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EUROPEAN
INVENTORY
ON NQF 2020

ITALY

Contents

ITALY
European inventory on NQF 2020

Introduction and context

Italy has the oldest teaching body in the EU and ensuring a supply of qualified teachers has been a challenge. The rate of early school leaving has decreased over the past decade, to 13.5% in 2019 ([1]). According to the 2018 Programme for international student assessment (PISA) ([2]), percentages of underachieving students in reading, maths and science were slightly above EU averages. Large differences, in terms of both school completion and school performance, exist between the north and the south, between native and foreign-born pupils and between pupils from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Institutional arrangements for evaluating the education system are set to change, with the integration of the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education System (Invalsi) and the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems (ANVUR) into the Ministry of Education, University and Research.

The proportion of students in vocational education and training (VET) is relatively high (55.3% in 2017, compared to the EU average of 47.8%), but their employability remains below the EU average (53.9% in 2018, compared to 79.5%) (European Commission, 2019). The reform programme *La buona scuola* introduced in 2015 focuses on alternance learning and made workplace training compulsory for all students in the last three years of upper secondary, in general education schools and technical and vocational schools (Cedefop, 2020). Together with diversification of study pathways and support for the dual system, piloted since 2015/16, this may facilitate transitions from education to work. The rate of attainment in tertiary education has been increasing but remains low, at 27.6% in 2019, compared to the EU average of 40.3% ([3]). The employment rate of recent tertiary graduates is also relatively low, at 64.9% in 2019 ([4]), and increasing numbers of university graduates are seeking employment abroad. Initiatives to open pathways to tertiary education and improve employment prospects for graduates focus on expanding the offer of tertiary vocational institutions (*Istituti Tecnici Superiori*) and the introduction, in a pilot phase as of 2018/19, of

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([1]) Data from European Commission, 2020.

([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/pisa-2018_en

([3]) Data from European Commission, 2020.

([4]) Idem.

professional university degrees (*lauree professionalizzanti*) ([5]). Adult participation in lifelong learning was 8.1% in 2019 ([6]), and only 2% among the low-qualified (European Commission, 2019).

The Italian education and training system is fragmented ([7]); it has been a challenge to integrate different levels of lifelong learning into a coherent national qualification system and to achieve effective inter-regional coordination, recognition of the regional qualification systems, and inter-regional mobility ([8]). The context for designing and awarding qualifications is complex, governed by multiple legislative acts under different regional and national authorities. The country adopted a comprehensive, learning-outcomes-based national qualifications framework (NQF) in 2018, following several other steps.

A qualifications framework for higher education (*Quadro dei titoli Italiani dell'istruzione superiore*, QTI) was published in 2010 by the Ministry of Education, University and Research and self-certified to the qualifications framework for the European higher education area (QF-EHEA) in 2012 ([9]). Between 2009 and 2012, and building on decisions made about higher education qualifications, Italy first referenced its national formal qualifications and those awarded by regions within the framework of the State-Regions agreement directly to the eight European qualifications framework (EQF) levels. The first Italian referencing report was presented to the EQF advisory group in May 2013 (Italian technical working group, 2012). A national strategy on lifelong learning was defined, leading to the adoption of Law No 92/2012 on labour market reform and Legislative Decree No 13/2013; this established a national system for certification of competences and a national repository of education, training and vocational qualifications awarded at national and regional levels and described in terms of learning outcomes. To enable the setting up of the national repository, stakeholder agreement was reached in 2015 on an operational common framework for national recognition of regional

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([5])   Three-year degree courses, consisting of two years of academic studies and one year of work-based learning, for highly specialised professionals in engineering, construction and the environment, and energy and transport, delivered in cooperation with professional associations.

([6])   Data from European Commission, 2020.

([7])   There are 21 regions and two autonomous provinces in Italy. With the modification of the V Title of the Constitution in December 2001, the regions increased their competence in education, maintained their competence in the vocational training field and in the definition of professional profiles and qualifications. As a result, there is a greater need for coordination between regions.

