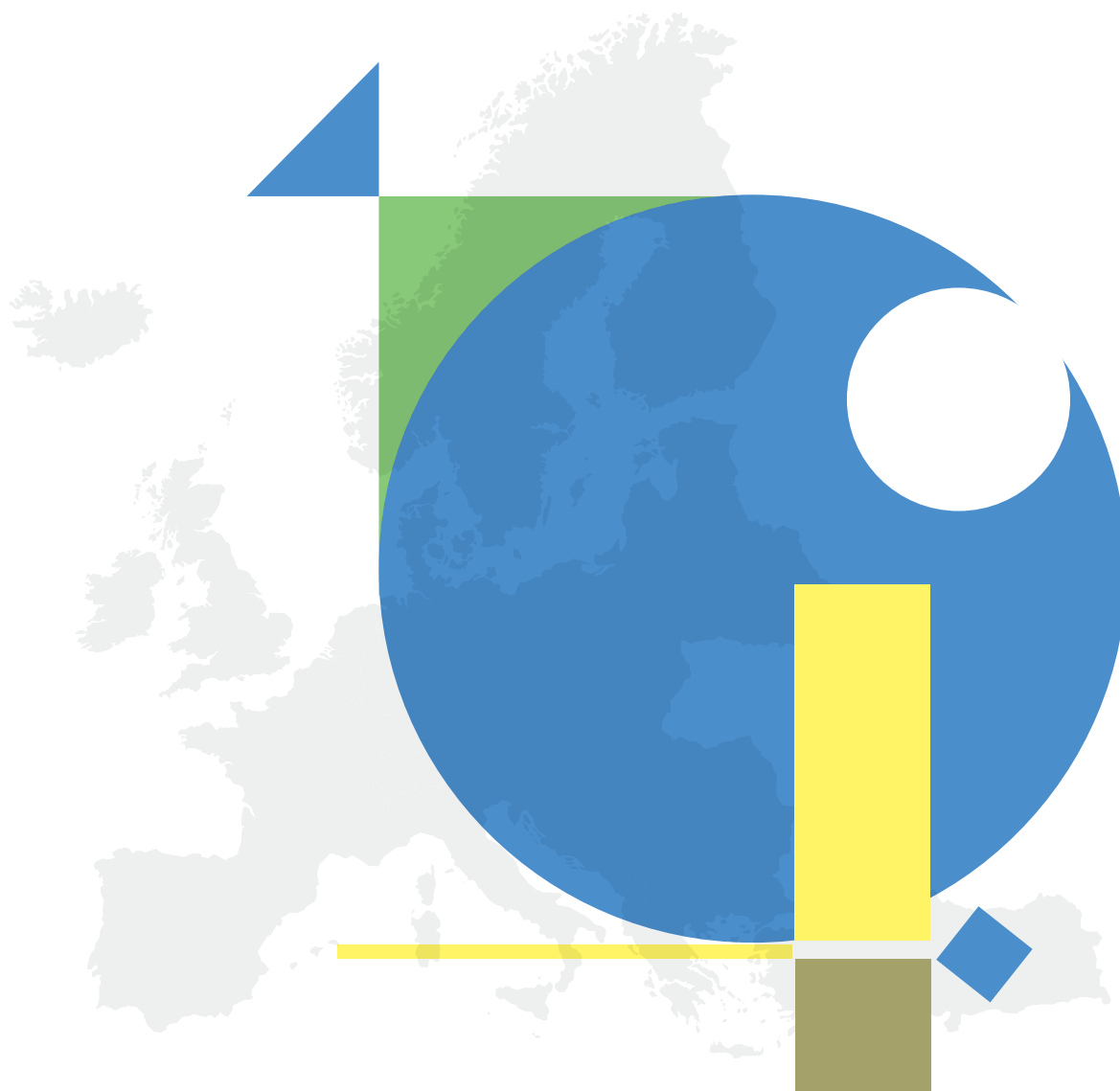




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EUROPEAN  
INVENTORY  
OF NQFs 2020  
**CZECHIA**

