



Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019

Volume II: National and regional cases



TURKEY

Introduction and context

NQF snapshot

The Regulation on the procedures and principles concerning the implementation of the Turkish qualifications framework (TQF Regulation) was adopted by a Ministerial Decision of the Council of Ministers and published in the *Official Journal* in November 2015. The Description of the Turkish qualifications framework (TQF Document) was adopted by a Ministerial Decision of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and published in the *Official Journal* in January 2016. The Regulation on the quality assurance of qualifications to be included into the TQF was adopted by a decision of the TQF Coordination Council and published in the *Official Journal* in March 2018.

The Turkish qualifications framework (TQF) has eight levels and includes all types and levels of qualifications and certification. Besides levels and level descriptors, the TQF defines qualification types and qualification categories.

The three-member TQF Coordination Council is the decision-making body of the TQF. Its members are high-level representatives of the three main bodies responsible for the TQF: the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA).

Turkey is an EU candidate country and participates in the European qualifications framework (EQF) advisory group. It referenced to the EQF at the March 2017 EQF advisory group meeting.

Educational, social, economic and political context

Turkey is an upper middle-income country of 80.3 million inhabitants, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 850.7 billion, a GDP per capita of USD 10,592, and a life expectancy at birth of 75.4 years (2017).

Turkey is a European Union (EU) accession candidate country. The EU accession process has been a significant anchor for socio-economic

reforms in the country. The EU is Turkey's largest economic partner, accounting for around 40% of Turkish trade, and 70–80% of foreign direct investment into the country is coming from the EU. Turkey has benefited significantly from deepening integration with the EU through the growing sophistication of both exports and imports and access to financing. It is a member of the OECD and the G20, and an increasingly important donor to bilateral official development assistance.

Although growth prospects have been reasonably robust, in recent years Turkey's economy has been fighting double-digit inflation and a falling currency, which all pose challenges to moving into high-income status. The influx of over 3 million Syrian refugees (2015–16) has created new social, economic and political demands, placing a strain to education and training reform efforts.

Economic growth has stimulated job creation, but unemployment remains at 10.9%. Turkey has witnessed positive developments against the EU 2020 targets. Considerable progress has been made especially on the EU 2020 twofold target on education (i.e. reducing the early leavers and increasing tertiary attainment) and adult participation in lifelong learning (albeit from relatively low levels). However, the country continues to experience low rates of labour market participation and employment, high informality and precarious and vulnerable employment, which disproportionately affect young people. Despite the increasing activity and employment rates in the 20–64 age group, Turkey continues to lag behind EU averages. Graduates from secondary vocational education and training (VET) show better employment prospects as compared to those of general secondary education streams. VET is a viable education option for a large number of young people; VET enrolments, as a proportion of upper secondary education, is high by almost 55.8%.

According to the OECD Education Policy Turkey report⁹¹³, Turkey has made substantial progress in

⁹¹³ OECD (2018). Education policy outlook 2018: putting student learning at the centre.

the area of education and human capital focusing on increasing equal access to primary, secondary, upper secondary (general and VET) and tertiary education. The education system includes key policies to support students from disadvantaged groups, immigrant backgrounds and population subgroups, as well as students with special educational needs and those living in different regions within the country. However, gaps vis-à-vis OECD benchmarks remain very large. This is partly due to the quality of education lagging behind quantitative changes in school years. Equity and quality in education continue to be seen as a challenge and Turkey has set several key priorities, such as improving access and completion of upper secondary education, addressing the needs of disadvantaged students and improving equity between regions (especially between urban and rural areas). Providing education facilities and services to Syrians with temporary protection in Turkey is another key target.

Improving access to both VET and tertiary education is a key policy target for the country. Key education policies have been implemented (starting in 2015), which address the establishment of better links between education levels and the labour market by allocating funding to support projects related to both professional teaching skills and students transitioning into the labour market. Other policies focus on updating qualifications to provide education orientation or transitions from lower to upper secondary education.

Turkey tracks the performance of its vocational graduates in the labour market through the E-graduate system. The country has invested efforts in developing new processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation, and has strived to improve inter-institutional cooperation to match supply and demand, assess effectiveness of education or employment policies etc. However, the mismatch between labour market demand and supply remains a constraint to growth and employability. There is need to address the high levels of skills mismatch, and many small entrepreneurs and workers need basic upskilling, as low skills inhibit the growth of productivity and incomes. Timely and relevant policy responses to the needs of young people are constrained by a lack of, or insufficiently exploited, data and information on transitions from school to work, on quality aspects of such transitions, and on vulnerable groups of young people. The mechanisms of skills needs identification and matching need to be consolidated and used for policy making.

Looking at the present delivery of the VET system in Turkey, it might be beneficial to look at some

forward-looking policy areas in the country's context. A more strategic approach – including sharing of information among educators and digitally streamlined consultation with employers – is required. Turkey skills panorama is being assessed through EU and OECD multi-country analysis. Turkey can learn from the way some countries are addressing these emerging challenges. Digital technology is evolving and will significantly change the way education and training are delivered. Perhaps it is time to re-imagine education and training in view of the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the growing demand for 'soft' or 'enterprise' skills. One suggestion is to move away from narrowly defined qualifications built around specific roles or tasks towards broader qualifications, structured around the concept of vocational streams. Vocational streams are clusters of occupations that share similar requirements for knowledge, skills and attributes. By focusing on the broader capabilities underpinning vocational streams, it is expected that youth job mobility, adaptive capacity and career development will be promoted.

