

Austria – Case study 1 (Supporting transition to VET)

Summary

The Austrian schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts have implemented the quality management system *HTL Q-SYS* which is part of the Austrian VET quality initiative (*Q/BB* www.qibb.at). Since 2006-2007 HTL Hollabrunn, in line with its mission statement, has developed its approach to smoothing students' transition from feeder schools. The project aims to improve access to vocational education and training and to increase the number of students who successfully complete their VET programmes. To succeed with this project it was necessary to invest in a further education programmes for teachers and trainers.

To support students' decision-making process, the secondary schools cooperate with the HTL. Information and orientation events, such as the open days, parents' evenings or counselling from careers advisors help parents and students make well-informed decisions. In addition, close cooperation with initiatives such as *Women into Technology* and *Girls and Technology* encourage young women to take up technical education.

Success is measured through questionnaires for parents and becomes evident through the decreasing number of students who leave the course early.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *use data and feedback to improve VET*
- *support staff training in relation to quality assurance*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers:
 - a) Share of providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative;
 - b) Share of accredited VET providers.
2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers:
 - a) Share of teachers and trainers participating in further training;
 - b) Amount of funds invested.
4. Completion rate in VET programmes:

Number of successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria.
10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET:
 - a) Information on existing schemes at different levels;
 - b) Evidence of their effectiveness.

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: HTL Hollabrunn (schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts)
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CITY: Hollabrunn, Austria

Austria – Case study 1 (supporting transition to VET)

<p>VET provider's approach to quality assurance:</p>	<p>The Austrian schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts have implemented the quality management system HTL Q-SYS, which is part of QIBB (www.qibb.at), the Austrian VET quality initiative. HTL Q-SYS guarantees a high quality, broad and practice orientated education at Austria's schools and colleges for engineering, arts and crafts (EQAVET Indicator 1). HTL Q-SYS is process orientated. It is based on objectives which are derived from the HTL mission statement. The extent to which these objectives are achieved can be evaluated by means of clearly defined indicators. The evaluation results form the basis for a continuous process of improvement.</p>
<p>project 'Initial phase: making the transition from feeder schools to HTL smooth'</p>	<p>Since 2006-2007 HTL Hollabrunn has been developing a project in accordance with the mission statement. The project is called, 'Initial phase: making the transition from feeder schools to HTL smooth'.</p>
<p>objectives of the project and met EQAVET indicators:</p>	<p>It aims to improve access to vocational education and training (EQAVET Indicator 10) and to increase the number of students, who successfully complete the VET programmes provided by HTL Hollabrunn (EQAVET Indicator 4). It was necessary to invest in further education programmes for teachers and trainers to guarantee the successful implementation of the project (EQAVET Indicator 2).</p>
<p>effective practice:</p>	<p>To facilitate the students' decision-making process concerning the choice of further education, the feeder schools (secondary schools) cooperate closely with the HTL. In the regions of Weinviertel and Waldviertel (Lower Austria) such cooperation also exists with primary schools. Information and orientation events, such as the open day, parents evening or profound counselling with a careers advisor, help parents and prospective students to make a well-informed decision for either learning a trade or pursuing further education in the technical field.</p> <p>In addition, close cooperation with initiatives like 'FIT' (Frauen in die Technik – Women into Technology) and 'Mut!' (Mädchen und Technik – Girls and Technology) should encourage young women to take up a technical education, and should help to make the most of the potential of female employment in this field in the future.</p> <p>At the beginning of their first year at HTL Hollabrunn, students are offered extensive support, encouragement and counselling. Initial assessment tests in German, English and mathematics provide information about a student's previous knowledge and skills in these areas and – in case of any deficiencies – allows them to take remedial measures within the first few weeks.</p> <p>Extensive coaching supports students in the first few critical weeks at the HTL. At this stage all teachers are involved in the coaching phase. The aim of this initial coaching phase is to enable students to learn independently and autonomously, and to fill certain knowledge gaps, which may result from different teaching practices at the pre</p>

	<p>transition schools. To achieve this goal, teachers of different subjects agree on certain interdisciplinary foci, which are then implemented in the first few weeks of school.</p> <p>For the success of the interdisciplinary approach it was crucial to bring on board all teachers of the first year. Intensive teacher training at the HTL and further training programmes were important.</p> <p>The objectives are for the students to quickly gain a common level of knowledge, develop the skills required to work independently, motivate them to continue their education and prevent them from quitting school. To counteract demotivation and drop out, the social competences of students are increased. Information days, excursions, sports events and intensive lessons in the subject 'social and personal competences' play an important role.</p>
evaluation and evidence:	<p>The success of the project is measured by means of feedback in the form of questionnaires for parents and becomes evident through decreasing number of dropouts. The decreasing number of dropouts in the first year of HTL Hollabrunn illustrates the effectiveness of these measures.</p>
which learners have benefited: students at the beginning of their first year at HTL Hollabrunn (IVET)	<p>The students became more motivated, and social divisions rarely occur in these newly-formed classes. In addition, independent and autonomous forms of learning have increased. The number of students, including students with a migrant background, who chose this form of high-quality education, has gone up. The quality of education and training can be enhanced because this initial phase in a completely new educational environment is no longer experienced as a threat but perceived as an opportunity, where support for the individual student is the main priority.</p>

Austria – Case study 2 (Challenging gender stereotypes)

Summary

The Hertha Firnberg School for Business and Tourism in Vienna provides initial training for approximately 800 students, two-thirds of whom are female. As part of its mission to challenge gender stereotypes, the school has introduced a course in Computer Science Management in partnership with the Technical University of Applied Sciences in Vienna. This course has attracted more male students and encouraged female students to consider alternative careers.

The school uses Austria's national quality assurance system, [QIBB](#). Under the leadership of the school director, the school's quality managers coordinate all aspects of quality assurance. They work with steering groups of teachers and students to introduce, manage and evaluate new approaches to quality assurance. All members of the steering groups receive regular training and share their knowledge with their colleagues.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET provider*
- *There is an early involvement of staff in planning, with regard to quality development*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported in the implementation of the planned actions.*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations or at the initiative of the VET providers*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment.*

For more information on this case study go to the next page or contact:

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Austria – Case study 2 (Challenging gender stereotypes)

The practice that is being quality assured

The Hertha Firnberg School for Business and Tourism in Vienna provides initial training for approximately 800 students, two-thirds of whom are female. As part of its mission to challenge gender stereotypes, the school has introduced a course in Computer Science Management in partnership with the Technical University of Applied Sciences in Vienna. This course has attracted more male students and encouraged female students to consider alternative careers.

Nearly 30 years ago the school started as a traditional upper vocational girls' school. The school's curriculum were modernised many years ago and no longer resembles a typical girls' program. However the school always had a low male student population (approx. 10 – 15 per cent of students). This led the school to develop a new Computer Science Management programme which includes:

- innovative science and IT programs (a novelty in this type of school);
- demanding language programs (English and Russian);
- solid training in business practices.

Working with the Technical University of Applied Sciences helped to ensure the quality of the program. This partnership includes

- joint development of curriculum by staff at the Hertha Firnberg School and the University
- part of the training takes place at the University
- team teaching: IT and science classes are taught by teams of teachers from the University and the Hertha Firnberg School.

The percentage of male students on this course is considerably higher in other classes in this traditionally female school (30-50 per cent of students are male compared to the usual 10-15 per cent). The course is an attractive offer for young women who prefer to abandon traditional career paths. At the same time, this course encourages young men to enrol in a traditional girls' school which has a strong emphasis on languages.

The VET providers approach to quality assurance

The Hertha Firnberg School is integrated into the Austrian VET Quality Initiative, [QIBB](#), launched by the General Directorate for Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and School Sport of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture.

Under the leadership of the school director, the school's quality managers coordinate all aspects of quality assurance. They work with steering groups of teachers and students to introduce, manage and evaluate new approaches to quality assurance. All members of the steering groups receive regular training and share their knowledge with their colleagues.

All the quality themes developed by the school's quality managers are integrated in the official quality cycle and are continuously revised and improved. In addition, regular staff events help to maintain the enthusiasm and motivation of both students and teachers and thus promote the topic inside and outside the school.

What challenges were overcome?

- convincing the school authorities to invest in the new course. The new course also helped to address the ongoing decline in student enrolment at traditional technical schools
- allocating enough funds to start the program and find business partners
- gaining agreement with the Technical University of Applied Sciences
- encourage enough students to enrol in this new program in the first year of operation
- convincing teachers that the new program would be a success
- introducing Russian as a second language as this would enrich the school's offer to students
- managing in an environment of budget austerity
- ensuring the course curriculum was within the rules established for all national programs
- team teaching involving school and university staff revealed numerous challenges in relation to employment contracts

What were the lessons learnt?

- the first year of the programme is the most challenging
- any new programme needs enough resources to work well
- coaching and training of teachers is vital to the success of the programme

Which learners have benefited?

As well as the students taking the course, the cooperation is both beneficial to Hertha Firnberg School and to the Technical University of Applied Sciences, as teachers from both institutions gain a valuable insight into the work of their partner.

The course has helped to develop a reciprocal understanding of the challenges and requirements facing secondary and tertiary education. This increased understanding and knowledge can be used to improve the transition process from secondary to tertiary education and helps to improve the curricula and teaching methods of secondary education. Innovating, inspiring and gender-sensitive teaching methods will need to form the basis of future-oriented science and IT classes in secondary schools.

Summary

The Intercollege in Nicosia, Cyprus uses the EFQM Excellence Model to conduct an annual self-assessment. This starts with a 1.5 day workshop for the management team assessing evidence and data in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. This is followed by decisions on improvements that need to be made, allocating responsibilities for implementation and agreeing a timescale for improvements. The self-assessment process follows a four stage cycle of:

- ✓ preparing for self-assessment;
- ✓ completing the self-assessment and identifying improvement priorities;
- ✓ planning and realising the improvements
- ✓ following up and reviewing the impact of the improvements

The ongoing annual self-assessment has led to improvements in the quality of all the training courses as shown through evaluations by the participants.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *use data and feedback to improve VET*
- *develop a culture of self assessment*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Self-assessment/ self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/ frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders.*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: INTERCOLLEGE

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NICOSIA, CYPRUS

Cyprus – Case study 1 (self-assessment)

Quality assurance practice

Intercollege's motto is "excellence in education" which is reflected in the activities of its international faculty, the college's infrastructure and the student support services. To ensure excellence is achieved in all its operations, since 2006 Intercollege has used a continuous improvement mechanism. Every year the management team carries out a self-assessment based on the criteria of the EFQM Excellence Model in order to:

- ✓ Understand how effectively the College is implementing its organisational strategy;
- ✓ Identify the relationships between the approaches used and the results achieved;
- ✓ Identify the current strengths and establish priorities to improve performance against the strategic objectives of the organisation;
- ✓ Identify opportunities for benchmarking.

The Self-Assessment includes a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of the organization's activities. The results are compared to the criteria in the EFQM Excellence Model. It allows the organization to discern clearly its strengths and areas in which improvements can be made and culminates in planned improvement actions that are then monitored for progress.

Approach to quality assurance

The self-assessment is carried out as a directed conversation between the management team of the organization on an annual basis. It takes place in the form of a 1.5 day workshop that involves members of the management team in a discussion and decision making process linked to assessing evidence and data. It leads to a consensus on strengths and areas for improvement. Subsequently, a second discussion and decision making process takes place in order to prioritize the list of potential improvement actions, assign ownership and agree timescales for delivery of the improvements.

Improving quality assurance

This self-assessment considers the current approaches. Based on the maturity of these approaches and their impact on the organisation's strategy, key opportunities for improvement are identified.

Examples of improvements have been:

- Implementing a survey to collect employee opinions
- Customer satisfaction survey (through course evaluations)
- Establishing an annual strategy forum

Through this process continuous improvement in quality are recognized, prioritized and implemented.

Challenges to overcome

An effective and efficient Self-Assessment requires excellent preparation and facilitation. The major challenges Intercollege had to overcome include:

- the need for training for all managers to improve awareness of the EFQM Excellence Model
- the need for an experienced facilitator to manage the self-assessment process

Lessons learnt

At the end of each self-assessment session, the management team feedback was collected. This identified the following strengths of using this method:

- enhances co-operation and informs staff about the quality assurance process
- provides possibilities for employee participation

- identifies the important problems in a comprehensive way
- it leads to improvements
- it encourages people to stop for a moment and motivates them to consider future developments

The following weaknesses have been identified:

- many staff have found the language and of quality assurance difficult to understand
- the model is complex and does not always fit the activities of the organisation
- it takes up a lot of time
- staff can find it hard to see the relevance of some of the criteria
- getting the right people to be part of the self-assessment team

Almost a year after the first self-assessment, Intercollege was successfully evaluated by an independent team of EFQM Validators and received the EFQM Committed to Excellence in Europe certification. Currently, Intercollege is in the process of applying for the next certification level, namely Recognized for Excellence in Europe.

Cyprus – Case study 2 (staff training)

Summary

Following Cyprus' entry into the European Union, there was a clear need for additional training for those working in the wine and vine-growing trades. With many small companies in the industry, and the need to address quality and the quality assurance issues surrounding production, [Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus](#) approved Quintessence Enterprises to organise a series of staff training events. A three stage approach was implemented:

- a two day course on the science and practice of the industry;
- visits by experts to each employer/vineyard to discuss their individual needs. This led to an improvement report for each business;
- a national conference on quality in wine making which was supported by national and international experts.

