

# **The N.Q.F. in Italy and the referencing procedure to the E.Q.F.:**

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**EU Twinning Project**  
**“Establishment of the Israeli National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**  
**as a mechanism to fostering the development of Israeli Human Capital”**


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# National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL)

ANPAL represents the national main key actor for ALMPs, aiming at reducing unemployment rates and at improving skills and employability. In particular, the ANPAL's main task are:

- ✓ to coordinate all the actors delivering employment services at local level (public employment centers (PECs) and private providers);
- ✓ to support the development of skills and qualifications for job searching and/or for continuation in further learning path-ways.
- **ANPAL is the designated authority, at the national level, as National Contact Point respectively for European tools such as: Europass, Euroguidance.... and the European Qualification Framework**
- ANPAL is responsible for the realization of **PIAAC** (on behalf of the Italian Ministry fo Labour, and together with the National Institute for Public Policy Analysis - INAPP).

# NQF and L.L.L. in Italy - main institutional steps

- 1) **Law 92/2012 Reform of the Labour Market**  
Lifelong learning for a new economic growth, social inclusion and for supporting employability/mobility
  - 2) **The First Referencing Report to EQF, 2012**
  - 3) **Legislative Decree 13/2013, *National Repository of Qualifications*** awarded at the national/regional level based on Learning Outcomes and EQF levels
  - 4) **Inter-ministerial Decree establishing the NQF, 8 January 2018**
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# NQF Objectives

1

Tool for the  
**description** and  
**classification** of  
national  
qualifications

3

....**thus**

**Completing** the  
referencing of  
qualifications to EQF

2

**Regulatory tool** for  
qualifications to  
**access** the National  
Repository of  
qualifications

# What are the main objectives of the NQF?

The Italian NQF is strongly inspired by the EQF Recommendation principles and indications and aims at:

- making qualifications easier to understand at national and international level by using the learning outcomes approach;
- promoting transparency and comparability of qualifications among countries;
- making the referencing process to the EQF easier;
- including all the qualifications in the updating EQF Referencing Report by representing both the qualifications and study systems and the world of the labour market.

*In addition, the NQF aims at coordinating and strengthening the national lifelong learning systems and the services for the validation and certification of competences.*



# NQF characteristics

Structured on 8 levels

Based on Learning Outcomes (LOs)  
approach

EQF descriptors

Holistic/all-inclusive approach



# Sub-descriptors and criteria. The methodological framework

| Knowledge   | Skills  | Responsibility / Autonomy  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Theoretical and/or factual dimension of knowledge</b> - The EQF explicit dimensions are fully adopted (Criteria 1) | <b>Procedural and practical skills</b> -The EQF explicit dimensions are fully adopted (Criteria 1)<br><br><b>Technical, professional and context specific skills</b> - Further descriptive elements to make NQF descriptors more inclusive (Criteria 4) | <b>Context</b> - The EQF implicit dimensions are made explicit (Criteria 2 )                                     |
| <b>Extent and depth of knowledge</b> - The EQF implicit dimensions are made explicit (Criteria 2)                     | <b>Cognitive skills</b> - The EQF explicit dimensions are fully adopted (Criteria 1)<br><br><b>Social-interaction and activation skills</b> - Further descriptive elements to make NQF descriptors more inclusive (Criteria 4)                          | <b>Responsibility</b> - The EQF explicit dimensions adjusted to the national qualifications systems (Criteria 3) |
| <b>Understanding and awareness of knowledge</b> - The EQF implicit dimensions are made explicit (Criteria 2)          |   | <b>Autonomy</b> - The EQF explicit dimensions adjusted to the national qualifications systems (Criteria 3)       |

## Main NQF level descriptor elements in Italy

Decree of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies in accordance with the Ministry of Education, University and Research establishing the NQF in Italy, 8 January 2018 - <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/01/25/18A00411/sg>

