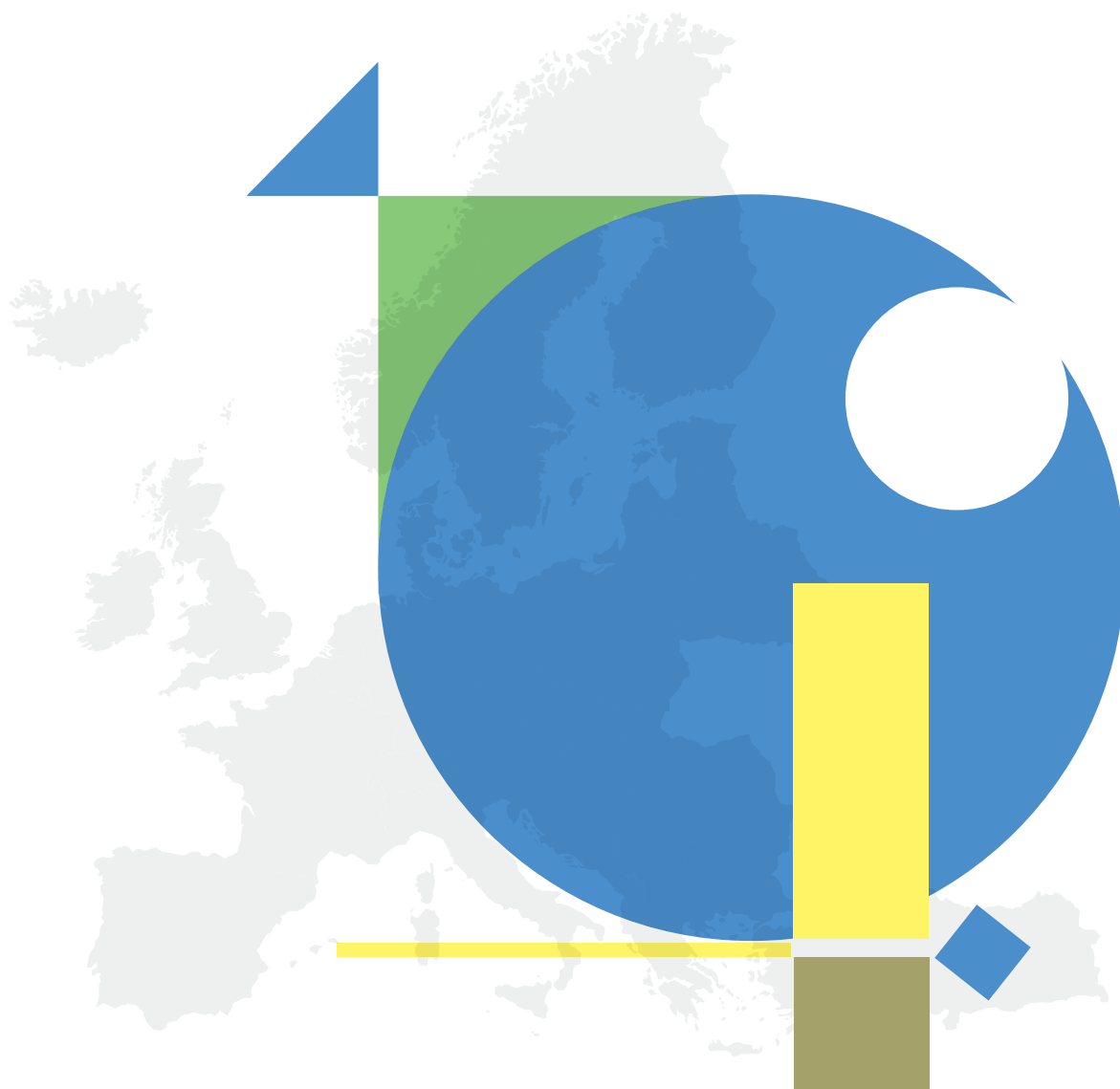




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EUROPEAN
INVENTORY
OF NQFs 2020
GREECE