The next step is to offer on line, real-time, distance learning support, including the use of web cameras in the wineries so that the sector can see the value of developing best practices.

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET as well as company-based training.

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/individual needs*
- *The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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Cyprus – Case study 2 (staff training)

Quality assurance practice

The vine and wine sector in Cyprus changed dramatically after the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. Before accession, the sector survived mainly on the basis of subsidies and consequently little attention was paid to the quality of wine. After accession and following the merger of many local wineries the quality of wine became the dominant issue and priority. The objective of the wine community in Cyprus is to gain access to new markets as well as to increase their share of existing markets.

Quintessence Enterprises Ltd set out to address the need of the wine sector and organised a series of seminars on the whole spectrum of wine science and practice, e.g. viticulture, winemaking and wine marketing. This sector-based training was supported by the Wine Product Council (WPC) which is the accredited Inspection Body for the vineyards and wineries industry.

Each seminar included a two day course in a conference room, where the theory and science of each topic was discussed and company based training where the expert(s) visited each company to discuss individual needs. After each visit a report on improved practice was prepared and given to the companies. Quintessence Enterprises Ltd also organised a national conference on wine making and good wine making practices where more than 30 experts participated.

The approach to Quality Assurance

Quintessence Enterprises Ltd was approved as a Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) provider by Cyprus' Human Resource Development Authority in 2002. Since then almost 5000 certificates for training seminars have been issued. Quintessence Enterprises Ltd's certificates are recognised by the Competent Authorities as offering the required competency. Quintessence Enterprises Ltd operates in line with ISO9000 and all the requirements of ISO17024 which covers personal competence are met. Each seminar is evaluated by attendees and the results used for the continuous improvement of the CVET processes. The results of each assessment are posted on the website of Quintessence Enterprises Ltd.

Challenges

One significant challenge for a new CVET provider is understanding how best to manage relationships with the Authorities. As a new VET provider it is important to convince the Authorities about the integrity and reliability of provision and explain how training can exceed expectations. It is also important to have a deep understanding of the markets and customers where CVET is provided. In an era of ready-made knowledge managers, shareholders and staff in a VET provider need to be creative and innovative. Individuals and organisations need to be well educated and trained so as to create consistently high quality VET provision.

The benefits to learners

It takes time to see the impact of effective training. The result of training and in-company visits to vineyards and wineries has been an improvement in the quality of the product as measured by sensory analysis in wine competitions organised by the Wine Product Council of. Since 2006, when Quintessence Enterprises Ltd started organising training courses to the industry, the quality of wine has steadily improved.

Czech Republic – Case study 1 (Involving internal and external stakeholders)

Summary

For the past three years, the Secondary Technical and Vocational Building School in Kolin, Czech Republic has been revising its approach to quality management. Key to the changes has been greater cooperation with external partners supported by internal meetings of subject boards comprising teachers and trainers. A new school curriculum has been introduced to respond to changes in the job market and students have been involved in completing contracts offered by external clients of the school. These developments have led to a ten per cent increase in applicants.

To assure the quality of the new provision, the school management has integrated more modern teaching methods and technologies into the learning. Teacher observation, class visits by school management and regular meetings of subject boards have improved the quality of teaching. This has been enhanced by close cooperation with construction companies in the region.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study demonstrates the following indicator:

9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market:

a) Information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/individual needs*
- *Early warning systems are implemented*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: **Secondary Technical and Vocational Building School**

www.ss-stavebnikolin.cz

CITY: KOLIN, CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Republic – Case study 1 (Involving internal and external stakeholders)

The practice that is being quality assured

The Secondary Technical and Vocational Building School in Kolin offers VET programs in the field of construction. Over the past three years, it has introduced substantial changes in its internal management, established more cooperation with external partners (including international partnerships) and supported greater internal cooperation between teachers and trainers through meetings of subject boards. New training arrangements have been introduced to enable greater flexibility in response to the job market and enable successful and less successful students to move between more and less demanding VET programs. Another important step has been to increase students' involvement in real contracts offered by external partners/clients of the school. The school premises have been extensively modernized and a great deal of construction work was carried out by the students as part of their training. The developments in the school have resulted in a ten per cent increase in applications acquisition of an improved reputation within the region and an increase of number of applicants from other catchment areas.

The VET provider's approach to quality assurance

Apart from using traditional pedagogic methods, the school management supports the integration of modern methods and technologies into the learning and teaching process. Mutual class observations among the teachers, class visits by the school's management, together with regular meetings of subject boards are targeted to improve the teaching competence of individual teachers. Close cooperation with construction companies in the region also contributes to improving the quality of VET.

The school management collects feedback from students and parents every year, using questionnaires and individual interviews. The school publishes an annual report and a self-evaluation report every three years. An early warning system for student behaviour has been implemented to limit high-risk behaviour. This helps to prevent truancy, injuries and drug abuse. School failure is also tackled by focusing on individual students' motivation through interviews with teachers, by creating more direct links between school based lessons and work based training, by financial appraisal for completing work and by the Scholarship program of The Central Bohemia region. The best school graduates acquire a certificate from the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic.

What challenges were overcome

Initially external clients had to be convinced that the VET provider could deliver appropriate contracts. This included producing high-quality results at reasonable prices. Early results were positive, and with references from first clients, the number of contracts grew until all students across various VET programs became involved in real world tasks. It was also important to ensure the contracted activities matched the goals and content of each of the VET programmes.

What were the lessons learnt

Students who are involved in real contracts tend to be more diligent and enjoy their work more. In addition to acquiring the required knowledge and skills, they improve their vocational and personal competences. This is important for individuals as well as their future employers. In March 2011, the Czech School Inspectorate highlighted the outstanding improvement in relation to the school, its courses and the outcomes from its VET provision.

Czech Republic – Case study 2 (Using all four stages of the quality cycle)

Summary

The Commercial Secondary School in Brno, Czech Republic first started using a four-stage quality assurance cycle in 2005. The approach, based on the Common Assessment Framework (a predecessor to EQAVET) led to the school receiving the “The National Quality Award of the Czech Republic – public sector” in 2010.

To identify the quality of course and the outcomes of education, the School uses:

- internal evaluations for key activities such as school leaving exams, assessment, activities linked with realisation of students’ personal development, continuous professional development of staff, the costs of course provision etc.
- class observations performed by the school management
- close cooperation with social partners.

The quality assurance model helps to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. An independent external evaluator also uses of questionnaire surveys, statistical comparisons and internal evaluations to help the School review performance.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Use data and feedback to improve VET*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers*
- *Learners’ feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers’ feedback this is used to inform further actions*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Commercial Secondary School

www.obchodskola.cz

Jánská 22

CITY:

Brno, Czech Republic

Czech Republic – Case study 2 (Using all four stages of the quality cycle)

Quality assurance practice

In order to improve quality, the Commercial Secondary School in Brno created its first self-evaluation report using the Common Assessment Framework in June 2005. The report revealed several strengths and weaknesses – this provided the inspiration for improvement. After successfully implementing an improvement plan (e.g. introducing performance indicators for the school and for individual employees, developing an evidence-based system for responding to complaints and suggestions, introducing an appraisal system for teachers and trainers etc.) the School decided to continue its self-evaluation activities and completed an analysis of its main activities.

Using results from the internal evaluation and the recommendation of the School's independent auditor, the Common Assessment Framework model was adopted. In 2008, new action plans for improvement was created (e.g. develop an internet presence; establish new systems for all key areas of the School's work etc.) In 2010, the school received "The National Quality Award of the Czech Republic – public sector".

The VET provider's approach to quality assurance

To identify the quality of course and the outcomes of education, the School uses:

- internal evaluations for key activities such as school leaving exams, assessment, activities linked with realisation of students' personal development, continuous professional development of staff, the costs of course provision etc.
- class observations performed by the school management
- close cooperation with social partners.

The quality assurance model helps to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. An independent external evaluator also uses of questionnaire surveys, statistical comparisons and internal evaluations to help the School review performance

What improvements have brought made?

Using this quality assurance approach has helped the School to:

- manage project activities more successfully
- introduce development plans for individual staff
- employ training specialists to support the continuous professional development of teachers and trainers
- improve its mutually beneficial cooperation with social partners
- actively involve staff and students in partner events
- benchmark performance – s
- support school staff to be involved as advisors, coordinators, instructors and a implementers of innovating initiatives
- establish a School Parliament and School Board
- introduce an information system in all sections and levels
- fostered high-quality relationships at work with fair and equal treatment for all
- improved public relations

What challenges have been overcome?

- finding new ways to manage the effective recruitment of new students
- better information management via use of the internet
- introduction of electronic communication in all sections and levels of the organisation

What were the lessons learnt

This is clear – any form of self-evaluation is beneficial. And quality assurance is an effective way for shaping continuous improvement.

Estonia – Case study 1 (A five year development plan)

Summary

The Tartu Vocational Education Centre in Estonia uses the [EFQM Excellence Model](#) to conduct an annual self-assessment. Since 2002 a team of 20, including representatives of teaching staff, middle and top management has been active in promoting quality assurance and development planning.

This team's activities include:

- ✓ developing the approach to quality assurance
- ✓ optimising the organisation's structure
- ✓ creating a shared organisational culture
- ✓ redesigning development planning
- ✓ ensuring the satisfaction of students, employees and stakeholders
- ✓ promoting self-assessment and reflection
- ✓ participating in quality award contests

The Centre's five year plan (2008-2013) was prepared by staff members, students and stakeholders.

It includes the following three targets:

- ✓ create a well-functioning working and learning environment
- ✓ ensure high employability for graduates
- ✓ ensure the sustainable development of the institution

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*
- *Use data and feedback to improve VET*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Share of teachers and trainers participating in further training*
- *Number of participants in VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria*
- *Completion rate in VET programmes*
- *Number of successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria.*
- *Unemployment rate according to individual criteria*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY:

Tartu, Estonia

Estonia – Case study 1 (A five year development plan)

Background

The Tartu Vocational Education Centre was founded in 2002 through the merger of four vocational schools. It is the largest VET institution in Estonia, offering courses for:

- upper-secondary students
- post-upper secondary students
- those who left school early at 17
- students wanting to complete pre-vocational studies
- adults seeking continuing vocational training

Following the merger of four vocational schools, the management team set out to involve staff and students in creating a shared organisation culture within a modern learning environment. The Centre is now widely recognised as a learning organisation where staff competence is the most powerful resource that needs to be developed and shared in order to achieve success.

In order to continue to improve, the centre has invested in its quality assurance team of about 20 people including representatives of teaching staff, middle and top management. This team's activities include:

- ✓ developing the approach to quality assurance
- ✓ optimising the organisation's structure
- ✓ creating a shared organisational culture
- ✓ redesigning development planning
- ✓ ensuring the satisfaction of students, employees and stakeholders
- ✓ promoting self-assessment and reflection
- ✓ participating in quality award contests

Tartu VEC operates within the framework of its 2008-2013 development plan, which was prepared by staff members, students and stakeholders. It seeks to *offer students the best possible opportunity for personal development and success through lifelong learning*. Central to the centre's activities are a series of questions, which are constantly asked:

- ✓ How are these activities related to fulfilling our mission and achieving our vision?
- ✓ Do our students benefit from these activities?
- ✓ Do our staff members benefit from them?
- ✓ Does the labour market and employers benefit from them?
- ✓ Are they beneficial for the wider society?

The 2008-2013 development plan is activated through the production of annual plans, which form the basis for development plans of each vocational unit. These plans are supported by the use of a set of indicators, which underpin an annual self-assessment to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of each area of the Centre's work. Each of the centre's strategic objectives is assessed in relation to core indicators, such as the:

- ✓ number of students
- ✓ the quality of the student support systems
- ✓ number of graduates
- ✓ number of graduates who passed the national examinations
- ✓ rate of employment after graduation
- ✓ number of students going on to further study
- ✓ dropout rate

- ✓ number of staff who are fully qualified teachers
- ✓ number of staff participating in in-service training

Tartu VEC's quality assurance processes are based on the Total Quality Management system and implemented using the four stage quality assurance cycle. Their approach is based on the following principles:

- ✓ processes must be managed
- ✓ all staff are responsible for their own results
- ✓ problems must be solved, not only discussed
- ✓ quality must be measured
- ✓ quality must be continuously increased
- ✓ management must be involved, committed and in the lead

Quality assurance at Tartu VEC is carried out using the following criteria and indicators:

- ✓ Middle and long term vocational education and training (VET) goals follow the pan-European goals. Stakeholders are involved in setting VET targets at different levels. Achieving of the set goals is monitored by special indicators (success criteria).
- ✓ Processes and results are assessed regularly by measuring

The main challenge has been to enable all staff to understand that quality assurance is not an external obligation. Rather it is relevant tool for ensuring development, competitiveness and satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Estonia – Case study 2 (Creating a clear line of sight between strategic and personal objectives)

Summary

The Kuressaare Regional Training Centre in Estonia has used the Estonian national model for quality assurance, which is based on the [EFQM Excellence Model](#) since 2002. This approach includes the development of a strategic plan, the setting of annual objectives and performance indicators for centre and each vocational unit, setting personal objectives for each member of staff and an assessment and review of individuals' personal objectives once a year.