Translation by Michela Bastianelli and Gabriella Falzacappa (ANPAL)

| Descriptor | KNOWLEDGE   | SKILLS   | RESPONSIBILITY and AUTONOMY  |
|------------|---|--|--|
| Level 1    | General and basic knowledge, with a limited extent, aimed at performing simple tasks in well-known and structured contexts.                       | Using know-how, materials and tools to perform simple tasks by involving basic cognitive, interpersonal and social skills.<br>Typically: FOCUS and INTERACTION   | Performing given task in accordance with required parameters, under direct supervision of the activities, in a structured context.   |
| Level 2    | General and basic knowledge, with a moderate extent, aimed at performing simple tasks in different sequences.                                     | Using know-how, materials and tools to perform simple tasks in different sequences, by involving cognitive, interpersonal and social skills, in a detailed range of context variables.<br>Typically: MEMORY and PARTICIPATION  | Performing assigned tasks in compliance with established criteria, under supervision for the achievement of results, in a structured context characterized by a limited range of diversified circumstances.                |
| Level 3    | A range of mainly general knowledge with conceptual elements, aimed at producing logical connections.<br>Capability of understanding.             | Applying a range of know-how, methods, materials and tools to achieve expected results by involving a set of cognitive, interpersonal, social and activation skills which facilitate the adaptability in changeable contexts.<br>Typically: UNDERSTANDING, CO-OPERATION and GOAL ORIENTATION | Achieving expected results by ensuring their compliance and by identifying the most appropriate implementation methods, in a structured context characterized by mutable circumstances requiring own activity change.      |
| Level 4    | A wide range of specialized knowledge in different fields, integrated by the factual and/or conceptual dimension.<br>Capability of understanding. | Applying a range of know-how, methods, routines, procedures, materials and tools to solve problems, by involving a set of cognitive, interpersonal, social and activation skills needed to overcome increasing difficulties.<br>Typically: PROBLEM SOLVING, CO-OPERATION and MULTITASKING    | Achieving goals by coordinating and integrating own and others results and activities, and by participating in both decision-making and implementation process, in a foreseeable context subject to unpredictable changes. |



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| Descriptor | KNOWLEDGE  | SKILLS  | RESPONSIBILITY and AUTONOMY   |
|------------|--|---|---|
| Level 5    | General and basic knowledge, with a limited extent, aimed at performing simple tasks in well-known and structured contexts.  | Using know-how, materials and tools to perform simple tasks by involving basic cognitive, interpersonal and social skills.<br><br>Typically: FOCUS and INTERACTION  | Performing given task in accordance with required parameters, under direct supervision of the activities, in a structured context.  |
| Level 6    | Integrated, comprehensive, in-depth and specialized knowledge.<br><br>Awareness of fields of knowledge.  | Applying a wide range of methods, routines, procedures and tools, in a conscious and selective manner also to modify them, by involving an extensive set of cognitive, interpersonal, social and activation skills needed to find unconventional technical solutions.<br><br>Typically: ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION, SPECIALIZED AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A TECHNICAL FIELD and MANAGEMENT OF CRITICAL PROBLEMS | Ensuring compliance of goals, achieved autonomously and by others, by identifying and planning corrective and development measures, and by taking part in the implementation process, in a specific and complex context subject to frequent and unpredictable changes.              |
| Level 7    | Integrated and advanced knowledge in a specific field, transferable from one context to another.<br><br>Critical awareness of theories and principles in a specific field. | Transferring, in different contexts, methods, routines and procedures needed to solve complex and unexpected problems, by involving advanced cognitive, interpersonal, social and activation skills needed to synthesize review and address demands through innovative and creative solutions.<br><br>Typically: SYNTHESIS VISION, NEGOTIATION AND MOTIVATION and PLANNING  | Overseeing objectives and processes of individuals and teams, by facilitating the day-to-day management and conditions stability, by autonomously making decisions and negotiating both goals and implementation methods, in an undefined context subject to unpredictable changes. |

# Can the learning outcomes approach make a difference?

## *Impact of the Learning Outcomes approach prior NQF*

General Education Reform  
(Ministry of Education  
Decree, n. 211, 2010)

The First National  
Referencing Report to the  
EQF (2012): General  
Education, Higher  
Education and regional  
qualifications awarded  
within State-Regions  
Agreement

- **Contributed to re-design Regional Repositories (regional qualifications aligned to those referenced in 2012)**

- Networking among different institutional stakeholders at national and regional level

- School-work alternation, apprenticeship....

