

HOW TO DESCRIBE MARKET QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE POLISH QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM

A GUIDEBOOK



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Preface to the English version

The Guidebook is a translation of the Polish version, written for representatives of business sectors, professional groups, training organisations, sectoral associations, crafts chambers and other social entities who would like their qualifications to be listed in the Integrated Qualifications Register and assigned a level of the Polish Qualifications Framework, and therefore included in the Polish integrated qualifications system.

The Guidebook is about describing "market qualifications" and "regulated qualifications", which are types of qualifications usually attained in the non-formal education sector. These terms are defined in the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS Act), which came into force in mid-January 2016. The Act brings the requirements for qualifications from the non-formal education sector in line with those for the formal general, vocational and higher education systems by having them based on learning outcomes, setting a standard for the manner of describing such qualifications, requiring a process of validation and certification, as well as internal and external quality assurance systems.

Three types of qualifications comprise the integrated system:

- qualifications from the formal general, vocational and higher education system awarded on the basis of legal acts regulating these systems – these qualifications are included in the integrated system by law,
- regulated qualifications, which are awarded on the basis of legal regulations other than those governing the formal education systems and under the jurisdiction of ministers of administrative departments related to the subject matter of the qualification,
- market qualifications, which are not established by law, but developed and awarded by entities such as social organisations, associations, professional groups, etc.

In order to include regulated and market qualifications into the Integrated Qualifications System and thus, in the Integrated Qualifications Register, they must be described according to the regulations of the Act, which present the scope and manner of presenting this information. In preparing the standard of describing qualifications in the IQS, the assumption was made that the description should



contain information which is important from the point of view of a person wanting to attain the qualification, as well as the institution conducting validation and certification, and also of government authorities responsible for carrying out development policies.

The Guidebook was translated to provide a better understanding and increased transparency of Polish qualifications for the international community. Additionally, we hope it becomes a useful example for policy analysts and policy developers in Europe and other countries.

Please bear in mind that the process of describing a qualification presented in this guidebook was developed for the needs of the Polish qualifications system. The approach presented in this text serves the needs of Polish users and is only one example of how this process can be designed. In developing their own qualifications system, countries must take into consideration their specific context and needs.

In preparing the translation, we encountered several terminological challenges and have made every effort to clearly define the terms used. In a few cases, we chose a literal translation, since there was no internationally agreed or fully equivalent term.

The primary target group of the original text are Polish readers already familiar with the national qualifications system. Knowing that this may not be the case with readers of the English version, we encourage you to read the Polish Referencing Report and other documents about the Polish Qualifications Framework (available at <http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/en/publications>), since presenting the entire system here is beyond the scope of this publication.

We hope the approach presented in the Guidebook will be inspiring for all persons interested in developing good quality and useful descriptions of qualifications.

Introduction

This guidebook is intended for persons who would like to prepare qualifications for inclusion in the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS), which are awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems: market qualifications (awarded as the result of the principle of the freedom of economic activity) and regulated qualifications (established by law).

The guidebook was prepared to support this inclusion process – to present the range and character of the information required in the application for entering qualifications in the IQS¹. Each section includes comments, guiding questions that should be asked in the course of the work on individual elements of a qualification's description, as well as examples and answers to frequently asked questions. The guidebook is based on the experiences from the pilot projects at the Educational Research Institute in 2014–2015.

Individual elements of the description are discussed in the order in which we propose that they be worked on: from explaining the purpose of including the qualification in the IQS, describing its learning outcomes, defining the requirements for validation² and the entities conducting the validation process, to the remaining information required in the application.

Much attention is devoted to learning outcomes, because they are the key element of a qualification's description. Conceptualizing a qualification through its learning outcomes enables the aims of lifelong learning to be better achieved and allows the attainment of learning outcomes acquired in very different ways (e.g. at work, during leisure time) to be formally confirmed. Clearer information can be provided when offering learners the opportunity to attain a qualification, and it can also be better adapted to the current needs of labour market participants.

Describing a qualification by its learning outcomes provides a greater understanding of how it functions in a domestic labour market for people planning their development and for employers seeking suitable employees. Using learning outcomes to describe a qualification increases its transparency and credibility in an international dimension, because it is through these learning outcomes that a qualification is assigned to a level of the Polish Qualifications Framework.

¹ According to art. 15 and 38 of the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 64).

² Poland's Act on the Integrated Qualifications System defines validation as verifying whether a person attaining a specific qualification has achieved a differentiated set or all of the learning outcomes required for that qualification.

This Guidebook supplements other material, including:

- "Słownik Zintegrowanego Systemu Kwalifikacji" [Glossary of the Integrated Qualifications System] (IBE, 2016), which clarifies the basic concepts of the IQS,
- "Zapewnianie jakości procesu nadawania kwalifikacji spoza systemów oświaty i szkolnictwa wyższego" [Quality assurance of awarding qualifications outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems] (IBE, 2016),
- "Polska Rama Kwalifikacji. Poradnik użytkownika" [Polish Qualifications Framework. A user's guide] (IBE, 2016),
- "Walidacja. Materiał instruktażowy" [Validation. Instructional material] (IBE, 2016),
- "Zasady przypisywania poziomu PRK do kwalifikacji. Materiał instruktażowy" [The principles of assigning a PQF level to a qualification. Instructional material] (IBE, 2016).

1. Why is the qualification needed and for whom?

1.1. The need for the qualification

- Demonstrate that the qualification meets current and anticipated social and economic needs (regional, national, European).
- Refer to the opinions of business organisations, labour market trends, forecasts for the development of technology, national and regional development strategies.



Guiding questions:

1. What social and economic circumstances argue for the inclusion of the qualification in the IQS?
2. What kind of labour market needs (regional, national, European) will the qualification meet?
3. What are the benefits of including the qualification in the IQS for particular groups of people?
4. Are there any data, reports, studies or other publications pointing to the need to include the qualification in the IQS?



Example:

- According to the "Abridged Statistical Yearbook of Poland" published by the Central Statistical Office in 2014, the number of motorcycles and scooters registered in Poland is constantly growing (Central Statistical Office, 2014 Statistical Yearbook Polish, LVII, p. 382).
- As of 2014, persons with a category B driver's license can drive a motorcycle with an engine capacity of up to 125 cm³. This has significantly increased interest in using such models, which means that the demand for related services has also increased.
- As a result of the dynamic growth in the number of motorcycles and scooters, as well as the number of businesses serving this type of vehicle, qualified

personnel must be provided for this service sector, especially since these vehicles are equipped with increasingly complex technology, requiring the use of specialized diagnostic equipment. The maintenance and repair of different vehicle models requires good preparation. Such skills should be formally validated. The provision of services by persons with relevant qualifications increases the safety of using motorcycles.

(for the qualification of "Motorcycle mechanic journeyman's certificate")



Answers to frequently asked questions:

What arguments can we make to have a qualification included in the IQS?

