

NQF state of play

 **Türkiye 2024**

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Overview

Stage of development: [Operational stage](#)

NQF linked to EQF: ✓

Scope of the framework:

Designed as a comprehensive NQF; it includes all levels and types of qualification from formal education and training and from the national vocational qualification system.

Number of levels:

Eight

Legal basis/stage of development:

Regulation on the procedures and principles of its implementation (TQF Regulation) (2015, updated in 2019)
(in Turkish)
(in English)

Regulation on the quality assurance of qualifications to be included in the Turkish qualifications framework (2018)
(in Turkish)
(in English)

NQF/EQF website:

[Website](#)

Qualifications register/database:

[TQF qualifications database](#)

Introduction and context

1.1. Policy context

Türkiye signed an Association Agreement with the EU in 1964 and a customs union was established in 1995. The European Council granted Türkiye candidate country status in 1999, leading to the opening of accession negotiations in 2005, although these are currently paused. Türkiye is working to align its VET policy with the EU's Skills Agenda and the Osnabrück Declaration from 2020.

According to the OECD, GDP growth in Türkiye is expected to slow down from 5.5 % in 2022 to around 4.5 % in 2023 due to weaker exports, while domestic demand is expected to remain the driver of growth. The earthquake in 2023 remains an issue. In the OECD Economic Outlook Note - Türkiye (OECD, June 2023), the country's economic growth is projected to moderate to 3.6 % in 2023 due to weaker exports, with domestic demand remaining the main driver of growth. The devastating earthquake in 2023 caused widespread damage, but the boost from reconstruction is expected to offset the negative impact of the disruption to economic activity.

The Education Vision 2030 strategy aims to raise the VET sector's performance by measures including establishing new centres of excellence, enhancing VET's responsiveness to support innovation, modernising teacher training, and increasing access and inclusiveness.

The Ministry of National Education's Strategic Plan (2015-2019), the Vocational and Technical Education Strategy Paper and Action Plan (2014-2018), the National Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014-18) and the National Employment Strategy of Türkiye (2024-28) comprise the framework within which Türkiye pursues VET reform, including the implementation of the TQF.

Türkiye's lifelong learning strategy and Action Plan (2014-2018) paid particular attention to improving access to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system and promoted Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL). In 2022, the Procedures and Principles on Recognition of Prior Learning and Quality Assurance (Procedures and Principles on RPL and QA) were published^[1]. They reflect the principles of the 2012 Council Recommendation on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning, including the four stages of identification,

documentation, assessment, and validation.

The TQF [Strategic Document of 2021](#) defines the priorities that are focused on strengthening the impact of the TQF, notably:

- a. increasing the range and numbers of qualifications in the TQF.
- b. intensified validation of skills acquired in nonformal contexts.
- c. implementation of learning outcomes approaches.
- d. striving to achieve shared investment and ownership by stakeholders and ultimately by society more generally, including learners, employers, trades unions, and professional associations.

The 'Vocational and Technical Education Policy Document', which was prepared to determine policies and strategies for developing vocational and technical education, was published by the Ministry of National Education in 2024. The Policy Document outlines the current situation and problem areas of vocational and technical education in Türkiye, as well as the policies and strategies for its development. It also includes the Turkish Qualifications Framework and its components.

[The VQA Strategy Plan \(2024-2028\)](#) is the unified roadmap for the sustained implementation and updating of the TQF.

1.2. NQF legal basis

The TQF was formally established by the Regulation on the Procedures and Principles on the Implementation of the Turkish Qualifications Framework, adopted by the Council of Ministers via Decision 2015/8213, and published in the Official Journal of 19 November 2015.

A second key legal act is the Regulation on the Quality Assurance of Qualifications to be included in the TQF, adopted in 2018. Some institutional arrangements predate the TQF legislation. The Vocational Qualifications Authority Law no 5544 (2006) was amended in 2011 to adapt it to NQF developments, notably designating VQA the responsible body for developing and maintaining the NQF.

Quality assurance of qualifications and consistency in the use of the TQF and the implementation of qualifications in the framework are key objectives of recent legislation.

Implementing secondary legislation includes ([2]):

- a. Principles and Procedures for the Identification of the Existing Qualification Types, Determining New Qualification Types and

- Updating and Cancellation of Qualification Types.
- b. Principles and Procedures for Updating, Modification and Cancellation of Qualifications.
 - c. Principles and Procedures Regarding the Publication of Qualifications and Their Use by Training or Certification Bodies.
 - d. Principles and Procedures for the Creation, Implementation, and Updating of the Qualifications Database.
 - e. Principles and Procedures for the Update of the Turkish Qualifications Framework.
 - f. Principles and Procedures on Recognition and Quality Assurance of Prior Learning.
 - g. Procedures and Principles Regarding Micro-Credentials within the Framework of the Turkish Qualifications Framework.
 - h. Procedures and Principles on the use of the Turkish Qualifications Framework Logo in Higher Education Graduation Documents.

Policy objectives

The TQF has been designed as a single integrated structure for the classification of qualifications. It includes all quality-assured qualifications achieved through all education and training programmes including primary, secondary, and higher education, special needs education and continuing training. It also recognises outcomes achieved through experience in the workplace or other non-formal and informal environments.

