From the Good to the Best-project
Kokkola 13.4.2011

Quality Assurance of Vocational Education and training and Finnish Education system

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Finnish National Board of Education
FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM
Levels of decision making

Parliament of Finland

Ministry of Education and Culture

Finnish National Board of Education

Provinces

VET providers
- Federations of Municipalities
- Municipality
- Private organizations

Educational Institutes

For education and learning
The structure of vocational education and training

- Upper secondary vocational education and training
  - Upper secondary vocational qualifications
  - Pre-vocational programmes
- Further vocational training
  - Further qualifications
  - Specialist qualifications
  - Further training not leading to any specific qualification organised according to the needs of individual students and employers

School-based VET and Apprenticeship training
VET fields

- Technology, Communications and Transport
- Social Sciences, Business and Administration
- Social Services, Health and Sports
- Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services
- Natural Resources and the Environment
- Culture
- Humanities and Education
- Natural Sciences
Output-oriented quality assurance in Finnish Vocational Education and Training

• Vocational adult education and training is also based on the system of competence-based qualifications.
• Competence tests/Vocational skills determined in Qualification Requirements

Three levels of competence-based qualifications:

- **Vocational qualifications** indicate competence to enter employment in the field.
  - In 2010, there were 52 upper secondary vocational qualifications including a total of 120 different study programmes

- **Further vocational qualifications** indicate the vocational skills required of skilled worker in the field.
  - In 2010, there were 187 further qualifications in all.

- **Specialist vocational qualifications** indicate a command of the most demanding tasks in the field.
  - In 2010, there were 129 specialist qualifications in all.
Design of Qualifications (QA)

- VQs consist of units (parts of qualification). Vocational units are composed on the basis of functions in working life and named according to activities at working life. Units are nationally decided and defined by the FNBE in the national qualification requirements.

- Preparation is done in expert groups (FNBE, trade unions, enterprises, sector ministries, employers, education providers, teacher unions and student unions).

- VQs discussed in Educational and Training Committees of each occupational sector and Qualification Committees.
# Upper secondary level (2008-)

National Requirements (3 years/120 credits) for each vocational qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational units</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including at least 20 credits of on-the-job learning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- basic and field-specific study units (compulsory)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- specializing study units (partly optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- other optional units (decided by VET provider)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core subject units (common to all)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>such as languages, math, physics, chemistry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-choice units</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- individual choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment and certification

- Theory and practice (KSC) are expressed, studied and assessed together within the same unit and there is a common one mark in the certificate.
- Knowledge, skills and competence are described as learning outcomes of the units.
- Targets of assessments are common in all VET-qualifications (Upper secondary vocational qualifications)
- Learning outcomes and assessment criteria are expressed as activities of the occupational area and activities in work.
- No final tests
- Self-assessment of students
Finnish targets of assessments vs. learning outcomes described in terms of "KSC"

1. Mastering of work processes
2. Mastering of tasks, working methods, tools and materials
3. Mastering of knowledge that forms foundation for work
4. LLL- key competencies common to all qualifications

Knowledge
Skills
Competence

For education and learning
Skills demonstration and Qualification certificate

- Student proves his/her vocational skills and competencies required in vocational study modules and working life
- Skills demonstrations mostly at workplaces
- Planning, implementing and assessing by teachers and representatives of employees and employers

- Qualification certificate in two parts
  - Final certificate by VET provider
  - Certificate of skills demonstrations by Local Board for Skills Demonstrations
Skills demonstrations

- National requirements of qualifications (competence based units and same requirements and criteria)
- Determined requirements of organizing skills demonstration tests (objectives and criteria of assessment, evaluators, test situations ...)
- National evaluations of learning outcomes are made based on skills demonstrations
Quality Management in Finland (Important topics)

- Decentralisation
- Normative regulations decreasing (1999 -)
- The provider is the main actor
- Trust – no inspection system
- Decisions on quality enhancement mainly made by the VET provider
- The provider can choose the method of quality management and self-assessment. (process)

1. 110 of VET providers answered the questionnaire (69 %).
2. 27 % of the respondents has made systematic quality work over 10 years, 27 % of the respondents 6 -10 years, 19 % the respondents 3-5 years and 27 % the respondents less than 3 years.
3. 61 % of VET providers use or have used EFQM, 49 % BSC and/or 36 % ISO standard (Online survey 2009, FNBE)
Quality assurance mechanisms

- Normative mechanisms (licensing/accreditation, national requirements for qualification/national core curricula, skills demonstrations, matriculation examination (mostly in general education), financing system, self-evaluation, taking part in external evaluation)

- Voluntary mechanisms (quality management, recommendations, quality awards..)
Quality Management in vocational education and training in Finland

• The National quality management system in vocational education and training
  1. National steering of VET
  2. Quality management of VET providers
  3. External evaluation of VET

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Quality Management Recommendation for vocational education and training

• The CQAF (the EQAVET) has been reference model
• On voluntary basis
• Recommendations provide a foundation for long-term development of quality assurance
• The role of Quality Management Recommendations is to be a part of national quality assurance in vocational education and training.
  • National steering of VET

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Quality Management Recommendation for vocational education and training

- Updated and integrated with each other in cooperation with stakeholders
- Signed January 2008 by Minister of Education and Culture.

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STRUCTURE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY DEFINITIONS AND PRIORITIES
NATIONAL STEERING OF VET

RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL BASIS OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)
- planning
- implementation
- evaluation and assessment
- review (feedback and procedures for change)

Characteristics of excellence
- consideration of functions as a whole
- customer focus
- leadership
- result orientation
- continuous learning, innovation and improvement
- people as resources
- effective processes
- relevance to the world of work and partnerships
- social responsibility
Structure of the quality assurance recommendations

- Recommendations are divided in sections on the characteristics of an excellent organisation.
- Each section presents recommendations relating different phases of the CQAF model (EQAVET).
- National VET policy definitions and priorities are communicated in the contents of individual recommendations.

