

# EQAVET peer review on student involvement and quality improvement in VET

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE



NETHERLANDS

## Timeline

2023 **Completed**

ID number 45479

## Background

The establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training has stimulated reforms in VET of the EU Member States, which contributed to the improvement of the quality assurance (QA) in VET systems across Europe. However, there remains a need to address the transparency of quality assurance arrangements at system level, which is an area that requires further attention and work. The introduction of peer reviews can support this procedure.

## Objectives

According to the 2020 VET recommendation, peer reviews are aimed at improving mutual learning, enhancing the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements in the provision of VET and reinforcing mutual trust between EU Member States.

## Description

In the 2020 VET recommendation a peer review is described as 'a type of voluntary mutual learning activity supporting improvement and transparency of quality assurance arrangements at system level. They are not aiming at accreditation procedures. based on a specific methodology to be developed by the European Network for quality assurance in vocational education and training'.

A peer review offers the chance to the country hosting it to reflect on its practices of quality assuring its national VET system. Peers from other Member States act as critical friends offering external feedback and sharing thematic relevant experiences from their country.

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Responding to the call of the 2020 VET Recommendation, and taking under consideration the second edition of the peer review manual, which includes a specific methodology for EQAVET peer reviews and incorporates lessons learned from the nine peer reviews taken place in 2022, the 16th peer review meeting was organised by the Netherlands in Utrecht. More specifically CINOP, an international education research,

project management and consultancy enterprise, which houses the Dutch EQAVET NRP, organised a peer review about student involvement and the role of teachers in the improvement of quality in upper secondary VET. In the peer review participated six peers, all network members of EQAVET, from the five following countries: Belgium-fr, Bulgaria, Finland, Malta and Slovenia.

The peer review meeting focused on strengthening VET teachers' bridging role between students and VET institutions and establishing a clearer approach to student engagement in VET (policy) developments.

During the peer review meeting the hosts introduced the Dutch national reference point (NRP) of EQAVET, CINOP, and its role in improving quality assurance in Dutch VET being a key actor at system level.

CINOP is in cooperation with VET institutions and other VET stakeholders responsible for VET Quality assurance (QA) in the Netherlands. Dutch VET providers are given a high degree of autonomy at their work and this autonomy applies also to the area of QA. VET providers are tasked with describing the education quality in accordance with their set goals, which are developed in agreement with their stakeholders. The QA procedure runs in accordance with the current Inspectorate framework and is being monitored by the Education inspectorate.

Although this self-directed quality approach is beneficial for schools since they can for example focus on specific topics, which are important to them, at the same time it is also challenging. Consequently, the education ministry encourages VET providers, teachers particularly, to develop a stronger quality culture with increased initiative and responsibility. Also CINOP intends to support them by organising sessions, developing tools and sharing knowledge on various topics, some of them aiming at strengthening students' involvement in QA and the quality cycle. Current topics and activities include sessions with education teams and QA employees to strengthen their role in QA.

Regarding student involvement in VET and QA, one key actor is the Dutch association of upper secondary VET colleges (MBO Raad). It represents the 57 publicly funded Dutch VET colleges, acts as a connecting link between VET colleges and the government and supports them and their stakeholders among other on policymaking and intended changes in legislation.

Furthermore, the National Youth Organisation and Interest Group for upper secondary VET Students (JOB MBO), consisting of a board of VET students and student council representatives, policy officers and a guest lecturer, also promotes VET student participation in policy making and their image in the media. The legal requirement for the establishment of student councils in all VET colleges since 2011, also contributed to the reinforcement of continuous dialogue of the Dutch policy makers with the VET students. The launch of the project 'You decide' in 2010, aiming at promoting the development of a culture of student participation, has enabled the involvement of VET students in policy making and revealed the challenges that need to be addressed so that this student involvement process can become more effective.

Following the presentation of the Dutch quality assurance system in VET with respects to the teachers' role and the reinforcement of VET students' contribution to it, first conclusions were drawn.

The Dutch host concluded that measures have been implemented supporting an increased participation of VET students in VET policy making and teachers' role in quality assurance. Nevertheless, the system could be less focused on formalities, which may prevent VET students' wider participation on policy processes, including representatives of minorities. Regarding teachers, education teams often face difficulties moving from theory to practice of quality assurance procedure due to lack of support by school support services. Finally, teachers often struggle to translate student's input into actions. A clearer picture of the responsibility and ownership of quality assurance procedure as well as a more structured support system for teachers and students, could be beneficial for more measurable results in this area for the future.

The peers also provided their initial feedback, which is planned to be drafted in detail in the form of a comprehensive feedback report.

## Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
- CINOP (EQAVET national reference point)

## Target group

### Other

Policy makers

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Further developing national quality assurance systems

### Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

### European and international dimensions of VET

Transnational VET initiatives, including joint VET programmes

## Subsystem

IVET CVET

## Further reading

[16th EQAVET peer review in the Netherlands on 'Student involvement and the role of teachers in the improvement of quality in upper secondary VET' - Flash Report](#)

[Second edition of the Peer Review Manual](#)

[Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training \(VET\) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#)

[Article on EQAVET activities 2025 on website European Commission](#)

### “ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/45479>