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# CZECHIA

## European inventory of NQFs 2020

### Introduction and context

Czechia has a relatively low rate of early school leaving (6.7% in 2019, compared to the EU average of 10.2%) and a high employment rate of recent graduates (87.3% in 2019) <sup>(1)</sup>. A very high percentage of upper secondary students, although less than in the previous year, are enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) (71.3% in 2018, compared to 48.4% across the EU) and, in 2019, 86.8% of recent VET graduates were employed <sup>(2)</sup>. The labour market relevance of the VET system is being strengthened; there is also a focus on flexibility and improving transferability between initial and continuous VET pathways <sup>(3)</sup>. According to the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) <sup>(4)</sup>, educational achievements of 15-year-olds in reading, maths and science are slightly higher than EU averages; however, socioeconomic background is a strong factor in differences in student performance (European Commission, 2019).

While the Czech education system remains highly decentralised, substantial changes in regional funding of schools have been introduced as of January 2020, from per-student funding to funding based on the number of hours taught, with the aim of improving teaching quality and more adequate remuneration of teaching staff (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2020). Discussions on the objectives, content and outcomes of Czech education until 2030 and on the revision of framework educational programmes (key curricular documents) have been held in preparation of the *Strategy for education policy of the Czech Republic 2030+* <sup>(5)</sup> (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2019). Tertiary educational attainment increased to 35.1% in 2019, while participation of adults in lifelong learning slightly decreased from 8.5% to 8.1% in

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<sup>(1)</sup> Data from European Commission, 2020.

<sup>(2)</sup> Idem.

<sup>(3)</sup> The ESF-funded project *Modernisation of vocational education and training*, launched in 2017, introduced over 350 modules aimed at enhanced transferability between initial and continuing VET pathways and qualifications in the national register of qualifications (European Commission, 2019). An examination model for master craftsperson qualifications is being piloted and master craftsperson qualifications are being developed, opening access to EQF level 5 for holders of VET qualifications at EQF level 3 who have relevant work experience (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2018).

<sup>(4)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/pisa-2018\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/pisa-2018_en)

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/skolstvi-v-cr/strategie-2030>

2019 <sup>(6)</sup>; both indicators remain below EU averages. In higher education, stronger internal quality assurance has been observed and the programme offer is being broadened to include professionally oriented programmes (European Commission, 2019).

Work on qualifications has been carried out at subsystem level to varying degrees, and the country has not yet decided to develop a comprehensive national qualifications framework (NQF). However, the importance of increased interconnectedness between various parts of the education system and the need to establish links between different education pathways have been acknowledged (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2014). Thus, the question remains whether a comprehensive NQF could help coordinate and bridge developments in different subsystems.

A national register of qualifications (*Národní soustava kvalifikací* – NSK) has been developed, addressing adults as a main target group and learning outcomes acquired outside formal education and training. The NSK is operational and functions as a framework for qualifications obtained through further education and as a tool for validation of non-formal and informal learning. It has eight levels and comprises qualification standards and assessment standards developed by sector councils based on the descriptions of occupations in the national system of occupations. It currently (September 2020) includes 1 364 qualifications in 27 sectors, between EQF levels 2 and 7.

A framework for higher education covering qualifications provided by universities at EQF levels 6 to 8 was adopted in November 2018, providing a basis for implementation and self-certification to QF-EHEA.

Czechia referenced its national qualifications system to the EQF in 2011 (NÚOV, 2011). All qualifications awarded in secondary education and higher education, and the qualifications included in the NSK, are linked to EQF levels. The three subsystems are regulated by three different acts <sup>(7)</sup>.

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<sup>(6)</sup> Data from European Commission, 2020.

<sup>(7)</sup> Act No 561/2004 Coll., on preschool, elementary, secondary and tertiary professional and other education (The Education Act).

[www.msmt.cz/uploads/VKav\\_200/Act\\_561\\_2011/edu\\_act\\_2011.doc](http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/VKav_200/Act_561_2011/edu_act_2011.doc)

Act No 111/1998 Coll., on higher education institutions.

