








# Aligning HE and VET instruments

## **PR2. Recommendations for moving to an aligned quality assurance system**

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## PROJECT CONSORTIUM

P1	PL	Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego	 SZKOŁA GŁÓWNA GOSPODARSTWA WIEJSKIEGO
P2	GR	Dimitra Education & Consulting SA	 ΔΗΜΗΤΡΑ εκπαιδευτική συμβουλευτική
P3	SW	Stiftelsen Kursverksamh Eten Vid Uauniversitet	 Folkuniversitetet
P4	IT	Tiber Umbria Comett Education Programme	 TUCEP TIBER UMBRIA COMETT EDUCATION PROGRAMME International network for knowledge and job
P5	CY	A & A Emphasys Interactive Solutions Ltd	

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## The final version of the recommendation study/self-assessment tool methodology

### Objectives of the methodology of the tool

In general, the main purpose of the self-assessment tool is to facilitate the self-assessment of VET and HE institutions in terms of different aspects of quality assurance and see where they are placed when implementing these aspects. These aspects represent different attention areas of quality assurance based on ESG and EQAVET quality frameworks.

Once the VET and/or higher education institutions complete their self-assessment, the tool will provide them recommendations of best practices the institution could implement to enhance its score/placement in each of the attention areas. In other words, after the institution assesses its score, relevant best practices (identified in PR-1) are proposed for the attention areas where it received a score lower than the average.

This methodology aims to identify the main features of the self-assessment tool as well as define the different attention areas and the best practices linked to each of those areas. The methodology will identify common attention areas between the two quality assurance frameworks (ESG and EQAVET) as well as different attention areas.

The self-assessment tool methodology should be discussed with both VET providers and HEIs to define the importance of the different aspects of the quality attention areas, as well as investigate the importance and the added-value of the different areas between the frameworks. Based on the outcomes of PR-1 and the results of the visits performed to VET Providers and HEIs, the project team finalizes the methodology for the self-assessment tool and defines the quality attention areas to be included.

### Functioning and main features of the self-assessment tool

The tool is designed to enable each institution, whether it is a HEI or a VET institution to assess specific attention areas related to quality assurance.

The institution/user should first select the attention areas it wants to assess. The user will then get a set of statements to which he/she should respond. Those statements are based on the attention areas the user selected. The user should then respond to each of those statements about his/her institution by selecting an answer from the following: “Completely, Largely, Somewhat, Not”.

After submitting the responses, the user will get the results of the self-assessment in forms of a spider graph and a report. The results in a spider graph represent the institution's scores in the attention areas the user selected at the beginning. A big spider

gives an indication that the institution has a high performance in terms in the attention areas that were selected and vice-versa. This is because the size of the spider represents the scores the institution got per attention area. In the attention areas where the institution gets a score that is less than the average, the user/ institution is provided with a set of recommended best practices to enhance its performance in this attention area.

The next section represents the recommendations/best practices per attention area.

## Attention areas and best practices

Under each attention area, a list of good practices is listed for the institution who will get a score that is less than the average.

### Theme 1: Vision and Policy

- 1) **Attention area 1: Leadership:** the way the leadership of the organization creates the conditions for a culture of quality and continuous improvement.

#### Recommendation:

**Leadership enables the institution to set the right circumstances to create a culture of quality: a culture in which all staff is actively involved in creating an attractive and challenging learning environment, a learning environment in which students are motivated to develop their talents and in which the labour market is actively involved in the process of education. To achieve this effect, there is a clear connection between the general learning objectives, the learning outcomes, the vision of the institution and its policy.**

Best practices	Sentences
Engage teachers/professors in the quality assurance procedure.	We engage teachers/professors in quality assurance procedures.
Choose a limited set of clear and measurable indicators which indicate whether the learning outcomes are met. To be added as a footnote: <i>"Selecting a focused set of indicators can streamline the assessment process and ensure that it remains manageable and relevant. This prevents the process from becoming overly bureaucratic and ensures that attention is concentrated on key outcomes."</i>	We choose clear and measurable indicators to indicate whether the learning outcomes are met.
Involve more external experts in the assessment of your quality assurance procedure. To be added as a footnote: <i>"Bringing in external experts can provide new perspectives and benchmarking"</i>	We involve enough external experts in the assessment of our

<i>against external standards. This can enhance the credibility and impartiality of the quality assurance process. The feasibility of this practice depends on the availability of experts and the institution's willingness to be evaluated by external parties."</i>	quality assurance procedure.
Foster leadership development in order to prepare future leaders with a culture of quality.	We foster leadership development to prepare future leaders with a culture of quality.

