

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework - process of creation

**Created within the Reform of the Portuguese Education and Training System
– build up the National Qualifications System**

- proposed by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, and Ministry of Science Technology and Higher Education.
- discussed in the National Council for Vocational Training.
- public consultation (August-September 2007) concerning all the instruments for the VET reform, including NQF.
- created in December 2007, based in EQF principles.
- regulated in July 2009.
- in force since the 1st October 2010.

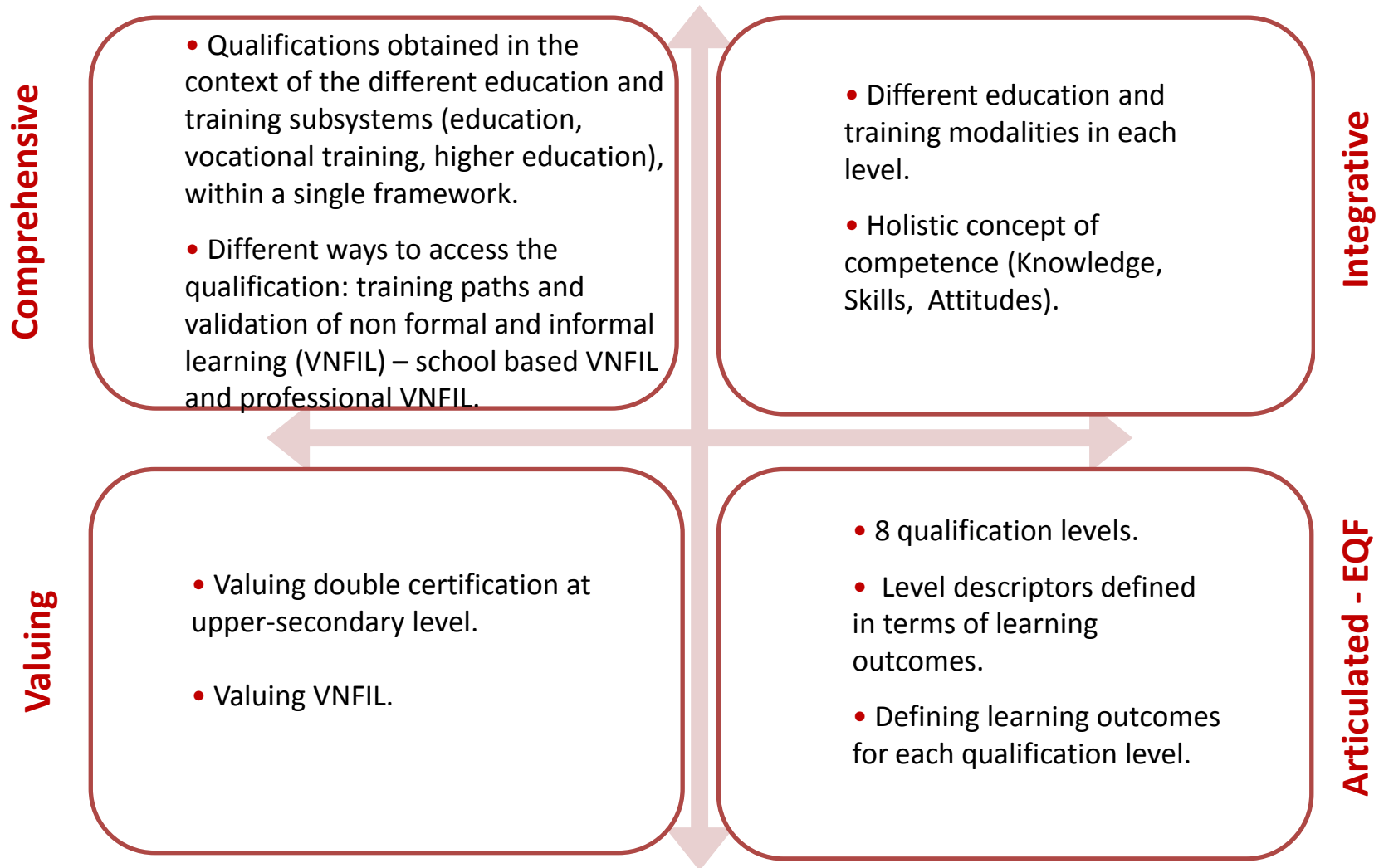
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Main objectives ...

- Integrating the qualifications obtained in the context of the different education and training subsystems (education, vocational training, higher education), within a single framework;
- Improving the legibility, transparency and comparability of qualifications;
- Improving the access, progression and quality of national qualifications;
- Defining learning outcomes for each qualification level;
- Ensuring coordination with the EQF, specifically in using the EQF as an instrument of reference for comparing qualification levels from different qualifications systems.

(Art.2º, Ministerial Order nº 782/2009, 23rd July)

The Portuguese Qualifications Framework – Key features



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Level	Qualifications
Level 1	2 nd cycle of basic education
Level 2	3 rd cycle of basic education (lower secondary education) obtained in basic education or via double certification paths (VET)
Level 3	Upper-secondary education with a view to pursuing higher level studies (general education)
Level 4	Upper-secondary education obtained via double certification paths (VET) Upper-secondary education with a view to pursuing higher level studies plus professional placement - minimum six months
Level 5	Post-secondary non-higher level qualification with credits to pursue higher level studies
Level 6	Bachelor degree
Level 7	Master degree
Level 8	Doctorate degree

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(at the beginning) Some challenges...

- Adjustment of the descriptors used in the implicit qualifications framework and the descriptors used in the national qualifications framework.
- The use of learning outcomes (LO) to define qualification levels - harmonising approaches, concepts and practices.
- The use of “attitude” instead of “competence” as a LO descriptor domain.
- Communication and dissemination of PQF and referencing to EQF to a wide spectrum of stakeholders.
- Differentiation between level 3 and 4 has not fully grasped by some stakeholders.

Some solutions...

- Methodology for designing qualifications based in LO.
- “Understanding the NQF – user’s support guide” (to make the PQF descriptors more explicit and readable, to clarify the criteria used to classify a national qualification at a given level; to make the PQF easier to use for providers in the education and training system).
- Communication and dissemination activities (conferences, workshops, sectorial councils for qualifications, leaflets, ...).

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Nowadays:

- The legal framework is in place
- Qualifications have been assigned to levels
- Quality assurance arrangements have been implemented

https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/compare?field_location_selection_tid%5B%5D=471&=Compare+selected+countries

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In which areas is NQF making more difference?

Visibility

- NQF levels are mentioned in all certificates and diplomas (IVET, CVET and VNFIL - non-higher education).
- (some) Certificates and diplomas include the NQF and EQF levels.
- VET database contains NQF and EQF levels (namely, the National Catalogue of Qualifications).
- Access to financial support and to professional internships takes the framework into consideration.

Legibility

- NQF level descriptors are more clear and accessible to end-users.
- NQF makes non-formal and informal learning more legible.

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In which areas is NQF making more difference?

Transparency

- Use of LO to describe and classify qualification – way of harmonising approaches, concepts and practices, but there are differences across subsystems.
- NQF level descriptors are used to support the review and renewal of qualifications.
- The use of “attitude” as a LO descriptor domain caused a redirection of attention to soft skills.

Involvement

- Stakeholders involvement
 - Referencing process (steering committee and WG: ANQEP + bodies involved in the qualifications regulation and quality assurance in ET).
 - Sectors initiative to design qualifications in terms of LO.
 - The role of SCQ in the design of qualifications.
 - Assessment of learning acquired in non-formal and informal settings.

Thank you all!

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