[http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/odbor\\_30/TF/Legislativa\\_a\\_metodicke\\_pokyny/Novela\\_2016/Zakon\\_o\\_vysokych\\_skolach\\_AJ.pdf](http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/odbor_30/TF/Legislativa_a_metodicke_pokyny/Novela_2016/Zakon_o_vysokych_skolach_AJ.pdf)

Act No 179/2006 Coll., on the verification and recognition of further education results.  
[http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/czech\\_rep\\_2006\\_act\\_recognition\\_further\\_education\\_results.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/czech_rep_2006_act_recognition_further_education_results.pdf)

## Policy objectives

In the absence of a comprehensive NQF, policy objectives were defined for the qualifications frameworks created at subsystem level. The establishment of the NSK was to some extent motivated by a gap between the requirements of the labour market and the education and training offer, and intended to strengthen the links between initial and continuing VET (Kadlec, Horská and Brůha, 2018). It was developed as an instrument in the national *Strategy for lifelong learning* <sup>(8)</sup>, which expired in 2015. The strategy's main elements aimed at improving access to lifelong learning and at developing a more permeable education and training system. Currently, the NSK functions as a framework for qualifications obtained in further education and as a tool for validation of non-formal and informal learning. It supports policies in adult education, in the upskilling and retraining of adults.

The *Long-term objectives in higher education* (2016-20) <sup>(9)</sup> referred to the introduction of a qualifications framework for higher education, which was adopted in 2018, and its self-certification to the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA). The aim of the higher education framework is to increase transparency and permeability of higher education by defining learning outcomes for qualifications at different higher education levels.

The *Strategy for education policy until 2020* included priorities to reduce inequalities, to increase the quality of teaching, to improve partnerships between schools and employers and to improve governance of the education system (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2014). A 2017 external evaluation of its implementation indicated that these priorities remained relevant, as well as a need to better link strategic documents for a more flexible response to societal shifts in the post-2020 period (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2019).

Developments in VET and higher education have not been coordinated or connected. Despite the efforts of the EQF national coordination point (EQF NCP), most stakeholders and decision makers are not convinced about the need for a comprehensive or overarching national framework or its benefits (Stalker, 2019). This leaves several challenges for developing shared concepts, improving communication and cooperation between subsystems and opening up access pathways to education programmes.

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<sup>(8)</sup> The Strategy of lifelong learning in the Czech Republic, 2007:

[http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti\\_EU/strategie\\_2007\\_EN\\_web\\_jednostrany.pdf](http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/Zalezitosti_EU/strategie_2007_EN_web_jednostrany.pdf)

<sup>(9)</sup> The *Strategic plan for the scholarly, scientific, research, development, innovation, artistic and other creative activities of higher education institutions for 2016-20* is available in English at: <http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/tertiary-education/strategic-plan-for-higher-education-institutions-2016-2020?lang=2>

## Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

The national register of qualifications (NSK) <sup>(10)</sup> addresses learning outcomes acquired outside formal education and training, responding directly to the needs of the labour market. It has eight levels and is currently populated with qualifications between EQF levels 2 to 7. Qualification levels in the NSK are described in terms of competences. The level descriptors of the NSK, although not divided into knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy, were developed in close connection with the eight levels of the EQF and are compatible with the EQF descriptors (NÚV, 2015). They reflect the complexity of work activities. Each qualification included in the NSK is described by a qualification standard (a list of expected learning outcomes) and an assessment standard (set of evaluation criteria). They are based on the descriptions of occupations in the national system of occupations <sup>(11)</sup>. The Act 179/2006 distinguishes between ‘vocational qualifications’, which testify to the professional competence of an individual to perform occupational or work activities in a specific occupation, or in two or more occupations to the extent specified in the qualification standard, and ‘comprehensive vocational qualifications’, reflecting the vocational competence of an individual to duly perform all activities in a certain occupation <sup>(12)</sup>.

The learning-outcomes-based NQF for higher education <sup>(13)</sup> covers three levels, corresponding to levels 6 to 8 of the EQF. It includes academic qualifications (bachelor, master and doctoral degrees), but excludes tertiary vocational education (DiS) degrees. Descriptors are divided into professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences. This division is compatible with the overarching framework for the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) and also with the EQF descriptors.

A set of level descriptors for primary and secondary education (EQF levels 1 to 4) was also drafted in 2012, based on core curricula. In this proposal, descriptors were grouped into three categories: knowledge, specific study and work skills and transferable skills. They are, however, not in use.

