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ARQA-VET

## **Teacher and trainer involvement in Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures**

**Report on a Joint Activity of Austria and Finland with  
contributions from DE, NL, RO and Scotland/UK in EQAVET NRP  
Call 2015**

**Michaela Jonach & Leena Koski**



FINNISH NATIONAL  
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

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## 1. Introduction

Within the EQAVET Call 2015-2017 Austrian and Finnish National Reference Points for QA in VET (ARQA-VET and FNAE) were implementing an activity focussing on „Teacher and trainer involvement in Quality Management Systems and Quality Assurance Procedures“. This activity included two meetings to which other NRP members (all together: AT, FI, DE, NL, RO, UK/Scotland) and VET provider representatives from these countries (teachers and trainers, management staff, school quality managers) were invited.

**First Meeting:** The first meeting took place in Vienna/Austria in October 2016 and focused on an introduction to the topic and also on the role of NRPs in supporting and encouraging VET providers to involve teaching staff in QM. Besides a presentation from ARQA-VET, an expert input from Geoff Hayward (Professor of Education, University of Cambridge) on the topic „How to involve VET teachers and trainers in QA work at provider level?“ was on the agenda. After this input we organised group discussions alongside the following questions:

- 🕒 Do you have special concepts and methods for the involvement of teachers and trainers in QM in your countries?
- 🕒 Which competences do „regular“ teachers and trainers need to do their quality work?
- 🕒 Which challenges and obstacles do you see?
- 🕒 How are teachers and trainers encouraged and motivated to use quality management instruments to improve teaching and learning processes?

The group discussed and defined the main findings of the first meeting and made content-related suggestions for the second meeting.



Figure 1: Participants of Workshop 1, Vienna, October 2016

**Second Meeting:** The Second meeting took place in Helsinki/Finland in February 2017. After a sum up of the most important findings of the first meeting with the help of a presentation

by ARQA-VET the focus of the second meeting was on concrete examples of good practice in the field of teachers and trainers involvement at provider level. Three Finnish VET providers were presenting their approaches:

- 📍 Mercuria Business School (Ms. Henni Timonen, Quality manager and Ms. Tarja Mykrä, Director of Development)
- 📍 South Savo Vocational College (Ms. Raisa Karjalainen, Quality coordinator)
- 📍 Luovi Vocational College (Ms. Marjut Huttunen, Quality manager)

In group discussions and with the help of the following questions, participants developed recommendations.

Discussion about individual (teachers) level:

- 📍 How do you involve teachers in QA of the VET provider/school in practice?
- 📍 How do you promote QA as a part of teachers work?
- 📍 What are the success factors?
- 📍 How do you evaluate/get evidence on the involvement? What are the criteria to be used?
- 📍 Connection between involvement of teachers and trainers and Learning Outcomes? What evidence do we have on that?



Figure 2: Discussion about the role of teachers and trainers

Discussion about the role of teachers and trainers when it comes to organisational quality development (organisational level):

- 🕒 How do you involve teachers and trainers in QA/organisational development?
- 🕒 What benefits have you identified?
- 🕒 What are the success factors?
- 🕒 How do you evaluate/get evidence on the involvement in your own organisation?  
What are the criteria to be used?
- 🕒 Connection between involvement of teachers and trainers and Learning Outcomes?  
What evidence do we have on that? Example?

## 2. Recommendations: How to involve teachers/trainers in quality management?

The group came to the conclusion, that teacher involvement is crucial for successful implementation of quality management. In some countries teacher involvement seems to be more self-evident than in others, but in any case it seems to be a very important topic. On the basis of expert inputs, good practice examples from different VET providers and results of discussions in small groups, participants of this Joint Activity came to the following recommendations concerning the topic teacher involvement in quality management:

### System level (Level of quality management system and VET system)

- 🕒 **Give teachers/trainers an active role at system level:** It is important to involve teachers at all levels, but also at system level. When a quality management system is newly developed or further developed, it is very important to involve teachers from the beginning to get their ideas and feedback to the design process of quality management systems. Talk with teachers and trainers, not only about them!
- 🕒 **Provide training for teachers/trainers or other settings in order to support them to develop their competences:** In many countries the provision of teacher training is also a task at system level. We discussed a lot that it cannot be taken for granted that all teachers/educators in VET have the necessary competences to do their quality work at different levels. It would be helpful to define the necessary competences for teachers (develop competence profiles) and to offer different training settings (online, face to face trainings, materials) or provide good examples how to develop those competences in their everyday work and thus to support the competence development of teachers in the field of quality work.
- 🕒 **Use a language which is easy to understand and useful for teachers/trainers:** Quality management terminology (e.g. process, indicator, data, review, scorecard) seems to be quite abstract and theoretical for some teachers. On the other hand in VET sector, the students have to know the QM practices of the field they study. The interrelation of QM-language with teaching, learning and the daily work of teachers doesn't seem to be obvious. We recommend to think about existing practices of using QM language

in the educational context and try to come to a more supportive and sensible use of it, keeping at same time the needs of working life in mind.