The TQF's objectives are to:

- a. provide a clear and consistent means of describing, classifying, and comparing qualifications.
- b. provide one integrated framework which includes all quality-assured qualifications, whether achieved in general, vocational, and academic education or in other learning environments.
- c. improve qualifications continuously so that the system can provide appropriate recognition of qualifications achieved in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts.
- d. contribute to training so that individuals are employable and equipped with defined and measurable qualifications and so help reduce unemployment.
- e. strengthen institutional cooperation among all parties, primarily awarding bodies, industry, and social partners.
- f. provide a benchmark for recognition in Türkiye of foreign qualifications and for recognition of Turkish qualifications abroad and serve as an instrument of comparison.

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

3.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The TQF has 8 levels and includes all types and levels of qualifications and certification. Its level descriptors are described in terms of learning outcomes and use the domains Knowledge, Skills, and Competence.

Knowledge is defined as theoretical and/or factual knowledge requiring comprehension of facts, principles, theories, and practices related to an area of work or learning.

Skills is defined as 'utilisation of knowledge' and 'problem solving', which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive, and creative thinking and dexterity, methods, materials, tools, and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.

Competence is defined as use of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination, and satisfaction of learning requirements.

3.2. NQF scope and coverage

The TQF is inclusive of all qualification types regardless of learning pathways. It allows for inclusion of:

- a. qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), spanning its respective Directorates for Basic Education, Special Education and Guidance Services, Secondary Education, Vocational and Technical Education, Lifelong Learning, and Religious Education.
- b. qualifications awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) by the 266 industry-linked authorised certification bodies (ACBs).
- c. higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE).

Qualification types enable the categorisation of different qualifications which are placed at the same level but differ significantly in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, volume and/or orientations.

An example of a qualification type is the Level 5 Associate Diploma,

offered in post-secondary or higher VET, where Türkiye has significant provision. Universities and colleges (MYOs) offer Level 5 associate degrees, which can be either general or more vocational in orientation. These fall within the remit of the Council of Higher Education.

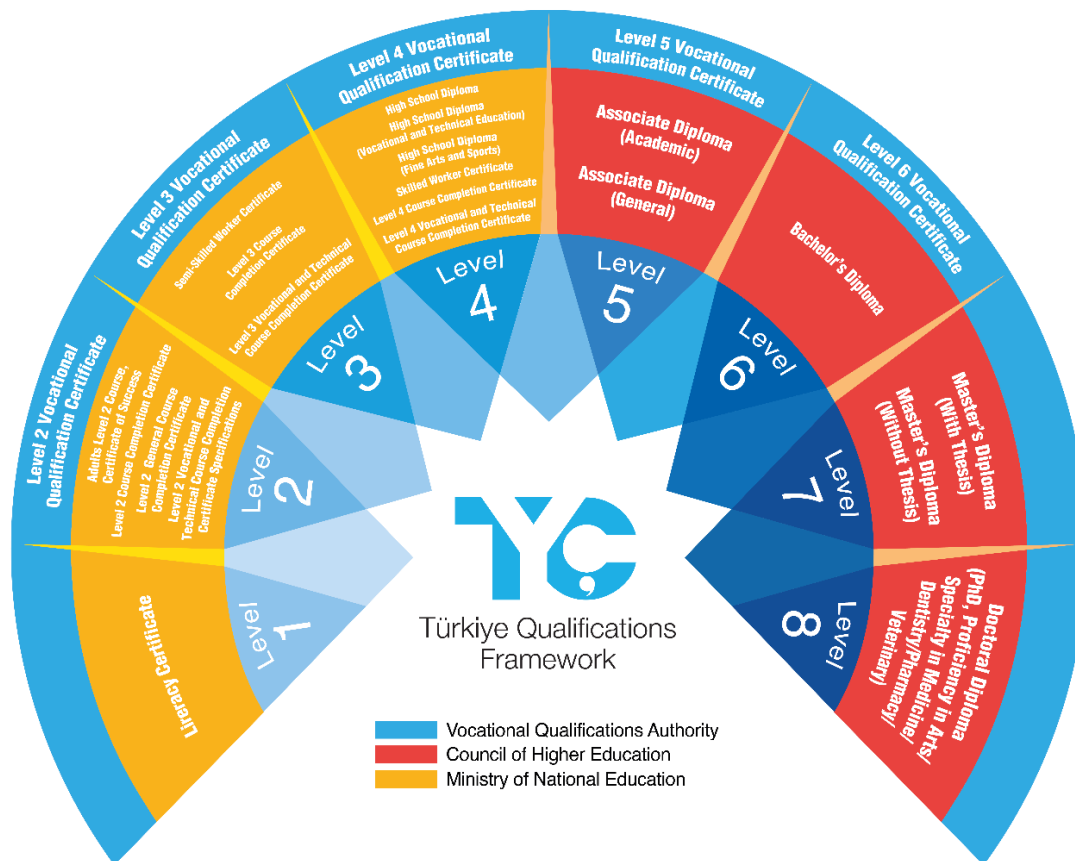
Another qualification type at Level 5 is the VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate, awarded by the ACBs.

A type at Level 4 is the High School Diploma, usually awarded to students on successful completion performance of four years' upper secondary vocational or technical high school, or sometimes at vocational education centres, multi-programme high schools and private vocational schools.

The Master Certificate is awarded to those successfully completing an apprenticeship programme. There are several qualification types in the TQF which have been updated recently after discussions with the responsible bodies. Types have been identified [with qualification type descriptors](#). Qualification type descriptors are updated by the responsible bodies when necessary and approved by the TQF Council.

Qualification Type Specifications, which are developed to describe the qualifications under the responsibility of VQA, CoHE and MoNE, which are named as Responsible Bodies, in a common language and to make them comparable, are designed in line with the areas of qualification knowledge in the annex of the EQF Recommendation. One of the conditions for the placement of qualifications in the TQF is that a qualification shall be compatible with the respective qualification type specification. Qualification type specifications that can be included in the TQF are presented in the table.