([8])   Cedefop (2014). *The common European tools reaching European citizens - Country studies: Italy* [unpublished].

([9])   http://www.ehea.info/pid34250-cid101267/italy.html

qualifications and related skills – the national framework of regional qualifications – followed by an inter-ministerial decree.

The comprehensive NQF is structured on eight levels described in learning outcomes in the three domains of the EQF (knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy). The framework covers qualifications from school education (general, technical and vocational), higher education and VET qualifications administered at regional level. Professional and international qualifications are to be included in the future. The NQF is at the activation stage of implementation. Work is under way on updating the EQF referencing report (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Policy objectives

In a context increasingly focused on lifelong learning as a strategic lever for economic growth, social cohesion and quality of education, training and employment services, influenced by EU-level developments, the NQF aims to help coordinate and strengthen national lifelong learning systems. It represents a reference tool in implementing the three main pillars of the lifelong learning strategy: the national system for certification of competences; an integrated system of training, education and employment services; and a single system for the interoperability of the different information sources. The NQF has two main functions: description and classification of Italian qualifications that are part of the national repository of education, training and vocational qualifications; and referencing of qualifications to the EQF to enable comparison of Italian qualifications to those of other European countries (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Inspired by the principles of the EQF, the objectives of the Italian NQF include ([10]):

(a) to improve access, transparency and permeability of the qualifications system;

(b) to promote the currency of qualifications at national and European level, including in terms of geographical and professional mobility;

(c) to promote the centrality of the person and the value of individual experiences, including through validation and certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, and those acquired through work-based learning;

([10]) Inter-ministerial decree of 8 January 2018 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and of the Ministry of Education, University and Research on the establishment of the national qualifications framework. *Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale No 20, 25.1.2018.* http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/01/25/18A00411/sg

(d) to contribute to the quality of education and competences acquired by individuals for personal, civic, social and professional growth.

Given its aim to help increase citizens' knowledge, skills and abilities in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, in line with the general rules and minimum standards set out by the Legislative Decree No 13/2013 setting up the national system for certification of competences, the NQF is expected to be used as a 'multitasking tool' in several contexts (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018):

(a) in general education, VET and higher education for strengthening links between subsystems to reduce barriers to progression and to increase permeability of subsystems;

(b) in the validation process for the identification, assessment and certification of skills acquired in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts;

(c) in public employment services and guidance centres for skill profiling and in developing career pathways;

(d) in the labour market for recruitment, workforce development, planning of work-based learning, and for certifying skills and competences acquired in work contexts;

(e) in institutional contexts for developing actions and measures to support vulnerable groups (e.g. NEETs) or to support specific programmes (e.g. upskilling).

A national strategic plan for the development of competences of adults for 2020-22 is being prepared, including provisions for coordinated actions for the development of competences of specific target groups, such as low-skilled and disadvantaged adult populations (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

Levels, learning outcomes and qualifications

The eight EQF levels and level descriptors were used directly in the first Italian referencing process to link all national qualifications from formal education and training to the EQF. The starting point of the referencing process was to analyse both learning processes and learning outcomes in relation to the EQF levels, including a critical analysis of the EQF level descriptors: knowledge, skills and competence. The 'knowledge' and 'skills' descriptors of the EQF were deemed clear enough to allow correlation with Italian qualifications, while the 'competence' descriptor was divided into three dimensions: work/study context; type of tasks, problems and problem-solving approaches; and autonomy and responsibility.

The comprehensive NQF, adopted in January 2018, was developed in close alignment to the structure of the EQF. It consists of eight qualification levels defined by level descriptors covering three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy. To ensure all Italian qualifications are included, sub-descriptors have also been developed, extending the EQF level descriptors. The explicit and implicit dimensions of the EQF descriptors were analysed by a national technical-methodological working group, resulting in the adoption of the explicit dimensions and in making the implicit dimensions more explicit. In some cases, particularly for the 'knowledge' and 'responsibility and autonomy' descriptors, the explicit and implicit dimensions were adjusted to the national context; in other cases, especially for the 'skills' descriptors, additional elements were adopted to make the NQF descriptors more inclusive.

