

Study Report

The Role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in Education and Labour Market



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The Study Report “The Role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in Education and Labour Market” was prepared by Academic Information Centre acting as Latvian coordination point for the EQF.

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List of Abbreviations

AIC	Academic Information Centre
HEI	higher education institution
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
LQF	Latvian Qualifications Framework
CoM	Cabinet of Ministers
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SQF	Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks
VEI	vocational education institution
VEL	Vocational Education Law
NTSC	National Tripartite Sub-council for Cooperation in VET and Employment
PQL	professional qualification level
GEI	general education institution
NCE	National Centre for Education

Introduction

The Latvian Qualifications Framework is an important tool which ensures the comparability of qualifications at both national and international level, thus facilitating transnational mobility of learners and employees and promoting lifelong learning of individuals. It is an eight-level system that comprises all levels (basic education, secondary education and higher education) and types (general education, vocational/professional education, academic education) of education, as well as professional qualifications to be acquired outside formal education.

The Latvian Qualifications Framework was established in 2010, as learning and job mobility increased significantly in Europe and worldwide, thus triggering the need for a clearer view of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual, in order to ensure the recognition of a qualification acquired abroad within the education or employment system of the host country. Also at the national level, the description of a qualification by admission criteria or duration of the programme did not give the education institutions and employers the necessary insight into the qualification and learning outcomes acquired by the individual.

The discussions of the European Community highlighted the fact that the development and recognition of citizens' knowledge, skills and competences are crucial for the development of individuals, competitiveness, employment and social cohesion in the Community. Such development and recognition should facilitate transnational mobility for workers and learners and contribute to meeting the requirements of supply and demand in the European labour market. One way of solution was to create a common reference framework which would serve as a common reference framework among different national qualifications systems and frameworks¹.

Prior to establishing the European Qualifications Framework in 2008, several countries, such as Great Britain (2001), France (2002) and Ireland (2003) had already established their national qualifications frameworks. However, during this time, most countries, including Latvia, focused on organising their national qualifications systems and referencing them to the European Qualifications Framework, thus facilitating the transparency and comparability of qualifications among the countries. Given the complexity of the referencing process, some European countries, such as Sweden (2016) and Serbia (2018) have implemented their national qualifications frameworks only over the past few years².

1 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

2 Cedefop (2019). Overview of national qualifications framework developments in Europe 2019. See: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/8609_en.pdf

It holds true that the trend of establishing national qualifications frameworks can be observed also in other countries, in certain cases dating back to earlier years, for instance, New Zealand (1990)³, Australia (1995)⁴ and South Africa (1995)⁵.

In many countries, where national qualifications frameworks have been existing for a decade or even longer, the influence of the frameworks on national education systems and their development, as well as their role on labour market and in society more broadly have become particularly relevant issues.

It has been already 10 years since the Latvian Qualifications Framework was established and referenced to the European Qualifications Framework. During this time, the education system of Latvia has undergone profound changes, where the Latvian Qualifications Framework has played an important role. Learning outcomes describing the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual are playing an increasing role in the development of education programmes and qualifications. Since 2013, the content of the higher education Diploma Supplement is referenced to the European Qualifications Framework, carrying a reference to the appropriate level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework and/or European Qualifications Framework. As for vocational education qualifications, the level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework is specified since 2017. Since 2016, the qualifications and their learning outcomes to be acquired within the education system of Latvia are available in the Latvian Qualifications Database⁶ and thus publicly available to individuals, education professionals, employers and general public not only at a national level, but also at European and international level (in the new Europass portal⁷).

The Latvian Qualifications Framework plays an important role also in labour market. It is used as a basis for the development of Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and serves as a tool for the comparison and clarification of the acquired profession and the relevant professional qualifications, establishing a closer link between education and labour market and facilitating transnational mobility of learners and workers and promoting their lifelong learning.

The aim of this study is to identify the role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in education and labour market of Latvia, as well as to determine, whether or not and to what extent the Latvian Qualifications Framework is recognisable among education professionals, on the labour market, among individual users and in general public.

3 Description of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (2016).
See: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Studying-in-NZ/New-Zealand-Qualification-Framework/requirements-nzqf.pdf>

4 Description of the Australian Qualifications Framework (2013).
See: <https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf-2nd-edition-january-2013.pdf>

5 Website of the South African Qualifications Authority.
See: <https://www.saqa.org.za/nqf-history-and-objectives-full>

6 Latvian Qualifications Database. See: www.latvijaskvalifikacijas.lv

7 The new Europass portal www.europass.eu was established on 1 July 2020 and since then is publicly available. Latvian qualifications were previously published in the Portal on Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Throughout the European Space (EQF/PLOTEUS) and the Portal on European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO).

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the data collection methods included the analysis of literature and laws and regulations, questionnaires for a specific target group (representatives from the secondary education, vocational education and higher education sector, employers and general public), in-depth interviews (representatives from the vocational education and higher education sector, representative of the employers and an expert involved in establishing the LQF). A total of 1238 respondents were surveyed and four in-depth interviews were conducted.

The first chapter of this Study Report describes the Latvian Qualifications Framework, the establishment process and its development, whereas the second chapter deals with the analysis of the role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in education and labour market, based on surveys and interviews conducted among the representatives from the education and labour market sector. Finally, conclusions on the current role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in education and labour market, as well as the awareness of the LQF are made.

1.

Latvian Qualifications Framework, its Establishment and Development

This chapter deals with the process of establishing and developing the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and describes the LQF (eight-level system, learning outcomes, level descriptors) and its main objectives.

1.1 Context for Establishing the LQF

The establishment of the LQF cannot be described separately from the common educational development trends in Europe and worldwide. Due to globalisation processes, resulting in increased mobility of citizens both in the field of education and professional activity in the European region, the enhancement of the recognition of individuals' qualifications and establishment of common (higher) education policy took on greater importance.

As early as 1997, the countries, including Latvia, signed the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region⁸, developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The Convention established new principles for the mutual recognition of diplomas, as the previous ones had become obsolete and could not be adapted to the changes occurred in higher education – the national education systems and qualifications to be acquired within these systems had become more diverse and paved the way for non-traditional programmes. Furthermore, the number of higher education institutions and mobility of students had increased.⁹

Consequently, in 1999, Latvia became one of the member states participating in the Bologna process, signing the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education¹⁰ which envisaged the establishment of a joint European Higher Education Area by 2010. The Declaration set out a number of measures to be implemented – to introduce a three-cycle degree system, to meet the requirements of the

⁸ Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region.
See: <http://likumi.lv/ta/lv/starptautiskie-ligumi/id/1434>

⁹ The Sixth Draft Explanatory Report to Lisbon Convention (1996).
See: http://www.aic.lv/rec/LV/acad-lv/lisb_pas.htm

¹⁰ Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education, as adopted on 19 June 1999 in Bologna.
See: http://www.aic.lv/rec/LV/new_d_lv/bol_lv/bol_decl.htm

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, to fully introduce mechanisms for the enhancement of the comprehension of qualifications (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the unified European Diploma Supplement), etc.

In the Berlin Communiqué of 2003¹¹, the national ministers agreed on the establishment of national qualifications frameworks in the context of the Bologna process, based on curricula in general and learning outcomes formulated for each separate study course. However, in the Bergen Communiqué of 2005¹² within the Bologna process, the national ministers confirmed their commitment to elaborate national qualifications frameworks compatible with the overarching qualifications framework in the European Higher Education Area by 2010.

The signing of the Bologna Declaration gave rise to discussions on the establishment of outcomes-based higher education also in the context of higher education in Latvia. In 2004, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) set up a Bologna Process Working Group, as decided by the ministers in the Berlin Communiqué. The Working Group was comprised of different stakeholders (persons responsible for making, introducing and implementing education policy), and one of its tasks consisted in establishing a qualifications framework for higher education in Latvia, determining the levels of qualifications corresponding the three-cycle structure developed within the Bologna process, as well as formulating general level descriptors for each type of higher education qualifications in Latvia¹³. The Working Group completed this task successfully. However, the level descriptors had not yet been established in the laws and regulations.

Meanwhile, at the EU level, the Member States held discussions on establishing a common European Qualifications Framework (EQF) covering all levels (general, vocational and higher education) and types (formal, non-formal and informal) of education. The discussions were concluded in 2008, as the Member States approved the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning¹⁴. It, inter alia, encouraged the countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010 and use an approach based on learning outcomes when defining and describing qualifications. In certain countries (including Latvia) the approval of this recommendation initiated the process of establishing national qualifications frameworks.

11 Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education (Berlin, 2003).
See: http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/maindoc/Berl_comm_fina.pdf

12 Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education (Bergen, 2005).
See: http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/Bergen_conf/050520_Bergen_Communique.pdf

13 Rauhvargers, A. (2004-2005). Establishing a Qualifications Framework for the Higher Education in Latvia. Working Document for Commencing Discussions at the Level of Latvia.
See: http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Latvija/Atsev_prez/LV_FRame24012005.pdf

14 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning.
See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF>

1.2 Process of Establishing the LQF and Its Development

The countries use different approaches to reference their national qualifications frameworks to the EQF, either developing a separate regulatory framework for this purpose (for instance, in Slovenia, Portugal, Sweden, etc.) or complementing the existing one. Similarly, they use different approaches also when organising their national qualifications in levels (for instance, Ireland uses ten level system, Iceland – a seven level system of, etc.). Latvia decided on establishing a eight level system which would correspond to the eight-level system of the EQF, thus amending the current Cabinet of Ministers (CoM) Regulations No 990 “Regulations on the education classification of Latvia”¹⁵. At the very beginning of establishing the LQF, it was already decided to implement the process of referencing the education system of Latvia to the EQF in two stages – to establish the LQF and reference it to the EQF and the qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2011, consequently strenghtening the LQF in the regulatory framework and reviewing the referencing process in accordance with the intended changes in the education legislation of Latvia.

The establishment of the LQF (see Figure 1) commenced in September 2009 after the MoES set up the Referencing Process Working Group¹⁶ to reference the Latvian Qualifications Framework to the EQF. The Working Group exercised supervisory functions, and its task consisted in examining and approving the level descriptors developed by the experts before their submission for amendments to the Cabinet Regulations No 990 “Regulations on the education classification of Latvia”.

In order to develop the level descriptors of the LQF, experts were involved and working groups were set up for this purpose. The level descriptors for general basic education, general secondary education, vocational basic education, vocational education and vocational secondary education were developed by the experts of the National Centre for Education (NCE), in collaboration with the MoES, and Academic Information Centre (AIC), based on the State education standards, occupational standards and study subject standards. The Working Group set up by the Latvian Council of Rectors, in turn, developed the level descriptors of the LQF for higher education, taking into account the level descriptors previously developed by the Bologna Process Working Group established in 2004. The expert groups worked in close collaboration to match the level descriptors of different education sectors. The Referencing Process Working Group examined the materials prepared by the experts and provided comments or objections.

In October 2010, the developed level descriptors were included in the aforementioned Cabinet Regulations. The eight-level descriptors of the LQF were developed in accordance with the EQF level descriptors and defined in terms of knowledge

¹⁵ Cabinet Regulation No. 990 “Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 990 “Regulations on the education classification of Latvia” (ceased to have effect). See: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=184810>

¹⁶ Ordinance of the MoES on setting up a Working Group No 405 (28 September 2009)

(knowledge and comprehension), skills (ability to apply knowledge, communication, general skills) and competences (analysis, synthesis, evaluation). In the Regulations, the table containing information on education levels of Latvia and the relevant education programmes was supplemented with a column indicating each education programme referenced to the respective LQF/EQF level.

Shortly after the establishment of the LQF, in 2011, the work on Self-Assessment Report “Referencing of the Latvian Education System to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area”¹⁷ commenced, involving the representatives of the education and labour market sector, as well as other stakeholders in the advisory process, which was concluded in October 2011 and successfully presented to the EQF Advisory Group. In May 2012, the Self-Assessment Report was clarified, taking into account the recommendations of the European Commission, Cedefop and experts from other countries, as a result of which also the second version of the Self-Assessment Report¹⁸ was published, thus marking the conclusion of the first stage of establishing the LQF and referencing it to the EQF and the EHEA qualifications framework.

Since the education system is subject to continuous changes due to social and economic demands, it was already foreseen that a review of the Self-Assessment Report would be needed in line with the reforms in education and the LQF. The most significant changes in education in Latvia, influenced by the LQF, are as follows:

- In 2013, the LQF was assessed, the LQF levels 1 to 4 were reviewed and proposals for legislative changes were developed.
- In 2014, discussions on opening the LQF for international qualifications at national level were held.
- In 2015, the Education Law was amended, establishing the general legal framework for the LQF (came into force on 16 July).
- In 2015, the Vocational Education Law was amended, establishing the correspondence of the professional qualification levels (PQL)¹⁹ to LQF levels and the general legal framework for Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (came into force on 16 July).
- In 2016, the Latvian Qualifications Database covering all qualifications and the relevant learning outcomes to be acquired within the formal education system of Latvia was created.

17 Academic Information Centre (2011). Referencing the Latvian Education System to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Self-Assessment Report.

See: http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/Latvia_report_1st_version_2011.pdf

18 Academic Information Centre (2012). Referencing the Latvian Education System to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Self-Assessment Report. Second Version.

See: http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/Latvian_Self-Assessment_Report_2nd-version_May-2012.pdf

19 In vocational education, the levels of professional qualification (LPQ) have been used already since 1999, before introducing the LQF levels. In 2015, the Vocational Education Law was amended, stipulating that PQL 1 shall correspond to LQF level 2, PQL 2 – to LQF level 3, PQL 3 – to LQF level 4, PQL 4 – to LQF level 5 and PQL 5 – to LQF levels 6 and 7.

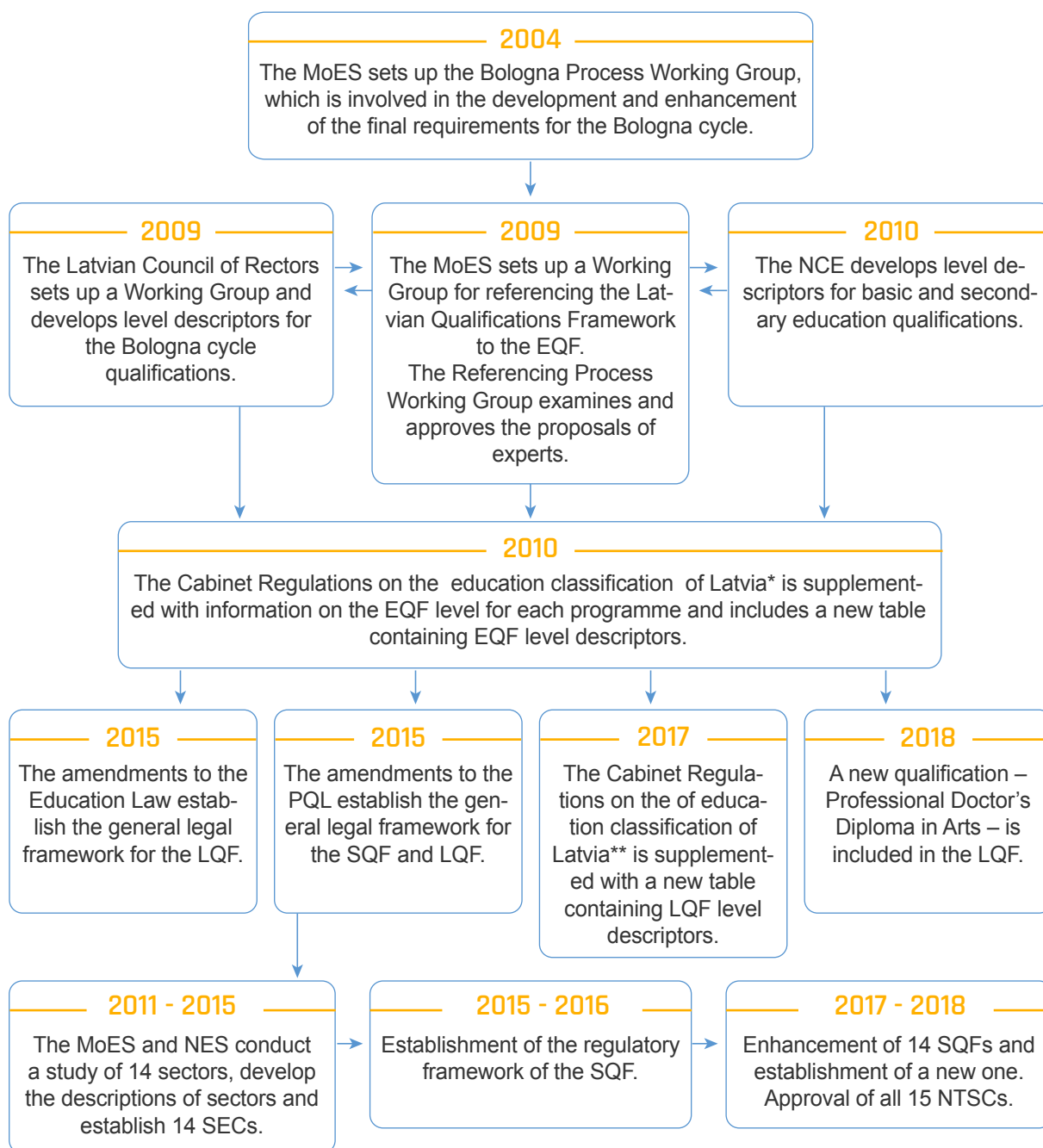
- In 2017, proposals for changes to the LQF levels 1 to 4 were included in the new Cabinet Regulations No 322 “Regulations on the education classification of Latvia”.
- In 2017, the work on the updated Self-Assessment Report commenced.
- In 2018, the Self-Assessment Report on the implementation of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Latvia was published. The Self-Assessment Report was successfully presented to the EQF Advisory Group.
- In 2018, a new qualification – Professional Doctor’s Diploma in Arts (LQF level 8) – was introduced.