Currently, the TQF database includes 51 other qualification types which are not yet formally included in the TQF, i.e. many qualifications - more than 32 000 - are developed and used but not yet formally part of the TQF.



Partial qualifications can be included in the TQF, though none have been levelled so far.

Micro-credentials exist in Türkiye, in the form of some VQA qualifications or course completion certificates. They are also being developed in higher education. Further, there is a huge set of modules used to support non-formal learning licensed by the Lifelong Learning Department of the Ministry of National Education. A few of these smaller VQA qualifications are already in the TQF, but most are not yet in the framework.

International qualifications are also eligible for inclusion.

Examples of qualifications awarded by VQA to candidates via the VNFIL route, and levelled in the TQF, are the Level 3 VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate for Wooden Moulder, and the Level 5 VQA Vocational Qualification Certificate for Waste Coordinator.

3.3. Use and renewal of learning outcomes and standards General Education

Learning outcomes underpin the TQF. The TQF regulation specifies that qualifications that will be included in the framework must be designed in learning outcomes so that qualifications are transparent and comparable.

Outcomes provide a common language for describing learning independently of context. They are also central to achieving improved understanding by employers, advisers, and learners of the value and relevance of learning.

Modules within MoNE's VET programmes are all defined in learning outcomes. However, MoNE VET programmes do not have yet separate qualification specifications defined by learning outcomes. This situation has created a challenge in populating the qualifications database.

VQA is the competent authority for preparing national occupational standards and national qualifications. Qualifications under VQA's mandate are based on occupational standards and learning outcomes.

General education qualifications developed under MoNE's mandate are not always defined by learning outcomes.

In higher education, all qualifications are based on learning outcomes. There are precise outcome statements for specific programme types by level and academic or professional orientation in the Turkish Qualifications Database.

3.4. Quality assurance arrangements

All qualifications that are part of the TQF must be quality-assured. A general requirement, already mentioned, is that any qualification proposed for inclusion must be written in learning outcomes.

In 2018, a [regulation specifying the criteria for placing a qualification in the TQF](#) was adopted. It stipulates the following conditions:

- a. Qualification form is prepared and approved.
- b. Valid and reliable assessment and evaluation processes are conducted.
- c. Certification processes are conducted in a transparent and impartial way.
- d. The processes related to the qualifications are subject to self-assessment and external evaluation.
- e. Units, teams, or bodies conducting the external evaluation are subject to regular review.
- f. Improvement activities are carried out in the light of the findings

- of self-assessment and external evaluation.
- g. Stakeholder involvement.
- h. Processes related to qualifications are implemented based on explicit and measurable objectives, criteria, and guidelines.
- i. Allocation of sufficient and appropriate resources for all processes are maintained.
- j. Feedback mechanisms are established and implemented.
- k. Electronic access to the outcomes of all processes is maintained.

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) is responsible for development of qualifications under its mandate. MoNE has launched a curriculum reform in secondary education, for both general and vocational and technical schools. Vocational curricula are modularised, and MoNE has a database of more than 3 500 modules that are also used for the licensing and certification of adult learning.

Although curricula are advanced, most initial vocational qualifications are not yet utilised and fully learning outcomes based. Modules based on learning outcomes are used for learning, but they are not separately assessed and often lack an assessment component.

VQA accredits the ACBs, which conduct assessment, evaluation, and certification of candidates for the Vocational Qualification Certificate type mentioned above. These ACBs are first accredited by Türkak, the Turkish accreditation agency which deals with accrediting conformity with international industry and service standards, using the ISO 17024 standard on personnel certification.

The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) coordinates and supervises development of higher education qualifications awarded by Higher Education institutes. The higher education qualifications framework is a sub-framework within the TQF and is already functioning. National working groups for different fields of learning define common outcomes as a guideline for qualification and curriculum developers.

Additionally, the Higher Education Quality Council was established within the framework of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation, published in the Official Gazette on 23 July 2015. It evaluates the quality levels of higher education institutions' educational and research activities, as well as their administrative services, based on national and international quality standards. It carries out the processes of internal and external quality assurance, accreditation, and authorization of independent external evaluation agencies. The primary responsibilities of the Higher Education Quality Council include:

- a. conducting external evaluations of higher education institutions.
- b. managing the processes of accreditation agency authorization and recognition.
- c. ensuring the internalisation and dissemination of a quality assurance culture in higher education institutions.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

4.1. Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

The Ministry of National Education initiated the TQF's development in 2005. Since the VQA was established, it has managed and coordinated the framework, cooperating most closely with the Ministry of National Education and the Council of Higher Education.

Each of these three entities is responsible for the quality assurance of the qualifications under its authority.

For higher education, the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council of Türkiye (THEQC) was founded in 2015 as a public legal entity with administrative and financial autonomy, with the aim of evaluating the quality levels of higher education institutions' education and research activities and administrative services in accordance with the national and international quality standards. THEQC uses the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) in HE. TQF Quality Assurance Criteria are fully compatible with the ESG and EQF Quality Assurance Principles.

Quality assurance for qualifications outside the scope of MoNE, CoHE, higher education institutions and the VQA will be ensured by the respective institutions and organizations specified in related legislation.

There are two bodies which oversee and determine implementation of the TQF, the TQF Coordination Council and the TQF Council. VQA houses the TQF Secretariat that supports both councils.