In 2013, a group of experts from education and the labour market drafted a proposal for national comprehensive descriptors, reflecting both the EQF

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<sup>(10)</sup> For more information on the NSK: <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/>

<sup>(11)</sup> The national system of occupations: [www.nsp.cz](http://www.nsp.cz)

<sup>(12)</sup> Certain vocational qualifications can be combined to obtain a comprehensive vocational qualification and, after a final exam, can lead to an IVET qualification at EQF level 3 or 4. More information on the NQF for higher education can be found at

<sup>(13)</sup> More information on the NQF for higher education can be found at: <https://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/vysoke-skolstvi/ramec-kvalifikaci-vysokoskolskeho-vzdelavani-ceske-republiky>

descriptors and the existing national sectoral descriptors. This proposal was updated in 2016, but the idea for a comprehensive NQF has not been taken forward.

The learning outcomes approach is widely used, although applied and interpreted slightly differently across education levels and subsystems. The Education Act, in force since 2005, introduced learning outcomes in national core curricula for all levels below tertiary. The use of learning outcomes as a starting point at all levels of the education system was one of the aims of the *Strategy for education policy until 2020* (Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2014). An official Czech translation <sup>(14)</sup> of Cedefop's *Handbook on defining, writing and applying learning outcomes* <sup>(15)</sup> was published in 2018.

Core curricula for primary and secondary education make the distinction between knowledge and skills and emphasise key competences (learning, problem solving, communication, social and interpersonal interaction, civic involvement and work skills) and their practical use. Expected learning outcomes are defined in terms of activities, practice-oriented, usable in everyday life and verifiable (tasks that students should be able to perform). Framework educational programmes in pre-primary, primary and secondary education are being revised, aiming to define learning outcomes for more educational stages and to better focus on skills for future jobs (European Commission, 2019).

Curriculum reform in vocational education and the development of relevant methodologies, and the Act on the verification and recognition of results of further education, have set the ground for a competence-based and learning-outcomes-oriented approach in VET. Initial VET (IVET) core curricula are increasingly being aligned with competences defined in the NSK, which in turn are based on occupational standards in the NSP. The holistic character of the term 'competence' is emphasised. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are not seen as 'atomised' entities which can be judged in isolation from each other (Cedefop, 2016).

In higher education, each study programme has a 'graduate profile' (general programme description) and programme goals, described in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are defined as professional knowledge, professional skills and general competences that graduates should be able to demonstrate on completion of a specific learning phase. Knowledge and skills are subject-specific, while competences are more general: they include judgment, communicative ability (including in foreign languages) and preparation for continuing learning. The use of professional knowledge and skills in a particular

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<sup>(14)</sup> <http://www.nuv.cz/file/3403/>

<sup>(15)</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4156>



context, with a particular degree of autonomy and responsibility, is described as a competence (NÚV, 2015). The National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education recommends that higher education institutions structure learning outcomes in this way, and it is intended that the qualifications framework for higher education be used in the accreditation process (Cedefop, 2016).

## Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The EQF national coordination point (EQF NCP) has been operational since 2009, first within the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NÚOV), and between 2011 and 2019 within the National Institute for Education (NÚV) <sup>(16)</sup>. Since January 2020, following the merging of the latter with the National Institute for Further Education (NIDV), the EQF NCP is hosted by the newly formed body – the National Pedagogical Institute (NPI CR) <sup>(17)</sup>. The EQF NCP played an important role in referencing the Czech qualifications system to the EQF, a process for which the Ministry of Education had overall responsibility. It has also led discussions on establishing a comprehensive NQF and provides and disseminates information on European tools. As a comprehensive NQF has not been put in place, there are no specific human or financial resources available for an NQF secretariat (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

The 2006 Act on the verification and recognition of further education results, which came into force in 2007 <sup>(18)</sup>, sets out the basic responsibilities, powers and rights of all stakeholders in developing and awarding national vocational qualifications. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) coordinates the activities of authorising bodies and approves, modifies and issues a list of vocational and comprehensive vocational qualifications. The National Council for Qualifications acts as an advisory body to the MEYS on qualifications. The national register of qualifications (NSK) was maintained and published by NÚV, and, as of 2020, by NPI CR. Sector councils are in charge of developing qualification and

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<sup>(16)</sup> The National Institute for Education was founded in 2011 by the merging of three institutions run by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports: the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (NÚOV), the Research Institute of Education (VÚP) and the Czech Institute for Educational-Psychological Guidance (IPPP ČR).