All four stages of the quality assurance cycle are used and quality is supported through self-evaluation. This includes a review of the whole organisation, its processes and indicators of success. It is part of the assessment and renewing of the Strategic Plan. The outcome of the self-assessment contributes to the Centre's accreditation to provide training and is shared with staff and the Ministry of Education and Research.

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *ensure there is a management culture, which is committed to quality assurance*
- *develop a culture of self-assessment*

This case study shows the following indicator is being met:

- *Share of providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative;*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored*
- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY:

Kuressaare, Estonia

Estonia – Case study 2 (Creating a clear line of sight between strategic and personal objectives)

Background

Kuressaare Regional Training Centre is accredited by the Ministry of Education and Research to provide initial and continuing vocational training. There are around 1000 students on upper secondary and post-secondary programmes and around 1000 adult students per year.

Kuressaare RTC's mission is to prepare people to be competitive in the Estonian and international labour market and be capable of living a fulfilling life. Its quality management system has been developed in line with the Estonian national models and focuses on

- eight principles of Organizational Excellence
- identifying enablers which lead to good outcomes
- using all four stages of the quality cycle (plan-do-check-act)
- the RADAR model which encompasses setting objectives while planning the results (Results); choosing the right strategies (Approaches); implementing plans (Deployment); Assessment and Review.

Kuressaare RTC's Quality Management System includes

- producing a strategic plan
- producing an annual plan of action
- establishing and meeting internal regulations
- undertaking an annual self-evaluation
- keeping excellent records
- ensuring all provision is covered by the national legislation
- using an intranet to share information with staff and students
- working in line with the National Information System of Education
- completing regular surveys to collect student and stakeholder feedback
- managing-by-walking-around

Getting to this point

Kuressaare RTC started to use the EFQM principles in its strategic planning in 1997 and each year has seen further developments. The initial task was to compile a quality management handbook, which set up the quality aims and the processes that would be used. All staff were involved in completing a SWOT [strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing Kuressaare RTC] to support the production of the strategic plan and action plans. Initially only the planning phase of the cycle was well executed; implementation was partial and depended too much on leadership skills; the evaluation (CHECK) and review phases (ACT) were insufficient and inconsistent.

During the next few years Kuressaare RTC also focused on self-evaluation and entered the national contest for a Quality Award in 2003, 2004 and 2007. At the same time improvements were made to the quality management system in line with the outcomes of self-evaluation and feedback from assessors. This led to a new approach, which included developing quality indicators and targets at the centre and training unit level (i.e. each vocational area). We agreed the quality indicators and target values. In addition a more systematic approach to collecting feedback from students, staff, employers and graduates was introduced.

By 2007 Kuressaare RTC had refined its approach to include a “clear line of sight” from the organisation's objectives, through departmental objectives to each employee. The strategic plan involved everyone including students and employers. This led to the annual action plan, which set out who was responsible for particular activities. From the annual action plan, each training unit made their own plans and every member of staff was set personal objectives and targets. These

personal objectives are evaluated annually by the manager from each vocational unit. After a long process of development, all four stages of the quality cycle are now working and it provides management with a useful tool to oversee quality. As well as the plans Kuressaare RTC also has the results.

Finland – Case study 1 (Using data and feedback to improve VET)

Summary

Salpaus Further Education College is an independent business unit of Lahti Region Educational Consortium. It provides vocational education and training, staff development services and general upper-secondary education. It caters for over 20 000 post-16 and adult students per annum and has an annual turnover of €70 million.

Central to its quality assurance processes, and the reason it was given a Quality Award from the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, is the use of real time data to improve performance. Following the development of earlier systems, Salpaus built its own data warehouse in 2010 which provides information to all staff. This provides real time information in relation to key indicators such as the different type of students (i.e. special needs students), drop-out rates and graduation rates. The data can be viewed at organisation level, course level, qualification level, study group level and individual student level.

This real-time information helps teachers, counselors and advisors to follow the progress of each student and to take action if needed.

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *use data and feedback to improve VET;*
- *develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Participation rate in VET programmes*
- *Completion rate in VET programmes*
- *Number of successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria*
- *Unemployment rate according to individual criteria*
- *Percentage of participants in VET classified as disadvantaged groups (in a defined region or catchment area) according to age and gender*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers;*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction;*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders;*
- *Early warning systems are implemented.*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY: Lahti, FINLAND

Finland – Case study 1 (Using data and feedback to improve VET)

The following is the full text to go on the EQAVET web site. It is accessed when readers select the hotlink

Salpaus Further Education College is an independent business unit of Lahti Region Educational Consortium. It provides vocational education and training, staff development services and general upper-secondary education. It employs nearly 800 staff, caters for over 20,000 post-16 and adult students per annum and has an annual turnover of €70 million.

In Salpaus, quality management covers all those procedures, processes or systems that are used to guarantee or improve quality. Quality management facilitates continuous improvement, the further development of operational systems and the improvement of results. It is an integral part of the College's systems and has an impact on all functions and levels within the organisation.

Developing a real-time student data system has been a three stage process. Initially, in 2003, a balanced score card of key indicators was used to frame the College's strategic planning This took account of national VET objectives, the requirements of the local environment (including the needs of business, other employers and students) and the needs of other stakeholders. The balanced score card was monitored, assessed and analysed by managers in order to improve practice. The second stage was led by the Lahti Region Educational Consortium which introduced an indicator portal in 2009. This is available to all staff and allows individuals to follow the results and trends of strategic indicators. However the collection and analysis of the data was not automatic and the results had to be manually entered into the portal every three months. The third stage has been the development of Salpaus own data warehouse in 2010 which provides real-time information to all staff.

This covers information on key indicators such as the different type of students (i.e. special needs students), drop-out rates and graduation rates. The data can be viewed at organisation level, course level, qualification level, study group level and individual student level. The information on students' progress helps teachers, counselors and advisors to follow individual students and take action if needed.

After its development phase the content of the data warehouse has been widened. Now all staff can follow a wide range of information connected to student studies, financial results or administration. The data warehouse is a tool for managers, teachers and administration personnel to monitor and improve performance.

Alongside the use of the data warehouse to provide data and information on key indicators, Salpaus makes use of annual internal and external assessments and evaluations. These are described in the College's evaluation plan and they are based on [EFQM Excellence Model](#). In addition to Salpaus' self-evaluation, other approaches such as customer surveys, management reviews, benchmarking and peer reviews are used to support evaluation and improvement.

Finland – Case study 2 (supporting individual students)

Summary

Savonlinna Vocational College is a medium sized vocational college which is owned by a regional network of eight local authorities. The college provides vocational education and training for young and adult learners with a focus on supporting individuals' vocational, general and personal growth as well as to training skilled staff for the world of work. The college has 1500 students completing national vocational qualifications and 800 adults completing basic and further vocational qualifications.

The College has a long history of developing a systematic approach to quality assurance and has won the national Quality Award from Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland three times. Its model of pedagogical leadership is based on sectoral leadership and developing a collegial approach to VET. One consequence of this pedagogical model is the provision of individual career paths for students.

The college focuses on helping students select courses which meet their individual career preferences. Using the advice of skilled careers counsellors, learners can put together bespoke courses which both prepare them for work as well as further study. This ability to design courses that meet individual needs helps to improve completion rates and supports vulnerable and disadvantaged learners.

This case study focuses on initial and adult VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *ensure that there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *use data and feedback to improve VET*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Completion rate in VET programmes*
- *Prevalence of vulnerable groups*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY: Savonlinna, FINLAND

Finland – Case study 2 (supporting individual students)

Background

Savonlinna Vocational College (Savonlinnan ammatti- ja aikuisopisto) is a medium sized vocational college providing vocational education and training (VET) which is owned by a regional network of eight municipalities. The college provides young and adult learners with vocational education and training across seven sectors. The aim is to support students' vocational, general and personal growth as well as to train them to become skilled staff who are able to meet the needs of the changing world of work. The college also provides flexible education and training across the region, is involved in the further development of employees and entrepreneurs in the regions and works within a set of principles that include internationality and sustainability. The college has 1500 students completing national vocational qualifications and 800 adults completing basic and further vocational qualifications. The college has 320 employees, of whom 170 are teaching staff.

Approach to quality assurance

The College has a long history of developing a systematic approach to quality assurance and has won the national Quality Award from Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland three times. Its model of pedagogical leadership is based on sectoral leadership and developing a collegial approach to VET. One consequence of this pedagogical model is the provision of individual career paths for students.

The college has organised its VET provision into three administrative clusters: health and social care and sports; technology and transport sector together with natural resources and the environment; and service sectors and culture. In addition there is a further cluster of staff covering expert services which includes staff who teach core subjects, the student counsellors, the college social worker and other teaching support staff. By arranging the courses in sector-based clusters, students are able to select units from other qualifications and build up their skills and competences from a package of related qualifications. Learners receive guidance on their selection of units in order to help them to design qualifications that meet their individual needs.

Each member of the teaching staff belongs to team for their subject. This offers everyone support from their colleagues, provides mutual support for planning and joint delivery of work. These activities help each cluster to meet their aims as set out in their operation plan.

Improving quality assurance

The college provides education and training for the entire age group and the population in the entire region. It offers training for transition stage students (e.g. preparatory and rehabilitating training, preparatory training for migrants etc) which is pre-vocational study. This VET provision focuses on strengthening the learners' motivation and skills to complete a whole qualification in order to prevent drop-out. Vocational qualifications, and in the case of adult education specific training packages, have been built so that it is possible for the learner to complete the whole qualification in smaller units. This enables learners to select units from outside their own qualification area. The arrangements in the college vary according to vocational area and learnign cluster. For special needs students they are able to progress through preparatory and rehabilitating studies towards a vocational qualification, which can be reached by increased work based learning and if necessary using adapted assessment. A similar study path is also available for recent migrants.

As part of the selction process, learners are supported and encouraged to develop individual career paths. This individualised approach was introduced in all curriculum based studies in autumn 2009. It enables the learner to focus their studies on their preferred career; though a change in career path is

possible during. As part of the process of making a career choice, staff provide coaching support (as part of the national skills competitions) to learners, offer vocational courses from the upper secondary general education to increase eligibility for higher education, and combine vocational studies with sporting activity. This flexibility and choice provides greater motivation for learners, responds to their needs and encourages them to complete their qualifications.

Individual career paths are also available for learners with special needs. Their path begins with preparatory and rehabilitating studies and counselling and continues in the national vocational qualification programme. Work-based training is provided through college workshops as part of the work-based career path. Learners are supported by service councillors, school assistants and specialised trainers who also accompany students to their place of work to be their work coaches.

Germany – Case study 1 (Inter-company training)

Summary

In Germany, initial VET is organised within the [dual system](#) which combines training in vocational schools with company-based training. For vocational training in “skilled crafts” this company-based training takes place in crafts enterprises on the one hand, and in inter-company vocational training centres on the other. This helps to broaden the learner’s experiences and makes a significant contribution to quality assurance.

Inter-company training helps to ensure that the full curriculum is covered although the training company is highly specialised. It aids technology transfer which prepares the skilled craft sector for the future. Also, by making use of practice-based and action-oriented training methods, inter-company instruction raises the quality of vocational education. Inter-company training is publicly funded and the running costs are shared between the Federal Government, the regional government and the skilled craft enterprises.

This case study focuses on company-based training of apprentices and initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances*
- *Ensure that VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers*
- *Participation rate in VET programmes*
- *Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market.*

For more information on this case study go to the next page or contact:

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Germany – Case study 1 (Inter-company training)

Background

In Germany, initial VET is organised within the [dual system](#) which combines training in vocational schools with company-based training. For vocational training in “skilled crafts” this company-based training takes place in crafts enterprises on the one hand, and in inter-company vocational training centres on the other. This helps to broaden the learner’s experiences and makes a significant contribution to quality assurance.

Apprentices within the skilled crafts industry receive training which enables them to approach the diverse and changing requirements of the workplace as experts in their craft or trade. They need to be occupationally competent and vocational proficient at the end of their training in order to accomplish the complex tasks assigned to them. The inter-company approach used by the skilled crafts industry helps to achieve this objective as well as assuring the quality of provision.

By providing opportunities for apprentices to learn in inter-company vocational training centres additionally to the training in crafts enterprises, learners gain a greater understanding of the industry and are better prepared for future employment. It also helps to strengthen crafts enterprises training, and supports a more systematic approach to training, the adaptation of learning to technological and economic developments, and the modernisation of the curriculum.

For companies with specialised production and service structures, it supplements curriculum coverage so that the requirements of the training regulations for specific occupations can be met in full. Inter-company training supports technology transfer which also helps the skilled craft sector prepare for the future. Also, by making use of practice-based and action-oriented training methods, inter-company instruction raises the quality of in-company training. Courses are normally attended by 6-12 apprentices at any one time. They are scheduled for three to four full working weeks during the year. Inter-company training is publicly funded and the running costs are shared between the Federal Government, the regional government and the skilled craft enterprises.