The TQF Coordination Council is the highest decision-making body. It consists of the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of National Education, the President of the Council of Higher Education, and the Director of the Vocational Qualifications Authority.

The TQF Council is a technical body which consists of twenty-two members. In detail, its composition is:

- a. 5 members from MoNE, all of whom are heads of the Ministry's Directorates.
- b. 9 from the HE sector (4 members assigned from CoHE; 1 Executive Board member; 1 university dean by rotation, 2 THEQC board members, and 1 member representing the National Student

- Council).
- c. 3 members from VQA, one of whom is the vice president.
 - d. 1 member from the Union of Chambers and Exchange Commodities of Türkiye.
 - e. 1 member from the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen.
 - f. 1 member each from the three largest confederations of trades unions.
 - g. 1 member each from the education unions within the trade union confederations.
 - h. 1 member from the largest employers' confederation.

The TQF Strategic Document lists 56 further organisations, consulted as secondary stakeholders ([3]).

According to the TQF Regulation, a TQF Consultation Committee with broad participation of relevant stakeholders should convene annually as a negotiation platform to evaluate TQF progress and to enable stakeholders to present their views. The members of the TQF Consultation Committee are identified and invited by the TQF Council.

The TQF Strategic Document states that efforts need to be made to involve learner representatives in the TQF structures.

4.2. Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

The TQF Council prepares the action plans for TQF implementation and a [communication strategy](#) to raise awareness about the TQF. It prepares principles, procedures, and criteria for issues such as quality assurance of the TQF, the Qualifications Database, progress routes, credit accumulation and transfer, validation of nonformal and informal learning, updating, modification and withdrawal of qualifications.

The TQF Coordination Council evaluates and approves proposals for procedures, principles, and decisions submitted by the TQF Council.

The Turkish Qualifications Framework Department within the VQA has acted as the TQF Secretariat since 2016, in line with the Vocational Qualifications Authority Act. The Secretariat comprises the head of unit, four experts and a secretary, who are VQA staff. The staff of the Secretariat is supported by temporary national and international experts, where and when needed.

The Secretariat:

- a. assists the technical and administrative tasks of the Coordination Council and TQF Council.
- b. drafts action plans, annual work plans and activity reports under the management of the Council.
- c. ensures the implementation of the communication strategy.
- d. develops and maintains the qualifications database.
- e. prepares or performs background research, draft procedures.
- f. carries out other tasks requested by the Chairman of the Council.

Labour market stakeholders - employers, trade unions, and employment services - have a strong representation in TQF management structures. They play an active role in all TQF activities and participate in all decision-making processes and have contributed to setting the criteria for the inclusion of qualifications in the TQF and other quality assurance criteria.

Türkiye has a [system of sectoral committees](#) that play an important role in the national vocational qualifications system run by the VQA. Sectoral committees are tripartite structures with state, employer, and trades unions representation.

In Türkiye, occupational standards are developed on demand - where an organisation recognises the need for an occupational standard, it makes a proposal to VQA, which, on approving the request, provides methodological. The Sector Committees are responsible for checking the validity of the occupational standards and vocational qualifications for public bodies, workers and employers and for preparing advisory notes ([4]).

Education and training institutions and providers develop or update their quality assurance mechanisms in line with the TQF Quality Assurance criteria. They also update existing curricula based on the TQF Level Descriptors and TQF Qualification Type Specifications. Moreover, they are developing mechanisms for the validation of nonformal and informal learning in line with the TQF.

The TQF Strategic Document concludes that if the TQF is really going to act as the country's national framework for lifelong learning, it needs to become all-pervasive. Like the most successful NQFs, it needs to be adopted and embraced not just by the responsible national authorities, but also by their stakeholders and ultimately by society more generally, including learners, employers, trades unions, professional associations, and so on.

The TQF Strategic Document identifies several actions to support this 'internalisation of the TQF'. Such actions use the TQF both strategically in high level policy making and more practically through thematic and expert work, including representatives from relevant organisations, beyond the current members of the TQF Council.

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 TQF Regulation includes provision for validation of non-formal and informal Learning (VNFIL), stipulating that all qualifications included in the TQF can be obtained through VNFIL. Learners should be able to use validation to access programmes, sit exams or take other assessments, secure exemptions, obtain certification of units, and accumulate and transfer credits.

Validation legislation has been updated, notably the October 2017 regulation on principles and implementation of VNFIL, regarding accreditation, measurement and evaluation, and the March 2018 revisions to the regulation on secondary education, which allows for use of validation in the sector.

The 2014-2018 Lifelong Learning Strategy Document promoted extensive use of VNFIL, including via EU projects. Piloting is also advancing through Erasmus projects such as the EQF-oriented assessment tools for prior learning in adult education, coordinated by the Çorum Public Education Centre.

In January 2019, VQA published a [Turkish version of the European Guidelines on Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning](#). The TQF Council developed a [procedure for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in line with the TQF regulation by the end of 2021](#). It follows the logic of the European Guidelines. The responsible bodies - VQA, MoNE and the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) - will be responsible for applying these general principles and procedures for the qualifications within their respective remits.

VQA has organised and supported the implementation of a VNFIL system to award national vocational qualifications to adults; the Authorised Certification Bodies (ACBs) conduct the assessment, evaluation, and certification of such candidates. The involvement in VNFIL of stakeholders such as employer organisations, through their presence in the ACBs, has created visibility and trust in the VQA qualifications and the validation process.