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GREECE

European inventory of NQFs 2020

Introduction and context

Greece has one of the lowest percentages of students who leave education and training early in the EU and this number has been further reduced (4.1% in 2019, compared to the EU average of 10.2%). However, spending on education remains lower than in most EU countries and is mostly on salaries. Within the last 20 years, Greece had around one fifth fewer school children so investment in lifelong learning opportunities has to be increased. The basic digital skills of the Greek population remain underdeveloped, although an extensive amount of digital educational content has been developed in recent years. Since the rate of tertiary attainment at 43.1% in 2019 exceeded the EU average of 40.3% and the national target for 2020 (40%), employment prospects of recent tertiary graduates have improved along with the new university entrance system, enacted in 2019, which allows all departments to receive university entrants by central allocation based on competitive exams ⁽¹⁾. As of 21 December 2020, following approval by the Greek Parliament, a new law reforming vocational education and training in Greece is in place. The law has established a national system for VET and lifelong learning encompassing levels 3, 4 and 5. The main objective is to make VET a first choice, as the attractiveness of vocational education and training is still low (European Commission, 2020).

Since 2010, Greece has been implementing an eight-level comprehensive framework for lifelong learning, the Hellenic qualifications framework (HQF) ⁽²⁾, aiming at a coherent and comprehensive system of qualifications from all parts and levels of education and training. The qualification framework for higher education

(1) Previous policy measures have been reversed. The government abolished the university asylum law and repealed access to low-demand departments for first-time students without national exams. As before, all departments receive university entrants by central allocation based on competitive exams (European Commission, 2020).

(2) Law 3879/2010 on the development of lifelong learning and other provisions set the ground for developing the HQF and introduced levels and the learning outcomes concept as essential elements of qualifications and awards.

Law 3879/2010 on the development of lifelong learning and other provisions. *Official Gazette*, 163A/2010.

http://www.edulll.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/nomos_-3879_2010.pdf

is a part of the overarching NQF ⁽³⁾. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is responsible for HQF implementation, with the National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) as the main actor at operational level.

The HQF is at activation stage. The legal basis of the HQF has been strengthened with the new Law 4763/2020, which was adopted by the Greek Parliament in December 2020 ⁽⁴⁾. This law is reshaping the institutional framework of VET and lifelong learning policies in Greece and formalises all operational aspects of the HQF.

The HQF was referenced to the EQF in 2015 and self-certification against the QF-EHEA is in progress.

Policy objectives

Work on the HQF is directly linked to the country's efforts to develop a framework for improving lifelong learning policies and practices, to aid transparency and comparability of qualifications, to allow recognition and certification of all kinds of education and training and to enhance horizontal and vertical mobility ⁽⁵⁾. The HQF is seen as a communication and transparency framework but is also intended to be reforming. In recent years it has become a main instrument for reforming the Greek education system. For example, the vocational upper secondary school degree at level 5 – post-secondary cycle (one year of apprenticeship class after three years of vocational upper secondary school at level 4) – has been regulated through relevant laws ⁽⁶⁾.

A new law ⁽⁷⁾ adopted in 2020 is reshaping the institutional framework of VET and lifelong learning policies in Greece, stating at the same time the priorities of the new government in this area. The law refers to operational aspects of the

⁽³⁾ In the Greek legal framework, the main types of higher education qualification are connected to NQF levels. This is mentioned in Article 19 of Law 4521/2018, which connects bachelor degrees to level 6, and in the ministerial decrees on master and doctorate degrees connecting them to level 7 and 8 respectively (Ministerial Decree 3686/2018 and 1127/2018).

⁽⁴⁾ Law 4763/2020 on the national vocational education system, training and lifelong learning. <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=5632>

⁽⁵⁾ An important milestone in these developments has been the Act on Lifelong Learning 3879/10.

⁽⁶⁾ These laws are: 4283/2014, 4310/2014, 4521/2018, 4559/2018, 4610/2019, 4666/2020 and ministerial decrees, for example 26381/2017, 90050/Y2/2018, F7/15572/d4/2018.

⁽⁷⁾ <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=5632>

national qualifications framework, thus firmly establishing its role within the Greek educational system.

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

The HQF has eight learning-outcomes-based qualification levels, reflecting the existing formal education and training system in Greece. Levels are defined in terms of knowledge (factual and theoretical), skills (cognitive and practical) and competence (autonomy and responsibility). Although work on level descriptors for HQF and on a qualifications framework for higher education has taken place separately, they are now integrated into the comprehensive framework, with higher education qualifications (bachelor degree, master degree and doctorate) linked to HQF levels.

The shift to learning outcomes represents a significant change in the Greek system from an ‘input’ approach to an outcome-oriented focus. The outcomes-based HQF is expected to support design of outcomes-based qualifications, thus moving towards lifelong learning and a more transparent qualification system. Consistent effort has been made by EOPPEP in 2020 to facilitate the introduction of the learning outcomes approach with the development and publication of relevant guidelines.

