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EUROPEAN
INVENTORY
OF NQFs 2022

HUNGARY

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European Inventory of National Qualifications Frameworks 2022 – Hungary

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is part of the European inventory of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs). Since 2009, Cedefop has been carrying out a systematic mapping and analysis of NQF developments in countries participating in the European qualifications framework (EQF) process. These reviews, done in close cooperation with the EQF Advisory Group, the European Commission and the European Training Foundation, have directly supported the development of operational and sustainable NQFs. The report offers a detailed description of the structure and scope of the Hungarian NQF, and its objectives, functions and institutional arrangements, along with data on the framework's implementation and its impact on broader policy areas.

The Hungarian Qualifications Framework (HuQF) (*Magyar Képesítési Keretrendszer, MKKR*) was adopted in 2012. It encompasses state-recognised qualifications acquired in general and higher education, vocational qualifications included in the national register of vocational qualifications and certain state-recognised adult education and training qualifications. Adult training qualifications can also be awarded outside formal education and training. The HuQF was jointly referenced to the EQF and self-certified to the qualifications framework of the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2015.

2. National context

2.1. Policy context

In 2020, public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (4.7 %) was slightly below the EU average (5 %). The country has an average level of participation in early childhood education (92.8 % in 2021), while its rate of early leaving from education and training is higher than the EU average (respectively 12 % and 9.7 % in 2021). In 2021, tertiary education attainment (age 25–34) (32.9 %) was well below the EU-27 average (41.2 %). Participation in upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) is average (49.7 % in 2020). The participation of adults in lifelong learning is rather low compared to the EU-27 average (respectively 5.9 % and 10.8 % in 2021) (European Commission, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2022).

2.2. NQF legal basis

The HuQF was adopted by Government Decision 1229/2012 on the Hungarian qualifications framework, which regulated the development phase of the HuQF. However, the full legislative integration of the HuQF has not yet been achieved. A

series of acts and government and ministerial decrees, governing the different education sectors, regulate issues such as qualification levels ([1]). For instance, Government Decree No 12/2020 on the implementation of the 2019 act on VET lists all new formal VET qualifications and indicates their HuQF level (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). For it to become fully operational, some important elements relating to the maintenance, operational functioning and further development of the HuQF are still to be established, such as rules on levelling and including qualifications in the HuQF or quality assurance issues (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

3.   NQF objectives and functions

The overall aim of the HuQF is to provide a comprehensive framework that includes all state-recognised qualifications, along with qualifications awarded outside formal education. The HuQF has the following objectives (Education Authority, 2015):
(a) to increase the transparency, comparability and transferability of qualifications among education sectors and between formal and non-formal pathways;
(b) to strengthen the learning-outcomes approach at each education level;
(c) to strengthen quality assurance;
(d) to promote the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning;
(e) to strengthen the coordination of education and training policies and cooperation with stakeholders;
(f) to better orient the design and revision of qualifications and programmes;
(g) to promote career guidance and counselling;
(h) to promote lifelong learning;
(i) to improve the labour market relevance of qualifications and increase the transparency of qualifications among employers at the European level.

The framework is viewed as a 'communication framework'; it has increased the transparency and comparability of qualifications at the national and European levels. The HuQF also supports the use of learning outcomes in VET and in general, higher and adult education (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022; Education Authority, 2020).

([1])   VET Act LXXX of 2019; Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult training and Government Decree No 11/2020 implementation the act; Act CCIV of 2011 on national higher education; Act CXC of 2011 on national public education.

4. Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

4.1. NQF structure and level descriptors

The HuQF has an eight-level structure. The level descriptors are defined in four categories: knowledge, skills, attitudes and autonomy/responsibility (Education Authority, 2015). They are directly comparable to the EQF level descriptors, except for the 'attitudes' category, which is not present as such in the EQF. This category includes emotional, cognitive and behavioural components relating to the object of learning.

