



# EQAVET

European Quality Assurance  
in Vocational Education and Training

Supporting the implementation of the  
European Quality Assurance Reference Framework  
for Vocational Education and Training



## Quality assuring work-based learning

Introducing quality assurance frameworks in work-based learning (WBL) has become a priority in recent years. Countries at the early stages of developing their quality assurance practices can learn from the experiences of others who have already implemented comparable quality approaches for WBL.

The EQAVET network has identified a series of common themes, called building blocks, which have been used to establish and strengthen quality assurance processes in WBL, in line with EQAVET (the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework or EQAVET Framework for short). The building blocks present an early analysis of approaches to quality assurance for WBL.

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## The EQAVET Framework

The EQAVET Framework is designed to promote better VET by providing authorities and VET providers with common tools for the management of quality in VET.

Given the diversity and complexity of approaches to VET quality within and across Member States, the Framework offers a common point of reference to ensure transparency, consistency and portability between the many streams of policy and practice across Europe, in order to increase mutual trust and mobility of learners and workers.

The Framework was developed by Member States in cooperation with the European Commission and adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009. It is a key element in the follow up to the Copenhagen Declaration, which calls for closer cooperation in the field of VET, and in the ongoing work to renew Europe's education and training systems. In every Member State, a Quality Assurance National Reference Point gives access to information on the Framework and national quality assurance matters in VET.

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## Building Blocks

The early analysis of approaches to quality assurance for WBL across Europe, which are in line with the EQAVET Framework, has identified six interdependent building blocks. These six building blocks support and complement each other and build on the EQAVET indicative descriptors and indicators.

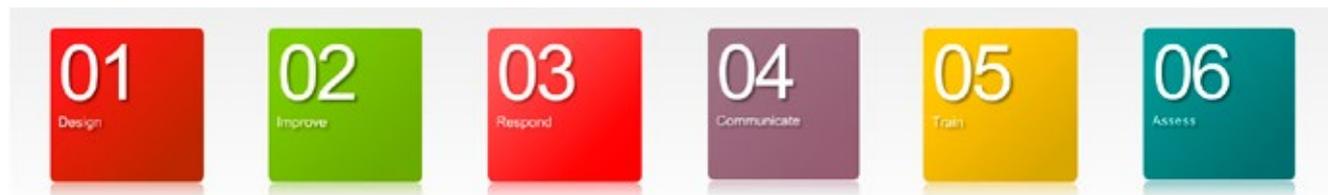
The building blocks are designed to be useful and appropriate for the three main models of WBL:

- Apprenticeship schemes which combine training in companies and VET schools or other education/training institutions;
- On-the-job training in companies which typically cover internships, work placements or traineeships which are a compulsory or optional element of VET programmes leading to formal qualifications;
- Integration into a school-based programme through on-site laboratories, workshops, kitchens, restaurants, junior or practice firms, simulations or real business/industry projects and assignments.

The building blocks provide guidance and set out activities that help VET providers to develop and support a quality assurance approach for WBL in line with the EQAVET Framework. All of the building blocks are supported by examples from European VET providers. You can find full details of these examples at: <http://www.eqavet.eu/workbasedlearning/GNS/Home.aspx>

Each building block includes:

- a 'call to action' and sets out activities that; help to develop a quality assurance approach for WBL
- identification of the 'key issues' that; should be considered and the factors for success
- reference to 'main messages' drawn from an analysis of current practice based on recent experiences, suggesting new ways forward.



## 01 Design work-based learning

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Work with partner organisations to ensure the relevance of learners' training during periods of work-based learning</p>	<p>Which organisations should we work with in order to provide high-quality training?</p> <p>Which courses/ qualifications should learners follow?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The quality of WBL can be enhanced if quality assurance is considered during the planning phase. In some situations this can be part of a formal arrangement between partner organisations.</li> <li>– It is important to ensure that each partner organisation links the content of their training to the learner's qualification.</li> <li>– Quality assurance is strengthened if each partner organisation has an opportunity to evaluate and review their working relationship.</li> </ul>	<p>Quality assurance is strengthened if it is planned from the start, and if responsibilities for each stage of work-based learning are clarified.</p> <p>Many VET teachers who spend time in companies find it easier to establish close connections between work-based and school-based provision.</p> <p>Small and medium-sized enterprises can be encouraged and supported to become more involved in work-based learning if attention is paid to their specific training needs and context.</p> <p>On-line systems enhances the ability of employers and VET schools to work collaboratively; this supports quality assurance and strengthens the opportunity to review work-based learning.</p> <p>Decisions on selecting companies to be involved in work-based learning can be difficult. However when VET schools are allowed to select, many report significant improvements in the quality of provision</p>