In 2018, for the purposes of analysing the further development of the LQF, the updated Self-Assessment Report “Referencing the Latvian Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area”²⁰ was drawn up, describing the further development of education in Latvia under the influence of the LQF, as well as the referencing of the LQF to the EQF and the EHEA qualifications framework in accordance with the EQF and EHEA criteria. The representatives from the education and labour market sector, as well as other stakeholders were involved in the advisory process. On 4 November 2019, the Self-Assessment Report was successfully presented to the EQF Advisory Group and received a high rating.

More information on the process of establishing the LQF and its development, as well as the changes to education in Latvia under the influence of the LQF is available in the aforementioned Self-Assessment Reports on the website of the Latvian National Coordination Point for EQF www.nki-latvija.lv under the section “Publications”.

²⁰ Academic Information Centre (2018). Referencing the Latvian Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area. Self-Assessment Report.
See: http://www.nki-latvija.lv/content/files/Referencing_report_2018_EN.pdf

Image 1 – Chart of the establishment and development of the Latvian Qualifications Framework



* Cabinet Regulation No. 990 Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 990 "Regulations on the education classification of Latvia" as adopted on 2 December 2008

** Cabinet Regulation No. 322 "Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No 322 "Regulations on the education classification of Latvia", as adopted on 13 June 2017

1.3 Description of the LQF

According to the Education Law²¹ the LQF is an eight-level system (see Table 1) that comprises all levels (basic education, secondary education and higher education) and types of education (general education, vocational education, academic education), as well as professional qualifications to be acquired outside formal education settings. The LQF is referenced to the EQF. The levels of the Latvian Qualifications Framework are described in terms of the intended learning outcomes to be acquired at the respective level. Each following level comprises the knowledge, skills and competences defined for the previous level.

Table 1

Formal education documents and the LQF level to be acquired in Latvia (2020)	
Education documents (qualifications)	LQF level
Certificate of general basic education (special education programmes for learners with (severe) mental development disorders or multiple severe developmental disorders)	1
Certificate of general basic education Certificate of vocational basic education Certificate of professional qualification (at basic education level)	2
Certificate of vocational education (<i>arodizglītība</i>) Certificate of professional qualification (at vocational education (<i>arodizglītība</i>) level)	3
Certificate of general secondary education Diploma of vocational secondary education Certificate of professional qualification (at secondary education level)	4
Diploma of first-level professional higher education (college education, length of full-time studies – 2 to 3 years)	5
Bachelor's diploma Professional Bachelor's diploma Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (length of full-time studies - at least 4 years)	6
Master's diploma Professional Master's diploma Diploma of professional higher education, diploma of higher professional qualification (total length of full-time studies - at least 5 years)	7
Doctor's diploma Professional Doctor's diploma in Arts	8

Source: Academic Information Centre – National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework

The LQF level descriptors are based on learning outcomes defined in three dimensions:

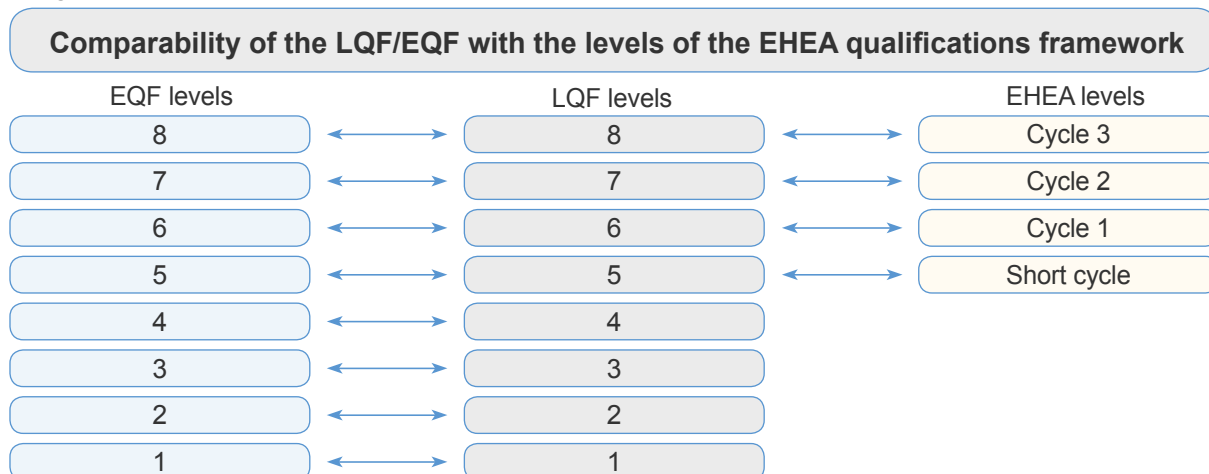
- Knowledge (knowledge and comprehension).

²¹ Education Law (1998). See <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759>

- Skills (ability to apply the knowledge, communication, general skills).
- Competences (analysis, synthesis and evaluation)²².

The LQF is referenced to the EQF and the EHEA qualifications framework (see Image 2). Thus, the Latvian qualifications are easy comparable with qualifications acquired abroad, regarding which the respective country has referenced their NQF to the EQF

Image 2



Source: Academic Information Centre, 2012

According to the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (23 April 2008), the reference to the respective EQF/LQF level is reflected in the qualifications acquired through vocational and higher education. Cabinet Regulations No 202 “Procedures by which state-recognised documents certifying the acquisition of higher education are issued”²³ states that the the Diploma Supplement of higher education shall carry a reference to the appropriate EQF/LQF level or the level of the EHEA qualifications framework.

The Cabinet Regulations No 451 “Procedures by which state-recognised documents certifying vocational education and professional qualification and documents certifying acquisition of a part of an accredited vocational education programme are issued”, in turn, specify that the diploma of vocational basic education, vocational education and vocational secondary education, in addition to the level of professional qualification, shall carry a reference to the appropriate LQF level.²⁴

The issue of reflecting the EQF/LQF level in general education qualifications is still on the agenda.

²² Cabinet Regulations No 322 “Regulations on the of education classification of Latvia” (in force as from 16 June 2017). See: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=291524>

²³ Cabinet Regulations No 202 “Procedures by which state-recognised documents certifying the acquisition of higher education are issued” (in force as from 19 April 2013). See: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=256157>

²⁴ Cabinet Regulations No 451 “Procedures by which state-recognised documents certifying vocational education and professional qualification and documents certifying acquisition of a part of an accredited vocational education programme are issued” (in force as from 2 July 2005).

2.

The Role of the LQF in Education and Labour Market

It has been 10 years since the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) was established and referenced to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the qualifications framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The LQF has played a significant role in education and labour market of Latvia, thus increasing the importance of the learning outcomes within the education system and facilitating an overall more comprehensible and transparent educational curriculum for the representatives from the education sector, employers, foreign partners and public in general. The LQF has a great significance in the context of promoting lifelong learning, developing modules and education programmes, assessment of learning outcomes, international mobility and recognition of qualifications acquired abroad. Furthermore, the LQF also contributes to closer collaboration between the education sector and labour market, when establishing occupational standards and sectoral qualifications frameworks.

The overall aim of this study is to determine to what extent the LQF is recognisable in education and labour market in Latvia, as well as to identify the areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent. In order to achieve the aim of the study, the representatives of the education and labour market sector were surveyed and surveys of public opinion were conducted.

2.1 Survey Outcomes

The survey was focused on education, labour market and general public, in order to gain a broader view of the opinions expressed by the respondents on areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent. In addition, a public survey was conducted to determine as to what extent the LQF is recognisable outside education and labour market sector, thus getting a better idea of whether or not it is necessary to raise more awareness of the LQF or adopt other measures which would strengthen the role of the LQF.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, a total of 1238 respondents were surveyed. For the purpose of conducting surveys, five questionnaires focused on the target groups were developed and surveys among the following target groups were conducted:

1. General education institutions at all levels of education (from lower to upper secondary school).
2. Vocational education institutions (vocational schools, vocational secondary education institutions, vocational education competence centres).
3. Higher education institutions (colleges, higher education institutions, academies, universities).
4. Employers – the questionnaires were intended for all persons involved in the recruitment process (company managers, department managers, personnel department, etc.).
5. General public – the questionnaires were distributed to the general public, using different social networks and websites.

It should be noted that, in general and vocational education institutions, the survey was conducted among the school directors, their deputies and teachers, whereas in higher education institutions – among the directors of study programmes. The selection of respondents did not include education administration authorities, as it was assumed that most of their employees are aware of the LQF. The respondents were granted anonymity.

The questionnaires for all target groups were distributed online. They included both multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. The questions of the questionnaire were formulated depending on the target group in form of multiple-choice questions to determine the awareness of the respondents of the LQF and gain a broader view of the areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent.

The questionnaires intended for education institutions and general public consisted of 13 questions (see Annex 1). The first six questions were aimed at obtaining general information about the respondents – their gender, age, most recent education attainment, region of employment²⁵ in Latvia or type of education institution where the person is employed. The questions seven to nine were related to the visibility and comprehension of the LQF – the nature of qualification, awareness of the LQF, the LQF level to which the most recently acquired qualification pertains, and frequency of dealing with the LQF. Those respondents, who responded to the question 8 about whether or not they are aware of the LQF with “Yes” or “I have only heard about it”, were asked to answer two additional questions. The purpose of the first additional question was to determine how the respondents had become aware of the LQF, while the purpose of the second additional question consisted in determining, in which areas, according to them, the role of the LQF is

²⁵ As provided for in the Regional Development Law, there are five planning regions in Latvia: Kurzeme Planning Region, Latgale Planning Region, Riga Planning Region, Vidzeme Planning Region and Zemgale Planning Region (Source: <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/planosanas-regioni>). Within this study, the data on Riga, the capital of Latvia, were analysed separately from the entire Riga Region.

more prominent. The last (open-ended) question was directed to all respondents, by which they were asked to indicate the LQF areas in education that should be strengthened and the reason of doing so. The questionnaires intended for the employers were slightly different, as the respondents were additionally asked to indicate whether or not they take into account employee's knowledge, skills and competences specified in diploma supplements.

The obtained data were analysed on an aggregate basis. The collected data were both analysed within the group and compared to those of different groups to identify the factors determining the visibility of the LQF and determine the groups in which the respective areas are considered to be the most significant. The obtained data will help to assess, whether or not further measures for raising awareness of the LQF are necessary, and if so, in which sectors they should be implemented. The obtained data on the areas influenced by the LQF will help to understand, which areas could be further strengthened (by assessing, whether or not it is necessary) and how to further develop the usability of the LQF in areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent.

2.1.1 General Education

The outcomes of the survey conducted among the general education institutions (GEI) account for the largest number of respondents from the selected groups comprised of general education, vocational education and higher education institutions. A total of 714 questionnaires were distributed, and 593 responses were received.

Out of the total number of respondents, 533 were female (89.9%), while 60 – male (10.1%). The majority of the respondents were aged 51 to 60 (42.8%), followed by the age group of 41 to 50 (25.8%) and the respondents aged 60 and older (17.5%). The employees from the education sector aged 18 to 30 (3.4%) and 31 to 40 (10.5%) accounted for the smallest number of respondents.

In addition to the gender and age group of the respondents, the employees from the education sector were asked to indicate the region of employment in Latvia. Based on the assessment of the overall statistical data on the regional distribution of schools collected within this study, it can be concluded that the number of GEIs in each region is mostly equal (in Kurzeme – 95, in Vidzeme – 95, in Zemgale – 92, in Latgale – 118, in Riga Region – 95). However, Riga accounts for the largest proportion (152). Even though Riga has the largest number of GEIs, the highest response rate was observed in Vidzeme (22.1%), but the lowest one – in Riga Region (11%). The response rate in other regions was similar.

Asked to indicate the most recent education attainment, most respondents indicated that they have a Master's degree (62.4%). However, a relatively small number of respondents mentioned that they have a the Bachelor's degree (20.6%), second-level professional higher education (15.2%) or a Doctor's degree (0.7%).

More than half of participants of the survey conducted among GEIs (57%) indicated that they currently are employed at a general secondary education institution, while less than one quarter of the respondents (23.8%) mentioned that they are employed at a general basic school. Only a small number of respondents represented the employees of general primary schools (5.4%). A part of respondents (12.6%) indicated that they work in more than one education institution. Others indicated that they are employed at three different educational institutions. In addition to general education institutions, the respondents also indicated that they are additionally employed at other education institutions, such as preschools, vocational education institutions (VEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs), etc.

In addition to the type of the education institution, the respondents were asked to indicate their position. The majority of the respondents (60.4%) indicated that they held the position of teacher, while directors were represented by less than one fifth of the respondents (18.5%). The deputy directors and deputy directors who are also teachers ranked third (9.9%) and fourth (5.4%) respectively with regard to the positions indicated in the questionnaire. A small number of respondents indicated also other positions, which were not included in the options of choice, but, all the same, form a substantial part of education, i.e., psychologists, leaders of hobby groups, social counsellors, etc.

Other questions included in the questionnaire were related directly to the LQF and aspects relevant to it. Given that the distribution of LQF levels is based on qualifications (credentials), in the context of this study, it was important to ascertain how the respondents perceive the term “qualification”. According to Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training), a qualification is the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) awarded by the respective institution after assessing the learning outcomes²⁶. A similar definition is provided in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, to which the education system of Latvia and the qualifications to be acquired within this system are related.

The respondents could select the following options as the possible explanation of the term “qualification”: length of service; professional experience; credential; occupation or position held; the set of knowledge, skills and competences. The majority of the respondents (68.8%) indicated that a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences. A relatively small number of respondents (16.2%) indicated that a qualification is a credential, whereas other respondents (8.4%) considered the qualification to be professional experience. Only a small number of respondents indicated other answers. Although, in the context of the LQF, a “qualification” is a credential, it should be pointed out that this term has not yet been separately defined in the laws and regulations of Latvia (the Education Law defines only the term “professional qualification”, which is the assessment of education and professional skill with respect to a particular profession, confirmed by documentary evidence).

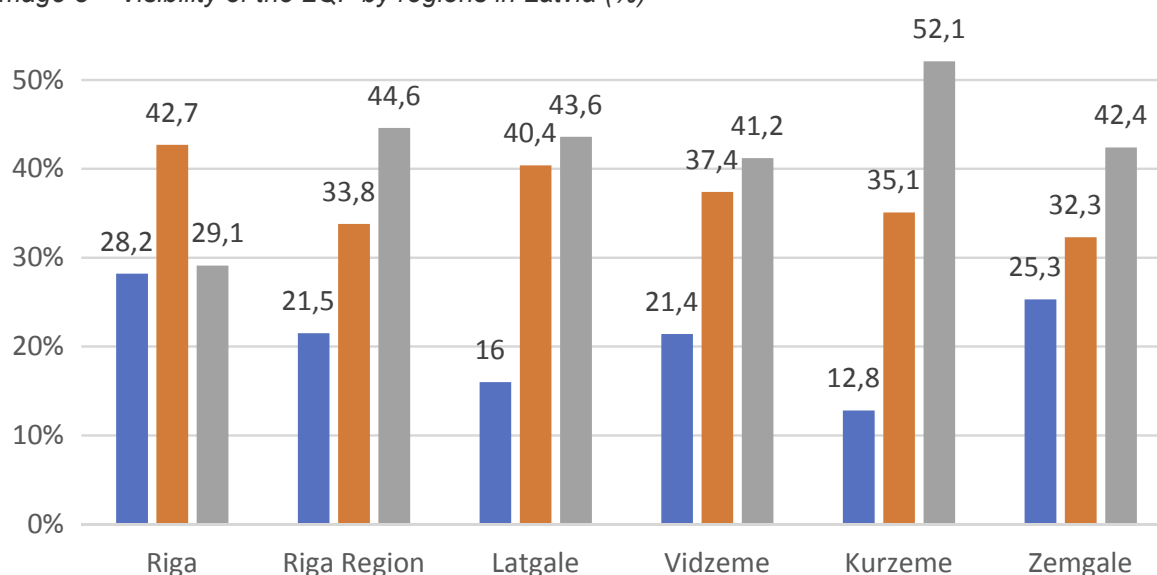
²⁶ Cedefop (2014). Terminology of European education and training policy. Second edition. See: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4117_en.pdf

In order to ascertain the awareness of the LQF among the respondents of the survey conducted among the GEIs, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they know what is the LQF. Depending on the answer, the respondents were asked to respond to two additional questions on the areas affected by the LQF, as well as how they had become aware of the LQF.

Out of all persons employed at general education institutions, only one fifth of the respondents (21.1%) indicated that they are aware of the LQF is, while one third (37.3%) had only heard about it, and less than half of the respondents (41.7%) acknowledged that they are not aware of the LQF.

The comparison of the levels of awareness of the LQF by regions of employment leads to the conclusion that the highest ratio between the respondents aware of the LQF and those not aware of the LQF, can be observed in Kurzeme, followed by Latgale (See Image 3). Vidzeme ranks first in the number of respondents not aware of the LQF, but this rate is compensated by the employees from the education sector who have heard about the LQF. A similar situation was witnessed in Riga Region, where the number of respondents not aware of the LQF is similar to the number of those who have heard about the LQF, while the number of those aware of the LQF is half as high as the number of respondents not aware of the LQF. The highest rate can be observed in Riga, where the number of respondents who have heard about the LQF exceeds the number of those not aware of the LQF. Moreover, it is the only region where the number of respondents aware of the LQF is equal to the number of those not aware of the LQF. In Zemgale, the ratio between the groups of respondents is not high. However, the percentage of those respondents not aware of the LQF is predominant.