It would be impossible to mention all the types of arguments that could justify the inclusion of a qualification in the IQS. They can be varied and change over time. Experience from the pilot projects carried out by the Educational Research Institute in 2014–2015 allowed us to develop a catalogue of sample arguments:

- respond to the growing demand for professionals in a given field,
- facilitate recruitment for certain jobs,
- stimulate the professional development of employees in a given sector of the economy,
- improve service quality by developing a qualification to be required of the persons providing such services,
- it will now be possible to formally confirm a set of skills acquired, for example, in the workplace (within the country and abroad), as a result of developing one's interests,
- counteract long-term unemployment and social exclusion (resulting from, for example, early school leaving and the lack of formally confirmed competences),
- facilitate labour mobility between different sectors of the economy by designing qualifications with common sets³ of learning outcomes,

³ The Polish concept of "sets" of learning outcomes is the same as the term "units" of learning outcomes, used in the qualifications systems of several European countries.

- increase the transparency of the competences of those seeking work abroad.

Should we refer to study results showing the need for having a qualification included in the IQS?

Yes. It is a good practice to use data, report conclusions and analyses in justifying the need for a qualification, as long as this type of information is available. If the referenced sources have been published, provide this information in a bibliography. If the data has not been published, you should indicate how this information can be accessed by others.

1.2. References to similar qualifications

- Explain how the qualification differs from selected qualifications of a similar nature. The point of reference should consist of qualifications functioning in the IQS. In addition, refer to qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) that contain at least one same set of learning outcomes.



Guiding questions:

1. Which qualifications currently awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems prepare learners to undertake similar activities? To what extent does the qualification being described differ from them? What additional competences does it confirm?
2. Which of the qualifications currently awarded outside of the formal general, vocational and higher education systems that are in the IQS prepare learners to undertake similar activities? To what extent does the qualification being described differ from them? What additional competences does it confirm?
3. Do the qualifications listed in the IQR have sets of learning outcomes that can be used to describe the proposed qualification?
4. Which of the qualifications listed in the IQR contain at least one same set of learning outcomes?



Answers to frequently asked questions:

How should we understand the term "similar qualification"?

"Similar qualifications" can be understood as those that are preparing learners to undertake similar or complementary activities (e.g. to apply make-up, style hair, identify a person's style type, select treatments by skin type). Similar qualifications may be directed to the same group of persons with similar experiences, interests or needs (e.g. a person providing services in styling, hairdressing or skin care).

Which qualifications should we refer to?

References should be made to those qualifications that are awarded in the formal general, vocational and higher education systems, as well as regulated (awarded on the basis of legal regulations) and market qualifications included in the IQS. It is also worth referring to qualifications not included in the IQS that are important to specific professional communities.

What is the significance of showing the similarities and differences between the qualification being described and similar ones?

This information enables you to present the uniqueness of the qualification being described and justify the need for its inclusion in the IQS. This is important for two reasons. First, it reduces the risk of including qualifications in the IQS that only superficially differ. Second, it allows you to show the relationship between the qualification being described and those that operate in the IQS. It guides the search for an answer to the question of whether any of the sets of learning outcomes of existing qualifications already in the IQS can be part of the new qualification.

How many similar qualifications should we refer to?

It is impossible to provide a specific number because this depends on the qualification being described. If there are few similar qualifications (or none at all), it is worth considering the development and inclusion of more than one qualification in the IQS, e.g. from a lower and higher level of the PQF. If there are many similar qualifications, you should only refer to several of them, e.g. the most popular ones or those especially valued by employers. At this stage of describing a qualification, the issue is not about the number of referenced qualifications, but showing the differences between the qualification being described and those already included in the IQS.

1.3. Target groups

- Provide information about the groups of persons who may be particularly interested in attaining the qualification, e.g. real estate managers, telecommunications specialists, women returning to the labour market.



Guiding questions:

1. Who may be particularly interested in attaining the qualification?



Examples:

- The qualification is mainly for employees of maintenance and repair shops installing engine tuning components and for persons wishing to start an engine tuning business.

(for the qualification of "Installation of engine tuning components")

- The qualification is designed primarily for people who:
 - » are employed in maintenance and repair shops, service stations and sales showrooms providing services to motorcyclists,
 - » operate a business that maintains, diagnoses and repairs motorcycles,
 - » maintain and repair motorcycles as a hobby.

(for the qualification of "Motorcycle mechanic journeyman's certificate")

1.4. The conditions required for proceeding with validation

- Determine (if needed) the conditions to be met by a person to proceed with validation and be able to attain the qualification (e.g. the required level of education).
- When determining these conditions, remember that they are not the same as the requirements for getting a job. Work experience should be indicated as a condition only in justified cases – competences resulting from professional practice should be reflected primarily in the learning outcomes required for the qualification.
- The conditions for proceeding with validation must be verifiable.



Example:

A person may be admitted to the motorcycle mechanic journeyman exam if he/she has at least a lower secondary school or an eight-year primary school completion certificate, experience in servicing, diagnosing and repairing motorcycles or has learned motorcycle mechanics in school or in an outside-of-school system.

The Resolution of the Minister of National Education of 14 September 2012 on the journeyman's examination, master's examination and the examination of professional competence conducted by the examination commissions of crafts chambers sets out seven paths leading to the journeyman's examination:

- completed an apprenticeship with a craftsperson as a young worker and obtained theoretical training in a vocational school or outside of school,
- completed continuing education outside of school for the profession of motorcycle mechanic,
- completed vocational training for adults, as described in Article 53c of the Act of 20 April 2004 on promoting employment and labour market institutions, for the profession of motorcycle mechanic,
- has a minimum of three years' experience working in the field of servicing, diagnosing and repairing motorcycles,

- completed post-lower secondary school of vocational training in a field associated with the profession of motorcycle mechanic,
- attained a professional title in an occupation related to motorcycle mechanic and has at least a 6 month period of professional practice in servicing, diagnosing and repairing motorcycles,
- attained a certificate of having passed an examination confirming professional competences and after receiving this certificate, has a minimum of a one year's work experience in servicing, diagnosing and repairing motorcycles.

(for the qualification of "Motorcycle mechanic journeyman's certificate")

1.5. Typical uses of the qualification

- Present the most important prospects for employment and further learning from the perspective of the personal and professional development of individuals who may be interested in attaining the qualification.
- You can also indicate the types of jobs a person will be able to apply for with this qualification.



Guiding questions:

1. What are the employment opportunities in the regional, national or European labour markets for a person who has attained this qualification?
2. What further learning opportunities exist for a person who has attained this qualification? What types of successive qualifications can be attained after having achieved this one?



Examples:

- A person with the proposed qualification can be employed by clubs, associations and sports federations, e.g. to coach national or regional teams, high performance athletes, sports teams in the highest class divisions. He/she can also work with regional sports associations in the further education and training of coaching staffs.

(for the qualification of "Master class coach")

- The proposed qualification can be used in the following situations:
 - » for employment in maintenance and repair shops, motorcycle service stations and sales showrooms,
 - » to operate a business providing motorcycle maintenance, diagnosis and repair services,
 - » for a hobby of maintaining and repairing one's own motorcycle,
 - » to attain successive qualifications associated with the field (e.g. to attain a motorcycle mechanic master's certificate, car mechanic journeyman's certificate, car mechanic master's certificate, automotive electrical mechanic journeyman's certificate, automotive electrical mechanic master's certificate, locksmith journeyman's certificate, locksmith master's certificate).

(for the qualification of "Motorcycle mechanic journeyman's certificate")

1.6. The entitlements / powers conferred by having attained the qualification

- Specify the entitlements / powers that accompany the qualification.
- Specify the entitlements / powers a person is able to apply for after having attained the qualification.
- If there are no entitlements or powers associated with the qualification, write "Not applicable" in the application form.



