EQAVET

Quality Assurance in VET: The Netherlands

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.

VET system and quality assurance

Overview of the VET system and how quality assurance takes place

The VET system in the Netherlands provides education to learners aged 16 and above with the aim to prepare them for a broad spectrum of occupations. The training provided concerns four sectors: health and care, engineering, economy, and agriculture.

There are 4 training levels of different duration (12 months to 4 years) and 2 learning pathways. A VET student can choose between two learning pathways:
- The school-based pathway (BOL pathway).
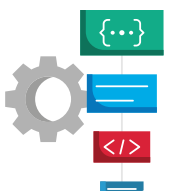- The on-the-job training pathway (BBL or apprenticeship pathway).[1]

Both pathways lead to the same level of qualification and diploma. The content of the programmes, in terms of what is acquired, is determined at national level in a qualification profile (educational standards as output) within the national qualification system.

The VET system is formed by three organisational levels: national, sectoral, and regional. There are both public and private VET institutions. Regarding public schools, there are a total of 58 and they provide education to almost 500 000 students overall.

The Dutch VET system does not make a clear distinction between IVET and CVET. The quality assurance framework in place does not distinguish between them and, therefore, it applies to both equally.

More information about the VET system in The Netherlands can be found on CEDEFOP's VET in Europe database: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/netherlands

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

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System-level QA arrangements	All EQAVET framework indicators are being used in the Dutch VET system (two indicators are partially used). The VET law mandates VET providers to set up a quality assurance system. They are relatively free to design and implement their own system, but they have to meet nationally set quality standards and ensure regular quality assessments that include the arrangements in place for teacher training. External reviews of public and private VET providers are conducted by the Inspectorate of Education. Since August 2017, the Inspectorate has increased the use of information about the quality that is given by the provider (the board) and then triangulates this information with the views of teachers, students, and companies.[2]
Provider-level QA arrangements	VET providers regularly assess the progress and achievement of the goals set for education programmes and use this to identify areas of improvement (the evaluation and review stage of the EQAVET quality cycle). Providers are also required to have authorities and responsibilities for quality assurance clearly defined, sufficiently communicated, and embedded in the organisation. Special focus is on independent assessment of the quality and the involvement of stakeholders. In terms of planning, VET providers must formulate enough specific and measurable goals for education in a structured manner, based on the institution's mission and strategic policy. Sufficient continuity in teaching and management staff is important. VET providers are obliged to maintain a sufficiently functioning dialogue regarding quality with internal stakeholders and persons responsible as well as with external stakeholders. This dialogue comprises accountability regarding the quality provided and its improvement.[3]
Which organisation(s) are responsible for VET policy?	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for outlining the general conditions for VET whereas the administration and management of schools as well as vocational education are regionally organised. Providers are responsible for quality assurance.

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

Recent policy developments (in the last 12 months)	• Flexibilisation of the VET system: in order to fit the needs of students and the labour market, the Ministry of Education is working on a more flexible VET system since 2019. • Lifelong learning: in order to increase lifelong learning among VET-schooled labourers, there are multiple new policies. Lifelong learning is a priority in VET policy since 2018. • The latest work agenda for VET of the Dutch Ministry of Education focuses on educating to diminish shortages on the labour market; minimising early school leaving in VET; and preventing discrimination in internship placements.
Priority areas for QA in your country	Together with both public and private VET schools, the Dutch EQAVET National Reference Point (NRP) is working on increased ownership of VET providers over the quality of VET education. For example, by increasing educational leadership among VET providers and by the development of a sectoral quality framework by VET providers themselves. In this way, the NRP wants to support the flexibilisation of the VET system. A more flexible system means that the Ministry of Education has less legal control over VET providers. This asks for a VET sector that has a mature QA system in place

Use of EQAVET labels	
Do you use an EQAVET label or seal to certify VET providers in your country?	No ☒
	Yes ☐