For the Turkish economy to be competitive and inclusive, there is an increasing demand for a remodelling of VET delivery in the formal system. The skills profile of the current workforce and the growing demand for more highly skilled workers has become imperative. STEM skill set, which includes science, technology design, engineering, mathematics, programming, systems analysis, critical thinking and computer use, should be part of the VET system. Courses and their associated qualifications will need to become more modular to allow them to be completed progressively and flexibly alongside work. Furthermore, modular course offerings should serve as the building blocks for more long-term and continuous engagement between students, employers and VET providers. Maintaining currency with industry requirements is central to VET but is becoming increasingly challenging with the pace of change. Entrepreneurship should be added to the core skills and lifelong learning should become accessible to all. In view of the combination of technological change and longer working lives – during which people may change careers a number of times and work for numerous employers – lifelong learning will be fundamental to future work environments. Education and training have never been more important.

Currently there is no published evidence of skills forecast and skills matching policies in Turkey. However, changes are planned that need to be confirmed. Harmonising demand for the workforce in the labour market and supply offered by the

education system fell within the scope of the 65th Government programme. This included higher education with the Transformation programme of high priority on development of basic and professional skills prepared within the framework of strengthening the education and employment relationship (MoNE 2018 Performance programme).

Harmonisation of the education system and the labour market also falls within the scope of the 11th Development plan 2019–23: making individuals acquire skills and qualifications that are required by the business sector by taking a lifelong learning perspective as the starting point, by adopting an entrepreneurship culture and strengthening school-business relations in vocational and technical education, taking medium- and long-term sector projections into account (MoNE 2018 Performance programme).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution brings far-reaching and accelerating disruptive change to business models and traditional education practices. For the government, it will entail innovations within education and labour-related policy making. For the education and training sector, it will mean vast new business opportunities as it provides new services to individuals, entrepreneurs, organisations and the public sector. Is the system ready to face what the future brings?

Workers in Turkey use information-processing skills at work and in their daily lives, however much less than do workers in other OECD countries⁹¹⁴. National and international studies and surveys confirm that acquiring the right skills remains a challenge in the country. This is strongly corroborated by employers' organisations. In Turkey adults are considerably less likely to read, write, work with mathematics, solve problems and use computers in their jobs and in everyday life than is the case across other participating OECD countries. The employment rate remains well below the OECD average, despite a rise from its pre-crisis level, while the unemployment rate remains well above the OECD average.

According to the 'Automation Readiness Index: Who is ready for the coming wave of automation?' of the Economist Intelligence Unit report commissioned by the ABB (June 2018)⁹¹⁵, unfortunately, there is not

yet much evidence in Turkey of either policy making or multi-stakeholder dialogue on this topic. There is not even evidence of any coordinated policy action, which analyses and/or plans for the challenges of automation, its impact on the future of work and skills needed not only to match needs but also to contribute to innovation, and inclusive economic and social growth in the country. In assessing the existence of policies and strategies in the areas of research, innovation, education and training, and labour market, the study highlights that little/no policy is in place in Turkey today which specifically addresses the challenges of AI- and robotics-based automation. No policies, apart from some initiatives (e.g. by Tubitak), are in place in areas such as curriculum reform, lifelong learning, occupational training and workplace flexibility.

Whatever the impact of intelligent automation on work and employment, it is clear that the Turkish government must be prepared. There is no thorough evidence and no robust policy on the skills for the future of jobs in the country. It confirms a lack of dialogue between government and industry, as well as between different industries, on the skills forecast and skills matching including the challenges of automation. There is an urgent need for structural engagement between government, industry, educational specialists and other stakeholders if policy making is to keep pace with skills for the future and innovation in automation.

Turkey submitted its fourth annual Economic Reform Programme covering the 2018–20 period⁹¹⁶. Turkey's Economic Reform Programme and other related national, EU and international strategic documents all recognise the need for structural and governance reform in the human resources development sector. National and international studies and surveys confirm that acquiring the right skills remains a

policy challenges that automation poses. Its attention is focused on three areas: innovation policies that directly or indirectly support research into and business adoption of artificial intelligence, robotics and other advanced technologies; education policies that aim to develop the human capital needed to take advantage of these technologies; and labour market policies needed to manage the workforce transition to a highly automated economy (for more detail, see the chart 'Index categories').

⁹¹⁶ These were assessed by the European Commission and the European Central Bank. Based on these assessments, joint conclusions with country-specific policy guidance were agreed on and adopted by all seven enlargement partners and the EU in the annual Economic and Financial Dialogue held on 25 May 2018. See the latest joint conclusions on the Economic Reform Programmes: www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/05/25/western-balkans-and-turkey-joint-conclusions-of-the-economic-and-financial-dialogue/

⁹¹⁴ OECD (2016). Survey of adult skills technical report (second edition).