Guiding questions:

1. Does the qualification entitle a person to undertake certain activities, which otherwise are not allowed without this qualification?
2. Is the qualification one of the conditions required to attain another qualification or other entitlements / powers?



Examples:

- A particular category of driver's licence entitles a person to drive specific types of vehicles on public roads.
- Having a category B driver's licence is an additional condition for attaining a category C1 driver's licence.

2. Which learning outcomes are required for the qualification?

2.1. Synthesis of the learning outcomes

- Provide a brief, general description of the knowledge, skills and social competences by defining the activities, which a person will be prepared to carry out after attaining the qualification.
- The synthesis of the learning outcomes should relate to the characteristics of the appropriate PQF level, and in particular, describe the extent to which a person with the qualification is prepared to act independently under more or less predictable conditions, to perform activities at different levels of complexity, to take on specific roles in a group, and to take responsibility for the quality and results of actions (their own or of the team they are leading).



Guiding questions:

1. What is the extent of supervision needed by a person with this qualification? How detailed do the directions and instructions need to be for a person with this qualification?
2. What role can a person with this qualification take on in a team – a person who is given instructions and follows them, or a person who organises the work of others, specifying the objectives and methods of action?
3. Can a person with this qualification support others in acquiring and developing competences? Can he/she be considered an expert in the given field, provide guidance to less experienced persons?
4. Does the qualification confirm that the learner is only prepared to use models and instructions, or can he/she also develop innovative ways of carrying out defined activities?
5. Is a person with this qualification prepared to solve problems independently in untypical situations, under variable and unpredictable conditions?



Examples:

PQF level	Syntheses of the learning outcomes (excerpts)
2	A person with this qualification washes and prepares the body of a vehicle to prepare it for maintenance activities according to provided instructions, follows guidelines for selecting cleaning and maintenance products for the individual elements of the chassis. He/she assesses the quality of the work performed and, if needed, corrects the work. <i>(for the qualification of "Maintaining motor vehicle chassis")</i>
3	A person with this qualification recognizes typical damage to electrical installations. He/she independently plans the execution of assigned tasks, selects replacement parts for electrical installations from a catalogue, performs measurements of the parameters of the electrical installation and interprets their results. <i>(for the qualification of "Maintaining electrical installations")</i>
4	A person with this qualification estimates the amount of food products required to prepare meals. He/she independently contacts suppliers to ensure the delivery of products of an appropriate quality, takes delivery, determines how they should be stored. He/she determines the working conditions for him/herself and supervised staff. He/she supervises the work of a small team preparing the meals, determines and, depending on circumstances, amends the plan of preparing individual dishes. He/she oversees compliance with the principles of rational food management and food safety and takes responsibility for the quality of the meals prepared by the team. <i>(for the qualification of "Managing a small food service")</i>
6	A person with this qualification identifies the legal status of real estate based on collected information, as well as in the context of changes taking place in the real estate market. He/she plans and implements research and analyses of the local real estate market; verifies the offer price of real estate, taking into account its condition, location, local investment indicators, local zoning plans. He/she conducts risk analyses, predicts eventual difficulties in the later use of the property. He/she takes responsibility for the consequences of the expert opinions made, observes the ethics of the profession and cares about the quality of the professional activities performed. <i>(for the qualification of "Providing expertise in the real estate market")</i>

7

A person with this qualification plans and implements strategies to achieve the best long-term results based on the abilities of trainees and through the use of his/her own practices in the field of the methodology and means of coaching. He/she organises and supervises the work of support staff; determines the working environment and morale of co-workers; takes responsibility for the quality and effectiveness of his/her own activities and those of the team being directed.

A person with this qualification is also prepared to advise on the development of coaching personnel and to select coaching methods and means. He/she shares knowledge and experiences, guides coaches, instructors and animators. He/she promotes an ethical attitude, motivates people to make an effort and to work together to achieve established aims.

(for the qualification of "Master coach")



Answers to frequently asked questions:

What role does the synthesis of the learning outcomes play in the description of the qualification?

The synthesis describing the learning outcomes answers the following questions: "What is the level of complexity of the activities that can be carried out by a person with this qualification? Under what conditions can a person with this qualification act? To what extent can a person with this qualification act independently?" The synthesis increases the clarity of the qualification's description and facilitates the ability to compare qualifications.

Would it suffice to have the synthesis of the learning outcomes prepared by just listing the professional tasks that a person with this qualification is able to do?

No, because qualifications may not necessarily prepare a learner to carry out professional tasks. It is important to think about qualifications from the perspective of learning. The perspective of learning is broader than the perspective of the labour market. And this has consequences for the description of the qualification.

First, finding a job is only one of the motives for attaining a qualification. Second, as a result of having attained defined learning outcomes, a person with a given qualification is able to perform various professional tasks, depending on the job position, working conditions and arrangements with the employer. Third, in using the language of professional tasks, and not learning outcomes, the opportunity is lost to compare the competences various persons may have.

Only by using descriptions of learning outcomes can you answer such questions as "What is this person able to do, what does this person know, what responsibilities is this person ready to assume?".

Figure 1. Examples of developing competences as the result of learning
(based on universal PQF level descriptors for the area of *Solving problems and using knowledge in practice*)

