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WellTo PROJECT

GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE JOINT CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION WP4, Deliverable 4.7

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1. INTRODUCTION

Joint qualification is quite a new term in the area of VET in the EU. In the Wellto project, we understand the development work concerning joint qualifications as one possible solution to integrate European VET recommendations, tools and instruments (EQF, EQAVET, ECVET, recognition of qualifications etc.) and to facilitate cooperation opportunities, to expand WBL and to enhance the mobility of students and staff in the creation of high quality educational programs.

Because lacking of legal provision for a joint qualification and its accreditation in member states, we tried to jointly develop an educational proposal that addresses needs of developing tourism sector on one hand and need of VET providers and students to experience high qualifying cooperation and mutual learning on the other. Quality assurance is a central element of such cooperation in running of training offers.

These guidelines address the management structure of such cooperation and indicates a way for quality assured implementation of the international joint curriculum (or part of it) and its further improvements. This manual represents some of first reflections on how joint qualifications are not just an educational program developed in a partnership project but how the “jointness” should be expressed also in setting a stabile cooperation structure based on quality assurance procedures to provide added value since the program is run by multiple providers. This guideline represents an opportunity to start setting procedures and criteria for joint cooperation on the program level and by implementing them in VET providers networks.

2. JOINT QUALIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION

A joint qualification is a vocational qualification awarded by one VET provider on the basis of an educational program with co-ordinated units (subjects, modules) prepared and run jointly with partners. The WellTo joint qualification is referenced against the level 4 of the EQF. Cooperating VET providers based their own educational programs on commonly agreed *qualification profile*. Certificates (for respective qualification) in this case are multiple but can be easily compared because based on common qualification profile.

Jointly prepared educational programs based on commonly agreed qualification profile have two main purposes: to form a space for VET providers' international cooperation and to facilitate mobility of students and teacher. They represent the next step in the process of internalisation of VET starting with students' short mobility and striving to legally justified implementation of jointly accredited qualifications documented by joint certificates.

In this project, the partners' cooperation included joint development of the qualification profile and coordinated development of VET programs with jointly prepared modules. The accreditation of developed national programs will follow in each country respectively. For the future, we propose to build the foundation for joint educational programs through the process

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of mutual agreement of public qualification authorities by commonly accepted evaluation by one experts' team followed by (joint) accreditation of a joint educational program.

Establishing joint qualification consists of developing a new VET programme and a new arena for knowledge. The prime objective of establishing the joint qualification is to improve the quality of the education and training of students. The result joining forces of different VET providers to offer a programme is the provision of a higher standard than the providers would achieve separately. Joint qualification can lead to increased internationalisation at the VET providers, stimulate multinational collaboration on teaching and training at a high level, increase the quality of work-based learning, offering to students an expanded and innovative arena for learning.

Joint qualification, developed and implemented between different VET schools in several countries can increase the relevance and attractiveness of VET provision. Besides undeniable benefits for companies and students, joint qualifications can significantly improve the internationalisation process and strategic cooperation of VET providers. Successful joint qualifications can be beneficial for other forms of cooperation as well. Establishing a joint qualification consortium must have a strategic foundation. Added value must be clear for both, for students and VET schools. It must build on sound students and teachers international activities, e.g. geographical mobility, development projects, co-operative teaching.

A joint program should be seen as mainstream educational offer. Its management should not be dedicated to a special structure (such as project coordinator) but should take part of regular management structure. Joint qualification management implies that the joint qualification and the joint program are fully integrated in the management and pedagogical processes of a VET provider. VET providers' consortium that manage joint program should draw a quality assurance plan that incorporates the relevant components of the providers' quality assurance systems. Self-evaluation report should be prepared regularly and should incorporate the collection of feedback from participating students, staff and relevant stakeholders during and after completion of program parts. It's important to get students and teachers possibility to be part of the program implementation at early stage so that it is possible to make adjustments and improvements.

Like any other activities within a VET provider, also the joint qualification must also be evaluated on a regular basis to gain information about the achievement of goals, the quality of work and possible future developments. The most important thing is to evaluate how the agreed learning outcomes have been achieved and how the process of running the joint qualification from the perspective of both the individuals and the provider.



3. APPROACHING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN IMPLEMENTING JOINT QUALIFICATION

VET providers face several challenges in implementing high-quality VET provision, including knowledge and skills required, educational standard setting, the entire process of implementation (e.g., planning, facilitation of training and learning, monitoring and evaluation), and the wide variety of contexts in which joint curricula is implemented. In order to address these challenges, a common approach to QA at policy and provider level was set by the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training recommendations (EQAVET) ¹. EQAVET helps developing and improving quality assurance in European VET Systems. The EQAVET approach (common principles, indicators and tools) is leading to the enhancement of the VET providers in empowering them to plan, implement and evaluate the joint curricula provision. The implementation of EQAVET principles establishes the cross-border cooperation of providers to guarantee improved quality, increased transparency and mutual trust between participating providers.

The Quality Assurance Cycle

EQAVET approaches the plan–do–check–act (PDCA) cycle as the common models of quality assurance. The PDCA cycle represents iterative way of feeding management information based on measurements and targets into an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement by completing the feedback loop.