Image 3 – Visibility of the LQF by regions in Latvia (%)



In addition to the comparison of the regions, it was analysed whether or not the position of the employees from the education sector could influence the awareness of the LQF. After analysing the data, it was concluded that there is a correlation between the position held at a company and the awareness of the LQF. Out of all

directors, less than one quarter of respondents (23.6%) indicated that they were aware of the LQF, less than half of respondents (41.8%) pointed out that they had heard about it, while only one third of respondents (34.5%) were not aware of the LQF. Among the deputy directors (part of them being also teachers), less than one third of respondents (30.8%) were aware of the LQF, less than half of respondents (42.9%) had heard about the LQF and only one fourth of respondents (26.4%) were not aware of the LQF. Meanwhile, the teachers were less aware of the LQF. Out of all teachers, the minority (15.9%) were aware of the LQF, only one third of them (35.2%) had heard about it, while half of them (48.9%) were not aware of the LQF. The awareness of the LQF at management level could be attributable to the fact that these employees deal more frequently with the laws and regulations, in which the LQF is mentioned. This is also reflected in the answers of the directors and deputy directors to the question on how they learned about the LQF.

The knowledge of the respondents about the LQF in each education institution were compared, in order to ascertain whether or not the type of the education institution at which they are employed influences their awareness of the LQF. The comparison showed that the respondents employed at primary schools are less aware of the LQF than those employed at basic and secondary schools. Half of respondents (50%) employed at primary schools are not aware of the LQF, less than one third of the respondents (31.3%) have only heard about it, while the minority of the respondents (18.8%) are aware of the LQF. Meanwhile, the outcomes in the context of basic and secondary schools are very similar. In basic and secondary schools, less than half of the respondents (39.7% and 38.5% respectively) were not aware of the LQF, a quite similar number of respondents (39.7% and 38.5% respectively) had heard about it, while one fifth of the respondents (20.6% and 20.4% respectively) were aware of the LQF, which indicates that the type of the education institutions has no effect on the awareness of the teaching staff about the LQF.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate their LQF level to determine, whether or not the employees from the education sector have knowledge of the distribution of LQF levels and were aware of the level to which their most recent qualification corresponds (See Image 4).

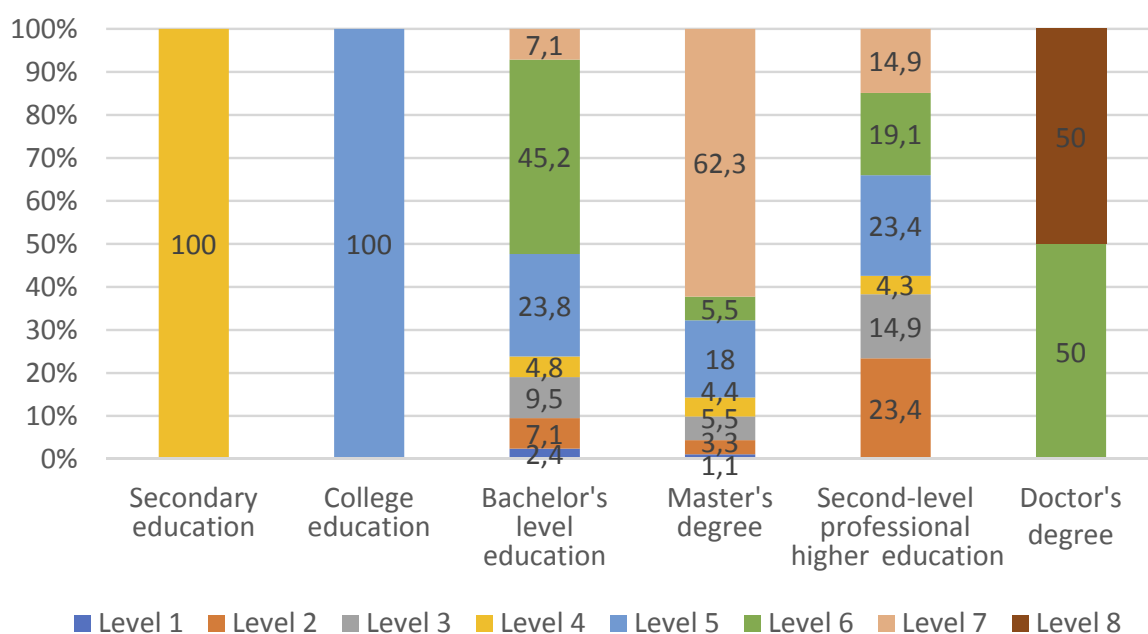
The comparison shows that the group of respondents, who are aware of the LQF or have heard about it, tend to relate their most recent qualification to the inappropriate LQF level. The highest accuracy rate was observed among the respondents with a Master's degree, as 62.3% of the respondents identified the appropriate LQF level 7. One fifth of the respondents (18%) indicated that their educational attainment corresponds to the LQF level 5, which could be attributable to the fact that a large percentage of the teaching staff relate their LQF levels to the levels of professional qualification (PQL), as the PQL 5 corresponds to the LQF levels 6 and 7. There was a relatively small number of answers indicating other educational attainments. It should be noted that, out of all respondents with a Master's degree, half of them (50.5%) refrained from responding to this question, indicating that they do not know their LQF or are aware of the LQF but are not able to identify the level.

A slightly different situation can be observed among the respondents with Bachelor-level education. The majority of the respondents with Bachelor-level education (65.6%) refrained from identifying the level. However, nearly half of those who did identify the level (45.2%) indicated that their educational attainment corresponds to the LQF level 6. Part of respondents (23.8%) indicated that their educational attainment corresponds to the LQF level 5, which, as in the previous example, could be attributable to the fact that part of the respondents relate their levels of qualification to the PQLs. There was a relatively small number of answers indicating other levels (between 2 and 9%).

Out of all respondents with second-level professional higher education, approximately half of them (47.8%) refrained from identifying the level. However, the minority of those who did identify it (19.1% and 14.9% respectively) were able to correctly identify the LQF level 6 or 7 appropriately. Nearly one quarter of respondents of this group (23.4%) indicated that their most recent educational attainment corresponds to the LQF level 2. This could be attributable to the term “second” included in the title of the level of education, which could cause certain confusion.

There was a small number of answers indicating other levels of education (secondary education, college education and a Doctor's degree), hence it was not possible to make conclusions. However, it should be noted that regardless of the small number of answers, the majority of the respondents were able to identify the appropriate LQF level to which their credentials correspond.

Image 4 – Comparison of the most recent educational attainment to the indicated LQF level (%)



The respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they deal with the LQF during their work/learning process. Nearly half of the employees from the education sector (43.3%) indicated that they never deal with the LQF during work or learning process. However, part of the respondents (13%) indicated that they deal with the LQF daily. A similar number of the respondents (16.9% and 19.6% respectively)

indicated that they use the LQF once a year or less than once a year. Only a small number of respondents (3.2% and 4% respectively) use the LQF once a week or once a month.

To ascertain whether or not the LQF is used more frequently in specific positions or during the learning process, the frequency of dealing with the LQF was compared against and the frequency of the position held. The comparison showed that out of all the teachers employed at GEIs, a surprisingly large number of respondents (15.4%) deal with the LQF daily. Meanwhile, the rate of other teachers dealing with the LQF on a monthly basis is very low (once a week – 2.5%, once a month – 2.8%). However, this percentage is slightly higher (once a year – 16.2%, less than once a year – 16.2%) when analysing this rate in the context of a longer period of time. Nearly half of the respondents (46.9%) indicated that they never deal with the LQF during their work/learning process.

The number of the directors and deputy directors (including those also employed as teachers) dealing with the LQF is slightly higher. Meanwhile, the ratio between the directors (7.3%) and their deputies (9.9%) and the teachers (15.4%) dealing with the LQF daily is lower. However, the average rate of dealing with the LQF on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis or less than once a year is higher among the directors and their deputies than among the teachers, which could be attributable to the fact that, in their daily work, they are more likely to deal with laws and regulations than the teachers. Also, the lowest rate of respondents who never deal with the LQF during their work/learning process (36.4%) can be observed among the directors, while this rate is considerably higher among the deputy directors (40.7%) and teachers (46.9%).

It should be noted that, based on the analysis of the aforementioned data on the frequency of using the LQF, it is hard to assess the data reliability, as a small percentage of respondents (3.2%) supposedly not aware of the LQF also indicated that they deal with the LQF daily. A smaller number of respondents (0.7%) indicated that they deal with the LQF once a week, while an even smaller number of teaching staff (0.3%) indicated that they deal with it once a month. A small number of respondents indicated that they deal with the LQF once a year (3.9%) or less than once a year (3.9%), even though they are not aware of the LQF. However, it does not mean that all these responses should be excluded from the survey outcomes, as the employees from the education sector are not required to be unequivocally aware of the LQF when dealing with it. For instance, the teaching staff may come across with the term of the LQF in laws and regulations or other documents without even clarifying its meaning and function.

The respondents indicating that they are aware of the LQF or have heard about it were offered an additional question, where they were asked to mention different platforms or sources of information, which might have helped them to learn about the LQF. The most common responses were as follows: information materials (28.9%), laws and regulations (17.1%), studies (13.3%) and mass media (11%).

In the second to last question of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate (choosing from the options “to a large extent”, “to a rather large extent”, “to a rather small extent” and “to a small extent”), to which extent they believed the LQF influences the areas as follows: learning outcomes; development of modules; development of curriculum; assessment of learning outcomes; development of occupational standards; international mobility; recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad; lifelong learning; issue of credentials; Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks. Respondents, who were aware of the LQF or had heard about it, indicated that the LQF played the greatest role in the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad (42.8%). A high share of respondents (37.3%) indicated that the LQF plays great role also in the development of occupational standards. As for the options of LQF aspects offered in the questionnaire, the respondents considered that the LQF has the least influence on the learning outcomes (12.1%), which could be attributable to the fact that, at the level of general education, greater emphasis has been placed on competence-based education relatively recently, as the new Regulations Regarding the State Education Standard came into force on 1 September 2020.²⁷ The previous General Basic Education Standards and General Secondary Education Standards included only the elements of learning outcomes.

The last question in the questionnaire was an open-ended question, where the respondents were asked to give their opinion on the areas of education influenced by the LQF, which should be strengthened, mentioning also the reason to do so. Out of a total of 593 responses received, 398 respondents (67.1%) refrained from responding to this question, while 48 employees of GEIs (8.1%) indicated that they lack understanding of the LQF and the areas influenced by the LQF in order to provide a response. Thus, a total of 147 (24.8%) valid responses were received. Out of all the respondents responding to this question, a small number of respondents (12.2%) indicated that one of the aforementioned areas influenced by the LQF should be strengthened, while one quarter of respondents (23.8%) suggested that the role of the LQF in general, vocational and higher education, special education and education of teachers should be strengthened.

In view of the responses provided by the respondents representing GEIs, the overall conclusion is that it is necessary to invest more explanatory work and implement wider measures to raise awareness of the LQF, which is also suggested by the comments of some respondents (5.4%).

²⁷ Cabinet Regulations No 747 “Regulations on the state basic education standard, basic education study subject standards and basic education programme samples” (effective from 1 September 2020). See: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303768-noteikumi-par-valsts-pamatizglitiba-standartu-un-pamatizglitiba-programmu-paraugiem> Cabinet Regulations No 416 “Regulations on the state general secondary education standard, study subject standards and education programme samples” (in force as from 1 September 2020)

2.1.2 Vocational Education

In total, 77 questionnaires were distributed to the directors and deputy directors of vocational education institutions (VEIs), who, at turn, forwarded them to the employees in charge. Thus, a total of 237 responses were received.

Out of all respondents participating in the survey conducted among VEIs, 189 were female (79.7%) and 48 were male (20.3%). Out of the total number of respondents, one third of the respondents (33.8%) were aged 51 to 60. The respondents aged 18 to 30 (4.6%) accounted for the smallest number of respondents, while the remaining age groups (respondents aged 18 to 30, 41 to 50 and aged 60 and older) were represented in quite equal proportions (20.3%, 21.1% and 20.3% respectively).

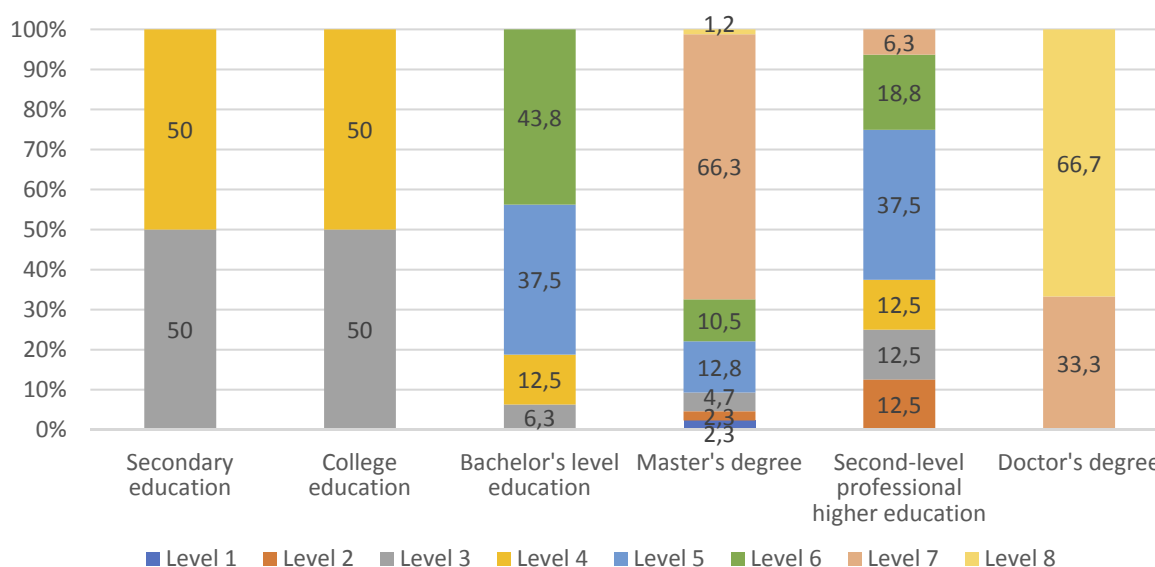
As in case of GEIs, the regional distribution of VEIs in Latvia is quite equal, with five VEIs in Riga Region, Vidzeme and Zemgale (each) and six in Kurzeme. Riga accounts for the largest number of VEIs with 23 schools, while there are only nine VEIs in Latgale. The survey conducted among VEIs included schools from all regions of Latvia, with the highest response rate in Riga (48.5%), followed by Vidzeme (19%) and Latgale (18.6%), but the lowest one – in Zemgale (3.8%), Kurzeme (4.2%) and Riga Region (5.9%).

In the following question, the respondents were asked to indicate the most recent educational attainment. The majority of respondents (62%) indicated that they had a Master's degree, while one fifth of the employees from the education sector (20.7%) had a Bachelor's degree. There was only a small number of answers indicating other educational attainments. Compared to the respondents from GEIs, there was a higher number of employees with first-level professional higher education and a Doctor's degree among the respondents from VEIs.

In order to ascertain, whether or not the respondents are able to identify the appropriate LQF level based on their most recent educational attainment, a comparison was made (see Image 5), which led to the conclusion that out of those respondents choosing to indicate the LQF level, mostly the employees from the education sector with a Master's and Doctor's degree were able to identify the appropriate LQF level to which their credentials correspond. Out of all respondents with a Master's degree, a large number of them (66.3%) indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 7, while a small number of respondents (12.8%) indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 5, which could be attributable to the fact that the teaching staff possibly associates the LQF levels with the PQL, as the PQL 5 corresponds to the LQF levels 6 and 7. Out of the small share of respondents with a Doctor's degree, most employees from the education sector (66.7%) indicated that their most recent credentials correspond to the LQF level 8. The majority of those with bachelor-level education and second-level professional higher education related their qualification to a different LQF level. Less than half of employees from the education sector (43.8%) with bachelor-level education indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 6, while more than one third of respondents (37.5%) believed that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 5

(LQF level 6 corresponds to the LPQ 5), which, just like in the previous example, can be attributable to the fact that a part of respondents confuse the LQF levels with the PQL. A similar situation can be observed among the respondents with second-level professional higher education, where only one quarter of respondents (25%) have indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 6 or 7.

Image 5 – Comparison of the most recent educational attainment against the indicated LQF level (%)



In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate their position held. The outcomes show that the highest response rate was observed among the teachers (64.6%), while the directors (5.1%), deputy directors (9.3%) and methodologists (4.6%) represented only a small number of the submitted responses. The remaining employees from the education sector indicated that, whilst holding the position of a teacher and director, they also perform the duties of a librarian, methodologist, head of department, etc.

Asked to define the term “qualification”, just like in case of the survey conducted among the GEIs, the majority of the respondents from VEIs (73%) indicated that a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences, while part of the respondents (11.4%) believed that a qualification is a credential.