Validation has been given a huge quantitative boost by the law requiring certification for 204 designated occupations. More than 3 million certificates have been issued so far, of which 2.5 million have been awarded for qualifications in occupations defined hazardous ([5]). This use of validation as a compulsory measure to meet legal requirements differentiates Turkish practice from the generally voluntary European approach to VNFIL, in which it is the learner who initiates the process and seeks certification or other validation ([6]).

Despite the huge number of people certified so far, female participation in validation is only 6 %, albeit this represents a small rise since 2020 ([7]). This is because most validation has been of workers employed in the 204 occupations defined in the regulation, which tend to be male dominated. Steps to improve access for women, and other categories such as migrants, are being taken by VQA, the ACBs and MoNE, which are developing new validation arrangements.

As indicated above, the MoNE Department of Lifelong Learning has established a database of modular programmes to support non-formal learning, which are also used for the certification of adult learning ([8]). Ensuring that these modularised programmes are obtainable through validation will widen the possibilities for lifelong learning, as it will allow for recognition of part qualifications.

VNFIL was legally introduced to the Turkish higher education system in 2011 but there has been only slow progress in that sector. To realise a fully national system for VNFIL, CoHE is expected to align with the initiatives pursued by the VQA and MoNE. Five universities have become ACBs.

The focus has been in past years to establish a functioning system of validation and it is time to change the focus from the system to the individuals who would benefit from validation. This requires more investment in guidance, identification, and documentation, and financial support for applicants from disadvantaged groups. A challenge for the coming years will be to make validation equally accessible to other groups such as women, migrants, and unemployed people. Steps in this direction are being taken, both by VQA and the ACBs, and through the new validation arrangements developed by MoNE.

The importance of working together to achieve a well-developed system of validation and on the ground implementation is pivotal. It needs to be embraced not just by the responsible bodies, but by their stakeholders and ultimately by society in general, including learners, employers,

trades unions, and professional associations.

5.2. Credit systems

One of the main goals of the TQF is to enhance the opportunities for transition between different types of qualification and create a system more easily accessible to individuals. To achieve this goal, the authorities aim to establish transparent credit values that serve as indicators of learning outcomes for each qualification placed in the TQF, and to establish a single credit transfer system for horizontal and vertical progression among qualifications based on credit.

Accordingly, guiding documents on credits have been prepared within the TQF, training sessions have been organised for the NQF management structures, and a procedure and principle for the accreditation of qualifications have been developed and brought to the approval stage.

Currently, diverse arrangements apply to the different qualifications types. For qualifications falling within its remit, the Ministry of Education uses a credit system based on ECVET. In higher education, both CoHE and the universities use ECTS. VQA is looking into developing a credit system for the vocational qualifications it regulates. There is a difficulty here, however, as so far these qualifications are only based on assessment so there are no real nominal learning hours.

The TQF Council proposes an evaluation and credit system associated with workload that will allow credit accumulation and transfer. The proposed metric for the qualifications to be included in the TQF is 60 credits as the value ascribed to a learning period of 1500 - 1800 hours. This approach complies with both ECTS and ECVET. The regulating bodies will determine the credit range of the qualification types and the credit values of the qualifications.

5.3. Promoting lifelong learning

There is a broad policy and social imperative to encourage and support lifelong learning in Türkiye, to fulfil the needs of individuals and society. The TQF is widely seen as central to enabling lifelong learning.

Türkiye's lifelong learning strategy and Action Plan (2014-2018) paid particular attention to improving access to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system and promoted VNFIL. However, there is not yet a new strategy for lifelong learning. The 2023 Education Vision to increase the quality of, and access to, lifelong learning programmes includes these measures:

- a. updated lifelong learning programmes for vocational, social, and cultural skills; examination of how societal awareness of lifelong learning processes can be improved.
- b. a National Lifelong Learning Monitoring System, which contains data from institutions and organizations operating in the field of lifelong learning, will be established.
- c. recognition of certificates awarded for participation in lifelong learning and non-formal education will be widened.

A growing number of qualifications in adult learning have been brought into the TQF portal, in particular course completion certificates and VQA certificates. They will become part of the TQF in the coming years. Here we see that Türkiye is part of an international trend of going beyond qualifications for formal education.

The wider debate on including micro-credentials, such as the 3 743 modular programmes offered by the Lifelong Learning Department of MoNE or those that are outside the scope of the Responsible Bodies is still open.

However, the existing TQF legislation addresses concerns regarding the inclusion of qualifications of different types and characteristics in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). For example, the TQF Quality Assurance Regulation sets minimum criteria for all qualifications to be included in the TQF. This allows the framework to incorporate different types of qualifications, such as micro-credentials, regardless of the respective awarding body's status, where the learning took place, or the method of delivery. The priority is that quality assurance criteria are always met, enabling the TQF to accommodate various types of qualifications.

NQF implementation and impact

6.1. Stage of implementation

TQF is in the operational stage.

Principal features of the TQF such as its structure, level descriptors and domains are long-established. Key functions, notably learning outcomes and quality assurance approaches, are already functioning and accepted and applied by stakeholders. Governance structures, and the principal working methods and instruments such as databases, are established.

There are nearly 32 488 qualifications, the great majority outcomes-based, already published in the [TQF Database](#). Inclusion of qualifications in the TQF itself started in November 2021.

The qualification placement in the TQF has led MoNE, CoHE, and VQA to create and publicly share their Quality Assurance Documents. At the time of writing, the implementation process has led to the inclusion of a total of 2,159 qualifications in the TQF, with 1,761 under CoHE's purview and 398 under VQA's management.

All qualifications managed by the VQA are attained through the assessment of prior learning. When examined within this framework, it becomes clear that the importance attributed to non-formal and informal learning is significant, especially when combined with the substantial amount of formal education.