4.2. NQF scope and coverage

The HuQF encompasses state-recognised qualifications awarded in general and higher education ([2]) and vocational qualifications included in the national register of vocational qualifications (nationally referred to as the register of vocational occupations – *szakmajegyzék*). Since 2020, basic qualifications (*alapszakmák*) have been included in the register and levelled to the HuQF; they are only offered by the new school-based VET system ([3]). Adult training qualifications can also be awarded outside of formal education and training. Since 2020, qualifications awarded outside the school system by training providers have been regulated by the act on adult education. They are also levelled to the HuQF levels based on their approved programme requirements (*Programkövetelmények*), expressed in learning outcomes ([4]) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). After completing the programme and passing a final vocational examination ([5]), learners can acquire a vocational qualification.

([2]) In accordance with Government Decree No 139/2015 on the register of qualifications acquired in higher education, short-cycle qualifications at level 5 are included in the higher education register.

([3]) Their programme and outcome requirements (*Képzési és Kimeneti Követelmények*) mention their HuQF level.

([4]) Programme requirements (*Programkövetelmények*) indicate HuQF levels.

([5]) In accredited examination centres, which are to be established gradually by 2025. The Innovative Support Centre (IKK) will run such exams in those sectors for which no accredited examination centre is established.

Table 1. **Hungarian qualifications framework (HuQF)**

HuQF level	Type of qualification	EQF level
8	Doctoral degree (PhD/DLA) (*Doktori fokozat*)	8
7	Master's degree (MA/MSc) (*Mesterfokozat*) Postgraduate qualification with a master's degree as a prerequisite (*Szakirányú továbbképzési szakképzettség*)	7
6	Bachelor's degree (BA/BSc) (*Alapfokozat*) Vocational qualification with a higher education degree as a prerequisite (*Felsőfokú végzettséghez kötött szakképesítés*) Postgraduate qualification with a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite (*Szakirányú továbbképzési szakképzettség*)	6
5	Advanced-level vocational qualification (full, add-on, technician) (*Emelt szintű szakképesítés, szakképesítés-ráépülés, technikusi szakképzettség*) Higher education short-cycle qualification (*Felsőoktatási szakképzettség*)	5
4	Upper secondary school leaving examination certificate – *matura* (*érettségi bizonyítvány*) Vocational upper secondary qualification (3-year VET programmes, full, add-on (*), partial (**)) (*középfokú szakmai bizonyítvány, 3 éves szakképzési programok, középfokú szakképesítés, szakma, részszakma, részszakképesítés*)	4
3	Completed 10th grade in upper secondary education (*befejezett 10. osztály*) Vocational qualification (partial (**)) (*Részszakma*)	3
2	Completed eighth grade in lower secondary education (*befejezett 8. osztály*) Lower secondary vocational qualification (partial) (*Részszakma*) Partial qualification (*Alapfokú részszakképesítés, részszakma*)	2
1	Completed sixth grade in lower secondary education (*befejezett 6. osztály*)	1

(*) Add-on qualifications from the national register of vocational qualifications build on one or more full qualifications. These consist of additional modules that extend the scope of the activities for which the holder is qualified.

(**) Partial qualifications cover a subset of the modules included in a full qualification. They prepare the holder for simpler occupations or for a narrower range of tasks.

Source: European Commission and Cedefop (2022).

4.3. Use of learning outcomes

Promoting learning outcomes has been an important part of the HuQF development and implementation process. The introduction of the framework has given a boost to the use of learning outcomes in the design and development of education programmes. In addition to developing learning-outcome-based qualifications, Hungary aims to embed the learning-outcomes approach to education and training by encouraging stakeholders to endorse and apply this approach. In practice, the use of learning outcomes, although widespread in regulatory documents, varies among education sectors, depending on established pedagogical practices and stakeholders' awareness. Guides and handbooks on how to write and use learning outcomes in qualification and curriculum design have been prepared for VET and higher education providers; seminars and conferences, primarily focusing on general education, have also taken place (Education Authority, 2020).