The framework covers qualifications from school education (general, technical and vocational), higher education and VET qualifications administered at regional level; professional and international qualifications are to be included in the future. In the process of allocating qualifications to NQF levels, specific attention will be given to NQF level 5, which marks the transition between secondary and tertiary education, and – from a labour market perspective – between the production and delivery of goods and services (levels 2 to 5) and the managerial levels (levels 6 to 7) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018).

The Italian education and training system has introduced the learning outcomes approach at national and regional levels, with each subsystem having its own characteristics. At upper secondary level, there are three main pathways lasting five years, linked to EQF level 4: general (*licei*), technical and vocational education. Qualifications awarded by upper secondary schools and regional qualifications awarded within the State-Regions agreement are described in learning outcomes according to a 2010 Presidential decree on general education reform ([11]).

In vocational training administered at regional level, there is a focus on competences, defined as the smallest units for certification, collected into codified lists based on the relevant EQF level and on a clear explanation of learning outcomes (Italian technical working group, 2012). There are two different options for vocational training: a three-year or a four-year pathway, linked to EQF levels 3 and 4. The four-year course can open up higher education options, provided the student takes an additional year and sits a State exam. The apprenticeship system

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([11]) Presidential decree of 15 March 2010 on general education reform. *Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale, No 137, 15.6.2010.*
http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/gu/2010/06/15/137/so/128/sg/pdf

has been reformed in recent years to integrate training and employment within a dual system (^{12}).

The higher (non-academic) technical education and training pathway (*istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore* – IFTS) used a national standard system based on competences dating from 2000; since 2008 the standards have been updated to make them more coherent with the learning outcomes approach. Following this 2008 amendment, IFTS was reorganised and a higher technical education pathway (*istruzione tecnica superiore* – ITS) was set up (^{13}). IFTS courses run for one year; ITS courses for two years. Both types of curricula are made up of units consistent with the learning outcomes approach. They are linked to EQF levels 4 and 5.

In the existing framework for higher education (QTI), Dublin descriptors (^{14}) are used nationally for the cycles of higher education agreed within the Bologna process. More specific descriptors are being defined for each programme by universities but clear evidence of applying the learning outcomes approach is still missing (Cedefop, 2016). Higher education is still under reform, aiming to move the system closer to the European standards designed by the Bologna process.

Despite legislative developments that take into consideration the learning outcomes orientation and recognition of its potential to change teaching and learning, a gap still exists between theory and practice. Teachers continue to use a more traditional input-oriented approach. Learning outcomes implementation is mainly part of pilot projects. It is not yet possible to assess the extent to which the approach is applied or its impact on the ground.

Institutional arrangements and stakeholder involvement

The Italian comprehensive NQF was adopted through the inter-ministerial decree of January 2018 (^{15}), which establishes the structure of the framework and

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(^{12}) Legislative Decree No 81/2015 on the reform of employment contracts (*Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale, No 144, 24.6.2015),* set up by the ministerial decree of 12 October 2015 on the definition of vocational standards for apprenticeship and general criteria for the implementation of apprenticeship learning pathways, putting the dual system into effect. http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/gu/2015/06/24/144/so/34/sg/pdf

(^{13}) Higher technical education and training courses organised by higher technical institutes with qualifications awarded by the Ministry of Education.

(^{14}) The Dublin descriptors used are: knowledge and understanding; applying knowledge and understanding; making judgements; communication skills; learning skills.

(^{15}) Inter-ministerial decree of 8 January 2018 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and of the Ministry of Education, University and Research on the establishment of the

regulates the procedures and criteria for allocating qualifications to NQF levels, and the bodies involved. Previous developments towards the creation of a national system for certification of competences were legislated through the National Law No 92/2012 on the reform of the labour market ([16]), the Legislative Decree No 13/2013 on the national certification of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning ([17]), and Decree of 30 June 2015 on an operational common framework for national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills ([18]). These enabled preliminary works on the classification of the diverse range of regional qualifications existing in the country and towards the development of a national repository of education, training and vocational qualifications.

