Mobility project for VET learners and staff

1. Organisational Support

The organisational support grant is a contribution to any costs incurred by the organisations in relation to activities to support student and staff mobility of high quality. For example:

- providing information and assistance to students and staff;
- selecting students and staff;
- preparing the learning agreements to ensure full recognition of the students’ educational components; preparation and recognition of mobility agreements for staff;
- providing linguistic and intercultural preparation to both students and staff – especially sector-specific language courses for VET;
- general management around setting up and managing mobility project;
- ensuring an efficient mentoring and supervision arrangements of mobile participants;
- specific arrangements to ensure the quality of traineeships in enterprises.

The quality of the implementation and follow-up of the project by the institution will be taken into account when the final grant is decided. The quality implementation of the mobility project should follow the guidelines set out in this Annex on the Mobility for VET learners and staff.

2. Before Mobility

A: Accreditation of participating organisations - The Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter

From 2015 onwards there is the possibility for non-accredited organisations to apply for the Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter through separate yearly calls launched by the National Agencies, provided that those organisations fulfil the prerequisite selection criteria and demonstrate the quality and sustainability of their internationalisation strategies. Please take good note that if organisations do acquire a new Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter in a given year, they will only be able to use it for undertaking VET mobility from the following General Call onwards.

For example, if organisations apply for a Charter under a specific call and this Charter is awarded in 2016, they will still have to apply at the same time for a VET mobility project without a Charter if they wish to carry out mobility under the 2016 General Call. They would only be able to use the Charter in the following call year (in this example 2017).

More detailed information is made available on the websites of the European Commission and National Agencies.

B: European Quality Charter for Mobility

VET organisations that plan to organise mobility activities for VET learners and staff must organise their activities in line with the principles and criteria set out in the European Quality Charter for
Mobility

The European Quality Charter for Mobility constitutes the quality reference document for education and training stays abroad. The Charter provides guidance on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes, such as professional betterment, to both young learners and staff. The respect of the principles set out in the Charter should help to ensure that mobility participants always have a positive experience both in the host country and in their country of origin on their return, and that the number and depth of education and training exchanges are stepped up. The Charter is available at:


C: ECVET - Memoranda of Understanding

VET organisations may decide to apply the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) in the framework of their mobility activities (for more information, see below). In these cases, a precondition for using ECVET is the setting up of an ECVET partnership. This partnership needs to bring together the competent organisations involved in

1. identifying the suitable learning outcomes during mobility activities;
2. delivering VET programmes that are apt at satisfying these needs;
3. assessing the extent to which learning outcomes have been achieved by learners; and
4. validating and recognising learners’ credits on their return to the home institution.

The partnership for ECVET mobility activities can be formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

A MoU is an agreement between competent organisations which sets the framework for credit transfer. It formalises the ECVET partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent organisations and institutions involved. It also establishes partnerships’ procedures for cooperation.

MoUs can be developed by networks of competent organisation/institutions from several countries/systems, but they can also be bilateral, depending on the partnership needs and ambitions. For more information and guidance on the establishment of a MoU please refer to the ECVET User’s Guide available on the website of the European Commission or refer to the following links:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/vocational-policy/ecvet_en.htm and
http://www.ecvet-secretariat.eu

D: Mobility Consortium

Besides VET providers applying as a single organisation, a national mobility consortium can also apply for a VET mobility project.

The purpose of mobility consortia is to facilitate the organisation of mobility activities and to offer added value in terms of quality of activities compared to what each individual sending VET institution (e.g., VET school) would be able to deliver alone. The member organisations of a national mobility consortium are expected to pool or share services related to the organisation of mobility and develop their internationalisation together through mutual cooperation and sharing of contacts.

Joint activities include typically joint administrative, contractual and financial management of mobility, joint selection and/or preparation and mentoring of participants as well as, where relevant,
a centralised point for finding enterprises and for matchmaking enterprises and participants. The national mobility consortium can also act as a facilitator for incoming trainees and staff. This includes finding a receiving organisation in the region where the national mobility consortium partners are located and providing assistance in case of need.

The consortium coordinator, possibly together with other/intermediary organisations, has to play an active role in fostering contacts with enterprises and finding opportunities for traineeships and training places for staff, in promoting these activities and providing information, etc.

Each sending VET organisation remains responsible for the quality, the contents and the recognition of the mobility periods. Each member of the consortium is required to sign an agreement with the consortium coordinator to specify the roles and responsibilities and the administrative and financial arrangements; the modalities of cooperation shall specify matters like the mechanisms for preparation, quality assurance and follow-up of mobility periods.