Reforms in general education and VET were initiated under Law 4186/2013 ⁽⁸⁾ on restructuring secondary education ⁽⁹⁾. The reforms that were initiated with this law brought about developments in curriculum reform on the basis of learning outcomes and training of counsellors and teachers. Working groups were formed under the auspices of the Ministry of Education to draft learning outcomes of qualifications provided in subsystems of formal education, and to suggest their allocation to the eight levels of the HQF. In the school year 2020/21, pilot skills workshops will be included in the compulsory school programme, while subjects which require written and oral assessment will be revised, based on learning outcomes ⁽¹⁰⁾.

⁽⁸⁾ Law 4186/2013 stipulates that vocational education and apprenticeship programmes will include clearly formulated learning outcomes and will be analysed in knowledge, skills and competences per subject, field and speciality.

⁽⁹⁾ [Law 4186/2013 on restructuring of secondary education and other provisions. *Official Gazette*, 193/A, 17.9.2013.](#)

⁽¹⁰⁾ More information [here](#).

In vocational education, since 2006, Greece has developed – by Ministerial decree ⁽¹¹⁾ – a methodology for analysing occupational profiles (standards), incorporating the learning outcomes approach ⁽¹²⁾, as an early effort to create a methodology for modularising VET curricula. It was also seen as a precondition for setting up a system for validating informal and non-formal learning and for accrediting training programmes. EOPPEP, in cooperation with social partners, developed and accredited 206 occupational profiles (standards) based on learning outcomes; updating and renewing outcomes in occupational profiles is a necessity, according to labour market research, surveys and evaluation of existing curricula. The legislative framework is set by Articles 2 and 41 of the new Law 4763/2020, which specifies the content of these training programmes.

A ministerial decision on a quality framework for VET curricula was adopted in 2017 ⁽¹³⁾, including the definition of learning outcomes, the connection with occupational profiles and issues regarding the design of VET curricula. The curricula will include explicitly the stated learning outcomes sought, analysed by knowledge, skills and competences, per subject, sector and specialisation, and teaching material will be prepared in line with the learning outcomes sought for each subject. Other ministerial decisions ⁽¹⁴⁾ taken were related to the curricula of the apprenticeship courses, based on learning outcomes ⁽¹⁵⁾, the apprenticeship certification scheme ⁽¹⁶⁾ and assessment of apprenticeship courses ⁽¹⁷⁾. The development of vocational education curricula for 35 specialties (336 subjects) based on learning outcomes has been undertaken by the [Institute for Educational Policy](#) and 23 of them have already been completed. EOPPEP, the body responsible for the certification of the apprenticeship graduates, has also created a database with 200 to 250 exam questions for each one of these specialties. A

⁽¹¹⁾ Common Ministerial Decision 110998/2006 on the accreditation of occupational profiles. *Official Gazette*, 566/B of 2.5.2006.

⁽¹²⁾ See Dželalija (2015).

⁽¹³⁾ [Ministerial Decision 26412/2017 on the quality framework of VET curricula. *Official Gazette*, 490B/2017, 20.2.2017.](#)

⁽¹⁴⁾ [Ministerial Decision Φ2/181534/Δ4. *Official Gazette*, 3820B/2017, 31.10.2017.](#)

⁽¹⁵⁾ As a result of Law 4186/2013 that set up the EPAL apprenticeship class, several Ministerial decrees of the Minister of Education were issued: the curricula of each specialisation are described according to the learning outcomes approach.

[Ministerial Decision Φ2/165262/Δ4. *Official Gazette*, 4496/B/11-10-18.](#)

[Ministerial Decision Φ2/146353/ΓΓ4 *Official Gazette*, 3643/B/1-10-19.](#)

⁽¹⁶⁾ In this scheme, the process verifies whether the graduate participating in the theoretical and practical part of the exam can answer questions that cover the learning outcomes of the curriculum.

⁽¹⁷⁾ [Presidential Decree 40/2018. *Official Gazette*, 76A/2018, 30.4.2018.](#)

main pillar of the new Law 4763/2020 is the upgrade of vocational education schools (EPAL) and vocational training institutes (IEK) in terms of curricula with clearly defined learning outcomes, technical equipment and teacher training.

