



**CEDEFOP**

European Centre for the Development  
of Vocational Training



# **Quality assurance of certification in IVET, Findings of a Cedefop study**

**EQAVET PLA on QA of qualifications, assessment and  
certification based on learning outcomes,  
14-15 April 2016**

**George Kostakis, Warsaw 14 April 2016**



## Aim of the study

- explore the quality assurance arrangements that support the certification process in European countries in initial VET
- provide an understanding of how the shift to learning outcomes influences them



# Research questions

- what characterises certification processes for IVET in the selected countries;
- to what extent and how are certification processes for IVET supported by systematic quality assurance arrangements;
- how is the shift to learning outcomes influencing quality assurance arrangements that support certification;
- to what extent and how is the experience gained from the certification process taken into account when reviewing the functioning and outcomes of IVET;
- which main strengths and weaknesses can be observed in relation to the quality assurance of certification processes and which are the recommendations – to policy-makers and practitioners – to be made on this basis?



# Research Methodology

**Desk research:** literature review and development of analytical model

**12 country reports** (desk research and interviews):

Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, UK-England

**10 case studies** (in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation):

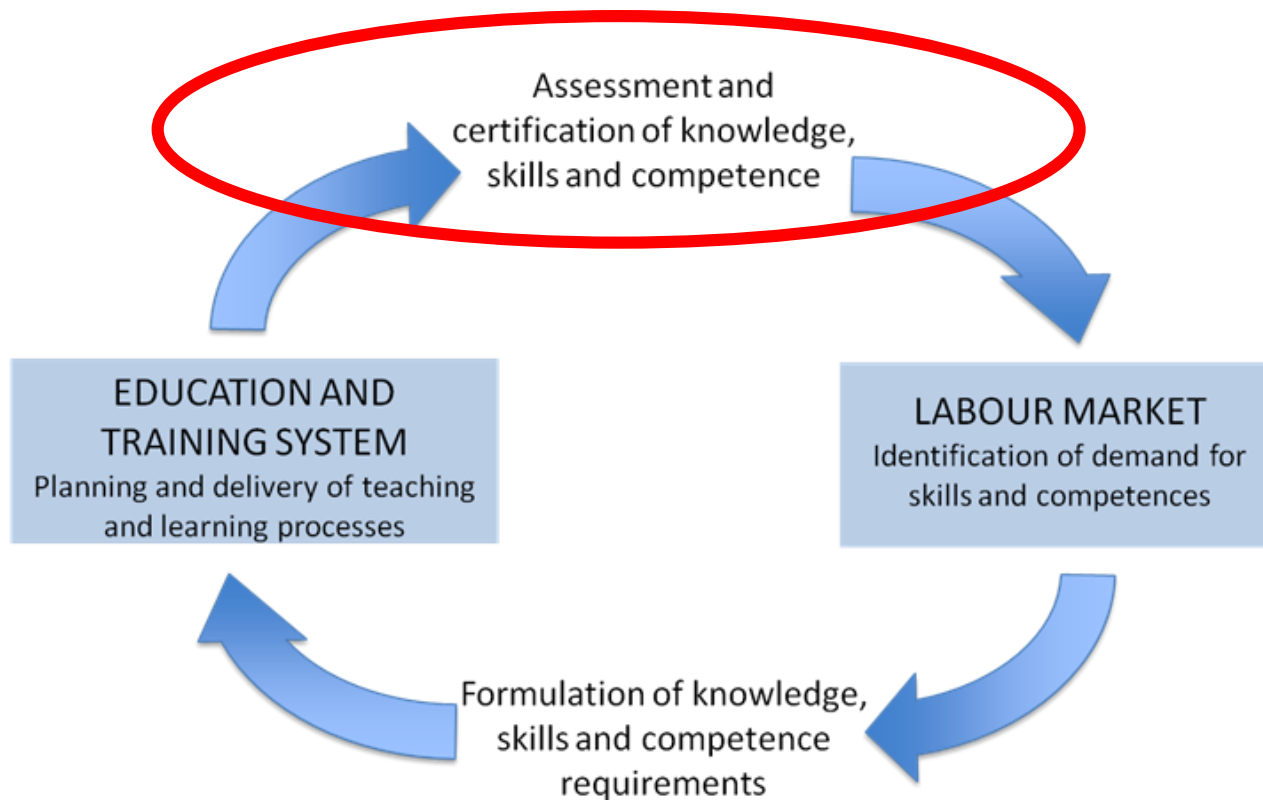
- Countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, UK-England
- Sectors: ICT, health and care, tourism

**Interviews:**

- Policy level (ministries, qualification authorities and quality assurance agencies): 50
- Practitioners (school principles, quality assurance managers, teachers, trainers, social partners involved in assessment ): 135
- Learners: 30