Inclusivity is a core principle of the TQF. Since the early days of its development, involvement of key stakeholders and social partners has been a testament to the framework's commitment to inclusivity. This is not only because the development and implementation of the TQF require collaboration among stakeholders, but also because the TQF serves as a tool to strengthen cooperation and partnerships across all areas of education and training.

6.2. Indicating RQF/NQF levels

TQF and EQF levels feature on the certificate and diploma supplements for almost all qualification types and on certificates of some qualification types.

Turkish authorities have noticed that in recent years that learners and workers have more frequently drawn attention to the indicated TQF levels

on their certificates and supplementary documents, especially in their international applications.

6.3. NQF dissemination

The TQF website contains promotional materials and has an active news section that is frequently updated. It now includes information, published in less technical language, to widen the range of users.

A major publicity campaign ran during 2022 and 2023, at home and abroad, to promote the TQF to beneficiaries. This included events in seven Turkish cities and a conference in Istanbul in October 2022. Its participants spanned the country's key education and training and labour market actors and stakeholders. Experts from seventeen other countries provided international experiences and viewpoints.

Training in credit systems was organised for TQF Board members and broader stakeholders during 2023.

Innovatively, an event to promote use of the TQF logo, including the importance of placing it on certificates with the signalled NQF level, was held in Ankara in June 2023. Representatives from the Ministry of Education, Council of Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Board, TQF Management Structures, and higher education institutions participated.

A stakeholder cooperation meeting was held with YÖKAK in July 2023, and cooperation meetings were held with MoNE on the Turkish Qualifications Database in August and September.

On 24 January 2024, a TQF logo information event was organised.

On 5 March 2024, an event entitled 'Beyond the Diploma: Skills, Microcredentials and Employability' took place.

In 2024, the Turkish Qualifications Framework, Europass and Microcredentials Conference was organised in collaboration with four different universities.

In cooperation with Izmir University of Economics, the 'Micro-Credentials: Identity Cards of the Digital Age' workshop was organised. The workshop report was published as a book by the Izmir University of Economics Publishing House.

In 2025, conferences titled 'Turkish Qualifications Framework and Micro-credentials' were organised at different times in cooperation with Ankara

Music and Fine Arts University, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, and Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

A manual has been prepared to provide detailed information to stakeholders about developing qualifications.

Micro credentials have also been promoted at meetings with stakeholders. Procedures and Principles on Micro-credentials within the Scope of Turkish Qualifications Framework was prepared with the participation of all stakeholders.

6.4. Qualifications databases and registers

Türkiye's national qualifications database is well-established and vast. It assembles in one place all quality-assured qualifications available in the country to ensure that these qualifications are visible, accessible, and comparable with each other and with international counterparts.

The Database is structured to allow identification of qualifications by type. Currently, it holds 32 488 qualifications - 681 under the responsibility of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA); 2 357 under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MoNE); 29 399 under the responsibility of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE); and 51 under the responsibility of the other associated institutions/organisations.

As indicated above, at the time of writing, the implementation process has led to the inclusion of a total of 2 159 qualifications in the TQF, with 1 761 under CoHE's purview and 398 under VQA's management.

It is the high number of HEIs, and their autonomy in developing and awarding qualifications, that explains why the overwhelming majority of qualifications are from that sector.

One of the significant steps taken after starting to place qualifications in the TQF is to make the TQF and accordingly, the EQF, visible and disseminate their use.

Responsible bodies can use the TQF logo also in web sites, databases, signboards, promotional documents, and at events such as fairs, provided that inclusion of the related qualification in the TQF is clearly mentioned.

Web pages of the relevant qualification under the Qualifications Database of Türkiye can be accessed through a QR code developed specially for each qualification. Users can thus access detailed information on learning

outcomes, EQF level, quality assurance requirements, progression routes, and placement in the TQF. Therefore, all qualifications having the TQF logo with a QR code present an explicit reference to the EQF level. Logos can be utilized in Turkish and English based on the choice of the responsible body.

Information about qualifications (including the qualification name, responsible institution, TQF and EQF Levels, learning outcomes, and related details) can be found by scanning the QR code on the TQF logos present on certificates and diplomas in the TQF. This information is provided in both Turkish and English.

The portal is for use by all TQF stakeholders, including intended beneficiaries such as students, teachers, guidance professionals and employers. It already offers plenty of information on qualifications to end users, while individuals can contact VQA directly with queries.

It is fully compatible with Annex VI of the EQF Recommendation, as it has been developed using EU grants. All the fields in Annex VI have been covered and are compulsory for registering qualifications. The database can be searched in Turkish or English.

Learning outcomes descriptions are recorded in full. Diploma supplement information is included for relevant qualifications.

The database is linked to the Europass portal, but the data is not yet accessible on Europass itself. The introduction of European Learning Model (ELM) Version 3 to update the software of the portal in order to re-establish links with QDR and Europass is planned. This will also allow widening of the database and make it more useful for supporting curricula development and career guidance and counselling. This may also open opportunities for developing new user interfaces.

Information on qualifications in the Database is available in Turkish and English. In the Database there are only summary and key learning outcomes provided.

6.5. Use of NQF in recognition of foreign qualifications

Türkiye has a functioning system for the assessment and recognition of foreign academic qualifications at associate degree, and bachelor's and master's levels, which is supported by legislation and in line with the Lisbon Convention. The Equivalence Office of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) deals with recognition and equivalence requests for these degrees. The TQF is used for the recognition of foreign

qualifications by the responsible bodies such as ENIC-NARIC Türkiye and MoNE.