⁹¹⁵ The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited (2018). See the Automation Readiness Index, which compares countries on their preparedness for the age of intelligent automation. The purpose of the index is to determine which countries are better positioned to take up the

challenge in Turkey. This is strongly corroborated by employers' organisations. To realise its underlying growth potential, Turkey needs to accelerate structural reforms in education and training, and employment and improve trust in its institutions. In particular, the country's economic growth would benefit from upgrading and making better use of its human capital through the pursuit of the education agenda and the deepening and widening of labour market reforms. Specifically, the qualifications of low-skilled workers should be improved through training, and female labour force participation should be stimulated through flexible working conditions. To address these challenges Turkey is encouraged to implement strategies to align education and training policies with labour market needs.

One major theme in the 11th Strategic Development Plan is digitalisation (Industry 4.0). However, according to PISA⁹¹⁷ 2016 results, Turkey ranked 52nd in science, 49th in mathematics, and 50th in reading skills among 70 countries. Given the coming digital transformation of the workplace and occupations, some questions need to be addressed urgently: Which sectors will be growing? What will be their skill needs (Industry 2.0, 3.0, or 4.0)? How will Turkey education system respond for future employability of the youth? Youth employment is a remaining challenge. Aging is another concern. Can Turkey design employment incentives for young people, while also keeping older workers employed? Turkey skills institutions cannot avoid some of the key questions: Which sectors to invest for productivity growth – by enhancing technologies (Industry 4.0), one can produce with fewer workers (aging)? What happens to youth unemployment? Who gets or keeps the job? Who will be better able to adapt to digitalisation of the workplace, the young or the old? In which occupations?

The large-scale technology or market changes occurring through technological advances such as automation, advanced robotics and virtualisation are already influencing the demand for both technical and soft skills in many occupations, with some skills in decline and others in higher demand. Turkey's socio-economic development require policy discussions about the impact that technological developments or disruption will have on Turkey's present workforce and skilling for tomorrow. The various ways by which the growth in technological advance is reshaping the labour market, workforce and jobs need to be examined and shared with all. These discussions cannot occur in isolation among educational platforms. The private sector is a key

partner for the intelligence on the skills required. The focus of discussions should be on the anticipated necessary skills from the perspective of both the innovators (technology producers) and industry (technology users).

Skills foresight enhances such thinking by gathering anticipatory intelligence from a wide range of knowledge sources in a systematic way and linking it to today's decision-making on how to deal with demographic change, health, social welfare, transport, energy, environment and climate change, community development, culture, human resources, and skills anticipation and education.

Policy objectives

Education and training reforms

Improving access to both VET and tertiary education is a key policy target for Turkey. Many education policies have been implemented, based on strategies such as the Lifelong Learning Strategy (2014–18), the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Strategy (2014–18), the Higher Education Strategy (2007–25) and the Employment Strategy (2014–23).

Turkey's Lifelong Learning Strategy and action plan pays particular attention to improving access to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system and promotes validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). The Employment Strategy and action plan attributes a core role to the TQF aimed at strengthening the link between education and employment and the quality of the VET system. The VET Strategy focuses on broadening access to VET, with improved system capacity and better employment outcomes for graduates. The latter is also the goal of the Higher Education Strategy. The Employment Strategy and action plan focuses on the national framework for qualifications to cover the university and non-formal education qualifications and entrepreneurship. A whole chapter on the role of the TQF in strengthening the link between education and employment focuses on the quality of the VET system. Its objectives include delivering qualifications as part of the TQF, implementing curricula in compliance with occupational standards, developing information, guidance and counselling and accrediting VET institutions.

Turkey's new lifelong learning strategy pays particular attention to improving access to lifelong learning beyond the formal education system and promotes the VNFIL⁹¹⁸.

⁹¹⁷ OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment.

⁹¹⁸ Lifelong learning Action Plan 2014–18: http://hbogm.meb.gov.tr/str/files/LLL_ACTION_PLAN.pdf

In higher education, the implementation of the learning outcome approach is an essential part of the implementation of the NQF for higher education. However, current arrangements inhibit the VNFIL in higher education.

According to the OECD Education Policy Turkey report, Turkey has made substantial progress in the education and human capital area focusing on increasing equal access to primary, secondary, upper secondary (general and VET) and tertiary education. The education system includes key policies to support students from disadvantaged groups, immigrant backgrounds and population subgroups, as well as students with special educational needs and those living in different regions within the country. However, gaps vis-à-vis OECD benchmarks remain very large. This is partly due to the quality of education lagging behind quantitative changes in school years. Equity and quality in education continue to be seen as a challenge and Turkey has set several key priorities, such as improving access and completion of upper secondary education, addressing the needs of disadvantaged students and improving equity between regions (especially between urban and rural areas). Providing education facilities and services to Syrians with temporary protection in Turkey is another key target.

International cooperation

The Turkish National Action Plan for EU Accession was presented to the European Commission in March 2016⁹¹⁹ and lists the actions that Turkish authorities are planning to take up to 2019 in order to align with EU legislation and continue the reform agenda in education and training, and the skills agenda.