### **Organisational level (level of VET providers):**

- 📍 Focus on the benefit for teachers and trainers and make these benefits visible: We recommend to make clear (as part of an ongoing process) how and why teachers and the organisation can benefit from quality management and their input to it. Conceivable benefits for teachers for examples are learning from others, shared responsibilities, professional development on the basis of feedback, support via organisational process management and many more.
- 📍 **Involve teachers and trainers at every level within the organisation:** We recommend to involve teachers not only at the level of the work in their classrooms or other learning environments but also when it comes to vision, mission and strategy and objectives of the organisation. Every teacher should have the possibility to participate in the process of strategy development and selection of objectives. This enhances the chance to get teachers on board and supports motivation and commitment.
- 📍 **Develop the quality culture of the organisation:** Quality management means both structures and instruments but also the culture of an organisation (values and attitudes). It's much easier to change structures than attitudes. Change of attitudes and values is a long-term process, and it helps if this process is accompanied by different settings, which enable teachers to have good experiences with new approaches. Empower the teachers that they are still in charge of choosing methods of teaching even though there are some common processes and procedures in quality management. Involve teachers and trainers in development of themselves as key persons.
- 📍 **Provide time, structures and resources for collective reflection of quality issues:** Collective reflection about the pros and cons of existing practices at VET provider level (How do we do? Why are we doing, what we are doing?) is needed if an organisation actually strives for continuous improvement. In many countries it is not very easy to find enough time, structures and resources for teachers to give them the opportunity to do these collective reflections. But remaining merely on the individual level („improve my own teaching and learning“) means to be far away from organisational development.
- 📍 **Be aware, that headmasters/school management members are role models:** Management staff has an important influence on organisational culture. When it comes to quality management it is important that the members of school management act as role models (for example do their own feedback procedures in an exemplary manner, show on their own example how they deal with failures and challenges). If management staff wants teachers to work on quality issues, it is an important prerequisite that it is done in the desirable manner by themselves. One possibility to make clear, that management staff is seriously interested in quality



issues, is that they ask teachers and trainers for feedback to themselves in their management role and show that they use the feedback for improvement of their work.

#### **Individual/trainers and teachers level:**

- 📍 **Give teachers support to work in teams:** The role of teachers and trainers has changed a lot in the last years. In many countries teachers are no „single players“ anymore, in this countries they usually work in teams. Other countries are in a transition phase in this respect. Teamwork opens possibilities for collective reflection and the creation of a collaborative culture that is beneficial for quality work at provider level.
- 📍 **Give teachers and trainers the possibility to receive and give feedback:** Feedback is a key issue when it comes to quality management. Student´s and other stakeholders feedback can be a very good basis for the professional development of teachers. There are good examples how the results and feedback are discussed in teams and the teams have had power to decide which improvement activities will be taken based on the feedback and results. To show the full potential of feedback let teachers also do it the other way around and give them opportunities to give feedback to management staff.
- 📍 Encourage and support teachers to assure that the quality cycle is likely to be implemented in their own work: It is also senseful to involve teachers in planning, implementation, evaluation and review of the school curriculum. .
- 📍 **Ask teachers how they want to be involved:** Teachers may have a lot of more ideas of how to be involved in quality management - especially when it comes to the question of what would be their needs to improve at individual level. Ask them continuously (for example via an evaluation or in other ways) how they would like to be involved in quality management and what would support their daily work. A step by step approach could be useful to keep in mind too.



### 3. Examples of good practice in different countries in relation to teacher involvement

#### 3.1 Mentor Model at ESEDU (South Savo Vocational College), Finland



Vocational expertise  
for working life

As the strongest training provider in South Savo, we offer a diverse range of opportunities:

- for vocational education
- for acquiring additional qualifications as well as updating one's previous training/education
- for taking proficiency tests for working life (such as the food hygiene proficiency certificate)

We have a strong regional co-operation with companies in South Savo in terms of providing various educational solutions.