In general education, the national core curriculum, published in 2020, has incorporated the learning-outcome-based approach [6]. National framework curricula [7] define learning outcomes for each subject in terms of content (knowledge), the developmental goals to be achieved by the end of a learning cycle or thematic unit (skills), the attitude to learning and the ability to learn autonomously.

In VET, the use of learning outcomes was introduced by VET Act LXXX of 2019 (Education Authority, 2020). New initial VET curricula were introduced in school-based VET as of 2020–2021 [8]. The development of HuQF level descriptors (particularly skills, responsibility and autonomy) reflects an increased focus on transversal competences and digital skills. In some VET programmes, learners acquire a partial qualification defined in the qualification standards of the full qualification listed in the register.

Learning outcomes have been included in higher education qualification requirements by regulatory measures and acts. The learning requirements and outcomes for qualifications listed in the higher education qualifications register were defined in accordance with the QF-EHEA in 2006, and further modified in line with the HuQF level descriptors in 2016. The shift to a learning-outcome-based approach to designing programmes and learning modules is under way in higher education.

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[6] Government Decree No 110/2012 (IV.4.).
[7] Framework curricula and information on how they should be used.
[8] Programme requirements (*Képzési és Kimeneti Követelmények*) and curricula (*programtantervek*) (80–85 % of the programme) and the local curriculum (15–20 %) replace the previous content standards laid down in the vocational and examination requirements (*szakmai és vizsgakövetelmények*).

The learning-outcomes approach is gradually spreading in adult education and training. Adult training programmes, which are levelled to the HuQF on the basis of new requirements expressed in learning outcomes (^{9}), are approved by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, which is responsible for VET and higher education, and are publicly available online together with initial VET curricula (^{10}).

4.4. Quality assurance arrangements

Quality assurance is regulated separately in each education and training sector. In general education (^{11}), quality assurance is built on the processes of accreditation, authorisation, registration, control and evaluation. The Education Authority and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (*Magyar Akkreditációs Bizottság*) support the Ministry of Culture and Innovation in monitoring and performing external evaluation in higher education. VET accredited examination centres, certified by the National Accreditation Office (*Nemzeti Akkreditációs Hivatal*), run the final vocational examinations for VET qualifications (^{12}). The Innovative Training Support Centre (IKK) organises vocational examinations in those fields of study where no accreditation centre is in place.

5.   Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the HuQF and initiating related legislation is shared by the Ministry of Interior (responsible for primary and secondary education and school-based adult public education), the Ministry of Culture and Innovation (responsible for school-based initial VET and continuing VET, and higher education) and the Ministry of Technology and Industry (responsible for non-school based adult training, including vocational and non-vocational courses). Other ministries are responsible for the standards and regulations of qualifications for the sectors they oversee (^{13}). The HuQF Working Group (consisting of representatives of ministries and all relevant stakeholders) is a forum for discussing and making recommendations concerning the HuQF. The

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(^{9})   Requirements of adult training programmes.
(^{10})   The Innovative Support Centre supports the implementation of VET Act LXXX of 2019.
(^{11})   Act CXC of 2011 on national public education.
(^{12})   These centres were introduced by Government Decree No 12/2020 and are expected to be fully operational by 2025.
(^{13})   For example, the Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of its own qualifications and curricula, such as the agriculture technician's curriculum. In the healthcare and artistic sector, framework curricula are jointly managed by the two ministries; relevant qualifications are levelled to the HUQF.

HuQF Working Group secretariat is part of the international relations unit of the Education Authority (*Oktatási Hivatal*), an agency of the Ministry of Interior ([14]).