One of the main challenges in establishing and implementing a comprehensive NQF in Italy has been the high number of stakeholders involved and the complexity of the education, training and qualification system; diverse qualification repositories and quality assurance systems at national and regional level are managed autonomously by the awarding bodies. The Ministry of Education, is responsible for qualifications awarded in school (general, technical and vocational) the Ministry of University and Research is responsible for higher education, while the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano are responsible for regional VET qualifications. Economic and social partners at national, regional and local level are also involved in designing and updating qualifications, and in the implementation of the national system for the certification of competences.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in concert with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University and Research, has been leading developments in EQF-related processes, in agreement with the regions, autonomous provinces and social partners, as laid down in several agreements. These authorities are responsible for the NQF at a strategic level. Operational

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national qualifications framework. *Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale No 20, 25.1.2018.* http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/01/25/18A00411/sg

([16]) Law No 92/2012 on labour market reform. *Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale, No 153, 3.7.2012.* http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/gu/2012/07/03/153/so/136/sg/pdf

([17]) Legislative Decree No 13/2013 on the general norms and standards for the definition and validation of non-formal and informal learning and for the definition of a minimum standard framework of services for the certification of competences

http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/02/15/13G00043/sg;jsessionid=QtVQDnVh W+1EjOvvz7l8GA__.ntc-as1-guri2b

([18]) Decree of 30 June 2015 of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education, University and Research on an operational common framework for national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills. *Gazzetta Ufficiale, Serie generale, No 166, 20.7.2015*. http://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/normative/Documents/2015/Decreto-Interministeriale-30-giugno-2015.pdf

functions have been assigned to the EQF NCP, which is currently hosted by the National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL) ([19]). As the main institution implementing active labour market policies, ANPAL's tasks are to coordinate all the actors delivering employment services at local level and to support development of skills and qualifications for entry to the labour market and for further learning. The agency has also been designated national Europass centre and national coordination point for Euroguidance and is responsible for promoting all EU tools for employability and mobility.

The EQF NCP is staffed by 6 ANPAL employees with permanent contracts and receives financial resources from EU funding (EQF NCP grant agreement). It is further supported by collaboration with co-applicants within the EQF grant agreement 2018-20 (Eurodesk, CIMEA, CINECA, Unioncamere) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020). The EQF NCP is responsible for NQF operational implementation and for updating the referencing report.

The National Institute for Public Policies Analysis (INAPP) is currently involved as an independent evaluator to guarantee quality and reliability in referencing qualifications to the NQF/EQF.

The National Technical Committee instituted by the Legislative Decree 13/201 ([20]) and the Technical Competence Group instituted by the inter-ministerial Decree of 30 June 2015 are two inter-institutional structures for advice on technical solutions, partnership, and coordination of the national system for certification of competences and NQF implementation, composed of representatives of public authorities competent for awarding qualifications at national and regional levels (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

The first Italian referencing report, linking qualifications recognised at national level directly to the EQF, was adopted in the State-Regions conference, following public consultation in 2012. A total of 150 stakeholder organisations took part in the consultation, along with universities, regions and enterprises.

([19]) In 2017, the EQF NCP was transferred from the National Institute for the Development of Vocational Training (ISFOL) to the new National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL), as a result of the 2015 Jobs Act.

([20]) Responsibilities of the technical committee include: setting up, implementing and maintaining the national repository of qualifications; the description and monitoring of the minimum standards for validation and certification of competences; the description of technical provisions to develop and implement the information system for the interoperability of authorities responsible for the certification of competences (European Commission and Cedefop, 2018)).

