

Improving VET quality assurance

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** LATVIA

Timeline

2018 Implementation**2019 Implementation****2020 Implementation****2021 Implementation****2022 Implementation****2023 Implementation****2024 Implementation****ID number 36372**

Background

An education quality evaluation takes place at international (international surveys, cross-border evaluations), national (national exams, evaluation of educators and principals, research, accreditation/licencing) and school (e-classroom and school performance quality evaluation) levels. It helps form a unified, mutually consistent and hierarchically subordinate education quality planning and monitoring system.

The evaluation requires a systemic approach. Evidence-based education policy-making requires: long-term data on learner performance at each education level; data analysis according to comparable criteria; analytical and research work with nationally defined criteria. There is a need to collect and analyse data that characterise the education system in order to justify changes in education policy at the State and institutional levels.

There was a need for a common platform for data collection to analyse the link the data stored in several information systems (for example, education, employment, social insurance and tax data).

The education ministry and its subordinate institutions need to strengthen their analytical capacity, both to ensure the analysis of education quality data and to prepare technical specifications for research and development in education.

Before 2015, a national quality assurance approach has been already in place. The State Education Quality Service (IKVD) had been appointed the EQAVET national reference point (NRP) in 2013. The quality of vocational education was ensured through the accreditation of vocational education institutions and programmes, carried out by the Accreditation Experts Commission and VET providers' information on EQAVET quality indicators. Schools were accredited without time limit, while their programmes had to be accredited every six years for awarding 'official' qualifications to be allowed. As a follow-up, education institutions were required to submit to the IKVD an annual self-assessment report on their progress in implementing the recommendations issued by the Accreditation Experts Commission. The IKVD provided guidelines to help vocational education providers strengthen their culture of self-assessment and quality assurance.

Objectives

To improve the education quality monitoring system based on statistical information, the results of comparative educational research, the achievement of students at the national level and other indicators characterising the results of the work of education institutions: analysis of the results of centralised examination and accreditation and licensing, as well as evaluation of the quality of teachers' work, the use and analysis of information, taking into account the medium and long-term achievable strategic goals and results.

Description

The national approach to quality assurance was reviewed in 2016 and the outcomes of the review have been published. As a result, the Cabinet of Ministers approved new regulations concerning the procedures for accrediting education institutions, examination centres, general and vocational education programmes and evaluating the professional activity of heads of schools. The revision also supported the increased use of EQAVET indicators, including the collection of data on teachers and trainers.

In April 2018, the education ministry launched a project Education quality monitoring system development and implementation (2018-22). It is jointly financed by the European Social Fund and its goal is to develop an education quality monitoring system based on the analysis and measurements of statistics, results of comparative education studies, student achievements at the State level and other indicators describing the education institutions, such as examination results, accreditation, licensing, as well as teacher performance assessment. The main activities include:

- (a) development of a description of the education quality assessment monitoring system and monitoring tools and approval of the tools;
- (b) development and implementation of a research programme in education: development of a procedure; implementation of eight studies (in higher education, vocational education, general education and adult education);
- (c) implementation of twinning and strategic communication activities, including training for those involved in monitoring the quality of education.

Target group (direct): State institutions that are responsible for the development of education policy, monitoring of its implementation, development of curricula, assessment of the quality of education and implementation of research: Ministry of Education and Science, National Centre for Education, State Education Quality Service, higher education and scientific institutions.

Target group (indirect): institutions subordinate to Ministry of Education and Science, education departments of municipalities, education experts, administration of education and scientific institutions, teachers, social partners, sector experts, learners and parents.

2018 Implementation

The project Education quality monitoring system development and implementation (2018-22) started in 2022 (project team, specifications, commissioning of tasks). In addition, a framework for the implementation of national research in education has been developed and training events were held to strengthen analytical capacity in cooperation with EC (working group on graduate tracking) OECD (working group on statistics) and peers from Lithuania and Estonia.

2019 Implementation

The revision of the national quality assurance approach was launched in 2019. It was supported by the development of the description of the education quality monitoring system: definition of education quality, indicators of education quality. Requirements for the national research in education were defined supported by analytical capacity training.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, Researchers have described the education quality monitoring system and defined the education quality (categories and elements), indicators of education quality, monitoring tools.

