



E-Mail-Newsletter

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EDITION 2

The national quality assurance reports show which QA steps are already being taken in the project countries and where there are still “white spots”.

The “Study on higher Vocational Education and Training in the EU” reveals that there is no common understanding in Europe of what higher VET is.

Quality Assurance in Higher VET



The project ‘Promoting and Implementing Quality Assurance in Higher Vocational Education and Training’

(QA HiVETnet) has been running since September 2014. With this 2nd Newsletter (for the first edition click [here](#)) we would like to give you an update on our project and present the results achieved so far. Any feedback, ideas and contributions are appreciated! For more information and latest news please check the project website: <http://www.qa-hivet.net>.

National Quality Assurance Reports

The main aims of QA HiVETnet are to increase transparency and a better understanding of higher VET qualifications and promote more parity of esteem between academic, research-oriented education and higher vocational education. These aims should be reached with the “European Guidelines and Principles on Quality Assurance in Higher VET” (European HiVET QA-Guidelines), which constitute the main product of QA HiVETnet.

In order to compile these guidelines, a **national report on the quality assurance mechanisms** in place for higher VET qualifications was produced for each project participating country (AT, BE, DE, FR, GR). These reports, which were drawn up on the basis of a common template in order to allow comparison, show which steps of quality assurance are already being taken and where qualification providers lack activities. All five national reports are available in English and can be downloaded from the project website: <http://www.qa-hivet.net/the-results/>.

What is Higher VET?

The information in the national reports was collected on the basis of specific higher VET qualifications. Thus, the reports also describe some key characteristics of those qualifications. In Europe there is ‘no consensus on the definition of higher Vocational Education and Training so far’, as a recent [study](#) of the European Commission concluded. Within the QA HiVETnet project and thus within the ‘European HiVET QA Guidelines’ higher VET is **defined** as follows:

- Higher VET comprises vocational qualifications which are allocated to EQF levels 5 to 8.
- Higher VET qualifications are not part of the Bologna process. Therefore, higher VET does not lead to a Bologna degree.
- Higher VET is demand-driven. Qualifications are only designed if there is a real demand from the companies. This also ensures that after successful graduation learners have competences they can apply directly on the labour market.
- The higher VET sector is characterised by a governance structure representing the companies. Usually, professional associations and chambers are responsible for these qualifications and cooperate closely with qualification providers.
- Higher VET is characterised by the direct involvement of professional practitioners who contribute with their know-how to the entire qualification process – from the development of a qualification up to its evaluation.
- Higher VET is mainly about further and higher qualification of people who actively pursue a professional career. Therefore learners in higher VET already have an IVET qualification and/or several years of experience acquired in a company.
- One major focus when providing qualifications in higher VET is to deepen and/or expand specialist competence to enable graduates to perform complex tasks, including in combination with unforeseeable situations at work which prompt certain actions, at their own responsibility, or to coordinate the performance of these tasks.

The twelve quality features of the European HiVET QA-Guidelines are structured along the “lifecycle” of a qualification.

- In addition, learners in higher VET acquire managerial and entrepreneurial skills enabling them to lead larger project teams, organisational units or companies as well as to take on responsibility for the staff, often also for in-house training of young people.
- The provision of specialist and managerial skills is complemented by the encouragement and strengthening of key soft skills (such as communicative skills, digital competences, problem solving competence, enthusiasm, creativity, innovation capacity) to further strengthen professional activity orientation.
- Qualifications provided in higher VET are not geared towards a specific company only but open up to graduates a wide activity field in the economy.

European Quality Assurance Guidelines

Against the background of this definition of higher VET, the partnership developed a first draft of the ‘European HiVET QA-Guidelines’, which are structured along the quality assurance cycle as used by [EQAVET](#). This cycle comprises the four phases of planning, implementation, evaluation and review. At the same time, these phases portray the ‘lifecycle’ of a qualification, along which **twelve quality features** (QF) of higher VET are described:



Planning	QF 1: A structured process for the identification and early recognition of skill needs
	QF 2: Qualification needs analysis with involvement of professional practitioners
Implementation	QF 3: A structured process for developing or modernising qualifications
	QF 4: Involvement of professional practitioners in the development/modernisation process
	QF 5: Transparency in the presentation of qualifications
	QF 6: Orientation towards learners with professional experience
	QF 7: High labour market relevance
	QF 8: Qualified teaching staff with practical experience gained in the economy
	QF 9: A structured process for assessment procedures
Evaluation	QF 10: A valid assessment procedures with competent examiners from professional practice
	QF 11: A standardised process for the evaluation of the qualification offer
Review	QF 12: Identification of any improvement measures to be taken as a result of the evaluation

Higher VET should foster entrepreneurship, meet the skill needs of companies and promote the employability of learners.

These twelve quality features are elaborated on in the ‘European HiVET QA-Guidelines’. According to the project partnership these quality features should form the basis for higher VET, which pursues three **key objectives**:

- (1) Meeting the skill needs of companies
- (2) Promoting the learners’ employability
- (3) Fostering entrepreneurship and leadership

SAVE THE DATE:
Final conference and
launch of the HiVET
QA-Network:
16 May 2017,
Brussels.

Dissemination and Testing

The first draft of the 'European HiVET QA-Guidelines' is being 'tested' at the moment in all partner countries. The publication is distributed among many actors involved in higher VET in order to collect feedback and comments. Should readers wish to receive the draft version of the Guidelines and/or take part in dissemination/testing events, please get in touch with the [project coordinator](#) or any of the [project partners](#).

European Quality Assurance Network – Save the date

The final version of the Guidelines will be presented during the final conference of this project. This conference will take place on **Tuesday, 16 May 2017 in Brussels** at the premises of [UEAPME](#). Please save this date in your schedule! This conference will also mark the launch of the 'European Network on Quality Assurance in Higher VET'. This network should guarantee the sustainability and further development of the Guidelines and foster – in the long run – the development of a 'Higher VET Area' in which the Guidelines are used.

News and Resources

In this section we would like to draw your attention to interesting links, studies, papers, and conferences, linked to project topic:

Study on higher Vocational Education and Training in the EU

This study was carried out on behalf of the European Commission by ICF (BE), Technopolis (UK) and 3s (AT) and published in February 2016. It answers the following questions:

- What characterises higher VET and how can it be defined?
- What are the main features of higher VET in each of the countries analysed?
- What are the main trends related to demand, pathways, prevailing sectors, and outcomes of higher VET?

▶ Download [study](#)

▶ Download [annexes](#)

New Skills Agenda for Europe

In June 2016 the European Commission adopted a new Skills Agenda for Europe. This agenda aims to make sure that people develop the skills necessary for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This task is essential to boost employability, competitiveness and growth across the EU. One aim of this agenda is to make VET a first choice by enhancing opportunities for VET learners to undertake a work based learning experience and promoting greater visibility of good labour market outcomes of VET.

▶ [Basic information](#)

▶ [The New Skills Agenda](#)

Vocational Skills Week

The first European Vocational Skills Week will take place from 5 to 9 December 2016 with events in Brussels and parallel activities in Member States, EFTA and EU candidate countries at national, regional and local levels.

▶ [More information and programme](#)

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