

## Quality Assurance in VET: Flemish-speaking Belgium

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

VET in Flanders is offered at different levels and by different providers. The difference between initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuous vocational education and training (CVET) is not always clear-cut. Vocational education and training programmes taken before entering the labour market are considered as IVET, whereas vocational education and training programmes taken after having had work experience are part of CVET (adult education).

IVET is organised at the level of secondary and post-secondary education (i.e., Secondary after Secondary Education, Se-n-Se), and higher vocational education (short-cycle programmes) as part of formal education.

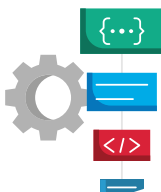
The provision of IVET as part of formal compulsory education (until 18 years old) is a shared responsibility between the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Employment, and (VET) schools. Young people aged between 15 and 16 can decide to take part in a system that combines learning both at school and on the shop floor (dual learning).

Many institutions in Flanders provide programmes at CVET level. The most important ones include:

- Centres for adult education.
- VDAB (the Flemish public employment service).
- Syntra (a private training provider in dual learning and the labour market and entrepreneurship).
- Centres for agriculture.
- Socio-cultural institutions.



The new integrated system of external quality assurance (the common quality framework) has its greatest effect on CVET programmes, as the many different systems of quality assurance are partly replaced by a single procedure and framework.

The rationale behind the Flemish strategy to enhance quality assurance is based on the idea that obtaining a qualification in IVET has the exact same value as obtaining a CVET one. Thus, the

	<p>Flemish Ministry of Education opted for a combination of IVET and CVET rather than making a distinction between the two.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>More information about the VET system in Belgium can be found on Cedefop's VET in Europe database: <a href="https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/belgium">https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/belgium</a></p>
 <p><b>System-level QA arrangements</b></p>	<p>External quality assurance on IVET is completed by the Education Inspectorate, with each school inspected at least once every six years.</p> <p>The Flemish Government defines the framework required for use during inspections. The Education Inspectorate has used the Context – Input – Process – Output model during inspections. It also publishes annual inspection reports that include recommendations for the Parliament.</p> <p>A new Parliamentary Act on External Quality Assurance for IVET was approved by the Flemish Parliament on 14 March 2018. The framework for external quality assurance is based on four components: results and effects, stimulation of development, quality development and policy. These components need to account for the context and inputs of the schools. The dual learning trajectories are being audited by the Education Inspectorate, together with the Flemish Social Inspection (Department of Work).</p> <p>CVET providers are classified into different policy domains, which are mainly education and work. CVET providers are also subject to external monitoring, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult education centres are inspected by the Education Inspectorate.</li> <li>• Syntra is externally evaluated by the Flemish Social Inspection</li> <li>• VDAB has its own external mechanisms for auditing quality assurance.</li> <li>• In higher education there is an institutional review and a study programme accreditation, which is done by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO).<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> <p>A Parliamentary Act on the Common Quality Framework for CVET came into force in 2019. The Act aims to build a quality assurance system for VET and the validation of non-formal learning, which leads to a professional qualification within the national qualifications framework (linked to the EQF). The framework regulates the accreditation and on-site quality control of public/private providers. The quality of the organisation must meet certain criteria. The</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/205aa0ac-460d-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

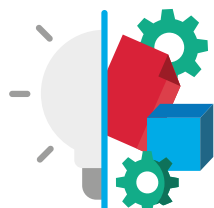
<sup>2</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/205aa0ac-460d-11e9-a8ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

	<p>framework for assessing the quality of the programmes (training or validation), consists of five components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objectives of the vocational qualification programme correspond to the competences of the intended professional qualification.</li> <li>• The design of the vocational qualification programme is developed and organised in such a way that learners can acquire or demonstrate the competences of the intended professional qualification.</li> <li>• The guidance of the learners in the framework of the vocational qualification programme leads to them being offered optimal opportunities to acquire or reveal the competences of the intended professional qualification.</li> <li>• The evaluation of the learners in the framework of the vocational qualification programme makes it possible to ascertain whether they have acquired the competences of the intended professional qualification.</li> <li>• The issues identified in connection with the objectives, design, guidance, and evaluation are converted into improvement actions.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Provider-level QA arrangements</b></p>	<p>Provider level quality assurance arrangements are not regulated by the government.</p> <p>Providers are required to undertake self-assessments and produce a self-evaluation report. This is used as the basis for the external reviews undertaken by the Education Inspectorate.</p> <p>Also, CVET providers are expected to monitor their own quality, although they can choose the way to go about this. Several providers use the quality arrangements developed by Syntra, which is based on the EFQM Framework.</p> <p>In the 2018 Parliamentary Act on external quality assurance for CVET, each policy department of the Flemish Government (mainly education and work) is responsible for the external quality assurance at the provider level.</p>
 <p><b>Which organisation(s)</b></p>	<p>IVET and CVET policy are a shared responsibility between the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Work.<sup>3</sup></p>

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are responsible for VET policy?

**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**

Belgium Flanders established the National Reference Point (NRP) in 2021 and developed the 2021-2023 national implementation plan.

The aim of the NRP project is to develop structural cooperation and coordination with the stakeholders within quality assurance in Flanders. A Steering Committee with representatives from the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Grants (AHOVOKS), the Education Inspectorate, the Flemish Social Inspectorate and the NVAO was set up to guide (part of) the implementation of the national implementation plan.

Firstly, a study was carried out, mapping and analysing the internal and external quality assurance systems and processes at the system level. This includes a qualitative analysis of the degree of linkage to the EQAVET framework and the strengths and learning points of the processes and system(s) as such.

Parallel to this an overview was drafted of how the various EQAVET indicators and descriptors were translated into the Flemish context.

The NRP will organise professionalisation initiatives, in collaboration with other partners, to disseminate the main insights from both the analysis and the translation of the EQAVET framework into the Flemish context.

In 2022 and 2023 Flanders participated in five Peer Reviews of VET quality assurance systems throughout Europe. On 30-31 March 2023 the Flemish NCP hosted a peer review of the organisation of quality assurance in VET in Flanders.



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

As the EQAVET NCP, the Flemish Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Grants (AHOVOKS) is responsible for the implementation of the EQAVET National Implementation Plan.

## Use of EQAVET labels

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

No

Yes