



## Introduction

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

## SECTION A - DESCRIPTION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

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### 1. Brief description of the context of the VET system in the country and the role of EQAVET

#### Introduction

In United Kingdom (UK), education is one of the areas in which power is devolved to the governments of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In Scotland, the responsibility for School Education and Vocational Education rests with the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills. The Directorate for Learning and Justice oversees policies with regards to both School Education and Vocational Education.

Following the creation of an independent review of the transition from school to work, the Commission for Developing the Young Workforce, the Scottish Government published an ambitious Youth Strategy in December 2014. Much of the focus of current VET is on those young people in the upper stages of their secondary education.

### 2. Initial VET (IVET)

#### Introduction

In Scotland, as stated above, much of the focus regarding IVET is currently on those young people in the upper stages of secondary school. The reforms are taking place under the banner of "Developing the Young Workforce". One initiative which has been introduced, although still in its pilot phase, is the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships. These are aimed at young people aged 16 to 18 and still at secondary school. The aim is to provide young people with a deeper understanding of the world of work in a particular sector, give them realistic work experience and an opportunity to undertake work placements.

The Foundation Apprenticeship is designed so that it will give young people progressing into Employment via the Modern Apprenticeship programme an accelerated route to achieving their apprenticeship.

## 2.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in IVET

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

In Scotland, the National Quality Framework has been developed by Education Scotland and covers the learning and teaching environment in schools and further education colleges. There are slight differences in the framework according to the sector under consideration.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority is the main awarding body which awards qualifications in schools and further education colleges and has its own quality assurance arrangements for these qualifications. Other awarding bodies also operate in this area and will have similar quality assurance arrangements.

Some of the awarding bodies are subject to regulation by SQA's Accreditation function (SQA Accreditation) which operates a set of Regulatory Principles which regulated awarded bodies are required to meet.

Private Training Providers (PTPs) are also involved in IVET, particularly with regard to the Modern Apprenticeship programme. Further Education Colleges are also involved in this programme. The main qualification in the Modern Apprenticeship Framework must be accredited by SQA Accreditation. Awarding bodies are therefore required to seek accreditation if they wish their qualification to be included in the framework.

- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in initial VET systems

There is no statutory requirement for stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance. In practice, however, there is stakeholder involvement.

- Requirements for evaluation and review

In Scotland, Education Scotland requires that further education colleges undertake a self-evaluation but this is not required within the school sector. Education Scotland undertakes a programme of inspection of both the school sector and college sector.

Awarding bodies will regularly review their quality assurance arrangements particularly in relation to the qualification content.

- Identification of training needs

Training needs are identified by those stakeholders which have responsibility for the different aspects of the quality assurance system.

- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on VET providers

In Scotland, most IVET will be delivered by further education colleges working in partnership with schools. Typically, the further education college will need to seek approval from the awarding bodies to be able to offer particular qualifications. Some qualifications, such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications, must be accredited by SQA Accreditation.

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

In Scotland, candidates who successfully complete the education and training programme will be awarded a certificate by the relevant awarding body.

- How is the quality assurance implementation monitored?

The implementation of the quality assurance system is monitored by the stakeholders which have responsibility for the different aspects of the system. For example, Education Scotland has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the National Quality Framework and regularly reviews it to ensure that it continues to be effective.

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

- Planning at VET provider level (including identification of training needs)  
In Scotland, with regards to the Modern Apprenticeship Programme, PTPs and further education colleges will work with industry in their area to determine the demand for apprenticeship places.
- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)  
In Scotland, PTPs and further education colleges are required to undertake self-assessment.
- Certification, assessment and validation of learners  
In Scotland, as above, candidates who successfully achieve the qualification will receive a certificate from the relevant awarding body.
- Stakeholder involvement  
At a local level, there are a range of stakeholders involved in the quality assurance system. For example, further education colleges are required to gather feedback from employers where the programme has links to the local employment market.

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

### Introduction

In Scotland, CVET falls under the remit of the Scottish Government with key roles and responsibilities for quality assurance (particularly in terms of inspection) assigned to Education Scotland and Scotland's Colleges which is a network organisation supporting FE colleges in Scotland. Significantly, a regional approach (through 12 newly-created regions) has been introduced with the aim of making the sector more efficient and responsive to the needs of students and local economies.

### **3.1 Quality assurance arrangements at system level in CVET**

- National Framework for quality assurance in CVET – who is in charge of what?  
In Scotland, the National Quality Framework has been developed by Education Scotland and covers the learning and teaching environment in schools and further education colleges. There are slight differences in the framework according to the sector under consideration.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority is the main awarding body which awards qualifications in schools and further education colleges and has its own quality assurance arrangements for these qualifications. Other awarding bodies also operate in this area and will have similar quality assurance arrangements.

Some of the awarding bodies are subject to regulation by SQA's Accreditation function (SQA Accreditation) which operates a set of Regulatory Principles which regulated awarded bodies are required to meet.

Private Training Providers (PTPs) are also involved in IVET particularly with regard to the Modern Apprenticeship programme. Further Education Colleges are also involved in this programme. The main qualification in the Modern Apprenticeship Framework must be

accredited by SQA Accreditation. Awarding bodies are therefore required to seek accreditation if they wish their qualification to be included in the framework.

- Statutory stakeholder involvement in quality assurance in CVET systems as per 2.1
- Requirements for evaluation and review as per 2.1
- Identification of training needs as per 2.1
- Who can deliver VET and under what conditions – accreditation or other requirements on CVET providers as per 2.1
- Certification – assessment and validation of learning (system level) as per 2.1
- Monitoring, inspection and use of indicators as per 2.1
- Requirements CVET providers have to comply with (if not described in 1<sup>st</sup> section) as per 2.1

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

- Planning at CVET provider level (including identification of training needs)  
In Scotland as per 2.2
- Requirements for monitoring and review (self-assessment)  
In Scotland as per 2.2
- Certification, assessment and validation of learners  
In Scotland as per 2.2
- Stakeholder involvement  
In Scotland as per 2.2

## **SECTION B - INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EQAVET**

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- National Reference Point – Introduction  
In Scotland the national reference point is SQA Accreditation. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has two distinct and autonomous parts:

#### SQA Accreditation:

Under Scottish Government legislation, SQA Accreditation quality assures qualifications offered in Scotland by approving awarding bodies and accrediting their qualifications. It does this by regulating awarding bodies and their qualifications against published regulatory requirements.

#### SQA Awarding Body:

SQA Awarding Body is one of the awarding bodies regulated. They are therefore subject to the same processes and regulation as any other approved awarding body.

- National approach to enhance quality assurance  
In Scotland, SQA Accreditation operates using Regulatory Principles and Regulatory Directives. EQAVET was considered when these were developed.
- Influence of EQAVET on national developments of quality assurance  
In Scotland, SQA Accreditation continues to liaise with Education Scotland and to provide advice and guidance on the use of and interpretation of the EQAVET indicators.