

Quality Assurance in VET: Estonia

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

In Estonia, both initial and continuing vocational education curricula are offered in VET institutions. IVET is offered at the second, third, fourth and fifth levels of Estonian Qualification Framework (that corresponds with the European Qualification Framework, EQF). At each level, students acquire learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) in accordance with qualifications at the appropriate EQF Level.¹

VET quality assurance arrangements are in continuous development. In line with developments in other EU Member States, Estonia has developed a system of indicators for self-assessment to facilitate the assessment of VET performance at the provider level. As such, the national approach of quality assurance in VET can be considered as a common quality assurance framework for VET providers.

CVET in Estonia is a synonym for adult education governed by the Adult Education Act (1993, amended in 2013, 2015). The Adult Education Act² provides the basis for:

- the management of the area of adult education.
- The requirements for the management of continuing education institutions.
- The provision of continuing education.
- The learner's right to study leave.
- The basis for financing continuing education.
- State and administrative supervision.

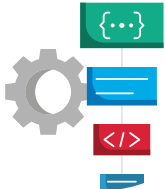

Based on the Act, adult education is divided into formal education and continuing education. The Adult Education Act sets quality standards for managers of continuing education institutions. For example, the continuing education institution shall establish the bases for the organisation of studies in continuing education and the bases for ensuring the quality of the activities of the continuing education institution. They can also set requirements for adult educators and basic requirements for the curriculum.

The principles in the act apply only to:

- Legal persons in private law providing continuing education.

¹ cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/estonia-u2

² <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/529062015007/consolide>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal persons in public law. • State and local government authorities. • Sole proprietors if pursuant to the law they have the obligation to apply for an activity licence for the provision of continuing education, or if they have submitted a notice of economic activities for the provision of continuing education.
 <p>System-level QA arrangements</p>	<p>Estonia's IVET quality assurance framework at the system-level is divided into four elements including planning, implementation, evaluation, measurement and 'feed forward' and feedback (adjustments). This draws on the findings from self-assessments and analysis of provider data.³</p> <p>External quality assurance of VET in Estonia is regulated by the Vocational Educational Institutions Act.⁴ The objective of the quality assessment of vocational education is to foster the development of learning-oriented school culture and to increase the reliability of vocational education. The purpose of initial assessment and re-assessment of curriculum groups is to grant the right to provide instruction in a new curriculum group.</p> <p>If the VET institution receives the right to provide instruction in curriculum group without a term, it will undergo regular quality assessments in the future, taking place at least once every six years. The result of the quality assessment is not linked to the right to provide instruction. Unlinking quality assessment from the right to provide instruction means that the assessment focuses more on the school's development. A shorter term of assessment does not necessarily indicate non-compliance with national regulations but rather shows new development needs and opportunities.</p> <p>There are also some thematic and ad-hoc reviews that take place.</p> <p>More information about the VET system in Estonia can be found on Cedefop's VET in Europe database: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/estonia</p>
	<p>Internal assessment shall be conducted in VET schools. Internal assessment is a continuous process, the purpose of which is to ensure conditions promoting the development of students and the consistent development of a school.</p> <p>Based on the purpose of internal assessment, the internal assessment of a school shall analyse the teaching and education, the management and evaluate the performance thereof. The internal</p>

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

⁴ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/112521/140626/F855211456/EST-112521.pdf>

Provider-level QA arrangements

assessment shall form the basis for preparing the development plan of a school and the assessment of quality.

Legislation requires providers to monitor the employment of students completing their VET for six months following completion. Estonia has developed quality assurance and assessment system for providers to undertake quality assurance.

The Adult Education Act states that the continuing education institution shall establish the bases for the organisation of studies in continuing education and ensuring the quality of the activities of the continuing education institution. It also sets out the requirements for adult educators and the basic requirements for the curriculum. The Adult Education Act states that quality assurance measures should be documented and published on the provider's website to support learners in making informed choices about training.

However, the Adult Education Act does not state how external quality assurance ought to take place. The Act leaves the responsibility for the quality assurance to the continuing education institution and its internal quality assurance process.

It has appeared that there is a strong need for external quality assurance in continuing education as well.

Starting from 2018, an EU funded project, [“Quality Enhancement in Continuing Education.”](#) has taken place in the Estonian Quality Agency for Education at the request of the Ministry of Education and Research. The aim of the project is to develop a quality assurance system for continuing education. Within this project, a threshold-based quality assessment model has been developed for assessing continuing education institutions quality based on the requirements set by the Adult Education Act. This quality assessment model has proven to be efficient in determining the quality of the curricula, teaching staff, learning environment and procedures. As the need to improve the Adult Education Act arose during the first assessment model, the next step was to include more quality oriented aspects in the assessment model. The aim of the quality assessment of study programme groups in continuing education is to evaluate the study programmes, learning and development of those programmes. The focus is now more shifted to quality and learner-focused approach.



