

# LIECHTENSTEIN

## European inventory on NQF 2014

### Introduction

In February 2011, the government decided to develop a national qualifications framework (NQF) for lifelong learning for Liechtenstein. This decision was part of a process under way since Liechtenstein committed to the European qualifications framework (EQF) in 2008. In 2013, a qualifications framework for higher education defined in terms of learning outcomes, in line with the qualifications framework in the European higher education area, was adopted and included in higher education law (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2013). It will constitute an integral part of the NQF for lifelong learning. It is expected that the NQF will be established by end of 2015. Recently, the education strategy 2020 was adopted, which refers to competences as outcomes of learning becoming the most important resource in a globalised world (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2011).

Since May 2011, the coordination and planning process has been under the National Agency of International Education Affairs (AIBA) in Liechtenstein. NQF developments are coordinated with NQF development in Switzerland and Austria due to close connections with education and training systems of these neighbouring countries. Most Liechtenstein students (in vocational education and training (VET) or higher education) study in Switzerland, but some also continue in Austria. An alignment of Liechtenstein NQF developments with framework developments in these countries, and particularly Switzerland, is crucial.

### Policy objectives

One first objective is to map and describe national qualifications in the NQF and reference them to the EQF. It is planned that all new certificates will be referenced to NQF and EQF levels.

In the longer term, NQF is seen as a tool which will support lifelong learning through better understanding of qualifications and learning opportunities, improved access to and participation in education and training, and participation, valuing all learning outcomes, in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

## Stakeholder involvement and framework implementation

Work on the NQF was initiated by the government. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, an expert from AIBA was appointed to provide technical and administrative support.

A steering group was set up with representatives from the Office for Vocational Training and Career Counselling, Ministry of Education (section higher education), University of Liechtenstein, Chamber of Industry and Trade and Chamber of Commerce, who are all informed of progress and have authority for final decisions.

For public involvement and information there was a national qualification framework Liechtenstein (*Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen Fürstentum Liechtenstein*) (NQFL) homepage established in spring 2013 <sup>(1)</sup> where all relevant information and updates can be seen and followed.

Liechtenstein started the Bologna process several years ago and this is now an integral part of the University of Liechtenstein. NQF developments will build on experience with development of the qualifications framework for higher education.

## Level descriptors and learning outcomes

Liechtenstein will have an eight-level framework though descriptors have not yet been formulated.

All subsystems have made important steps in implementing a learning outcomes approach, but to varying degrees. Learning outcomes already play an important role in accreditation processes in higher education. A qualifications framework for higher education was implemented in 2013. In general education, educational standards were introduced in 2010 and tested for grades 3, 4, and 8 since. A competence-based approach is being strengthened in teaching, and evaluation of general education. In line with the amended VET law in 2008 (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2008, Article 6), qualifications and curricula have been revised with stronger focus on competences and equipping students with the competence to act (*Handlungskompetenz*) (Cedefop, forthcoming).

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<sup>(1)</sup> See [www.nqfl.li](http://www.nqfl.li) [accessed 16.10.2014].

## Validating non-formal and informal learning and links to the NQF <sup>(2)</sup>

The 2014 inventory on non-formal and informal learning maintains that the validation process in Liechtenstein can be characterised as quite pragmatic due to the country's size and that fostering validation is not a political priority. Nevertheless, there are validation arrangements in place. Validation of non-formal and informal learning follows a similar approach to that developed in Switzerland. The Vocational Training Act determines that admission to any examination or qualification does not depend on attending certain educational programmes. Admission is also granted if applicants have at least five years' work experience.

In higher education most development has occurred in the past four years. Liechtenstein only has a framework for higher education. The Education Authority (*Schulamt*) regards development of the national qualifications framework for higher education (*Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen Fürstentum Liechtenstein für den Hochschulbereich*) (NQFL-HS) as an opportunity for anchoring lifelong learning more within higher education, and for improving validation and recognition of prior learning achieved outside the higher education system. The legal bases for admission to higher education have been formalised. The Law on Higher Education regulates conditions and process of admission without a *matura* certificate (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2005, Article 24) and limitation of crediting learning acquired outside the higher educational system. It is possible to recognise non-formal and informal learning for achievement of a qualification up to a maximum of one sixth of the necessary work load (European credit transfer and accumulation system credit points) for the whole qualification.

Standards used in VET and higher education for validation, are those of existing programmes. The validation process in VET is based on a similar process to the one developed by Switzerland, following a similar series of steps. The process, however, requires a great deal of effort from individual applicants. Interested persons with work experience often decide to take part in regular educational programmes at vocational schools, because this route can be faster and less cost-intensive than a validation process.

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<sup>(2)</sup> This section draws mainly on input from European Commission et al., 2014.

## Referencing to the EQF

A referencing report will be adopted by the government in spring 2015.

### **Main sources of information**

[URLs accessed 16.10.2014]

Ministry of Education: <http://www.4icu.org/institutions/177.htm>

AIBA in Liechtenstein: <http://www.eeagrants-li.com/>

## List of abbreviations

AIBA	National Agency of International Education Affairs
EQF	European qualifications framework
NQF	national qualifications framework
NQFL	Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen Fürstentum Liechtenstein [national qualifications framework Liechtenstein]
NQFL-HS	Nationaler Qualifikationsrahmen Fürstentum Liechtenstein für den Hochschulbereich [national qualifications framework for higher education]
VET	vocational education and training

## References

[Urls accessed 15.10.2014]

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- European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (2014). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Liechtenstein*. [http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2014/87065\\_LIE.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2014/87065_LIE.pdf)
- Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein (2005). Gesetz über das Hochschulwesen (Hochschulgesetz; HSG) [Law on Higher Education (Higher Education Act; HSG)]. *Liechtensteinisches Landesgesetzblatt [Liechtenstein law gazette]*, 414.0, No 2.  
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- Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein (2013). *Qualifikationsrahmen für den Hochschulbereich im Fürstentum Liechtenstein (NQFL-HS) [Qualifications framework for higher education in the Principality of Liechtenstein]*. [http://www.llv.li/files/sa/pdf-llv-sa-qualifikationsrahmen\\_fuer\\_den\\_hochschulbereich\\_im\\_fl\\_nqfl\\_hs\\_2013.pdf](http://www.llv.li/files/sa/pdf-llv-sa-qualifikationsrahmen_fuer_den_hochschulbereich_im_fl_nqfl_hs_2013.pdf)