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

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

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

#### What does the Building Block mean?

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

#### The ‘call to action’

- 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

Questions about key factors for success

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

#### Lessons Learnt

Suggesting new ways forward

- 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.

### 02 Approaches reflect the provider’s circumstances

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

#### What does the Building Block mean?

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

#### The ‘call to action’

- 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

Questions about key factors for success

- What is the best way to encourage VET staff to improve their approach to quality assurance?
### 03 A culture of self-assessment

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#### 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?

#### Lessons Learnt
- 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?

- 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.

### 04 Support staff training

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#### 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?

#### Lessons Learnt
- 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?

- 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.
### 05 Use data and feedback to improve VET

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**Key questions**

Questions about key factors for success

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?

**Lessons Learnt**

Suggesting new ways forward

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.

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### 06 Involvement of stakeholders

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**Key questions**

Questions about key factors for success

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?

**Lessons Learnt**

Suggesting new ways forward

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.
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.

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