**E: European Development Plan**

The European Development Plan concerns only applications from applicants that do not possess the Erasmus+ VET Mobility Charter. Although non-Charter holders are not expected to be aiming for internationalisation or sustainability to the same degree as those organisations that have been accredited with the Charter, nevertheless they are expected to already be reflecting on the impact of mobility on their respective organisations beyond the mere mobility itself. Before applying, a VET provider or a national mobility consortium coordinator must develop a European Development Plan; this plan is part of the application form.

This section indicates how the planned mobility activities are inscribed in a wider and long-term strategy of development and modernisation of the VET providers involved in the project.

This European Development Plan will be an important part of the evaluation of grant applications and should provide information on:

- the needs of the VET providers in terms of quality development and internationalisation (e.g. as regards management competences, staff competences, new teaching methods or tools, European dimension, language competences, curriculum, organisation of teaching, training and learning, reinforcing links with partner institutions) and how the planned activities will contribute to meeting these needs;
- the impact expected on learners, teachers, trainers and other staff, and on the VET provider overall;
- the way VET schools and companies will integrate the competences and experiences acquired by their staff into their curriculum and/or their development plan;
- the way work-based learning can be enhanced sustainably through transnational cooperation.

**F: Mobility Tool+**

At the earliest when the participants are selected, the beneficiary organisation must encode general information regarding the participant and the type of mobility activity s/he will carry out (e.g. participant name, destination, duration of the mobility, etc.) into Mobility Tool+. The beneficiary organisation is also responsible for updating Mobility Tool+ with any change occurred to participants or activities during the lifetime of the mobility project. Beneficiaries will be able to generate prefilled reports from Mobility Tool+ based on the information they have provided. Mobility Tool+ will also generate reports to be filled in by the participants in mobility activities.
More information about Mobility Tool+ and how to access it will be provided in the grant agreement between the National Agency and the beneficiary.

G: Conditions of participation of VET learners

Selection

The sending organisation carries out the selection of participants in the mobility activity. The selection of learners - as well as the procedure for awarding them a grant - must be fair, transparent, coherent and documented and shall be made available to all parties involved in the selection process.

The sending organisation shall take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or selection process of individual participants.

Accompanying persons

VET learners with special needs or disadvantaged backgrounds may be accompanied by a person that will support them during the mobility period. The involvement of the accompanying person should be proportional to the number of learners involved (usually one accompanying person per group of learners carrying out a traineeship in the same receiving organisation).

The duration of the stay abroad of accompanying persons should also be proportional to the needs of the learners (usually a stay for the whole duration of the activity is accepted only in cases where the learners are not autonomous or minors).

Agreement with the learner

Prior to their departure, VET learners must sign an agreement with the sending and receiving organisation which includes also the following:

- a "learning agreement" setting out the programme of training to be followed, as agreed by the learner, the sending and the receiving organisation. This agreement defines the target learning outcomes for the learning period abroad, specifies the formal recognition provisions (e.g. ECVET);
- a "Quality Commitment", annexed to the learning agreement, showing the rights and obligations of the trainees, the sending and receiving organisations and, when relevant, intermediary organisations.

When signing the learning agreement, VET learners are entitled to receive a grant to support them during the period of traineeship abroad. Such grant may consist of one or both of the following:

- an EU grant, calculated per day of activity (see the "funding rules" section in Part B of this Guide); and/or
- a local, regional and national grant provided by a public or private donor, or loan scheme.

"Zero-grant VET learners" are allowed, (i.e. learners who carry out traineeships which respect the
Erasmus+ VET mobility criteria and benefit from the advantages of being an Erasmus+ learner without receiving an Erasmus+ mobility grant). The rules stated in this Programme Guide, except those relating to the allocation of grants, also apply to such "zero-grant VET learners".

**Online linguistic support**

VET learners undertaking a mobility activity lasting 19 days or longer are eligible to receive linguistic support prior to departure or during the mobility activity. In this regard, the Commission makes available an online service for selected VET learners, with a view to assess their competence in the language they will use to carry out their traineeships abroad.

This service also offers them, where necessary, the possibility to improve the knowledge of the language before and/or during the mobility period. Participants with a level of at least B2 in the main language of work may choose to follow an OLS course in the language of the receiving country, if available. Such an online service will be gradually implemented in the course of the Programme. The linguistic support is provided as follows:

- at the time of applying for a VET mobility project, the applicant organisation will estimate the need for linguistic support - in the main language of instruction or work - of the learners undertaking a traineeship in the framework of the mobility project;
- National Agencies allocate online licences to beneficiary organisations according to general criteria specified by the Commission;
- once selected by their sending organisation - and before signing their learning agreement - all learners (except native speakers) benefiting from the online service will carry out an online test to assess their competences in the selected language. The results of this test will be communicated to the learner and, upon request, to the sending organisation. These results will not have any influence on the possibility for the learner to go abroad;
- based on the number of online licences available for language courses, those participants who need linguistic support may be offered the possibility to follow an online language course;
- at the end of their traineeship, VET learners will carry out a second assessment to measure the progress made in the language. The results will be communicated to the student and, upon request, to the sending organisation.

