



EQAVET

European Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

Supporting the implementation of the
European Quality Assurance Reference Framework
for Vocational Education and Training

POLICY BRIEF

This note summarises the key issues emerging from the EQAVET working groups, which were established to advance the implementation of the EQAVET work programme 2010-2012. The note has been prepared by the EQAVET Secretariat experts managing the work and content of the working groups. The EQAVET working groups provide the means by which the EQAVET Network will address and work on areas of strategic importance for the successful implementation of the Recommendation on establishing a European quality assurance reference framework for VET. The key task of the working groups is to develop practical guidance and materials which will assist Member States in developing their national approaches to the implementation of the Recommendation and reporting on progress. This note reflects the opinions of participants in the working groups and does not constitute an official European Commission or EQAVET position.

EQAVET Working Group

On developing guidelines to support the implementation of the Reference Framework

Countries taking part: BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, IT, CY, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO, SI, FN, UK, HR; and Social Partners

SUMMARY

This policy note is based on on-going work and on line discussion in Phase II of the EQAVET work programme in the Working Group on Developing guidelines to support the implementation of the Reference Framework. This working group is developing materials to support the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (VET). All the material is available on the website at www.eqavet.eu.

OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKING GROUP

The adoption of the Recommendation created a legislative basis for promoting cooperation on issues of quality assurance in VET. In line with the Recommendation, **Member States** and Social Partners are participating in the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework Network (EQAVET) which supports National Reference Points for quality assurance. This working group is one of two such EQAVET groups. Its focus is to produce materials and identify effective practice which supports Member States to develop their approach to implementation.

EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

Following the creation of [a web-based resource](#) to assist Member States to develop and monitor their national systems, the working group has focused on quality assurance systems for VET providers. The work will offer National Reference Points a set of resources and approaches to quality assurance which can be used with VET providers within their system. This will include examples of effective practice where VET providers have considered the indicators and indicative descriptors set out in the Recommendation. Alongside examples of practice, the web-based resource will suggest approaches to both building and monitoring a quality assurance system through the use of a series of “building blocks.”

ANALYSIS of OUTCOMES New knowledge and/or European added value

The focus is on supporting National Reference Points to work with those who are involved in initial and continuing VET, adult and informal learning, as well as company-based provision. Given the breadth of this activity, the working group is seeking to identify a wide range of practice that can be used in a large number of contexts. To date, there has been agreement on the value of identifying a few “building blocks” which could be used by VET providers to develop systems and approaches if they do not already exist. However the approaches that help those VET providers that are relatively new to quality assurance are unlikely to be valuable/ useful to those with well-developed systems. As the needs of these two groups of VET providers are significantly different, a range of resources and approaches will need to be developed. It will be for National Reference Points to decide which resources are most useful in their context.

The working group is ensuring close alignment with the activity of EQAVET's Working Group on Indicators as they develop an on-line approach to self-monitoring. Ensuring this synergy between the working groups will give the National Reference Points a range of resources to support their work with many different types of VET providers and forms of VET provision.

**POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS
or KEY MESSAGES
for POLICY MAKERS,
at national and
European levels**

The Group has decided to develop further the existing EQAVET web-based resource. The methodologies and structures that were designed for VET systems have been judged as appropriate for VET providers. For those who are already familiar with this resource, this approach will enable easy and early adoption when the new materials become available from April 2012.

It is already apparent to the Group that there is no standard way for VET providers to develop or improve their quality assurance arrangements. The experiences of those offering company-based training, informal learning opportunities and provider-based initial training are so different that a range of solutions will be required. Consequently, a menu of resources comprising examples of practice, guidance on the use of the indicative descriptors and indicators at provider level, and an analysis of Member States' progress to date in establishing national systems, could all be useful.

METHODOLOGY

For the production of the web-based resource, the working group relied on expertise from across Europe including staff from expert bodies such as CEDEFOP and ETF, in addition to the European social partners and VET provider associations. This approach has continued with one main change. The meetings of the working group are now used to consider proposals and ideas developed between meetings by EQAVET and its advisors. This allows more time for discussion and reduces the workload of working group members outside meetings. The Group still makes use of an on-line forum to make early comments on draft proposals.

CHALLENGES

The most significant issue facing the working group is to provide resources that genuinely satisfy the wide range of VET providers e.g. quality assurance arrangements that are effective for company-based training and commercial environments may not be appropriate for a publicly funded initial training programme in a vocational college. Similarly, quality assurance arrangements for informal adult learning may not be suitable for a full-time two year course. In this context, finding examples that are transferable, contain universal principles or approaches, address the indicators and indicative descriptors and cover all stages of the quality assurance cycle continues to be a challenge.