<sup>(17)</sup> <https://www.npicr.cz/o-nas>

<sup>(18)</sup> Act No 179 of 30 March 2006 on verification and recognition of further education results and on amendments of some other acts: <http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/further-education/the-act-on-the-recognition-of-further-education-results>

assessment standards for qualifications up to level 7 included in the NSK <sup>(19)</sup>. There are currently 29 sector councils consisting of representatives of employers, employees, qualification authorities and academic sectors. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been developing the national system of occupations, which is closely linked with the NSK.

Over the past 15 years there has been a transfer of powers and responsibilities to the local level. Cooperation among central government, regional government, social partners (especially employers) and parents is important. The involvement of employers is strongest in VET, where they take part in the formulation of national curricula and in the work-based training of students <sup>(20)</sup>. Schools are responsible for setting and achieving their own goals, based on the national curriculum. Key quality assurance mechanisms remain under the control of the Ministry of Education. The Czech School Inspectorate acts as external evaluator for primary and secondary education and tertiary vocational schools. Approval of programmes in tertiary education is the responsibility of the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (university sector) and the Accreditation Commission for Tertiary Vocational Education (tertiary vocational sector). Higher education institutions are able to apply for institutional accreditation alongside programme accreditation. Individual institutions at all levels of education and training are also required by law to have internal quality assurance systems in place (NÚV, 2015).

## Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways <sup>(21)</sup>

The Czech system of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL) is regulated by Act 179/2006 on the verification and recognition of further education

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<sup>(19)</sup> At higher levels, sector councils define only specialised supplementary qualifications, not those awarded by higher education institutions (bachelor, master and PhD degrees).

<sup>(20)</sup> Cooperation of schools with employers in curriculum design, practical training, final examinations and placements for teaching staff was made mandatory through a 2018 amendment of the Education Act. For more information on involvement of employers in VET, please see Cedefop and ReferNet (2020a).

<sup>(21)</sup> This section draws mainly on input from the 2018 update to the *European inventory of validation of non-formal and informal learning* (Stalker, 2019).

results <sup>(22)</sup>, amended in 2012 <sup>(23)</sup>. The VNFIL system addresses primarily the CVET sector, with the national register of qualifications (NSK) as its main tool. Validation and recognition procedures are in place for all qualifications included in the NSK, aimed at increasing employability of adults and mitigating skill shortages on the labour market. The NSK currently contains 1 364 vocational qualifications in 27 different sectors, ranging between EQF/NQF levels 2 to 7, with most on levels 3 (702 qualifications) and 4 (420 qualifications) (data from September 2020). They are developed and revised in a multistep process, with broad stakeholder involvement.

The VNFIL system operates more or less parallel to formal education, with some connections between the two. Vocational certificates obtained through VNFIL differ from those awarded in formal VET, as certification in the two subsystems is governed by different legal acts. All four stages of validation (identification, documentation, assessment and certification), are available, but the first two are not mandatory to apply for assessment and certification. Europass documents are used to support the documentation stage. Assessment and certification relate to the authorisation system. Assessment of knowledge, skills and competences gained by prior learning and work experience is carried out according to the qualifications and assessment standards included in the NSK. The assessment is competence-based, usually consisting of an oral examination, a written part and a practical demonstration of skills and competences. Over the past 10 years, more than 180 000 adult learners have passed exams and were awarded a certificate of vocational qualification (data from September 2018). Certain vocational qualifications can be combined to obtain a comprehensive vocational qualification and, after a final exam, can lead to an IVET qualification. Approximately 80 IVET qualifications at EQF level 3 can be obtained in this way, which can be seen as a bridge between VNFIL and formal VET. About 30 vocational qualifications included in the NSK at EQF level 4 and obtained through validation of non-formal and informal learning can be recognised as the vocational part of the *maturita* exam, leading to the Certificate of upper secondary vocational education with *maturita* exam; the standardised part of the *maturita* exam (Czech language, English or Maths) must be passed as well.

