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European Quality Assurance Frameworks for micro-credentials

Andrey Girenko, GIRAF PM e.K.

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Introduction

- Why Quality of Education matters?

  Educational failure
  - Pelalises an individual for life
  - Imposes high costs on society

  OECD (2012), Equity and Quality in Education: Supporting Disadvantaged Students and Schools, OECD Publishing.
  http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264130852-en

- Investing in Quality Assurance pays off for all stakeholders

What is Quality Assurance (QA) in education?

Quality assurance involves the **systematic** review of educational provision to maintain and improve its quality, equity and efficiency. It encompasses educational establishment self-evaluation, external evaluation (including inspection), the evaluation of teachers and school leaders, and student assessments.

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QA is implemented at all levels:
- Educational System as a whole
- **Education providers**
- Educational programme
- Subject

QA and micro-credentials: why it matters?

QA is in the centre of micro-credential definition:

"A micro-credential

1. is a record of focused learning achievement verifying that a learner knows, understands or can do;
2. <u>includes assessment based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider;</u>
3. has stand-alone value and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials and/or macro-credentials including through recognition of prior learning; and
4. <u>meets the standards required by relevant quality assurance."</u>

UNESCO, 2021

Quality underpins Acceptance
Acceptance is based on Trust; Trust is based on proven Quality and Transparency

European QA Framework in Higher Education

- Educational policies in Europe: How it works
  - Member States maintain their sovereignty when it comes to Education
  - Cohesion is achieved through the system of Recommendations and other collective activities
  - Europe has a diversity of HE systems (EHEA extends beyond the EU)

Cohesion in Quality Assurance
underpins many fundamental EU policies such as e.g. European Common Labour Market

European QA framework in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

- Why VET?
- QA in VET: challenges
- https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H1202%2801%29

EQAVET is based on
- quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/ assessment, and review/revision)
- selection of descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at both VET system and VET provider levels.
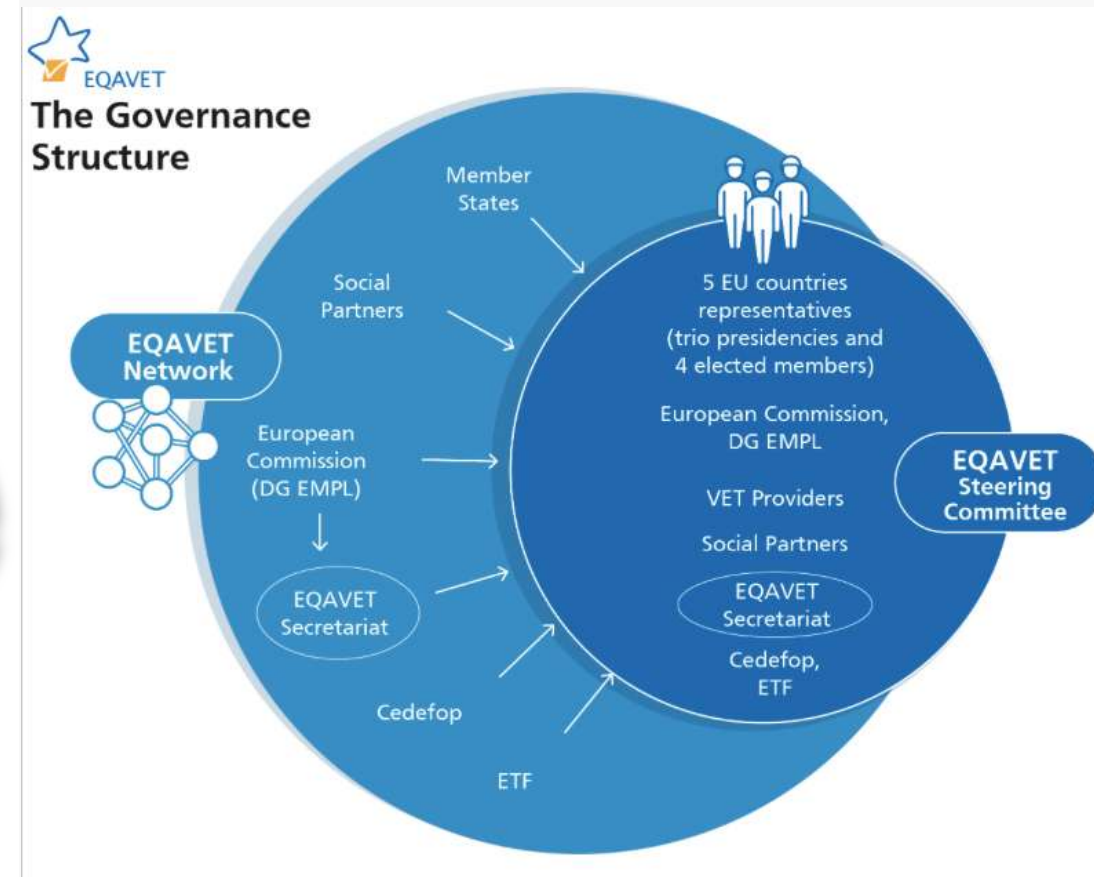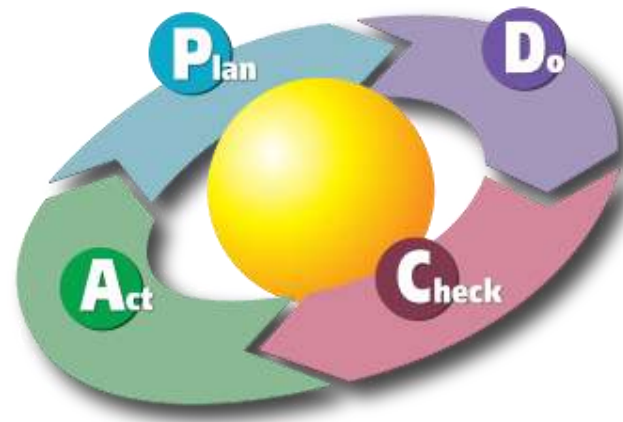
EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- ***QC1** Planning reflects a strategic vision shared by the relevant stakeholders and includes explicit goals/objectives, actions and indicators*
  - EU, National and regional VET policy goals are reflected while planning the course
  - Quantitative goals and targets are set for the course
  - Design of the course content/structure is done with the involvement of relevant stakeholders (e.g. needs definition, goals setting)
  - Allocation of QA responsibilities is explicit

