



## Introduction

This report has been drafted by the EQAVET National Reference Point of Denmark and describes the main quality assurance arrangements in vocational education and training.

## SECTION A – DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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### 1. Initial VET (IVET)

#### Introduction

Organisation adapting and improving local VET to labour market needs is implemented by VET providers in cooperation with local training committees.

In August 2014 the IVET system was reformed with four objectives:

1. More students must choose vocational training directly from the 9th or 10th grade
2. More students must complete vocational training
3. Vocational training should challenge all students to become as skilled as possible
4. Confidence and well-being at vocational schools must be strengthened

Each provider of a VET programme must prepare an annual Action Plan for Enhanced Implementation based on the four objectives above. In addition, each provider must prepare a self-evaluation report based on its education programme.

#### **1.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in IVET (include information on work-based learning)**

- National Framework for quality assurance in initial VET – who is in charge of what?  
At national level, the institution in charge of quality assurance is the National Agency for Quality and Supervision / Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality. The Agency is responsible for tests and exams within IVET, oversight of IVET providers and development of evaluation systems for IVET. As outlined above, the Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality is the body

responsible for legal, policy and programme definition aspects of VET. The National Agency for Quality and Supervision is responsible for inspections of provider quality, based on data for the results.

- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in initial VET systems  
Stakeholders have a formalised and important role in the national QA process regarding definition of qualifications, general framework VET programmes, planning and assessment. The overall system-level quality assurance requirements are defined in the Danish Vocational Education and Training Act (Bekendtgørelse af lov om erhvervsuddannelser, LBK nr 789 af 16/06/2015). The orientation of IVET programmes is clearly on learning outcomes, and programmes are competence-based. The curriculum is based on the NQF.
  
- Requirements for evaluation and review  
A number of national Acts and Regulations provide the national framework for IVET. The Danish Vocational Education and Training Act, Act for Institutions for Vocational Education and Training, and The Statutory Order regarding Vocational Education and Training set out the overall aims of VET – as well as objectives for the medium and long term. Objectives are not linked to EU goals. The national framework also covers delivery including:
  - Access to IVET
  - Systems for appointment of vocational colleges
  - Rules and requirements for teacher qualification
  - Quality assurance at provider level (quality requirements)
  - Form and general content of programmes
  - Requirements regarding providers' educational plans
  - Testing and evaluation of learners
  - Requirements as regards transparency of evaluation results (provider systems for quality assurance)
  - Framework for stakeholder involvement (system and provider level)
  
- Identification of training needs  
Social partners play an important role at both system and provider levels – and for planning, implementation, evaluation and review. At system level, the Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training – composed of the social partners, schools and teacher associations and other individuals appointed by the Ministry – is closely engaged in policy development and objective setting and provides advice on all aspects concerning IVET, including recommendations on the establishment of new VET qualifications, adaption of VET qualifications or, where appropriate, discontinuation.  
National Trade Committees, representing employees and employers within a sector, develop the specific regulations for each of the VET programmes stipulating duration, content, subjects, contents and competence levels. The National Trade Committees are responsible for monitoring skills development on the labour market and recommend changes to the existing programmes.
  
- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on VET providers  
The Ministry approves institutions and private companies, and confers rights to provide specific VET programmes to schools. Specific conditions needs to be fulfilled to be approved, and if these conditions are not fulfilled, the approval may be revoked.

National Trade Committees approve training places. Training places need to fulfil specific requirements to be accredited. The Trade Committees are also responsible for inspection of the approved enterprises.

- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level)/monitoring, inspection and use of indicators

There are three main qualification types in IVET:

- Qualifications at level 3 of the DK NQF (also EQF Level 3) – these result in the achievement of the professional certificate;
- Qualifications at level 4 of the DK NQF (EQF Level 4) – these result in professional certificates at upper-secondary level (Bevis or Svendebrev);
- Qualifications at Level 5 of the DK NQF (EQF Level 5) – these are typically specialisations or complementary degrees – access is mostly subject to completion of a VET degree at a lower level, but may also be subject to VET of a longer duration.

The Ministry establishes the overall structure and supervises the examination during the IVET education. The Trade Committees establish final examination standards and issue final certification standards. Actual assessment is undertaken with independent assessors drawn from local enterprises.