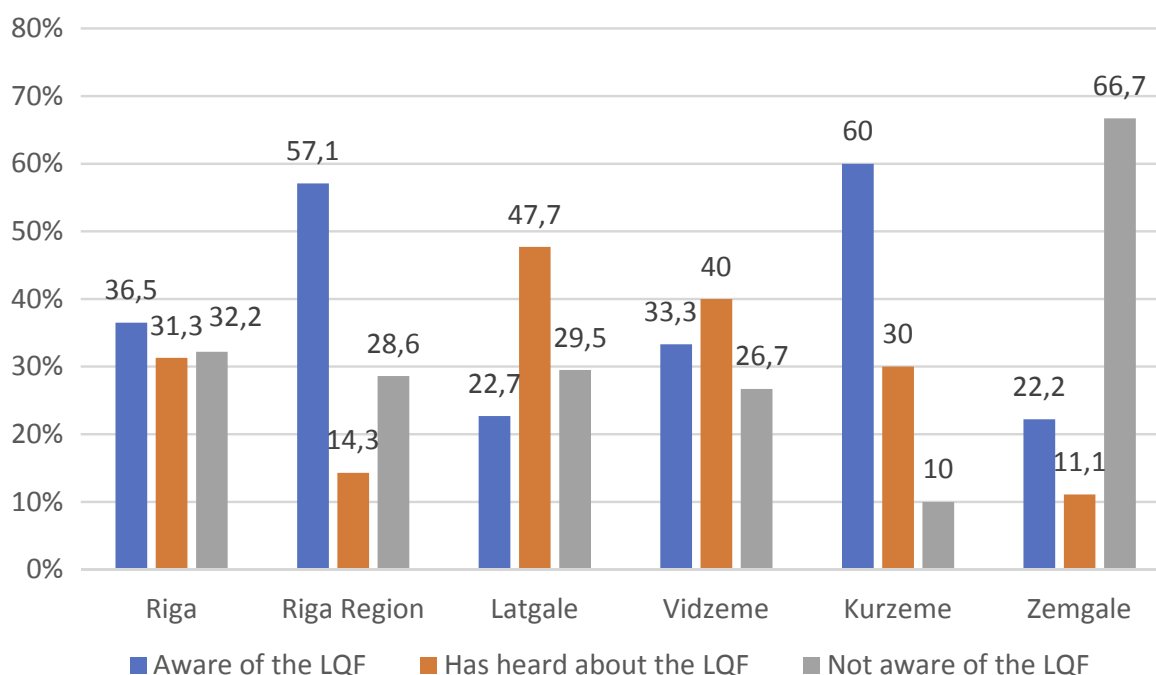
One of the most important questions for all target groups, including the employees from VEIs, was whether or not they are aware of the LQF. In general, it should be noted that the number of respondents aware of the LQF was higher among the employees from VEIs than among the employees from GEIs. A possible explanation for this situation could be the fact that as of 1 January 2017, the credentials certifying the acquisition of vocational education²⁸ must carry a reference to the appropriate LQF level. Thus, the employees become aware of the LQF while dealing with laws and regulations. More than one third of respondents (35%) indicated that they are aware of the LQF (21.1% among the employees from GEIs), while one third of

²⁸ Cabinet Regulation No. 451 “Cabinet Regulations No 451 “Procedure by which state recognised documents certifying vocational education and professional qualification and documents certifying acquisition of a part of an accredited vocational education programme are issued” (in force as from 2 July 2005).
See: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=111580>

the employees from the education sector (34.2%) had never heard about it. Less than one third of respondents (30.8%) indicated that they are not aware of the LQF (41.7% among the employees from GEIs).

In order to ascertain the level of awareness of the LQF among the employees from VEIs, a comparison was made, thus identifying the regions with the highest and lowest level of awareness of the LQF (see Image 6). The analysis showed that even though Kurzeme (60%) and Riga Region (57.1%) account for the highest number of respondents aware of the LQF, the number of employees from the education sector, out of the total number of those participating in the survey, in these regions is too small to draw general conclusions. The outcomes suggest that Zemgale accounts for the highest percentage of respondents not aware of the LQF (66.7%). However, also in this case the number of respondents from this region was too low to draw general conclusions. Nevertheless, the number of responses received from Riga, Vidzeme and Latgale was sufficient to draw general conclusions. In Riga, the percentage of respondents aware of the LQF (36.5%) was quite similar to the number of respondents who had only heard about it (31.3%) and those not aware of the LQF (32.2%). In Vidzeme, the total number of the respondents, who are aware of the LQF or have at least heard about it, makes up the majority of respondents (73.7%). Meanwhile, in Latgale, the percentage of respondents aware of the LQF (22.7%) is lower than the number of those not aware of the LQF (29.5%), which, however, is compensated by almost half of the employees from education sector (47.7%), who have at least heard about the LQF.

Image 6 – Awareness of the LQF by region (%)



In addition to the awareness of the LQF by region, it was also ascertained whether the awareness of the LQF is more prominent among persons holding different positions at VEIs. The highest level of awareness of the LQF was observed among the directors of VEIs, where nearly all of them (91.7%) are aware of the LQF.

Only one respondent indicated that he had only heard about it. A similar situation can be observed also among the deputy directors – half of them (50%) were aware of the LQF, while nearly half of the teaching staff (40.9%) had at least heard about it. Among the teachers, the number of respondents aware of the LQF was slightly smaller than among the managerial staff, as nearly half of respondents (39%) had indicated that they are aware of the LQF, while a very similar number of respondents (39.6%) had at least heard about the LQF.

After indicating the LQF level, the respondents were asked to mention the frequency of dealing with the LQF during their work or the learning process. Most respondents (35.9%) indicated that they never deal with the LQF, while one fifth of the employees from the education sector (20.7%) deal with the LQF on a daily basis. However, it should be noted that a small number of respondents, who had indicated that they are not aware of the LQF, had also mentioned that they deal with the LQF on a daily basis. Although it is unlikely that the respondents not aware of the LQF would deal with it daily, it would be more likely at less frequent intervals, coming across this term in documents, laws and regulations, etc. and at the same time not knowing the true meaning of the LQF.

Subsequently, the frequency of dealing with the LQF was compared against the position held, in order to ascertain whether persons holding specific positions deal with the LQF more frequently than others. The collected survey outcomes suggest that one third of directors (33.3%) deal with the LQF once a year, one third of the deputy directors (31.8%) deal with the LQF once a month and one third of methodologists (36.4%) deal with the LQF weekly, while nearly half of teachers (45.5%) never deal with the LQF, which suggests that education institutions mostly deal with the LQF at a managerial and administrative level. However, the managerial and administrative staff is involved in issuing credentials, and they are more likely to deal with laws and regulations or other sources mentioning the LQF.

In the next question, the respondents, who had indicated that they are aware of the LQF or have at least heard about it, were asked to mention the source of information through which they had become aware of the LQF, in order to assess the efficiency of the information dissemination channels. The outcomes of the survey suggest that one fourth of respondents (25.6%) had become aware of the LQF through laws and regulations, while a similar number of employees from the education sector (22%) had learned about the LQF from their colleagues at work or in seminars and conferences (18.3%).

In the second to last question, the respondents were asked to indicate to what extent the LQF influences specific areas selected for this study. The outcomes suggest that the development of occupational standards ranks first among the employees from VEIs (43.9%), followed by the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad (38.4%) and issue of credentials (34.8%). Only a small number of employees from the VEIs considered that the influence of the LQF is more prominent in the area of learning outcomes (10.4%).

In the last (open-ended) question the respondents could describe the areas of education influenced by the LQF, which should be strengthened, mentioning also a reason to do so. A total of 74 valid responses were received, and they

suggest a great diversity of opinions. From the areas mentioned in the survey, a small percentage of respondents indicated that the role of the LQF in occupational standards (5.1%) should be strengthened, while even lesser respondents (4.1%) pointed out that the lifelong learning requires strengthening.

In view of the responses provided by the respondents from VEIs, the overall conclusion is that it is necessary to invest more explanatory work and implement wider measures to raise awareness of the LQF, which is also suggested by the comments of some respondents (6.8%). Furthermore, the respondents (19.6% of the total number of responses received) indicated that they lack understanding of the LQF in order to respond to the last question.

2.1.3 Higher Education

In higher education, directors of study programmes directly involved in the development of the curriculum and formulation of the intended learning outcomes were selected for the survey. Out of a total of 571 questionnaires distributed to the directors of study programmes 221 responses were received.

Out of 221 employees from HEIs, 154 were female (69.7%) and 67 – male (30.3%). One third of respondents (33.9%) were aged 41 to 50. A similar number of respondents (29.4%) were aged 51 to 60, while the employees from higher education institutions aged 18 to 30 (2.7%), 31 to 40 (12.2%) and over 60 years (21.7%) accounted for the smallest number of respondents.

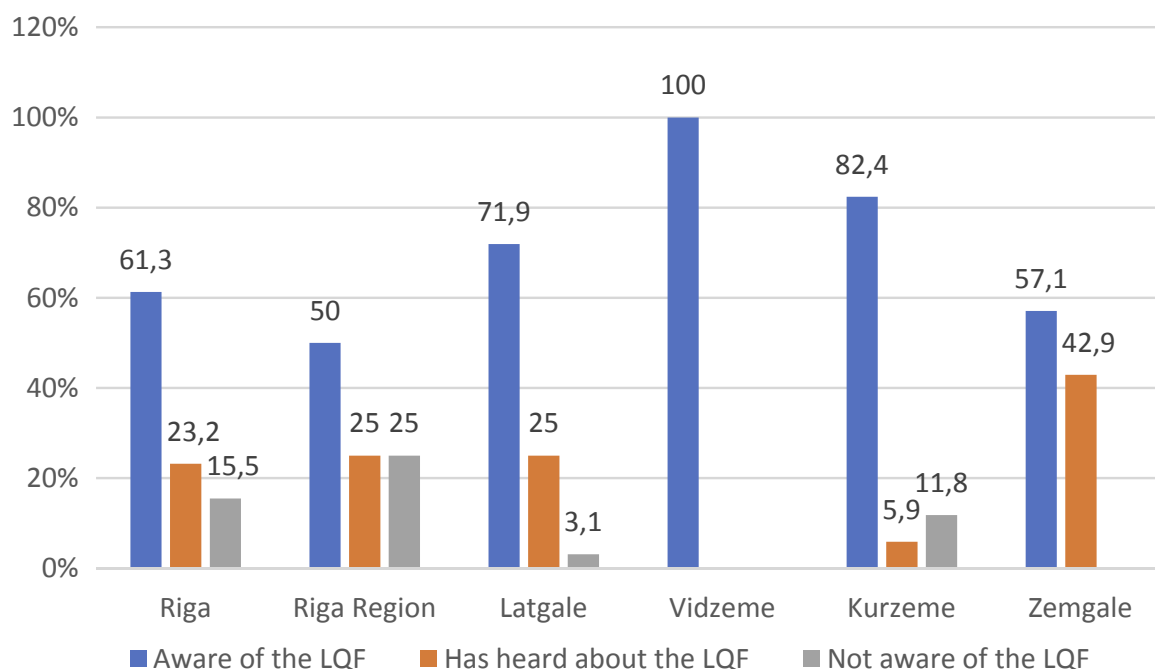
Asked whether or not the respondents are aware of the LQF, the majority of them (64.7%) responded that they are aware of the LQF, while one quarter of respondents (23.5%) indicated that they have heard about it, which could be attributable to the fact that the directors of study programmes are directly involved in the formulation of learning outcomes in accordance with the LQF level descriptors. Moreover, since 2013, the LQF/EQF level or the EHEA qualifications framework level must be indicated in the supplement to the diploma higher education, which suggests that they could have become aware of the LQF by means of the regulatory framework.

The regional distribution of HEIs across Latvia differs from region to region. Riga accounts for the largest number of HEIs (40), followed by Latgale (6), Kurzeme (3), Riga Region (2), Zemgale (2) and Vidzeme (1). Accordingly, the response rate by region was similar. A large part of respondents in this group (64.3%) were from Riga, followed by Latgale (14.5%), Zemgale (9.5%) and Kurzeme (7.7%). Only a small number of respondents represented the Riga Region and Vidzeme.

In order to ascertain the regions with the highest and lowest level of awareness of the LQF (see Image 7), a comparison was made. Since the number of respondents representing the Riga Region and Vidzeme is small, no general conclusions can be drawn. However, it was possible to compare the data on the remaining regions. The highest proportion of the teaching staff aware of the LQF can be observed in Kurzeme (82.4%), followed by Latgale (71.9%), Riga (61.3%) and

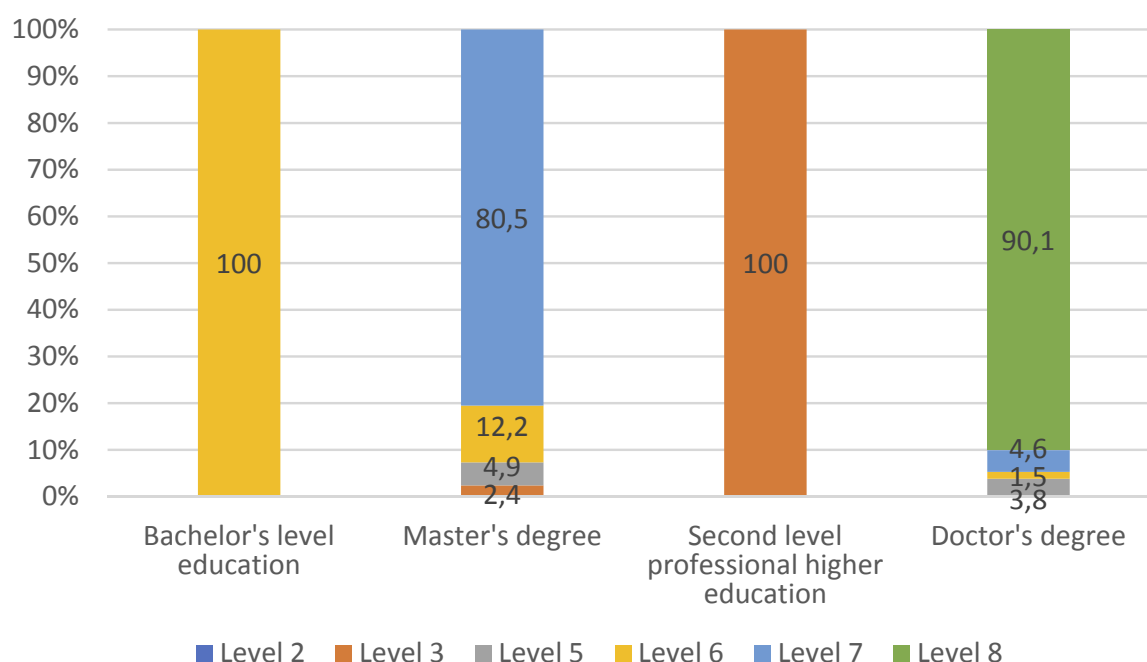
Zemgale (57.1%). However, compared to other regions, in Zemgale, the percentage of those respondents, who have only heard about the LQF, is considerably higher (42.9%). The number of respondents not aware of the LQF is small in all regions across Latvia. In general, it is evident that it is necessary to implement further measures to raise awareness of the LQF and outreach activities in Riga, Zemgale and, possibly, the Riga Region, thus seeking to reduce the number of respondents who are not aware of the LQF or have only heard about it.

Image 7 – Awareness of the LQF by region (%)



In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate their most recent educational attainment. The outcomes of the survey show that, out of the total number of respondents, most of them had a Doctor's degree (72.9%), while one fourth of them (25.8%) – a Master's degree. Only a small number of respondents indicated other educational attainments. In addition to the educational attainment, the respondents were asked to identify the LQF level to which they believed their most recent credential corresponds. As suggested by the outcomes of the survey, the majority of those respondents who chose to indicate the LQF level were mostly able to identify the appropriate LQF level to which their most recent credential corresponds (see Image 8). Nearly all respondents with a Doctor's degree (90.1%) indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 8, while the majority of the teaching staff with a Master's degree (80.5%) indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 7. The number of those respondents indicating other levels to which their credentials correspond was too small to draw general conclusions.

Image 8 – Comparison of the most recent educational attainment to the indicated LQF level (%)



Taking into consideration the meaning of the term “qualification” in the context of the LQF, also the employees from the HEIs were asked to provide an explanation of this term. The majority of respondents (84.6%) indicated that a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences, whereas a relatively small number of the representatives of HEIs (8.1%) indicated that a qualification is a credential. It should be noted that, in the context of the EQF, a “qualification” is a credential to be awarded as a certification of the acquired and assessed knowledge, skills and competences, which would explain why the respondents tend to associate a qualification with a set of knowledge, skills and competences.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of dealing with the LQF. One third of respondents (31.2%) indicated that they deal with the LQF once a year, but nearly one fifth of the employees from the education sector (18.6%) deal with the LQF once a month. A small number of respondents indicated that they never deal with the LQF (12.2%). It should be noted that the frequency of dealing with the LQF could significantly differ depending on the specific nature of work and additional work duties.

The respondents, who indicated that they are aware of the LQF or have at least heard about it, were asked to answer an additional question about the way they had become aware of the LQF. Nearly half of respondents (40%) had become aware of the LQF, through laws and regulations, while one fifth of the representatives from HEIs (20.5%) indicated that they had learned about the LQF at work from their colleagues. A small number of respondents (12.8%) indicated that they had become aware of the LQF in seminars or conferences.