In higher education, the Greek authority responsible for the accreditation of higher education programmes (HQAAA) uses, as evaluation criteria, the learning outcomes approach and expected competences in accordance with the national qualifications framework for higher education ⁽¹⁸⁾. Higher education qualifications are included in the HQF register and general descriptors of higher education programmes have been developed in cooperation with higher education institutions. Evaluation of higher education institutions has been completed ⁽¹⁹⁾ and self-certification against the framework of qualifications of the European higher education area is in progress ⁽²⁰⁾. Higher education levels are mentioned in the legislative acts that concern qualifications ⁽²¹⁾.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

Since 2011, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, has been responsible for the development and implementation of the HQF, as well as for putting the HQF and procedures for validation of learning outcomes into practice and assuring quality in lifelong learning ⁽²²⁾. EOPPEP has been designated as the national coordination point (NCP) for EQF and is the awarding body in relation to three qualification types in the framework: certificate of vocational training school (level 3), certificate of apprenticeship class (level 5) and vocational training diploma (level 5). EOPPEP cooperates with the [Hellenic Authority for Higher Education](#) (previously Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency) on quality issues in higher education. It is also the EQAVET national reference point (NRP), so there is coordination of the respective activities

⁽¹⁸⁾ This is anticipated by Law 3879/2010, Article 16, Paragraph 4, point (d), as supplemented by Article 46 of the present law.

⁽¹⁹⁾ In June 2016, HQAAA finished the evaluation of 36 higher education institutions.

⁽²⁰⁾ Information on external evaluation of higher education institutions can be found at: <https://www.ethaae.gr/en/quality-assurance/external-evaluation-reports-of-institutions>

⁽²¹⁾ HQF levels 7 and 8 are mentioned in the approvals of the regulations for post-graduate and doctoral studies. Relevant information can be found in the [Official Gazette \(OG\) 481/B/18-2-2019 \(Amendment of the 3672/b/4-6-18\)](#).

⁽²²⁾ The HQF Unit operates under the Qualifications Certification Department of EOPPEP. Since 2019, a part-time external expert supports the Unit's activities and, in particular, the ones that are related to communication with the awarding bodies and the database for the qualifications (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

of the two national points on quality issues that arise from the implementation of NQF. The work programme of the national coordination point (NCP) 2018-20 included an integrated communication strategy ⁽²³⁾ developed among EOPPEP and quality assurance agencies such as HQAAA.

An advisory committee, comprising representatives from public administration, the education and academic community, social partners and external consultants, was established to support EOPPEP during the referencing process (2014-15) ⁽²⁴⁾. A new advisory committee will be formalised for the updated referencing report of the HQF. Till then, the main work of implementing the HQF will be done by EOPPEP (as the coordinating agency). An independent administrative authority, the Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education (ADIPPDE), has been established ⁽²⁵⁾ and is responsible for quality assurance both in general and vocational education. It is fully operational (qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3, and 4) and is working closely with the Ministry of Education.

Involvement of social partners is very important for the implementation of the framework. Their representatives are members of the governing board of EOPPEP, the Central Examination Board for the Certification of Vocational Training (KEEPEK) ⁽²⁶⁾ responsible for the accreditation of post-secondary IVET, as well as of the committees for the development of occupational profiles/VET curricula. Social partners also take part in the new National Apprentice Coordination Body (ESOM), an advisory body on apprenticeship issues established by Law on 26 February 2018 ⁽²⁷⁾. ESOM can cooperate with chambers,

⁽²³⁾ Leaflets, handbooks and other promotional material have been produced mainly addressing teachers and students. The broader communication strategy was designed at the beginning of 2018 and was aimed at increasing the visibility of the framework to different stakeholders, as well as to a wider audience. A comprehensive plan was decided, including a research study for a rebranding of the framework, the update of the HQF site, the organisation of conferences in three Greek cities, press releases, newsletters, TV and radio spots, infographics and other promotional material. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic most plans were paused.

⁽²⁴⁾ The members of the advisory committee were appointed by the Ministry of Education, by social partners, by the National Centre for Public and Local Administration and by Cedefop.

⁽²⁵⁾ Law 4142/2013.