- 2) **Attention area 2: Support:** The way arrangements are made to create commitment and involvement for the institution's policy.

**Recommendation:**

**To foster staff commitment and engagement within an educational institution, it is essential for the board and managers to proactively support and endorse a vision and policy that emphasizes the importance of quality education, labor market involvement, and the provision of an environment conducive to learning. This policy is set out in a long-term plan which is being evaluated.**

Best practices	Sentences
Develop a strategy through which all staff of the institution are actively involved in discussing vision and policy.	We develop a strategy through which all staff of the institution are actively involved in discussing vision and policy.
<b>For HEIs:</b> Develop a strategy that better reflects the relationship between research, learning, and teaching.	We have a strategy to describe the relationship between research, learning and teaching.
Adapt the policy and support structure based on the evaluation outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.	Policy and support structure is regularly updated based on the evaluation outcomes.
Develop clear communication channels so that all staff are aware of the institution's goals, their role in achieving them, and the progress being made.	Clear communication channels are in place so that all staff are aware of the institution's goals, their role in achieving them, and the progress being made.

## Theme 2: Organization

- 3) Attention area 3: Outcome and accountability:** The way the institution deals with feedback information to deal with its responsibilities and achieve its mission and objectives.

### Recommendation:

**The institution collects results of the achieved learning outcomes consisting of information which is also of relevance for employers, students and further education. The institution shows good governance by making these results public to their different stakeholders. As part of its culture of quality the qualitative and quantitative information is used for the improvement of the education and the services of the institution. The institution should also close this feedback loop by informing stakeholders how their feedback has led to specific improvements.**

Best practices	Sentences
Collect periodically quantitative as well as qualitative information retrieved from the different feedback sources: students, teaching staff, managers and employers.	We periodically collect quantitative and qualitative information retrieved from the different feedback sources: students, teaching staff, managers and employers.
Account for students' feedback in your internal quality assurance indicators.	Students feedback is accounted for in our internal quality assurance indicators.
Put in place more measures that motivate students to provide their feedback.	We put in place measures that encourage students to provide feedback.
Develop a Responsive Feedback System: Establish a system where feedback leads to actionable plans, ensuring that feedback is not just collected but acted upon.	A Responsive Feedback System is in place to establish a system where feedback leads to actionable plans, ensuring that feedback is not just collected but acted upon.
Engage Alumni: Include alumni feedback to assess the long-term impact of educational quality on career success and relevance.	We encourage the Alumni to provide their feedback in order to assess the long-term impact of educational quality on career success and relevance.
Ensure the transparency of external quality assurance processes.	External quality assurance processes are transparent.
Regularly publish outcomes and developments, so that stakeholders can see the improvement of institutional quality over time.	We regularly publish outcomes and developments, so that stakeholders can see the improvement of institutional quality over time.



- 4) **Attention area 4: Staff development and staff allocation:** The way the institution deals with talents, skills and ambitions of teaching staff.

**Recommendation:**

The main contributors for achieving good learning outcomes are teachers. To ensure high educational quality, the institution should be able to recruit the right teachers and keep teachers motivated. The institution knows how individual teachers contribute to its objectives. It has a development policy supporting teachers' life-long learning and their career path and career wishes. It also develops and implements recruitment strategies that enable the recruitment of qualified teachers.

Best practices	Sentences
Arrange periodic and systematic evaluation, for all staff.	We arrange periodic and systematic evaluation for all staff.
Offer opportunities for teachers to upskill and reskill through workshops, courses, and conferences.	Opportunities for teachers to upskill and reskill through workshops, courses and conferences are offered.
Establish mentorship programs to support less experienced staff and to foster knowledge sharing.	We establish mentorship programs to support less experienced staff and to foster knowledge sharing.
Create policies that support a healthy work-life balance to prevent burnout and maintain teachers' motivation	We create policies that support a healthy work-life balance.
Ensure that teachers are aware of the institution's quality policy.	We ensure that teachers are aware of the institution's quality policy.
Motivate teachers to contribute to the institution's quality assurance.	Teachers are encouraged to contribute to the institution's quality assurance.
<b>For HEI:</b> Give teachers enough time and capability for appropriate research that enables them to publish in highly ranked journals.	We give teachers enough time and capability for appropriate research so that they can increase their number of publications in highly ranked research journals.