Which

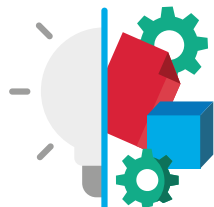
The Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) coordinates and leads the development of VET policy and its implementation through municipalities and other line ministries. The MoER and the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA, formerly EKKA) are responsible

<p>organisation(s) are responsible for VET policy?</p>	<p>for the external quality assessment of curriculum groups in VET institutions.⁵</p> <p>An area of Adult Education Policy at the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the strategic planning of CVET. Further training provided for in the Adult Education Act shall be applied to continuing education.</p>
<div data-bbox="242 1048 427 1299" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Recent policy developments (in the last 12 months)</p>	<p>Since 2019 the following policy developments have taken place. External quality assurance of VET in Estonia is regulated by the Vocational Educational Institutions Act and the conditions of and procedure for quality assessment are established by a regulation of the minister responsible for the area. The quality assurance activities are delegated to the Republic of Estonia Education and Youth Board, more specifically to an independent agency within the Board called the Estonian Quality Agency for I Education (HAKA).⁶ The principles for QA in VET have been laid down in the HAKA Conceptual Framework Document for QA in VET.</p> <p>The objective of the quality assessment of vocational education is to foster the development of learning-oriented school culture and to increase the reliability of vocational education.</p> <p>Quality assessment of vocational education provides an opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the school to get feedback about the quality of the study process and recommendations to develop it and to use the results of an independent external evaluation for the school's strategic management. • To inform interested groups (learners, labour market, state, the society in general) about how well vocational education meets the national demands, objectives of development plans, labour market needs and expectations of the learners. <p>HAKA is in charge of two types of assessment in VET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial assessment and re-assessment of curriculum groups (granting the right to provide instruction in a new curriculum group). • Quality assessment of curriculum groups. <p>The results of the threshold-based quality assessments in continuing education have been an indicator for driving the need to change the Adult Education Act towards being more quality oriented. The changes are in the process and the renewed Act is expected to be in force in 2024. For more information please see: The project "Quality Enhancement in Continuing Education" - HAKA.</p>

⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/205aa0ac-460d-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

⁶ <https://www.engq.eu/membership-database/ekka-estonian-quality-agency-for-higher-and-vocational-education/>

Specific projects in the country (optional)



Please provide a short description of recent projects or initiatives in the field of QA in VET that you would like to highlight for your country

Joint activity with Croatia, Finland, Slovenia, and Estonia: Promoting the use of Transnational Peer Reviews by updating the criteria.⁷

Action Grant EQAVET - European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training National Reference Points Agreement number - 2019 -0493/001-001 Project Nr 609143-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA3-EQAVET-NRP.⁸ Project duration: 01/04/2019-31/3/2021.

The expected results are as follows:

- The updated version of criteria for quality areas for Transnational Peer Reviews and they are in line with the EQAVET framework, EQAVET+ and the newest developments on the topic. The quality areas developed, together with the criteria from a comprehensive entity for the entire VET provider.
- Transfer strategy (including transfer strategy for participating countries) and monitoring plan to assure the use of the criteria and Peer Reviews at VET provider level.
- Promotional materials to promote the use of Peer Reviews and to provide guidance on how to use the criteria.
- Trainings for transnational peers and national peers; the number of trained peers for transnational Peer Reviews has increased in partner countries.
- Deepening of the culture of quality assurance in VET by focusing on the importance of feedback loops and the review phase of the quality cycle by VET providers and EQAVET national reference points (NRPs).

More information is available on the following websites:

- [EQAVET - HAKA.](#)
- [Webinar: Promoting the use of Transnational Peer Reviews by updating the criteria - HAKA.](#)

Follow-up: EQAVET NRP 2021 – 2023, Project ERASMUS-EDU-2021-EQAVET-IBA

This is a joint activity with Croatia, Finland, Slovenia, and Estonia: Promoting the use of Transnational Peer Reviews. The development work has been carried out as a joint project by the quality assurance national reference points of Finland, Croatia, Slovenia, and Estonia (HAKA). In the EQAVET project 2021-2023 the use of the Peer Review method and the handbook with QA criteria has been promoted.

⁷ <https://www.eqavet-nrp-slo.si/>

⁸ <https://www.oph.fi/fi/koulutus-ja-tutkinnot/laadunhallinnan-koordinaatiopisteen-projekti-2019-2021>



Which organisation(s) are responsible for the project / initiative

Estonian Education and Youth Board, Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA, formerly EKKA)

Use of EQAVET labels

Do you use an EQAVET label or seal to certify VET providers in your country?

No

Yes