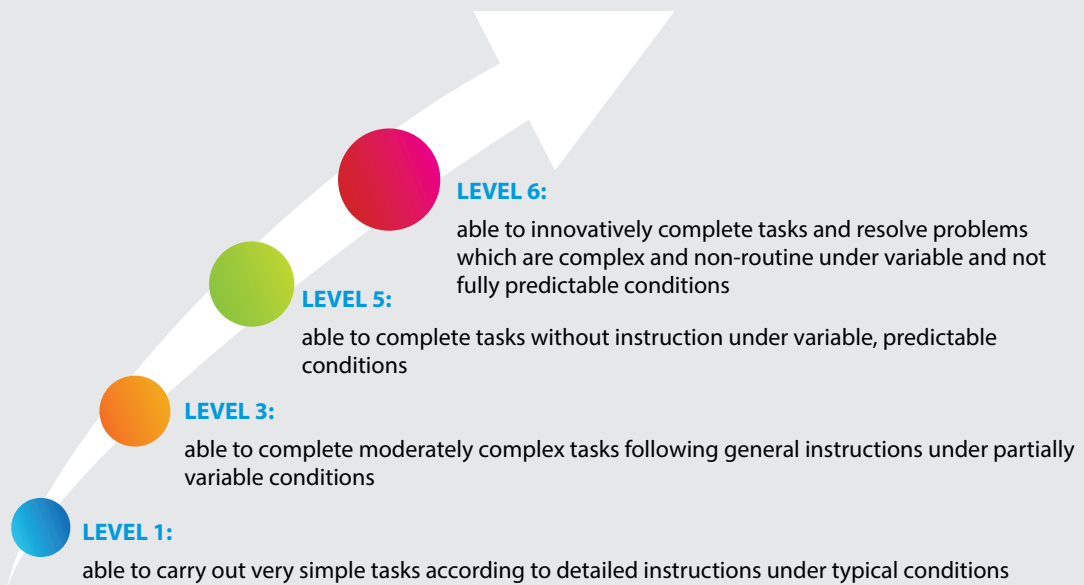
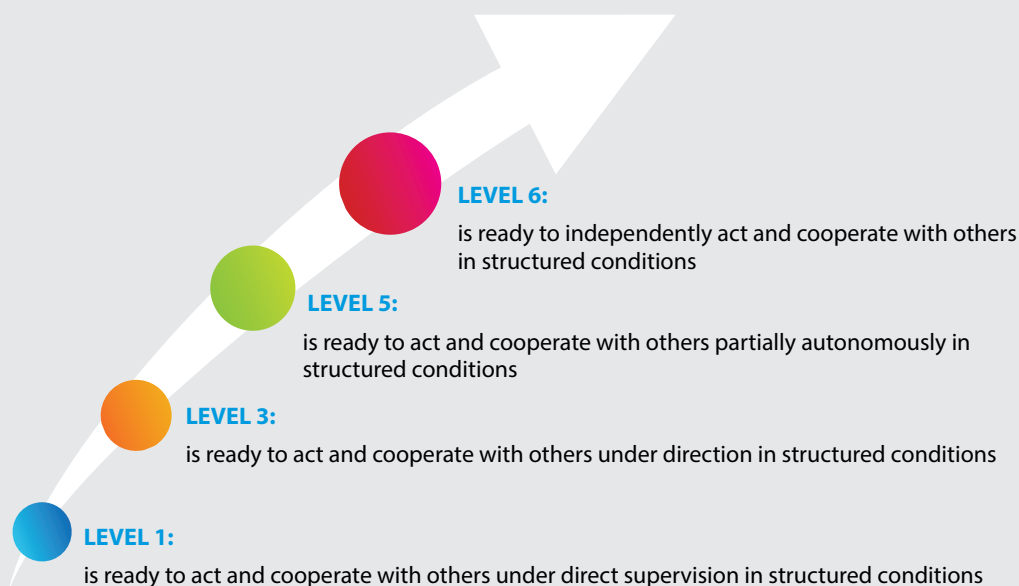


Figure 2. Examples of developing competences as the result of learning
(based on universal PQF level descriptors)



How does the "synthesis of the learning outcomes" relate to other elements of the description of the qualification, such as "references to similar qualifications" or the "short description of the qualification"?

Information on the relationship between the qualification being described and similar qualifications is the starting point for formulating the synthesis describing the learning outcomes. Discussions of the relationship between the qualification being described and similar qualifications should provide arguments for its inclusion in the IQS. In contrast, the synthesis is aimed at making this information clearer for persons seeking ways to further their development and learning, as well as for employers seeking employees with specific competences. This is why we describe, among other characteristics, the level of autonomy a person has with a given qualification, their preparation in working with others and taking responsibility for their work.

The synthesis of the required learning outcomes only describes the learning outcomes achieved with an awarded qualification. The "short description of the qualification" itself includes the greatest amount of information from the point of view of the persons for whom it is intended, as well as from the perspective of

an employer. The short description can refer to the learning outcomes required for the qualification, but it does not have to. The guidelines for completing this part of the form are intentionally general.

2.2. Sets of individual learning outcomes

- A set of learning outcomes is a distinct part of the learning outcomes required for a given qualification. Individual learning outcomes should be interrelated, complementary and presented in an orderly manner (e.g. from simple learning outcomes to more complex ones).
- Individual learning outcomes are defined by descriptions of skills (i.e. the ability to perform tasks and solve problems) and their verification criteria, by specifying their scope and defining the knowledge and social skills required to attain them.
- Specific learning outcomes should be:
 - » clear – their description should raise no doubts, enable validation to be planned and carried out, allow validation results to be compared, and are able to be referenced to a PQF level,
 - » realistic – able to be achieved by the persons for whom the given qualification is foreseen,
 - » able to be verified during the validation process,
 - » understandable to persons who may be potentially interested in the qualification.
- The use of operational (action) verbs (e.g. *differentiates*, *justifies*, *installs*) is preferred when describing individual learning outcomes.

Examples of operational verbs:

A	accepts, achieves, acknowledges, accommodates, adapts, adjudicates, adjusts (e.g. an action plan), administers (e.g. personal information), aligns, analyses, announces, applies, arbitrates, argues, arranges, articulates, assembles, assesses, assigns (e.g. a task), assists, attaches, attains, attributes, avoids
B	begins, blends, brings, broadens, builds
C	calculates, carries out, captures, categorizes, changes, checks, challenges, chooses (e.g. tools, methods), cites (e.g. examples), classifies, closes, collects, compares, completes, complies, compiles, composes, comprehends, concludes, conducts, confronts, connects, constructs, contrasts, contributes, controls, convinces, coordinates, copies, corrects, counters, counts, creates (e.g. a work of art), cuts out (e.g. a paper pattern)
D	describes, debates, decides, differentiates, defends (i.e. an opinion), defines (e.g. needs) demonstrates, deposits, designs (i.e. research tools), determines, develops, differentiates, digitalizes (e.g. a document), discovers, discusses (e.g. strengths and weaknesses, stages of carrying out a task), disinfects (e.g. a wound), disassembles, displays, divides, documents, draws
E	edits, elaborates, emphasizes, employs, engraves, enumerates, establishes, estimates, examines, exhibits (e.g. objects according to their historical context), exhibits (e.g. has the characteristics of), explains (e.g. conditions, relationships), extracts
F	facilitates, fills out, finds, fixes, follows (e.g. instructions, a process), forecasts, formulates (e.g. questions)
G	gathers, generalizes, groups
H	handles, hauls, helps, highlights (e.g. positive features),
I	identifies, illustrates, imitates, implements, improves, includes, incorporates, indicates, influences, informs, initiates, inserts, installs, instructs, integrates, interprets, introduces, isolates
J	judges, justifies (e.g. the choice of a tool)
K	keeps (e.g. records)
L	labels, leads, links, lists, locates (e.g. defects)
M	makes (e.g. decisions), maintains, manages, marks, maximizes, measures, minimizes, mixes, mobilizes, modifies, moulds (e.g. attitudes), motivates
N	names, navigates, notifies
O	obtains, operates, opposes, organises

P	paraphrases, participates, performs, patches, places, plans, polishes, practices, predicts, prepares (e.g. a plan, schedule), presents, preserves, prevents, produces (e.g. a brand image, a presentation), proposes, proves, provides (e.g. information, advice, guidance)
Q	quotes
R	reads, recites, recognizes, recommends, reconstructs, records, recruits, reduces, refines, reflects, registers, regroups, regulates, relates, removes, reorganises, repairs, repeats, reports, reproduces, researches, resolves, responds, reviews
S	searches, seeks, selects, separates, services, sets, sews, shows, simplifies, sketches, sorts, solves, specifies (e.g. aims), starts, stocks (e.g. products), stores, studies, substantiates, summarizes, supervises, supplements (e.g. missing documents), supports, synthesizes
T	takes apart, takes advantage of, tailors, tells, ties, transcribes, transforms, translates (e.g. simple statement from English), transports, turns off, turns on (e.g. devices in the proper sequence),
U	underlines, uses (e.g. computer programs), updates (e.g. a menu), undertakes, unifies
V	values, varies, verifies (e.g. that a task has been carried out properly)
W	weighs, widens, writes