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- **QC1** *Planning reflects a strategic vision shared by the relevant stakeholders and includes explicit goals/objectives, actions and indicators*
  - Early involvement of teaching and admin staff in the course planning
  - VET provider has an explicit and transparent QA system in place
  - Planning covers compliance with GDPR and other data protection rules/regulation

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- ***QC2** Implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders and include explicit principles*
  - Resource planning and assignment (e.g. staff, facilities, educational technologies, etc.) ensuring achievement of goals and targets is done
  - Requirements regarding teaching staff competences are presented
  - Strategic plan for staff competences development is in place
  - Teaching staff undertake regular training and develop cooperation with relevant external stakeholders

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- *QC2 Implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders and include explicit principles*
  - Learner-centered approach enabling VET provider to respond to the learning needs of individuals is implemented
  - Innovative teaching and learning methods (both in school and work place) are widely used for the course delivery
  - Valid, commonly acceptable, accurate and reliable methods to assess individuals' learning outcomes are used

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- **QC3** *Evaluation of outcomes and processes is regularly carried out and supported by measurement*
    - Self-assessment/self-evaluation is periodically carried out under national and regional regulations/frameworks or at the initiative of VET providers, covering also the digital readiness and environmental sustainability of VET institutions
    - Evaluation and review covers processes and results/outcomes and includes such assessments as e.g. learner satisfaction as well as staff performance and satisfaction

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- ***QC3*** *Evaluation of outcomes and processes is regularly carried out and supported by measurement*
  - Evaluation and review are data/evidence-based and involves external stakeholders
  - Early warning system is in place and used for the course delivery

EQAVET Recommendations (training provider)

- ***QC4*** *Review*
  - Learner's feedback on individual learning experience and learning/teaching environment is collected and analyzed
  - Together with teachers', trainers' and all other relevant stakeholders' feedback this is used to inform further actions
  - Review results are transparent for all stakeholders
  - There is a mechanism to use the feedback and review results for improving the quality of teaching/learning
  - There is practice of discussion over the review results with external stakeholders

QA KPIs derived from EQAVET recommendations

- Investment in training of teachers/trainers (indicator #2)
  - Share of teachers/trainers underwent/undergoing further training
- Completion rate (indicator #4)
  - Number of persons having successfully completed/abandoned the course (drop-out rate)
- Placement rate (indicator #5)
  - Share of learners employed at positions relevant to the subject of learning at designated point in time after completion of training
  - Share of employed learners at designated point in time after completion of training

QA KPIs derived from EQAVET recommendations

- Utilization of acquired skills at the workplace (indicator #6)
  - Information on occupation obtained by individuals after completion of training
  - Satisfaction rate of individuals and employers with acquired skills/competences
- Unemployment rate according to individual criteria (#7)
- Prevalence of vulnerable groups (%% and success rate of participants classified as disadvantaged groups)

Example of the "EQAVET-compliance" questionnaire for course developers

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdsS_Nh4t00d3_1jH0ci7_epI8KxBkD32RnSGPn1SkCMaFVMA/viewform?usp=sf_link

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Conclusions:

- European policies and practices in the field of QA for micro-credentials are at the initial stage, although micro-credentials are not a new phenomenon.
- Bottom-up movement with top-down steering
- Diversity based on existing traditions and different baseline conditions in different countries
- The main principle remains the same: Quality of micro-credentials is a responsibility of their providers, Trust is the key
- More uncertainty with alternative providers (outside of HE system)
- International exchange and collective efforts lead to commonly accepted standards and practices.

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Thank You

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