Each VET programme (there are currently 120) is governed by a specific regulation setting out IVET programme objectives and stipulating duration, content, subjects, contents and competence levels. The national curriculum is a framework curriculum and requirements related to content are flexible and allow adaptation to meet local needs. Overall, objectives and the framework are drawn up at national level, but providers are relatively autonomous within the framework.

- How is the quality assurance implementation monitored?

The Ministry (National Agency for Quality and Supervision) monitors VET providers in terms of educational results. The Ministry furthermore undertakes legal, financial and pedagogical inspections of VET – based on various information sources.

Indicator-based monitoring is used – with data collection on quality indicators. Each provider must have an annual action plan based on indicators. The action plan must be published on the provider's homepage.

## **1.2 Quality assurance arrangements at provider level in IVET**

- Planning at VET provider level (including identification of training needs)

As long as primary national objectives and the framework rules are met, the specific content of training may vary from college to college in order to adapt IVET to local needs and demands. Each VET provider there is affiliated to a Local Training Committee responsible for local planning. All VET colleges develop local training plans which set out specific objectives for the VET programmes delivered, and specifics as regards curriculum.

- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)

Self-evaluation plays a central role in the Danish approach to quality assurance and is considered the “backbone” of the Danish approach to quality assurance<sup>189</sup>.

The Statutory Order regarding Vocational Education and Training<sup>190</sup> requires all IVET providers to put in place a system for quality assurance to ensure continued

quality development to document the quality system and to publish results. IVET providers must have:

- A documented quality system – including specific procedures for methods of evaluation within specific VET programmes, and an approach for involving trainees and enterprises.
- Procedures for information collection and self-evaluation.
- An annual follow-up plan/action plan and a plan for public dissemination. The follow-up plan for improvement must include strategies to improve the completion rate and it should form part of the subsequent annual action plan. Reporting and publicity of the results must be ensured.

In contrast, IVET providers may choose their own quality concept and there are no requirements as regards the evaluation model to be used. Quality rules also apply to in-company training for which the Trade Committees/social partners are responsible. However, the Ministry's focus is on the school-based part of IVET as in-company training is under the jurisdiction of the social partners.

- **Certification, assessment and validation of learners**  
All learners will, at the end of their education, receive a certificate validated by the social partners and the National Agency of Education and Quality.
  
- **Stakeholder involvement**  
Stakeholder involvement at provider level is institutionalised by local training committees and plays an important role in quality assurance. Local training committees consist of representatives of the social partners, teachers and trainees. The local training committees ensure the relevance of the VET training delivered and advise the VET colleges on all matters related to the VET programmes provided. They also ensure cooperation at local level between the colleges and the local labour market. Furthermore, employers are engaged in the examination of students.

## **2. Continuous VET (CVET)**

### **Introduction**

IVET, CVET is provided through a public system, and school-based CVET is often provided by colleges delivering IVET and/or provided as on-the-job training. However, there is an increase in supplementary training, internal company training, and private training offered. In addition, liberal adult education such as evening classes is provided. This training, however, is not covered by quality assurance measures for CVET.

CVET (and IVET) in Denmark is understood as continuing education and training leading to a recognised vocational qualification within a certain trade or profession. In Denmark, CVET is generally targeted at both skilled and unskilled workers. Considering

that IVET and CVET are, typically, provided by the same institutions, the quality approach implemented is largely similar.

## 2.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in CVET

- National Framework for quality assurance in CVET – who is in charge of what?

The Act for Institutions for Vocational Education and Training, the Statutory Order on common competence descriptors for CVET<sup>192</sup> as well as the Statutory Order on CVET and adult **education**<sup>193</sup> provide the framework for delivery of CVET including:

- Overall objectives for CVET,
- Systems for appointment of vocational colleges (the Act covers both IVET and CVET reflecting that providers are typically the same);
- Systems for competence descriptors of CVET qualifications;
- Frameworks for stakeholder involvement (system and provider level);
- Frameworks for the development of the competence descriptors.

The competence descriptors for CVET, of which there are currently some 150, have been drawn up by the social partners in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. These are divided into some 3000 different CVET modules. The competence descriptors provide the framework to which providers are obliged to adapt their training offer (see below).

- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in CVET systems  
IVET social partners play an important role in the management, priority setting, development, organisation and quality assurance of the programmes. The Advisory Council for adult and continued vocational training, composed of representatives of the social partners, provides advice to the Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality on any issue related to the development of CVET and sets out the framework for the development of standards and curriculum for CVET. Furthermore, the social partners, as noted above, play a leading role in the development of the common competence descriptors.
- Requirements for evaluation and review  
The same rules as for IVET apply. The Ministry approves institutions, and confers rights on schools to provide specific CVET programmes. Specific conditions need to be fulfilled to be approved, and if these conditions are not fulfilled the approval may be revoked.
- Identification of training needs  
As in IVET, the social partners play a key role in the identification of CVET training needs.
- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on CVET providers  
The same rules as for IVET apply. The Ministry approves institutions, and confers rights to provide specific CVET programmes to schools. Specific conditions need to be fulfilled to be approved, and if these conditions are not fulfilled the approval may be revoked.
- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level)  
All learners will, at the end of their education, receive a certification validated by the social partners and the National Agency of Education and Quality.

- Monitoring, inspection and use of indicators  
The Ministry (National Agency for Quality and Supervision) monitors CVET providers in terms of educational results. The primary source is 'Vis Kvalitet', where participants are asked to evaluate the CVET courses (see below). Furthermore, the Ministry undertakes legal, financial and pedagogical inspections of VET providers, including CVET, based on various information sources.
- Requirements CVET providers have to comply with (if not described in 1<sup>st</sup> section)  
The same rules as for IVET apply. The Ministry approves institutions, and confers rights to provide specific CVET programmes to schools. Specific conditions need to be fulfilled to be approved, and if these conditions are not fulfilled the approval may be revoked.

## **2.2 Quality assurance arrangements at provider level in CVET**

- Planning at CVET provider level (including identification of training needs)  
Within the framework of the competence descriptors for CVET, CVET providers adapt the provision of training to local needs. The CVET providers are obliged to draw up a policy stating how the institution will ensure that the CVET provision will need local labour market needs. This policy is a requirement for funding. Moreover, providers have established their own common audit system.
- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)  
As for IVET, CVET providers are required to put in place a system for quality assurance to ensure continued quality development, formulate a follow-up plan, and a plan for dissemination. However, CVET providers are required to carry out comparative evaluations of all the CVET programmes that they provide allowing the establishment at national level of aggregated data on quality of CVET.  
A national self-evaluation tool 'Vis Kvalitet' was developed in the late 1990s and came into operation in the year 2000. The national self-evaluation tool is a compulsory element of the CVET self-evaluation tools and of providers' quality assurance tools. The tool measures participant satisfaction with the training provided. The tool allows each provider to adapt it by adding additional questions to the mandatory ones.
- Certification, assessment and validation of learners  
CVET providers are responsible for assessment of learning outcomes and examinations according to national standards set by the sector continuing training committees and issue certificates (within the national framework).
- Stakeholder involvement  
The social partners and local enterprises play an important role in the development and provision of CVET at local level, selecting and adapting with the provider the CVET provisions at local level.

## SECTION B – INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE and EQAVET

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### - National Reference Point – Introduction

The National Agency for Education and Quality under the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality are hosting the NRP. The agency is responsible for:

- Co-operation with VET providers;
- Quality development in primary and secondary school and VET;
- Inspection and monitoring based on indicators of the primary, lower secondary school and VET;
- Tests and examinations in lower and higher secondary schools (IVET and CVET) as well as in adult education
- Monitoring and control in lower and higher secondary school, IVET and CVET: covering financial control, institutional control and control and monitoring and control of content. Monitoring also covers indicator-based monitoring
- Financial contributions to schools including VET schools

### - National approach to enhance quality assurance

The national approach to enhance quality assurance consists of

1. An Action Plan for Enhanced Implementation, based on the four objectives mentioned above, and prepared by each provider;
2. Indicator-based monitoring with data collection on quality indicators based on the four objectives;
3. Continuous dialogue between the Ministry, the social partners and the providers.

### - Influence of EQAVET on national developments of quality assurance

The Danish quality assurance is based on the EQAVET indicators. That is to say, the indicators are included in the quality approach of the providers. The schools can choose the guidance on developing and further improving quality assurance using the EQAVET Recommendation.