Quality Assurance in VET: Hungary

This document provides an overview of quality assurance in VET in the respective country. It covers information on VET systems and how quality assurance takes place, which organisations are responsible for VET policy and any recent developments in VET policy.

Updated in May 2024

VET system and quality assurance

Overview of the VET system and how quality assurance takes place

VET is available from the age of 14 (or 15), offering several options.
A five-year technological programme (Technikum) combining general subjects and sectoral basic education (common contents of vocational training affiliated to the same economic sector) in grades 9 and 10 and vocational specialisation in grades 11 to 13. Learners acquire the upper secondary school leaving certificate (EQF level 4) giving access to higher education, and a technician diploma (EQF level 5).

Overview of the VET system and how quality assurance takes place
A three-year vocational school (Szakképző Iskola, ISCED 353) programme provides general and vocational (sectoral foundation) education in grade 9, followed by vocational specialisation (grades 10 and 11). Learners acquire an EQF level 4 vocational qualification entitling holders to perform an occupation. Graduates may enrol in a two-year follow up programme in a Technikum to obtain the secondary school leaving certificate.

At the end of the ninth grade, there is interoperability between the two VET tracks, without any aptitude test. Skills acquired during the sectoral foundation year(s) are assessed before moving on to specialised vocational training. General upper secondary graduates may enrol in any of the two VET tracks, without general subjects, to acquire a vocational qualification in two years.
A two-to-four-year special vocational school programme for SEN learners (Szakiskola ISCED 252, 352, 353) provides VET based on special framework curricula issued by the Minister for Education to acquire a partial (EQF level 2) or full (EQF level 3) vocational qualification.

Holders of the secondary school leaving certificate may enrol in post- secondary (ISCED 454) programmes in Technikum and higher VET programmes (ISCED 554) in higher education institutions. In both programmes, learners acquire an EQF level 5 VET qualification in two years and may transfer credits to a Bachelor (BA/BSc) programme in the same field.

Work-based learning is delivered in school-settings or through a practical training placement in companies. In contrast to the phasing out of apprenticeship contracts, as of 2020/21, learners may conclude vocational employment contracts to follow both, (specialised vocational) theory and practice in companies. After completion of lower secondary, those unsure of which pathway to follow can enrol in a one-year (optional) orientation programme (ISCED 294, EQF 2). Learners unable to finish lower secondary by the age of 16 can enrol in a basic competences' development programme (Dobbantó, ISCED 242), followed by a catch-up programme delivered in school workshops (Műhelyiskola programme, ISCED 254) to acquire the primary school leaving certificate attesting completion of lower secondary and/or an EQF level 2 or 3 partial qualification. The formal system is centrally governed. VET institutions are affiliated to VET centres. Adults may acquire up to two vocational qualifications free of charge in formal, school-based VET programmes.[1]

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[1] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/hungary-u2

How quality assurance takes place?

In Hungary, quality assurance and quality improvement of VET has always been in the focus of the VET development policy. Since 2000 there has been a systematic quality assurance and quality improvement activity in formal VET (IVET) with the aim of better serving the demands/needs of the labour market/economy, improving the quality, attractiveness and effectiveness of VET and transferring VET institutions into learning organisations.

In the last few years, as part of the comprehensive reform of the Hungarian VET system as a whole and following the complete detachment of the VET system from public education, from the 2020/2021 school year onwards, Hungary has introduced changes to quality assurance, which has been strongly influenced by the EQAVET Framework. Objectives and measures outlined in the strategy for the renewal of the VET system in Hungary (VET 4.0 Strategy, adopted by the Government on 28 March 2019 and revised, updated in November 2023) as well as the relevant provisions of the new VET Act (of 19 November 2019) and its Implementing Regulation (of 7 February 2020) are aimed at improving the quality management system of VET and included the implementation of a standardised quality management system (QMS) based on the EQAVET Framework.[2]

This national quality management system for formal VET institutions was designed and developed in the second half of 2021, and the institutions had to elaborate their own QMS description by law before 31 August 2022.

Simultaneously changes to quality assurance have been introduced also in the adult training/CVET system. The new legal regulatory environment of adult training (amended Act LXXVII of 2013 on Adult Training and its Implementing Regulation of 7 February 2020) refers also to quality assurance mechanisms of adult training providers, which include the establishment and operation of a QMS specified in the legislation and corresponding to the (principles of the) EQAVET Framework.

System-level QA arrangements

IVET

The comprehensive quality management system (QMS) of formal VET institutions consists of the following elements:

• Quality policy: it contains the institution's mission and vision, strategic goals, quality objectives, and defines the organisational framework of the QMS.

• Self-evaluation: the Self-evaluation Guidebook, published on 8th February 2022 by the minister responsible for VET, contains the 21 detailed EQAVET-based self-evaluation criteria against which institutions evaluate all the areas of their activities and the results achieved, 24 indicators to be compulsory measured, 11 processes to be compulsory regulated, the measuring tools of partner satisfaction surveys, and a proposal for the process and methodology of the institutional self-evaluation.