In the initial stages of the Programme, the online assessment and courses will not be provided in all EU languages and language courses may not be available for all participants requesting them. Further details will be made available at the websites of the Commission and National Agencies.

For languages not covered by the Commission's service, linguistic support must be arranged by the participating organisations in the VET mobility project; a specific grant for "linguistic support" may be provided for that purpose. Furthermore, organisations involved in a VET mobility project can use the "organisational support" grant to address the needs of participants in terms of pedagogical, intercultural or specific linguistic preparation (see the “funding rules” section in Part B of this Guide).

**H: Conditions of participation of staff**

**Selection**

The selection of staff shall be carried out by the sending organisation. The selection and grant award procedure must be fair, transparent, coherent and documented and shall be made available to all
parties involved in the selection process.

The sending organisation shall take the necessary measures to prevent any conflict of interest with regard to persons who may be invited to take part in the selection bodies or selection process of individual beneficiaries.

The selection criteria (priority given to staff going abroad for the first time, limitation on the possible number of mobility activities per staff member during a given time period, etc.) shall be made public.

**Mobility agreement**

The selection of the staff will be made by the sending organisation on the basis of a draft mobility programme submitted by the staff member after consultation with the receiving institution or enterprise/organisation. Prior to departure, the final mobility programme shall be formally agreed by both the sending and receiving organisations by exchange of letters or electronic messages.

Both the sending and the receiving organisations shall be responsible for the quality of the mobility period abroad.

**3. During Mobility**

**Interruption of learners' mobility**

For traineeships, the period of mobility abroad may be interrupted by the enterprise holidays if the enterprise is closed during this period. The grant is maintained during this period. The closure period does not count towards the minimum duration of a traineeship period.

**Prolongation of learners' mobility**

A prolongation of an on-going mobility period may be agreed between the sending and the receiving organisations subject to the following:

- before the end of the mobility period initially planned, the grant agreement must be amended and all the arrangements relating to the prolongation of the duration must be completed. Such amendment is particularly important in those cases where the prolongation also determines a request of extension of the monthly EU grant. In fact, although the duration of the mobility period shall be defined in the student’s Certificate of Attendance (this is the period indicated by the beneficiary organisations in their final reports), the maximum number of months to be covered through the EU grant shall be the one set out in the mobility agreement or its amendment(s). This will be the case, even if the duration indicated in the learning agreement is shorter than the one indicated in the Certificate of Attendance;
- the additional period must follow immediately after the on-going mobility period. There can be no gaps (holidays and VET school/enterprise closures are not considered "gaps") unless duly justified and approved by the National Agency.

**4. After Mobility**
A: Recognition of learning outcomes

The sending and receiving organisations involved should agree on issuing a Europass Mobility certificate at the end of the mobility. For more information on how to proceed, consult the Europass website:


The results of language assessment and online language courses will be reported centrally but will not provide any formal qualification.

ECVET

VET organisations may decide to apply the ECVET system in the framework of their mobility activities. ECVET is a common methodological framework that facilitates the accumulation and transfer of credits for learning outcomes from one qualifications system to another. It aims to promote transnational mobility and access to lifelong learning. It is not intended to replace national qualification systems, but to achieve better comparability and compatibility among them.

ECVET applies to all outcomes obtained by an individual from various education and training pathways that are then transferred, recognised and accumulated in view of achieving a qualification. This initiative makes it easier for European citizens to gain recognition of their training, skills and knowledge in another Programme Country. More information about ECVET can be found on the Commission's website at:

- http://www.ecvet-secretariat.eu

When ECVET is used, the credits accrued for learning outcomes acquired should be made transparent and should be specified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the participating organisations.

B: Reporting

At the end of the period abroad, all VET learners and staff who have undertaken a mobility activity are required to complete and submit a final report. For mobility activities lasting 19 days or more, the report also includes a qualitative evaluation of the linguistic support received during the mobility period.

Those students and staff who fail to submit the report may be required to partially or fully reimburse the EU grant received. Reimbursement shall not be requested when a learner or staff member has been prevented from completing her/his planned activities abroad due to a case of force majeure. Such cases shall be reported by the sending organisation and be subject to the written acceptance by the National Agency.

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