

Occupational qualification framework in Estonia



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Summary of the results

The purpose of this survey was to find out, in which extent is the occupational qualifications system a link between the labor market and the lifelong learning system, enhancing the development, assessment and recognition of person's occupational competence. 8 focus groups were conducted between September and October 2020 for specialists with different background. All together we had 50 participants, who had some experience with the occupational qualifications system. All focus groups took place via Zoom virtual environment, with an average of 3-7 participants in each focus group. Each focus group lasted about 2,5 hours and written summaries were made from each focus group. Focus groups were not recorded. 8 open-ended questions were prepared for the participants. In addition 7 of them included scale based assessments.

In general, people consider occupational qualification certificates as useful tools to indicate the required qualifications (see Figure 1). It gives a necessary guarantee to the Employer and to the Client. It is also seen, that the occupational qualification system supports professionalism of the field.

It gives a good possibility to specialists for self-reflection to set conscious development goals. It also gives a possibility to standardize the needed competence level as in Estonia it is not possible to get higher education in the field and people have different background when they start working as career counsellors or career information specialists. In general the biggest employers in the field (The Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund and earlier also Foundation Innove) value the occupa-

Usefulness of the occupational qualification system, its support to the professional development and digitalisation

(10- the highest score; 1- the lowest score)

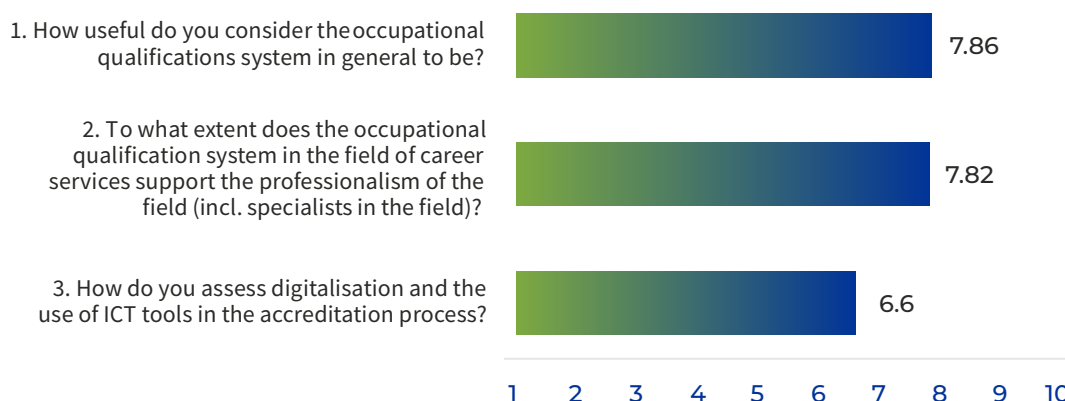


Figure 1. Average scores for the usefulness of the occupational qualification system, its support to the professional development and digitalisation.

tional qualification and support specialists in acquiring the certificates. Unfortunately the system is not valued equally in private sector yet. It was also brought out that the system would be valued higher when there would be a wider international background and specialists with the accreditation in Estonia would have a possibility to work abroad. In addition, the system doesn't include all the target groups today, including people working in the educational field and people working with clients with special needs. Multiculturalism is also something that is not included enough to the system yet. Digitalisation and the use of ICT- tools got the lowest score in the 10- point scale. It was considered that there is a long way to go to use all the possibilities that we have today. We do have the possibility to send all the documents electronically, but the system

doesn't use online application forms, online tests, web-based counseling session tools or video counseling possibilities. Applying for the profession should also allow the applicant's digital competences to be demonstrated in the application process. According to the participants, the materials of the exam should also be more interactive, e.g. instructional videos, etc.

The system should be easier and more user friendly.

The competencies described in the current occupational qualification system are assessed largely as relevant (see Figure 2). Still, there is a need for some change as the standard is too much oriented to public sector and doesn't include changes due to the changed labor market (e.g. increased digitalization and ICT

Relevance of the described competences, coherence of the assessment standard, compliance of training offers with labor market, and support structure for capacity building.

(5- the highest score; 1- the lowest score)



Figure 2. Average scores for the relevance of the described competences, for the coherence of the assessment standard, for the extent of the amount in which the professional training meets the requirements of the labor market and for the extent in which the qualification system provides supportive structure for the professional training.

competence need). Similar changes must be done also in the assessment standard.

The lowest score (3,56- points) describes educational system and training opportunities available for practitioners. As there is not possible to get a specific professional qualification from any national universities and most of the trainings have been focused to professionals in public sector, then there is a long way to go to have similar training opportunities in private sector as well. There is a lack of basic training as well as training possibilities at advanced level. However, the available courses are based to the occupational qualification standard and there is a good base from where to start building the system.