The National Office of VET and Adult Learning (NOVETAL) supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, ensures the coordination and implementation of national VET and adult learning policies and the development of qualifications, curricula and teaching material. The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as a public body, has decisive powers in adult education; in some cases, it has exclusive decision-making competences. The sector skills councils) aim to align VET curricula with labour market needs by making proposals to inform decision-making. Skills councils are also responsible for the development of adult training programme requirements.

The stakeholders' role in everyday HuQF implementation has been limited to participation in an HuQF interministerial task force ([15]) and other sector-specific committees (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020). The HuQF provides the opportunity for dialogue between various education and training subsystems and institutions, and between the education sector and the labour market. Involving stakeholders from general education remains a challenge to be addressed.

6.   Recognition and validation of prior learning

6.1.   Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways

The legal frameworks governing VET, higher education and adult education allow for the validation and recognition of prior learning ([16]). National strategies ([17]) have set promoting validation as a clear objective, but without an overall validation policy and procedure. Validation practices are limited and fragmented; in each education sector, validation is developed through one-off projects. The shift to a learning-outcomes approach supports the implementation of validation. In adult training, the assessment of prior learning (competence) is compulsory. In relation to formal school-based VET and adult education, there are legal provisions on validation laid down in the new VET act. The project 'Improving the quality and content of 21st century vocational training and adult education' piloted the introduction of a

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([14])   *Source:* Internal communication with the Education Authority.
([15])   The HuQF task force includes stakeholders such as the ministries and the relevant national institutions involved in HuQF implementation, the national councils for different education sectors, quality assurance bodies, national economic chambers and stakeholder associations (Education Authority, 2015).
([16])   This section draws mainly on input from Tót (2019).
([17])   The 2014–2020 lifelong learning strategy, the midterm strategy against early school leaving and the 2011–2020 social catching-up strategy.

validation system (the pilot programmes were completed in November 2020), while a study on the quality assurance system for validation was finalised in September 2021. In 2022, a methodological guide on expert training was developed (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2023).

Further development and implementation of the HuQF is expected to support validation, because the framework is open to including qualifications obtained through the validation of prior learning achieved in non-formal and informal settings. However, no rules have been set out on the link between validation and the NQF.

7. NQF implementation and impact

7.1. Stage of implementation

The HuQF has reached the activation stage, and end users are being made aware of it (though more action is needed). The framework operates as a reference point for the use of learning outcomes and for the revision and renewal of qualifications, while it is gradually playing a role in improving the transparency and comparability of qualifications at the national and international levels. However, criteria and procedures for the allocation of qualifications to levels need further clarification and HuQF quality assurance arrangements should be strengthened (Education Authority, 2020), while the full legislative integration of the HuQF has not yet been achieved.

7.2. Indicating EQF/NQF levels

In general education, HuQF/EQF levels are only indicated on the upper secondary school leaving examination certificate, the *matura* (HuQF level 4). In VET, HuQF/EQF levels are indicated on new certificates as regulated by law ([18]). In higher education, only postgraduate qualifications with a bachelor's or master's degree as a prerequisite (levels 6 and 7) and doctoral degrees do not indicate HuQF/EQF levels. All qualifications that indicate HuQF/EQF levels on their certificates also indicate EQF levels on the relevant Europass diploma or certificate supplements (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

7.3. NQF dissemination

There is a communication strategy (*Kommunikációs terv*) in place, which is being reviewed. The strategic goals are to promote the HuQF, providing online, offline and interactive tools; introduce the EQF, promoting the international transferability

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([18]) Government Decree No 12/2020 (II. 7.) implementing provisions of the 2019 VET act.

of qualifications; and recognise and draw attention to learning-outcome-based competence development in education and the labour market. The main communication measures and tools that will be used include printed information leaflets, articles, a website, the organisation of professional events and participation in public and professional events (with a stand, presentation, roll-up banner, etc.). Following the referencing of the HuQF, training sessions, seminars and conferences took place, primarily targeting general education, VET and adult education teachers. The main aim was to promote the use of learning outcomes and disseminate information on the HuQF (Educational Authority, 2020). The EQF national coordination point participated actively in these events, while it also runs other activities to raise awareness about the HuQF and the learning-outcomes approach. For instance, in 2022 the Educational Authority published an HuQF brochure to serve as a practical guide to the framework, and an HuQF leaflet targeting end users (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022).