- 5) **Attention area 5: Employer and stakeholders' involvement:** The way the institution deals with employer and stakeholder's involvement to achieve its mission and objectives, and to create attractive and up-to-date education.

**Recommendation:**

To ensure good learning outcomes the institution seeks a maximum level of employer and stakeholder's involvement in the different stages of education. Within the boundaries of rules and regulations, measures are taken to involve employers in defining learning outcomes, learning content, delivery of education, examination and quality evaluation. Continuous engagement of employers contributes to up-to-date and attractive education and to increased students' motivation.



Best practices	Sentences
Evaluate systematically the extent to which your learning objectives match the labor market requirements.	There is a systematic evaluation of the extent to which our learning objectives match the labor market requirements.
Develop a strategy to actively involve the labor market stakeholders in the different aspects of education.	Our institution has a strategy to actively involve the labor market stakeholders in the different aspects of education.
Employers are highly involved in estimating future labor needs and therefore in the supply of new programmes and students.	We involve employers in estimating future labor needs and therefore in the supply of new programmes and students.
Create a network of the relevant stakeholders and engage them in periodic discussions on key issues related to quality assurance.	A network of different relevant stakeholders is created and engaged in periodic discussions on key issues related to quality assurance.
Follow-up on the WBL to ensure that the tasks assigned to students are in line with their educational programme and learning objectives.	We follow-up on WBL to ensure that the tasks assigned to students are in line with their educational programme and learning objectives.

### Theme 3: Teaching

- 6) **Attention area 6: Curricula:** The way the institution arranges for input and feedback from the professional domain.

**Recommendation:**

**The institution's policy regarding labour market involvement is visible in the way employers or employer organisation are involved in the definition of the content of the education. Involvement can be limited due to laws and legislations, but even though the institution arranges for input and feedback from the professional domain, taking into account the future demands from that same domain. The institution offers up-to date education which is valued by the professional domain. The institution accounts for the following factors in its curricula development and revision process: the curricula development process, mechanisms for feedback integration, continuous review and adaptation.**

Best practices	Sentences
Take measures to engage staff and students in the continuous improvement of the curriculum.	Measures are taken to engage staff and students in the continuous improvement of the curriculum.
Create feedback loops where student input is actively sought and used to inform curriculum development.	We create feedback loops where student input is actively sought and used to inform curriculum development.

<b>For VET:</b> Make continuous improvements to your programmes to ensure their relevance to the national as well as the regional labor market needs.	We make continuous improvements of our programmes to ensure their relevance to the national as well as the regional labor market needs.
Implement a systematic approach to collect feedback from all stakeholders, including employers, alumni, and industry experts.	Our institution puts in place a systematic approach to collecting feedback from all stakeholders, including employers, alumni, and industry experts.
Design curriculum structures that allow for timely updates without overhauling entire programmes, to integrate new skills and knowledge areas as they become relevant.	Curriculum structures are designed to allow for timely updates without overhauling entire programmes, to integrate new skills and knowledge areas as they become relevant.
Regularly conduct labor market analysis to predict future skills needs and proactively adapt the curriculum.	We conduct regular labor market analysis to predict future skills needs and to adapt the curriculum proactively.
<b>For HEI:</b> Include a description of the potential professions and career paths that students can pursue after the end of their programmes.	We include in our curricula a description of the potential professions students can pursue at the end of their programmes.

**7) Attention area 7: Internship, Apprenticeship and WBL:** The way the institution arranges for good learning conditions during apprenticeship and/or WBL.