The EU Education and Training 2020 priorities, the Bruges and Riga medium-term deliverables and the new EU Skills Agenda are informing the Turkey skills agenda. Turkey has benefited from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) funds beside national contribution to implement the policy options under each Riga medium-term deliverable. Applications for the Erasmus+ programme has increased in quantity focusing on implementing the Riga medium-term deliverables. There is a good level of exchange, implementation and learning from other countries, which is shared in the country. However, Turkey's central structures need to be more strategic in terms of building on these developments and learning from peers in EU Member States and beyond, and mainstreaming them in the national education and training system.

Turkey has a functioning system for the assessment and recognition of foreign academic qualifications in Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's degrees that is supported by legislation and in line with the Lisbon Convention. The Equivalence Office of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE/YÖK) deals with recognition and equivalence requests for these degrees. The CoHE is part of the ENIC-NARIC networks.

Many professions in Turkey are regulated. Requirements to execute a regulated profession are defined in different laws. The CoHE has adopted a Regulation on the harmonisation of the minimum training requirements for the seven regulated professions, stipulated by EU Directive 2005/363. This should bring the minimum requirements for these professions in compliance with the Directive.

The VQA is responsible for the validation of the vocational qualifications held by foreigners who are seeking to work in Turkey. The VQA Law speaks of validation, not of recognition⁹²⁰.

To execute a craft profession in Turkey one needs to have a mastership certificate. Foreigners can establish a business or work as employees if the equivalence of their certificate is recognised by the Ministry of Education (in addition they need a residence permit and a work permit). Legislation involved is Law No 3308 on vocational training (as amended by Law No 4702).

Levels and use of learning outcomes

NQF scope and structure

The TQF is designed as an inclusive, comprehensive framework for classification of all quality-assured qualifications. The TQF primarily includes:

- a. qualifications awarded under the mandate of MoNE;
- b. qualifications awarded under the mandate of the VQA;
- c. higher education qualifications awarded under the coordination and supervision of the CoHE.

In time, the TQF will include other qualifications awarded under the mandate of certain responsible institutions.

Alignment to other classification systems

The TQF is the national instrument for classification of qualifications in Turkey. The higher education

⁹¹⁹ www.ab.gov.tr/files/5%20Ekim/uepkitapcik2016-2019-EN.pdf

⁹²⁰ Principles and procedures (in Turkish): www.myk.gov.tr/images/articles/editor/140613/MYK_yab_sert_dogrulanmasi_usul_esaslari_revize_web2.pdf

qualifications framework, which is a sub-framework within the TQF, is already functioning⁹²¹.

The qualifications database includes qualifications awarded in Turkey regardless of their quality. This means that the database currently functions as a qualifications inventory rather than a register of the qualifications included in the TQF. In the database it is emphasized that the official levelling/inclusion of qualifications into the TQF has not started yet. The database includes all qualifications provided by the VQA and a high proportion of the qualifications provided by the Ministry of Education. There is only one higher education institute whose qualifications are included. As of August 2018, 1 633 qualifications were included in the database. The database is accessible in Turkish and English⁹²².

NQF levels and level descriptors

The TQF has eight levels. In addition to levels, the TQF uses qualification types and qualification categories.

- a. Qualification types distinguish among qualifications that are at the same level but differ significantly in terms of their functions, learning outcomes, volume and/or orientations. Examples of qualification types are associate degree and level 5 vocational qualification certificate, at level 5; vocational upper secondary education diploma and skilled worker certificate, at level 4.
- b. Qualification categories classify qualifications according to their purposes.
 - Principal qualifications reflect comprehensive sets of learning outcomes achieved as a result of assessment after completion of a learning process, training programme or vocational training, e.g. the vocational and technical high school diploma marking the end of vocational and technical secondary education.
 - Supplemental qualifications are awarded for learning achievements additional to a previous principal qualification. They relate to updating and refreshing of knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development and they can only be achieved on condition that a principal qualification is previously achieved, e.g. level 6 vocational qualification certificate in job and occupational counselling, achieved in addition to any bachelor degree.
 - Unit qualifications provide recognition for the achievement of a coherent set of learning outcomes that form part of the

combination of the overall requirement for a principal qualification. Unit qualifications are usually associated with modular learning programmes.

- Special purpose qualifications are awarded for sets of learning outcomes that form a distinct, coherent achievement that may be used alone (such as license to work, and license to start up business). These qualifications involve fewer learning outcomes compared to a principal qualification but they can be used as a license to operate, e.g. level 3 vocational qualification certificate for roller operation in the construction sector or level 5 vocational qualification certificate for computer hardware in the IT sector.

The TQF level descriptors are described in terms of learning outcomes and use the following domains: knowledge, skills, and competence.

- a. Knowledge is defined as theoretical and/or factual knowledge requiring comprehension of facts, principles, theories and practices related to an area of work or learning.
- b. Skill is defined as utilisation of knowledge and problem solving, which requires the ability to use logical, intuitive and creative thinking and dexterity, method, material, tools and instruments acquired in an area of work or learning.
- c. Competence is defined as use of knowledge and skills in an area of work or learning by taking responsibility and/or displaying autonomy, determination and satisfaction of learning requirements.

Use of learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are the backbone of the TQF. According to the Regulation, the TQF is to ensure that qualifications are based on learning outcomes. However, the shift to learning outcomes takes time.

The national qualifications developed by the VQA are based on learning outcomes. By mid-2018, the VQA had published 451 national qualifications in 21 sectors.