Recognising and validating non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways ([21])

A national legal framework on validation has been progressively developed in Italy since 2012. Law No 92/2012 for labour market reform paved the way for creating a national system of competence certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning as key elements of lifelong learning. The law fixed rules and regulatory requirements concerning the characteristics of validation/certification services and the parties involved, with the aim of ensuring transparency, usability and broad accessibility. Law No 92/2012 led to the adoption of different provisions, including Legislative Decree No 13/2013 on national certification of competences and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Article 3 of the decree defined some important principles and features of the validation system:

(a) the focus is on the competences acquired by an individual in formal, non-formal or informal contexts;
(b) a whole qualification or parts of it can be obtained through validation;
(c) the system is designed to value an individual's study, work and life experiences, assuring simplicity, accessibility, transparency, accuracy, confidentiality and fairness;
(d) documents and certificates issued in the validation process are public;
(e) quality assurance for the reliability of national competence certification is based on a shared and progressive system of indicators, tools and quality standards applied at national level.

The validation system defined by Decree No 13/2013 is national and comprehensive and covers competences related to qualifications included in the national repository of education, training and vocational qualifications, the single framework for the certification of competences. The national repository comprises all existing national, regional and sectoral repertories of qualifications referenced to the EQF from school (general, technical and vocational) and higher education (under the authority of the Ministry of Education, University and Research), the regional VET system (under the authority of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano), and qualifications for regulated and non-regulated professions. It is expected that work on descriptive standardisation over time will allow greater permeability between subsystems and recognition of credits. The decree defines three types of standards for validation and certification services: process standards (outlining the main steps of identification, assessment and certification); certification standards (outlining what kind of information must

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([21]) This section draws mainly on input from the 2018 update of the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning (Perulli, 2019).

be registered); and system standards (outlining the roles and responsibilities of actors involved). The standards used for VNFIL are the same as in the formal education and training system and collected in the National Repository of Qualifications. The institutional authority in charge of setting up the validation system is the national technical committee led by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education and comprising all qualification authorities ('entitling bodies'). The committee is responsible for defining the *National guidelines for the interoperability of public entitled bodies of the national system for certification of competences;* officially adopted on 5 January 2021 by inter-ministerial decree ([22]) (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Agreement on an operational common framework for national recognition of regional qualifications and related skills was reached in 2015, followed by an inter-ministerial decree. This operational framework establishes a mechanism of mutual recognition for regional qualifications, and standard procedures for the process, attestation and system for validation services. Regional differences in validation policies and practices still exist.

Further development and implementation of the validation system nationally is expected once the national guidelines on VNFIL and certification of competences are adopted.

NQF implementation and impact

NQF development and implementation in Italy is part of wider education and labour market reform. A major milestone was reached in January 2018, when the comprehensive Italian NQF was adopted by inter-ministerial decree, as a component of the technical infrastructure of the national repository of education, training and vocational qualifications established in 2013 as the single framework for certifying competences. The comprehensive NQF is seen as supporting the link between the national repository and the EQF. Current efforts are focused on implementing both the national repository and the NQF.

The national repository is a comprehensive collection of all existing national, regional and sectoral repertories, under the responsibility of the competent authorities ('entitling bodies'). It covers qualifications from higher education; secondary general education; vocational education and training; national framework of regional qualifications; apprenticeships; and qualifications related to the regulated and non-regulated professions. To be included in the

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([22]) http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2021/01/18/21A00166/sg

national repository, qualifications must be referenced to the EQF ([23]). One significant area of work in recent years has been on regional qualifications to enable their referencing to the EQF and inclusion in the national repository. This has been carried out through the *Atlas of work and qualifications*, developed as a methodological tool for the rationalisation of the high number and diversity of qualifications with different content and awarding criteria. The *Atlas* also represents the technical infrastructure of the national repository ([24]). Over 4 000 VET regional qualifications have been classified and included so far, and the *Atlas* will be extended to all national qualifications.