Step of the cycle	EQAVET criteria
Planning	Set up clear, appropriate and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources
Implementation	Establishes procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives (e.g. development of partnership, involvement of stakeholders, allocation of resources, and organisational or operational procedures)
Evaluation	Design mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements and outcomes by collecting and processing data in order to make informed assessment
Review	Development procedures in order to achieve the targeted outcomes; after processing feedback, key stakeholders conduct discussion and analysis order to devise procedures for change

The Quality Assurance cycle (or PDCA cycle) supports the continues monitoring, exchange of findings and improvements of each VET providers in different stages, e.g. by evaluation and improvement the effectiveness of the current arrangements or by adapting an existing VET provision to the changing context. In the provision of joint curricula, the using of four stages of the cycle will guarantee the high quality of cooperation and continues improvement of achievements and processes.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1546&langId=en>

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4. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE WORK-BASED LEARNING

WellTo joint qualification combines learning taking place in classes, and work-based learning. Work-based learning (WBL) is foreseen as apprenticeship which combine training in companies and schools, or internship with shorter periods in companies or even training in schools workshops. The WBL often take place during the mobility periods.

The EQAVET building blocks for WBL are designed to promote better VET by providing VET providers with criteria for the management of quality. The building blocks with the Wellto issue to be considered provide guidance to develop and support a quality assurance approach for WBL.

EQAVET WBL building blocks	Key issues	WellTo issues to be considered
Design WBL	Work with partner organisations to ensure the relevance of learners' training during periods of work-based learning	Is the quality assurance included in the partners agreement? How the companies are selected? Is the content of WBL linked to the joint qualification?
Improve the quality	Agree with partner organisations when the quality of training will be monitored and how improvements will be made	Is the WBL monitored on an on-going basis? Is the staff with responsibility for quality assurance identified? Are proposals for improvements discussed within the partnership?
Respond to learners needs	Continue to be aware of the specific needs of learners throughout their work-based learning	Is an in-company trainer named to support a student? Do school keep in touch with student during the periods of WBL? Is a feedback given to the student?
Communicate	Ensure learners and partner organisations are kept well informed and receive frequent updates on all aspects of training	Are members of the partnership in constant communication through existing channels? Is the learner included in communication?
Train the staff	Ensure staff are well prepared for their training role, which includes quality assurance	Is the quality assurance a shared responsibility of the staff in companies and at VET providers? Are all staff members involved in the training trained to participate in QA activities?

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		Are guidance on how to manage the quality assurance process known by staff?
Assess the learners	Work with partner organisations to review the work-based training programme and to assess and certify individual learner achievements, where appropriate	<p>Are the assessment criteria and tools prepared?</p> <p>Are all staff members involved in the assessment activities?</p> <p>Are assessors trained to run the assessment?</p>

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES AND AREAS

Quality assurance is a joint task within the WellTo partnership. The dedicated identified staff members (WBL mediators) are involved in the implementation and quality assurance of the joint qualification. The WellTo quality assurance mechanisms are completing the respective QA institutional frameworks in place at VET providers.

The WellTo quality assurance mechanism are based on the following list of areas and quality criteria.

Areas	Requirements/ quality criteria
Partnership	<p>VET providers know and understand the roles and functions the partnership</p> <p>A clear agreement among the partner institutions about expected achievements exists</p> <p>Each of the partners have clear and explicit objectives for participation in the partnership</p> <p>Partners communicate regularly and in an open manner</p>
Status of cooperating VET providers	<p>Are VET providers are accredited by national authorities?</p> <p>Are partners are regularly informed about changes?</p>
Cooperation agreement	<p>Cooperation agreement (CA) forms bases for joint implementation of the joint educational program</p> <p>CA defines assumed responsibilities of partners and defines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the consortium structure and governing bodies - content and structure of the joint program - the task distribution between partners - mobility requirements and framework - students selection and support - QA obligations

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	CA is regularly revised by all partners
Joint educational program and learning outcomes	The units LOs are described in knowledge and skills to be acquired LOs are harmonised with occupational profile and regularly revised
Training companies	Training companies meet the WBL criteria A company training plan that extends over the whole period of training exist The training report is regularly discussed with the trainees The company maintains regular contact with the VET provider
In-company trainers	In-company trainer are technically competent and impart the training content comprehensibly Opportunities for basic and further training of trainers are offered
Joint units planning	Joint units (JU) are planned by teachers in cooperation with teams of teachers, teachers of other providers, in-company mentors JU are planned in transparent way and are shared inside consortium JU are planned according to characteristics and needs of students JU are planned according to characteristics of different learning locations (classroom, workshops, companies, media) The teaching and learning arrangements allows and supports the collaboration of students
Students support	The students support contributes to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes The students support take into account specific challenges of mobile students
Assessment of knowledge	The assessment criteria and indicators clearly related to the agreed learning outcomes and feasible for the mobility period The results of the students assessment are documented and recognised by VET provider
QA activities (feedback collection, self-report)	The cooperating institutions agree on joint quality assurance mechanism, based on EQAVET principles