Nevertheless in some cases the input oriented approach has not been completely overcome

# Completion of the referencing process to the EQF

**Milestone:** Completion of referencing of the National Lifelong Learning System aimed at giving the Italian qualifications system fully representativeness and updating of the First national Referencing Report to EQF.

The new phase of Italian referencing process to NQF/EQF started in order to include in the future updated Report the regional qualifications. (about 4,000).

According to the Inter-Ministerial Decree for the establishment of the NQF, the referencing process to the NQF includes 4 steps:

- 1. start-up:** the awarding body, or any other competent subject, applies to the EQF NCP for referencing by providing all descriptive elements of the qualification, including a referencing proposal to the NQF;
- 2. preliminary phase:** the EQF NCP elaborates a referencing schema to the NQF;
- 3. independent evaluation:** INAPP expresses and independent evaluation of the referencing proposed and draws up a mandatory non-binding opinion;
- 4. approval and publication:** EQF NCP, at the end of the previous steps, approves the referencing to the NQF for inclusion in the National Repository of the education and training qualifications.

# Developing the National Framework

Updating the First Referencing Report to the EQF (end of 2019?)

Guidelines for referencing the qualifications to the NQF/EQF

Implementation of Validation of Non-formal Informal Learning procedures

# Procedures for allocation process of the relevant NQF/EQF levels to all qualifications awarded at the national level

Stakeholders involved in the process in Italy:

1. Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
2. Ministry of Education, University and Research
3. Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzan
4. Presidency of the Council of Ministers - EU Policies Department
5. All the stakeholders of the economic and social

## Target Audiences

- **Institutional stakeholders**
- **Awarding Bodies**
- **Education and VET providers**
- **Employers**
- **All the stakeholders of the economic and social partnership**

# Implementing the NQF

- **When implementing the NQF, has priority been given to particular sectors of the national education and training system (qualifications from general, vocational, higher education and training, qualifications from non-formal and international education)?**

In implementing the NQF no specific priority has been given to particular sector/sub-sector on education and training system. Nevertheless, the first Referencing Report, in the absence of a National Qualifications Framework, referenced primarily formal education: General Education, Higher Education, Regional VET qualifications under State-Regions Agreement.

By introducing an all-inclusive NQF, Italy intended to overcome this initial limit so as to include in the framework all qualifications awarded at the national level, i.e. all those qualifications not referenced during the first phase: regional qualifications.

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# Implementing the NQF

## ➤ **Are there types of qualifications which raise specific challenges in terms of levelling?**

Due to the recent adoption of the NQF, the specific challenges in terms of levelling of qualifications will be gathered and analyzed as the referencing process will progress on. As already mentioned, the Italian NQF focused on the definition of a set of descriptors valid for referencing both learning (education) paths and working paths. In this framework, at the moment, the main attention is given to level 5 as, on learning's side, it marks the transition between Secondary and Tertiary level of education, while, on labour market's side, level 5 identifies the border between the production of goods and services area (level 2 to 5) and the management area (level 6 to 7).

# Implementing the NQF

## ➤ Which have been the key challenges so far in implementing the NQF?

1) One of the main challenge in implementing the NQF was to develop a framework inclusive of all the qualifications awarded at the national level. An ***all-inclusive approach***, thus, guided the entire NQF implementation process and on the basis of the EQF descriptors, sub-descriptors have been developed.

