational education (LQF levels 2 to 4) through the introduction of the SQFs (covering LQF levels 2 to 7). As a result, occupational standards and professional qualification requirements have been revised, updated, or newly developed (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024). Modular vocational education programmes have been implemented, enabling partial professional qualifications, such as recognising lower-level qualifications within higher-level education programmes. This approach also promotes lifelong learning.

Significant emphasis has been placed on increasing the quality of vocational education in line with labour market needs. The LQF is considered to have contributed to improving quality in VET. Progress has been made in modularising VET programmes and developing a system for sectoral qualifications linked to the LQF ([25]).

The LQF also has a communication and transparency function, expanding individuals' opportunities for mobility between countries, institutions and education levels. It complements the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education (European Commission & Cedefop, 2018).

Referencing to the EQF

The LQF was referenced to the EQF and self-certified against the QF-EHEA in October 2011. The referencing report was published in 2012 (Academic Information Centre, 2012). An updated referencing report was presented to the EQF Advisory Group in 2019 (Academic Information Centre, 2018b).

Important lessons and future plans

The LQF is considered one of the main driving forces for promoting the use of learning outcomes at all levels and in all types of education, and for supporting quality assurance and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The transparency and comparability of Latvian qualifications is further supported by the Latvian qualifications database. However, as indicated by the 2020 impact study, there is room for further improvement in this area (European Commission & Cedefop, 2020; 2024; Academic Information Centre, 2020). Firmly embedding the LQF in the legal framework for education and training was a milestone in its development process, as was including qualifications from all education sectors (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022).

LQF developments have been informed by several studies and supported by close cooperation and exchanges of views among stakeholders and national authorities. This evidence-based and consensus-seeking approach has been one of the success factors of LQF implementation so far.

Current challenges include the inclusion of LQF levels on general education certificates. With the growing importance of microcredentials and partial qualifications, the rigidity of the LQF, which follows the structure and traditions of the formal education system, has become more apparent. Discussions about integrating microcredentials into the education framework are ongoing (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Challenges also remain in achieving consistent use of terminology, for example the term 'qualification', across all stakeholders at national level. However, this does not affect end users directly. The main challenge is to reach end users and provide tailored information that clearly shows the value and benefits of the NQF (European Commission & Cedefop, 2024).

Much effort is still needed to increase awareness of the LQF, especially among employers and the public. Large-scale activities sharing the expertise of experienced LQF users could further develop the LQF (Academic Information Centre, 2020). Other areas of future work include opening up the framework to qualifications awarded outside formal education, master craftsperson qualifications, microcredentials and international qualifications, and indicating LQF/EQF levels on general education qualifications (European Commission & Cedefop, 2022; 2024).

Main sources of information

[URLs accessed 14.2.2025]

Academic Information Centre (AIC).

Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027.

EQF national coordination point.

Latvian Qualifications Database.

Academic Information Centre. (2018b). *Referencing the Latvian qualifications framework to the European qualifications framework for lifelong learning and the qualifications framework for European higher education area - Updated self-assessment report.*

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	<p>Doctor diploma (doktora diploms) Example: Doctoral Degree of Science Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Engineering and Technology (Zinātnes doktora grāds zinātnes doktors(-e) (Ph.D.) inženierzinātnēs un tehnoloģijās)</p> <p>Professional Doctor diploma in arts (profesionālā doktora diploms mākslās) Example: Professional Doctor's Degree in Arts (Profesionālais doktora grāds mākslās)</p>	8

Master diploma (magistra diploms)

Example: Master degree of natural sciences in mathematics (Dabaszinātņu maģistra grāds matemātikā)

Professional master diploma (profesionāla maģistra diploms)

Example: Professional Master Degree in Adaptronics, Leading Electrical Engineer (Profesionālais maģistra grāds adaptronikā, Vadošais elektroinženieris)