Etelä-Savon ammattopisto South Savo Vocational College

Figure 3: Vocational expertise working life

At Esedu, the staff development guidelines primarily join strategic priorities with the competence areas of the task of the teacher but also with the competence required in the tasks of other staff of an educational institution. Peer learning and mentoring competence are named as one of the guidelines of the priority area of pedagogy.

The aim here is to develop mentoring activities as part of different work assignments, particularly from the perspective of obtaining tacit knowledge at the final career stage, promote peer learning as a clear staff development tool, and support it, e.g. by providing opportunities for encounters between different fields and among actors from different educational institutions and professionals responsible for different tasks. In addition, the aim is to utilise the competence available in an educational institution in staff development. These objectives can be achieved by taking mentoring competence into account when updating competence assessment and personal development plan practices; by creating independent processes for the development, training and mentoring of people at the different stages of their careers; by supporting orientation and induction, planning of education as well as personnel management and supervisory work by preparing clear contents that are targeted at the staff at the different stages of their careers as part of the development work.

While we were using a mentoring model even before this guideline, the aim of framing the above issues in the staff programme is to enhance the effectiveness of mentoring in Esedu. In addition to the strategy, the objectives and measures to the areas described above have been derived from different assessment results; for example, the results of the working life barometer and the targets of development derived from the barometer are strongly visible.

### **3.2 Feedback surveys and utilisation of Wilma at MERCURIA**

Mercuria Business School established in 1908, is a private business college with limited company status. Mercuria Business School is situated in the city of Vantaa, within the metropolitan area of Helsinki. Mercuria Business School offers three-year programmes in Business Administration amounting to 180 competence points. The studies lead to diploma in Business Administration. Apprenticeship training is available for young people and adults: the students can also get the diploma by demonstrating their skills in competence-based examination. Besides the degree programmes the Business Services provide professional training, tailor made courses and research and development activities for companies. We have had an active role in developing competence-based learning together with many remarkable companies.

The School is well known for high customer satisfaction and close co-operation with the local business society. Many leading Finnish and international companies use our training programmes and services. The Mercuria Business School has got Quality Award for VET in 2016 and that year special theme in the competition was learning outcome orientation and customer orientation. The School has collected feedback from different stakeholders on different ways and below there is yearly cycle of different feedback procedures.