2) Another main challenge in implementing the NQF refers to the **high number of stakeholders involved in the process**. This is due to the complexity of the Italian national learning and training system, i.e. to the diverse qualifications repositories (national and regional) which are autonomously managed by the awarding bodies (the Ministry of the Education, University and Research responsible for the General Education and the Higher Education; the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, responsible for regional VET qualifications).



# Implementing the NQF

## ➤ Which key challenges do you see for the future?

- 1) The launch of a dissemination campaign aimed at raising the knowledge of the framework by all the stakeholders responsible for the management of qualifications repositories and for referencing the qualifications to the NQF levels. The communication activities mainly aims at stimulating the debate on the application of the EQF/NQF strategy and its related issues (referencing, levelling, learning outcomes, competences validation, etc.). The dissemination activity yet started during 2018.
- 2) The update of the First National Referencing Report to EQF: during the first referencing phase to EQF the Italian qualifications system was directly referenced to the EQF levels; the qualifications involved in the process were: qualifications of the General Education, qualifications of the Higher Education (academic and nonacademic), and VET qualifications in the framework of State-Regions agreements. **VET qualification awarded by Regions, instead, were not part of the first referencing phase.**

# Implementing the NQF

## ➤ Which key challenges do you see for the future?

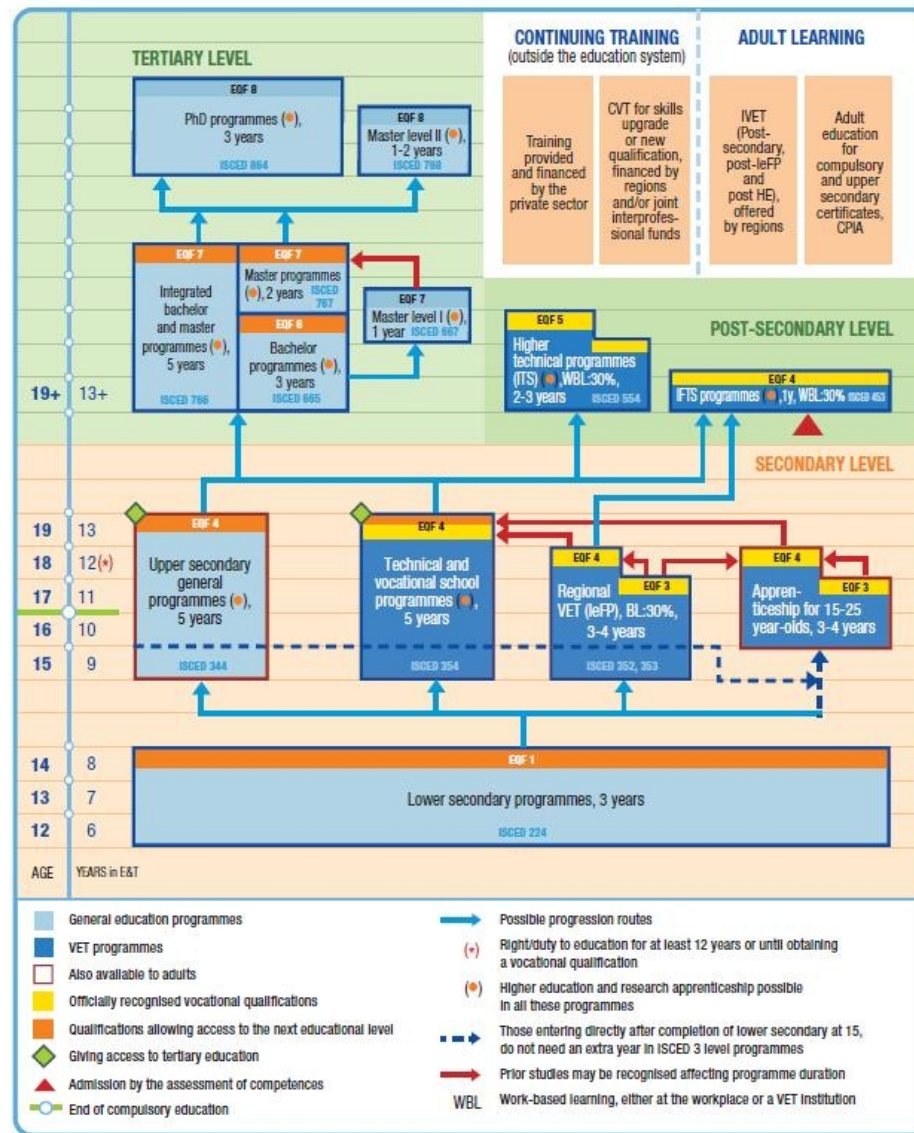
3) The implementation of operational guidelines to be used for describing and referencing new qualifications. The guidelines aim at providing all interested parties with supporting elements for levelling qualifications to the EQF/NQF.