Quality assurance indicators

Inter company training helps to ensure the following three indicators from the EQAVET recommendation are met:

- **Indicator 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems**
Inter-company apprentice instruction is legally enshrined in the German Vocational Training Act and the Crafts and Trades Regulation Code. These allow for parts of the initial vocational training programme to be conducted in suitable establishments away from the training workplace if it remains of importance for the vocational training. The legislation allows for inter-company apprentice instruction to be occupationally specific measure based on the training regulations for each occupation. It takes place in inter-company educational institutions which were originally established by professional associations of [Chambers of Skilled Crafts \(Handwerkskammern\)](#). The [Federal Ministry of Education and Research](#) and the [Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology](#) support about 1000 of these inter-company vocational training centres.
- **Indicator 3: Number of participants**
In 2009, 458,649 apprentices in Germany participated in 50,327 inter-company training courses. Currently there are approximately 500 different curricula for inter-company instruction.
- **Indicator 9: Mechanisms for determining vocational training needs**

The content of inter-company instruction is shaped by the cooperating national-level trade organisations of German skilled crafts and trades and the Heinz Piest Institute for Trades and Technology.

Approval is given by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology or the relevant ministries from the regional government (Länder). The national-level trade organisations can suggest modifications and updates to the training regulations and/or the instruction programmes at any time. The Heinz Piest Institute for Trades Technology regularly surveys the extent to which individual occupations make use of the nationally recognised and funded inter-company training courses. This enables conclusions to be drawn on issues such as the relevance of each course and the activities of the skilled craft and trade organisations. This provides early indications of whether there is a need for new or revised course offerings. In addition, the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) provides a set of criteria which employers and trade organisations can use to evaluate inter-company courses.

Germany – Case study 2 (Developing high quality apprentices)

Summary

In Germany, the social consensus ensures that all school leavers are offered vocational education and training based on the [dual system](#) which provides new learners with a wide range of employability skills. As part of the partnership between the state and the private sector, Linhardt GmbH & Co. KG - a packaging manufacturer with headquarters in Bavaria - regularly trains young people. In 2010, 22 trainees successfully completed their initial vocational training in one of the following three sectors: tools manufacturing/ servicing; production; or administration/ management. These trainees were the first to graduate from Linhardt's own programme called "ABC – towards the training championship". Linhardt's commitment to training received the "VET quality label" of the German IVET Trainer Academy (DBA-Cert) in summer 2010.

The "Linhardt ABC – towards the training championship" approach is a name, a motto and a campaign for high quality training. It establishes, from the start, that training is connected to learning and it serves to describe the road "from beginner to professional" that should be taken by trainees during their apprenticeships. It also sets out the goals for the organisation - to become a training champion – and for the trainee to become a champion. The "Linhardt ABC" language is used whenever the company is discussing training-related topics. The company managers want to be different from their competitors. The creation of their own training logo is part of the "Linhardt ABC" approach which is used in their marketing materials to gain a competitive advantage.

This case study focuses on company-based training of apprentices and initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Recognise and build on existing internal arrangements*
- *Set clear roles and responsibilities for different parts of the VET system*
- *Define and implement a communications strategy*
- *Use feedback to improve VET*
- *Ensure quality assurance covers all aspects of VET provision*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Indicator 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers*
- *Indicator 2: Investment in training of teachers and trainers*
- *Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes.*
- *Indicator 6: Utilisation of acquired skills in the workplace*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored*
- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction*

- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*

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Germany – Case study 2 (Developing high quality apprentices)

Background

In Germany, the social consensus ensures that all school leavers are offered vocational education and training based on the [dual system](#) which provides new learners with a wide range of employability skills. As part of the partnership between the state and the private sector, Linhardt GmbH & Co. KG - a packaging manufacturer with headquarters in Bavaria - regularly trains young people. In 2010, 22 trainees successfully completed their initial vocational training in one of the following three sectors: tools manufacturing/ servicing; production; or administration/ management. These trainees were the first to graduate from Linhardt's own programme called "ABC – towards the training championship". Linhardt's commitment to training received the "VET quality label" of the German IVET Trainer Academy (DBA-Cert) in summer 2010.

Linhardt draws up its in-company training plan for trainees, which corresponds to the training regulations set by the autonomous industrial body (the Chamber). This sets out the practicalities of training as all enterprises that operate the dual system enter into a contract with trainees in which they undertake to provide them with the required professional competences for the relevant training occupation. The suitability of training enterprises and in-company training personnel is monitored by the Chambers. Linhardt offers apprenticeship training in the following sectors and occupations:

Sector	Occupations
Tools manufacturing/ servicing	Tools mechanic, milling machine operator, industrial mechanic, electronics technician
Production	Machine and plant operator, printer
Administration/ management	Industrial clerk, European business clerk, IT specialist, technical product designer, media designer

The management of Linhardt began this initiative because they wanted to develop the company and safeguard its future. The management wanted to be prepared for increasing demands that would face the organisation and the need for them to respond to an ageing population. In addition, the management team was keen to develop trainees according to the values and expectations of the company. This included the need to improve trainees' integration within the company and strengthen their teamwork in order to help them become and feel part of the business. Linhardt believes that through more intensive support, trainees can become better prepared for their working life following the completion of their training.

To support their training approach Linhardt defined their own training standards, reorganised their training structures, modernised the processes and content of training and strengthened their planning for learning. Consequently the company now has a standard set of arrangements in all its locations and in all its training departments. Linhardt has its own training guide which trainers as well as trainees can use.

The evaluation has shown that communications between trainers and trainees, and exchanges between staff located at different sites have really improved. By reviewing the training arrangements and optimising the approaches, there has been a considerable reduction in the workload of the trainers. The standardised approach is proving to be very important to Linhardt as the company regularly provides training in ten to twelve occupations and its trainees make up 8 – 10 per cent of its employees. Linhardt considers it a huge advantage when the same standards and

structures are applied in all training departments and locations. They intend to continue to set an example and be a flagship in the region in terms of training.

What were the challenges?

It was and sometimes still is difficult to convince every colleague of the necessity of the initiative. In addition, the practical implementation of a company-wide scheme across many occupations is an ongoing and demanding process.

What are the benefits?

The acceptance of the training approach and the use of a standard process for all trainees in all departments and at all locations have been positively received. These have, for example, helped trainees to participate in exchanges within the group of companies and enrol in other internal training programmes. In general, trainees have increased their independence and now take more responsibility for their tasks and projects. This has been possible because trainees participate and assume responsibility in group-wide and cross-departmental projects.

From the trainers' point of view, training has become the topic of more extensive discussion than before. The perceived value of the training has increased and it is seen in a more positive light. A new organisational structure has been developed, visible to everybody, and responsibilities have been redefined. The tasks of the trainer have also changed: there is now less of the typical instructing and training and more assisting in the learning process and organising the training.

Colleagues were officially appointed and promoted as training officers, which makes them feel more appreciated. Training is no longer the exclusive responsibility of the official trainer; rather, the responsibility is now shared among many people – the colleagues and the training officers.

Linhardt recognises that the process is not finished just because they have received certification. The management team knows there is an ongoing incentive to continually improve the quality of training by adapting to the constantly changing conditions in the business and to the wider changes in vocational content.

Indicators

Linhardt's measures meet the following indicators:

- **Indicator 1: Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers**
Linhardt has developed and implemented its own system of quality assurance which is tailored to their particular needs.
- **Indicator 2: Investment in training of teachers and trainers**
Trainers are encouraged to attend both internal and external continuing education courses which meet the company's quality initiative.
- **Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes.**
Linhardt compiles statistics of the grade point average of each trainee, the share of trainees hired after completing their initial training, and the share of learners who are employed in the company or elsewhere.
- **Indicator 6: Utilisation of acquired skills in the workplace**
After three months and one year, each department manager of the former trainees is interviewed to assess the trainees' knowledge and their job-related competences.

Hungary – Case study 1 (Using feedback from partners to improve VET)

Summary

The Ferenc Hansági Vocational and Secondary School for Catering and Tourism in Szeged, Hungary has been monitoring the requirements of partners and measuring the effectiveness of its training in meeting their needs since 2000. As part of the school's annual plan, views are collected from the different school partners such as the employees, students and their parents, the school's supporting foundation and organisations that provide apprenticeship places.

The school uses a standardised approach in relation to selecting respondents, setting targets, measuring the outcomes, and ensuring the results are valid, reliable and accurate. The process is overseen by the school's Quality Management Team whose analysis identifies trends, compares the results to the school's targets and presents the results from each group of respondents e.g. students and their parents, teaching staff, employers etc. Based on the results, the Quality Management Team identifies strengths and suggests areas for improvement. All the school's partners are informed about the outcomes from the surveys.

This case study focuses on initial VET.

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Develop a culture of self-assessment.*
- *Use data and feedback to improve VET.*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace.*
- *Satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences.*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/individual needs.*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers.*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction.*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders.*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions.*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY: Szeged, Hungary

Hungary – Case study 1 (Using feedback from partners to improve VET)

The approach to quality assurance

The Ferenc Hansági School for Catering and Tourism in Szeged, Hungary has been monitoring the requirements of internal and external stakeholders – i.e. partners – , and measuring the effectiveness of its training in meeting their needs since 2000. As part of the school’s annual plan, views are collected from employees, students and their parents, the school’s supporting foundation and organisations that provide apprenticeship places.

The process is set out in the school’s Quality Management Programme which ensures the approach in relation to selecting respondents, setting targets, measuring the outcomes, and ensuring the results are valid, reliable and accurate. Since 2008 the views of students, staff, the school’s supporting foundation and a sample of employers have been collected through online questionnaires specifically targeted to each partner group. These include – amongst others – questions on the quality of leadership, the quality of teaching, the results achieved by students, the school environment and the effectiveness of the relationship with partners.

The process is overseen by the school’s Quality Management Team whose analysis identifies trends, compares the results to the school’s targets and presents the results from each group of respondents e.g. students and their parents, teaching staff, employers etc. Based on the results, the Quality Management Team identifies strengths and suggests areas for improvement. All the school’s partners are informed about the outcomes from the surveys.

Ferenc Hansági School’s approach has been strengthened over the past ten years. Having initially identified the need for more information about partners’ perceptions and needs, the [EFQM model](#) for institutional self-evaluation was introduced in 2002. This was supplemented in 2004 and 2005 by the adoption of the Hungarian self-assessment model for vocational schools and the use of the criteria set out for self-evaluation in the Hungarian Quality Award for Public Education.

Most of these self-assessments and self-evaluations were enhanced by external evaluations as this helped to validate the internal findings and strengthened the external feedback. In 2007 the school used the self-assessment model developed by Hungary in response to the development of the CQAF (The Common Quality Assurance Framework) and took part in its first international Peer Review process as part of a EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The school’s current approach is to use self-evaluation in line with the Hungarian Quality Management Framework which is compatible with EQAVET.

The impact on quality

Following the measurement of each partners’ needs and levels of satisfaction, action plans have been prepared and implemented. The focus for each plan has been revealed from:

- the partners’ needs and their satisfaction with the current training programmes,
- recommendations from the school’s management team,
- the views and agreement of the teaching staff (e.g. improvements in contact arrangements with parents, improvements in internal communication).

Once the changes were implemented, the results were monitored and measured.

The results from the measurement of partners' needs and levels of satisfaction are also used in subsequent self-evaluations to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal processes and for performance appraisal of the teaching staff.

Overcoming challenges

The largest difficulty to overcome is related to the reliability of the responses from partners. Initially it was hard to gauge the level of satisfaction from employers as the response rates to the questionnaire did not guarantee a representative sample. This was not the case with other groups such as parents where more communication channels could be used to increase the response rate. For employers additional communication methods, including the use of personal contacts, had to be adopted.

Lessons learnt

The frequent and regular use of action plans, based on employers' and other partners' satisfaction with provision, has improved the effectiveness of the school. In addition, using partner satisfaction measurements to inform self-evaluation and self-assessment has ensured the school and its managers stays focused on the needs of employers. However, to make this quality system work, there needs to be an effective approach to internal communications which is based on the commitment and willingness of all the staff.

Hungary - case study 2 (Career tracking system)

Summary

The Békéscsaba Central Vocational School and Student Dormitory (BÉKSZI) was established in August 2007 as a result of the merger of three well-established vocational schools. It provides vocational training in 44 occupational areas in the following ten vocational sectors: engineering, architecture, electronics, business administration, information technology, transport, timber industry, catering and tourism. It aims to meet the requirements of the economy by offering training which responds flexibly to the changing demands of the labour market.

One aspect of the school's approach to quality assurance is the systematic monitoring of the employment of the school's graduates after they complete their training. BÉKSZI's career tracking system has operated successfully for several years and data is collected annually using a system developed by the school. The system investigates the extent to which the school's training meets the demands of the labour market and how students make use of the knowledge and skills acquired during training.

As the systematic tracking of school leavers is a priority in VET and employment policy in Hungary, this approach is regarded as a model for other VET providers.

For more information on this case study, go to next page or contact:

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Hungary
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CONTACTS: Mr Marton József - principal (kozponti@mail.bekszi.hu)
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The case study covers all types of IVET, CVET and adult training.

The case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance;
- develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances;
- support staff training in relation to quality assurance;
- use data and feedback to improve VET.

The case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers;
- procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation;

- results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place.

The case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- indicator 4 - completion rate in VET programmes;
- indicator 5 (a and b) - placement rate in VET programmes;
- indicator 6a - utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace: (a) information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training, according to type of training and individual criteria.

Hungary - case study 2 (Career tracking system)

BÉKSZI's career tracking system has operated successfully for several years and data is collected annually using a system developed by the school. The system investigates the extent to which the school's training meets the demands of the labour market and how students make use of the knowledge and skills acquired during training.