Examples:

Learning outcomes (skills)	Verification criteria	Reference to PQF levels (best matching elements of the PQF level descriptors)
Preparing a motorcycle for diagnosis	- Protects the motorcycle from damage or accidental movement at the diagnostic station - Selects materials and tools to clean motorcycles depending on the type of dirt and to treat the body - Cleans the motorcycle of dirt from daily use	- Is able to perform moderately complex professional tasks (P3Z_UO)² - Is able to organise a work station to perform moderately complex professional tasks, taking into account safety requirements (P3Z_UN)
Complies with regulations on personal information protection	- Defines the concept of "personal information" according to the regulations of the current act on personal data protection - Shows how personal information can be used according to the regulations of the current act, including: » protecting personal information from being accessed or taken by unauthorized persons » protecting personal information from being used, lost, damaged or destroyed - Explains the need for reporting the name of an entity's administrator for the protection of information to the General Inspector for Personal Data Protection - Explains the principles for protecting paper and electronic documents that include personal data.	- Knows and understands typical and other often used organisational solutions in performing professional tasks (P4Z_WO) - Is ready to take responsibility for performing professional tasks autonomously (P4Z_KO)

² These codes refer to the types of second stage generic descriptors in the Polish Qualifications Framework. In this example: P=level, the number represents the level, Z=vocational education and training, U=skills O=organisation of work. For more information (in Polish) see http://www.kwalifikacje.edu.pl/images/download/Publikacje/Polska_Rama_Kwalifikacji.pdf.

Learning outcomes (skills)	Verification criteria	Reference to PQF levels (best matching elements of the PQF level descriptors)
Planning the professional development of a team	- Explains the significance of identifying gaps in the competences of subordinate employees and provides examples of activities to support their professional development - Describes the information required for a person directing a team to plan the professional development of individual employees. - Discusses available methods of motivating employees to undertake self-learning and explains its effectiveness - Explains the significance of exchanging knowledge and experiences within a team - Discusses ways of monitoring professional development plans of individual employees - Explains the importance of autonomously planning one's own learning and how a person can continually develop their competences	- Is able to assess the possibilities for the professional development of subordinate employees (P6Z_UU) - Is ready to participate in promoting a culture of quality in professional activities (P6Z_KO)



Answers to frequently asked questions:

Why do we use descriptions of skills in developing the required learning outcomes of a qualification?

The different categories of learning outcomes of the PQF cannot be treated separately, because the learning outcomes defined as "knowledge" always include a component of skills, "skills" always contain some elements of knowledge, and "social competence" consists of some skills and some knowledge. In describing a market or regulated qualification, the aspect of skills is at the forefront, and for this reason, knowledge and social competence are indicated in the verification criteria. This approach is based on the belief that in terms of qualifications, the key issue is the answer to the following question: "What types of activities is a person able to do with this qualification?"

Should we develop a qualification's required learning outcomes so that they refer to all of the components of the descriptors for the proposed PQF level?

No, the learning outcomes required for a market or regulated qualification may relate to selected descriptors of the proposed PQF level.

It should be noted here that the learning outcomes required for a qualification usually refer to descriptors of different PQF levels. The PQF level of a given qualification is determined by the key learning outcomes ("Key learning outcomes" is a term used in the method for levelling qualifications in Poland).

What is the function of the verification criteria in the description of learning outcomes?

Verification criteria are the basis for planning and conducting validation, the results of which should be comparable between different certifying institutions. Verification criteria are important in determining the methods chosen for validation and the way it is organised.

In addition, validation criteria are one of the major determinants of the qualification's PQF level. Likewise, more precisely describing a skill through the use of various verification criteria allows it to be referenced to the descriptors of different PQF levels.



Examples:

Learning outcomes (skills)	Verification criteria	Reference to PQF levels (best matching elements of the PQF level descriptors)
Chooses tools	▪ Differentiates the tools of a typical work station, describes how they are used (also in the context of workplace health and safety regulations) ▪ Maintains a neat and orderly work station	▪ Knows the principles and procedures of workplace health and safety related to professional activities (P2Z_WO) ▪ Is able to use typical equipment found at a work station for performing simple professional tasks, taking into account health and safety requirements (P2Z_UN)

Learning outcomes (skills)	Verification criteria	Reference to PQF levels (best matching elements of the PQF level descriptors)
Chooses tools	- Indicates how a work station should be equipped and prepared, referring, among others, to workplace health and safety regulations - Determines the principles of how the tools found at a work station are chosen and used	- Is able to design a work station required for performing moderately complex professional tasks (P4Z_UN) - Is able to instruct and train others in performing professional tasks (P4Z_UU)

Verification criteria are also helpful for people attaining a given qualification. They enable people to learn what they will have to do and demonstrate to confirm the achievement of the required learning outcomes.

How many verification criteria should a given learning outcome have?

The number of verification criteria can vary depending on the learning outcome. The accuracy of the verification criteria is more important than their number.

How detailed should the verification criteria be?

Verification criteria should be sufficiently detailed so that it is clearly understood what is meant by a particular skill, type and scope of knowledge or social competence. For example, if a qualification requires that a given skill requires the use of specific tools, methods or procedures; knowledge of selected theories and standards – then the verification criteria should clearly indicate this.

However, verification criteria should not be excessively detailed, as this could make the qualification's description less understandable to persons who potentially may be interested in it. This could also make it difficult to access the qualification, increase the cost of its validation, as well as quickly outdate it.

Why is the use of operational verbs recommended in describing skills and verification criteria?

Using operational (action) verbs improves the precision of the description and helps to avoid ambiguous wording, such as "adequately responds", "applies the

rules for environmental protection", "respects safety principles", "cares about the environment", "is aware of innovations in the professional tasks being performed", "knows the assessment guidelines", "is ready to cooperate", "follows the principles of communication", which provoke the need to ask further questions.

How should we use operational verbs when describing learning outcomes?

No operational verb can be linked to only one PQF level.

In the course of describing skills and verification criteria, the following should be kept in mind: the verbs used should not conflict with the requirements described for a given level. They should indicate to the best extent as possible the scope and depth of a person's knowledge required for a given qualification, as well as their preparation to act independently and make decisions. Therefore, when describing qualifications from lower levels (1-3), verbs such as "identify", "differentiate" should be used more often, while in the case of qualifications from higher levels (6-8), verbs such as "substantiate", "analyse" should be used.

2.3. Differentiated sets of learning outcomes

- List the sets of learning outcomes required for the qualification, including: sequence numbers (1, 2, ...), the name of each set, an indication of the PQF level for each set and the notional workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes in each set.
- The name of the set should:
 - » refer to the learning outcomes making up the set or relate to the character of the specific learning outcomes it contains,
 - » be as short as possible,
 - » not use abbreviations,
 - » use verbal nouns where possible, such as, e.g. *gathering, storing, sewing*.



Example:

Sets of learning outcomes for the qualification of "Managing a library":

1. Collecting, recording and selecting library collections (PQF level 4, 50 hours)
2. Cataloguing collections (PQF level 5, 100 hours)
3. Making collections accessible (PQF level 4, 50 hours)
4. Storing and preserving library materials (PQF level 3, 30 hours)
5. Conducting information services based on library resources and sources of information (PQF level 5, 100 hours)
6. Managing a library (PQF level 4, 50 hours)



Answers to frequently asked questions:

Why are specific learning outcomes grouped into sets?