The respondents, who indicated that they are aware of the LQF or have heard about it, were asked to mention to what extent the LQF influences different areas related to education and labour market. From the 10 areas proposed (i.e., learning

outcomes; development of modules; development of curriculum; assessment of learning outcomes; development of occupational standards; international mobility; recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad; lifelong learning; issue of credentials; Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks), a large number of the employees from HEIs indicated that, to a large extent, the LQF influences the development of curriculum (63.6%), which could be attributable to the fact that the directors of study programmes deal with the development, improvement, updating and implementation of study programmes and their submission for accreditation. Thus, they deal with different areas related to the LQF, such as learning outcomes, which must be developed for all study programmes. To a large extent, the LQF influences also the issue of credentials (56.4%) and the development of occupational standards (53.8%). The high proportion of the employees from HEIs, who consider the role of the LQF to be more prominent in the issue of credentials, could be explained by the fact that the LQF/EQF and EHEA qualifications framework level must be indicated in the supplements to credentials, while the application of occupational standards plays a great role in the development of professional education programmes, as they define the general and professional knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired in the particular occupation. Among the respondents, the role of the LQF in lifelong learning was rated the lowest (18.5%).

The last question in the questionnaire of the survey conducted among the representatives of HEIs was an open-ended question, in which the respondents could indicate the areas of the LQF which should be strengthened, mentioning also the reason to do so. The responses to this open-ended question were different. The most frequent response was that the stakeholders should be more informed about the LQF and measures to raise awareness of the LQF are required (9.3%). In the questionnaires, several respondents (10.3%) indicated that all aforementioned areas influenced by the LQF should be strengthened. Some employees from the education sector (4.7%) pointed out that the term “competence” should be clearly defined, in order to avoid confusion and misunderstandings, or another term, such as “attitude” should be used instead. Many respondents (8.4%) indicated that the level descriptors for the knowledge, skills and competences should be improved, thus allowing for a clear distinction from the knowledge, skills and competences defined for the previous level, as well as showing a clear difference between the knowledge, skills and competences. Several respondents (5.6%) pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen higher education as such, with a strong emphasis on professional higher education. A small number of respondents (1.9%) indicated that, in the context of the LQF, lifelong learning should be strengthened.

2.1.4 Labour Market

Given the strong link between education and labour market, also a labour market survey was conducted to ascertain the role of the LQF in labour market. The survey questionnaires were sent to persons involved in the recruitment processes,

namely, to company managers, department managers, personnel departments, etc. Within the study, a total of 506 questionnaires were distributed. Another 430 questionnaires were sent out with the support of the Employers' Confederation of Latvia. A total of 75 responses were returned.

Out of the total number of respondents (75), 59 were female (78.8%), while 16 were male (21.3%). The majority of employers were aged 41 to 50 (45.3%), while the number of respondents aged 31 to 40 and 51 to 60 was very similar (22.7% and 21.3% respectively). Only a small number of respondents represented the remaining age groups.

The respondents also had to indicate their most recent educational attainment. As suggested by the survey outcomes, the majority of respondents (65.3%) have a Master's degree, while nearly one fifth of the surveyed employers (18.7%) have a Bachelor's degree. Only a small number of respondents indicated other educational attainments.

The respondents were asked to indicate the region of employment. Although the questionnaires were distributed to the companies from all regions of Latvia, Riga accounted for the highest response rate (68%), while the remaining regions were represented to a very similar extent (with a response rate ranging between 5.3% and 8%). However, it should also be noted that Riga²⁹ accounts for the largest number of economically active companies.

To gain insight in the profile of the companies, who had provided responses, the respondents were asked to indicate the status of their workplace. The majority of respondents (62.7%) indicated that they are employed at a private company, whereas a small number of respondents (16%) are employed at a State-owned capital company with full or partial State capital. Only a small number of respondents provided other responses.

In order to ascertain the level of understanding of the LQF in labour market, also the employers were asked to indicate, whether or not they are aware of the LQF or have at least heard about it. The survey outcomes suggest that more than half of respondents (53.3%) are not aware of the LQF, while only one fifth of respondents are aware of the LQF. The remaining respondents (29.3%) indicated that they have only heard about the LQF. The number of employers aware of the LQF, compared to the representatives of the education sector, was relatively low. It could be attributable to the fact that the employers, compared to the representatives of the education sector, are less likely to come across the LQF, while dealing with laws and regulations, attending seminars/conferences, etc.

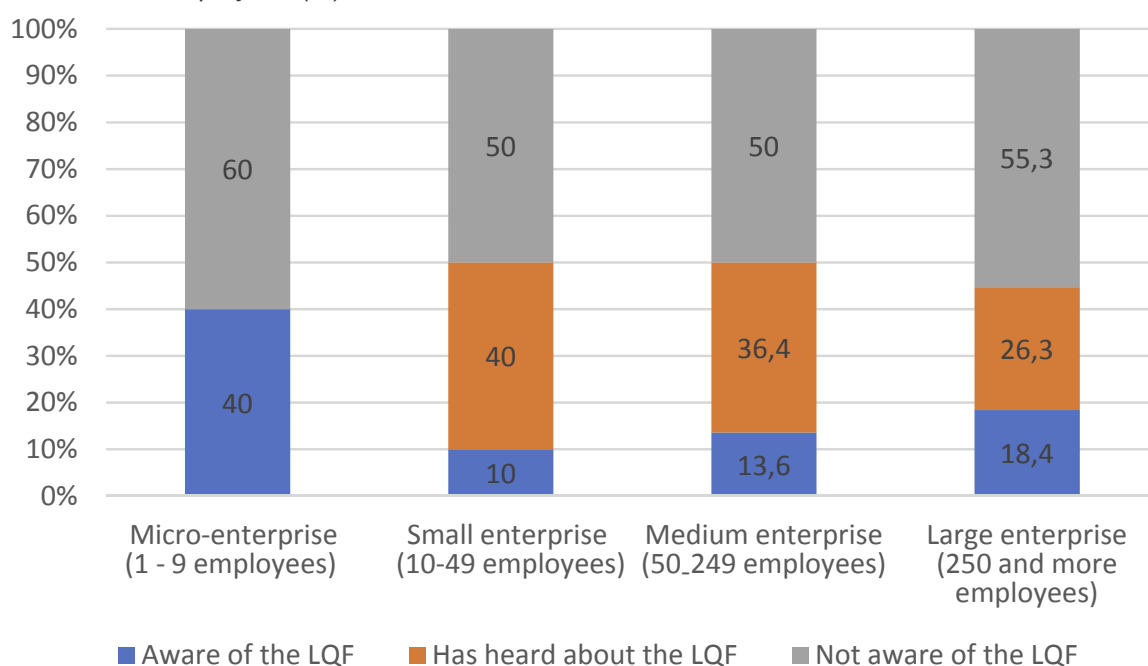
The respondents were asked to indicate the type of company by the number of employees, in order to get a broader view of how the LQF is used in different types of companies. Half of respondents (50.7%) indicated that they are employed at a large enterprise (with 250 and more employees), while less than one third of respondents (29.3%) indicated that they are employed at a medium enterprise

²⁹ Central Statistical Bureau (2018). Economically active companies in statistical regions, cities and districts. See: https://data.csb.gov.lv/pxweb/en/uzn/uzn__01_skaitis/SRG010.px

(with 50 to 249 employees). Only a small number of respondents (13.3% and 6.7% respectively) represented the small enterprises (with 10 to 49 employees) and micro-enterprises (with 1 to 9 employees).

In order to ascertain the types of companies accounting for the highest level of awareness of the LQF, the levels of awareness of the LQF were compared, taking into account the type of company by the number of employees. As suggested by the comparison of the outcomes, the number of employees does not determine to what extent the employers are aware of the LQF (see Image 9). The proportion of respondents not aware of the LQF in all types of companies (by the number of employees) was very similar (ranging from 50 to 60%), while the number of respondents, who are aware of the LQF or have at least heard about it, was also very similar in this type of companies – in most cases with the only difference of the proportion of the respondents who are aware of the LQF and who have only heard about it.

Image 9 – Comparison of the levels of awareness of the LQF depending on the type of company by the number of employees (%)



In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the position held, in order to gain a broader view of the diversity of respondents among those participating in the survey. Less than half of respondents (44%) indicated that they hold the position of a company manager, senior manager or owner. One third of respondents (33.3%) indicated that they are middle or lower-level managers, while one fifth of respondents (22.7%) indicated that they are employees with no managerial duties, part of which could be employees of the personnel department.

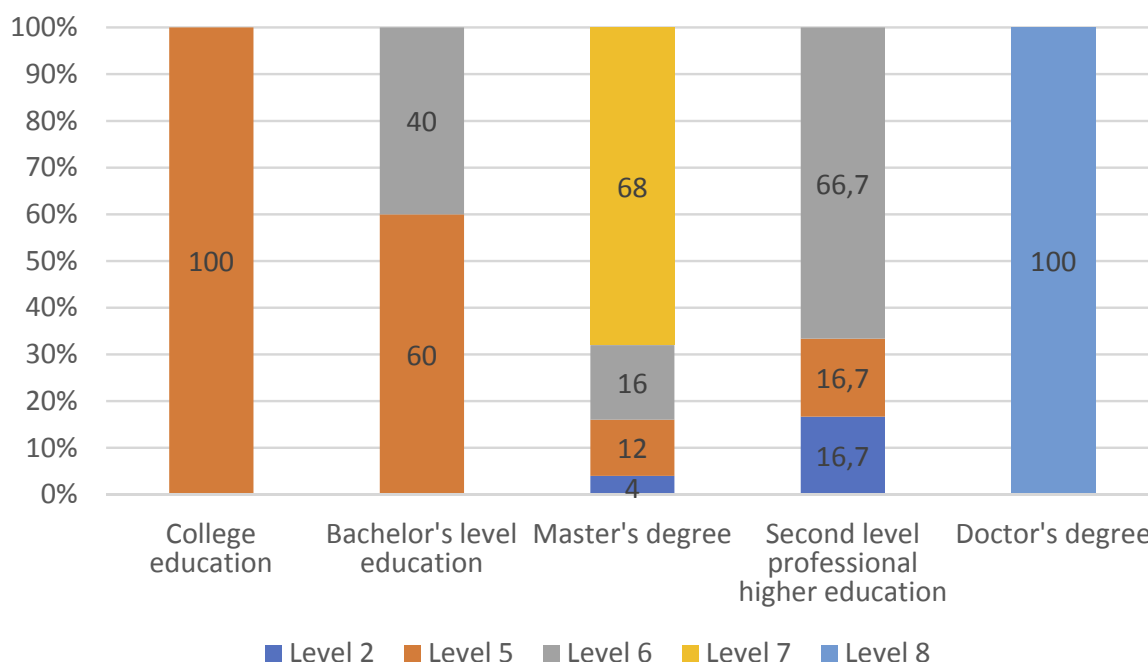
In addition, the levels of awareness of the LQF of respondents were measured against their position held at the company, in order to ascertain whether or not the awareness of the LQF depends on the position held. After comparing the outcomes, it could be concluded that, in the context of the LQF, in companies the respondents, who are employees with no managerial duties, are more aware of the LQF than the

managers. Less than one third of respondents (29.4%), who are employees with no managerial duties, were aware of the LQF, while less than half of respondents (41.2%) had at least heard about the LQF. Meanwhile, the level of awareness of the LQF among the company managers, senior managers or owners, as well as middle and lower-level managers is considerably lower, compared to the employees with no managerial duties. Out of all company managers, senior managers or owners, more than half of respondents (57.6%) indicated that they are not aware of the LQF. Similar statistics can be observed among middle or lower-level managers, the majority of which are not aware of the LQF (64%). Such a striking difference of the levels of awareness of the LQF among the employees with no managerial duties and the senior or lower-level managers could be attributable to the fact that the survey conducted among the employees with no managerial duties was mainly focused on the employees of the personnel department, who are more likely to be aware of the LQF, for instance, while evaluating the supplement to the diploma of higher education, acquired by a candidate, where the LQF level and learning outcomes are indicated.

As for the meaning of the term “qualification” in the context of the LQF, also the employers were asked to express their opinion on the explanation of this term. The majority of respondents (77.3%) indicated that a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences, while only a small number of respondents (10.7%) considered a qualification to be a credential. As in the field of education, also in the context of labour market the respondents emphasised the knowledge, skills and competences, not indicating that it is a credential representing this knowledge, skills and competences, when asked to define a qualification.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the LQF level to which their most recent credential corresponds, in order to determine, compared against the most recent educational attainment, whether or not the respondents are able to identify the correct LQF level to which their credential corresponds. After comparing the outcomes of the questionnaire, it could be concluded that the majority of those respondents, who indicated the LQF level to which their credential corresponds, were able to identify the correct LQF level (see Image 10). For instance, none of the respondents with college education or a Doctor's degree committed a mistake, indicating the LQF level 5 and level 8, respectively. Out of all respondents with a Master's degree, the majority (68%) indicated that their credential corresponds to the LQF level 7. A similar situation can be observed among the respondents with second-level professional higher education, as the majority of the employers (66.7%) indicated that their credential corresponds to the LQF level 6.

Image 10 – Comparison of the most recent educational attainment to the indicated LQF level (%)



In order to gain a broader view of the frequency of dealing with the LQF, while carrying out their daily work duties, the employers were asked to indicate how often they deal with the LQF. As suggested by the survey outcomes, half of respondents (52%) never deal with the LQF, which is not surprising, given the fact that more than half of employers were not aware of the LQF, when asked about the awareness of the LQF. A small number of respondents (17.3%) indicated that they deal with the LQF less than once a year, while several respondents deal with the LQF at least once a year (9.3%) or once a month (10.7%). Thus, it can be observed that the respondents still somewhat deal with the LQF in different ways, for instance, while evaluating the supplement of the higher education documents, in collaboration with educational institutions, during the development of occupational standards, etc.

Given the fact that the employers are most likely to deal with the LQF during the recruitment process, the respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they use the LQF during the recruitment process. Although the majority of respondents (61.3%) indicated that they do not use the LQF during the recruitment process, one fourth of employers (25.3%) mentioned that, in certain cases, they do actually use the LQF during the recruitment process.

In order to ascertain to what extent the employers use the LQF, they were asked whether or not they take into account the knowledge, skills and competences described in Diploma Supplements. The outcomes of the survey show that half of respondents (50.7%) take into account the knowledge, skills and competences indicated in Diploma Supplements. However, it should be noted that slightly less than half of respondents (40%) indicated that they do not take into account the knowledge, skills and competences indicated in Diploma Supplements. A small number of respondents (9.3%) noted that they are not aware of the possibility of learning this type of information, based on Diploma Supplements.

The respondents, who are aware of the LQF or have heard about it, were asked to indicate how they had become aware of the LQF, in order to gain a broader view of the efficiency of different information channels and determine which sources of information are more relevant among the employers. As suggested by survey outcomes, there were several proposed options which received a similar number of responses. One fifth of respondents (22.9%) indicated that they had become aware of the LQF through information materials, while a similar number of respondents (20%) had learned about the LQF, through laws and regulations. Part of respondents (17.1%) had learned about the LQF from their colleagues at work.

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate to what extent the LQF influences the 10 proposed areas in the context of labour market. As suggested by the outcomes, a large number of employees believe that the role of the LQF is more prominent in the development of curriculum (54.3%). In general, the respondents have indicated that the LQF influences all the proposed areas to a large or a rather large extent. However, most employers have indicated that the LQF influences the issue of credentials to a small extent (17.1%), even though this area was considered one of the most important areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent.

2.1.5 General Public

To gain a deeper insight in the use of the LQF outside the area of education and labour market, the public opinion was analysed within the study. However, it was not the main objective of the study.

Various online tools were used for the public survey, including the Twitter account and website of the NCP of Latvia, Europass page on Facebook and Twitter, the Latvian Qualifications Database and the website of the AIC. Upon concluding the survey, a total of 107 responses were received.

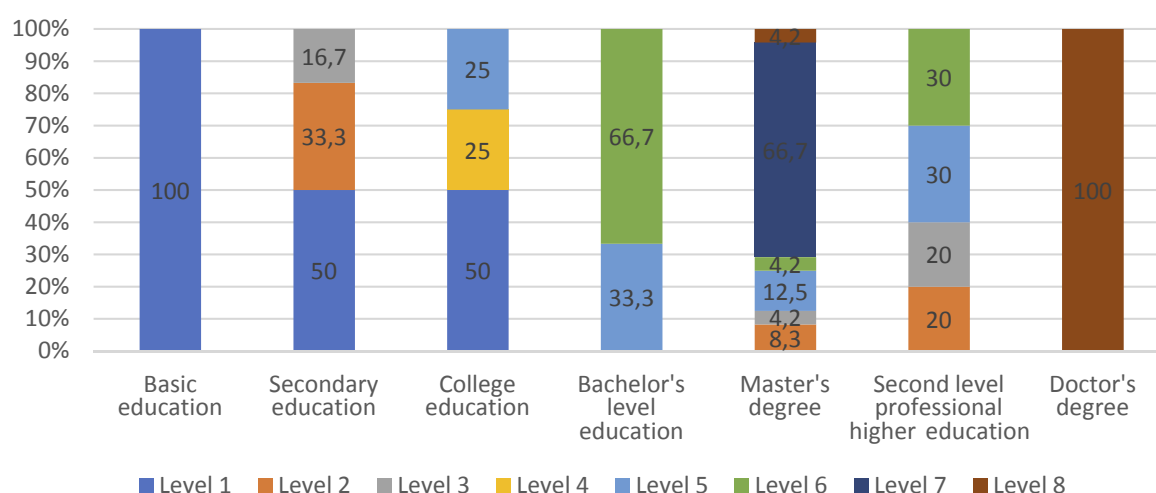
Out of the total number of respondents, 77 were female (72%), but 30 were male (28%), the majority of which were aged 31 to 40 (34.6%), while a similar number of respondents (31.8%) were aged 18 to 30. A quite high response rate could be observed among the respondents aged 51 to 60 (17.8%), while only a small number of respondents represented other age groups.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they are aware of the LQF, in order to ascertain to what extent the general public is aware of the LQF. As suggested by the survey outcomes, more than half of respondents (55.1%) were not aware of the LQF, while one fifth of respondents (22.4%) were aware of the LQF. The same number of respondents (22.4%) have only had heard about the LQF.