Pursuing a craft profession in Türkiye requires a Master certificate or equivalent. Foreigners can establish a business or work as an employee if the equivalence of their certificate is recognised by the Ministry of Education. VQA is responsible for the confirmation of the authenticity of vocational qualifications held by foreigners who are seeking to work in Türkiye.

Many professions in Türkiye are regulated, including the 204 VQA qualifications for hazardous occupations mentioned earlier. Requirements to pursue a regulated profession are defined in different laws.

The Turkish Council of Higher Education adopted a Regulation on the Harmonisation of the Minimum Training Requirements for the seven regulated professions stipulated by the EU-Directive 2013/55. The General System under the European Directive 2013/55 may be important as well for other regulated professions that are regulated in the EU member states and those that require a VQA certificate to practise. This issue has not been addressed yet.

6.6. Career guidance and counselling

Use of guidance and counselling to support learners and jobseekers in navigating curricula and qualifications available is one aspect to be strengthened in the education and employment sectors. There is a clear role here for the TQF and the use of the TQF register.

6.7. Awareness and use of the NQF

Bodies exercising functions relevant to TQF implementation, such as ministries, the CoHE etc, plus QA bodies have high awareness of the TQF. Likewise, education and training providers, NGOs that represent sectors and branches, occupations and professions; and employers' organisations and industry bodies engaged via skills councils which interact with the TQF.

Learners who hold qualifications on which the TQF levels are indicated clearly have some exposure to the framework. However, those already established in the labour market, or those possessing older qualifications, usually have less awareness of the TQF.

Workers and job-seekers' awareness level is moderate for the time being however it is expected to increase more in future.

Guidance and counselling practitioners' awareness has not been calculated so far.

6.8. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

In the activities detailed in Section 7.3, surveys were conducted with participants and stakeholders, and feedback and opinions regarding the TQF were collected. These surveys identified progress made by the TQF and the remaining challenges.

A TQF National Conference was organised in January 2023, which evaluated the framework's overall progress while also guiding technical work on RPL, levelling of qualifications, quality assurance etc.

The 'TQF Logo Information Meeting' was held in January 2024 in collaboration with the Vocational Qualifications Authority, the Council of Higher Education, and the Higher Education Quality Board.

Queries from individuals received through the TQF website are regularly answered throughout the year.

6.9. Impact

The TQF has increased the transparency, comparability and quality of qualifications through setting rigorous criteria for the admission to its levels of new qualifications. Its impact is further visible in the use of learning outcomes to design qualifications and standards, and in the increased opportunities for progression between different types of qualifications.

It has, as the figures in Section 6 attest, hugely boosted the awarding of certificates via validation of skills acquired through non-formal routes.

The impact of the NQF is visible in the dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders. Sector Skills Councils and the ACBs give industry a significant voice in standards, curricula and qualifications development.

The National Employment Strategy 2024-2028 attributes a core role to the Turkish Qualifications Framework in encouraging greater certification of the workforce - the TQF incorporates a wide range of qualifications types within its levels and facilitates the award of qualifications for people who have acquired competences informally, notably via work experience.

Referencing to the EQF

7.1. Referencing to the EQF

Türkiye is an EU Candidate Country, a member of the EQF Advisory Group and participates in the Bologna process in higher education. It simultaneously referenced the TQF to the EQF and self-certification against the Bologna framework in 2017. It presented an updated referencing report in 2023 to reflect progress in the TQF's implementation.

The Türkiye Referencing Report was updated and resubmitted to the EQF Advisory Group in March 2025, at which point re-referencing was carried out.

Türkiye is at an advanced stage in implementing the Bologna Process.

7.2. International cooperation

Türkiye participates in the Riga Process of cooperation in VET among EU, EEA, and Candidate Countries. It has progressed since 2015 on the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs) in the priority areas of work-based learning, quality assurance, access to VET, qualifications, key competences, and teacher professional development.

In quality assurance, the Turkish Higher Education Quality Council of Türkiye joined ENQA in 2020. The Council of Higher Education represents Türkiye in ENIC-NARIC networks.

57 VET and higher education centres from Türkiye participates in ETF's Network for Excellence (ENE).

Important lessons and future plans

Türkiye's framework is a highly sophisticated instrument. Its wide and deep implementation has been enabled by the expertise of its lead bodies, a rigorous quality assurance system, and a committed contribution from industry.

Further, there is an enabling framework of regulations, policies, and procedures such as the Qualification Type Specifications of the Responsible Bodies.

Although the TQF does not yet contain any MoNE qualifications, many are already in the register and are expected to be placed in the framework in 2025 and onwards. Qualifications under the responsibility of the MoNE are included in the Turkish Qualifications Database. The process of placing them in the Turkish Qualifications Framework is ongoing. This will mean millions of people will soon hold qualifications that are part of the TQF. They will start a new journey with their qualifications, enabling them to access new jobs and learning opportunities.

The TQF Strategic Document clearly sets a path for the TQF to become a truly lifelong learning framework. One of the challenges is to mobilise more stakeholders and wider society, including learners, employers, trade unions, professional associations, teachers, trainers, assessors, guidance counsellors, in addition to the many stakeholders already involved. One suggestion made in the TQF Strategic Document is to involve learners in the TQF governing structures.

The TQF is promoted via a well-designed communication strategy. But to mobilise the framework's many and diverse actors and stakeholders, extensive capacity building and awareness raising efforts are required, including new ways of communicating with stakeholders and ensuring that the TQF becomes a daily reality for Turkish citizens, through its inclusion in job descriptions and vacancies, course descriptions and certificates.