First, grouping learning outcomes allows them to be presented in a clearer way. Second, grouping learning outcomes allows the qualification to be attained in stages and thus spread over time to better respond to a person's abilities and circumstances.

Third, when learning outcomes are described in this way, specific sets can be shared among qualifications. Once validated, they will not have to be re-validated in the process of attaining another qualification that includes the same set of learning outcomes. For example, if a person with qualification X that includes learning outcome sets A, B and C decides to get qualification Y, which has learning outcome sets A, D and E, they will not have to validate set A again. Only the learning outcomes in sets D and E will have to be validated.

Can qualifications have common sets of learning outcomes?

Some sets of learning outcomes can be included as a requirement of more than one qualification. In such cases, attaining a successive qualification (with a common set of learning outcomes as the qualification that has been already awarded) should be simpler.

The possibility of using a set of required learning outcomes that is part of another qualification can reduce the cost of designing the new qualification.

Do all sets of required learning outcomes for a given qualification have to be directly related only to that qualification?

No. Sets of learning outcomes can be either specific to a given qualification or be non-specific, that is, they may contain learning outcomes that have a universal character, for example. "Preparing for public speaking", "Archiving documents", "Managing the work of a team", "Managing information flow".

How many skills should be included in a set of learning outcomes?

The experience of the pilot projects implemented at IBE indicates that one set should include requirements consisting of a notional workload of several dozen hours for around 5 skills.

3. How should qualifications be validated?

Requirements for validation and the entities conducting validation

- Determine the requirements for carrying out validation in various institutions. The requirements should apply to:
 - » the methods used in validation – to verify the learning outcomes required for the qualification, but also (if needed) to identify and document the learning outcomes,
 - » human resources – the competences required of persons carrying out validation,
 - » the way validation is conducted, as well as the organisational conditions and materials required for the qualification to be properly validated.
- Validation requirements may be indicated for individual sets of learning outcomes or for the entire qualification.
- The requirements may be supplemented by additional guidance for institutions and persons designing the validation process and carrying it out, as well as for persons seeking to attain the qualification.



Guiding questions:

1. What kinds of methods can determine whether a person has achieved the learning outcomes required for the qualification?
2. What kinds of methods do not make it possible to verify whether a person has achieved the learning outcomes required for the qualification?
3. What kinds of methods allow the identification of learning outcomes achieved by a person through learning in different ways?
4. What kinds of methods allow the achievement of learning outcomes to be documented?

5. What competences should persons have, who are performing various functions in the validation process? Do these competences correspond to the requirements for the methods used in validation?
6. How often and in what ways should the competences of the persons performing various functions in the validation process be reviewed and improved?
7. Should validation have a specified timeframe?
8. What are the organisational and material resources required to properly carry out validation (e.g. the duration of the process, site conditions, equipment)?



Answers to frequently asked questions:

Why must we define the requirements for validation and the institutions conducting validation in the description of the qualification?

Defining common requirements is intended to ensure that the results of validation conducted by various institutions can be compared. In addition, these requirements are an important criterion for assessing the institution applying for the authority to certify the qualification – only institutions demonstrating that they are able to carry out validation in accordance with the requirements specified in the description of the qualification can be authorized to certify it.

What should guide us in determining the requirements for validation?

Validation requirements must reflect the nature of the learning outcomes for the qualification, taking into account the various possible learning pathways of persons who are attaining the qualification. For example, in the case of determining the requirements of the methods used in the validation of the learning outcomes "baking bread" or "laying tile", it would be wrong to have a test of theoretical knowledge. Such skills should be verified through practical tasks, in conditions similar to real ones.

How detailed should the description of the validation requirements be?

Validation requirements should not provide a detailed scenario of the validation process. Each certifying institution develops and carries out its own scenarios, taking into account these requirements. Therefore, the general principle is that the description of the validation requirements does not specify the methods and tools needed to carry out validation.

Can we indicate many kinds of methods to verify one set of learning outcomes?

Yes, you can specify any number and type of methods, adapting them to a given set of learning outcomes.

**Example:**

Learning outcomes (skills)	Verification criteria
Maintains and repairs irrigation systems	- Names types of irrigation systems - Selects methods of repairing and maintaining the components of an irrigation system - Performs tasks related to the repair and maintenance of irrigation systems - Indicates the health and safety regulations and environmental protection regulations that apply when maintaining and repairing irrigation systems

In the example given, it would suffice to verify the examinee's knowledge in the case of criteria 1 and 4 (by using a test, for example), whereas it would be necessary to verify criteria 2 and 3 by assessing the performance of practical tasks. You could also combine these methods in one task, where practical tasks would be supplemented by answering questions related to the more theoretical aspects.

What should we take into account in the requirements for the persons carrying out validation?

These requirements should take into account the competences of the persons carrying out validation, in particular, of those persons responsible for designing the validation process at the certifying institution and of those persons who are verifying learning outcomes. It is important to indicate both the required competences in the fields related to the qualification and competences in conducting validation.

The human resources requirements may also indicate how such persons are to be selected. As an example, it may be required that experts outside the certifying institution are involved in this process.

What can be specified in the requirements on how to carry out validation?

These requirements may, among others, indicate the minimum or maximum duration of validation. They may also impose the order of the tasks performed by the person undergoing validation. For example, before performing practical tasks in the laboratory, it may be necessary to verify whether the person knows the required health and safety regulations for the given type of laboratory.

What additional guidance can we provide to supplement the validation requirements?

Validation requirements may be supplemented by information on the conditions to be met by persons who must repeat the validation process.

4. What else is included in the description of the qualification?

4.1. Name of the qualification

- Provide the full name of the qualification as it should be listed in the IQR and in the document confirming its attainment.
- To the extent possible, the name of the qualification should:
 - » unequivocally identify the qualification,
 - » differentiate it from other qualifications,
 - » differ from the names of professions, job positions, professional titles, entitlements / powers,
 - » be as short as possible,
 - » not use abbreviations,
 - » be based on verbal nouns, e.g. *collecting, maintaining, sewing*.



Examples:

- Diagnosing the electrical system of an automobile.
- Managing a municipal economy.
- Maintaining green areas.

4.2. Name of the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded

- Provide the name of the document confirming the awarded qualification, as well as its period of validity and, if necessary, the conditions for renewal.
- In the case of a qualification awarded for a fixed time period, the conditions of renewal should be provided, such as the period of validity and the requirements for renewing the qualification.



Examples:

- Names of documents: certificate, diploma, attestation.
- Period of validity and requirements for renewal: valid indefinitely, valid for 3 years from the date it is awarded.

4.3. Proposed PQF level of the qualification

- In addition to proposing a PQF level (from 1 to 8) for the qualification, the law requires that proposals for its level in the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) also be submitted, if such a framework exists in the sector or industry relevant to the qualification being described and this SQF is included in the IQS.

4.4. Notional workload needed to attain the qualification

- Provide the approximate number of hours needed by a typical learner attaining the qualification to achieve its learning outcomes and undergo validation (1 hour = 60 minutes).
- To begin, it is worth determining the notional workload required to achieve specific sets of learning outcomes. The notional workload for the qualification corresponds to the total workload required to achieve its different sets of learning outcomes.



