



Challenges and opportunities for internationalisation and international recognition of TVET education - Sharing findings of the 5 Qualification Benchmarking exercises

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What is Qualifications Benchmarking

An in-depth evidence-based review of the 'core components' of a qualification and underpinning quality assurance processes aimed at:

Determining its comparable academic standing in relation to selected frameworks of reference (e.g. RQF, EQF)

Offering a comparative perspective on the core components of qualifications against international practice

Assessing the extent to which 5 overarching Ecctis' TVET QRA QA standards aligned with EQAVET are met



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Content and Structure

Good Practice

- Broad curriculum combining general / specialised modules focusing on industry based skills.
- Clear focus on employability, reflecting engagement with employers in curriculum development.
- Inclusion of modules in transferrable and soft skills.

Suggested Areas for Development:

- Specialised modules could include higher level content, including content relating to management and managerial skills (in particular the Diplomas in hospitality related subjects).
- Research and project work could be integrated in stand alone modules or throughout the programme from the 1st / 2nd year onwards.
- Ensuring no duplication with content covered at the Intermediate level and a clear progression in terms of content.

Mode of Learning

Good Practice:

- Strong focus on the development of practical skills, as required by industry
- Inclusion of an internship to facilitate work-based skills.
- Focus on softer skills.

Suggested Development Areas:

- Increased use of case studies to promote analytical skills development.
- Greater use of tasks across modules that focus on report writing and research, self-reflection and evaluation as well as project and independent research skill development.
- Including a greater range of project-based learning tasks.

Learning Outcomes

Good Practice:

- Programme level outcomes/training goals generally written to be measurable and specific, using a range of appropriate command words

Suggested Development Areas:

- Reviewing the wording of all modular level learning outcomes/training goals to ensure they use command words that are specific and measurable
- Modular outcomes may benefit from closer alignment to programme level outcomes/training goals in order to cover the full range of cognitive skills. Mapping may be helpful to achieve this.

Assessment Methods

Good Practice

- Strong focus on the assessment of practical skills, linked to employability.
- Thorough assessment of specific, practical skills and knowledge.

Suggested Areas for Development

- Use of a broader range of assessment methods, including projects, reports, case studies and other more open-ended tasks to facilitate the assessment of higher order thinking skills.
- Avoid over-assessment, by reducing or replacing specific tests with broader, holistic tasks that can focus on multiple areas of skills and knowledge.
- Providing additional guidance relating to the skills assessed in the Graduation Thesis
- Marking methods and guidelines could include assessment criteria and levels of response descriptors for open-ended tasks and reports

Key Findings – Overall Comparability in the context of the UK System

- All of the selected College Diploma programmes found comparable to RQF Level 4 overall, with two of the five demonstrating some elements of RQF Level 5.
- Broad comparability was observed in relation to RQF Level 4 knowledge and skills descriptors in relation to demonstrating a range of technical and practical knowledge and using it to address complex yet well-defined problems.
- The Diplomas in Electro-Mechanics and Industrial Electrics, show some overlap with elements of RQF Level 5 in being able to plan and implement technical systems, which points to solving broadly defined complex problems.
- All five programmes were found not to cover (explicitly and consistently throughout the programme) RQF Level 5 skills being able to use research to inform development, being able to evaluate actions, methods and results.

Quality Assurance findings

Although colleges in Vietnam have autonomy in developing their own curricula and training programmes, they are subject to national requirements and regulations.

- Circular 28/2017 stipulates the principles, requirements, process of development, operation, evaluation, improvement of the VET quality assurance and self-evaluation system of VET institutes..
- Circular 03/2017 prescribes the procedures for design, evaluation, and issuance of the training programs and writing, selection, and evaluation of the training materials for intermediate- and college-level vocational education.

Programme Development and Approval

There is a clear, documented process in place for the programme design and approval of qualifications and programmes, ensuring that they align with institutional and national priorities, and that relevant internal and external stakeholders are consulted.