While Italy does not yet have an NQF register, the EQF NCP has been designing an IT platform for referencing qualifications to the EQF/NQF. It could be linked to the *Atlas of work and qualifications* to facilitate retrieval of information on qualifications (e.g. descriptions of learning outcomes) during the referencing process. It will include all the fields mentioned in Annex VI of the EQF recommendation. The register will be linked to the Europass portal through the EU Qualifications Data Register (QDR). The IT platform and NQF register are expected to be completed by the end of 2021 (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

The Italian NQF is at the activation stage. Implementation structures are in place and the roles of different stakeholders have been formally defined. The framework is gradually supporting reform and renewal of education and training and the qualifications system and playing a role in improving transparency and comparability of qualifications. Communication strategies are being put in place. The main challenges that need to be addressed for the NQF to become operational include: finalising the operational guidelines for describing qualifications in learning outcomes and for levelling them to the NQF; updating the referencing report to the EQF; and developing the NQF register.

EQF levels are currently included on new qualification documents from general education, initial VET and higher education. Starting with the school year 2015/16, it has been compulsory to indicate the EQF level on Europass certificate

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([23]) The minimum criteria for including qualifications in the national repository are: identification of the qualification owner (awarding body); identification of the qualification and related skills; referencing, where applicable, to the classification codes of the Italian National Institute of Statistics concerning economic activities (ATECO 2007: https://www.istat.it/en/archive/17959) and professions (CP 2011: https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/18132); and referencing to the EQF.

([24]) The *Atlas of work and qualifications* based on the decree of 30 June 2015 is available at: http://atlantelavoro.inapp.org

supplements for qualifications from upper secondary education (general, technical and vocational) ([25]).

Referencing to the EQF

Italy initially referenced all its formal qualifications (general education, VET and higher education qualifications), awarded by the Ministry of Education, University and Research, and those awarded by regions in the framework of State-Regions Agreement) directly to the eight levels of the EQF. The first Italian referencing report was adopted in 2012 and presented to the EQF advisory group in May 2013. National qualification descriptors were analysed in terms of learning outcomes and mapped directly to EQF level descriptors. Qualifications described in the first referencing report are used by almost 85% of people involved in education and training.

Following the adoption of the comprehensive NQF in 2018, the EQF NCP aims to present an updated referencing report. Its adoption may be possible by the end of 2021, following a national and international consultation conducted in 2020-21.

Important lessons and future plans

Several legislative initiatives over recent years as part of the reform of the labour market have led to setting important priorities: defining national qualifications standards based on learning outcomes; developing a national public certification system; and setting out principles for developing a system of validation of non-formal and informal learning. The main challenge has been the complexity of the education and training system, the high degree of fragmentation of the qualification system, with different repositories managed by different awarding bodies, and the difficulty of harmonising qualifications issued at regional level. The establishment of the national repository of education, training and professional qualifications, and the creation of the *Atlas of work and qualifications* have been important steps. The latter serves as a tool for rationalising existing qualifications and as the technical infrastructure of the national repository, with over 4 000 regional VET qualifications classified so far.

A major milestone was reached in 2018 with the adoption of the comprehensive NQF, including all qualifications awarded nationally and in the regions. The inclusive nature of the framework is considered a success factor in

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([25]) The Certificate supplements repository for general education can be accessed at: https://www.istruzione.it/esame_di_stato/europass/SupplementoEuropass.htm

increasing transparency and comparability of qualifications, and learning and professional mobility both within the country and at European level. Once the NQF becomes operational, it is expected to contribute to the quality of education and training; promote upskilling, updating, and valuing of competences; facilitate competence-based shared design of qualifications involving education and training and labour market actors, and promote work-based learning pathways; support skills needs analysis and the development of self-assessment tools and matching devices of learning and job opportunities; increase coordination among the education, training and employment services; reduce complexity in the qualifications system; support the recognition of foreign qualifications; and facilitate interoperability among the various databases and registers available at national, local and European level supporting operators and end users (European Commission and Cedefop, 2020).

Work on the NQF so far has fostered dialogue and cooperation among different institutional stakeholders, primarily through the national technical committee and through efforts of the EQF NCP. This work has also resulted in the adoption of a learning outcomes orientation in a number of legislative acts ([26]); further implementation of the learning outcomes approach is expected to have an impact on teaching and learning. However, there is still a gap between formal regulations and practical implementation of learning outcomes.

