

EQAVET peer review on the ‘Quality assurance of initial VET pathways which have a stronger work-based learning component in Italy’ - Flash Report

The peer review

This EQAVET peer review took place from 26-27 October 2022 in Rome. It was hosted by INAPP which manages the work of the EQAVET National Reference Point in Italy. EQAVET Network members from Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary and Spain acted as peer reviewers.

The peer review focused on an initial VET pathway - **the leFP** (*Istruzione e Formazione Professionale*). Traditionally initial VET has been the responsibility of the 21 Regional Administrations with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education sharing responsibility for setting minimum standards at the national level. Italy’s regions have different VET systems with different features and rules. The leFP is the first national VET pathway for young learners from the age of 14. The leFP balances regional autonomy with the creation of a nationally recognised, initial VET qualification. The hosts invited the peer reviewers to consider two governance arrangements relating to the implementation of the leFP.

The leFP

The leFP is one of the VET options available to learners at the age of 14. leFP is a three- or four-year programme in a vocational training centre. Each programme is managed by the regions and leads to a vocational qualification at EQF Level 3 or 4.

The leFP is funded by the regions and usually provided by not-for-profit vocational training centres (VTCs) which have to be accredited by the regions. If the supply of leFP courses is insufficient to meet the local demand, each region can invite vocational schools to organise a programme which leads to the leFP qualification. In 2019/2020 more than 250,000 students participated in leFP (157,000 were in an accredited VTC). The leFP was offered to 9% of all students who enrolled in post-14 education and 17% of those on an initial VET programme.

The leFP is based on the “**dual model**” which includes a larger work-based learning component (400 hours per year) than has traditionally been included in Italian VET programmes. Each region’s leFP programme is slightly different as they include additional competences and skills which are important to each region. All the leFP qualifications are included in a **national repertory**. The profile for the leFP programmes were established in 2010 and the leFP qualifications were included in the national repertory in 2011.

The focus of the peer review

The peer review focused on two areas of quality assurance:

- the **governance** of the leFP - particularly in relation to balancing the needs and responsibilities of the regions with the national requirements;
- including leFP qualifications in the **national repertory**.

Each region's leFP programme is based on regional legislation which meets the principles, general rules and expectations established by the State. Responsibility for the leFP is shared. The State defines the minimum level of provision and its characteristics, and the regions are responsible for all other aspects of organising the programmes.

Based on the peer reviewers' experience, they commented on:

- the successful implementation of a national VET programme in a context where responsibility for VET provision is based on regional decisions;
- the regions' use of a national set of guidelines to accredit VTCs to offer the leFP;
- the establishment and use of a range of mechanisms to enhance cooperation and collaboration between the State and the regions;
- the challenge associated with the quality assurance of a national programme when there are regional differences;
- the intention to strengthen the **parity of esteem** between qualification by including the leFP alongside all other qualifications in the national repertory;
- the benefits to VET learners of more **work-based learning** and the opportunities to be mobile through the acquisition of a nationally recognised qualification.

The peer reviewers further remarked that:

- the first review of the leFP profiles was delayed. It was completed in 2019. It will be important to ensure the timetable for subsequent reviews is met;
- the importance of using data and evidence to systematically review the profiles and competences that support the leFP;
- the process for making changes to the content of the leFP are complex - there are many stakeholders and organisations at the regional and State level that need to be consulted;
- the leFP has been a success. However, there is a need to strengthen communication and dissemination to ensure the programmes are better publicised (e.g. information for students, trainers, parents, guidance teams, employers etc.);
- there are many potential ways that regions can support each other through mutual learning and shared good practice;
- the leFP provides an opportunity to design a VET graduate tracking programme to show learners' subsequent employment, mobility, and success.

Next steps

At the end of the meeting, the peer reviewers shared their initial feedback on the two issues associated with the quality assurance of the leFP. A comprehensive feedback report will be drafted and shared with the Italian hosts. The feedback in the peer reviewers' report will help to inform the national stakeholders on further improvements.

The EQAVET Peer Review initiative 2022 - 2023

The [2020 Council Recommendation on VET](#) called upon the EQAVET Network to develop a specific methodology for EQAVET peer reviews, with the objective to support the improvement and transparency of quality assurance arrangements at system level in the Member

States. Over the course of 2021, with the support of DG EMPL and the EQAVET Secretariat, the EQAVET Network agreed on a joint methodology and prepared a Peer Review Manual.

The Quality Assurance National Reference Points from 21 Member States agreed to take part in the first phase of the EQAVET Network's peer review initiative. The Italian Peer Review was the fifth out of ten Peer Reviews scheduled for 2022. Eleven peer reviews are planned for 2023.