Recommendation

Monitor and improve quality of programme design by combining internal and external evaluation/ review. There should be separation between the internal Executive Board/Group of Advisers of the training programmes and the Evaluation Board which advises on the approval of new programmes to the Executive Board. The evaluation Board should be an external function and include employers' representatives as well as experts from the world of education and training.

Policies for Quality Assurance

Explicit and transparent quality assurance systems are in place, and responsibilities for their management, development and implementation are clearly allocated within the institution

Recommendation

Ensure that the Quality Assurance cycle is seen as an iterative process linking Planning-Implementation-Evaluation -Review. This should be included in all documentation related to the quality system e.g., Quality handbook, and recognise that all the stages are interlinked and be considered as a loop and not as separate functions

Programme Monitoring and Review

There is a clear, documented process in place for the monitoring and review of qualifications and programmes, ensuring that they achieve the objectives set for them, and that relevant internal and external stakeholders are consulted

Recommendation

Establish sector advisory boards for programmes of study. These would provide a forum for regular discussion of the needs of the sector in general ,and reflect an industry perspective and not just the needs of individual employers.

Teaching and Learning

There are institutional policies and processes to ensure that teaching and learning resources are appropriately assigned to programmes of study with a view to supporting students in achieving the expected learning outcomes, including appropriate study facilities, academic support, and support to staff.

Recommendation

There should be a process for internal validation of assignment work to ensure that all candidates entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified national/institutional standard.

This should be supported by annual external validation of results and outcomes to ensure that assessment, and internal quality assurance activities, have been conducted in a consistent, safe, and fair manner.

Information

Clear, accurate and up-to-date information about the programme of study is readily accessible to prospective or current students, or other stakeholders, and is issued to students upon graduation for the benefit of facilitating progress to further study or employment.

Recommendation

Investigate the opportunities available to allow VET students to undertake a mobility experience overseas. This would be through the Erasmus+ programme with EU partner organisations or through the Turing programme for UK institutions.



Challenges and opportunities for internationalisation and international recognition of TVET education – *Qualification Benchmarking Toolkit*

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Qualification Benchmarking Toolkit

It provides guidance in developing and implementing VET qualifications, and underpinning quality assurance processes, which are aligned with international best practice.

It draws on Ecctis' Qualification Benchmarking methodology and the reference frameworks underpinning the five qualification benchmarking exercises:

- Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF), mapped against the European Qualification Framework (EQF);
- the European Quality Assurance Framework for Vocational Qualification and Training (EQAVET).

Core Components: Entry Requirements and Duration

- *Clear, pre-defined and published entry requirements should be in place, ensuring transparency in admission procedures.*
- *The qualification duration is in line with the overall aims and objectives of the training/study programme and is realistic timeframe for students to achieve the stated learning outcomes*

Core Component: Content and Structure

The content and structure of the training/study programme should be designed to reflect its overall aims and objectives

- The programme content and structure should enable development of knowledge, competencies and skills at the intended level.
- The breakdown of the programme content should be clearly displayed in the programme handbook, including qualification pathways.
- Clear indication of requirements for each unit should be set out in the programme handbook.

Core Component: Mode of Learning

The mode of learning should be appropriate and relevant to the aims and objectives of the training/study programme

- The choice of modes of learning and delivery methods should enable the students to achieve the full range of learning outcomes.
- They should be compatible with the overarching aims and objective of the programme.
- Processes should be in place to monitor and review the adopted modes of learning.

Core Component: Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes should clearly describe the knowledge, skills, and competencies students are intended to demonstrate on completion of the qualification, or at the end of the module

Learning outcomes should be:

- **Measurable** – linked to assessment, and with a clear cognitive process (usually encompassing a verb)
- **Specific** – stating the particular knowledge or skill a student should have upon completion, ideally avoiding use of vague terms
- **Feasible and achievable** within the timeframe of the study programme.
- The modular/unit level learning outcomes should align with programme level outcomes.