The career tracking system is operated by BÉKSZI's quality management team in partnership with the school's form teachers. At the end of each academic or school year the form teachers with responsibility for students who are leaving complete a standardised spread sheet. This includes collecting students' contact details including their telephone numbers and email addresses. At the beginning of the next school year they use this information to collect more detail on each student's occupation and their qualifications. They also identify how each student's career is developing and whether they are continuing with their studies. For those who continue to study, information is collected on the level of the course, the name of the qualification and institution etc. If the student isn't continuing their studies, the information collected shows whether they are in employment or not and whether their employment is related to their qualifications. If a student cannot be contacted, this information is also recorded.

The data collected by the form teachers is summarised at departmental level and at an institutional level. It is analysed in order for evaluations and comparisons to be made between departments, types of training, vocational sectors and qualifications. The outcomes of this analysis are presented and discussed with all the staff at one of the regular staff meetings.

Difficulties

The role of the n form teacher is crucial. Their willingness to cooperate has a large impact on BÉKSZI's ability to track former students. In some situations, a positive attitude is not enough. When students take employment abroad, form teachers find it more difficult to contact them and data on employment is often lost. The largest problems arise when the data is inconsistent and conclusions cannot be made from one year to the next because the data is missing or previous surveys used different parameters.

Lessons learnt

Although the method used for to track students' careers is simple, it has proved to be very efficient. In 2012 BÉKSZI had information on 82 per cent of the students who completed training in 2011. BÉKSZI has found it very useful to look at the data on employment in different vocational sectors, and across the different vocational qualifications. It is particularly useful for BÉKSZI when planning the number of students to enrol in the next year. It also helps to evaluate the students' success in the end of course exams. If there are high levels of failure in a profession, the causes will be analysed and changes can be made.

BÉKSZI has found that three months after completing training is an appropriate time for form teachers to contact former students. Waiting longer makes it much more difficult to contact students and collect the relevant data.

Ireland – Case study 1 (Work-based apprenticeship training)

Summary

Fáilte Ireland provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourist destination. Its activities include business support, enterprise development, training and education, research, marketing and regional development. One of its programmes is the Traineeship in Professional Cookery for those seeking to work with food in the tourism industry. The two year traineeship supports “on the job” learning with one day/week in a college. Participants must be in current employment in an approved hotel, bar or restaurant.

Central to the quality assurance of the programme is Fáilte Ireland’s selection of employers. Those selected need to:

- be approved and registered
- appoint an establishment mentor to guide and support the trainee
- release the trainee to attend college on a day release basis
- abide by a code of practice

This case study focuses on apprentices, and company-based and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace*
- *Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market*
- *Schemes used to promote better access to VET.*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Fáilte Ireland

www.failteireland.ie

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CITY: Dublin, Ireland

Ireland – Case study 1 (Work-based apprenticeship training)

Background

This case study focuses on quality assurance while developing a traineeship programme for existing practitioners or career changers seeking to qualify as a chef in the tourism and hospitality industry in Ireland or abroad. The programme (traineeship) offers training opportunities for those with minimal entry requirements. This is important in the hospitality sector where a large proportion of the workforce can be transient or lack qualifications in this discipline. The traineeship helps learners to gain a high level professional qualification while employed. It also adds significant value in terms of skills and productivity to the participating establishment's business. The traineeship also supports Fáilte Ireland's remit to provide a skilled workforce and for the tourism and hospitality sector.

This programme comprises work based learning (four days a week) and college based learning (one day a week) with full-time work based placements at the start and end of each year. The traineeship is open to existing chefs and career changers and is widely supported by employers in the tourism and hospitality industry including hotels, restaurants, cafes, industrial caterers etc. It allows participants to combine training for a high level internationally-recognised qualification whilst working almost full time. The traineeship is only offered by approved employers who are capable and willing to support the trainee and meet the programme's objectives.

How is quality assured?

An important element of the traineeship is the industry mentor who guides the trainee through the programme and ensures learning objectives and deadlines are met.

Participating employers, in order to be approved by Fáilte Ireland, have to meet a set of criteria including attendance at a mentor training workshop. Trainees complete reflective journals and meet the agreed training plan. Achievement has to be confirmed by the industry mentor and progress is assessed by the college lecturer. This ensures each trainee meets the programme's objectives.

What challenges were overcome?

The main challenge was finding sufficient number of employers who could be approved for the traineeship. Employers receive some financial incentive to participate. Fáilte Ireland's liaises closely with each employer throughout the programme to ensure the learners complete their training journals.

What were the lessons learnt?

Working with the employers, Fáilte Ireland's has to ensure the training content is practical and relevant. For employers, in return for supporting a student and providing a structured work environment, the programme must benefit their business. The traineeship relies on the collaboration and close working of the three partners i.e. the educator, the industry and the trainee.

Ireland – Case study 2 (self-assessment)

Summary

Killester College of Further Education, a College of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee provides initial VET courses to students who have left compulsory education, adults returning to education, students with disabilities and/or special education needs and international students. Its approach to inclusion has meant it is the first educational institution in Ireland to have achieved the “Excellence through Accessibility” award from the National Disability Authority.

At the heart of all its activities is a person-centred approach to learning which recognises the importance of finding bespoke solutions for individual learners. Alongside an initial assessment of needs, a range of teaching and assessment methods help to ensure all learners achieve the best they can. This inclusive approach has led to significant improvements in participation and completion as well as academic success in terms of achievement.

This case study focuses on IVET and adult basic education

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers
- participation rate in VET programmes
- completion rate in VET programmes
- prevalence of vulnerable groups
- schemes used to promote better access to VET

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Killester College of Further Education

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Principal

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CITY:

Dublin, IRELAND

Ireland – Case study 2 (self-assessment)

Background

Killester College of Further Education accepts all learners and is committed to equality of access, participation and outcomes based on the principles of person-centred planning. Over the last ten years the college has developed its inclusive learning approach by providing learning support (such as assistive technology, personal assistance and additional tuition) to any learner who needs it. This has led to a significant internal re-organisation in order to eliminate any internal barriers to learning (e.g. within the administrative or organisational arrangements) for the students. This inclusive learning approach is embedded in the quality assurance system.

Describe the good practice

Equality of access, participation and learning outcomes required a holistic view to the college's operations. It is not possible to be a little inclusive, or to be inclusive in only some things. Students are encouraged to declare any learning support requirement when they apply to the college. This ensures they are supported from their first day on any programme. Where appropriate a needs assessment is conducted to identify the support that may be required. Inclusive teaching methodologies, the use of ICT and accessible assessment methods are central to inclusive participation and offer all students a fair chance to succeed.

Describe how the identified example of good practice is improving QA

Killester College provides all its courses with a view to ensuring inclusion is central. A key part of this strategy has been the use of ICT and a mixture of learning methodologies. This benefits all students and there have been marked improvements in attendance and retention rates as well as in student achievement in assessments e.g. in 2000/01 60-65 per cent of students completed their courses, in 2009/10 80-85 per cent completed. The number of students with higher grades has increased from 55 per cent to 65 per cent and failures reduced from 20 per cent to 12 per cent over the same period.

A key part of implementing the policy on inclusive learning was the development of strategic partnerships. The first and probably the most important was the partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College in 2003. Also at this time Killester College became one of eight colleges in the City of Dublin to receive the services of a qualified Disability Support Officer as part of the Disability Support Service provided in partnership with a disability services provider, National Learning Network. Other partnerships have included an EU funded project under the EQUAL community initiative, and work with two organisations in North-East Dublin that provide services to people with disabilities – one for people with physical disabilities and one for people with intellectual disabilities.

The college continually reviews the implementation of its policy on inclusive learning. Areas of strength are identified and enhanced and areas of weakness addressed.

What challenges were overcome?

The two main challenges have included making structural changes to a building which was designed fifty years ago and overcoming the external administrative barriers.

What were the lessons learnt

Inclusive education is as much an attitude of mind as it is a methodology. In addition, it is important to be clear about what the college can do and, equally importantly, what it does not do.

How has the practice been recognised within the national system



Killester College of Further Education is the first educational institution in Ireland to have achieved the “Excellence through Accessibility” award from the National Disability Authority.

Italy – Case study 1 (Changing an organisation’s culture)

Summary

The Vocational Institute of Industry and Handicrafts in Rome trains qualified technicians for the mechanical and electrical/electronic sectors. The Institute operates in line with ISO 9000 and uses the EQAVET approach to measure performance. Its approach to quality assurance has been widely recognised, through the granting of awards, accreditation and recognition by many national bodies. It has strengthened its approach to quality assurance through Peer Review, close monitoring of learners’ performance, extensive use of data, a series of welcoming activities for new learners and the involvement of all staff.

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider’s circumstances*
- *Develop a culture of self assessment*
- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*
- *Use data and feedback to improve VET*
- *Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Explicit goals/objectives and targets are set and monitored*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders*
- *Learners’ feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers’ feedback this is used to inform further actions*
- *Information on the outcomes of the review is widely and publicly available*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*

This case study shows the following indicator is being met:

- *Share of employed learners at designated point in time after completion of training*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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CITY:

Rome, ITALY

Italy – Case study 1 (Changing an organisation’s culture)

Background

The Vocational Institute of Industry and Handicrafts in Rome trains qualified technicians in the mechanical and electrical/electronic sectors. Its four main goals are to:

- provide professional qualifications which meet the needs of the labour market;
- promote educational success and social inclusion (including unemployed adults, migrants and those with disabilities);
- provide routes from vocational training to Higher Education;
- provide lifelong learning and re-training opportunities for those returning to education.

The practice that is being quality assured

The Institute’s quality management system covers all aspects of provision and operates in line with ISO 9001. Its quality strategy ensures:

- provision meets and exceeds student expectations;
- consistency across all the curriculum delivery and content areas;
- the Institute is sustainable and can meet its short and long term objectives;
- high levels of involvement and motivation from stakeholders.

There is frequent monitoring and reviewing of both practice and policy control and success is measured in line with the indicators in the EQAVET Recommendation

The approach to quality assurance

The Institute gained its first accreditation from ISO in 2004. This approach has now been applied to a wide range of Institute activities including training provision, a computerised student evaluation process, on-line registration, staff management and external communications. As a result of the Peer-Review experience the Institute has started to evaluate its processes based on Isfol – Reference Point for Quality in VET approach [<http://www.rpnqualita.isfol.it>] and the European benchmarks (EQAVET).

Using the building blocks

All six of the Building blocks proposed by EQAVET are used. Roles have been assigned to the management team and staff members. In line with the EQAVET Recommendation, the head teacher has created an environment where dialogue and involvement enable the Institute to respond to local circumstances and meet the demands for education and training in the region.

To support new learners, the Institute has introduced a series of “welcome” activities (e.g. the development and use of entry tests in order to evaluate individuals learning and relational skills, additional support for those who need to improve their study skills, careers advice and advice on studying autonomously.), Within these activities, the Institute has developed a culture of continuous

improvement, identifying the need to create a cycle of quality assurance and improvement, based on planning, implementation, evaluation / assessment and review.

A recent Peer Review provided an opportunity to inform the whole institution of the self-assessment methodology and create a shared culture of quality.

Data and feedback are central to improving quality. Through the use of ongoing and final audits and the implementation of improvement plans, one of the most significant changes has been the transformation of organisation's culture. This has helped to keep the drop-out rate low; ensured student attendance is high and supported student employment (currently 84 per cent are employed after six months and 81 per cent after one year).

How the practice is improving quality assurance

The Institute has adopted a school-wide approach to quality assurance with clearly stated rules (e.g. regulation, objectives and standards to follow), quality assurance processes and reviews of the outcomes achieved. This has led to a greater appreciation from students, their families and stakeholders. All students have benefitted from the school-wide approach.

What challenges were overcome?

Many schools can be resistant to change. Developing a culture that addresses and assesses professionalism can lead to opposition. To date the systematic use of procedures, the use of new technologies, the implementation and management of a quality assurance approach have led to positive results. Central to implementation has been the need for effective internal and external communication. This needed to make clear the proposed changes and the new roles and functions that were being introduced. Staff needed many opportunities to discuss the changes and share their thoughts on best practice and how to ensure continuous progress.

A second challenge related to introducing a culture of self-assessment which could identify strong and weak points in the structure. This was helped by the Peer Review project and the systematic collection of data. This has allowed for a more objective analysis of the Institute's activities to be undertaken.

Italy – Case study 2 (standardising internal processes)

Summary

CIOFS-FP was established in 1986 as a non-profit association which operates in 14 regions in Italy through 70 local centres. It provides vocational training in partnership with other non-profit and vocational training organisations, as well as social partners, public bodies, enterprises and their relevant organisations. Its main focus is to support young people, trainers and local networks, which sum up services and support granted by public and private bodies involved at a local level. To ensure the quality of its services the Association has obtained ISO 9001-Certification.

The Association's quality management system has led to a standardised approach to internal procedures. Initially only the core business processes linked to the design and delivery of VET and guidance services were reviewed. Later, as the system developed, other "soft" processes were reviewed - such as student selection, reporting arrangements, accounting systems, learning outcomes. When necessary each process, and the associated procedures, has been revised on the basis of national and regional regulatory requirements. This process-led quality management system has allowed the Association's to identify the needs of each VET centre and implement appropriate strategies which meet the local circumstances

This case study focuses on initial and continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *develop a culture of self assessment*
- *support staff training in relation to quality assurance*
- *use data and feedback to improve VET*
- *ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/ individual needs*
- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Investment in training of teachers and trainers*
- *Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: CIOFS-FP Association

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Practice that is being quality assured

The Association's quality management system has led to a standardised approach to internal procedures, business processes, defining tasks and responsibilities and analysing performance by management and the human resources department. The Association has used self-evaluation procedures, developed by the National Reference Point for Quality Assurance in VET ([ISFOL](#)) to analyse and compare internal processes against a set of national standards and to introduce improvements.