7.4. Qualifications databases and registers

The HuQF database includes 3 438 qualifications, targeting end users (learners and employers), education and training providers, ministries and institutions ([19]). It includes state-regulated qualifications from VET (apart from basic qualifications – *alapszakmák*) and from higher education, and the upper secondary school leaving examination certificate, the *matura* (*érettségi bizonyítvány*) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). Until 2020, the data were retrieved from the national register of vocational qualifications and the higher education qualifications register (Cedefop and ReferNet, 2023). For each qualification, the HuQF database gives information on the HuQF/EQF level, the field of study, the duration, the awarding body, credit points, the entry requirements and relationships with occupations or occupational fields, along with a description of the qualification, a link to relevant supplements and any additional information. The database has been connected to the Europass platform (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). The current databases are available separately in the sectoral registers ([20]).

7.5. Awareness and use of the NQF

HuQF awareness is increasing in the education and training sector, but there is still room for improvement. The awareness and use of the framework among labour market stakeholders is limited (Educational Authority, 2020). The use of the HuQF varies. Although it is used extensively in regulatory and legislative documents, and

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([19]) The HuQF database in Hungarian and English.
([20]) The national register of vocational qualifications and the higher education qualifications register.

HuQF levels are indicated on certificates and diplomas, the framework is not used outside the formal education and training system (Educational Authority, 2020).

7.6. Monitoring and evaluating the NQF

A progress report (*Helyzetfeltáró tanulmány*) on HuQF developments since 2015 was published by the Education Authority at the end of 2020 ([21]). It also discussed the use of learning outcomes in Hungary.

7.7. Impact of the NQF

The HuQF provides systematic information about qualifications, increasing their transparency for learners and for education and labour market stakeholders. It also makes it easier to compare qualifications at the national and European levels (European Commission and Cedefop, 2022). The framework has played a decisive role in promoting the learning-outcomes approach in all education and training sectors (see Section 4.3); for instance, in higher education and VET, designing learning-outcome-based qualifications is a common practice. The framework has not yet significantly helped to improve the quality of programmes or to embed learning-outcome-based teaching and learning processes in practice (Educational Authority, 2020). The impact of the framework outside education is rather low; for example, local chambers are largely unfamiliar with the HuQF (Education Authority, 2020).

8. Referencing to the EQF

The HuQF was jointly referenced to the EQF and self-certified against the QF-EHEA in 2015 (Education Authority, 2015).

9. Reflections and plans

One important achievement of the HuQF is that it has significantly promoted the learning-outcomes approach in all education and training sectors (Education Authority, 2020).

The HuQF implementation in the three education subsystems (VET, higher education, general education) is fragmented, and cooperation across them remains a challenge. HuQF development work in non-formal adult training and related work on the validation of prior learning in non-formal training are at an early stage.

([21])   The progress report in Hungarian and English.

For future stages of development, the framework is open to linking qualifications acquired in non-formal settings, training regulated by the adult training act, international qualifications and other certificates awarded by private providers. Although dissemination actions have raised awareness of the HuQF among teachers and trainers, the main priorities include ensuring that heads of educational institutions, curriculum developers and teachers better understand and endorse the learning-outcomes approach, and enabling them to use it effectively in their daily work (Educational Authority, 2020). Future tasks should also include the wider dissemination of the benefits of the framework among end users (students, parents, employers and employees), including education experts and practitioners, and guidance counsellors.

Acronyms

EQF	European qualifications framework
HuQF	Hungarian qualifications framework
NQF	national qualifications framework
VET	vocational education and training

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