

EQAVET Lithuania Peer Review on ‘VET teachers’ expertise for VET quality assurance: development, application and sharing - Flash Report

EQAVET Peer Review in Lithuania

The tenth EQAVET Peer Review took place on 24-25 January 2023 in Vilnius, hosted by the Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMPC). Nine EQAVET Network members from Belgium-fr, Czechia, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia acted as peers. The Peer Review focused on VET teachers’ expertise for VET quality assurance and how VET teachers can contribute to the quality assurance of VET processes at different levels (personal professional level, VET provider level, national level) with their expertise. The feedback from peers, based on their knowledge of strategies for VET teachers in their countries, will feed into adjustments of the Lithuanian system.

VET teachers’ expertise for VET quality assurance

To kick-off the meeting, the Vocational Education Division of the Lifelong Learning Department of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Lithuania presented the achievements, challenges and future plans of VET in Lithuania.

In the last ten years, the approach to VET has shifted in Lithuania. The Ministry launched an external evaluation of VET institutions, promoted VET to general education students, developed a legal pathway for apprenticeship and introduce modular programs. The Ministry also focused on strengthening quality assurance and the mentality of teachers towards it. A reorganisation of VET institutions led to merge schools and reduce their number from 77 to 44 between 2010 and 2022 to improve their quality. VET has an important place in Lithuania as students represent more than half of the total share (52% in 2021).

Lithuania is facing several challenges in VET including building trust for employers in VET, the quality of VET programmes, developing a dedicated training for VET teachers which is currently similar to secondary teacher training or giving more flexibility to VET. The Ministry has currently two main goals for VET:

- ❖ ensure that students pick VET as a first choice;
- ❖ ensure that VET meet the labour market needs.

The host presented three main components for VET teachers’ contribution to quality assurance in VET in Lithuania during the peer review.

The teacher certification system

In 2005, the Ministry for Education and Science developed a voluntary teacher certification system with three aims:

- ❖ Encourage teachers to continuously improve;
- ❖ Provide conditions for teachers to grow and acquire a qualification category matching their level of competence with financial advantage;
- ❖ Increase the responsibility of teachers for educational results and professional development.

There are four stages of professional development for VET teachers: certified, senior, methodologist and expert. The certification is based on several criteria including continuous professional development, work experience, demonstration of achievements and competence grow as well as self-reflection. Teachers are assessed by a commission.

However, an important part of teachers does not get certified and few teachers reach the highest level (37 out of 1719 VET teachers), which is a challenge for the Ministry.

The methodological commissions

KPMPC coordinates sixteen VET methodological commissions uniting VET teachers working in particular professional areas and delegated by VET institutions. The task of each commission is to improve the quality of VET in its field of activity, to ensure methodical and subject-specific cooperation between VET teachers and educational support specialists. KPMPC intention is that these commissions would increasingly perform the role of professional learning communities. Additionally, each VET institution has established school-level methodological groups.

A VET teacher methodologist, Chairman of Motor Vehicles, Ships and Aircraft VET Methodical Commission, presented the role of a methodological Commission. The commission discusses the curriculum of the VET sector and initiates the development of new programmes and the update of existing curricula to help schools to stay aligned with the needs of the labour market.

Supporting teachers' methodical activities at institutional level

VET institutions organise methodical activities including annual self-assessment to reflect on their strategy and performance, feed in their annual working plan, revise their programme in the framework of a methodical group. Each school has flexibility in the organisation of its methodical group but in general, monitoring is carried out on a continuous basis. VET teachers participate on a voluntary basis to the group and its activities. The evaluation of teachers is decoupled from the self-assessment of their school, which challenges the overall coherence of the VET institutions' strategy.

Peer discussion

The Lithuanian hosts presented their VET system and the three elements for discussion: their certification system for VET teachers, their involvement in methodological commissions and VET teachers' methodical activities. Teachers and VET providers were invited to give the voice of the practice. At the end of the meeting, the peer reviewers shared their initial feedback on the Lithuanian system for VET teachers.

Peers found the certification system for teachers important for lifelong learning. To further strengthen the system, they suggested to include continuous improvement as a goal for VET teachers. The certification system and its benefits could be promoted more extensively to encourage teachers to get certified.

According to peers, the role, inputs and outputs of the methodological Commissions could be clarified to increase their results. The participation of schools to the national commissions should be harmonised and the communication between the commissions and the VET institutions developed. Peers suggested to increase the cooperation between the national and school-based methodological Commissions.

The self-assessment of VET institutions is seen as a valuable tool by peers, but attention should be paid to keep the exercise flexible enough to be useful. Teachers should always be

involved in the self-assessment. Peers believed the Ministry could provide support to the schools in carrying their methodical activities such as the self-assessment and make sure the format allows them to improve concretely.

A comprehensive feedback report will be drafted and shared with the Lithuanian 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 (EQAVET NRPs) from 21 Member States have agreed to take part in the first phase of the EQAVET Network's peer review initiative. The Lithuanian Peer Review was the first out of twelve Peer Reviews that are scheduled to take place in 2023, following nine peer reviews in 2022.