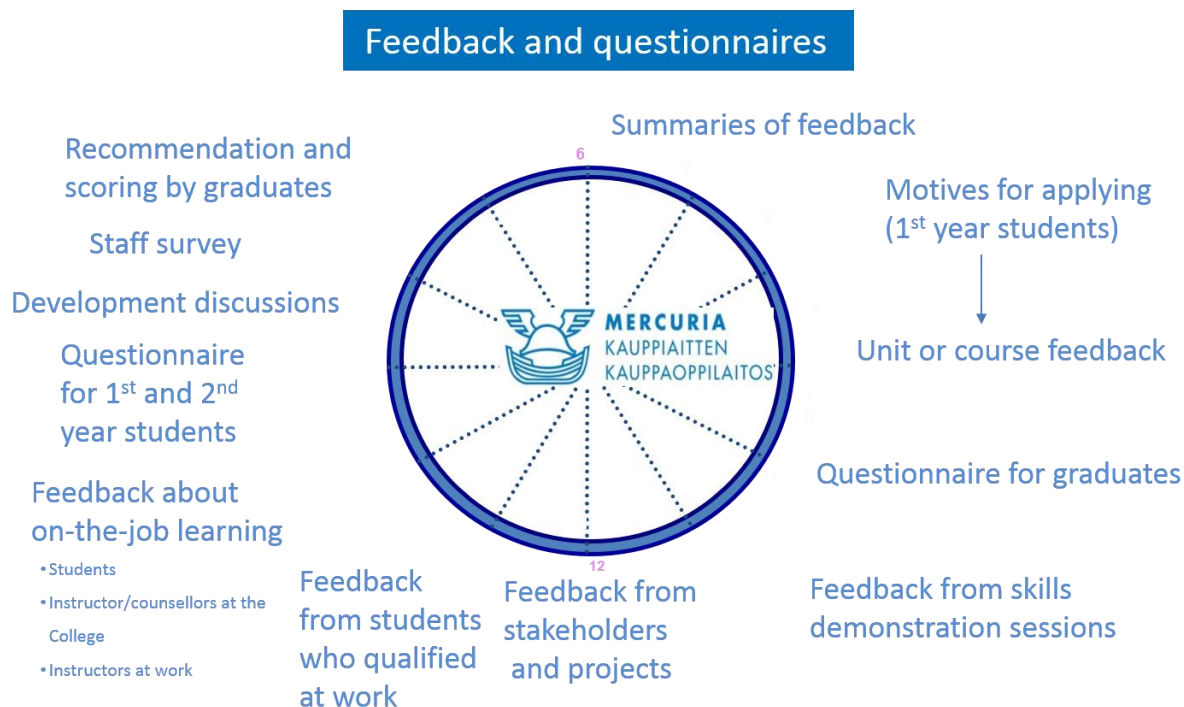


Figure 4: Examples of how teachers use the information received from feedback surveys

Teachers receive information about the fact why the students have applied to MERCURIA and what kind of expectations they have.

Course feedback provides teachers with information about how they have managed to implement the course, whether the course has reached the participants, what went particularly well and how the course could be improved in future. At the same time, teachers can compare the feedback they have received with the feedback received by all teachers at MERCURIA.

The survey for MERCURIA graduates provides both working life contacts through reaching former students and possible on-the-job learning places and career stories to support teachers' work. Additionally, information is received about whether students are in employment that corresponds with their education.

Based on the feedback received from competence demonstrations, teachers can, for example, ensure the quality of teaching and develop theoretical instruction.

The feedback from working life provides teachers with important information about how smooth the cooperation between working life and MERCURIA is and what kind of wishes there are.

The feedback from on-the-job learning periods helps teachers ensure that the existing operating methods work. It also helps teachers develop their own operating methods in the implementation of on-the-job learning, such as training the students and implementing the entire on-the-job learning process. Through the collection of feedback from on-the-job learning, teachers can themselves give feedback and their development suggestions to

issues related to on-the-job learning. With the help of this feedback, teachers also receive information on how satisfied workplace instructors are with the implementation of on-the-job learning and about what kind of wishes they have regarding further development of the practice.

With the help of the annual student survey, teachers receive a wide range of evaluations and information about how successful teaching has been and what kind of development suggestions and wishes students have regarding the education. This way, teachers can also improve their own operating methods.

Through staff surveys and development discussions, teachers can give feedback on MERCURIA's operation and their development suggestions for improving the education to the management. Feedback and development suggestions as a whole benefit the development of the operation, the definition of common goals and the drawing up of plans to achieve the goals

### Wilma from teachers' point of view in MERCURIA

The most important single system in terms of the functioning of processes and operational management at MERCURIA is the student administration system Primus and its web user interface Wilma. Primus serves as an information store and, together with the user interface Wilma, forms MERCURIA's enterprise resource planning system.

MERCURIA constantly develops Primus and Wilma and the aim is to make more efficient use of them and expand their use possibilities. As a result of this development work, Primus and Wilma now have an increasingly central role in the practical operating methods and the everyday operational management and general management of the education institution.

Teachers produce and use the information and functionalities of the information system in a uniform way. Communication, the flow of information and tasks such as enrolment for training and giving feedback on courses are carried out in Wilma according to uniform practices. In addition, it is easier to monitor studies through Wilma. In competence-based qualifications, the workplace assessment forms have been moved to Wilma and teachers have been instructed use Wilma more efficiently when providing guidance. This way the information will be transferred into the student's individualisation document and the guidance given will be documented, which also makes it easier to demonstrate and monitor guidance.

#### **An example of how Wilma helps in the competence-based approach:**

At the beginning of the studies, the student starts to fill in the form Guidance and individualisation (O&H, Ohjaus ja henkilökohtaistaminen) in Wilma. At this stage, the student is asked to provide information about his/her work experience and hobbies, ways to study/learn, future plans and the work duties that he/she is interested in, among other things.

The HOPS (personal study plan) instructor discusses the student's wishes and goals with the student with the help of the O&H form filled in by the student. When it is time to choose the competence area and study units, the HOPS instructor goes through the choices with the student. The student selects the study units to the HOPS tree himself/herself. The HOPS instructor will mark the planned dates for completing the study units to the student's HOPS tree. Study units are selected separately for each year of study.

The vocational skills demonstrations and on-the-job learning periods in Wilma are already opened for the student in each selected study unit. When it is time for the student to complete the on-the-job learning periods and vocational skills demonstrations, the student and the HOPS instructor will together record a plan for the on-the-job learning period and the vocational skills demonstration in Wilma.