Approach to quality assurance

The Association's quality management system is based on reviewing individual processes. Initially only the core business processes linked to the design and delivery of VET and guidance services were reviewed. Later, as the system developed, other "soft" processes were reviewed - such as student selection, reporting arrangements, accounting systems, learning outcomes. When necessary each process, and the associated procedures, has been revised on the basis of national and regional regulatory requirements. This process-led quality management system has allowed the Association's to identify the needs of each VET centre and implement appropriate strategies which meet the local circumstances.

In 2007 and in 2010 the Association introduced Peer Review Methodologies on the basis of the guidance from ISFOL (*Peer Review Handbook for Education and Training and the initial self-assessment guide for schools and training institutions*). This identified the ever-increasing need to benchmark performance against other VET providers and the importance of listening to the view of a wide range of stakeholders.

Each regional board in the Association CIOFS-FP sets annual targets in key areas identified by senior management. These targets are monitored and performance is analysed annually by the senior management team. The results are presented to each Board of Directors in order for system-wide change to be identified and implemented.

Data and feedback on performance is collected from:

- ⇒ VET students who systematically complete satisfaction questionnaires, internship diaries, self-assessment, lesson observations, and final reports on their own performance. Students also participate in discussions on their courses by appointing their own representatives;

- ⇒ companies where students complete work placements and training. Their views are collected on internship evaluation sheets and during meetings between the VET center and enterprise-based tutors;
- ⇒ partners in the Association's transnational projects using evaluation tools developed for these projects. In addition specific indicators are used to assess the strength of the partnership such as the quality of cooperation, each partners' reliability and continued willingness to exchange information or collaborate;
- ⇒ the VET trainers provide data on their team work, on how well training is coordinated and on the logistical arrangements for each project.

Internal stakeholders - tutors, coordinators, trainers, central support teams - and external ones - such as the companies for whom training courses are designed and implemented - are involved in the design of training phase and in delivering guidance and training. The companies help to plan VET activities in the classroom and during the work experience. They also help to define the training objectives to be achieved. Such objectives are monitored during the regular meetings of training course staff.

How the practice is improving quality assurance

The quality assurance activities have improved the flow of information and data between the national headquarters, the regional boards and VET centers. The use of consistent and reliable data has also provided the senior management team in the Association with the evidence they need analyse and improve the organisation.

What challenges were overcome?

It was important to:

- fully involve the human resources department in achieving the goals of the Association;
- analyse and improve the organisation of the training programs and VET centers so they could better meet the needs of the beneficiaries;
- enable comparisons to be made across the Association in order to facilitate collaborative learning;
- improve internal communications.

What were the lessons learnt

- The increasing importance of involving the human resources team in the Association to ensure to support continuous improvement of the quality management system.
- The use of a Peer Review methodology highlighted the strengths of the Association, and introduced some European indicators that had not yet been considered by Association.

Romania – Case study 1 (Implementing the national model)

Summary

Romania has introduced a national quality management system for continuing VET providers. The system has the following main objectives:

- to implement a quality assurance model linked to ISO 900 and Excellence Models and in line with the EQARF Recommendation;
- to measure the effectiveness and progress of these quality assurance requirements;
- to measure the quality of continuing VET provision in relation to the relevant performance indicators;
- to compare the continuing VET providers' quality against the agreed targets;
- to compare the continuing VET provider' quality against the agreed benchmarks.

CALISIS is a three year project, implemented from January 2009 until December 2011. It focuses on continuing VET providers, the regional authorities and the National Qualification Authority.. FiaTest Ltd, an accredited provider that offers more than 1,000 continuing VET courses has participated in the design and delivery of this pilot quality management system for CVET as part of this national project .

This case study focuses on continuing VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Develop a culture of self assessment*
- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*
- *Use data and feedback to improve VET*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Resources are appropriately internally aligned/ assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*

This case study shows the following indicator is being met:

- *Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers: (a) share of VET providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law/at own initiative*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

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Romania – Case study 1 (Implementing the national model)

Background

Romania has introduced a national quality management system for continuing VET providers. The system has the following main objectives:

- to implement a quality assurance model linked to ISO 900 and Excellence Models;
- to measure the effectiveness and progress of these quality assurance requirements;
- to measure the quality of continuing VET provision in relation to the relevant performance indicators;
- to compare the continuing VET providers' quality against the agreed targets;
- to compare the continuing VET provider' quality against the agreed benchmarks.

CALISIS is a three year project, implemented from January 2009 until December 2011. It focuses on continuing VET providers, the regional authorities and the National Qualification Authority.. FiaTest Ltd, an accredited provider that offers more than 1,000 continuing VET courses has participated in the design and delivery of this pilot quality management system for CVET as part of this national project .

The CVET quality management system is based on seven criteria:

- *the EQAVET Recommendation;*
- *Excellence Model;*
- *ISO 9001 standards;*
- *key and financial results (performance measure 1);*
- *the quality of the training programs as measured by trainees/ trainers/ employers (performance measure 2);*
- *the indicators in the EQAVET Recommendation (performance measure 3);*
- *indicators to measure internal processes (performance measure 4).*

VET provider's approach to quality assurance

FiaTest Ltd approach is based on quantifying the effectiveness of its quality management system by using five measures:

- *how well all the quality assurance requirements have been implemented;*
- *the extent to which behaviour has changed as a result of implementing quality assurance measures;*
- *the reliability, validity and effectiveness of how quality is measured;*
- *the quality of the teaching and learning process;*
- *the quality of the improvement process e.g. the quality of the improvement plans, preventive actions, corrective actions etc.*

Each of the five measures is assigned a value between zero and 100 and strengths and areas for improvements are noted. This process will be repeated for the next three years in order for trends to be identified. Using the seven criteria and the five measures of success, a decision will be made at the national level on whether the ongoing accreditation/authorisation as a VET provider continues or whether continuing VET provider's provision is specifically monitored in subsequent years.

Lessons learnt

FiaTest Ltd has found that:

- performance improves if a VET provider has a strong and mature quality assurance system;
- there is less need to monitor continuing VET providers if they have a strong and mature quality assurance system;

- very effective continuing VET providers provide a good benchmark for other organisations

Because of the effectiveness of its own systems, FiaTest Ltd has become one of the leaders for national CVT programmes in Romania.

Challenges overcome

These can be divided into two sections, internal and external. Within FiaTest Ltd:

- there was resistance from employees to using quantitative assessment and the use of a self assessment questionnaire;
- it was important to collect results and outcomes that related to the indicators of success
- it took time for employers to become fully involved in measuring the quality of training programmes;
- finding a simple way to represent information from the quality indicators in order that improvements could be identified for each programme

Outside the organisation

- creating links between the quality of the training programme and the accreditation and authorisation process
- at times there was a low level of trust and a lack of consensus between the internal self-assessment team and the external assessors
- the quality management organisations that award certificates for quality assurance found a quantitative process difficult to accept
- for many Romanian organisation involved in continuing VET, the four stage EQAVET quality assurance cycle was a new concept.

Romania – Case study 2 (Romania - Entrepreneurial skills)

Summary

One way VET providers can help learners to prepare for employment is through the development of their entrepreneurial skills and competences. Since 2001, one of the most successful approaches used in Romanian business schools has been the development of 'training companies.' The focus is on active learning and VET learners are required to identify a business idea arising from their study of the market. This includes identifying what is needed by the market and the opportunities this offers, creating a project plan for the company and simulating its implementation. Key to the success of this approach is the ability to assure the quality of the VET learners' experience. Since 2008 an annual national competition has awarded a 'Quality Mark' to those training companies with excellent quality assurance processes. This label confirms that an agreed set of quality standards are in place and used by the training company.

The Higher Commercial School "Nicolae Kretzulescu" in Bucharest is committed to using this instrument and operates the highest quality standards. One of the school's training companies, *Whispers of Elegance Ltd*, achieved the Romanian national Quality Mark (a label of excellence) through its focus on:

- preparing the documentation that is required to set up a business;
- securing start-up funding;
- undertaking commercial activities;
- organising a simulated annual general meeting;
- securing commercial contracts;
- completing these commercial contracts.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Placement rate in VET programmes*
- *Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: The Higher Commercial School "Nicolae Kretzulescu"
HRISTO BOTEV 17, SECTOR 3
0302333

CITY: DIRECTOR: MIRELA DINESCU
Bucharest, ROMANIA

Romania – Case study 2 (Entrepreneurial skills)

Background

Many VET providers establish 'training companies (virtual companies) as part of their approach to helping learners prepare for employment. These training companies seek to simulate businesses and, as far as possible, replicate the everyday decisions and activities that learners will find when they enter the world of work. In Romania, the national system has the following main objectives:

- increase the number of VET graduates entering the labour market;
- reduce the amount of time it takes for learners to adjust to work;
- help VET learners to adapt to the changing needs of the workplace;
- encourage VET learners to take a positive attitude to risk and taking initiative.

These virtual companies are based on the concept of 'learning by doing' and they are managed by a specialist coordinator within each institution. The VET learners develop a business idea following a study of the market, identify the opportunities that exist in the market, elaborate a company project plan, and simulate its implementation. As far as possible, the training companies use the same equipment, specialist software and business approaches used by industry. Learners are expected to acquire the key competences that are needed by industry in order for them to set up their own business or join a company. Their learning is based on observation, mentoring and completing real-world activities which are necessary for a business to succeed and grow in a competitive environment. VET learners succeed when they acquire and demonstrate the core competences that they or their employers need to be successful in the real world.

This approach to training is successful when the simulated business offers high quality opportunities. Since 2008 an annual national competition has awarded a 'Quality Mark' to those training companies with excellent quality assurance processes. This asks competitors to demonstrate that VET learners:

- are developing the skills needed for business;
- have the IT skills and competences required for starting their own business;
- are acquiring the skills and competences associated with professional behaviour i.e. they "know what to do and know how to do it";
- have the communication and language skills needed for business.

The Quality Mark is a label of excellence and confirms that an agreed set of quality standards are being used in implementing the 'training company' approach to learning.

One of the institutions that regularly participates in these national competitions is the Higher Commercial School "Nicolae Kretzulescu" in Bucharest, where many learners are involved in the development of training companies. One of these virtual companies - *Whispers of Elegance Ltd* –has been awarded the Quality Mark label for its work in:

- preparing the documentation that is required to set up a business;
- securing start-up funding;

- undertaking commercial activities;
- organising a simulated annual general meeting;
- securing commercial contracts;
- completing these commercial contracts.

The school has also successfully participated at international training fairs organised for 'training companies' in Prague and Bratislava in 2011 and in Prague in 2012.

The school maintains the quality of its provision by ensuring VET learners receive support to develop their entrepreneurial skills in a real world situation. In particular the school ensure that their training uses:

- the actual working methods and specific activities of a real company;
- simulations to demonstrate working methods and processes, and effective working relationships between the training company and external contractors and customers;
- activities which deepen and improve the business language and communication skills of VET learners;
- approaches which focus on the development of the specific competences and skills required by the industry and by those who wish to start their own business.

Slovenia – Case study 1 (A central committee for quality assurance)

Summary

TSC Nova Gorica is a publicly-funded centre offering upper secondary VET courses, higher VET courses and adult education. The school's focus is to develop the talents of individual students in order that every student completes their qualifications on time and finds a suitable job or continues with their studies.

In line with legislation, the school has established a central commission to oversee quality assurance. Six of the 10 members of the commission represent the school. There are also representatives from employers, parents and students. Each section of the school organises its own quality assurance processes and these include collecting the opinions of:

- students on the learning environment;
- company-based trainers on students' vocational qualifications and competences;
- employers of the readiness of students for work;
- staff on the quality of provision.

In addition, documents are regularly analysed to ensure they are up-to-date and appropriate for learners, peer reviews are undertaken, learning and teaching processes are monitored, in company training is reviewed and the value of individualised learning process learning is promoted. Information from each of the school's units is considered by the quality assurance committee.

This case study focuses on initial VET, continuing VET and adult education

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Develop a culture of self assessment*
- *Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers*
- *Completion rate in VET programmes*
- *Placement rate in VET programmes*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated*
- *There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders*

- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*
- *Information on the outcomes of the review is widely and publicly available*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*
- *Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Nova Gorica Technical Centre

www.tsc.si

Contact: info@tsc.si or the Slovenian National Reference Point at

www.siga-vet.si, contact: darko.mali@cpi.si

CITY:

Nova Gorica, Slovenia

Slovenia – Case study 1 (A central committee for quality assurance)

Background

TSC Nova Gorica is a publicly-funded centre offering upper secondary VET courses, higher VET courses and adult education. Organised into six units, the school is accredited to provide upper secondary VET programs in the field of metalwork, mechanical engineering, electronics, ICT, mechanics, transportation, wood science and technology, health care, agriculture, horticulture, ecology, food science and technology, catering and other technical subjects. It also provides higher vocational programmes in ICT, mechanics and landscape management. The school organises and provides practical facilities for in-company training, upper secondary VET programs for adults, short courses for adults, certification of national vocational qualifications as well as being involved in national and international projects (e.g. ESF, PHARE, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus etc).