The TQF needs to be well integrated with Türkiye's lifelong career guidance and counselling systems and tools, making it easy for individuals to navigate qualifications, and learning and employment opportunities. Thought should be given to how the TQF Database can be deployed more effectively to support professionals in guidance and counselling, curriculum developers, and to reach the public.

Most TQF qualifications are awarded to candidates successfully completing formal qualifications. However, 3 million certificates have also been awarded by the VQA, largely through the compulsory scheme to qualify people working in the defined hazardous occupations.

At the same time, there is a need to widen validation to reach groups or categories so far under-represented.

This includes women, who tend not work in the hazardous occupations. Then there the millions of refugees in Türkiye, who can also benefit from these qualifications. VQA has in fact made many of its qualifications accessible to refugees by adapting and translating its procedures, and more than 15,000 refugees have obtained a VQA certificate. However, this success has been largely due to financial support from donors, and sustainable solutions are needed to ensure that refugees can access further learning or training and jobs through these qualifications.

As in many other European countries, adult learning needs to be better integrated in the TQF to support lifelong learning.

For now, national vocational qualifications issued by VQA can only be obtained through assessment - no related programmes preparing people for those assessments is available. This is because ISO Standard 17024 - which is used to accredit the authorised certification bodies - is about personnel certification and emphasises the need to avoid a conflict of interest between the training and assessment functions of assessment bodies. However, there is now an ongoing debate that there should be training offered to prepare people to take the assessments, and, therefore, to accredit appropriate training providers. These new arrangements would have the advantage of very likely increasing the success rate of candidates preparing to take the national vocational qualifications.

In addition, the 3 743 modular programmes that are licensed by MoNE offer an important reservoir for lifelong learning courses and possibly for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Outside the control of the Responsible Bodies, there are many other forms of training in companies, or by private providers using vendor certificates, or by NGOs, the voluntary sector or community initiatives. The question is whether these could be one day part of the TQF to make a truly lifelong framework.

Main sources of information

[Vocational Qualifications Authority website](#)

[TQF and EQF website](#)

[TQF database](#)

[EQF referencing report](#)

[Qualifications framework for higher education, information about programmes](#)

[Guideline on learning outcomes](#)

[Turkish version of EQF Note 4 on learning outcomes](#)

[Quality Assurance Handbook](#)

[Guideline on validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)

[TQF Communication Strategy](#)

[TQF Glossary](#)

[TQF Strategic Document](#)

[Turkish version of EQF Brochure and Infographic - Infographic](#)

[Turkish version of EQF Brochure and Infographic - Brochure](#)

[Brochure on TQF, EQF and Level Descriptors](#)

National qualification framework (NQF)

NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION TYPES	EQF LEVEL
8	<p>PhD (PhD: Competence and PhD in Art / Specialization in Medicine / Dentistry / Pharmacy / Veterinary Medicine) Category Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education</p>	8
7	<p>Master degree (with Thesis) Category Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education</p> <p>Master degree (Non-Thesis) Category Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education</p>	7
6	<p>Bachelor's Degree Category Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education</p> <p>Level 6 Vocational Qualifications Certificate Category Qualification awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority</p>	6

5

Associate Degree (General)

5

Category

Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education

Associate Degree (Vocational)

Category

Qualification awarded under the coordination and supervision of the Council of Higher Education

Level 5 Vocational Qualifications Certificate

Category

Qualification awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority

High School Diploma**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

High School Diploma (Vocational and Technical Education)**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

High School Diploma (Fine Arts and Sports)**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Mastership Certificate**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 4 Course Completion Certificate**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 4 Vocational and Technical Course Completion Certificate**Category**

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 4 Vocational Qualifications Certificate**Category**

Qualification awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority

3

Journeyman's Certificate

3

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 3 Course Completion Certificate

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 3 Vocational and Technical Course Completion Certificate

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 3 Vocational Qualifications Certificate

Category

Qualification awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority

2 **Adults, Level 2 Lower Secondary Education** 2

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 2 Course Completion Certificate

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 2 General Course Completion Certificate

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 2 Vocational and Technical Course Completion Certificate

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Level 2 Vocational Qualifications Certificate

Category

Qualification awarded under the mandate of the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA)

1 **Literacy Certificate** 1

Category

Qualifications awarded under the Ministry of National Education

Acronyms

ACBs	Authorised Certification Bodies
CoHE / YÖK	Council of Higher Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	European qualifications framework
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISCO	International standard classification of occupations
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QA	Quality Assurance
QF-EHEA	Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area
RBs	Responsible bodies (CoHE, MoNE, VQA)
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
THEQC	Turkish Higher Education Quality Council of Türkiye
TQF	Turkish Qualifications Framework

VET Vocational Education and Training

VNFIL Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

**VQA /
MYK** Vocational Qualifications Authority

References

[URLs accessed 8/4/2025]

European Training Foundation (ETF). (2025). *Key policy developments in education, training and employment: Türkiye 2024*.

European Training Foundation (ETF). (2024). *Validation of non-formal and informal learning -country report, Country report: Türkiye, 2023*.

Notes

[1]December 2021 the procedural basis was accepted by the TQF Council.

[2]All the legislation can be found online.

[3]Annex B TQF Stakeholders of the TQF Strategic Document p 26-27.

[4]See VQA booklet

[5]https://portal.myk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_istatistik

[6]Common European Principles 2004

[7]Turkiye country report Validation of non-formal and informal learning
2023

[8]Course programmes (meb.gov.tr)