Guiding questions:

1. What information is needed to help a person be well prepared to carry out the activities required to attain the qualification?
2. What kinds of activities does a person have to carry out to attain the qualification?
3. What is the average number of hours needed to achieve each set of learning outcomes?
4. What is the average number of hours required to carry out validation?



Answers to frequently asked questions:

Why should we estimate the work required to attain the qualification?

This information is especially helpful for persons interested in attaining the qualification.

Can the notional workload be considered equivalent to the number of hours of a course or training workshop leading to the qualification?

No. The notional workload is not the same as the number of hours provided during a course or training workshop.

What kinds of activities should be taken into consideration to estimate the workload required of a person who wants to attain the qualification?

A variety of activities related to learning and attaining a qualification should be considered, such as:

- analysing a typical learner's competences before starting the learning process, planning the learning process and preparing to start it,
- participating in organised forms of learning offered by educational institutions (e.g. labs, lectures),
- preparing for classes,
- participating in other forms of organised education (on-the-job training, internships, workplace training, etc.),
- choosing, gathering and studying materials, preparing for exams, tests, presenting assignments or projects for assessment, etc.,
- undergoing validation.

How should we determine the notional workload for diverse groups of people attaining the qualification?

The amount of time spent on attaining the qualification will differ for each qualification and each person. To estimate the workload, a reference is used of the average time needed to achieve the learning outcomes for persons just starting to learn the material for a given qualification.



Examples of the notional workload

Examples of the notional workload required to attain the qualification of "Organising leisure time"

The result of the notional workload for the "Preparing to implement an event" set of learning outcomes	analysing competences and planning learning activities	4 h
	independent learning	20 h
	training	11 h
	preparing for validation	10 h
	validation	5 h
	TOTAL	50 h
The result of the notional workload for the "Implementing events" set of learning outcomes	analysing competences	2 h
	training	20 h
	independent learning	6 h
	internship	16 h
	preparing for validation	2 h
	validation	4 h
	TOTAL	50 h
The result of the notional workload for the "Presenting the cultural and historical information of a given region" set of learning outcomes	training	50 h
	independent learning	50 h
	lectures	5 h
	internship	15 h
	preparing for validation	6 h
	validation	4 h
	TOTAL	130 h
Notional workload for the qualification of "Organising leisure time"	TOTAL	230 h

4.5. Brief description of the qualification

- Provide selected information about the qualification for persons interested in attaining it, as well as for employers, who will be able to quickly assess if the qualification has the exact skills and competences they are seeking.
- In writing the brief description, try answering the question: "What activities or tasks can be done by a person with this qualification?"



Guiding questions:

1. Which information about the qualification could be especially useful for persons who are searching for qualifications that meet their needs?
2. Which information about the qualification could be especially useful for employers?



Examples:

- This qualification prepares a person to independently plan and organise the work of sowing, planting and caring for plants. He/she performs, among other tasks, relevant plant care, selects ways of watering plants, repairs and maintains irrigation systems, introduces new plant species in green areas in accordance with the instructions of landscape architects.

(for the qualification of "Maintenance of green areas")

- This qualification prepares a person to produce corrective eyeglass lenses based on received orders and make minor repairs to eyeglasses. He/she uses the appropriate workshop machinery and equipment, such as grinding machines, grinders, drills, groovers, dioptimeters and small specialist tools.

(for the qualification of "Making and repairing eyeglasses")

- This qualification can be attained by persons who have proven achievements in guiding their trainees to achieve success in sports at the national or international level. A person with this qualification is prepared to:
 - » coach athletes at the championship level in competitive sports,
 - » direct the development of coaching personnel,
 - » organise and supervise the work of employed staff.

(for the qualification of "Master coach")

Annex 1. Selected regulations from the Act of 22 December 2015 on the Integrated Qualifications System (Journal of Laws 2016, item 64)

Art. 15. 1.

The application referred to in art. 14 para. 1, provides:

1. information on the entity referred to in art. 14 para. 1 [...];
2. the description of a market qualification consists of:
 - a. name of the qualification,
 - b. name of the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded, the period of its validity, and if needed, the conditions of its renewal,
 - c. notional workload expressed in hours needed to attain the qualification,
 - d. brief description of the qualification, inclusive of information on the activities or tasks a person with this qualification is able to do,
 - e. the entitlements / powers conferred by having attained the qualification,
 - f. information on the groups of persons who may be interested in attaining the qualification,
 - g. if needed, the conditions required of a person to proceed with validation, especially the required level of education,
 - h. requirements of validation and the entities conducting validation,
 - i. the need for the qualification, presented in the context of labour market trends, new technology developments, needs of society, as well as national or regional development strategies,
 - j. typical uses of the qualification,
 - k. references to similar qualifications and to qualifications in the Integrated Qualifications Register that have common sets of learning outcomes;
- 3) the learning outcomes required for the given qualification, presented in accordance with **art. 9 para. 1 item 1**;
- 4) proposals of a Polish Qualifications Framework level for the given qualification and referencing to a level in the Sectoral Qualifications Framework, if a Sectoral Qualifications Framework exists for the given sector or industry;
- 5) information on the estimated cost of the document confirming that a given qualification has been awarded;
- 6) educational subject code, as described in the regulations issued on the basis of art. 40 para. 2 of the Act of 29 June 1995 on public statistics (Journal of Laws 2012, item 591, with later amendments);
- 7) code of the Polish Classification of Activities (PKD).

Art. 9. 1.

Levels in the Polish Qualifications Framework are assigned to partial qualifications if:

- 1) the learning outcomes required for the given qualification are written in a manner that includes:
 - a) a synthesis describing the required learning outcomes,
 - b) differentiated sets of learning outcomes,
 - c) specific learning outcomes in sets, as well as the verification criteria for attaining individual learning outcomes;
- 2) a comparison has been made of the learning outcomes required for the given qualification with the first and second stage generic level descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework.

Art. 38. 1.

The relevant minister may include a regulated qualification in the Integrated Qualifications System, if the description of the given qualification contains:

- 1) learning outcomes described according to **art. 9 para. 1 item 1**;
- 2) requirements of validation and the entities conducting validation;
- 3) institutions authorized to certify or information on whether certifying authority is granted on the basis of art. 41 para. 1;
- 4) if needed, additional requirements to be met by entities requesting the authority to certify on the basis of art. 41 para. 1;
- 5) institutions authorized to function as external quality assurance institutions, or information on whether the external quality assurance institution is appointed from the list according to art. 59 para. 1;
- 6) if needed, additional requirements resulting from the specific character of the given qualification, relating to:
 - a) the scope and frequency of the external evaluation, as described in art. 64 para. 1 and 2,
 - b) the scope and frequency of submitting external evaluation reports, as described in art. 68 para. 1 and 2,
 - c) the scope and frequency of submitting reports of activities, as described in art. 76 para. 1–3;
- 7) if needed, the conditions required of a person to proceed with validation, especially the required level of education;
- 8) the period of validity of the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded and, if needed, the terms of extending the validity of this document.

Art. 9. 1.