For all of the VQA qualifications, modules used in the VET training programmes of MoNE are defined by learning outcomes. However, MoNE VET programmes have no separate qualification specifications defined by learning outcomes. This situation created a challenge while populating the qualifications database. MoNE general education qualifications also are not readily identified as defined by learning outcomes. In higher education, some universities have identified the qualifications

⁹²¹ See the higher education qualifications framework website: <http://tyyc.yok.gov.tr/>

⁹²² <http://portal.tyc.gov.tr/>

Table 84. Turkish qualifications framework level descriptors

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
1	Have a general knowledge of self and environment	Have basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	Carry out simple tasks under guidance and supervision
2	Have an elementary factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have basic skills required to use necessary information in order to carry out tasks and to solve potential simple problems	Carry out simple tasks under supervision with limited autonomy Have awareness of own learning needs within the scope of a lifelong learning approach
3	Have an elementary theoretical knowledge and moderate factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have skills required to select and apply data, methods, tools and materials in order to carry out tasks and solve problems	Take responsibility in carrying out tasks Complete tasks in consideration of changing situations Identify and meet own learning needs under guidance within the scope of a lifelong learning approach
4	Have a moderate theoretical and operational knowledge and good factual knowledge in a field of work or study	Have cognitive and practical skills required to perform procedures and generate solutions to problems specific for a field of work or study	Take full responsibility in completing tasks within predictable, but changeable contexts Supervise the ordinary tasks of others, and take limited responsibility in evaluating and improving such tasks Meet own learning needs, and define proactive learning goals under guidance within the scope of a lifelong learning approach Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities
5	Have comprehensive, theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of work or study including awareness of the boundaries of that field	Have comprehensive, cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems whose limits are defined, and concrete problems	Carry out management and supervision tasks in contexts with unpredictable changes Evaluate and improve own and others' performance level Be in interaction for operations in contexts of work or study including the management of projects Have general awareness of the scope of a lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as the relationship of this scope with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Have awareness of the relationship of knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes in a field of work or study with moral issues and responsibilities
6	Have an advanced theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in a field of work or study, including inquiring thinking	Have advanced skills, including the quality of mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Make decisions by taking responsibility in unpredictable work or study contexts, and manage complex technical or professional activities or projects Take responsibility in managing the professional development of individuals and groups Have experience in the concepts, policies, tools and practices of a lifelong learning approach for a field of work or study as well as their relationship with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning Have awareness of social and moral issues in assessing work or study

(Continued)

Table 84. Turkish qualifications framework level descriptors (Continued)

LEVEL	KNOWLEDGE	SKILL	COMPETENCE
7	<p>Have advanced specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront in a field of work or study, as the basis for original ideas and/or research</p> <p>Have an inquiring approach for knowledge issues in his/her field and at the interface between different fields related to his/her field</p>	<p>Have advanced problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation activities that are carried out to develop new knowledge and methods in a field of work or study and to integrate knowledge from different fields</p> <p>Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research operations as a team member or partially autonomously</p>	<p>Manage and transform unpredictable and complex work or study contexts that require new strategic approaches</p> <p>Have experience in managing changes within a complex context</p> <p>Take responsibility in contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or evaluating the strategic performance level of teams</p> <p>Show leadership in the concept, policy, tools and practices of a lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study and the interface between different fields as well as their relationship with formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Integrate knowledge and make judgements in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>
8	<p>Have the most advanced systematic knowledge and inquiry analysis capacity in the theory, practice, method and techniques of a field of work or study</p> <p>Have the most advanced interface knowledge in different fields of work or study related to a particular field of work or study</p>	<p>Have the most advanced and specialised skills, including synthesis and evaluation, that require the use of knowledge, methods and techniques, required to solve critical problems in the most advanced research and/or innovation within a field of work or study and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice</p> <p>Have skills required to understand, design, apply and adapt advanced research processes autonomously</p> <p>Have problem-solving skills, including the use of methods and approaches from different fields, required to solve new and complex problems in his/her field</p>	<p>Demonstrate competence in the development of new ideas and processes at the forefront of work or study contexts, including strong competence, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional consistency and research</p> <p>Show leadership in developing new and original approaches to redefine or extend existing knowledge or professional practice in a field of work or study</p> <p>Develop original policies and practices for the promotion of a lifelong learning approach for knowledge in a field of work or study as well as the interface between different fields in unpredictable and complex contexts that require innovation, and for the promotion of this approach through formal, non-formal and informal ways of learning</p> <p>Create new knowledge in a field of work or study in consideration of social and moral issues and responsibilities</p>

Source: Vocational Qualifications Authority.

they offer by learning outcomes but it is not easy to give an exact number. The process of transformation continues and the plan was to have all qualifications of MoNE and higher education institutions defined by learning outcomes until the end of 2018, at least on the qualifications database.

Definition of qualification

The VQA Law No 5544 defines a qualification as the formal certification of knowledge, skill and competence possessed by an individual and recognised by the competent authority (VQA Law, Article 2-(1) h).

The TQF Regulation defines a qualification as the official document obtained when a competent body, at the end of a process of assessment and validation, recognises that an individual has accomplished the learning outcomes according to certain criteria (TQF Regulation, Article 3-(1) r).