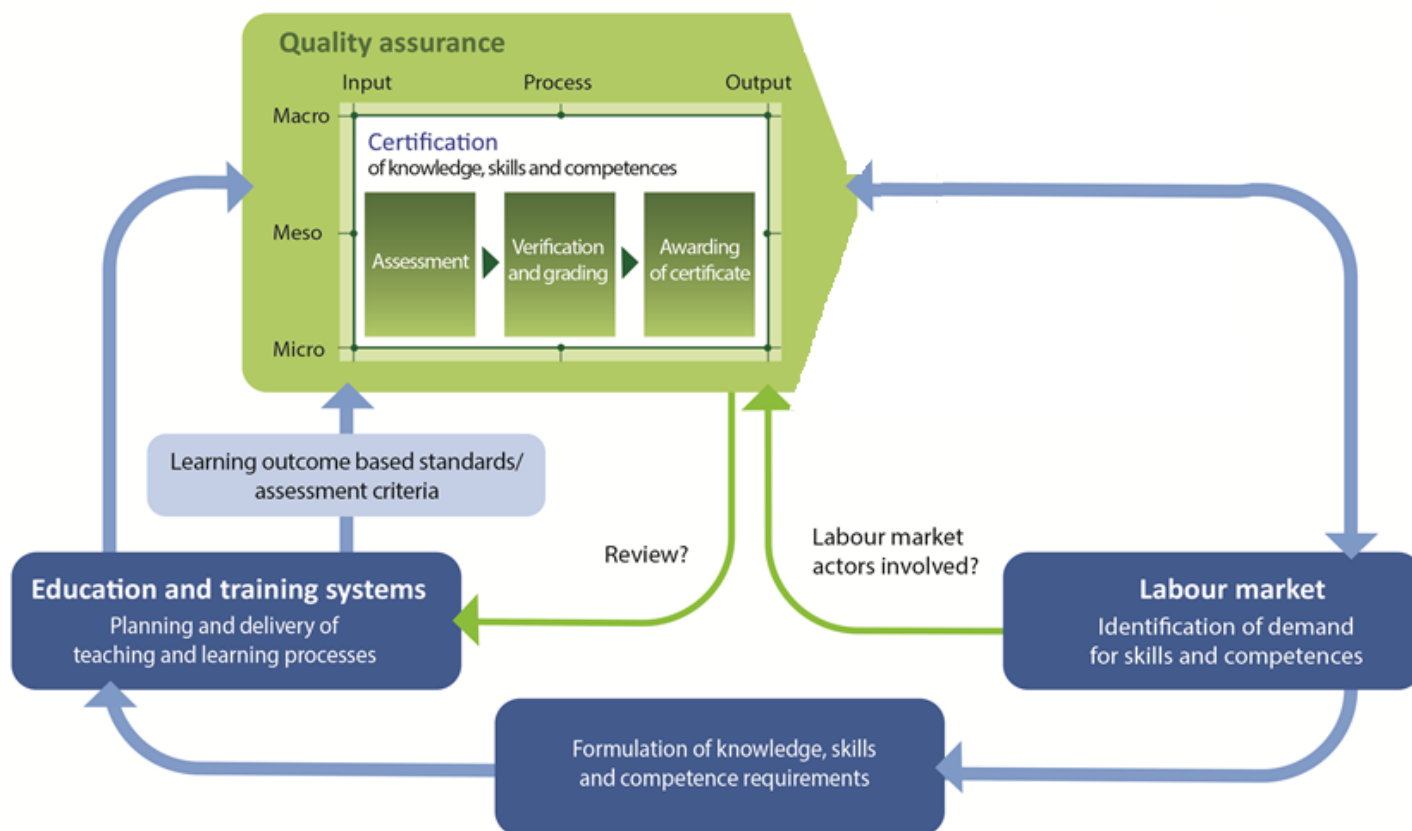


# Position of certification



Based on Cedefop 2013, Renewing VET provision

# The Analytical Model





# Key Quality features (1)

- a) certification within formal quality assurance mechanisms
  - ✓ As part of accreditation/approval of institutions/exam. committees
  - ✓ As part of QA frameworks at system or provider level
- b) provision of clear reference points for assessment
  - ✓ Alignment of qualification requirements and assessment standards
- c) provision of information to those concerned
- d) Regulations on selection, requirements and training of assessors
  - ✓ competences of assessors – composition of examination boards – provision of guidelines to assessors – training of assessors



## Key Quality features (2)

- e) quality of assessment methods and procedures
  - ✓ standardisation of final exams - verification/approval of exam assignments - multiplicity of examination methods - assessment in authentic settings
- f) quality of verification and grading
  - ✓ verification by an independent qualification committee - use of grading scales to ensure consistency - grading by a group of assessors;
- g) Appeal procedures
- g) Documentation, evaluation and monitoring of certification





# Increasing trust in certification



Reliable  
Not Valid



Low Validity  
Low Reliability



Not Reliable  
Not Valid



Both Reliable  
and Valid

by Experiment-Resources.com



# Improve the use of learning outcomes based standards in certification

- Centrally defined assessment standards increase **reliability** and ensure consistent results

But is not enough

Intended  
learning outcomes



Achieved  
learning outcomes

- Establish dialogue and reach a common understanding between all involved
- Guidelines for defining and describing learning outcomes for assessment purposes



## Strengthen the involvement of labour market stakeholders

- ✓ Increases **validity** of assessment
- ✓ Provides useful feedback for teaching and learning process
- ✓ Increases credibility of certification and trust in qualifications
  - But greater effort is needed to make it systematic



# Evaluation and Review of certification

Data on certification results are collected but ...

are they used to provide



- **feedback to individual learners** (e.g. in relation to their competence development process, their strengths and weaknesses);
- **feedback to the VET provider** (e.g. in relation to the design and organisation of the certification process, but also of other processes such as pedagogical and didactical approach etc.); HU, NL, SI, FIN, England
- **feedback at system level** (e.g. in relation to learning-outcomes-based standards, requirements for teachers and assessors, stakeholder involvement).



# Thank you for your attention

For further information:

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