**Recommendation:**

**In its vision on education the institution describes how work-based learning (WBL) and/ or apprenticeship contribute to the intended learning outcomes. To make apprenticeship and WBL effective, the institution sets standards and arranges for a network of employers which are able to meet these standards. Also, the institution prepares the students prior to a WBL placement or apprenticeship and evaluates the learning outcome with students as well as employers. To insure a WBL that contributes to the quality of education, the institution accounts for: Quality Monitoring of WBL Sites, Partnership Agreements with relevant employers and WBL mentorship programs by employers in the workplace.**

Best practices	Sentences
<b>For VET:</b> Incorporate regular updates to the curriculum and WBL programmes based on emerging industry trends and technologies.	We incorporate regular updates to the curriculum and WBL programmes based on emerging industry trends and technologies.
Ensure that there are robust feedback mechanisms for students to share their WBL experiences with the institution.	We ensure that there are robust feedback mechanisms for students to share WBL experiences with the institution.
Measure employers' satisfaction with graduates' technical skills and performance in the workplace.	We assess the extent to which employers are satisfied with graduates' technical skills and performance in the workplace.
Measuring employers' satisfaction with graduates' soft skills.	We assess the extent to which employers are satisfied with graduates' soft skills.
Evaluate skills and competences taught during WBL through a close dialogue with the supervisor at the workplace.	We assess the skills and competences earned by the student during WBL, through a close dialogue with the supervisor at the workplace.

## Theme 4: learner

- 8) **Attention area 8: Guidance:** The arrangements an institution makes to help learners to develop a career path which matches their talents.

### Recommendation:

**Providing career advice and support during all stages of education is part of the institutions' vision on educational objectives and quality. The services and support offered prevent drop-out (to be added only for VET) and help improve students' professional awareness and career management competences for life-long learning as well as to move on to the next level of education. It thus helps to achieve main learning outcomes. The institution accounts for the different types of career guidance such as one-on-one counseling, workshops, job fairs, and mentoring programs.**

Best practices	Sentences
Arrange for career guidance programmes for students in different stages of their study path.	Career guidance programs are offered for students in different stages of their study path.
Assure that you appoint guidance staff who has up-to-date knowledge regarding the world of professional education and labor market.	We appoint a guidance staff who has up-to-date knowledge regarding the world of professional education and labor market.

<b>For VET:</b> Engage experts from specific fields to guarantee more tailored guidance based on students' specialization and interest.	We engage experts from specific fields to guarantee more tailored guidance.
<b>For HEI:</b> As part of the general course, familiarize students with possible career paths that they can pursue after completing education.	Students are familiarized with possible career paths that they can pursue after completing education.
<b>For HEI:</b> Engage/hire counsellors and/or researchers with expertise in specific fields.	We engage/hire counsellors and/or researchers with expertise in specific fields.
Use personalized guidance services to match the talents and interests of individual learners, accommodating different career aspirations and learning styles.	We use personalized guidance services to match the talents and interests of individual learners.
<b>For HEI:</b> Ensure that career guidance is well-integrated with academic advising so that educational choices support students' career goals.	Career guidance is well-integrated with academic advising in a way that enables educational choices to support students' career goals.

- 9) **Attention area 9: Learning process:** The arrangements an institution makes to foster students' motivation and engagement in the learning process.

**Recommendation:**

**Providing students with an up-to-date knowledge that enables them to pursue the career they choose whether it is an academic or non-academic career. Providing students with the relevant knowledge that they really need for the career they chose, will increase their motivation to learn. The institution guarantees a learning process with high quality by putting in place relevant assessment strategies as well as learning resources and outcomes.**

Best practices	Sentences
Use different assessment strategies that promote continuous learning and motivation, including formative assessments, peer assessments, and self-assessment opportunities.	We use different assessment strategies that promote continuous learning and motivation.
<b>For HEI:</b> Support joint scientific publications of students and lecturers for students who want to pursue an academic career.	We support joint scientific publications of students and lecturers.

Stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection, and engagement in the learning process.	We stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection, and engagement in the learning process.
<b>For HEI:</b> Match the research skills that the student acquires with the requirements of the highly ranked research journals.	Research skills acquired by students are matched with the requirements of the highly ranked research journals.
<b>For HEI:</b> Account for students who would like to pursue a non-academic career.	We account for students who would like to pursue a non-academic career.
Develop a strategy for life-long learning for students.	We develop life-long learning strategies for students.
<b>For HEI:</b> Account for students who would like to pursue an academic career in higher VET.	We account for students who would like to pursue an academic career in higher VET.
<b>For HEI:</b> Track your graduates' career paths in a systematic way. This should include both; those who pursue an academic career and the others who choose a non-academic one.	We systematically track our graduates' career path whether it is academic or non-academic.
<b>For VET:</b> Track your graduates' career paths in a systematic way.	We systematically track our graduates' career path.