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An example: Customer focus

VET providers identify key customers and their current and future needs and expectations. VET providers take customer needs and expectations into account when planning and developing services and products for different customer groups.

VET providers:

- identify external and internal customers, prioritise different customer groups and take each group’s needs and expectations into account when planning education, training and other services in co-operation with key VET stakeholders (such as the world of work);

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EQARF: the Quality Cycle and Indicators

Indicator 1, 2 Define goals and objectives

Indicator 3, 7, 8 Coherent with goals

Indicator 4, 5, 6 Collection and processing data; discuss results

Indicator 9, 10 Review
Output-oriented quality assurance in Finnish Vocational Education and Training

Financing system

Statutory core funding (input)
Based on average unit costs and number of students, (takes into account differences in costs)
* Performance-based financing (output)

To encourage quality improvement

3 % of the core funding
The impact on VET providers is much more
The results are published on the website of FNBE
* Quality awards for VET
• Student based follow-up system
• Performance–based financing system takes into account background factors (education, student and local environment)
Quality Awards (since 2000)

Targets

• To encourage and promote quality management and evaluation of education
• Exchange of good practices
• To highlight the role of VET/education
• Improve the image of VET/education
• EFQM/CQAF as reference model
• External evaluation board (representatives of all important stakeholders)

Three steps selection

1. Selection based on the written applications
   • Individual evaluations and consensus study visit in max. 6 organisations
   • Consensus based evaluation 1–4 quality awards yearly

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Quality models/methods which have been used and/or are in use at VET provider level?

- EFQM Excellence Model: 67% used in the last 5 years, 61% in use currently.
- Total Quality Management (TQM): 10% used in the last 5 years, 4% in use currently.
- ISO 9000 - standardit: 38% used in the last 5 years, 36% in use currently.
- CAF: 11% used in the last 5 years, 10% in use currently.
- Balanced Scorecard: 51% used in the last 5 years, 49% in use currently.
- Jokin muu: 29% used in the last 5 years, 25% in use currently.

(N = 110)
Leonardo projects and links to other QA activities

Leonardo projects on European Peer Reviews

Leonardo project ”Peer Review in Initial VET ”
1.10.2004–30.9.2007

Leonardo project ”Peer Review  Extended”. Implementing the CQAF through Peer Review – “Mutual Review and Assessment of VET Providers and Extension of the European Peer Review Network”

Leonardo project ”Peer Review  Extended II”
1.11.2007–30.10.2009

www.peer-review-education.net
Leonardo projects and links to other QA activities

Leonardo project: Peer Review Extended II, coordinator Öibf, Austria
Project number- LLP-LdV/TOI/2007/AT/0011

Results:
• Face-to-face Peer Training, CVET too (Finnish modification too)
• Peer Review procedure and criteria for CVET for Finland
• Transfer Strategy for Finland.
• Peer Review as a part of ENQA-VET work programme/Thematic group
• National development activities: Peer Reviews as a method of QA. Result agreement between Ministry of Education and FNBE includes year 2009 the national development and support activities to promote the use of Peer Reviews.
• Quality Management Recommendation for VET is directed to IVET and CVET

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Quality Management Recommendation for VET

VET providers make diverse use of various evaluation methods and data in order to develop their operations.

VET providers:
- collect and analyse evaluation results and other feedback information;
- make use of results obtained in other evaluations, such as the results of national evaluations;
- have an external evaluation of their operations carried out at least once every three years;
- develop their operations by means of internal audits;
- co-operate with other education and training providers by carrying out benchmarking and peer reviews, for example.

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National Peer Review activities in Finland

- The procedure for Transnational European Peer Reviews can be used in Finland for both IVET and CVET (only some slight modification needed).
- National criteria for IVET and CVET have been developed based on European Peer Review criteria.
- Many Peer Review trainings have been organised.
- Peer Review procedure have been used in ESR projects (experience on European Peer Review projects have been used) and criteria have been developed.
- CIMO in cooperation with FNBE has developed draft criteria and Peer Review procedure for TOI projects and they will be piloted in autumn.
- Coordinating group for Peer Reviews used in quality improvement tool for projects at national level to unify the procedure and to help find good practices.
Leonardo project ”Peer Review Impact”

Project duration:
Contractual period: 1.10.2009 – 30.9.2011
(24 months)

Partner institutions: 8 partners in five countries

Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), coordinator, Finland
Keuda Vocational College, Finland
Tampere College, Finland
Öibf, Austria
Hohere Technische Bundeslehranstalt Steyr, Austria
Hansagi Ferenc Vendeglatoipari es Idegenforgalmi Szakiskola es Szakkozepiskola, Hungary
ISFOL, Italy
University of Twente, Netherlands
ROC Aventus, Netherlands

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Leonardo project "Peer Review Impact"

Aims

• Contribute to the implementation of the EQARF by focusing on the review phase
• Enhance the understanding of the interplay between institutional quality assurance systems, evaluations and institutional improvement of VET provision
• Improve and further develop the European Peer Review methodology focus on the impact and making changes
• Increase the use of Peer Reviews at national and European level by disseminating the results of previous Leonardo projects on Peer Reviews and REVIMP and transferring the results to new sectors, target groups and regionally
• Optimize the effectiveness of external evaluations in VET, especially Peer Reviews.

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Leonardo project ”Peer Review Impact”

Main Products

- Report on Impact on Peer Reviews
- Peer Review Impact Guidelines
- Peer Review Follow-Up Guide
- Seminar/Workshop for VET providers how to use the Peer Review Impact Guidelines
- Transfer strategy paper

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