## 02 Improve the quality

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Agree with partner organisations when the quality of training will be monitored and how improvements will be made</p>	<p>How should an organisation take responsibility for monitoring quality?</p> <p>When and how will improvements be made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The quality of training is improved when it is monitored and reviewed on an on-going basis (not only when the learners have finished their course or qualification).</li> <li>– Identifying staff with responsibility for quality assurance can be a core part of an improvement plan</li> </ul>	<p>Increasingly, data from work-based learning is being used to make comparisons with regional or national data. This helps employers, other stakeholders and VET providers to identify areas where further information can be collected and used to review and improve quality.</p> <p>Increasingly, also, employers, VET providers and other stakeholders are designing agreements for work-based learning which set clear expectations for training and clarify how and when improvements will be made.</p> <p>In many situations the amount of time learners devote to work-based training is increasing.</p>

## 03 Respond to learners' needs

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Continue to be aware of the specific needs of learners throughout their work-based learning</p>	<p>How will we respond to learners' ongoing or emerging training needs?</p> <p>How will problems experienced by a learner be resolved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learners are more confident and feel more secure when there is a named member of staff to support them during work-based learning.</li> <li>– Quality is enhanced when VET schools keep in touch with learners during periods of work-based learning (and employers keep in touch with learners while they attend a VET school).</li> <li>– Quality is strengthened when learners are given the time and opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences, training and learning.</li> </ul>	<p>Matching individual needs of learners to the needs of employers brings benefits for everyone. Assigning a member of staff to support learners during work-based training strengthens the quality of provision and enhances the quality assurance process.</p> <p>Work-based learning enables VET providers and employers to design more individualised approaches to learning.</p> <p>Learner and employer feedback is part of a systematic approach to quality assurance during work-based learning. This feedback is used during training and at the end of the courses to improve quality.</p> <p>VET providers, employers and stakeholders need to work closely together during periods of work-based learning. In some situations this closeness is characterised by staff from VET schools visiting students and organising regular meetings with employers.</p>

## 04 Communicate

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Ensure learners and partner organisations are kept well informed and receive frequent updates on all aspects of training</p>	<p>How will organisations involved in training communicate with each other?</p> <p>How will partner organisations involved in training keep in touch with each other and with learners?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Communication between partner organisations is one of the most important aspects of work-based learning.</li> <li>– The quality of training is enhanced when partner organisations work on the basis of 'no surprises'.</li> <li>– Learners should be as well informed as the organisations that are managing their learning.</li> </ul>	<p>IT systems are important to ensure learners, employers and VET schools remain in contact during work-based learning. There is an increase in the use of real-time systems to improve quality, monitor progress and ensure communication is effective.</p> <p>Formal agreements between VET schools, employers and other stakeholders are being used to strengthen communication during work-based learning.</p> <p>Learners are being seen as key stakeholders who have a stake in their own learning – this is particularly noticeable during periods of work-based learning.</p>

## 05 Train the staff

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Ensure staff are well prepared for their training role, which includes quality assurance</p>	<p>How will all staff be made aware of how quality is assured?</p> <p>Which staff will need training in relation to quality assurance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Quality is improved when all members of staff know that training is evaluated and reviewed regularly</li> <li>– Identifying those with responsibility for quality assurance helps – but it is not enough. Quality assurance should be seen as a shared responsibility.</li> <li>– Staff training should include guidance on how to manage a quality assurance process.</li> </ul>	<p>Training in both pedagogy and quality assurance is becoming more important for company-based staff.</p> <p>Training which supports company-based staff and other stakeholders to become more involved in assessment is important in many situations.</p>

## 06 Assess the learners

<b>What does the Building Block mean?</b>	<b>'Call to action'</b> <i>– have you decided?</i>	<b>Key Issues</b> <i>about factors for success</i>	<b>Main messages</b> <i>Suggesting new ways forward</i>
<p>Work with partner organisations to review the work-based training programme and to assess and certify individual learner achievements, where appropriate</p>	<p>What type of assessment will be completed by the learner?</p> <p>Who will assess each learner – and has the learner been informed?</p> <p>What does a learner have to demonstrate to 'pass' or complete the training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Views on an individual learner's achievement can vary: quality is improved when there is an agreed process for resolving any differences before they occur.</li> <li>– The quality of the learner's experiences and the accuracy and validity of their assessment is strengthened when there is a clear statement of which learning outcomes, standards or competences need to be demonstrated.</li> </ul>	<p>VET schools expect employers to be involved in assessment. For many VET schools, employer involvement is an essential part of work-based learning.</p> <p>Assessing learners while at work is one aspect of the assessment of practical skills and professional competences which are essential for VET qualifications.</p> <p>Assessment during work-based learning should be based on a pre-determined set of competences and skills. Agreement on the focus of assessment improves the quality of training and work-based learning.</p>

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## Further information

The building blocks are part of the **EQAVET Online Guidance on quality assurance for work-based learning (WBL)**, which is a web-based tool designed to support implementation processes and actions aligned to the EQAVET Framework for WBL at national and provider levels.

The tool is available, free of charge, on the EQAVET network website at [www.eqavet.eu](http://www.eqavet.eu)

# THE QUALITY CYCLE

of the European Quality Assurance Reference  
Framework for Vocational Education and Training





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Supporting the implementation of the  
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