Turkey does not use the term qualification standard⁹²³ but the TQF Regulation and the TQF Document use the term 'qualification type specification' to describe the features of a qualification type. A qualification type specification includes:

- a. qualification type title,
- b. awarding body,
- c. orientation,
- d. level,
- e. category,
- f. credit range and typical duration programme,
- g. programme profile,
- h. learning environment,
- i. learning outcomes,
- j. key competences,
- k. assessment and evaluation methods,
- l. quality assurance,
- m. entry requirements,
- n. requirements for obtaining the qualification,
- o. progression paths,
- p. legal basis of the qualification.

Qualification type specifications have been drafted for all types such as bachelor diploma and level 3 vocational qualification certificate and submitted for consultation by the responsible bodies. The plan

⁹²³ The document which corresponds to qualification standard is the national qualification in the VQA context. Unfortunately this is causing a misunderstanding since the term 'qualification' alone stands for the formal outcome of an assessment process. Eventually, there is an invisible 'standard' or 'specification' word in the term national qualification. National qualification (specification) provides the information about the learning outcomes, performance criteria, assessment procedure, assessor competences, etc.

is to use these specifications while developing qualifications in specific types, so that the qualification bachelor in BA should be consistent with the qualification type specification of bachelor diploma.

Development process of qualifications

MoNE is responsible for developing qualifications under its mandate. It has launched secondary education curriculum reform for both general and vocational and technical schools. Vocational curricula are modularised and MoNE has a database of more than 4 000 modules that are also used for the licensing and certification of adult learning. There are also plans to establish a national credit system for VET. Although curricula are advanced, most initial vocational qualifications are not yet utilised and fully learning outcomes-based. Modules based on learning outcomes are used for learning, but they are not assessed separately and often lack an assessment component.

The VQA is responsible for developing qualifications under the national vocational qualifications system. Qualifications under the VQA's mandate are based on occupational standards and learning outcomes. Assessment, evaluation and certification for these qualifications are carried out by certification bodies (called Voc-Test centres), authorised by the VQA. These qualifications are classified under the qualification types vocational qualification certificate.

The CoHE coordinates and supervises the development of higher education qualifications awarded by higher education institutes. The higher education qualifications framework is a sub-framework within the TQF that is already functioning. National working groups for different fields of learning define common outcomes as a guideline for qualification and curriculum developers. A common register on the website of the higher education NQF⁹²⁴ provides links to specific programmes (website in Turkish and English).

Access, progression and credit

According to its Regulation, facilitating access to qualifications and progress between qualifications are the main principles of the TQF. The TQF Council has drafted a concept paper about credit transfer and accumulation. The preparation of the principles and procedures for horizontal and vertical progression between qualifications in the TQF, credit transfer and accumulation is about to start.

The TQF proposes an evaluation and credit system associated with the workload that will allow credit

⁹²⁴ <http://tyyc.yok.gov.tr/>

accumulation and transfer. The proposed metric for the qualifications to be included in the TQF is 60 credits as the value ascribed to a learning period of 1 500 to 1 800 hours. This approach is compliant with both of the transnational credit systems in use in Europe – ECTS and ECVET. The regulating bodies will determine the credit range of the qualification types and the credit values of the qualifications. The principles and procedures for the credit transfer systems are planned to be developed by mid-2019.

Stakeholder involvement and institutional arrangements

NQF legal basis

The Regulation on the procedures and principles concerning the implementation of the Turkish qualifications framework (TQF Regulation) entered into force via Decision 2015/8213 of the Council of Ministers and publication in the *Official Journal* of 19 November 2015 (numbered 29537). According to the Regulation, a three-year action plan for the implementation of the TQF has been developed by the TQF Secretariat and approved by the TQF Council.

The Regulation on the quality assurance of qualifications to be included into the TQF was adopted and published in the *Official Journal* in March 2018⁹²⁵.

Governance and institutional arrangements for the NQF

The three-member TQF Coordination Council is the decision-making body of the TQF. Its members are the Deputy Minister of National Education, the President of the CoHE and the President of the VQA. The TQF Coordination Council is assisted by the 22-member TQF Council, representing MoNE, the CoHE, the VQA and social partners' organisations. The TQF Council addresses technical issues.

The VQA is the body responsible for the implementation and execution of the TQF. The TQF Department of the VQA executes secretariat services for the TQF Council and Coordination Council.

The TQF Coordination Council, the TQF Council and the TQF Department of the VQA have been established and are operational. Their main duties and responsibilities are described below.

The TQF Coordination Council:

- evaluates and approves procedures, principles, decisions, suggestions and opinions submitted by the TQF Council;
- collaborates with responsible bodies and institutions, international organisations, and the bodies and institutions of other countries.

Members of the Coordination Council are responsible for ensuring collaboration and coordination in the implementation of Coordination Council decisions within their bodies.

The TQF Council:

- prepares a three-year action plan for the implementation of the TQF and a communication strategy to raise national and international awareness of it;
- prepares principles, procedures and criteria for a wide range of issues, such as quality assurance of the qualifications to be included in the TQF, qualifications database, progress routes, credit accumulation and transfer, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and updating, modification and cancellation of qualifications.