The main challenge in the near future remains updating the EQF referencing report. NQF evaluation will be carried out as part of the monitoring activities foreseen by Decree 13/2013 for the identification, validation and certification services.

([26]) For example: the 2010 decree of the Ministry of Education on the reform of general education; Legislative Decree No 13/2013 on the setting up of the National repository of qualifications; Law No 107/2015 on school-work alternation in upper secondary schools; the State-Regions agreement of 24 September 2015 on the dual system in VET; Legislative Decree No 81/2015 on the reform of employment contracts; and the 2017 guidelines on internships.

Main sources of information

- The National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL) hosts the EQF NCP: https://www.anpal.gov.it/eqf
- The *Atlas of work and qualifications* is available at: http://atlantelavoro.inapp.org
- Portal of the Ministry of Education, University and Research with information on higher education programmes: www.universitaly.it
- Information on the Italian qualifications framework for higher education: http://www.quadrodeititoli.it/index.aspx?IDL=2
- Italian Ministry of Labour; ISFOL (2012). First Italian referencing report to the European qualifications framework. https://europa.eu/europass/en/reports-referencing-national-qualifications-frameworks-eqf

Italian qualifications referenced to the EQF

Italian formal qualifications	EQF levels
Research doctorate – *Dottorato di ricerca* Academic diploma for research training – *Diploma accademico di formazione alla ricerca* Specialisation diploma – *Diploma di specializzazione* Second level university master – *Master universitario di secondo livello)* Academic specialisation diploma (II) – *Diploma accademico di specializzazione (II)* Higher specialisation diploma or master (II) – *Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (II)*	8
Master degree – *Laurea magistrale* Second level academic diploma – *Diploma accademico di secondo livello* First level university master – *Master universitario di primo livello* Academic specialisation diploma (I) – *Diploma accademico di specializzazione* Higher specialisation diploma or master (I) – *Diploma di perfezionamento o Master (I)*	7

Italian formal qualifications	EQF levels
Bachelor degree – *Laurea* First level academic diploma – *Diploma accademico di primo livello*	6
Higher technical education diploma – *Diploma di tecnico superiore*	5
Upper secondary education diploma – *Licei diploma liceale* Upper secondary education diploma – technical schools – *Diploma di istruzione tecnica* Upper secondary education diploma – vocational schools – *Diploma di istruzione professionale* Professional technician diploma – Diploma professionale di tecnico (*) Higher technical specialisation certificate – *Certificato di specializzazione tecnica superiore*	4
Professional operator certificate *Attestato di qualifica di operatore professionale* (*)	3
Compulsory education certificate *Certificato delle competenze di base acquisite in esito all'assolvimento dell'obbligo di istruzione* (**)	2
Lower secondary school-leaving diploma *Diploma di licenza conclusiva del primo ciclo di istruzione*	1

(*)   Competent authority: regions.
(**)   Competent authority: Ministry of Education, University and Research or regions, according to type of education pathway.
Source: Adapted from Italian Ministry of Labour; ISFOL (2012).

Acronyms

ANPAL	National Agency for Active Labour Policies
EQF	European qualifications framework
EQF NCP	national coordination point for EQF
IFTS	higher (non-academic) technical education and training pathway [*Istruzione e formazione tecnica superiore*]
INAPP	National Institute for Public Policies Analysis
ISFOL	National Institute for the Development of Vocational Training
ITS	higher technical education [*istruzione tecnica superiore*]
NEETs	people not in employment, education or training
NCP	national coordination point
NQF	national qualifications framework
PES	public employment service
PISA	Programme for international student assessment
QF-EHEA	qualifications framework for the European higher education area
QTI	Italian qualifications framework for higher education [q*uadro dei titoli italiani dell'istruzione superiore*]
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning

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Cedefop (2016). *Application of learning outcomes approaches across Europe: a comparative study*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 105. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3074

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: Italy*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/developments-vocational-education-and-training-policy-2015-19-italy

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