EQAVET

European Quality Assurance
in Vocational Education and Training

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

Building a quality assurance approach in line with the EQAVET Framework

Guidelines for VET providers

Introducing quality assurance frameworks in vocational education and training (VET) has become a priority in recent years. VET providers at the early stages of developing their quality assurance approaches can learn from the experiences of others who have already implemented comparable quality frameworks.

The EQAVET network has identified a series of common themes, called building blocks, which have been used by European VET providers to establish and strengthen quality assurance processes, in particular the approaches set out in the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (the EQAVET Framework). The building blocks present an early analysis of approaches to quality assurance among European VET providers.

The EQAVET Framework

The EQAVET Framework is designed to promote better VET by providing authorities and VET providers with common tools for the management of quality in VET.

Given the diversity and complexity of approaches to VET quality within and across Member States, the Framework offers a common point of reference to ensure transparency, consistency and portability between the many streams of policy and practice across Europe, in order to increase mutual trust and mobility of learners and workers.

The Framework was developed by Member States in cooperation with the European Commission and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009. It is a key element in the follow up to the Copenhagen Declaration, which calls for closer cooperation in the field of VET, and in the ongoing work to renew Europe's education and training systems. In every Member country, a *Quality Assurance National Reference Point* gives access to information on the Framework and national quality assurance matters in VET.

Building Blocks

The early analysis of approaches to quality assurance by VET providers across Europe, which are in line with the EQAVET Framework, has identified six interdependent building blocks. These six building blocks support and complement each other and build on the EQAVET indicative descriptors and indicators.

The building blocks provide guidance by identifying key activities which could be undertaken in order to improve quality assurance processes in line with the EQAVET Framework. All of the building blocks are supported by examples from European VET providers. You can find full details of these examples at: www.eqavet.eu/index2.html

01 Management culture	02 Approaches reflect the provider's circumstances	03 A culture of self-assessment	04 Support staff training	05 Use data and feedback to improve VET	06 Involvement of stakeholders

The building blocks set out activities that would help VET providers to develop and support a quality assurance approach in line with the EQAVET Framework. They include:

- referring to the EQAVET quality assurance cycle
- a "call to action"
- identifying the key issues that should be considered and the factors for success
- referring to "lessons learnt" based on an analysis of recent experiences from European VET providers, which suggest new ways forward

01 Management culture

The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions	Lessons Learnt
Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise	*Questions about key factors for success*	*Suggesting new ways forward*

1. Ensure there is a management culture which is committed to quality assurance	✔	✔	✔	✔

What does the Building Block mean? / The 'call to action'

Central to the implementation of the EQAVET Framework is a culture which supports and values quality assurance.

Does the management team value quality assurance?

Are all managers involved in ensuring high quality VET?

Does the management team take responsibility for quality assurance?

Key questions

How can the management team:
- provide leadership in quality assurance?
- ensure a culture of quality assurance which includes learning from the experiences of others?
- encourage staff involvement in quality assurance?
- ensure a cost effective and appropriate approach to quality assurance?

What is the best way to encourage VET staff to improve their approach to quality assurance?

Lessons Learnt

The EQAVET Framework can be used by the management teams of individual VET providers to monitor and build a quality assurance approach.

External recognition of effective quality assurance systems helps to motivate and encourage managers and staff.

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02 Approaches reflect the provider's circumstances

The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions	Lessons Learnt
Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise	*Questions about key factors for success*	*Suggesting new ways forward*

2. Develop approaches which reflect the provider's circumstances	✔	✔		

What does the Building Block mean? / The 'call to action'

The EQAVET Framework covers all aspects of VET provision. VET can be enhanced by building on existing quality assurance arrangements.

How can VET providers use the EQAVET Framework to improve their approach to quality assurance?

Is the approach to quality assurance manageable and realistic?

Key questions

What should VET providers consider when developing their approach to quality assurance?

How can VET providers use what they learn from the experiences of others?

How can Quality Assurance National Reference Points help VET providers ensure their approach is in line with the EQAVET Framework?

Lessons Learnt

A consistent approach to high quality training and the outcomes of training helps business and VET providers to improve their competitive advantage.

VET providers often have a long tradition of quality assurance; success is easier if this experience is used as a basis for further development.

An incremental approach which makes the introduction or strengthening of quality assurance manageable can produce significant improvements.

03
A culture of self-assessment

The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions *Questions about key factors for success*	Lessons Learnt *Suggesting new ways forward*
Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise		

| 3. Develop a culture of self-assessment | | | ✔ | ✔ | How can managers encourage staff and other interested stakeholders to reflect continually on the quality of VET provision? | Transparency helps all stakeholders to look at the quality of provision, and consider ways in which it can be improved. |

3. Develop a culture of self-assessment — Evaluate & Assess ✔, Review & Revise ✔

Key questions

How can managers encourage staff and other interested stakeholders to reflect continually on the quality of VET provision?