⁽²⁶⁾ KEEPEK consists of members of EOPPEP, representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Confederation of Greek Employers (SEB), the Employees' associations (GSEE) and the Greek Chamber of Finance and Commerce. Source: [EQAVET NRP Greece \(2016\). Report on Greece: summer 2016.](#)

⁽²⁷⁾ ESOM's purpose is to provide the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity with suggestions on improving the institutional

foundations and research organisations and other bodies to fulfil its purpose. The National Council of Education (ESYP) has been reformed into the National Council for Education and Human Resources Development (ESEKAAD) ⁽²⁸⁾. ESEKAAD now includes many representatives closely involved with VET issues. Its mandate has been extended to be the overall link between education and the labour market ⁽²⁹⁾. According to Law 4763/2020, the new committees that are responsible for the above-mentioned work are the Central Advisory Committee of VET (KSEEK), the Central Scientific Committee of VET (KEE) and the Regional Committees for the link between VET, production and the labour market (SSPAE).

A significant number of private education institutions/providers have engaged with EOPPEP and expressed interest in the inclusion of their awards (from formal or non-formal education) in the qualifications framework. A dialogue has also started with the Greek recognition and equivalence committees and competent authorities ⁽³⁰⁾ on the role and contribution of the framework to the recognition and equivalence of awarded qualifications.

Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways ⁽³¹⁾

In Greece, there has been slow progress in developing a framework for validation of non-formal and informal learning gained through work experience and other means ⁽³²⁾. A national system for the certification of outputs that was expected to boost employment, started development in 2016, but progress has not been

framework for apprenticeship and designing, implementing and evaluating apprenticeship programmes.

⁽²⁸⁾ Law 4452/2017, Article 18.

⁽²⁹⁾ EOPPEP, ESOM and ESEKAAD operate under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for deciding the type of cooperation among relevant authorities.

⁽³⁰⁾ These are: the Hellenic NARIC (DOATAP) responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications of higher education; the Directorates of Secondary Education, responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications of general education; the Agency of the Technological Educational Institutes, responsible for the recognition of qualifications of tertiary – not higher – education that are no longer awarded; the National Council for the Recognition of Vocational Qualifications (SAEP); and EOPPEP, which acts as the committee for the recognition of foreign and Greek qualifications of secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training.

⁽³¹⁾ This section draws mainly on input from [Manoudi, A. \(2019\). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2018 update: Greece*](#).

⁽³²⁾ For example, in leisure time.

quick ⁽³³⁾. In 2020-21, development of this system remains one of the strategic objectives of EOPPEP with the support of the Ministry of Education.

Continuing vocational education and training (CVET) has been the policy priority making the biggest progress in recent years. A regulatory framework has been developed for the operation of lifelong learning centres (*Kentra dia viou mathisis* (KDBM)), which offer continuous vocational training, general adult education, vocational guidance and lifelong counselling. During 2020, around 30 VET curricula for the institutes of vocational training (IEK) were designed by the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning/Ministry of Education. Eight of them were checked for their compliance to standards and approved, by decision of EOPPEP's Board of Directors.

A good example of validation of non-formal learning since 2014 has been adult trainers, who need to have certified educational competence/proficiency to train in non-formal learning programmes funded by public resources ⁽³⁴⁾. More specifically, enrolment for the examinations means meeting certain criteria regarding educational attainment or proven professional experience. The updated system foresees three pathways:

- (a) direct certification of conditions and criteria;
- (b) participation in an assessment process, and then certification;
- (c) enrolment in training programmes and subsequent certification ⁽³⁵⁾.

Progress has also been made on the upskilling pathways recommendation ⁽³⁶⁾, in terms of offering opportunities for basic skills training to low-skilled adults. A memorandum of cooperation is planned, to be signed by EOPPEP (the validation authority) and the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), which is the Greek public employment service (PES). An updated version of it has been signed recently by the two parties and there is currently an ongoing dialogue regarding the subjects and the methods of cooperation. In addition, the apprenticeship semester attached to IVET (*Mathiteia* IEK) has been initiated and

⁽³³⁾ Once it is in place, certification of learning outcomes/outputs will follow criteria and processes that will ensure that the certified learning outcomes will lead to qualifications that correspond to the requirements of the relevant occupational profiles (*Epaggelmatiko perigramma*).

⁽³⁴⁾ Law 4115/2013.

⁽³⁵⁾ All the details of the assessment stage are explicitly described and analysed on [EOPPEP's website](#).

⁽³⁶⁾ Council of the European Union (2016). Council recommendation of 19 December 2016 on upskilling pathways: new opportunities for adults. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 484, 24.12.2016, pp. 1-6. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016H1224(01)&from=EN).

a quality framework has been developed ⁽³⁷⁾ On a final note, the HQF level of the Greek qualification is indicated on the Recognition Decision issued by EOPPEP for foreign qualifications provided that the corresponding Greek qualification has been placed in the framework ⁽³⁸⁾.