Two monitoring tools were developed (for school network efficiency analysis - in secondary education and for graduate tracking - in higher education) in collaboration with the team for the project State education information system development - education monitoring system.

Training and participation in international working groups by the project staff continued.

A new regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers regarding the procedures for accreditation of educational institutions, educational programmes and evaluation of the professional activity of heads of educational institutions was drafted in 2020. The revision has also promoted the use of EQAVET indicators.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the education ministry launched research to develop and implement an education quality risk identification system. The aim of the research is to develop a mathematical model of the components of the education quality management system and its prototype, Education quality risk identification system for general education and vocational education.

Work on an online glossary of education terms began with the aim to develop an online glossary explaining education terms in Latvian, with equivalent terms in other languages.

Work on two monitoring tools continued. A monitoring tool for graduate tracking in higher education was published on the State education information system public portal. The piloting of a monitoring tool for school network efficiency analysis in general education was launched.

2022 Implementation

A group of researchers from the leading Latvian universities continued their work on research 'Dictionary of Education' [Izglītības terminu skaidrojotā vārdnīca] with the aim of updating, developing and publishing 3000 education terms.

A new research on school as a learning organisation started to help develop and test the national model, including the development of criteria for schools self-assessment, recommendations for data usage in the schools with the aim to assess education quality and improvements of learning.

2023 Implementation

To improve the process of licensing education programmes, new licensing regulations were adopted (Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No 253 of 23 May 2023 'Procedure for Licensing General and Vocational Education Programmes').

In 2023, 334 new vocational education programmes have been licensed for 50 different professional qualifications. Compared to the previous reporting period, the total number of licensed vocational education and training programmes has decreased by 53%, which is explained by changes in the regulatory framework, the active transition of education institutions to the implementation of modular education and training programmes according to the models of programmes agreed by the ministry. The licensing of VET programmes has also been improved. To license a VET programme, a VET institution doesn't need to submit the whole programme to the State Education Quality Service anymore, but only its implementation plan.

Another important aspect for VET quality assurance was the shift from programme accreditation to VET provider accreditation. This reduced the administrative burdens for VET providers and allowed them to spend more time and resources on innovation, improved performance, and overall capacity building. An integral part of the process was self-evaluation and reporting. In 2023, a lot of attention was paid to improve these processes.

In 2022/23, VET institutions subordinated to the education ministry switched to modular programmes (according to the model approved by the education ministry), therefore, compared to 2022, the number of modular vocational education programmes licensed according to the model has decreased almost 4 times.

2024 Implementation

In June 2024, the government approved new rules on accreditation of general education and vocational education institutions 'Procedure for accreditation of general education and vocational education institutions and evaluation of the professional performance of their heads', which are aimed at improving the procedure for accreditation of general education and VET institutions and professional performance evaluation of education institution managers. The new accreditation rules strengthen the institutional accreditation of education institutions and introduce requirements for assessing the quality of education that are in line with modern trends in education development.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education and Science
- National Centre for Education (VISC)
- State Education Quality Service (IKVD)

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)
National, regional and local authorities

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Using EU transparency tools (EQF, Europass, ESCO, ECTS, ECVET principles)

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET underpinned by a culture of quality assurance

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

Cedefop ReferNet Latvia (2018). Latvia: national VET quality assurance uses European indicators

Education quality monitoring system (information on the web of the Ministry of Education and Science) (in Latvian)

Regulations regarding the implementation of activity 8.3.6.2. Education quality monitoring system development and implementation, of the operational programme Growth and employment

Ministry of Education and Science report on the establishment of an education quality monitoring system [Informativais zinojums Par izglītības kvalitātes monitoringa sistemas izveidi]

Government regulations on accreditation of education programmes (No 618 from 6 October 2020)

Study on education quality monitoring system (Izglītības kvalitātes novērtēšanas monitoringa sistemas un monitoringa riku apraksta izstrade)

Procedure for licensing general and vocational education programmes

Procedure for accreditation of general education and vocational education institutions and evaluation of the professional performance of their heads

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Improving VET graduate tracking

The policy development envisages creating a coordinated approach to VET graduate tracking.



Type of development

Practical measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2024 Implementation

Amendments to the VET law

Amendments to the law should allow students to receive a State-recognised partial vocational qualifications, thus promoting a competence-based approach in VET.



Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). Improving VET quality assurance: Latvia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2025). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2024 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/36372>