



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 a culture of using indicators to self-monitor the quality assurance processes in VET provision

Countries taking part: AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, IE, HU, LT, LV, MT, NL, SI, PT, RO, UK, TR; and Social Partners

SUMMARY

This policy note is based on the on-going online work and discussion taking place in Phase II of the EQAVET work programme, in the Working Group on Developing a culture of using indicators to self-monitor the quality assurance processes in VET provision. It brings together the contributions made by 16 European countries and Social Partners reflecting on developing national approaches to the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training at VET provider level (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

The diversity of VET provision and providers at national level constitutes both a source of innovation and a challenge for National Reference Points in their task of supporting the implementation of the EQAVET Recommendation.

This working group is developing a tool which is based on a) the previous work developed by the EQAVET network; b) a cross-referenced understanding of the needs and expectations of VET providers across Europe; and c) a shared interpretation of the EQAVET Recommendation, in particular of the set of ten indicators.

Given that the implementation of EQAVET at VET provider level is heavily context dependent, involving linked processes of interpretation, negotiation, bargaining, and ambiguity management, the National Reference Points will act as catalysts to adapt the EU perspective to realities and priorities at national level. It is essential that instruments developed at EU level be adapted in ways that address local problems and understandings, and engage with established practice.

ANALYSIS of OUTCOMES New knowledge and/or European added value

The Working Group on Indicators is expected to deliver by March 2012 a) a set of guidelines on using indicators to support the development of a culture of quality assurance and development and b) a series of existing practices which can be used by National Reference Points to illustrate how training organisations have responded to the EQAVET Recommendation in other countries.

Thus, the efforts being made by the Commission and Member States to implement the EQAVET Recommendation reflect their commitment to the underlying objectives of this process, i.e. to improve employability, achieve a better match between training demand and supply and ease access to VET.



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

The purpose of the *Recommendation on a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET* is to help VET systems and providers to develop quality systems and to improve the quality of their processes, products, and services. However, since it is a reference framework, it has to be adapted to the needs and requirements of national systems and providers in Member States.

Hence, the main aspect to be considered is the implementation process, i.e. how can EQAVET be successfully implemented by VET national authorities and providers? The response of the working group is to translate abstract theory into concrete examples of practice.

However, policy makers at national and local levels need a) to work toward an explicit common understanding of how indicators and data can support VET quality and quality assurance at national, regional and local level, b) to provide professional learning opportunities to help their teaching/training staff make use of data and c) to implement a data system (if not already in existence) that can afford easy and integrated access to data.

Finally, policy makers need to address such barriers to quality management as lack of commitment at management level, resistance to change within organisations, and insufficient use of empowerment and teamwork.

METHODOLOGY

Representatives of Member States, Social Partners and VET provider associations participating in the working group have agreed on the following methodology:

- a) To build on the work already developed by the EQAVET network;
- b) To exchange information and viewpoints during the planned meetings and on-line (between meeting) towards common understandings on the use of indicators and data;
- c) To capitalise on the knowledge and experience of using indicators and outcome-based performance approaches for VET among Member States and organizations such as CEDEFOP, EUROSTAT, SGIB, UOE, OECD, etc.;
- d) To reach general agreement on the results of on-line work and work in meetings with a view to achieving consensus on the final draft of the planned deliverables;
- e) To cooperate with the Working Group on Developing guidelines.

CHALLENGES

The challenge for the working group in producing material for use by the National Reference Points when supporting their VET providers in implementing the EQAVET Recommendation is to put in place an instrument that will be applicable in national contexts and implementation processes. To this end, the group is formulating a Guide, in cooperation with the Working Group on Developing guidelines, which will assist National Reference Points in structuring work with their national VET providers.

Policy implementation is always a challenging process because it is shaped over time by interactions between VET goals, methods and heterogeneous provider settings. The materials developed in this working group will play an important role in helping National Reference Points to offer support to VET providers which is suited to their specific regional and/or national contexts.