Master diploma and diploma of professional qualification (maģistra un profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**Diploma of professional higher education and diploma of higher professional qualification (profesionālās augstākās izglītības diploms and augstākās profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**

Example: Diploma of professional higher education with professional qualification: Medical doctor's degree (Profesionālās augstākās izglītības diploms ar profesionālo kvalifikāciju: Ārsta grāds)

Diploma of professional qualification (volume of full-time studies at least 300 ECTS after secondary education) (profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)**

6

Bachelor diploma (bakalaura diploms)

Example: Bachelor of Engineering Science in Information Technology (Inženierzinātņu bakalaura grāds informācijas tehnoloģijā)

Professional bachelor diploma (profesionālā bakalaura diploms)

Example: Professional bachelor degree in financial engineering, Senior data analysis specialist (Profesionālais bakalaura grāds finanšu inženierijā, Datu analīzes vecākais speciālists)

Bachelor diploma and diploma of professional qualification (bakalaura un profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**Diploma of professional higher education and diploma of higher professional qualification (profesionālās augstākās izglītības diploms and augstākās profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**

Example: Social Worker

Diploma of professional qualification (volume of full-time studies at least 60 ECTS after short-cycle or first cycle studies) (profesionālās kvalifikācijas diploms)**Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)**

6

5

Diploma of short-cycle professional higher education (volume of full-time studies - 120-180 ECTS) (īsā cikla profesionālās augstākās izglītības diploms)**Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)**

5

4	<p>Certificate of general secondary education (atestāts par vispārējo vidējo izglītību)</p> <p>Diploma of vocational secondary education (diploms par profesionālo vidējo izglītību)</p> <p>Example: Electro-Technician (Elektrotehnīkis)</p> <p>Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)</p> <p>Example: Electrician (Elektrotehnīkis)</p> <p>Certificate on the acquisition of professional qualification part (apliecība par profesionālās kvalifikācijas daļas apguvi)</p>	4
3	<p>Certificate of vocational education (atestāts par arodizglītību)</p> <p>Example: Car Mechanic (Autoatslēdznieks)</p> <p>Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)</p> <p>Example: Car Mechanic (Autoatslēdznieks)</p> <p>Certificate on the acquisition of professional qualification part (apliecība par profesionālās kvalifikācijas daļas apguvi)</p>	3
2	<p>Certificate of general basic education (9 years) (apliecība par vispārējo pamatzglītību)</p> <p>Certificate of vocational basic education (apliecība par profesionālo pamatzglītību)</p> <p>Example: Assistant Carpenter (Galdnieka palīgs)</p> <p>Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)</p> <p>Example: Assistant Carpenter (Galdnieka palīgs)</p> <p>Certificate on the acquisition of professional qualification part (apliecība par profesionālās kvalifikācijas daļas apguvi)</p>	2

1

Certificate of general basic education (special education programmes for learners with (severe) mental development disorders or multiple severe developmental disorders) (apliecība par vispārējo pamatzglītību)

1

Certificate of professional qualification (profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecība)

Acronyms

AIC Akadēmiskās informācijas centrs (Academic Information Centre)

ENIC- European Network of National Information Centres and Network
NARIC of National Academic Recognition Information Centres

EQF European qualifications framework

LQF Latvian qualifications framework

NCP national coordination point

NQF national qualifications framework

QF- qualifications framework in the European higher education area
EHEA

VET vocational education and training

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Notes

[1]More information at Eurostat [[gov_10a_exp](#)], accessed 18 October 2024.

[2]More information at Eurostat [[edat_lfs_9912](#)], accessed 18 October 2024.

[3]More information at Eurostat [[educ_ue_enra13](#)], accessed 18 October 2024.

[4]More information at Eurostat [[edat_lfse_14](#)], accessed 18 October 2024.

[5]More information at Eurostat [[edat_lfse_14](#)], accessed 18 October 2024.