• Performance evaluation of VET teachers and trainers and the institutional leaders: the work and the performance of the VET teachers and trainers and the institutional leaders is evaluated by the head of the VET institution based on the methodology proposed by the minister.3

• External evaluation: the Guidebook to be published by the minister responsible for VET will contain the same set of EQAVET-based evaluation criteria as applied to self-evaluation, and a description of the procedure and the methodology of external evaluation. External evaluation of VET institutions is required by law every four years and will be carried out by the Innovative Training Support Centre Plc. It is used to assess the work of the VET institution and its head. As the external evaluation always follows the VET institutions self-evaluation, the first external evaluation cycle lasts from 1 September 2024 till 31 August 2018.

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[2] https://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/EAG2019_CN_HUN.pdf

The set of criteria and measuring tools to be applied for self- evaluation, external evaluation and teacher-trainer performance evaluation incorporate the EQAVET indicative descriptors and the relevant EQAVET indicators.

For VET institutions, in order to prepare their QMS description by the statutory deadline, i.e., by 31 August 2022, professional documents, methodological guide(line)s have been elaborated centrally by the sectoral governance and published by the minister responsible for VET. The in-service training programmes "Quality management in VET institutions" and "Performance assessment and evaluation in practice" constitute another important element of the technical assistance and professional support provided for the institutions. All formal VET institutions belonging to the 41 VET centres were trained in both subjects.

Adult training/CVET

The quality assurance mechanisms of adult training/CVET have three main dimensions: licensing of the adult training activity, establishment of QMS of the adult training providers and the external evaluation of the QMS.

- Training providers have to apply for a licence that specifies the courses they are entitled to offer. The license is awarded for an indefinite period by the Pest County Government Office, based on the opinion of an expert committee.
- Compulsory requirement for issuing the licence is that adult training providers set up and operate their own QMS defined in the relevant legislation. The QMS guarantees – through the everyday activity, the related self-evaluation and by providing publicity – the continuous professional self-development, the continuous improvement of training, assets and human resources where improvements are based on publicly available data and feedback.

The adult training QMS also makes provision for the external review of adult training/CVET providers at least once in every four years. External evaluation examines if the adult training provider performs its training activity in accordance with the quality management system. The methodology and the tools to be used in the course of external evaluation should be adapted to the EQAVET Framework.[3]

The adult training/CVET providers must elaborate eight procedures within their QMS and define quality indicators connected to each of these eight procedures to evaluate the achievement of the targets assigned to the indicators. In case the target value is not achieved, the adult training provider shall implement corrective actions or change the target.

One of these eight procedures is the document describing the procedure for self-evaluation of the adult training activity.

Similar to formal VET institutions, adult training/CVET providers are also required to carry out self-evaluations, but they are free to define the frequency, the execution and methods used, which are not regulated by legislation. Self-evaluations include the evaluation of the adult training activity, the competences and work of the trainers, the achievement of the adult training provider's objectives and targets, the perceptions of adult learners, and are to be followed by corrective actions.[4]

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[3] https://epale.ec.europa.eu/is/node/153587

[4] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/205aa0ac-460d-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

Which organisation(s) are responsible for VET policy?

The Ministry for Culture and Innovation is responsible for the central governance of VET and adult learning as of 2019 this includes vocational qualification curricula in higher education.
Coordination and policy implementation is ensured by the National Office for VET and Adult Learning and (since 2019) by the Innovative Training Support Centre Plc.

Social partners shape VET policy through participation in advisory bodies. The VET Innovation Council (a discussion forum for education and training providers, chambers, employers and trade unions) and sector skills councils shape proposals for aligning VET programmes and qualifications with labour market needs. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is responsible for the registration and attestation of apprenticeship placements.[5]

Priority areas for QA in your country

Currently our priority is to get the national quality management system for formal VET institutions implemented in full, i.e., integrated into everyday work, practice of the VET institutions. Furthermore, our priority is to provide continued professional support to the institutions to implement and operate their QMS. This professional support activity is managed, organised and coordinated by the Innovative Training Support Centre Plc. with the involvement of quality management experts - practitioners and includes measures such as reviewing the institutions' QMS descriptions from professional point of view, providing targeted online and on-site consultations and thematic workshops always adjusted to the actual tasks of the QMS implementation. These activities serve also as the preparation for developing the procedures and methodology of the external evaluation of the VET institutions' quality management system.

Specific projects in the country

The recent EQAVET project (2023-2026) continues the development work with managing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the results and operating the National Expert Network and the Stakeholder Working Group. The project team and experts will participate in EQAVET related national and international events for capacity building. During the project lifetime the description of the nationally adapted EQAVET Framework for IVET and C-VET on provider and system level will be revised and updated. Further improvement on self-evaluation process in IVET will include workshops and sharing of good practices. The main activities involve the development of the national VET graduate tracking system in line with European policy measures. We will cooperate with other EQAVET NRPs and engage in several peer review activities. We will continuously communicate with target groups and dissemination of project milestones.

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[5] https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/hungary-u2