Although these are significant steps for the country, validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet as developed in Greece as in other EU countries. Even though informal and non-formal learning is gaining importance, such learning is not adequately valued and recognised in society. A cultural shift would also be required in favour of learning outcomes, to support steps towards recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning. The law ⁽³⁹⁾ adopted in 2020 is intended to strengthen the certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning in the country and the active participation of social partners in the design and implementation of a lifelong learning system.

NQF implementation and impact

The HQF is at an activation stage. Its establishment in the Hellenic education and training community has been supported by several developments in education and training legislation over recent years. The new law ⁽⁴⁰⁾ adopted in 2020 is reshaping the institutional framework of VET and lifelong learning policies in Greece, stating at the same time the priorities of the new government in this area. The law formalises the operational aspects of the HQF, establishing its role within the Greek educational system. This is a very important step in moving into a full operational stage. The reform aims at setting up a completely new model of VET at EQF levels 3 and 4 with the creation, for the first time, of model vocational education schools (EQF level 4) and the creation of pilot and thematic vocational training Institutes (IEK) at EQF level 5 (parallel to the existing ones). The law establishes permeability arrangements from VET to higher education, by giving the opportunity to graduates of IEK and students of the post-upper secondary year of apprenticeship (at level 5) to have access to level 6 of the HQF – following successful entry exams. The law increases the engagement of social partners and boosts vocational education and training's labour market relevance and attractiveness. The main objective is to change fundamentally the image of Greek

⁽³⁷⁾ Ministerial Decree 26412/2017. *Official Gazette*, 490B/2017.

⁽³⁸⁾ OPPEP recognises foreign qualifications for secondary and post-secondary vocational education and training.

⁽³⁹⁾ <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=5632>

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=5632>

VET and make it a first choice for young students in the future. The first stage in the development of the HQF has focused on the range of qualifications awarded within formal education and training and, in a long-term perspective, it is planned to accommodate qualifications awarded outside formal education and training. Inclusion of qualifications in the framework is defined through qualification type specifications. They include title of award, level, awarding body, summary descriptor, volume of learning, purpose, education sector, learning outcomes, employment relevance and progression possibilities. Qualification types from VET, general education and higher education have been assigned to HQF levels. Having already developed qualification types, which is a key element of the framework, the country is now placing, in all qualification types, each individual (named) qualification expressed in learning outcomes. For example, in level 7 of the HQF, there is the type 'master degree' ⁽⁴¹⁾.

A qualifications register ⁽⁴²⁾, in cooperation with the respective education institutions, has been developed, including 724 learning-outcomes-based qualifications from the formal education system. The register has been used as a pilot project to link the learning outcomes of the qualifications to the [relevant ESCO pillar](#). Since 2018, 50 higher education qualifications have been added to the register. As a result of legislative changes concerning higher education in Greece, and a procedure that was initiated by the HQF unit of EOPPEP (regarding the update of the register's content), around 450 new higher education qualifications have been sent for inclusion in the register ⁽⁴³⁾. The qualifications of secondary vocational education that are not awarded anymore (old qualifications) are expected to be included in 2021.

HQF and EQF levels have started to be indicated on new qualifications (e.g. for EPAL apprenticeships, level 5) and on certificate and diploma supplements in VET and higher education. A number of private education bodies have expressed

⁽⁴¹⁾ (a) Master degree (MSc) in renewable energy systems (Department of mechanical engineering of the Faculty of applied technology of the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Western Greece);

(b) Master degree in science and technology of food and human consumption (Department of food science and human nutrition of the Faculty of food, biotechnology and development of the Agricultural University of Athens);

(c) Master degree in techno-economic management and security of digital systems. Directions: techno-economic management of digital systems/digital systems security. (Department of digital systems of the School of information and communication technologies of the University of Piraeus).

⁽⁴²⁾ [Greek qualification register](#). It is linked to the [European Commission's portal on learning opportunities and qualifications](#).

⁽⁴³⁾ The qualifications of secondary vocational education that are not awarded anymore (old qualifications) are expected to be included in 2021.

interest in the inclusion of their awards in the framework. 205 certificate supplements have been issued so far with reference to HQF and EQF levels, mostly for IEK diplomas and EPAL apprenticeship class degrees ⁽⁴⁴⁾. A dialogue has started on the role and contribution of the framework for the recognition and equivalence of qualifications.