[6]Regulation 202/2013 - procedures by which State-recognised education documents certifying higher education are issued; Regulation 240/2014 on the State standard of the academic education; Regulation 512/2014 on the State standard of the second level professional higher education; Regulation 633/2016 - procedure for developing occupational standards, professional qualification requirements (if occupational standards for the profession are not approved) and the sectoral qualifications framework; Regulation 451/2005, as amended in 2016 - procedures by which State-recognised documents certifying vocational education and professional qualifications and documents certifying acquisition of a part of an accredited vocational education programme are issued; Regulation 617/2018 on the State professional higher education standard for obtaining a doctoral degree and the procedure for awarding a professional doctoral degree in arts.

[7]However, the implementing Cabinet regulations are still under development. (Source: Internal communication with the AIC.)

[8]In other words, learners can obtain several professional qualifications after completing a single vocational education programme.

[9]Amendments to Law on Higher Education Institutions in 2022 introduced ECTS in Higher Education. The law still defines these credits as 'Latvian credit points', but their volume corresponds to ECTS (1 year = 60 credit points).

[10]These qualifications are levelled to sectoral qualifications frameworks.

[11]In 2023 new regulations were issued regarding documents certifying State-recognised vocational education and professional qualifications, module certificates and part of the professional education programme, and in 2024 regulations on the procedure by which State-recognised education documents certifying higher education were amended.

[12]Regulation 747/2018 on the State basic education standard and basic education programme samples; Regulation 416/2019 on the State general secondary education standard and the general secondary education programme samples.

[13]Source: Internal communication with the AIC.

[14]As part of the European Social Fund project 'To ensure effective management of vocational education institutions and improvement of professional competence of the personnel involved', 101 modular programmes were developed and can be implemented by any vocational education institution. State-owned vocational education institutions are recommended to implement modularised education programmes. The shift towards modularised programmes is ongoing. (Source: Internal communication with the AIC).

[15]Regulation No 240 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 13 May 2014 on the State standard of academic education (Noteikumi par valsts akadÄmiskÄs izglÄ«tÄ«bas standartu); Regulation No 512 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 26 August 2014 on the State standard of second-level professional higher education (Noteikumi par otrÄ IÄ«meÅa profesionÄlÄs augstÄkÄs izglÄ«tÄ«bas valsts standartu).

[16]Since 2018, the Quality Agency for Higher Education has been a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and has been included in the European quality assurance register for higher education.

[17]Cabinet Regulations No 794 'Regulations on accreditation of higher education institutions and colleges', stipulate procedures for the regular and emergency accreditation of higher education institutions and colleges, as well as the procedures for the revocation and cancellation of higher education institution and college accreditation.

[18]Initial regulations introducing the national validation procedures were approved in 2011 by Regulation No 146 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 22 February 2011. In 2023, regulations regarding validation of a person's competence for admission to later stages of study of a vocational education programme, and procedures for validation of professional qualification or its parts were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and came into force the same year. The regulations were amended in 2024.

[19]Armenia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, and United Kingdom.

[20]Latvian legislation on LQF and EQF.

[21]In accordance with the legislation, only LQF levels (not EQF levels) can be indicated on vocational education diplomas/certificates (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). The professional qualification level (LQF one to seven) is indicated on continuous education certificates (certificates of professional qualification) - in line with the Vocational

Education Law, professional qualification levels correspond to LQF levels. (Source: internal communication with the AIC).

[22][Regulation No 202 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 16 April 2013 on the procedures by which State-recognised education documents certifying higher education are issued.](#)

[23]The National Centre for Education (NCE) developed Europass Certificate Supplements for relevant professional qualifications, available in the [NCE Certificate register](#).

[24]The AIC, in cooperation with NCE, translated into English certificates that are up to date and designed the [Latvian Database of the Europass Certificate Supplements](#).

[25][Order 629/2009 of the Cabinet of Ministers on the concept of enhancing the attractiveness of vocational education and the participation of social partners in the quality assurance of vocational education.](#)

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