Core Component: Assessment Methods

- *Assessment should provide a sufficiently fair, valid, and reliable evaluation of students, and assessment methods and volume should be appropriate and relevant to the curriculum.*
- *The assessment criteria are published and made known to the student in advance, with clear guidance on the standards required to attain each grade, in particular the pass grade.*
- *Clear and appropriate policies are in place for the development of assessment materials, ensuring their validity in terms of content and construct; reliability, practicality and fairness.*

Core Component: Associated Outcomes

Progression opportunities, including both academic and training progression routes and typical occupational outcomes, should be clearly outlined to students as part of the programme description

- Providers should clearly outline to both prospective and current students the progression routes available to students, including typical occupational destinations
- Job roles could lead to and possible pathways to further studies, such as articulation arrangements with universities or other institutions of higher learning.

The Quality Assurance Cycle

The Quality Assurance Cycle

1 Planning

Set up clear, appropriate and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources

Planning

2 Implementation

Establish procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives (e.g. development of partnerships, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources, and organisational or operational procedures)

Implementation

4 Review

Develop procedures in order to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or new objectives; after processing feedback, key stakeholders conduct discussion and analysis in order to devise procedures for change

Review

3 Evaluation

Design mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements and outcomes by collecting and processing data in order to make informed assessment

Evaluation

Policies for Quality Assurance

Develop documents clearly setting out the institutional policies and processes underpinning their internal quality assurance systems and make these easily accessible

- A quality handbook, or a code of good practice,
- Widely and clearly communicated across the institution
- It allows for their consistent and transparent application across the institution, and accountability

Programme development and approval

Adopt a strategic approach to programme design, development and approval to ensure it reflects an institutional mission and strategic goals, as well as broader national strategic priorities

- The overarching purpose will help identify learning outcomes and other core components

Make use of a range of internal and external sources and stakeholders in designing, developing, and approving a training or study programme

- An inclusive and consultative approach ensures that the programme is informed by current relevant expertise, well resources, and meets the needs of key beneficiaries.

Have a clear documented process in place for the design, development, and approval of new training/study programmes

- *Setting out key steps, roles, ultimate responsibilities.*



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Programme monitoring and review

Adopt a strategic approach to programme monitoring and review, to ensure it reflects institutional mission and strategic goals, as well as broader national strategic priorities

- a formal opportunity to critically reflect on institutional practices and performance

Make use of a range of internal and external sources and stakeholders when monitoring and reviewing a training/study programme

- An inclusive and consultative approach ensures that the programme is up-to-date , well resourced, and continue to meet the needs of key beneficiaries.

Have clear and documented policies and processes in place for the monitoring and review of new training/study programmes

- *Setting out key steps, roles, ultimate responsibilities.*



Teaching and learning

Adopt an institution-wide strategic approach to teaching and learning to ensure that training/study programmes are adequately supported and students are enabled to achieve their set learning outcomes, in alignment with broader institutional and external priorities and expectations

- carrying out regular review of the effectiveness of the adopted approach, seeking feedback from all key stakeholders, to ensure it continues to meet their needs and support institutional mission.

Ensure that everyone involved in teaching and supporting learning, including external experts and partner organisation, such as internship and work-experience providers, are appropriately qualified and supported in delivering their responsibilities



Teaching and learning

Ensure that the physical and/or virtual learning environment is accessible to all students and suitable to enable them to achieve the expected learning outcomes at the end of their studies

- A regular review of the learning environment should be part of internal quality assurance

Ensure that all students are provided with continued support throughout their learning activities, including through induction, continuous academic and professional guidance and advice, and timely and constructive feedback on their progress.

- consider developing a culture of dialogue between teachers and students to underpin a learning environment conducive to continuous and guided reflection and improvement by part of all students



Information

Provide clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about programmes of study to support prospective students in making an informed choice and enrolled students in making the most out of their studies

- including the learning environment and activities, student support provided, progression opportunities to employment or further studies, and the national and international status of the resulting qualification – e.g. a comprehensive programme handbook

Upon graduation, promptly issue transcripts to graduate providing a comprehensive record of the studies/training undertaken, so as to support their progression to employment or further studies/training



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