

European Commission Consultation, 'European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training'

Response from the University of Stirling

General comments

The University welcomes the development of a system to facilitate credit transfer, accumulation and recognition on a voluntary basis, and that is based on the recognition of learning outcomes. As this developed is progressed the University of Stirling, through its Institute of Education, would be interested in evaluating and appraising the various initiatives. We would highlight the need to articulate effectively and appropriately with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

1. The purpose of and reasons for an ECVET system

1.1 Are the most important objectives and functions of a European system of credits for vocational training and education and the role of competent authorities fully outlined in the consultation document? **1.2** If not what is missing?

The University supports the articulation of a system that would create greater opportunity for learning, wherever it occurs and at whatever level, to be accredited, accumulated and validated within a comprehensive and harmonised European system, thereby facilitating greater mobility for individuals within the European labour market. However, in terms of articulation with higher education, we would welcome some indication that the recognition of such credit remains the province of the admitting institution.

1.3 What would be the main added value of the planned ECVET system?

The provision of a system which articulates with existing frameworks in the further and higher education area, including national frameworks such as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, to facilitate and promote lifelong learning and mobility.

2. The technical basis for ECVET

2.1 Do some technical specifications need to be set out in greater detail with a view to the practical implementation of ECVET? If so, which ones?

Yes, in terms of the relationship of ECVET to national qualifications frameworks and the framework for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

2.2 Do ECVET's technical specifications take sufficient account of the evaluation/ validation/ recognition/ accumulation/ transfer of learning outcomes whether formal, non-formal or informal? If not please give details.

As 2.1 above.

2.3 Are the allocation of credit points to qualifications and units and using a reference figure of 120 credit points sufficient to ensure the convergence of approaches and the coherence of the system at European level, if not what do you suggest?

Yes

3. Implementing ECVET

3.1 Under what conditions could describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and expressing them in units effectively improve the transparency of qualifications and contribute to the development of mutual trust?

3.2 Which criteria or combinations of criteria for allocating credit points could be selected and used?

A process for the recognition of prior experiential learning would need to be developed as part of the process for establishing partnerships.

3.3 Are there any features in your qualifications system which would favour the introduction of ECVET?

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework would be compatible with the principles of ECVET, in that it allows all forms of credit to be mapped onto a structure that recognises the importance of lifelong learning and the contribution of learning at different levels.

3.4 What constraints if any, do you foresee?

As general comments above and 5.1 below.

3.5 How and within what timeframe (launch, introduction, experimentation, widespread introduction) could ECVET be implemented in your area?

There would need to be a nationally supported initiative, linked to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

4. Measures for supporting the implementation and development of ECVET

4.1 What kind of measures should be taken at European national and sectoral levels to facilitate the implementation of ECVET? **4.2** What documents, manuals and guides could be developed to facilitate the implementation of ECVET?

As 3.5 above.

5. ECVET's potential for enhancing mobility

5.1 To what extent and how will ECVET be able to contribute to the development of transnational and even national partnerships?

The University's view is that ECVET would support institutions and national agencies understand potential applicants qualifications and experience, and that this would assist in providing a common 'language' on which partnerships could be based. However, whether or not to progress such partnerships should remain at the discretion of individual institutions or national agencies.

You may not wish to respond to all questions listed but feedback is welcomed in areas where you have a view.

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