The VET provider's approach to quality assurance

TŠC Nova Gorica has established a central commission for quality assurance as prescribed by the legislation in 2006. The Commission has 10 members of whom six represent the various units in the school centre. There are also representatives from employers, parents and students. Each of the six units in the school has its own quality assurance group. These groups collect opinions from:

- students on the learning environment;
- company-based trainers on students' vocational qualifications and competences;
- employers of the readiness of students for work;
- staff on the quality of provision.

In addition, documents are regularly analysed to ensure they are up-to-date and appropriate for learners, peer reviews are undertaken, learning and teaching processes are monitored, in company training is reviewed and the value of individualised learning process learning is promoted. Information from each of the school's units is considered by the quality assurance committee.

Alongside the regular collection of feedback, the school has participated in various quality assurance projects which support employees and develop the school's approach to quality assurance. From each project an evaluation has provided clear feedback which is used as a basis for coordinating future work. These evaluations have made use of questionnaires, interviews with the key stakeholders, peer reviews etc.

The current focus of quality assurance is the support of the school's management system. Having identified that the quality assurance system can be improved through a more effective involvement of the management team, the school is preparing a new strategic approach in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Commission. To support the preparation of this new strategic approach each unit in the school has organised a series of workshops where employees thoroughly review the existing strategy and make suggestions in relation to quality assurance. This helps all the staff to accept the strategy as their own. The final version of the strategy will be sent to the School's Council for acceptance.

As part of the new quality assurance strategy, there will be a new system of regular evaluation and constant improvement. This is being prepared by the school's management team and the Quality Assurance Commission. The goal is to rationalise the school's approach to evaluation, implement more consistent measures of performance as well as regularly assessing performance against the agreed measures of success.

The impact of the changes

TŠC Nova Gorica has developed over the past 12 years through both the merger of independent units and through developing new areas of study. Managing these ongoing changes to the school's structure has taken place at the same time as quality assurance in VET has been supported by legislation and the introduction of many national projects in quality assurance in VET. The school's early quality assurance systems were developed in this changing environment. Now that things are more settled, the school has time to analyse and improve its quality assurance systems.

The approach being used to design a new strategy is one that is based on cooperation between all employees. It recognises that everyone has their part to play in implementing the strategy. As such, the school believes that the process of constant improvement can only be realised if everyone participates in the design and implementation of the process. Key to the new approach is the design of indicators and agreement on how to evaluate the effectiveness of self-evaluation (this forms the basis of a separate peer review project).

What challenges were overcome?

At the start of the process, the management team had to be in the lead and decide there was a need to work systematically on quality assurance. This need for constant improvement and the involvement of all employees had to be recognised. Despite pressures on time and finances, the management team and Quality Assurance Commission had to make this a priority. It was also necessary to overcome the view that quality assurance in VET was an unnecessary bureaucratic task.

What were the lessons learnt?

The school's experience suggests that you need a systematic approach to quality assurance to experience success. While evaluations could help the school to realise what could be improved, it was clear that there was a need to assess achievement against an agreed set of measures. While initially the work of quality assurance should be led by the management team, it needs to be completed in close cooperation with all stakeholders in order to ensure improvements are made.

Slovenia – Case study 2 (A focus on employability)

Summary

The Educational Centre of Biotechnology Ljubljana, Slovenia is a publicly-funded school offering upper secondary VET courses, higher VET courses and adult education. Two of school's most important objectives are employability and the ability of learners to acquire the skills they need for the work place and in continue their education.

The school introduced a quality assurance system in 2001 (in advance of the 2006 legislation which required all VET schools to introduce a systematic approach to quality assurance). The focus has been on the four stages of the quality cycle and measuring performance against two of hard to measure indicators: employability and the utilisation of acquired skills at the work place and in further education. Information on these two indicators is collected once per year by a member of the teaching staff. Using a sample of students, a telephone survey takes place six months after they complete their training. Information is collected on issues such as student destination, type of employment contract (long or short term, part time etc.), how they got the job, whether the job is at the company where they were placed during the practical training. For those who are continuing with their studies, information is collected on which programme has been chosen and the reasons for continuing with education.

This case study focuses on initial VET, continuing VET and adult education.

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *develop a culture of self assessment*
- *use data and feedback to improve VET*
- *ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Placement rate in VET programmes*
- *Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *European, national and regional VET policy goals/objectives are reflected in the local targets set by the VET providers*
- *Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/individual needs*
- *There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development*
- *Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers*
- *The relevant stakeholders participate in the process of analysing local needs*
- *Relevant and inclusive partnerships are explicitly supported to implement the actions planned*
- *Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance*
- *Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers*

- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction*
- *Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders*
- *Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions*
- *Procedures on feedback and review are part of a strategic learning process in the organisation*
- *Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Educational centre of Biotechnology Ljubljana

www.bic-lj.si

Contact: bostjan.ozimek@guest.arnes.si or the Slovenian National Reference

Point at www.siga-vet.si, contact: darko.mali@cpi.si

CITY:

Ljubljana, Slovenia

Slovenia – Case study 2 (A focus on employability)

Background

The Educational Centre of Biotechnology Ljubljana, Slovenia is a publicly-funded school offering upper secondary VET courses, higher VET courses and adult education. Organised into four units, the school is accredited to provide upper secondary VET programs in the field of veterinary science, food technology and nature protection. It offers technical subjects from the high school curriculum. It also provides higher vocational programmes in food technology and nutrition, catering (hospitality) and tourism. The school also has its own business centre – Centre for Adult Education - which provides upper secondary VET programs for adults (formal education) and short courses for adults seeking to improve their literacy in order to return to education (a project co-financed through ESF), vocational and professional training courses for companies and short courses on food technology, cooking/culinary art, veterinary nursing etc.

The approach to quality assurance

The school introduced a quality assurance system in 2001 (in advance of the 2006 legislation which required all VET schools to introduce a systematic approach to quality assurance). The school has regularly cooperated and participated in a number of network initiatives in the field of quality assurance over the past ten years. Its quality assurance focus has been on the four stages of the quality cycle and measuring performance against two of hard to measure indicators: employability and the utilisation of acquired skills at the work place and in further education.

Information on these indicators is collected once per year through a telephone poll with students who have completed selected courses. For those in employment information is collected on issues such as:

- destination of students;
- type of contract (long or short term, part time etc.);
- how they got the job (through an advert, with the help of acquaintanceship etc);
- whether they are employed at the company where they completed their practical training;
- how satisfied they are with the competences they gained during their VET training;
- how they use these skills in their further studies, etc.

For those who are continuing with studies, information is collected on issues such as:

- which educational programme they chose;
- their reason for continuing with education;
- how satisfied they are with the competences they gained during their VET training;
- how they use these skills in their work etc.

This information is then analysed and present to the teachers and trainers. This leads to a series of action plans for the coming year. One of the most important consequences of this quality assurance approach has been much closer and more extensive cooperation with companies and their trainers. This is very important as these companies are training partners for the practical aspects of the VET provision. The evaluations identified that a significant number of the former students gained employment where they completed the practical aspects of their training. With a close working relationship between school trainers and those involved in practical training at the work place, the flow of information about students and courses has improved, and school trainers now visit students more often during their practical placements. The evaluations have also helped employers to identify the competences that they need and to make changes to the school-based part of the training programmes. The final benefit of this approach to quality assurance has been the school's focus on training its own teachers and trainers.

How the approach improves quality assurance

The approach has improved quality assurance in a number of ways:

- the culture of quality (assurance) is influenced directly by the self-evaluation procedures, as the development of a transparent methodology builds teachers' understanding and confidence;
- work on quality assurance is regularly and presented to the whole team of teachers and trainers;
- the development of evaluation methods based on the two quality indicators which are among the more difficult to measure has developed colleagues' experience in the field of quality assurance which can be used in other areas;
- skills and expertise have been developed through gathering information and data, analysing it and formulating and implementing measures for improvement over the last five years.

What challenges were overcome?

Monitoring employability and the use of acquired skills has been demanding, both from a methodological point of view and in terms of practicalities. In the first year, the school used an online survey, but the response rate was very low. The switch to telephone interviews was much more time-consuming but much more informative and effective. It was also important to invest time and resources in making improvements, defining how these improvements would be measured and reporting on the improvements. This could only be done with clear and detailed plans. A specific lesson from this process was the impact on the curriculum - making changes in response to employers' needs and ensuring the quality of these changes required a great deal of attention.

What were the lessons learnt?

Designing the best methodology which ensured the telephone interviews provided valid, accurate and reliable results was time consuming. In addition, responding to curriculum changes required a much closer and longer-term relationships with employers. The school increasingly values the importance of practical training in the work place and the contribution that local employers make to the design and delivery of training. The school also found that its former students were very willing to share their experiences in order to improve things for others.

Spain – Case study 1 (peer support)

Summary

Every high school in the autonomous community of Aragón has its own quality management system. Each team comprises staff from across the organisation. The Tiempos Modernos high school in Zaragoza is one of 27 VET schools that have ISO 9001:2008 certification (a further 11 are in the process of gaining their certificates). Tiempos Modernos, alongside all the other certificated high schools, collects annual statistics on satisfaction. The most relevant information comes from students, their families, teaching and non-teaching staff and companies who employ the school's graduates.

As the regional government is keen for all high schools to gain certification for quality assurance, Tiempos Modernos supports other high schools in the region. As part of this work it helps other schools develop their own quality management instruments and materials including software for measuring students' and employers' satisfaction with the provision.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Support staff training in relation to quality assurance*

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- *Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated.*
- *Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers.*
- *VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place.*
- *Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction.*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Investment in training of teachers and trainers*
- *Satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Tiempos Modernos high school

<http://www.iestiemposmodernos.com/>

CITY: Zaragoza, SPAIN

Spain – Case study 1 (peer support)

Background

All the VET providers in Aragón are aware of the need to ensure quality. Increasingly learners expect more from their training institutions especially in relation to ensuring their training is relevant to the skills and competences required at work. This puts pressure on teachers and trainers to demonstrate their provision is high quality and meets the needs of learners and employers.

Many VET providers have responded to these expectations by introducing quality management arrangements that are organised to meet their own circumstances. Part of the process of developing local systems includes:

- identifying existing arrangements;
- verifying that these arrangements lead to improvements in quality;
- reviewing and refining these arrangements so there is a systematic and consistent approach to quality assurance.

Developing quality assurance

Every high school in the autonomous community of Aragón has its own quality management system. Each team comprises staff from across the organisation. The Tiempos Modernos high school in Zaragoza is one of 27 VET schools that have ISO 9001:2008 certification (a further 11 are in the process of gaining their certificates). Tiempos Modernos, alongside all the other certificated high schools, collects annual statistics on satisfaction. The most relevant information comes from students, their families, teaching and non-teaching staff and companies who employ the school's graduates.

The Tiempos Modernos high school started its VET provision in the 1980s when it specialised in Electronics, Administration and Computing. The merger of many schools in the 1990s led to general education and VET provision being offered in the same institutions. This large increase in the number of teachers and students created a need for more sophisticated approaches to management and the need to introduce systems which would assure quality.

To support VET providers, in 2000 the autonomous community of Aragón launched a programme to implement ISO 2000 in all high schools - Tiempos Modernos received their certificate in 2003. Now it supports other high schools in the region. As part of this work it helps other schools develop their own quality management instruments and materials including software for measuring students' and employers' satisfaction with the provision. The autonomous community continues to support quality assurance through an annual seminar for the key staff in each of the certificated high schools and those that are in the process of being certified.

Key to Tiempos Modernos' work to support other VET providers is the need to recognise that a quality management system is central to any high school's management system and processes. It is something that can benefit all areas of the VET provider's management arrangements. Tiempos Modernos' system covers four system areas: teaching and learning; school organisation; human resource and the maintenance of the college's environment.

THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Processes that are quality assured at Tiempos Modernos		Activities
KEY PROCESSES	TEACHING AND LEARNING	Follow up and update the education plan
		Evaluate the education plan
		Follow up the evaluation of the education plan
		Develop a classroom teaching programme
		Follow up the classroom teaching programme to evaluate implementation
		Welcome day for learners
		Monitor students' absenteeism
		Maintain an absence register
		Ensure diversity is addressed
		Follow up of the diversity plan
		Work alongside the management team
		Provide staff with disciplinary reports on students
		Online register
		Offer learners out of school activities.
		Evaluate students' learning
		Ensure training is evaluated
		Address learners' complaints relating to assessment
Evaluate work-based learning		
Clear arrangements for the practical aspects of work based training		
Produce guidance on each programme		
KEY PROCESSES	COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS	Undertake regular communication with families, students and companies.
		Provide a school reception facility with tasks for students.
		Give parents access to teaching plans and management systems through the web
STRATEGIC PROCESSES	SCHOOL ORGANISATION	Outline, follow up and evaluate the teaching programmes
		Produce clear documents setting out the teaching programmes
		Ensure there are clear systems for admitting and enrolling learners
		Making clear what is being offered to learners
		Each department allows learners to select courses from a range of areas
		The timetable is organised so that learners can complete a range of courses
		Clear statement about the duties of teaching and non-teaching staff
		Consideration and care for ill or injured students.
		The use of a documentation control system

		A system to manage the release of external documents.
		Published meeting schedule
		There is a clear plan to introduce new VET programmes
	HUMAN RESOURCES	Control over staff numbers
		There are clear rules for the nomination of the head teacher, head administrator, heads of department etc
		Published rules relates to staff illness, time-off from work etc
		Making teachers feel welcome at work
		Staff training.
		All staff have access to documentation of the quality management system.
	MEASURING, ANALYSIS AND IMPROVEMENT	Clear approach to measuring, analysing and improving the quality assurance processes
		Assessment of teaching
		Regular review of all the school's systems
		Measurement of academic outcomes
Measuring customer's satisfaction		
SUPPORT PROCESSES	MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT	Maintain the school's infrastructure and services
		Maintain teaching environments that meet the needs of specific subjects e.g. music, technology etc
		Environmental and workplace risks are managed
	ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT	Budget management.
		Annual budget allocations to departments.
		Budget allocations to professional areas.
		Purchase controls are in place
		Regular stocktaking is undertaken
		Providers' responses and comments are evaluated

The Netherlands – Case study 1 (peer support)

Summary

VET providers in the Netherlands are responsible for the quality of their education and training. Working within a framework set by government, each institution is autonomous and monitored by inspectors. The type and scale of the inspections is determined through a risk-based assessment of quality. Those institutions that show they are capable of monitoring and improving their own quality receive a light-touch inspection. 24 VET providers collaborate in a Quality Network and support each other to improve the quality of provision. Their activities include monitoring the quality of provision, peer review, staff training and preparing reports following an external audit for managers to review.

This case study focuses on all aspects of VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance*
- *develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *support staff training in relation to quality assurance*

This case study demonstrates the following indicators:

- 1a - share of VET providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law or at own initiative
- 2a - share of teachers and trainers participating in further training

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated
- There is an early involvement of staff in planning, including with regard to quality development
- Providers plan cooperative initiatives with other VET providers
- VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place
- The strategic plan for staff competence development specifies the need for training for teachers and trainers
- Staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders to support capacity building and quality improvement, and to enhance performance
- Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers
- Evaluation and review includes adequate and effective mechanisms to involve internal and external stakeholders
- Results/outcomes of the evaluation process are discussed with relevant stakeholders and appropriate action plans are put in place

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET ORGANISATION: The Quality Network

www.kwaliteitsnetwerk-mbo.nl

The Netherlands – Case study 1 (peer support)

The following is the full text to go on the EQAVET web site. It is accessed when readers select the hotlink

Background

In the Netherlands, within an overarching education framework set by the government, VET providers (schools) have a high level of autonomy. Each is responsible for the quality of training and education. The education inspectorate monitors schools' capacity to assure and improve quality. The inspectorate uses a risk-based monitoring system which results in decreased monitoring when a school has proven it is capable of monitoring and improving its own quality. However the inspectorate increases its monitoring when problems are detected.

Within this framework 24 schools cooperate in a Quality Network (www.kwaliteitsnetwerk-mbo.nl). The participants support each other in order to improve the quality of their education and training. This support includes sharing information and experiences, training staff to review the quality of VET providers and by performing reviews in which the system of quality assurance used by an organisation to monitor and improve VET is examined. The Quality Network aims to review all its member organisations every three years.

Quality assurance process

The external review on a VET provider's quality assurance system is performed by an audit team of four people, led by an independent auditor. The first day of the audit involves discussions with managers, and education and support staff. The main aim is to get an impression on how the organisation's quality assurance system works. The second day is used to investigate two educational teams in order to understand how the quality assurance system operates at a team level. A report is then compiled and sent to the VET provider's Board. The VET provider is invited to publish the report's conclusions and the quality profile of the organisation.

Quality assurance activities

The Quality Network organises training courses for staff from the VET providers so they can become an auditor. Once an individual has completed the course, and produced a portfolio of evidence from a number of reviews, the auditor can be certified and included in a register of reviewers.

As it is common for VET providers to meet standards set by the government, the Quality Network has produced its own set of quality standards that each organisation should be able to meet. To support the Quality Network's approach to external review, consideration is given to the quality assurance system that is used by the VET provider. This contrasts with the approach used by the inspectorate which focuses on the quality of individual courses. Underlying the Quality Network's approach is the belief that it is the system that will help to raise the quality of training and individual courses to the required level.

The VET provider's ability to produce a positive report from the Quality Network's review gives the government confidence that the organisation can improve or at least maintain its educational quality. The decision to join the Quality Network and participate in its system of peer review shows that a VET school is serious about its responsibility for the quality of its core business i.e. the education and training of young people.

The Netherlands – Case study 2 (students' rights)

Summary

VET learners are important stakeholders in the Dutch system. Since 2011 they have had the right to be involved in the work of the each VET provider's Board of Directors. This includes the right to be involved in decision making, discussing new initiatives, receiving information and providing advice to the senior management team.

The Vocational Youth Organisation (JOB) provides student groups with materials and advice in order that they can operate effectively as part of any Board of Directors. JOB also advises students on how they can help to improve the quality of VET, how to set up and run a Student Board and the rules and regulations regarding examinations and assessment should be implemented.

This case study focuses on all aspects of VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study demonstrates the following indicator:

- 1a - share of VET providers applying internal quality assurance systems defined by law or at own initiative

This case study shows the following indicative descriptors are being met:

- Ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders takes place to identify specific local/ individual needs
- Responsibilities in quality management and development have been explicitly allocated
- VET providers have an explicit and transparent quality assurance system in place
- Resources are appropriately internally aligned/ assigned with a view to achieving the targets set in the implementation plans
- Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes of education including the assessment of learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction
- Learners' feedback is gathered on their individual learning experience and on the learning and teaching environment. Together with teachers' feedback this is used to inform further actions

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET ORGANISATION: Vocational Youth Organisation
www.job-site.nl or www.ijbeslistmee.nl

The Netherlands – Case study 2 (students' rights)

The following is the full text to go on the EQAVET web site. It is accessed when readers select the hotlink

Background

In the Netherlands the interests of VET students are looked after by the Vocational Youth Organisation (JOB). It is run by a student board whose members are elected each year.

Since 2011 VET students have had a legal right to participate in their education and advise the Board of Directors in each VET school. Each VET provider has to establish a student board which has four rights:

- to agree/disagree with proposals (the right of consent)
- to comment on, and make proposals (the right to initiate)
- to receive relevant information (the right to information)
- to offer suggestions (the right to provide advice)

Student boards

In one VET school, a student board of seven members has been in operation since 2006. The board provides advice on issues such as the student charter and the rules regarding examinations and education. In addition they respond to requests for advice from the VET provider's Board of Directors they have the right to put items on the agenda. In addition to working with the Board of Directors they liaise with regional and local businesses and the government, and cooperate with JOB. In return for their contribution and involvement with the student board, members receive credit towards their study, recognition of the competences that they have demonstrated or financial payment.

To support students to improve the quality of VET, JOB has developed a VET improvement kit. This helps students to be effective in identifying issues, making proposals for change and convincing management of the need to respond to student issues. JOB has also developed a toolkit for VET students who want to establish a student board.

Challenges and lessons learnt

Despite the legal right to have a student board, not all students are interested in participating it can be difficult to find motivated students. Despite the difficulties it is better to have five motivated students who are active than ten who are not interested.

Students need time to get to know the work and VET providers should not expect them to work autonomously at the start. The VET provider should appoint a teacher or staff member to help the new student board especially during the first years of its existence.

Those who are on the board want to be taken seriously. A recent study from JOB shows that many students felt they were not yet getting the respect they deserve and expect.

UK – Case study 1 (Developing company based training)

Summary

Dunbia is one of Europe's leading suppliers of beef, lamb and pork products for the local, national and international retail and commercial markets. It employs over 3200 staff across its ten sites in the UK and Ireland. The emphasis on high quality training and development is one of the cornerstones of its success.

For many years Dunbia has delivered its own in-house training and it has been recognised as an approved assessment centre. The in-house training uses the national occupational standards produced by the relevant UK Sector Skills Council. Dunbia wanted its staff to receive recognition for the more specialised training it provides. By using Northern Ireland's Recognition of Training in Employment programme (RTEP) Dunbia has been able to have this training accredited and included as part of a qualification on the Qualifications and Credit Framework which has been referenced to the European Qualifications Framework.

This case study focuses on continuing and company-based VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Block:

- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*

This case study shows the following indicator is being met:

- mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Dunbia

For more information contact:

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CITY: Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

UK – Case study 1 (Developing company based training)

Background

Dunbia is one of Europe's leading suppliers of beef, lamb and pork products for the local, national and international retail and commercial markets. It employs over 3200 staff across its ten sites in the UK and Ireland. The emphasis on high quality training and development is one of the cornerstones of its success.

For many years Dunbia has delivered its own in-house training and it has been recognised as an approved assessment centre. The in-house training uses the national occupational standards produced by the relevant UK Sector Skills Council and the qualifications are included on the Qualifications and Credit Framework which has been referenced to the European Qualifications Framework. The company has an award winning on-site butchery academy where employees complete a nationally-recognised qualification in Food Manufacture – Meat and Poultry Processing. However, the qualification did not match the full range of skills demonstrated by Dunbia's employees, some which were unique to the company.

Northern Ireland's Learning and Recognition of Training in Employment programme (RTEP) has been established to support the development of appropriate qualifications and units for just this sort of situation. This gave Dunbia the opportunity to have all aspects of their in-house training accredited on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). To support Dunbia, and assure the quality of the provision, the regulators liaised with the company and the Sector Skills Council for the food and drink manufacturing industry in the UK.

Dunbia described the skills it needed to have recognised using the relevant National Occupational Standards. It then worked closely with the Sector Skills Council to specify the learning outcomes and assessment criteria required to be recognised on the QCF. The Sector Skills Council then coordinated the development of a unit of a qualification which will be accredited as part of a new qualification that fully reflects the range of skills which Dunbia requires.

This process has brought Dunbia's training into a regulated system – the QCF, which ensures the relevant awarding organisation checks the appropriate quality standards are in place for the delivery and assessment of the qualification. It shows how employers' needs can be included in the qualification development process and how a central support programme, such as the RTEP, can be used to promote companies' involvement in qualification design.

UK – Case study 2 (Encouraging disadvantaged groups)

Summary

Coleg Glan Hafren in Cardiff recruits students from one of the most deprived community in Wales. Cardiff also has a high percentage of the workforce with low levels of literacy and numeracy and locally up to 1,800 young people are not in employment, education or training. There are also 500 children in care in Cardiff. The Colleges' Entry to Vocational Studies course has been designed to focus on these two groups of disadvantaged learners.

The Entry to Vocational Studies course lasts 48 weeks. It starts with a one-day taster session followed by ten weeks of basic literacy and numeracy training. Alongside careers advice, the course assigns one day each week to work with employers such as those in the automotive engineering, retail, hairdressing or beauty industry. To support all learners there is extensive involvement from over 60 Learning Support Tutors, employers and the young people's services from the local authority. Additional support is also provided for students with specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia.

The course aims to encourage disadvantaged learners to stay in training at the College, enter work-based training programmes or gain employment.

This case study focuses on initial VET

This case study demonstrates the following Building Blocks:

- *Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances*
- *Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders*

This case study shows the following indicators are being met:

- *Prevalence of vulnerable groups:*
- *Schemes used to promote better access to VET:*

For more information on this case study, go to the next page or contact:

VET PROVIDER: Coleg Glan Hafren

<http://www.cavc.ac.uk/en/>

CITY:

Cardiff, UK

UK – Case study 2 (Encouraging disadvantaged groups)

Background

Coleg Glan Hafren in Cardiff recruits students from one of the most deprived community in Wales. Cardiff also has a high percentage of the workforce with low levels of literacy and numeracy (below the targets set by the Welsh Government) and locally up to 1,800 young people are not in employment, education or training. A high percentage of employees in Cardiff - up to 15% in areas of deprivation - have little or no qualifications. There are also 500 children in care in Cardiff.

The practice being quality assured

The College works closely with a number of external agencies to provide a bespoke programme for these learners. Entry to Vocational Studies starts with a one-day taster session which introduces learners to a variety of subject areas in the college. This is followed by a ten week basic skills literacy and numeracy and careers advice programme and, finally, a full vocational studies programme. A feature of the vocational studies programme is that one day per week is designated a vocational day when learners can choose to work in automotive engineering, retailing, construction, hairdressing or beauty. The course also includes one week placements with large public and private sector employers.

The course lasts 48 weeks and supports learners to achieve one of nine qualifications and progress to other vocational courses in the college, enter work-based learning or employment.

Ensuring quality

Key to providing training that meets learners' needs has been the active involvement of external stakeholders. By using a multi-agency approach learners and staff have gained a greater understanding of a wide range of employers and have built positive relationships with many public sector organisations such as the police, Careers Wales and children's services.

The second key aspect of quality assurance has been the need to recognise the specific learning requirements of the students. With over 33 per cent of the learners from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, the College devised its programme in partnership with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service as this helps pupils who struggled with English in school make the transition to vocational training. There is also extensive support for students with individual learning needs. Over 60 Learning Support Tutors work with students in mainstream classes and in the Enterprise Workshops. There are additional tutors who support students with specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia and dyscalculia.

Students choose to attend the college because of the support it provides for individual learners. Its work to promote social inclusion and increase employability has been recognised by a number of external agencies.