

The Council recommendation on VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience and the role of EQAVET

What does the VET Recommendation say about EQAVET?

The [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#) underlines that the 2009 EQAVET Recommendation set out a reference framework to support Member States in improving the quality of their vocational education and training systems and to contribute to increased transparency of vocational education and training policy developments between Member States. During the ten years of its implementation, EQAVET has stimulated reforms in national quality assurance systems, but did not contribute significantly to the improvement of transparency of quality assurance arrangements. Furthermore, it was mostly applied in school-based initial vocational education and training.

Therefore, the 2009 EQAVET framework should be integrated into this Recommendation and elements addressing the shortcomings of its implementation in relation to the quality of learning outcomes, certification and assessment, stakeholders' consultation, the role of teachers and trainers, work-based learning and flexibility of vocational education and training should be added. In order to improve mutual learning, enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements in the provision of vocational education and training and reinforce mutual trust between EU Member States, EU level peer reviews of quality assurance at system level should be introduced.(18)

The Recommendation further underlines the transversal character of EQAVET by stipulating that **Vocational education and training need to be underpinned by a culture of quality assurance**. The EQAVET Framework should be used in national quality assurance systems, for both initial and continuing vocational education and training. Quality assurance systems should cover vocational education and training in all learning environments (such as school-based provision and work-based learning, including apprenticeship schemes) and all learning types (digital, face-to-face or blended), delivered by both public and private providers, and should be underpinned by a set of indicative descriptors and common reference indicators for quality assurance in vocational education and training applied both at system and provider level, according to national context (20).¹

The role of the Quality Assurance National Reference Point for vocational education and training is also addressed: The Recommendation stipulates that the NRP should continue to bring together all relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels to:

- take concrete initiatives to implement and further develop the EQAVET Framework,
- inform and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework,
- support self-evaluation as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions

¹ See Annex II of the Recommendation for the complete revised EQAVET Framework

- participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in vocational education and training,
- provide an updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements based on the EQAVET Framework,
- engage in EU level peer reviews of quality assurance to enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States (21).

This Recommendation replaces the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

What does that mean for EQAVET?

As mentioned, the VET Recommendation states the need for EQAVET to address shortcomings of its implementation to date (e.g. quality of learning outcomes, certification and assessment, stakeholders' consultation, role of teachers and trainers, work-based learning and flexibility of VET). It is emphasised that the EQAVET Framework should be used across national quality assurance systems (IVET and CVET), and QA in VET should cover all learning environments and all learning types. It is a core principle that all vocational education and training is underpinned by a culture of quality assurance.

Given this cross-cutting function of QA in VET, the other five core principles for VET implementation stipulated by the VET Recommendation are equally relevant for EQAVET:

- Vocational education and training is agile in adapting to labour market changes
- Flexibility and progression opportunities are at the core of vocational education and training
- Vocational education and training is a driver for innovation and growth and prepares for the digital and green transitions and occupations in high demand
- Vocational education and training is an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training/ skills
- Vocational education and training promotes equality of opportunities

The EQAVET framework has been updated to reflect these core principles. In order to implement the new Recommendation, countries will need to step up their efforts to make VET for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience a reality. EQAVET has an important role to play in guiding this process.

How will we discuss this during the EQAVET ANM 2020?

The EQAVET Annual Network meeting 2020 will provide an opportunity for the EQAVET Network to exchange on their priorities and next steps regarding the implementation of the updated EQAVET framework. In small group discussions, we will focus on two central topics in particular:

- 1) Digital transitions: Fostering digital skills and improving digital VET delivery in VET
- 2) Quality assurance of flexible VET pathways.

For further detail on the two topics, please refer to the workshop papers.