A survey was commissioned by EOPPEP in 2017, as part of the actions aimed at evaluating the impact of the HQF and its referencing to the EQF ⁽⁴⁵⁾. It indicated a very high level of awareness and understanding of the framework among education and training providers and end-users (95.2% of respondents were aware of the HQF, 80.2% were aware of its structure and 74.8% were aware of how it was referenced to the EQF). Most respondents were also favourable about the usefulness of qualification frameworks in general, and in presenting the knowledge, skills and competences of employees.

An integrated communication strategy has been designed by the Hellenic EQF-NCP and it has been updated annually to increase the use and visibility of the framework. A creative design is under production with infographics to strengthen the identity and branding of the framework.

Referencing to the EQF

The HQF was referenced to the EQF in 2015 and self-certification against the QF-EHEA is in progress. The country is planning to prepare an updated referencing report but a decision about the time has not been made yet.

Important lessons and future plans

The HQF is expected to have an important impact on education and training. There has been increased attention to validation of non-formal and informal learning, improvement of the transparency and quality of the Greek qualification system and reconstruction of the qualifications register in accordance with compatibility requirements of both the EQF portal and the European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations portal (ESCO). The main success factors for the

⁽⁴⁴⁾ The certificate supplements are available online [here](#).

⁽⁴⁵⁾ The study was conducted by the SOLIDDOP company in 2017 and is part of the actions developed by EOPPEP as the National Coordination Point of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF-NCP) entitled *Evaluating the impact of the National Qualifications Framework and its referencing to the EQF*. This evaluation served as a pilot for a nationwide research study regarding the recognition/impact of NQF-EQF within Greek society.

HQF to reach its aims are related to the clear structure of the HQF, the use of qualifications types that facilitate the qualifications' grouping in broader categories at the same level, as well as the qualifications register that presents, in a concise way, the qualifications that are placed in the HQF. The HQF quality assurance procedures have also set an example to be followed by the rest of the training providers (European Commission; Cedefop, 2020).

Involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in HQF development and implementation is seen as crucial but remains a challenge. The participatory nature of the processes and procedures necessary for the development and referencing of the HQF might be a good opportunity not only to reduce barriers between secondary and tertiary education but also to strengthen bridges between general and vocational education.

Other challenges include the preparation of an updated referencing report, referencing international sectoral qualifications to the HQF, including qualifications awarded outside the formal/regulated system and the rest of higher education qualifications to HQF levels 6 to 8 ⁽⁴⁶⁾. There is a clear division between non-university, mostly private, institutions and the university sector, which is public, charges no fees and offers entrance through national examinations in accordance with the constitution.

According to the 2017 survey on the HQF implementation and its impact on the Greek education system, a high level of awareness and understanding of the framework among education and training providers and end-users has been observed. Future plans include the development of a methodology, by EOPPEP in cooperation with education and labour market stakeholders, for classifying qualifications acquired through non-formal education, based on knowledge, skills and competences. Upon EOPPEP's authorisation, the awarding bodies will gain access to the qualifications register with a view to updating the qualifications they award and adding new ones. It is planned to establish new qualification types following the introduction of the 'integrated master' qualification, or the ESK degree ⁽⁴⁷⁾ (Level 3), that are being introduced by several higher education providers. An upgraded version of the HQF and the preparation of an updated referencing report are also expected.

The HQF is currently a communicative framework that promotes transparency, but with an important reform role as well; so far, the framework has strengthened quality assurance and helped re-shape qualifications types defined in learning outcomes, thus facilitating the qualifications grouping in broader categories at the same level. A review of all qualifications (including non-formal

⁽⁴⁶⁾ For the time being foreign qualifications awarded by foreign institutions cannot be included in the HQF.

and informal ones) to be included in the qualifications register is required to enhance the reform role of the framework (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Main sources of information

- EOPPEP (The national organisation for the certification of qualifications and vocational guidance) is the designated EQF NCP:
<http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/>
- HQF and the EQF: <http://nqf.gov.gr/>
- Greek qualifications register: <https://proson.eoppep.gr/en/Qualifications>
- EOPPEP (2016). *Greece – EQF referencing report*
https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/greek_referencing_report_2016.pdf

Hellenic national qualifications framework (HQF)

