

EQAVET peer review on ‘Quality assurance and qualification of in-company trainers in IVET (dual system) and CVET in Germany’ - Flash Report

EQAVET Peer Review in Germany

The second EQAVET system level peer review of the 2024-26 cycle took place on 25-26 June 2024 in Bonn, hosted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) which is where the German National Reference Point is located. Eight EQAVET Network members from Austria, Czechia, Greece, Portugal and Spain acted as peers. The peer review focused on quality assurance and qualification of in-company trainers in IVET (dual system) and CVET in Germany. The feedback from peers should help to improve the qualification for in-company trainers and support them with the current challenges of digitalisation, heterogeneity, demography and sustainability to deliver qualitative trainings in German companies.

In-company trainers and their qualification

Qualifications for in-company VET personnel

During the online preparatory meeting, the German NRP presented the qualifications for in-company trainers (IVET and CVET) in Higher VET. They are an additional offer to a certification which is based on the Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO), According to the Vocational Training Act, in-company trainers should be personally and professionally suited. They should show occupational skills, knowledge and competences as well as vocational and work-related pedagogical competences. In case they are registered by name with the corresponding competent body, they are legally responsible for properly executing trainings according to a certain training regulation. Companies providing training have to have at least one registered in-company trainer, who has passed the examination based on the AEVO.

The AEVO, introduced in 1972 regulates the authorisation for training and the attestation of the vocational and work-related pedagogical competences of in-company trainers in IVET. The AEVO is supplemented by a framework plan that sets out the content to be examined and is used as a recommended curriculum for courses that prepare for an examination based on the AEVO.

In the past the AEVO experienced great resistance from the industry, as companies did not want conditions to be imposed on them for carrying out the training. The AEVO was suspended in 2003 to reduce the administrative pressure on companies and encourage them to offer more training places, but due to the lack of positive evolution and to negative trends for the quality of training, the AEVO was reintroduced in 2009. Since then, it has experienced acceptance as the minimum standard qualification among all parties, including employer representatives. This also strengthened efforts to further professionalise in-company trainers and led to the introduction of two additional training qualifications: the Certified Trainings and CVET Pedagogue (EQF/DQR level 6) and Certified Vocational Pedagogue (EQF/DQR level 7). Due to lack of demand by the industry, however, these certificates have not met the expectations and need to be revised. The BIBB is currently conducting a preliminary study to first explore whether there is a need for introducing another qualification at EQF/DQR level 5.

The situation of in-company trainers

To kick-off the peer review meeting in Bonn, the German NRP presented the situation of in-company trainers and the challenge of their professionalisation. The dual IVET system relies on two learning venues with 70% of the training performed in a company and 30% in a vocational school, therefore in-company trainers have the main responsibility for the training. The Vocational Training Act requires companies wanting to provide training to have suitable training premises and training staff. Any company wanting to offer apprenticeship training needs to register at least one employee who can function as the designated responsible trainer ('Ausbilder') for the occupation being trained. In the German dual system, in-company training must follow minimum standards defined in the training regulations. In-company trainers bear the legal responsibility for the proper implementation of the apprenticeship training but also 'skilled workers providing training' take on training tasks under the responsibility of the in-company trainer.

The training staff is composed of four categories: training managers, full-time in-company trainers, part-time in-company trainers and skilled workers providing training. The national employee surveys (1998/99) suggested that 16% of German employees are regularly in charge of training apprentices. 6% of them were full-time trainers while 94% of all employees involved in apprenticeship training were part-time trainers. Many 'informal' trainers do not identify as trainers. Companies usually register one person as a trainer, but in practice several skilled workers and clerks perform the training informally without having the certification. Inter-company training centres support companies that cannot provide the required technology or resources and are not in the position to fully impart the vocational skills, knowledge and abilities of the training regulations. They also offer guidance and classes. Trainers are selected based on their knowledge of their occupation and their willingness to share their knowledge, generally in an informal process.

AEVO and framework plan changes

In 2020/21, BIBB conducted a study to assess whether the AEVO and its framework plan adequately reflected the current challenges for training personnel and company-based training practice and if an update was necessary. It appeared that competences assessed by the AEVO were rather limited and considered insufficient to tackle transformation challenges on the labour market. Moreover, the role of in-company trainers is not well recognised and appreciated in companies.

The study recommended maintaining the AEVO as it is flexible enough, i.e. the examination regulations requiring no amendment. However, while the framework plan is an important component of the AEVO, its content should be adapted and modernised to cover challenges such as digitalisation, sustainability, demography and heterogeneity. This has been done in 2023. In the context of the study it was also recommended that voluntary further training programmes as well as refresher courses could be offered.

Projects to support in-company trainers

Four initiatives and projects were presented to illustrate further support to companies and their trainers as well as how to better consider the themes of digitalisation and sustainability in trainings:

- **PrimAQ (great training quality)** is a licensed model from the central office of chambers of crafts for further training (ZWH) aimed at chambers of crafts which then offer it to their companies to support and improve in-company trainings. Training advisors in the chambers can provide tools such as guidance, booklets or training plans, as well as organise events, including workshops for trainers and trainees,

breakfasts for trainers where they can exchange their experience or round tables for managers/CEOs.

- **MIKA – Media and IT skills for trainers** was developed to strengthen in-company trainers' digital skills and their use of digital media in their training. MIKA offers an e-learning platform, online trainings, seminars, digital training tools, a community of practice and educational games.
- **Sustainability** is among four standards (law, safety and digitalisation) which need to be implemented within the training. Pilot projects have been developed to make sustainability more tangible for apprentices by implementing dedicated content in the trainings for in-company trainers.
- **'Weiterbildungsmentoring'** is a new approach to initiate and support better participation in CVET in companies for employees with low formal qualifications. Over 300 mentors work in 100 companies across Germany on these projects to advise their colleagues and encourage their participation in CVET, initiate conversations on career development and to support structural change.

Peer Discussions

The peers discussed the situation of in-company trainers in Germany. Due to the current transformation issues in the dual system, the qualification of trainers is a key quality aspect for the German NPR. In-company trainers could be the starting point to deal with the main transition challenges. Peers reflected on which qualification content was central for in-company trainers, how technical knowledge could be enriched by pedagogical competences through qualifications, the strengths and weaknesses of the qualifications of in-company trainers and how to support and qualify in-company training personnel in view of the current and future challenges.

At the end of the meeting, the peer reviewers shared their initial feedback. Peers believed soft skills should be more strongly emphasised (including the readiness to change). Peers suggested to organise regular refresher courses to ensure in-company trainers are being kept up to date with pedagogical evolutions and society challenges to adapt their training (e.g. related to digitalisation or the diversity of the group of apprentices). Peers also pointed out a problem related to the high number of informal in-company trainers who need to be recognised and trained accordingly. Incentives could also encourage informal in-company trainers to complete the qualification.

In terms of supporting the transformation process, peers mentioned, for example, the possibility of organising workshops and providing space for the exchange of good practices, of developing and issuing micro-credentials as well as setting up additional support structures for in-company trainers.

Next steps

A comprehensive feedback report will be drafted and shared with the German hosts.

The EQAVET system level peer review initiative

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. A first cycle took place in 2022-2023 with Quality Assurance National Reference Points (EQAVET NRPs) from 21 Member States taking part in the EQAVET Network's peer review initiative. A second cycle is planned for 2024-26 with 20 participating NRPs. The German peer review was the second out of five peer reviews that are scheduled to take place in 2024. Nine further peer reviews are planned to take place in 2025 and six in 2026.