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<sup>(22)</sup> The Act on the verification and recognition of further education results (2006): <http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/further-education/the-act-on-the-recognition-of-further-education-results>

<sup>(23)</sup> Among the amendments: the term ‘partial qualification’ was replaced with ‘vocational qualification’; the minimum age limit for taking part in competence assessment was removed; parts of a vocational qualification can be recognised when passing a competence assessment for another vocational qualification.

The main strengths of VNFIL in Czechia are the existing legal basis, information accessibility, quality assurance arrangements, close collaboration with employers in developing vocational qualifications and the correspondence with the EQF. The national VNFIL policy, supported by the NSK, has also been incorporated in the national active policy for employment (APE), the framework of measures stipulated by the Act 435/2004 on Employment, which links retraining offers to existing vocational qualifications. Accessibility of guidance and counselling services are aspects that could be improved; while disadvantaged groups have access to validation through public employment services, support services are typically subject to fees.

Education and training providers in general, VET and higher education can decide to shorten a learner's pathway in line with legal provisions. However, there is no methodological framework for how this should be done and there is little data on how much it is used. Access to formal education programmes requires a formal qualification; to access higher education, students have to have achieved an upper-secondary leaving certificate (*maturita*). In the absence of a comprehensive NQF, coordination, communication and transfer among the different subsystems remain limited.

No credit system is used in VET. The European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) is used in higher education, though it is not linked to validation arrangements.

## NQF implementation and impact

Czechia does not have a comprehensive NQF in place and it is not known whether one will be developed in the near future. Work on qualifications has been carried out at subsystem level. In 2011, the country referenced its qualifications from secondary education, higher education and the vocational qualifications included in the national register of vocational qualifications (NSK) directly to EQF levels.

The NSK includes qualifications outside the formal system, awarded under the Act 179/2006 on the verification and recognition of further education results. It functions as a framework for the VNFIL system and adult education. Qualifications in the NSK are developed based on occupation standards in the national system of occupations (NSP). The NSP and NSK are interconnected through a single central database of competences<sup>(24)</sup>. The NSK is operational. The NSK database<sup>(25)</sup> records the following information for each vocational qualification:

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<sup>(24)</sup> The central database of competences is available at: <http://kompetence.nsp.cz/>

<sup>(25)</sup> The NSK database is available at: <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/>

qualification and assessment standard (including description of learning outcomes), reference to corresponding occupations, information on authorising body and validation procedure and NSK/EQF level. So far (September 2020), 1 364 vocational qualifications in 27 sectors have been included in the database, all achievable through validation. Over 180 000 vocational qualifications were awarded by September 2018 (Stalker, 2019).

EQF levels have been indicated on the qualifications included in the NSK since 2011, and on general education qualifications, initial VET qualifications and qualifications awarded by tertiary vocational schools and conservatories since 2017 <sup>(26)</sup>. Including EQF levels on higher education qualifications is voluntary and has been a challenge, due to the autonomy of higher education institutions. EQF levels have been indicated on Europass certificate supplements <sup>(27)</sup> and diploma supplements for tertiary vocational qualifications since 2012 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

The EQF NCP has been disseminating information about the EQF through the EQF national website <sup>(28)</sup>, social media, and presentations in seminars, conferences, workshops and education and job fairs. The main groups targeted have been policy and decision makers, experts in the different education sectors, teachers, career counsellors, learners and employers (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018). It has also been leading discussions on the possibility of developing a comprehensive NQF.

The qualifications framework for higher education, in line with the Bologna framework, was designed and developed between 2009-12 (in the Q-RAM project), initially covering EQF levels 5 to 8. In 2012, the framework went through pilot implementation at 12 universities and four tertiary VET institutions (VOŠ). In 2015, the framework was revised and its scope was reduced to EQF levels 6 to 8; it includes only qualifications provided by universities (not VOŠ, tertiary VET institutions). The framework was adopted in 2018, setting the ground for implementation and self-certification to QF-EHEA. It has been included in the amendment to the higher education Act, which is to be discussed by Parliament.