Secretariat services in relation to the TQF are carried out by the TQF Department of the VQA.

The TQF Secretariat:

- provides assistance to all the technical and administrative works of the Coordination Council and Turkish Qualifications Framework Council;
- drafts an action plan, annual work plan and activity report under the management of the TQF Council;
- ensures the implementation of the TQF communication strategy;
- establishes the qualifications database and ensures its update;
- prepares all kinds of research and analysis reports requested by the Chairman of the TQF Council, or conducts work and procedures for their preparation;
- performs other duties assigned by the Chairman of the TQF Council.

Roles and functions of actors and stakeholders

The TQF Regulation foresees the establishment of a consultation committee, with broad stakeholder participation, to evaluate issues and submit opinions regarding the framework. The committee will meet at least once a year. The VQA and the TQF Council have identified which stakeholders should sit on the consultation committee and the consultation committee has been established. The list of the

⁹²⁵ https://myk.gov.tr/images/articles/TYC/TQF_QA_Regulation.pdf

institutions to be represented in the committee was approved by the TQF Coordination Council at a meeting held on 25 January 2018.

Turkey has a system of sector committees, which is one of the cornerstones of the sustainability of the national vocational qualification system under the VQA. Sector committees are tripartite structures with State, employer and employee representatives; their establishment, duties and operations are regulated by law. Some 26 sector committees⁹²⁶ are operational; sectors have been defined by the VQA. These committees perform tasks related to the development and maintenance of occupational standards and qualifications for their sector.

Resources and funding

The TQF Regulation stipulates that all expenditures arising from drafting, updating and roll out of the framework shall be covered by the VQA. MoNE, the CoHE and the VQA shall designate personnel to work permanently at the TQF Department of the VQA (Secretariat), which consists of one administrative staff, three assistant experts, one expert and one manager.

Erasmus+ funds are also being used and IPA II funding for TQF implementation is expected in 2019.

Per diem allowances for TQF Coordination Council and Council members attending meetings shall be covered by the responsible bodies.

Quality assurance of qualifications

The TQF Document states that: 'All quality-assured qualifications shall be included in the TQF. The Regulation on the quality assurance of qualifications to be included into the TQF – adopted and published in the *Official Journal* in March 2018 – regulates the quality assurance procedures and principles to which qualifications must comply to be included in the TQF. This Regulation is applicable to all the qualifications offered in Turkey, whether achieved through formal education, non-formal education or an RPL/VNFIL procedure.

The Regulation stipulates the duties, authorities and responsibilities regarding the quality assurance and the components of the quality assurance system, namely:

- a. quality assurance criteria,
- b. quality assurance paper and guidelines,
- c. qualification form,
- d. assessment and evaluation,
- e. certification,

- f. self-assessment and external evaluation,
- g. regular review,
- h. allocation of resources,
- i. stakeholder involvement,
- j. feedback mechanisms,
- k. accessibility to the outcomes of the activities (through electronic information technologies).

The criteria for quality assurance are identified in accordance with Annex 4 of the EQF Recommendation 2017, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, as well as national quality frameworks for education that are in compliance with them.

The TQF has three regulating bodies: MoNE, the CoHE and the VQA. Each body is responsible for the quality assurance of the qualifications under its authority. For higher education, the Higher Education Quality Board was established in 2015. Quality assurance for the qualifications outside the scope of MoNE, CoHE, higher education institutions and VQA responsibility will be ensured by the institutions and organisations specified in related legislation.

The TQF Coordination Council shall monitor continuous improvement of all quality assurance processes.

The qualifications under the responsibility of MoNE and CoHE mostly focus on academic and key competences, while the qualifications under the responsibility of the VQA focus on employment and skills. Thus, the quality assurance systems of the institutions responsible for qualifications in Turkey have different procedures by nature.

The CoHE is an affiliated member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

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

The VQA and MoNE's lifelong learning department are actively working to widen the VNFIL in Turkey.

The 2014–18 Lifelong Learning Strategy promotes extensive use of the VNFIL. MoNE has conducted two EU IPA lifelong learning projects with VNFIL components. The Lifelong Learning 2 project, completed in 2017, lays the foundation for the VNFIL system under MoNE's remit and provides organising

⁹²⁶ www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/sector-komiteleri

principles and mechanisms for the identification, assessment and certification in relation to the qualifications under MoNE's authority.

Turkey has implemented a system to assess, evaluate and certify skills of adults against national vocational qualifications. Assessment, evaluation and certification are carried out by certification bodies (called Voc-Test centres) authorised by the VQA. In recent years, the number of authorised certification bodies increased substantially, from 45 in 2016 to 170 by August 2018.

The TQF Regulation and TQF Document include provisions for the recognition of prior learning, stipulating that all qualifications included in the TQF can be attained via RPL/VNFIL.

Learners will have the following possibilities through the recognition of prior learning:

- a. access to programmes,
- b. access to exams,
- c. exemptions,
- d. certification of units,
- e. credit accumulation and transfer,
- f. recognition of qualifications.