In order to compare the educational attainment of the respondents against the LQF level to which their credentials correspond, the respondents were asked to indicate their most recent educational attainment. Nearly half of respondents

(41.1%) indicated that they have a Master's degree, whereas one fourth of respondents (23.4%) have a Bachelor's degree. Only a small number of respondents (2.8%) have a Doctor's degree. Subsequently, the credentials of the respondents were compared against the LQF level to which they correspond (see Image 11), as a result of which it turned out that the majority of respondents with a Master's and Bachelor's degree (66.7%) were able to indicate that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 6 or 7, while all respondents with a Doctor's degree indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 8. However, the majority of respondents with other educational attainment had difficulty indicating the LQF level to which their most recent credentials correspond, given the fact that only one fourth of respondents (25%) with college education indicated that their credentials correspond to the LQF level 5, while none of the respondents corresponding to the LQF levels 1 to 4 were able to identify the appropriate LQF level.

Image 11 – Comparison of the most recent educational attainment to the indicated LQF level (%)



In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the region where they work, learn or study, in order to get a broader view of the level of awareness of the LQF in different regions of Latvia. The survey outcomes show that the majority of respondents (70.1%) work, learn or study in Riga, while only a small number of respondents indicated other regions of Latvia. Vidzeme ranked second (9.3%), while only a small number of respondents indicated the Riga Region (6.5%), Latgale (6.5%), Zemgale (5.6%) and Kurzeme (1.9%). Given the high proportion of respondents, who indicated that they work, learn or study in Riga, it is not possible to make a representative comparison of the levels of awareness of the LQF in the regions of Latvia.

In order to obtain further information on the respondents, they were asked to indicate their occupation. The survey outcomes show that the majority of respondents (80.4%) are employed, while only a small number of respondents (7.5%) indicated that they learn/study or are unemployed (8.4%).

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the type of educational institution, at which they learn or study. As suggested by the survey outcomes, the majority of respondents (78.5%) study at a higher education institution, which

is also supported by the responses to the question about the most recent educational attainment, where the most respondents had indicated that they have college education or higher educational attainment (82.2%). The same number of respondents (7.5%) study at general or vocational education institutions.

In view of the term “qualification” not only in the context of the LQF, but also in other areas, also the general public was asked to explain the meaning of this term. As suggested by the survey outcomes, the majority of respondents (66.4%) consider a qualification to be a set of knowledge, skills and competences, while only one fifth of respondents (19.6%) associated it with a credential.

In the next question, the respondents were asked about the frequency of dealing with the LQF (at work, while looking for a job, during the study process, etc.), in order to ascertain to what extent the LQF is used among the general public. The survey outcomes show that most respondents (58.9%) never deal with the LQF, which is not surprising, given the fact that a similar number of respondents (55.1%), asked about the awareness of the LWQ, indicated that they are not aware of it. Meanwhile, a small number of respondents (16.8%) indicated that they deal with the LQF less than once a year.

Those respondents, who were aware of the LQF or had heard about it, were asked to mention how they learned about the LQF, in order to gain a broader view of different information channels through which the LQF reaches the general public and assess the efficiency of the current sources of information. As suggested by the outcomes, one third of respondents (35.4%) had learned about the LQF from their colleagues at work, whereas one fifth of respondents (22.9%) had come across the LQF during the study or learning process. A small number of respondents had learned about the LQF through laws and regulations (8.3%) and in seminars or conferences (8.3%).

As in the previous question, the respondents, who are aware of the LQF or have heard about it, were asked to mention the areas in which the role of the LQF is more prominent. As suggested by the survey outcomes, the majority of respondents believe that, to a large extent, the LQF influences the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad (50%), while many respondents also mentioned the development of occupational standards and issue of credentials (both 37.5%) as important areas where the role of the LQF is more prominent. However, the role of the LQF in job descriptions (27.1%) and lifelong learning (25%) was rated the lowest.

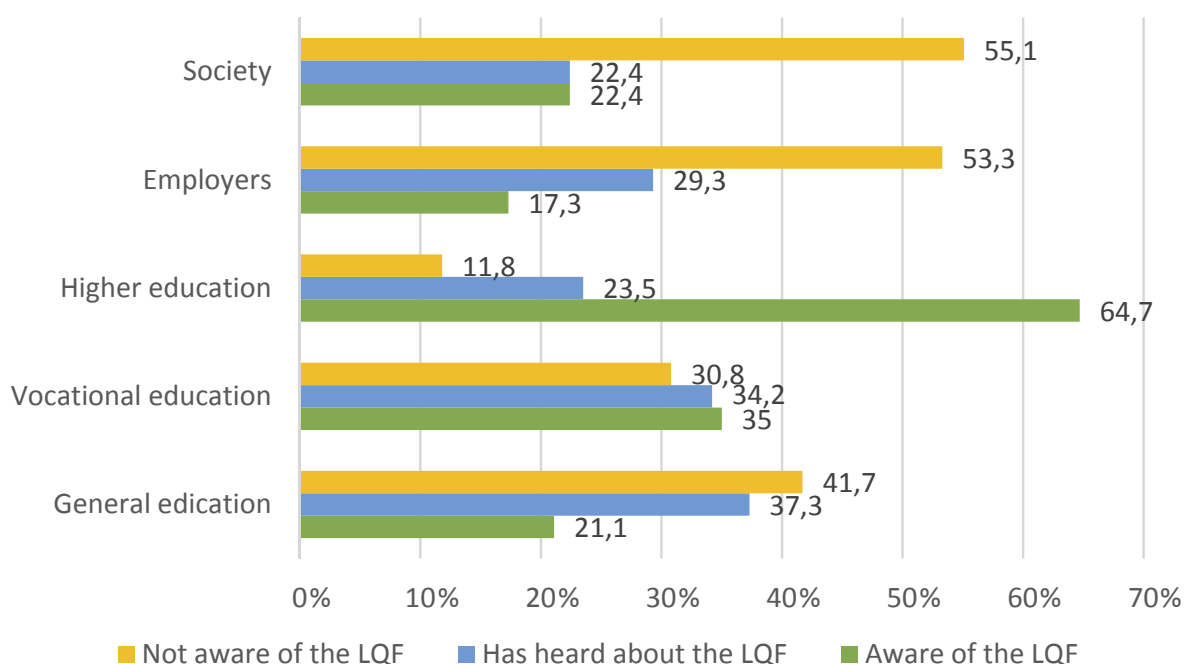
The last question was an open-ended question, allowing the respondents to indicate the areas of the LQF related to education and labour market, which should be strengthened, mentioning also the reason to do so. The responses provided by the respondents were very different and do not suggest specific trends. However, several respondents (20%) pointed out that it is necessary to inform the general public about the LQF and raise awareness of it in general public and labour market, as evidenced by the small number of respondents, who are not aware of the LQF or have only heard about it.

2.1.6 Conclusions of the Survey Outcomes

The evaluation and comparison of the responses provided in the questionnaires lead to the conclusion that the responses to certain questions differ from one group of respondents to another.

One of the main objectives of this study was to ascertain the level of awareness of the LQF both in education and labour market. Consequently, the respondents were asked whether or not they are aware of the LQF. After comparing the groups of respondents (see Image 12), it can be observed that the area of higher education accounts for the highest number of respondents aware of the LQF. The majority of the surveyed directors of study programmes (64.7%) indicated that they are aware of the LQF, while nearly one quarter of respondents (23.5%) acknowledged that they have at least heard about it, which is not surprising, given the fact that the directors of study programmes are expected to develop learning outcomes for their study programmes and indicate the LQF level during the accreditation process. Comparing the responses provided by the employees of GEIs and VEIs, it can be observed VEIs account for a higher proportion of employees from the education sector aware of the LQF than GEIs, which is not surprising, given the fact that credentials issued by VEIs must carry a reference to the appropriate LQF level. However, the level of awareness of the LQF among the employers and the general public is low. Out of the total number of employers surveyed (75), more than half of them (53.3%) indicated that they are not aware of the LQF. Similarly, out of the total number of respondents participating in the public survey (107), more than half of them (55.1%) indicated that they are not aware of the LQF.

Image 12 – Awareness of the LQF among the groups of respondents (%)



Another objective of the study consisted in determining the areas in which the role of the LQF is more prominent. The comparison of the outcomes led to the conclusion that the role of the LQF was more prominent in three areas:

- The recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad ranked first among the employees of GEIs and the general public.
- The development of curriculum ranked first among the employees of HEIs and employers.
- The development of occupational standards ranked first among the employees of VEIs.

All groups of respondents were asked to indicate both their most recent educational attainment and the LQF level to which their credentials correspond, in order to ascertain whether or not the respondents are able to identify the appropriate LQF level to which their credentials correspond. After comparing the groups of respondents, it could be concluded that the representatives of HEIs were able to identify the LQF, to which their credentials correspond, most accurately, while the responses of other groups of respondents were similar. Comparing the correspondence of the educational attainment to the relevant LQF level among the respondents, it could be concluded that the respondents with a Master's and Doctor's degree were able to identify the appropriate LQF level, to which their credentials correspond, more accurately, while the respondents with other educational attainment mostly tend to indicate the inappropriate LQF level.

Taking into account the meaning of the term “qualification” in the context of the LQF, the groups of respondents were compared, in order to ascertain whether or not the understanding of the meaning of this term differs depending on the area and the educational attainment. The comparison led to the conclusion that, in all groups, most respondents believed that a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences, while only a small number of respondents associated a qualification with an “credential”.

Also, the levels of awareness of the LQF were compared against the region, where the respondents work/ learn/ study, in order to identify the regions that require more outreach activities and measures for raising awareness of the LQF. This comparison shows that the lowest level of awareness of the LQF can be observed in Kurzeme among the employees of GEIs and HEIs and in Zemgale among the employees of VEIs. Among the employers and general public, most respondents (68% and 70.1% respectively) indicated Riga as the place of work/ learning/ studies. Thus, the number of those respondents representing other regions of Latvia was not sufficient, in order to draw general conclusions.

Finally, the responses of the respondents between the groups were compared, in order to understand how the different groups of respondents had become aware of the LQF and which sources of information were the most efficient. After comparing the survey outcomes between the groups, it could be concluded that, in the field of education, the most respondents had learned about the LQF through laws and regulations, especially in higher education, where nearly half of respondents (40%)

selected this option. Although the option “laws and regulations” ranked high also among the employees of GEIs, the majority of respondents (28.9%) indicated that they had become aware of the LQF from information materials. A very similar situation can be observed among employers, where most respondents had become aware of the LQF from information materials (22.9%), while a similar number of respondents (20%) learned about the LQF through laws and regulations. However, the responses provided by the general public differ widely from those provided by other groups of respondents, as most respondents indicated that they had learned about the LQF at work from their colleagues (35.4%), while a large number of respondents acknowledged that they had become aware of the LQF during learning/studies (22.9%).

2.2 Interview Outcomes

In order to get a broader overview of the meaning of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and its further development both in education and labour market, four in-depth interviews were conducted in addition to the survey. Experts representing education institutions and labour market were selected for the interviews. Also, a person involved in the development of the LQF was invited to the interview, in order to reflect on the process of establishing the LQF and its development, as well as to outline the possible further development of the LQF.

The respondents were asked to respond to eight to nine questions, most of which were focused on the meaning and awareness of the LQF, while the remaining questions (depending on the competence of the respondents) were aimed at determining the areas, where the role of the LQF is more prominent, and identifying the aspects of the LQF that should be strengthened.

During the first interview, a director of a study programme (DSP) with 15 years of experience in working at HEIs and 10 years of experience in organisation of the study process and the development and accreditation of study programmes was interviewed. The interview with the director of a study programme was aimed at determining the role of the LQF in the development of study programmes and in higher education in general, as well as to identify the areas, in which, in the view of the DSP, the role of the LQF is more prominent.

During the second interview, an employer with great experience in recruitment processes was interviewed. Since she also represents an association, she has great experience in collaboration with other employers, who are members of the association. In addition to the collaboration with employers, the members of the association also take part in activities related to education, such as collaboration with the MoES, training of teachers, organisation of technical innovation activities/ hobby groups, etc. The interview with the employer aimed at seeking her view on the LQF and its use on the labour market.

During the third interview, a director of a vocational school (DVS) with great experience in the management of VEIs and vocational education in general was interviewed. The school managed by the DVS maintains broad collaboration with employers representing different sectors, when developing education programmes and addressing other matters. The interview with the DVS aimed at gaining a deeper insight in the use of the LQF in the context of vocational education, given the strong emphasise of qualifications in vocational education.

During the fourth interview, a person involved in the establishment of the LQF (PIE of the LQF) with great experience in higher education, i.e., in giving lectures, seminars and examinations and involving in organisations at both institutional and sectoral level, etc. was interviewed. A person forming part of the Referencing Process Working Group established by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) was selected for the interview, in order to gain more insight in the establishment of the LQF and its development over the last decade since the establishment of the LQF.

2.2.1 Concept and Awareness of the LQF

One of the objectives of the interview consisted in seeking the view of the respondents on the term “qualification” comprised by the LQF, as well as determining the level of awareness of the LQF, gaining information on its use and identifying the areas mostly influenced by it.

As in the survey questionnaires, also during the interviews, the sectoral experts were asked to explain the meaning of the term “qualification” not only in the context of the LQF, but also in education and labour market. The respondents did not have a consistent understanding of the term “qualification”. According to the DVS, a qualification is a set of knowledge, skills and competences, certified by a credential, whereas the DSP and the employer described a qualification as a set of knowledge, skills and competences (attitudes) acquired during the studies. However, the respondents did not mention that this knowledge, skills and competences are certified by a credential. The DVS did, however, point out that the employees of vocational education institutions have a clear and unambiguous understanding of the qualification.

During the interviews, the respondents were asked to mention whether or not they have been involved in the establishment of the LQF and to what extent, if so. Before conducting the interviews, it was known that only the PIE of the LQF was involved in the establishment of the LQF, as the PIE of the LQF formed part of the Referencing Process Working Group established by the MoES. However, during the interview, it turned out that, to a certain extent, also the DVS was involved as a representative of an association. During the establishment of the LQF, the PIE of the LQF formed part of different groups, which were tasked to translate the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) into Latvian and develop the descriptors of the EQF, as well as attended different seminars, providing comments and explanations. The employer indicated that she was not involved in the process of

establishing the LQF and that she had become aware of it only later, during the activities organised by the AIC. Subsequently, she took note of the relevant laws and regulations, which lead to participation in the development of programmes and occupational standards.

To gain more insight in the areas, in which the role of the LQF is more prominent, also the sectoral specialists were asked to give their opinion. According to the DSP and PIE of the LQF, the LQF plays significant role in learning outcomes. In addition to the learning outcomes, the DSP also mentioned the development of occupational standards, pointing out that a lot of employers deal with the LQF while developing occupational standards, while the PIE of the LQF acknowledged that the LQF plays a significant role in regulated professions, where the learning outcomes and level descriptors are of great importance both in Latvia and abroad, while recognising diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad. The DVS, in turn, suggested that all areas related to the LQF should be strengthened. The employer, however, indicated that the LQF plays a significant role in determining the levels of qualifications, without mentioning specific areas.

The employer and the PIE of the LQF were also asked to assess the level of awareness of the LQF in education and labour market. During the interview, the employer acknowledged that the employers are not aware of the LQF, indicating that, for the most part, the employees involved in the development of occupational standards and collaboration with Sectoral Expert Councils deal with the LQF. The PIE of the LQF, in turn, indicated that almost everyone is aware of the LQF in higher education, pointing out that the level of awareness of the LQF is high also beyond the area of education, such as among the representatives of Sectoral Expert Councils, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Culture, the Employers' Confederation of Latvia, and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Latvia. However, the PIE of the LQF emphasised that, for the most part, the level of awareness of the LQF is more likely to be higher among companies, which, to a certain extent, are related to education, while other companies might have only a vague idea of the LQF.

2.2.2 Further Development of the LQF

During the interviews, the respondents were asked several questions related to the strengthening and further development of the LQF for the purpose of seeking the opinion of sectoral specialists on how the LQF should be further strengthened and which areas would require improvement and changes.

During the interviews, the respondents were asked to identify the areas or aspects of the LQF which should be strengthened in the context of education and labour market. The DVS pointed out that, for the time being, it is crucial to raise awareness of the LQF, so that it could be used more widely, focusing on the employers. According to her, the employers (especially the personnel department)

would benefit greatly from the use of the LQF, as they would have a better idea of the specialist to be recruited and the required skills. The DSP mentioned that it is necessary to raise awareness of the LQF among the employers, for instance, through a collaboration with the Latvian Association of Personnel Management. The use of the LQF during the recruitment process may have its benefits, but, as indicated by the employer, most employers currently do not refer to the LQF to evaluate the potential employees. She also stated that, during the job interviews, most employers do not examine the diploma and/or the Diploma Supplement. This conclusion supports the opinion of the DVS and DSP on the need to raise awareness of the LQF among the employers. Furthermore, the DVS added that greater knowledge of qualifications among the employers would significantly improve their workforce, as exemplified by the following case: A company recruited a person with a certificate of professional qualification instead of another person with a diploma, who had applied for the same position, only because the company did not know the difference between these credentials.