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<sup>(26)</sup> According to Decree No 3/2015 Coll., on certain documents in education.

<sup>(27)</sup> The Europass certificate supplement database, including certificate supplements for formal VET qualifications (EQF levels 2-4): [https://edo.europass.cz/edo/search\\_en/](https://edo.europass.cz/edo/search_en/)

<sup>(28)</sup> <http://www.nuv.cz/eqf>

## Referencing to the EQF

Czechia referenced its national qualifications subsystems directly to the EQF levels in December 2011. Formal qualifications from secondary education were referenced based on the classification of educational qualifications types (KKOV) and nationally approved curricula. CVET qualifications awarded through VNFIL are included in the NSK, whose eight levels were also referenced to the eight EQF levels. Qualifications from tertiary vocational education and higher education were linked to the EQF based on characteristics of the different levels of tertiary education set out in national legislation (NÚV, 2015). The initial referencing report (NÚOV, 2011) was approved through Cabinet decision 557/2011 and updated in 2013 and 2015 following minor changes in legislation. The latest referencing report (NÚV, 2015) is published on the Europass platform. There are no plans to present another updated referencing report for the time being; however, the Education strategy 2030+, which is currently being finalised, may introduce significant changes in the education system, which may call for an updated EQF referencing report in the future, once the strategy is implemented (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

The framework for higher education has not yet been self-certified against the QF-EHEA.

## Important lessons and future plans

Partial/sectoral qualifications frameworks based on the learning outcomes approach have been developed in Czechia, specifically the national register of qualifications (NSK), used as a tool for the VNFIL system and adult education, and a qualifications framework for higher education.

The NSK and its online database are operational and are being used for upskilling and reskilling of adults and for validating learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. A strong policy rationale underpinning the VNFIL strategy could be considered one success factor in the implementation of the NSK. Partnership between the education sector, qualification management and employers, within the sector skills councils, has been leveraged to define skills shortages in the labour market and utilise the VNFIL system to mitigate them (Stalker, 2019).

There has been commitment for the introduction of a learning-outcomes-orientation in all subsystems of education and training. Qualification and assessment standards for vocational qualifications included in the NSK are expressed in terms of competences. Competences in the NSK have been

gradually used as a source of information for educational programmes in initial VET. The revision of framework educational programmes in primary and secondary education is currently being debated, with the aim to strengthen their learning-outcomes-orientation and to promote the development of skills for employability. It has been suggested that, in the future, the NSK could constitute a comprehensive system of reflection aimed at translating the needs of the labour market into educational outcomes (Kadlec, Horská and Brůha, 2018).

Successful implementation of learning outcomes requires coordination of subsystems, initiatives, measures and bodies, which is sometimes difficult. Better understanding of the approach and communication are prerequisites for future implementation of learning outcomes across education and training. Informal networks of experts, teachers, researchers, policy makers and officials willing to discuss and share their experiences have been created.

The main challenge and open topic of discussion in the country is the development of a comprehensive NQF, with a coherent set of level descriptors. This could bring together qualifications obtained in formal education and training and those included in the NSK. It could potentially increase connectedness and coherence between developments in the different parts of the education system and open up access pathways. Explicit levels and a single set of descriptors would make links to EQF levels more transparent. Discussions on the purpose and potential advantages of an NQF have been held, along with work by experts, but reaching political agreement among stakeholders remains a challenge. The Education strategy 2030+ does not address the development of a comprehensive NQF (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

#### Main sources of information

- The National Pedagogical Institute is the EQF NCP: <https://www.npicr.cz/>
- EQF webpage: <http://www.nuv.cz/eqf>
- National register of qualifications (NSK): <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/>
- National register of higher education institutions and accredited study programmes: <https://regvssp.msmt.cz/registrvssp/>
- NÚV (2015). *National referencing report of the Czech Republic: 3rd revised edition*. <https://europa.eu/europass/en/reports-referencing-national-qualifications-frameworks-eqf>