4) The development of procedures for the inclusion of private, sectorial and international qualifications in the NQF;

5) The governance of the implementation, maintenance and updating of the NQF and its impact evaluation at the national level.



# VET in the education and training system in Italy



Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Italy

# VET in a lifelong learning perspective

**When Young people complete lower secondary education at age 14.**

**At this stage, learners sit a state exam to acquire a certificate (EQF level 1) which grants admission to the upper secondary level where young people have the opportunity to choose between general education and VET.**

At upper secondary level, young people may opt for:

1) five-year programmes which include the two last years of compulsory education and three years (under the right/duty of education and training) in:

- a) high schools (*licei*). These provide general education programmes at upper secondary level (general education):
- b) technical schools;
- c) vocational schools.

The qualifications awarded after successful completion of high school, technical and vocational school are at EQF level 4 and a state leaving exam at the end of them gives access to higher education.

Source: CEDEFOP and ReferNET, 2016)

# VET in a lifelong learning perspective

At upper secondary level, young people may opt also for:

2) Regional Education and Vocational training courses (leFP) (3 or 4 years - EQF 3 or 4 respectively);

3) an apprenticeship-type scheme (EQF 3 or 4).

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At post-secondary level, the Italian system features higher technical training (ISTRUZIONE E FORMAZIONE TECNICA SUPERIORE-**IFTS** e ISTRUZIONE TECNICA SUPERIORE-**ITS**) and short programmes or courses (post-leFP and others).

# VET Governance in Italy

Responsibilities are shared among the different actors involved in planning and organising VET as follows:

- the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) sets the framework for VET in national school programmes (technical and vocational schools) for higher technical training;
- the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MLPS) sets the framework for Regional Education and Vocational training courses (IeFP), while the regions and autonomous provinces are in charge of planning, organisation and provision;
- regions and autonomous provinces are also in charge of planning, organisation and provision of ITS, IFTS, post IeFP, post-higher education, and most of the apprenticeship-type schemes;
- social partners play an important role in promoting company-level training plans to be financed by the regions or by the joint interprofessional funds and have a general advisory role in VET policy.

# VET in Italy at upper secondary level

## *(Technical and vocational school programmes)*

In **technical school programmes** (*istituti tecnici*) learners can acquire knowledge, skills and competences to carry out technical and administrative tasks. These programmes start at the age of 14 and finish at 19. They offer an upper secondary education diploma – Technical schools EQF 4 (such as: tourism, graphics and communication, administration, finance and marketing).

In **vocational school programmes** (*istituti professionali*) learners acquire specific theoretical and practical preparation enabling them to carry out qualified tasks in production fields of national interest. These programmes start at the age of 14 and finish at 19. They offer an upper secondary education diploma – Vocational schools EQF 4 (such as: services for agriculture and rural development, social and health services, etc.)

The certificate awarded mentions the branch and length of the studies, the final marks, the points assigned through 'school credit', the points assigned through training credits, the subjects included in the curriculum and the total number of teaching hours dedicated to each subject.

