

Czech Republic – applying the quality assurance cycle to the development to the National Register of Qualifications

The National Register of Qualifications (NSK) is the Czech Republic's public register of more than 1 450 qualifications, as of 1 November 2021 (complete vocational and vocational qualifications) and their qualification and assessment standards. It was developed through two projects:

- ❖ from 2005-08 the focus was on the design and pilot implementation under the control of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports;
- ❖ since 2009 the focus has been on the development and implementation of the NSK. This project is being managed by the National Institute for Education.

Each project has strengthened the role of the social partners (especially employers) particularly in relation to agreeing the content and structure of the qualifications. The projects also support the development of educational programmes which lead to the award of a qualification and the integration of initial and continuing education.

The main objectives of the NSK are to:

- ❖ support lifelong learning through the recognition of learning outcomes regardless of where learning takes place or how long it takes to demonstrate achievement;
- ❖ facilitate national and international movement of the work force by increasing the transparency of qualifications;
- ❖ involve all parties (social partners and education institutions) in describing qualifications;
- ❖ simplify the processes which learners use to transfer between different qualification levels and between sectors;
- ❖ make more connections between initial and continuing education;
- ❖ ensure the quality of qualifications to meet the needs of the labour market; and
- ❖ support disadvantaged groups and people with lower-level qualifications.

NSK is the system-level framework for initial and continuing education which enables qualifications obtained in the Czech education system to be compared with the levels described in the European Qualification Framework (EQF). This state-guaranteed system describes the skills which are needed for a specific occupation or its components e.g., specific work activities. It is based on the principles set out in the 2006 legislation on the **Verification and Recognition of Further Education Results**. Vocational qualifications are drafted by employers and based on occupational descriptions set out in the National System of Occupations. Employers are represented by Sector Councils which are coordinated by a consortium comprising representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, and Trexima, a consultation company. Through

this mechanism procedures have been established to identify the training needs of the labour market and the society.

NSK defines the requirements for competences of individual qualifications irrespective of how they are achieved. These competences are defined by the 28 Sector Councils which include representatives from employers, training providers, and the public administration authorities. The transparent NSK system provides users (e.g., those who wish to acquire a qualification, employers, schools, and other training providers) with reliable information about the qualifications sought by the labour market.

The Sector Councils identify potential vocational qualifications – and the needs of the labour market. These proposals and descriptions are then submitted for approval by the appropriate authorising body (usually a Ministry). If a proposal for a new vocational qualification is approved, the Sector Council establishes a working group to develop qualification and assessment standards. In line with the legislation and in response to the needs of the labour market, the NSK accepts revisions and changes to existing standards for vocational qualification (approximately 300 per year) and the development of new standards (approximately 40 per year).

The development and implementation of the NSK had been funded by the ESF and the national government's budget.

The information was gathered in 2022. For more information, please check the national website.