Levels in the Polish Qualifications Framework are assigned to partial qualifications if:

- 1) the learning outcomes required for the given qualification are written in a manner that includes:
 - a) a synthesis describing the required learning outcomes,
 - b) differentiated sets of learning outcomes,
 - c) specific learning outcomes in sets as well as the verification criteria for attaining individual learning outcomes;
- 2) a comparison has been made of the learning outcomes required for the given qualification with the first and second stage generic level descriptors of the Polish Qualifications Framework.

Annex 2. Describing a market qualification – a proposed step-by-step process

Justifying the need for including the qualification in the IQS

The need for the qualification (art. 15 para. 1 item 2i)

Demonstrate that the qualification meets current or anticipated social and economic needs (regional, national, European).

Refer to the opinions of business organisations, labour market trends, forecasts for the development of technology, national and regional development strategies.

References to similar qualifications (art. 15 para. 1 item 2k)

Explain how the qualification differs from selected qualifications of a similar nature. The point of reference should consist of qualifications functioning in the IQS. In addition, refer to qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR) that contain at least one same set of learning outcomes.

Target groups (art. 15 para. 1 item 2f)

Provide information about the groups of persons who may be particularly interested in attaining the qualification, e.g. real estate managers, telecommunications specialists, women returning to the labour market.

The conditions required for proceeding with validation (art. 15 para. 1 item 2g)

Determine (if needed) the conditions to be met by a person to proceed with validation and be able to attain the qualification (e.g. the required level of education).

When determining these conditions, remember that they are not the same as the requirements for getting a job. Work experience should be indicated as a condition only in justified cases – competences resulting from professional practice should be reflected primarily in the learning outcomes required for the qualification.

The conditions for proceeding with validation must be verifiable.

Typical uses of the qualification (art. 15 para. 1 item 2j)

Present the most important prospects for employment and further learning from the perspective of the personal and professional development of individuals who may be interested in attaining the qualification.

You can also indicate the types of jobs a person will be able to apply for with this qualification.

The entitlements / powers conferred by having attained the qualification

(art. 15 para. 1 item 2e)

Specify the entitlements / powers that accompany the qualification.

Specify the entitlements / powers a person is able to apply for after having attained the qualification.

If there are no entitlements or powers associated with the qualification, write "Not applicable" in the application form.

Description of the learning outcomes and requirements for validation

Synthesis of the learning outcomes (art. 9 para. 1 item 1a)

Provide a brief, general description of the knowledge, skills and social competences by defining the activities, which a person will be prepared to carry out after attaining the qualification.

The synthesis of the learning outcomes should relate to the characteristics of the appropriate PQF level, and in particular, describe the extent to which a person with the qualification is prepared to act independently under more or less predictable conditions, to perform activities at different levels of complexity, to take on specific roles in a group, and to take responsibility for the quality and results of actions (their own or of the team they are leading).

Sets of individual learning outcomes (art. 9 para. 1 item 1c)

A set of learning outcomes is a distinct part of the learning outcomes required for a given qualification. Individual learning outcomes should be interrelated, complementary and presented in an orderly manner (e.g. from simple learning outcomes to more complex ones).

Individual learning outcomes are defined by descriptions of skills (i.e. the ability to perform tasks and solve problems) and verification criteria, specifying their scope and defining the knowledge and social skills required to attain them.

Specific learning outcomes should be:

- clear – their description should raise no doubts, enable validation to be planned and carried out, allow validation results to be compared, and are able to be referenced to a PQF level,
- realistic – able to be achieved by the persons for whom the given qualification is foreseen,
- able to be verified during the validation process,
- understandable to persons who may be potentially interested in the qualification.

The use of operational (action) verbs (e.g. *differentiates, justifies, installs*) is preferred when describing individual learning outcomes.

Differentiated sets of learning outcomes (art. 9 para. 1 item 1b)

List the sets of learning outcomes required for the qualification, including: sequence numbers (1, 2, ...), the name of each set, an indication of the PQF level for each set and the estimated workload needed to achieve the learning outcomes in each set.

The name of the set should:

- refer to the learning outcomes making up the set or relate to the character of the specific learning outcomes it contains,
- be as short as possible,
- not use abbreviations,
- use verbal nouns where possible, such as, e.g. *gathering, storing, sewing*.

Requirements for validation and the entities conducting validation

(art. 15 para. 1 item 2h)

Determine the requirements for carrying out validation in various institutions. The requirements should apply to:

- the methods used in validation – to verify the learning outcomes required for the qualification, but also (if needed) to identify and document the learning outcomes,
- human resources – the competences required of persons carrying out validation,
- the way validation is conducted, as well as the organisational conditions and materials required for the qualification to be properly validated.

Validation requirements may be indicated for individual sets of learning outcomes or for the entire qualification.

The requirements may be supplemented by additional guidance for institutions and persons designing the validation process and carrying it out, as well as for persons seeking to attain the qualification.

Other elements in the description of the qualification

Name of the qualification (art. 15 para. 1 item 2a)

Provide the full name of the qualification as it should be listed in the IQR and in the document confirming its attainment.

To the extent possible, the name of the qualification should:

- unequivocally identify the qualification,
- differentiate it from other qualifications,
- differ from the names of professions, job positions, professional titles, entitlements / powers,
- be as short as possible,
- not use abbreviations,
- be based on verbal nouns, e.g. *collecting, maintaining, sewing*.

Name of the document confirming that the qualification has been awarded (art. 15 ust. 1 pkt 2b)

Provide the name of the document confirming the awarded qualification, as well as its period of validity and, if necessary, the conditions for renewal.

In the case of a qualification awarded for a fixed time period, the conditions of renewal should be provided, such as the period of validity and the requirements for renewing the qualification.

Proposed PQF level of the qualification (art. 15 ust. 1 pkt 4)

In addition to proposing a PQF level (from 1 to 8) for the qualification, the law requires that proposals for its level in the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) also be submitted, if such a framework exists in the sector or industry relevant to the qualification being described and this SQF is included in the IQS.

Notional workload needed to attain the qualification (art. 15 para. 1 item 2c)

Provide the approximate number of hours needed by a typical learner attaining the qualification to achieve its learning outcomes and undergo validation (1 hour = 60 minutes).

To begin, it is worth determining the notional workload required to achieve specific sets of learning outcomes. The estimated workload for the qualification corresponds to the total workload required to achieve its different sets of learning outcomes.

Brief description of the qualification (art. 15 para. 1 item 2d)

Provide selected information about the qualification for persons interested in attaining it, as well as for employers, who will be able to quickly assess if the qualification has the exact skills and competences that they are seeking.

In writing the brief description, try answering the question: „What activities or tasks can be done by a person with this qualification?“

How to describe market qualifications for the Polish Qualifications System

This guidebook was written with the persons in mind who are interested in describing qualifications awarded outside the formal general, vocational and higher education systems. It presents the scope and type of information required in applications for including a qualification in the Integrated Qualifications System. Each part of the application is reviewed, using comments, guiding questions – worth consideration while working on specific elements of the description – as well as examples from pilot projects and answers to frequently asked questions.

Educational Research Institute

The Institute conducts basic and applied research, analyses and provides consultancy with the aim of strengthening evidence-based education policy and practice in Poland.

The Institute employs researchers specialising in education: pedagogues, sociologists, psychologists, economists, political scientists and representatives of other scientific disciplines – outstanding specialists in their respective fields who have a wide spectrum of experience in scientific research, teaching, public administration and the activities of non-governmental organisations.

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