**- The certification models are drawn up by the Ministry of Education (MIUR).**

# VET in Italy at upper secondary level

## *(Three- and four-year Regional Education and Vocational training programmes (leFP))*

The leFP programmes (*percorsi triennali e quadriennali di istruzione e formazione professionale*) are designed and organised by the **regions**. Starting from **age 15**.

**EQF 3 or 4**

The dual system experimentation is currently being launched (State-Regions Agreement dated September 24th 2015) and it will give young people the possibility to achieve a qualification and/or a professional diploma through training courses characterised by a real alternation between training and work.

Such courses could take the form of:

- (a) an apprenticeship for achieving a qualification and a professional diploma and the higher technical specialisation certificate;
- (b) school - work alternation;
- (c) simulated training enterprise.

Access to leFP courses is possible only after completion of the lower secondary school (former *scuola media* in Italian) and after passing the related State exam.



## VET in Italy at upper secondary level ( higher technical education and training courses (HTC), Istruzione e Formazione Tecnica Superiore (IFTS)

One year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high technical specialisation certificate (EQF 4)

Regions have exclusive competence in planning the training offer for higher technical education and training courses (HTC). HTC are aimed at developing professional specialisations at post-secondary level, meeting the requirements of the regional labour markets.

Structured in 20 specialisation areas defined at national level, which are described in terms of minimum education standards by the MIUR and the MLPS ( 30 ). Those areas may be further defined by the regions in relation to local labour market characteristics.

Financed by regional resources, mostly the European Social Fund and resources allocated through periodic calls for projects. The duration of an HTC programme is 800 to 1 000 hours (two semesters), which include practical and theoretical training and at least 30% of the time spent in a company as trainee.

# VET at upper secondary level

## *(Higher technical institutes (HTI), Istruzione Tecnica Superiore (ITS))*

Two-or three-year post-secondary non-academic programmes which lead to a high-level technical diploma (*Diploma di tecnico superiore*, EQF 5).

HTI or ITS are non-academic training opportunities at tertiary level. The MIUR and the MLPS defined 29 national occupational profiles and general provisions, such as those for assessment and skill certification. It covers six strategic technological areas of specialisation: energy efficiency, sustainable mobility, new technologies for life, new technologies for Made in Italy (mechanics, fashion, food, housing, business services), innovative technologies for cultural goods and services, ICT.

The duration of an HTI programme is 1 800 to 2 000 hours: at least 30% of these hours have to be spent on-the-job (internship). At least 50% of training has to be provided by experts from the world of work and professions. HTI are formally set up as foundations with minimum composition of:

- (a) a regional training, centre either private or public, based in the same province as the foundation;
- (b) a school;
- (c) a university;
- (d) an enterprise belonging to the sector covered by the HTI;
- (e) a local authority (municipality, province, metropolitan city or mountain community).

# Apprenticeship in ITALY

Note that: the **MLPS** distributes financial resources to the regions for VET provision and supports/monitors its implementation through its agencies, the **ANPAL** and the **INAPP**.

Regions and autonomous provinces (Regions/AA.PP from here on) are in charge of planning and organising regional VET programmes. They finance those through the Ministry of Labour's and their own resources.

Apprenticeship for vocational qualifications and diplomas, upper secondary education diplomas and high technical specialisation certificates'. This is for those aged 15 to 25 and may be applied to vocational education and training (VET) programmes at upper- and post-secondary levels.

The duration of the contract (and so the duration of alternance) varies between a minimum six months and the maximum duration of the VET programme it applies to. The distribution of time between training in the education and training institution and the company is defined on one school-year basis. Besides in- and out-of-company training.

Apprenticeship foresees a component of ordinary work experience. Generally, between 50% and 70% of the time is spent at school and the rest in the company;

**Thank you for your attention**

**רבה תודה!  
Todà rabà!**

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