As further example of raising awareness of the LQF, the DSP suggested more frequent seminars aiming at exchanging the experience between the directors of study programmes, thus helping them having a better understanding of the areas influenced by the LQF, different qualifications and study programmes developed and implemented at other higher education institutions. According to her, many directors of study programmes have a lot of experience in working with the LQF, but everyone has their own experience worth sharing with others.

During the interview, asked about the strengthening of the areas of the LQF, the PIE of the LQF suggested that it is necessary to improve the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks (SQFs), pointing out the following:

“There are common SQFs established in Latvia, but different sectors, for instance, health care or other sectors, should develop their own sector-oriented SQFs as sub-systems of the main framework. However, the efforts of the AIC have not been really forthcoming.”

At the end of the interview, the PIE of the LQF added that the knowledge, skills and competences referred to in the LQF level descriptors should be replaced by knowledge, abilities and skills, stating that the knowledge, abilities and skills are very traditional terms understandable to everyone involved in education and labour market, while many do not understand the term “competences”, justifying his standpoint with the following example:

“A person has knowledge of how to make a stool, abilities of how to process wood and then the skills of making a kitchen stool, chair for the living room or a chair for the Castle of Riga. It is a skill, when one already knows these things, such as, which wood to use in the particular case – one has the abilities of processing different types of wood, which leads to the intended outcome. Only then one is competent in carpentry.”

The analysis of the opinions of the respondents did not suggest serious issues or shortcomings with regards to the LQF. It was, however, possible to identify specific areas, which could be improved, such as the SQFs. Nevertheless, all respondents suggested that more awareness of the LQF should be raised and more explanatory information about the LQF should be disseminated among the employers and other stakeholders, who could use the LQF in their work or learning/study process or already do so, without even being aware of it.

Conclusions

The study “The Role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in Education and Labour Market” aimed at ascertaining the level of awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) in Latvia and seeking the opinion of the respondents on the areas of education and labour market mostly influenced by the LQF. The study involved a survey conducted among the representatives of the sector of general, vocational and higher education, employers, as well as a public survey. A total of 1238 respondents were surveyed and four in-depth interviews were conducted, in order to have a better overview of the role of the LQF and its likely further development in both education and labour market.

Awareness of the LQF

The study shows that the representatives of education institutions account for the highest level of awareness of the LQF among all respondents. In this target group, respectively, the highest level of awareness of the LQF was observed among the representatives of higher education institutions, followed by the employees of vocational education institutions and general education institutions. However, the lowest level of awareness of the LQF was observed among the employers and general public.

As for the awareness of the LQF among the representatives of the education sector depending on the regional distribution, Zemgale accounted for the lowest level of awareness of the LQF among the employees of vocational education institutions, followed by Kurzeme among general and higher education institutions. Riga, on the other hand, accounts for the highest level of awareness of the LQF among general education institutions, followed by Kurzeme among vocational education institutions and Vidzeme among higher education institutions. As suggested by the outcomes of the survey conducted among the employers (68%) and general public (70.1%), the majority of respondents represent the city of Riga, hence the representative selection of other regions in Latvia was not sufficient to draw general conclusions.

In order to evaluate the understanding of the LQF of the respondents and the distribution of qualifications depending on the level, the respondents were initially asked to indicate their most recent educational attainment, subsequently identifying the level to which their most recent credentia corresponds. The outcomes show that the representatives of higher education institutions were able to identify the appropriate LQF, to which their credentials correspond, most accurately, while the responses of other groups of respondents were similar. It should be noted that the supplement to the diploma of higher education carries a reference to the appropriate LQF level since 2013, but the documents of vocational education only since 2017, while in general education it is not yet indicated. Worth mentioning is the fact

that the respondents representing higher education institutions were the directors of study programmes, who were most directly involved in the development of education programmes and their referencing to the appropriate LQF level. Thus, it would allow for the representatives of the higher education sector to have a better understanding of the placement of qualifications within the framework depending on the level. In this regard, it should be also noted that the representatives of vocational education institutions often referenced their most recently acquired qualification to a level that would correspond to the historically existing levels of professional qualification, which have been used in vocational education since 1999 and were referenced to the appropriate LQF levels only in 2015.

Similar challenges in education had to be faced after the introduction of the term “qualification” along the establishment of the LQF. Until now, the laws and regulations define only the term “professional qualification”, which is “assessment of education and professional skills with respect to a particular profession, confirmed by documentary evidence”. In order to ascertain the understanding and opinion of the term “qualification” among the respondents, the participants of the study were offered several possible options to choose from – “length of service”, “professional experience”, “credential”, “profession or position held” and “set of knowledge, skills and competences”, or they could also provide another response. The majority of respondents considered a “qualification” to be a set of knowledge, skills and competences, while only a small number of respondents preferred the option “credential”.

Application of the LQF on a Daily Basis

As part of the study, it was also important to ascertain how often the respective groups of respondents deal with the LQF on a daily basis (at work, while seeking employment, during the learning process, etc.).

The study shows that, among the representatives of general education institutions, almost half of respondents do not deal with the LQF in their daily work. Most respondents, who had indicated that they deal with the LQF also on a daily basis, were mostly directors or deputy directors. Similar outcomes can be observed also among the representatives of vocational education institutions, where nearly half of respondents do not deal with the LQF on a daily basis. However, those who deal with the LQF at work or during the learning process, are mostly managers, deputy managers or methodologists. In this target group, those respondents holding the position of a teacher are the ones who deal less with the LQF in their daily work. However, the participants of the survey, who represent higher education institutions, are the ones dealing most with the LQF in their daily work. Only a small number of respondents indicated that they do not deal with the LQF. It should be noted that these outcomes should be analysed, taking into account the fact that the need and frequency of dealing with the LQF may vary depending on the position held.

Since the employers are more likely to deal with the LQF during the recruitment process, the respondents were asked to mention how often they use the LQF during the recruitment process. More than half of respondents do not use the LQF during the recruitment process, whereas one fourth of employers indicated that they do in fact use the LQF during the recruitment process. The study also shows that half of the surveyed employers take into account the knowledge, skills and competences indicated in the diplomas. However, nearly the same number of the surveyed employers do not take into account the knowledge, skills and competences described in the diploma supplements or are not aware of the possibility to learn this type of information from diploma supplements.

Sources of Information on the LQF

The study shows that, in education, the respondents have mostly become aware of the LQF through laws and regulations, especially in higher education, where nearly half of respondents mentioned them as a source of information. Although this response ranked high also among the employees of general education institutions, most respondents indicated that they had become aware of the LQF from information materials.

A similar situation can be observed also among the employers, where the majority of respondents had become aware of the LQF from information materials and through laws and regulations. The public survey shows that the respondents had learned about the LQF mostly at work from their colleagues or during the learning/study process.

The Role of the LQF in Education and Labour Market

Over the last decade, the education system of Latvia has undergone major changes, to a great extent also influenced by the LQF. The curricula and scope of qualifications have become more transparent and comprehensible for both individuals and education professionals and employers, allowing them to understand what the learner knows, can and is able to do, thus promoting lifelong learning and facilitating transnational mobility and recognition of qualifications.

The study aimed at seeking the view of the respondents on areas mostly influenced by the LQF. Although the views of the respondents varied depending on the target group they represented, it seems that the LQF mostly influences the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad, as well as the development of education programmes and occupational standards.

As suggested by the survey outcomes, the representatives of general education institutions believed that the role of the LQF is more prominent in the recogni-

tion of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad, as well as in the development of occupational standards. Among the professionals of vocational education, on the other hand, the development of occupational standards ranked first, followed by the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad, the issue of credentials and outcomes-based education. The representatives of higher education institutions and employers indicated that the role of the LQF is more prominent in the development of curriculum. The public survey shows that the LQF influences mostly the recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad.

During the interviews, the participants of the study also emphasised the role of the LQF in the establishment and development of outcomes-based education.

Further Development of the LQF

The study outcomes led to the conclusion that a great deal of effort still must be invested in increasing the awareness of the LQF, focusing more on raising awareness of the LQF especially among the employers and the general public, in general. It was concluded that most employers, for the time being, do not use the LQF when evaluating the potential employees. The employers (especially the personnel department) would benefit greatly from the use of the LQF, as they would have a better idea of the specialist to be recruited and the required skills. Moreover, also the general public is still not quite aware of the LQF and its benefits – the transparency and comprehensibility of qualifications, understanding of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired, the support in facilitating mobility and lifelong learning, etc.

The study outcomes also suggested that, for the purpose of further development of the LQF, it is necessary to organise more large-scale activities aiming at exchanging experience between those LQF users who currently deal with the LQF on a daily basis (such as the directors of study programmes). These seminars would raise awareness of the areas influenced by the LQF, as well as different qualifications and study programmes developed and implemented at other higher education institutions.

The study also led to the conclusion that the awareness of the LQF depends to a large extent on its representation of laws and regulations, as many respondents have already come across the LQF through laws and regulations. Currently, the term “qualification” is not defined in the regulatory framework. Also, it does not stipulate to include a reference to the relevant LQF level in general education qualifications.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, as well as the proposals of the respondents participating in the survey and the interviews, several recommendations for raising the level of awareness of the LQF and contributing to its development were put forward:

- Although further activities to raise awareness of the LQF (and also the EQF) are necessary in all surveyed target groups, which was often also pointed out by the respondents during the survey and the interviews, in particular, they should be implemented among the employers and representatives of the general public.
- Outreach activities should be focused on benefits of the LQF – transparency and comprehensibility of qualifications, benefits in formulating the learning outcomes, support in facilitating mobility and lifelong learning, etc.
- Whilst carrying out the outreach activities, it is necessary to further explain the terminology used in the context of the LQF, with special emphasis on terminology, which has been historically used in a different context or has not yet been clarified, such as the term “qualification”. The outreach activities should be focused on the differences between the distribution of the historically used levels of qualifications and those used in the context of the LQF. The term “qualification” must be defined in laws and regulations.
- The levels of awareness of the LQF differ depending on the region of Latvia represented by the respondents. Thus, it is necessary to organise regional outreach activities, which involve informing both the representatives of the education sector and general public about the LQF and its benefits. Zemgale accounted for the lowest response rate among the representatives of education institutions, followed by Kurzeme. Thus, further outreach activities should be organised in these regions.
- To reach wider public, one of the possible activities could be the information by means of mass media. Also, it is necessary to improve the website of the National Coordination Point for the EQF, making it more interactive and user-friendly, so that it could be used by an increasing number of users. While different information materials have served as an efficient channel for the distribution of information on the LQF, the respondents had often become aware of the LQF also at work, through laws and regulations or in seminars and conferences. Thus, it is necessary to diversify the information materials, organise large-scale outreach seminars and conferences and enshrine the LQF in laws and regulations.
- It is necessary to strengthen the LQF in the regulatory framework, for instance, through amendments in laws and regulations with regard to the indication of the LQF level in general education documents, thus improving the transparency of qualifications and awareness of the LQF in education and labour market at both national and international level.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1	Sample Questionnaire
ANNEX 2	Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors, Deputy Directors and Teachers of General Education Schools
ANNEX 3	Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors, Deputy Directors and Teachers of Vocational Education Schools
ANNEX 4	Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors of Higher Education Study Programmes
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Sample Questionnaire

The role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in Education and Labour Market

Academic Information Centre – National Coordination Point for the European Qualifications Framework conducts a study “**The Role of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in Education and Labour Market**”. Within the study, a survey on the visibility of the Latvian Qualifications Framework among the directors of study programmes implemented at higher education institutions and the directors, deputy directors and teachers of general and vocational education institutions is conducted.

The questionnaire is anonymous.

It takes 7 to 10 minutes to fill in the questionnaire.

Thank you for expressing your opinion!

This study is conducted with the support of European Commission project “National Europass Centre + EQF NCP 2018-2020” (No VS/2018/0241)

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- Aged 18 – 30
- Aged 31 – 40
- Aged 41 – 50
- Aged 51 – 60
- Over 60 years

3. What is your most recent educational attainment?

- Secondary education
- College education
- Bachelor-level education
- Second-level professional higher education
- Master's degree
- Doctor's degree

4. In which region of Latvia are you employed?

- Riga
- Riga Region
- Vidzeme
- Latgale
- Kurzeme
- Zemgale

**5. At what type of education institution are you currently employed?
(More than one option can be selected)**

- General primary school
- General basic school
- General secondary education institution
- Vocational education institution
- College
- Higher education institution
- Other

6. What is your current position? (More than one option can be selected)

- Director of an education institution
- Deputy director of an education institution
- Director of a study programme
- Teacher (teaching staff)
- Other

7. In your opinion, what is a qualification?

- Length of service
- Professional experience
- Credential
- Profession or position held
- Set of knowledge, skills and competences
- Other

8. Are you aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework?

- Yes
- I have only heard about it
- No

**9. To which level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework does your
most recently acquired educational document pertain?**

- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5
- Level 6
- Level 7
- Level 8
- I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level.
- I do not know.

10. How frequently do you deal with the Latvian Qualifications Framework during your work/learning process?

- Daily
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once a year
- Less than once a year
- Never

11. How did you learn about the Latvian Qualifications Framework?

- During the studies (learning)
- At work from the colleagues
- In the mass media
- On the website of the National Coordination Point
- In seminars or conferences
- In laws and regulations
- In information materials
- Other

12. In your opinion, to what extent the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below? Please, indicate the extent of influence!

	To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent
Learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of modules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of education programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment of learning outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of occupational standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
International mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifelong learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Issue of credentials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. In your opinion, which areas of the Latvian Qualifications Framework concerning education should be strengthened and why?

Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors, Deputy Directors and Teachers of General Education Schools

Question 1.

Gender (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Female	533	89.9
Male	60	10.1
Total	593	100.0

Question 2.

Age (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Ages 18 – 30	20	3.4
Ages 31 – 40	62	10.5
Ages 41 – 50	153	25.8
Ages 51 – 60	254	42.8
Over 60 years	104	17.5
Total	593	100.0

Question 3.

Most recent education attainment (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Secondary education	6	1.0
College education	1	0.2
Bachelor-level education	122	20.6
Second-level professional higher education	90	15.2
Master's degree	370	62.4
Doctor's degree	4	0.7
Total	593	100.0

Question 4.

Region of employment (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Riga	110	18.5
Riga Region	65	11.0
Vidzeme	131	22.1
Latgale	94	15.9
Kurzeme	94	15.9
Zemgale	99	16.7
Total	593	100.0

Question 5.

Type of education institution. (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
General primary school	32	5.4
General basic school	141	23.8
General secondary education institution	338	57.0
Vocational education institution	5	0.8
College	0	0.0
Higher education institution	0	0.0
Other	77	13.0
Total	593	100.0

Question 6.

Position (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Director of an education institution	110	18.5
Deputy Director of an education institution	59	9.9
Director of a study programme	1	0.2
Teacher (teaching staff)	358	60.4
Other	65	11.0
Total	593	100.0

Question 7.

Qualification (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Length of service	7	1.2
Professional experience	50	8.4
Credential	96	16.2
Profession or position held	19	3.2
Set of knowledge, skills and competences	408	68.8
Other	13	2.2
Total	593	100.0

Question 8.

Awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes	125	21.1
I have only heard about it	221	37.3
No	247	41.7
Total	593	100.0

Question 9.

Level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework to which the most recently acquired credential pertains (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Level 1	3	0.5
Level 2	20	3.4
Level 3	21	3.5
Level 4	14	2.4
Level 5	55	9.3
Level 6	39	6.6
Level 7	124	20.9
Level 8	1	0.2
I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level	98	16.5
I do not know	218	36.8
Total	593	100.0

Question 10.

Frequency of dealing with the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the work / learning process (N=593, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Daily	77	13.0
Once a week	19	3.2
Once a month	24	4.0
Once a year	116	19.6
Less than once a year	100	16.9
Never	257	43.3
Total	593	100.0

Question 11.

Way of becoming aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=346, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
During the studies (learning)	46	13.3
At work from the colleagues	36	10.4
In the mass media	38	11.0
On the website of the National Coordination Point	16	4.6
In seminars or conferences	31	9.0
In laws and regulations	59	17.1
In information materials	100	28.9
Other	20	5.8
Total	346	100.0

Question 12.

Extent to which the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below (N=346, frequency, %)						
		To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent	Total
Learning outcomes	Frequency	42	89	168	47	346
	%	12.1	25.7	48.6	13.6	100.0
Development of modules	Frequency	25	115	169	37	346
	%	7.2	33.2	48.8	10.7	100.0
Development of curriculum	Frequency	15	53	171	107	346
	%	4.3	15.3	49.4	30.9	100.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	Frequency	21	83	177	65	346
	%	6.1	24.0	51.2	18.8	100.0
Development of occupational standards	Frequency	9	44	164	129	346
	%	2.6	12.7	47.4	37.3	100.0
International mobility	Frequency	21	74	154	97	346
	%	6.1	21.4	44.5	28.0	100.0
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	Frequency	20	60	118	148	346
	%	5.8	17.3	34.1	42.8	100.0
Lifelong learning	Frequency	24	87	153	82	346
	%	6.9	25.1	44.2	23.7	100.0
Issue of credentials	Frequency	22	63	143	118	346
	%	6.4	18.2	41.3	34.1	100.0
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	Frequency	15	64	181	86	346
	%	4.3	18.5	52.3	24.9	100.0
Valid total	Frequency	214	732	1598	916	

Question 13.

Areas influenced by the Latvian Qualification Framework, which should be strengthened (N=147, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Lifelong learning	9	6.1
Issue of credentials	2	1.4
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	1	0.7
Development of curriculum	2	1.4
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	3	2.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	1	0.7
All the areas should be strengthened	10	6.8
Higher education	10	6.8
Vocational education	10	6.8
General secondary education	4	2.7
Special education	4	2.7
Education of teachers	7	4.8
Raise awareness of the LQF	8	5.4
Other	73	49.7
Total	346	100.0

Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors, Deputy Directors and Teachers of Vocational Education Schools

Question 1.