## Czech qualification types, NSK levels and links to EQF levels

EQF levels	Czech qualifications awarded in formal education and training	NSK levels and qualifications (awarded through VNFIL)
8	<b>Doctoral programme</b> ( <i>doktor</i> ) – PhD degrees three to four years beyond master	8
7	<b>Master programme</b> ( <i>magistr, inženýr, doktor</i> ) – Mgr, MgA., Ing., Ing. arch., MUDr, MDDr, MVDr, JUDr, PhDr, RNDr, Pharm.Dr, ThLic., and ThDr degrees – one to three years of tertiary education beyond bachelor or four to six years of tertiary education	7 E.g. Head detective ( <i>vedoucí detektiv</i> ) Chemical specialist product manager ( <i>specialista chemie produktmanažer</i> )
6	<b>Bachelor programme</b> ( <i>bakalář</i> ) – Bc and BcA degrees – three to four years of tertiary education  <b>Graduation diploma – Tertiary professional education</b> ( <i>diplom absolventa vyšší odborné školy ve vzdělávacím</i> ) – DiS degree three to three-and-a-half years of tertiary education  <b>Graduation diploma – Conservatoire</b> ( <i>diplom absolventa konzervatoře</i> ) – DiS degree – 8 years study after 5 years of primary education or 6 years study after completion of a lower secondary general education programme	6 E.g. Career counsellor for educational and professional paths ( <i>kariérový poradce pro vzdělávací a profesní dráhu</i> )  Independent research and development electrician ( <i>samostatný elektrotechnik výzkumný a vývojový pracovník</i> )
5		5 E.g. Travel guide ( <i>průvodce cestovního ruchu</i> )  Agricultural advisor for crop production ( <i>zemědělský poradce pro rostlinnou výrobu</i> )
4	<b>Certificate of upper secondary general education with <i>maturita</i> exam</b> ( <i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce z oboru vzdělání</i> ) – four years of general upper secondary study  <b>Certificate of upper secondary vocational education with <i>maturita</i> exam</b> ( <i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce z oboru vzdělání</i> ) – four years of vocational upper secondary study	4 E.g. Quality management specialist in engineering ( <i>technik řízení jakosti ve strojírenství</i> )  Detective trainee ( <i>detektiv koncipient</i> )



EQF levels	Czech qualifications awarded in formal education and training	NSK levels and qualifications (awarded through VNFIL)
	<b>Certificate of supplementary study leading to a <i>maturita</i> exam</b> ( <i>vysvědčení o maturitní zkoušce z oboru vzdělání</i> ) – two years of study after level 3 VET certificate	
3	<b>Certificate of upper secondary VET –</b> ( <i>výuční list z oboru vzdělání</i> ) – three years of upper secondary VET study	3 E.g. Glassmaker for pressed glass ( <i>sklář pro lisované sklo</i> )  Locksmith ( <i>zámkař</i> )
2	<b>Certificate of lower secondary education</b> ( <i>vysvědčení o získání základního vzdělání</i> ) – completion of a lower secondary general education programme – nine years  <b>Certificate of upper secondary education with VET certificate</b> ( <i>výuční list z oboru vzdělání</i> ) – two years of upper secondary study  <b>Certificate of upper secondary education without VET certificate</b> ( <i>vysvědčení o závěrečné zkoušce</i> ) – 1 or 2 years education programmes	2 E.g. Production of side dishes ( <i>výroba příloh</i> )  Guard ( <i>strážný</i> )
1	<b>Special education</b> – completion of an educational programme in a special school – 10 years	1

(\*) In the absence of a comprehensive NQF, Czechia referenced its qualifications subsystems directly to the EQF.

Source: Adapted from NUV (2015); the national register of qualifications (NSK): <http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us> [accessed 2.4.2020]; the EQF NCP, 2020 (email communication).

## Acronyms

CVET	continuing vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KKOV	classification of educational qualification types
NCP	national coordination point
NSK	national register of qualifications ( <i>Národní soustava kvalifikací</i> )
NQF	national qualifications framework
NPI CR	National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic

NÚOV	National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education [ <i>Národního ústavu odborného vzdělávání</i> ]
NÚV	National Institute for Education [ <i>Národního ústavu pro vzdělávání</i> ]
QF-EHEA	qualifications framework of the European higher education area
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning

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