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What is EQAVET?

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Work in European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) brings together the Member States of the European Union, the Social Partners and the European Commission in a community of practice to develop a culture of quality assurance both within national vocational education and training (VET) systems and at a European level.

EQAVET should be seen in the broader context of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) and the Copenhagen Process, which calls for a deeper collaboration in the field of VET where countries work together in developing common responses to shared challenges.

EQAVET works in a collaborative methodology designed to support Member States in improving the quality of their VET and supporting the implementation of the Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (Reference Framework), adopted in 2010.

The Reference Framework aims to increase the transparency, market relevance, consistency and transferability of VET qualifications across Europe. It provides a common framework and tools to Member State VET systems and VET providers to improve, monitor and evaluate their quality assurance policies and practices in a manner appropriate to their national/institutional context.

The effective implementation of the Reference Framework requires Member States to participate fully in the EQAVET Network, its work programme and to support well functioning Quality Assurance National Reference Points (National Reference Points).

In every Member country, a National Reference Point gives access to information on the Reference Framework; and brings together existing relevant bodies, involving the Social Partners and all stakeholders concerned at national and regional levels. The National Reference Points play a key role in EQAVET.

The EQAVET work programme

The aim of the EQAVET work programme is to:

Provide a sustainable platform for a community of practice in which participants exchange information and experience, learning from each other in order to reach shared results and solutions

Promote European collaboration in the area of quality assurance in VET in order to develop national implementation actions/plans in the use and adaptation of the Reference Framework

Contribute to policy development in the area of quality assurance in VET through concrete proposals and initiatives

Develop a culture of continuous quality improvement both within national VET provision and at a European level

Objectives

The work programme aims to support and facilitate the implementation of the Reference Framework by achieving the following objectives:

1. Increasing cooperation among stakeholders: EU Member States, VET providers, Social Partners, relevant EU and national organisations, business, civil society and decision makers, aimed at supporting their ability to improve and manage VET provision.
2. Improving capacity at international, national, regional and sectoral levels to further identify and understand best practices in quality assurance for VET, in order to effectively formulate guidelines, tools and instruments; and select and implement practical, efficient and priority adaptation actions/plans.
3. Enhancing and improving the level and amount of information and advice on quality assurance in VET related issues.
4. Disseminating and using the knowledge gained from practical adaptation activities/initiatives towards the implementation of the Reference Framework.
5. Integrating the information and knowledge obtained into sustainable national development plans by providing technical and content support to National Reference Points.

Implementation

The work programme is organised in two phases linked to the deadlines set by the Recommendation:

- An adaptation phase, which supports the development of national approaches for using the Reference Framework, by 18 June 2011.
- A reporting phase, which will support the preparation of the national review/report on the implementation of the Reference Framework, by 2013.

Specific activities are designed to support each phase:

Phase 1
Adapting phase

Develop instruments and tools which support Member States in setting up their national adaptation plans/actions for the implementation of the Reference Framework

Phase 2
Reporting phase

Support the provision of feedback and analysis of national adaptation plans/actions to Member States and the preparation of national implementation reports on the adaptation phase

The National Reference Points play a core role in implementing the work programme at national level.

Activities

The EQAVET work programme is implemented through five types of activity designed to address a range of strategic topics, in which National Reference Points participate actively:

Working Groups

- Working group 1 on developing guidelines to support the national implementation approaches for using the Reference Framework
- Working group 2 on quality indicators in VET to support the national implementation approaches for using the Reference Framework

Sectoral seminars on quality assurance issues in VET from the industry perspective

Annual Forums bringing together senior policymakers, National Reference Points, the Social Partners and other key stakeholders at European level

Reflection group on building synergies and complementarities between EQAVET, EQF and ECVET*

Ongoing research and stocktaking on Member States progress in implementing, capturing and sharing existing best practices

* EQF: European Qualifications Framework; ECVET: European Credit Systems for VET

Participants in activities meet regularly. They maintain constant communication and work using an on-line resource developed within the EQAVET website.

The activities of the work programme will produce a range of diversified materials of interest to policymakers and VET providers (such as expert reports, policy briefs, technical papers, web-based information, forum discussions, video reporting, webinars, surveys and studies). The materials reflect on how to improve quality in VET and most appropriately implement the Reference Framework

in specific national and/or institutional contexts. All this material is available on the website at www.eqavet.eu

EQAVET also produces a twice-yearly newsletter, which provides updates and technical information on current developments in the field of quality assurance in European VET. The newsletter is available on-line in English, German and French; and it is summarised in 20 European languages. The newsletter can be received upon registration at www.eqavet.eu