Gender (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Female	189	79.7
Male	48	20.3
Total	237	100.0

Question 2.

Age (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Ages 18 – 30	11	4.6
Ages 31 – 40	48	20.3
Ages 41 – 50	50	21.1
Ages 51 – 60	80	33.8
Over 60 years	48	20.3
Total	237	100.0

Question 3.

Most recent education attainment (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Secondary education	3	1.3
College education	6	2.5
Bachelor-level education	49	20.7
Second-level professional higher education	25	10.5
Master's degree	147	62.0
Doctor's degree	7	3.0
Total	237	100.0

Question 4.

Region of employment (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Riga	115	48.5
Riga Region	14	5.9
Vidzeme	45	19.0
Latgale	44	18.6
Kurzeme	10	4.2
Zemgale	9	3.8
Total	237	100.0

Question 5.

Type of education institution (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
General basic school	1	0.4
General secondary education institution	2	0.8
Vocational education institution	207	87.3
College	1	0.4
Higher education institution	1	0.4
Other	25	10.5
Total	237	100.0

Question 6.

Position (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Director of an education institution	12	5.1
Deputy Director of an education institution	22	9.3
Methodologist	11	4.6
Teacher (teaching staff)	153	64.6
Other	39	16.5
Total	237	100.0

Question 7.

Qualification (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Professional experience	27	11.4
Credential	27	11.4
Profession or position held	10	4.2
Set of knowledge, skills and competences	173	73.0
Total	237	100.0

Question 8.

Awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes	83	34.2
I have only heard about it	81	35.0
No	73	30.8
Total	237	100.0

Question 9.

Level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework to which the most recently acquired educational document pertains (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Level 1	2	0.8
Level 2	4	1.7
Level 3	9	3.8
Level 4	6	2.5
Level 5	23	9.7
Level 6	19	8.0
Level 7	59	24.9
Level 8	3	1.3
I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level	42	17.7
I do not know	70	29.5
Total	237	100.0

Question 10.

Frequency of dealing with the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the work/ learning process (N=237, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Daily	32	13.5
Once a week	14	5.9
Once a month	29	12.2
Once a year	49	20.7
Less than once a year	28	11.8
Never	85	35.9
Total	237	100.0

Question 11.

Way of becoming aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=164, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
During the studies (learning)	17	10.4
At work from the colleagues	36	22.0
In the mass media	7	4.3
On the website of the National Coordination Point	3	1.8
In seminars or conferences	30	18.3
In laws and regulations	42	25.6
In information materials	26	15.9
Other	3	1.8
Total	164	100.0

Question 12.

Extent to which the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below (N=164, frequency, %)						
		To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent	Total
Learning outcomes	Frequency	17	46	76	25	164
	%	10.4	28.0	46.3	15.2	100.0
Development of modules	Frequency	9	46	69	40	164
	%	5.5	28.0	42.1	24.4	100.0
Development of curriculum	Frequency	4	31	75	54	164
	%	2.4	18.9	45.7	32.9	100.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	Frequency	7	49	68	40	164
	%	4.3	29.9	41.5	24.4	100.0
Development of occupational standards	Frequency	6	25	61	72	164
	%	3.7	15.2	37.2	43.9	100.0
International mobility	Frequency	9	45	66	44	164
	%	5.5	27.4	40.2	26.8	100.0
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	Frequency	5	35	61	63	164
	%	3.0	21.3	37.2	38.4	100.0
Lifelong learning	Frequency	8	46	75	35	164
	%	4.9	28.0	45.7	21.3	100.0
Issue of credentials	Frequency	9	23	70	62	164
	%	5.5	14.0	42.7	37.8	100.0
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	Frequency	11	32	64	57	164
	%	6.7	19.5	39.0	34.8	100.0
Valid total	Frequency	85	378	685	492	

Question 13.

Areas influenced by the Latvian Qualification Framework, which should be strengthened (N=74, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Lifelong learning	3	4.1
Issue of credentials	1	1.4
Development of occupational standards	4	5.4
Development of curriculum	1	1.4
Development of modules	1	1.4
Vocational education	4	5.4
Secondary education	2	2.7
Higher education	4	5.4
Professional skills	2	2.7
All	7	9.5
Raise awareness of and inform about the LQF	5	6.8
Other	41	55.4
Total	74	100.0

Summary of the Outcomes of the Survey Conducted Among the Directors of Higher Education Study Programmes

Question 1.

Gender (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Female	154	69.7
Male	67	30.3
Total	221	100.0

Question 2.

Age (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Ages 18 – 30	6	2.7
Ages 31 – 40	27	12.2
Ages 41 – 50	75	33.9
Ages 51 – 60	65	29.4
Over 60 years	48	21.7
Total	221	100.0

Question 3.

Most recent education attainment (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Bachelor-level education	2	0.9
Second-level professional higher education	1	0.5
Master's degree	57	25.8
Doctoral degree	161	72.9
Total	237	100.0

Question 4.

Region of employment (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Riga	142	64.3
Riga Region	4	1.8
Vidzeme	5	2.3
Latgale	32	14.5
Kurzeme	17	7.7
Zemgale	21	9.5
Total	221	100.0

Question 5.

Type of education institution (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
College	10	4.5
Higher education institution	199	90.0
Other	12	5.4
Total	221	100.0

Question 6.

Position (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Director of a study programme	142	64.3
Director of a study programme, teacher (teaching staff)	39	17.6
Other	40	18.1
Total	221	100.0

Question 7.

Qualification (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Professional experience	8	3.6
Credential	18	8.1
Profession or position held	4	1.8
Set of knowledge, skills and competences	187	84.6
Length of service	1	0.5
All aforementioned	3	1.4
Total	221	100.0

Question 8.

Awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes	143	64.7
I have only heard about it	52	23.5
No	26	11.8
Total	221	100.0

Question 9.

Level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework to which the most recently acquired credential pertains (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Level 1	0	0.0
Level 2	1	0.5
Level 3	1	0.5
Level 4	0	0.0
Level 5	7	3.2
Level 6	8	3.6
Level 7	39	17.6
Level 8	118	53.4
I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level	22	10.0
I do not know	25	11.3
Total	221	100.0

Question 10.

Frequency of dealing with the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the work/ learning process (N=221, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Daily	31	14.0
Once a week	22	10.0
Once a month	41	18.6
Once a year	69	31.2
Less than once a year	31	14.0
Never	27	12.2
Total	237	100.0

Question 11.

Way of becoming aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=195, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
During the studies (learning)	6	3.1
At work from the colleagues	40	20.5
In the mass media	3	1.5
On the website of the national coordination point	6	3.1
In seminars or conferences	25	12.8
In laws and regulations	78	40.0
In information materials	18	9.2
Other	19	9.7
Total	164	100.0

Question 12.

Extent to which the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below (N=195, frequency, %)						
		To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent	Total
Learning outcomes	Frequency	19	40	66	70	195
	%	9.7	20.7	33.8	35.9	100.0
Development of modules	Frequency	25	50	75	45	195
	%	12.8	25.6	38.5	23.1	100.0
Development of curriculum	Frequency	8	15	48	124	195
	%	4.1	7.7	24.6	63.6	100.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	Frequency	18	37	70	70	195
	%	9.2	19.0	35.9	35.9	100.0
Development of occupational standards	Frequency	10	21	59	105	195
	%	5.1	10.5	30.3	53.8	100.0
International mobility	Frequency	26	59	72	38	195
	%	13.3	30.3	36.9	19.5	100.0
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	Frequency	17	25	61	92	195
	%	8.7	12.8	31.3	47.2	100.0
Lifelong learning	Frequency	36	76	61	22	195
	%	18.5	39.0	31.3	11.3	100.0
Issue of credentials	Frequency	13	17	55	110	195
	%	6.7	8.7	28.2	56.4	100.0
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	Frequency	15	29	68	83	195
	%	7.7	14.9	34.9	42.6	100.0
Valid total	Frequency	187	369	635	759	

Question 13.

Areas influenced by the Latvian Qualification Framework, which should be strengthened (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Raising awareness of and informing about the LQF	10	9.3
Higher education	6	5.6
Referencing of non-formal education	1	0.9
Improvement of level descriptors	9	8.4
Occupational standards	2	1.9
Lifelong learning	2	1.9
International mobility	1	0.9
Define or change the term "competence"	5	4.7
Assessment of learning outcomes	1	0.9
All	11	10.3
Other	59	55.1
Total	107	100.0

Summary of the Outcomes of the Employer Survey

Question 1.

Gender (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Female	59	78.7
Male	16	21.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 2.

Age (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Ages 18 – 30	3	4.0
Ages 31 – 40	17	22.7
Ages 41 – 50	34	45.3
Ages 51 – 60	16	21.3
Over 60 years	5	6.7
Total	75	100.0

Question 3.

Most recent education attainment (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Secondary education	1	1.3
College education	3	4.0
Bachelor-level education	14	18.7
Second-level professional higher education	7	9.3
Master's degree	49	65.3
Doctoral degree	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 4.

Region of employment (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Riga	51	68.0
Riga Region	5	6.7
Vidzeme	4	5.3
Latgale	5	6.7
Kurzeme	6	8.0
Zemgale	4	5.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 5.

Status of the company (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Non-governmental organisation, association or foundation	5	6.7
Authority or organisation financed from the State or local government budget	3	4.0
Private company	47	62.7
Municipally owned company	7	9.3
State-owned capital company with full or partial State capital	12	16.0
Subsidiary of a State-owned capital company	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 6.

Type of company by the number of employees (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Micro-enterprise (1 to 9 employees)	5	6.7
Small-scale enterprise (10 to 49 employees)	10	13.3
Medium-sized enterprise (50 to 249 employees)	22	29.3
Large enterprise (250 and more employees)	38	50.7
Total	75	100.0

Question 7.

Position (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Manager, senior manager or owner of a company	33	44.0
Middle or lower-level manager	25	33.3
Employee with no managerial duties	17	22.7
Total	75	100.0

Question 8.

Qualification (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Professional experience	8	10.7
Educational document	8	10.7
Set of knowledge, skills and competences	58	77.3
Length of service	1	1.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 9.

Awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes	13	17.3
I have only heard about it	22	29.3
No	40	53.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 10.

Level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework to which the most recently acquired credential pertains (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Level 1	0	0.0
Level 2	2	2.7
Level 3	0	0.0
Level 4	0	0.0
Level 5	8	10.7
Level 6	10	13.3
Level 7	17	22.7
Level 8	1	1.3
I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level	7	9.3
I do not know	30	40.0
Total	75	100.0

Question 11.

Frequency of dealing with the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the work/ learning process (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Daily	3	4.0
Once a week	5	6.7
Once a month	8	10.7
Once a year	7	9.3
Less than once a year	13	17.3
Never	39	52.0
Total	75	100.0

Question 12.

Application of the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the recruitment process (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Always	10	13.3
Occasionally	19	25.3
Never	46	61.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 13.

Relevance of the knowledge, skills and competences, specified in the diploma supplement, in the recruitment process (N=75, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes, they are relevant.	38	50.7
No, they are not relevant.	30	40.0
They are not aware of it.	7	9.3
Total	75	100.0

Question 14.

Way of becoming aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=35, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
During the studies (learning)	4	11.4
At work from the colleagues	6	17.1
In the mass media	1	2.9
On the website of the National Coordination Point	1	2.9
In seminars or conferences	4	11.4
In laws and regulations	7	20.0
In information materials	8	22.9
During the work process	1	2.9
While performing the duties of the Sectoral Expert Council	1	2.9
I became aware of it upon receipt of this questionnaire.	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

Question 15.

Extent to which the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below (N=35, frequency, %)						
		To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent	Total
Learning outcomes	Frequency	3	9	17	6	35
	%	8.6	25.7	48.6	17.1	100.0
Development of modules	Frequency	4	3	24	4	35
	%	11.4	8.6	68.6	11.4	100.0
Development of curriculum	Frequency	3	3	10	19	35
	%	8.6	8.6	28.6	54.3	100.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	Frequency	3	8	16	8	35
	%	8.6	22.9	45.7	22.9	100.0
Development of occupational standards	Frequency	3	2	18	12	35
	%	8.6	5.7	51.4	34.3	100.0
International mobility	Frequency	3	7	18	7	35
	%	8.6	20.0	51.4	20.0	100.0

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Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	Frequency	3	5	13	14	35
	%	8.6	14.3	37.1	40.0	100.0
Lifelong learning	Frequency	4	13	11	7	35
	%	11.4	37.1	31.4	20.0	100.0
Issue of curriculum	Frequency	6	5	15	9	35
	%	17.1	14.3	42.9	25.7	100.0
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	Frequency	4	5	18	8	35
	%	11.4	14.3	51.4	22.9	100.0
Valid total	Frequency	36	60	160	94	

Question 16.

Areas influenced by the Latvian Qualification Framework, which should be strengthened (N=24, frequency, %)

	Frequency	%
Assessment of learning outcomes	1	4.2
Lifelong learning	1	4.2
Work-based learning	1	4.2
Raise awareness of the LQF	1	4.2
Lack of understanding of the LQF	2	8.3
No strengthening is necessary	2	8.3
All	3	12.5
Other	13	54.2
Total	24	100.0

Summary of the Outcomes of the Public Survey

Question 1.

Gender (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Female	77	72.0
Male	30	28.0
Total	107	100.0

Question 2.

Age (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Ages up to 18	2	1.9
Ages 18 – 30	34	31.8
Ages 31 – 40	37	34.6
Ages 41 – 50	10	9.3
Ages 51 – 60	19	17.8
Ages 61 – 70	5	4.7
Over 70 years	0	0.0
Total	107	100.0

Question 3.

Most recent education attainment (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Basic education	4	3.7
Secondary education	15	14.0
College education	5	4.7
Bachelor-level education	25	23.4
Second-level professional higher education	11	10.3
Master's degree	44	41.1
Doctor's degree	3	2.8
Total	107	100.0

Question 4.

Region of employment/ learning/ studies (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Riga	75	70.1
Riga Region	7	6.5
Vidzeme	10	9.3
Latgale	7	6.5
Kurzeme	2	1.9
Zemgale	6	5.6
Total	107	100.0

Question 5.

Occupation (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Learning/ studies	8	7.5
Unemployed	9	8.4
Employed	86	80.4
Employed student	2	1.9
Other	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0

Question 6.

Type of education institution (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
General basic school	2	1.9
General secondary education institution	8	7.5
Vocational education institution	8	7.5
College	5	4.7
Higher education institution	84	78.5
Total	107	100.0

Question 7.

Qualification (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Professional experience	6	5.6
Profession or position held	8	7.5
Credential	21	19.6
Set of knowledge, skills and competences	71	66.4
Other	1	0.9
Total	107	100.0

Question 8.

Awareness of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Yes	24	22.4
I have only heard about it	24	22.4
No	59	55.1
Total	107	100.0

Question 9.

Level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework to which the most recently acquired educational document pertains (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Level 1	6	5.6
Level 2	6	5.6
Level 3	4	3.7
Level 4	1	0.9
Level 5	11	10.3
Level 6	12	11.2
Level 7	16	15.0
Level 8	3	2.8
I am aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework, but I cannot identify the level	13	12.1
I do not know	35	32.7
Total	107	100.0

Question 10.

Frequency of dealing with the Latvian Qualifications Framework in the work/ learning process (N=107, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
Daily	8	7.5
Once a week	4	3.7
Once a month	7	6.5
Once a year	7	6.5
Less than once a year	18	16.8
Never	63	58.9
Total	107	100.0

Question 11.

Way of becoming aware of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (N=48, frequency, %)		
	Frequency	%
During the studies (learning)	11	22.9
At work from the colleagues	17	35.4
In the mass media	3	6.3
On the website of the National Coordination Point	1	2.1
In seminars or conferences	4	8.3
In laws and regulations	4	8.3
In information materials	5	10.4
From friends	2	4.2
Other	1	2.1
Total	48	100.0

Question 12.

Extent to which the Latvian Qualifications Framework influences the areas listed below (N=48, frequency, %)						
		To a small extent	To a rather small extent	To a rather large extent	To a large extent	Total
Learning outcomes	Frequency	11	7	20	10	48
	%	22.9	14.6	41.7	20.8	100.0
Development of modules	Frequency	9	15	17	7	48
	%	18.8	31.3	35.4	14.6	100.0
Development of curriculum	Frequency	5	9	17	17	48
	%	10.4	18.8	35.4	35.4	100.0
Assessment of learning outcomes	Frequency	9	14	13	12	48
	%	18.8	29.2	27.1	25.0	100.0
Development of occupational standards	Frequency	5	8	17	18	48
	%	10.4	16.7	35.4	37.5	100.0
International mobility	Frequency	7	13	15	13	48
	%	14.6	27.1	31.3	27.1	100.0
Recognition of diplomas and qualifications acquired abroad	Frequency	4	4	16	24	48
	%	8.3	8.3	33.3	50.0	100.0
Lifelong learning	Frequency	12	18	14	4	48
	%	25.0	37.5	29.2	8.3	100.0
Issue of credentials	Frequency	3	11	16	18	48
	%	6.3	22.9	33.3	37.5	100.0
Job descriptions	Frequency	13	17	12	6	48
	%	27.1	35.4	25.0	12.5	100.0
Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks	Frequency	4	11	19	14	48
	%	8.3	22.9	39.6	29.2	100.0
Valid total		Frequency	82	127	176	143