



Introduction

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

SECTION A - DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Initial VET (IVET)

Introduction

Initial VET (IVET) covers higher secondary education. In Norway, provision of initial VET is a shared responsibility between the national administration and VET providers. IVET is based on the principle of school VET training followed by formalised apprenticeship training in an enterprise.

1.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in IVET

- National Framework for quality assurance in initial VET – who is in charge of what?
At system level, the institutions in charge of quality assurance are the Ministry of Education and Research (Kunnskapsdepartementet), the Directorate for Education and Training (Utdanningsdirektoratet) and the state's representative at county level which is the county governors (Fylkesmenn).
- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in initial VET systems
 - 1) The National Council for Vocational Education and Training (Samarbeidsrådet for yrkesopplæring) is appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research and composed of social partners, representatives of the Ministry and other appointed stakeholders. The Council provides advice on the general legislative and policy framework and takes initiatives within VET.
 - 2) Advisory Councils for Vocational Education and Training (Faglig råd) exist for each of the nine main vocational education programmes. The Advisory Councils are composed of social partners representing specific trades or trade areas and other key stakeholders. They provide advice on the content of VET programmes and future skill needs.
- Requirements for evaluation and review
The National Council for Vocational Education and Training as well as the advisory Councils for Vocational Education and Training plays an important role in the translation of skill needs into national curricular and definition of study subjects.
- Identification of training needs
Skills needs are primarily identified by employers, but also by employees, schools and authorities.
- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on VET providers
Both private and governmental providers can deliver VET. They need a satisfactory system for assessing, as well as a satisfactory system for following up the results (The Education Act).

Other training establishments – including enterprises - that assume responsibility for training one or more learners must be approved by the county authority. Before approval is given, training establishments must have been professionally assessed by the county vocational training board. All training establishments are obliged to organise learning so that the apprentice can achieve the objectives of the curriculum.
- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level)/monitoring, inspection and use of indicators
School owners (which are mostly the counties) must have a satisfactory system for assessing and following up the results of these assessments (The Educational Act). Inspection and control is decentralised to the county governor.
- How is the quality assurance implementation monitored?
The counties provide advice and follow the enterprises – and ensure that they meet the requirements for approval. The county governor follow up with the VET providers.

1.2 Quality assurance arrangements at provider level in IVET

- Planning at VET provider level (including identification of training needs)
The county vocational training board (Yrkesopplæringsnemnder) gives advice on matters concerning the entire upper secondary VET model, thus advising directly on the dimensions of the offer. They also have focus on quality issues leading to a reinforcement of VET quality policy at regional level overall.
- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)
School owners (which are mostly the counties) must have a satisfactory system for assessing compliance. VET providers must ensure stakeholder involvement.
- Certification, assessment and validation of learners
The structure and specifications for examinations are laid down in the Regulation related to the Educational Act. Furthermore, each VET programme (currently 52 basic programmes for the first two years – and 176 programmes for the last two years of VET) are governed by a specific regulation (laereplan) under the Knowledge Promotion Reform. These regulations set out IVET programme objectives, stipulating duration, content, subjects, content and competence levels. These regulations also specify requirements for the final exam under each programme.

For the final exam, assessment is undertaken with independent assessors typically drawn from local enterprises.

- Stakeholder involvement
At national level we have The National Council for Vocational Education and Training composed of social partners, representatives of the Ministry and other appointed stakeholders, and The Advisory Councils for Vocational Education and Training composed of social partners representing specific trades or trade areas and other key stakeholders.

At county level we have The County Vocational Training Board composed of social partners, representatives of the county and other appointed stakeholders.

2. Continuous VET (CVET)

Introduction

In Norway VET is referred to as the upper secondary education level (i.e. IVET). We have no separate system of VET at the tertiary level. This needs to be seen in a context where quality assurance development in relation to EQAVET only relates to IVET. Consequently, this report does not cover CVET in any detail.

SECTION B - INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EQAVET

- National Reference Point – Introduction

Norway has had an EQAVET National Reference Point since the early 2000's. The NRF is hosted by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. All activities are integrated into the Department's general activities. Consequently, no specific budget, or specific HR has been allocated to the NRP. Also, the NRP does not have a workplan, nor does it monitor the implementation of specific activities.

- National approach to enhance quality assurance
The National approach is strategic – to develop systems for quality assessment. The system aims to evaluate quality in VET (process of delivery and outcome/results) – to provide a basis for VET providers to develop quality at provider level.

- Influence of EQAVET on national developments of quality assurance
EQAVET - and the open method of coordination of quality assurance - is one of the sources of inspiration for development of the national approach, and more broadly for consideration of the development of quality assurance.