

# PORTUGUESE QUALIFICATIONS STRUCTURE

- The creation of the National Qualification Framework (NQF), which was undertaken as part of the Education and Training System reform process and the creation of the National Qualifications System, was based on the following assumptions:
  - The need to integrate and coordinate qualifications obtained within the different subsystems of education and training (education, vocational training, higher education) within a single framework;
  - the importance of valuing and considering competences acquired in non-formal and informal contexts;
  - improved legibility, transparency and comparability of qualifications;
  - valuing dual certification particularly associated with upper-secondary qualifications;
  - ensuring the coordination with European Qualifications Framework, which involves the use of the EQF as a reference tool to compare the qualifications levels of different qualifications systems, in terms of lifelong learning.

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-qualifications-framework-60\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-qualifications-framework-60_en)

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- The options taken regarding the design and structure of the NQF are in response to the following aspects:
- The NQF includes qualifications at various levels of the education and training system, regardless of entry points (primary, upper-secondary, higher education, vocational education and training and processes of recognition, validation and certification of competences, acquired both formally and informally);
- divided into 8 qualification levels that include all the qualifications currently produced in the Portuguese education and training system;
- the adoption of a methodology based on learning outcomes to describe each qualification level: the use of learning outcomes in defining qualification levels reflects a major change in the way qualifications are conceptualised and described, making comparability possible according to competences and not learning processes;
- the adoption of the “knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes” fields for the definition of learning outcomes for each qualification level;
- the adoption of descriptors of learning outcomes found in the EQF.

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The NQF is structured as follows:

<b>Qualification Levels</b>	<b>Qualification</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle of primary education
<b>Level 2</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> cycle of primary education obtained in primary education or via dual certification
<b>Level 3</b>	Upper-secondary education geared towards further studies in higher education
<b>Level 4</b>	Upper-secondary education obtained via dual certification or upper-secondary education geared towards further studies in higher education with vocational internship – minimum 6 months
<b>Level 5</b>	Non-higher, post-secondary qualification with credits to continue to higher education-level studies
<b>Level 6</b>	Licentiate Degree (Licenciatura)
<b>Level 7</b>	Master Degree
<b>Level 8</b>	Doctorate

Source: Ordinance no.782/2009, 23<sup>rd</sup> July

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Qualification Levels	Corresponding learning outcomes		
	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
<b>Level 6</b>	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles.	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study.	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts. Take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups.
<b>Level 7</b>	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields.	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches. Take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.
<b>Level 8</b>	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study, and at the interface between fields.	The most advanced and specialised skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research.