The TQF Coordination Council will prepare guidelines for RPL/VNFIL principles and procedures. This will be a general VNFIL framework like the EU Recommendation 2012. The responsible bodies shall manage the application of these principles and procedures for the qualifications under their authority. The principles and procedures were planned to be prepared at the end of 2018.

The VNFIL was legally introduced in the Turkish higher education system in 2011 but is still in a starting phase. The country has an operational system to assess, evaluate and certify adult skills against national vocational qualifications. Assessment, evaluation and certification are carried out by certification bodies authorised by the VQA (called Voc-Test centres). By August 2018 the country had 170 authorised centres and numbers are increasing. The VQA certification has become compulsory for 81 hazardous occupations, which puts a strain on the capacity of the system.

For the qualifications under MoNE's authority, comprehensive updates have been made in the VNFIL legal framework. Amendments of the VET Law (No 3308 of 2 December 2016, adopted by the Parliament) stipulate that: 'The vocational qualifications related to prior learning are defined based on the occupational standards and their levels and assessed by testing. The VNFIL and accreditation principles will be defined by a

regulation issued by MoNE.' On 2 October 2017, MoNE issued the Regulation on the principles and implementation of VNFIL, regarding accreditation, measurement and evaluation. On 26 March 2018, revisions were made to the Regulation on secondary education to include VNFIL in the system. The VNFIL was established in the higher education system in 2011 but is still in its early stages.

Turkey has a highly developed system of distance learning. Most stages in formal and non-formal education can be reached by distance learning and open education options.

NQF implementation

Inclusion of qualifications in a register

The TQF does not yet include qualifications since realisation of the quality assurance is a priority for qualifications to be included into the TQF. Therefore, the quality assurance Regulation has been adopted; it envisages the establishment and implementation of quality assurance systems by April 2020. The principles and procedures for the inclusion of the qualifications into the TQF are being drafted. Following the adoption of these principles and procedures, the quality assured qualifications can be included into the TQF, expected in 2019.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of the NQF

Monitoring the effectiveness of the TQF implementation will be the joint task of the TQF Coordination Council and TQF Consultation Committee established in 2018.

Impact for end-users

Legal arrangements for the TQF are in place and its implementation is in process. A qualifications database is operational. The TQF does not yet include qualifications since the realisation of quality assurance is a priority for qualifications to be included into the TQF. Therefore, the quality assurance Regulation has been adopted; it envisages the establishment and implementation of quality assurance systems by April 2020. The principles and procedures for the inclusion of the qualifications into the TQF are being drafted. Following the adoption of these principles and procedures, the quality assured qualifications can be included into the TQF, expected in 2019.

The authorised certification bodies/VOC-Test centres, which assess, evaluate and certify skills of adults have an impact on end-users. By August 2018 these centres had issued over 387 000 certificates to individuals that now hold a recognised national vocational qualification.

Referencing to regional frameworks

Turkey is an EU candidate country and participates in the EQF advisory group. The EQF referencing of the TQF was completed in the spring of 2017.

Important lessons and future plans

The institutional arrangements for the TQF have been very much focused on and around the VQA. Coordination of the TQF will be shared between stakeholders, in a similar way that the VQA executive board has been functioning. The VQA experience has greatly contributed to the developments so far. MoNE and the CoHE will play a more prominent role in the implementation of the TQF. The VQA is supporting the implementation of the TQF, but is also one of the three regulating bodies and it will establish a system for quality assurance of provision. The accumulation of these different tasks within a single institution is not easy to manage, particularly if the system is starting to grow more rapidly. The numbers of authorised certification bodies, providers and qualifications is increasing, as VQA certification is becoming compulsory for certain qualifications.

Development of the TQF as an integrated structure is a huge step forward from the previous position where the national vocational qualifications system operated as a parallel structure, focusing on the certification of adults. The responsibilities of the VQA, MoNE and the CoHE are becoming clearer but the new quality assurance regulation defines the division of responsibilities based on a common set of quality assurance criteria. Implementation of the quality assurance regulation will be decisive in determining the ultimate division. Sectors have been actively involved in developing national occupational standards and qualifications and are volunteering to become authorised certification bodies, but there is a need to support the establishment of these bodies, to allow the system

to grow fast enough to meet the expectations. Training that can lead to qualifications is the next challenge. The role of the sectors in initial and post-secondary VET (MYOs⁹²⁷) and possibly higher education has to be clarified. There is interest from the private sector in using the TQF to make qualifications more relevant. Many training providers provide adult learning courses. The Istanbul municipality, as an example, is offering hundreds of courses, free of charge, for more than 1 million participants. These courses are based on MoNE's programmes, with a MoNE course completion certificate awarded. The municipality is doing this through a protocol with MoNE. Bringing such courses into the TQF by mapping them against the outcomes of units of VQA or MoNE qualifications is a process currently being considered to quality assure and certificate them within the TQF.

Abbreviations

CoHE	Council of Higher Education
EQF	European qualifications framework
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (the EU's support programme for candidate and potential candidate countries)
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
RPL	recognition of prior learning
TQF	Turkish qualifications framework
VET	vocational education and training
VNFIL	validation of non-formal and informal learning
VQA	Vocational Qualifications Authority

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⁹²⁷ Post-secondary colleges, offering VET and general education; offer higher education short-cycle qualifications; administered by CoHE.