HQF level	Qualification types	EQF level
8	Doctorate (Διδακτορικό Δίπλωμα) (Universities)	8
7	Master degree (Μεταπτυχιακό Δίπλωμα Ειδίκευσης) (Universities/technological educational institutions (TEI)-higher education)	7
6	Bachelor degree (Πτυχίο Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης) (Universities/TEI-higher education)	6
5	Vocational post-secondary school 'degree' (**) for graduates of EPAL apprenticeship class, level 5 (post-secondary level) (Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 5 – ΕΠΑΛ) Vocational training diploma (post-secondary level) (Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 5) (vocational training institute) (Ινστιτούτο Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΙΕΚ) Vocational training diploma (*) (Δίπλωμα Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου Μεταδευτεροβάθμιας Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΙΕΚ) (post-secondary level) Post-secondary non-tertiary education diploma or 'degree' (**) (Δίπλωμα ή Πτυχίο Ανωτέρας Σχολής)	5

HQF level	Qualification types	EQF level
4	<p>General upper secondary school leaving certificate (Απολυτήριο Γενικού Λυκείου)</p> <p>Vocational school (Επαγγελματικές Σχολές) (EPAS, ΕΠΑΣ) certificate (Πτυχίο ΕΠΑΣ)</p> <p>Vocational upper secondary school (Επαγγελματικά Λύκεια) (EPAL, ΕΠΑΛ) 'degree' (**)</p> <p>(Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας, Εκπαίδευσης και Κατάρτισης Επιπέδου 4- ΕΠΑΛ)</p> <p>EPAL certificate (Απολυτήριο Επαγγελματικού Λυκείου – ΕΠΑΛ Επιπέδου 4)</p>	4
3	<p>Vocational training school (Σχολές Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, ΣΕΚ – SEK) certificate (post-lower secondary level)</p> <p>(Πτυχίο Επαγγελματικής Ειδικότητας Επιπέδου 3 – ΣΕΚ) (***)</p> <p>IEK certificate (*)</p> <p>(initial vocational training-post lower secondary level)</p> <p>(Πιστοποιητικό Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης, Επίπεδο 1– ΙΕΚ)</p>	3
2	<p>Lower secondary school certificate (3 years)</p> <p>(Απολυτήριο Γυμνασίου)</p>	2
1	<p>Primary school certificate (6 years)</p> <p>(Απολυτήριο Δημοτικού)</p>	1

(*) This qualification is no longer being awarded since the enactment of Law 4186/2013.

(**) The word 'degree' used with quotation marks is a direct translation from the Greek terminology as it appears in the legislation (*ptychio*). In Greek, the word *ptychio* is used for titles of study from different education levels (higher, secondary, etc.). It is not to be confused with its usage in the English language, where degree refers to a higher education title of study, i.e. bachelor degree.

(***) This programme was abolished by Law 4386/2016. Cohorts already enrolled at that time will be able to complete their studies and can still acquire the qualification; the last cohort was expected to graduate in 2018/19.

Source: EOPPEP, 2020 (e-mail communication).

Acronyms

ADIPPDE	Authority for Quality Assurance in Primary and Secondary Education
CVET	continuous vocational education and training
EOPPEP	National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance
EPAL	Επαγγελματικά Λύκεια [vocational upper secondary school]
EPAS	Επαγγελματικές Σχολές [vocational school]
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESEKAAD	National Council for Education and Human Resources Development
ESOM	National Apprentice Coordination Body
ESCO	European skills, competences, qualifications and occupations portal
ESK	Επαγγελματικές Σχολές Κατάρτισης [vocational training schools]
ESYP	National Council of Education
EU	European Union
HQAAA	Αρχή διασφάλισης και πιστοποίησης της ποιότητας στην ανωτάτη εκπαίδευση [Greek authority responsible for the accreditation of higher education programmes of study]
HQF	Hellenic qualifications framework
IEK	Ινστιτούτο Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης [vocational training institute]
IVET	initial vocational education and training
KDVM	Κέντρα Δια Βίου Μάθησης [lifelong learning centres]
KEE	Κέντρα Επαγγελματικής Εκπαίδευσης [vocational education centres]
KEE	Central Scientific Committee of VET
KEEPEK	Central Examination Board for the Certification of Vocational Training
KSEEK	Central Advisory Committee of VET
NRP	national reference point
OAED	Manpower Employment Organisation
PES	public employment service
SEK	Σχολή Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης [vocational training school]
SSPAE	Regional Committees for the link between VET, production and labour market
TEI	Τεχνολογικά Επαγγελματικά Ινστιτούτα [technological educational institutions]

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