The HOPS instructor conducts regular discussions with the student (at least once during each period) and records this to the O&H form in Wilma under section 6. Guidance, discussions with the student and the guardian, and related events. All entries made to the O&H form are also visible to the student and the guardian.

The student's personal information, such as work experience, hobbies, dreams, choices, dates of completed studies, on-the-job learning plans, skills demonstration plans and guidance given are shown in the individual study plan that can be printed out from Wilma.

### **3.3 Teacher/educator trainings in Austria**

In Austria, special teacher trainings in the context of working with students' feedback are implemented right now. ARQA-VET has developed a workshop design for this topic with a special focus on teachers. Three pilot workshops for teachers have already been implemented. At the moment the focus is on the individual level (continuous improvement of individual teacher performance, improvement of individual teaching and learning). Main topics of the trainings are: Work with the P-D-C-A to improve teaching and training processes – planning of teaching and training, implementing teaching and training, evaluating teaching and training, come to improvements on the basis of evaluation results. The next step is to develop a Train the Trainer concept for multipliers. The aim is to create a group of multipliers who get competences to work with teachers on quality topics. Further quality management topics, including organisational development, are planned to be prepared with special focus on teachers as target group.

### **3.4 Involvement of teachers and trainers in strategic planning in the Netherlands**

In the Netherlands teachers and trainers are deeply involved in the strategic planning of VET providers. Before planning and control starts, the strategy (Vision, mission and ambition) is reviewed. To do so, discussion groups/focus groups are formed with representatives of the

organisation (Principal & Vice, Executive Officers, Team managers and Educational Directors and Teachers).

- 🕒 Teams evaluate their courses and consider improvements and changes. There are (ROC) objectives to meet and the strategy has to be followed. The targets a team sets are to be written in a yearly team plan.
- 🕒 The team plan will be evaluated by the Q&A, supporting teams and team managers.
- 🕒 A department plan and a concern plan is derived from / completed with the team plans.

Each year, teams use the educational policy cycle for their courses.

- 🕒 The professional competences are explored, to determine what students should learn to become a professional.
  - 🕒 Qualification requirements are described.
  - 🕒 An educational model is developed or chosen
  - 🕒 Course programmes are to be managed, e.g. targets, objectives, etc. are set
  - 🕒 The programme will be translated into timetables, to match students and teachers to realise the courses.
- 
- 🕒 Requirements and resources are set.
  - 🕒 Each year there will be a team evaluation to start the next PDCA cycle.
  - 🕒 There are Q&Q audits to check and support.

## 4. Good Practice in other fields

### 4.1 Romania: Improving the quality of education and training through partnership networks (co-financed by the ESF through SOP HRD 2007-2013)

- 🕒 220 certified persons with professional skills to develop partnership networks (members of the Evaluation and Quality Assurance in schools, members of the school board).
- 🕒 *Inter assistance networks* - 16 IVET school networks (96 schools) were set up on a sectoral base - peer learning and peer review activities are organised, a website and online platforms are developed to facilitate online communication (<http://parteneriatpentrucalitate.tvet.ro>)

### 4.2 Successful stories in Romania - Compendium of Best Practices / Compendium in Promoting Vocational Education and Training

Our Project, (EQAVET-NRP-RO (573687-EPP-1-2016-1-RO -EPPKA3-EQAVET-NRP / Restricted Call EACEA 46/2015), was fully compliant with the EQAVET recommendations and the

specific objectives of this call. One of the most serious challenges for the Romanian initial vocational education and training is its low attractiveness. This is not only caused by the intrinsic characteristics of the initial vocational education and training, but also by social and cultural factors. Students, parents, the society at large have little information about vocational education and training and the career opportunities it offers. Finding a job after completing initial vocational training, taking into account the labour market requirements, is one of the most important factors that influences the perception over vocational education and training. Disseminating best practices by persons who have completed a vocational education and training programme and have successful careers is the best method for promoting initial vocational education and training.

**The projects objectives were:**

- 📍 To collect and disseminate best practices at national and European level, with a view to increasing VET visibility and attractiveness.
- 📍 To raise awareness among all stakeholders as to the benefits of vocational education and training and the central role of VET quality assurance, through the Project website, data base, relevant materials and one information session.
- 📍 To disseminate the policies and tools developed in EQAVET and the Project via the Project website, data base, relevant materials and information session.