How can VET providers learn from each other?

How are the outcomes of self-assessment used to make improvements?

In a commercial and competitive environment, how can VET providers share effective practice?

Lessons Learnt

Transparency helps all stakeholders to look at the quality of provision, and consider ways in which it can be improved.

Creating a successful approach to quality assurance is more likely if the focus is on improving teaching and learning rather than controlling practice.

Ongoing dialogue and communication are central features of successful self-assessment.

What does the Building Block mean?

A culture which encourages reflection and self-assessment will lead to improved quality of provision.

The 'call to action'

Are all those involved in VET participating in self-assessment?

Does the management team support self-assessment?

04
Support staff training

The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions *Questions about key factors for success*	Lessons Learnt *Suggesting new ways forward*
Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise		

4. Support staff training in relation to quality assurance — Plan ✔, Implement ✔, Review & Revise ✔

Key questions

How can managers ensure that everyone who needs it receives training in quality assurance?

How can staff training be both cost effective and ensure high quality provision?

Lessons Learnt

Small amounts of training in quality assurance can make a big difference.

Training in quality assurance has to be supported by the leadership or management team.

Building on existing quality assurance arrangements will result in more success.

What does the Building Block mean?

VET is dependent on the knowledge, skills and competences of staff. VET can be enhanced if staff have an increased awareness of quality assurance.

The 'call to action'

Is support and training in quality assurance available to all those involved in VET?

05 — Use data and feedback to improve VET

	The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions — *Questions about key factors for success*	Lessons Learnt — *Suggesting new ways forward*
	Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise		
5. Use data and feedback to improve VET			✔	✔	How can VET providers benefit from using the EQAVET indicators? How can VET providers: - decide what data is relevant? - identify sources and collect data? - analyse the data? - use the data to improve quality	A systematic and consistent approach to collecting, analysing and using data provides a more secure way of making decisions in relation to VET provision. The views of learners, teachers, trainers and employers are essential to improvement. Transparency helps everyone understand what changes are required – this supports quality improvement.

What does the Building Block mean?

VET has to meet the needs of both employers and learners. Key to any quality assurance system is the way data on performance is systematically collected and used by VET providers to modify and improve provision.

The 'call to action'

Is data and feedback analysed and used to improve VET provision?

Do the EQAVET indicators and indicative descriptors help to identify areas for development?

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06 — Involvement of stakeholders

	The relationship of the Building Block to the 4 stages of the EQAVET quality cycle				Key questions — *Questions about key factors for success*	Lessons Learnt — *Suggesting new ways forward*
	Plan	Implement	Evaluate & Assess	Review & Revise		
6. Ensure VET is based on the involvement of external and internal stakeholders	✔	✔	✔	✔	How are internal views on the quality of VET taken into account? How do you collect and take into account the views of key external stakeholders? What can be learnt from your competitors or from other VET providers?	Providing for the needs of employers is essential in VET. Collaboration, both within regional and national associations as well as between similar organisations, can develop better quality assurance processes.

What does the Building Block mean?

VET is based on effective partnerships between government, social partners and national stakeholders; employers and VET providers; and learners and society. They create the foundation stone of the VET system which gives it strength, relevance and acceptability.

The 'call to action'

Is the quality of provision improving as a result of stakeholder feedback?

How are the internal and external views taken into account?

Is there a systematic approach to ascertaining and meeting the needs of stakeholders?

Main messages

- The EQAVET Framework reflects existing quality assurance arrangements used by VET providers.
- There are many diverse ways of introducing quality assurance approaches which reflect the EQAVET Framework.
- Many VET providers have developed their own quality assurance systems which are efficient, cost effective and well respected.
- Progress towards the EQAVET Framework and other European tools is being made by many VET providers.
- Increasing business competitiveness is dependent on high quality staff, and quality assurance can make a significant contribution.
- Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is an important aspect of quality assurance. Data and feedback after the teaching and learning have been completed is not enough.
- The management and leadership team have a crucial and central role in quality assurance and in ensuring that VET meets the needs of the labour market.

THE QUALITY CYCLE
of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training

Planning — Implementation — Evaluation — Review

Further information

The building blocks are part of the **EQAVET Quality Cycle** on-line tool which is designed to support implementation processes and actions aligned to the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET Framework) at national and provider levels.

The tool is accessible via internet on the EQAVET network website at www.eqavet.eu

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