



EUropean FUture Retail Manager EUFURM Sector Qualification Framework

Retail Sector Skills Alliance Future Retail managers for efficient and flexicure SMEs / RETAIL

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1. Introduction to the EUFURM Matrix of learning outcomes concerning the requirements of the European Retail Manager occupational profile

This paper introduces the main concepts of vocational and educational training (VET) in Europe. The Sections covered in this chapter include:

- the European strategies for VET,
- a quick overview of ESCO,
- an introduction to the ECVET system,
- a summary of the aims and activities of the RETAIL project

Workplace learning is vital to the future of the Retail sector as it enables staff to participate in a regular process of up-dating skills and engaging in Continuous Professional Development (CPD). CPD is often specific, relating to the employees role and the strategic direction of the organisation, enabling the organisation to evolve the knowledge and skills it requires to survive in an ever more competitive market. From a broader perspective CPD complements the more general Continuous Vocational Education and Training (CVET) being an expressed aim of the European policies for education, training and employment, also including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

An organisation that invests in appropriate knowledge intensive training for its staff can expect to realize a number of benefits as summarised below:

- Training can provide one mechanism for the organisation to use to survive in a competitive and global market
- The expected productivity gains from training are greater than those of wage increases
- Increased job satisfaction, staff retention and lower rates of absenteeism
- Develop needed vocational skills
- Investing in training provides the skilled workers for the future
- Boost innovation
- Support knowledge transfer
- Increased reputation of the organisation making it a more attractive place to work and therefore attracting a competent staff
- Help to Improve the costumer relation management and efficient strategies to face crisis
- Improve the image of the sector
- Promote the integration of learning with working and flexicurity in retail trade

To compete in a global economy, as stated above, organisations must have a workforce with the appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies and have a staff that can engage with CPD to ensure the future survival of the business. CPD may take the form of 'on-the-job' or 'off-the-job' programmes of learning and it is likely to become an expected part of an employees work role, at all levels, as staff engage in a lifelong leaning culture.

Retail staff is increasingly likely to influence key areas of the Retail sector in the future and as such will influence and change the knowledge, skills and competencies required of a Retail Manager (RM), the focus of this work, leading to greater need and opportunities for CPD for RMs.



Training is one method that can be utilised to enhance the transfer of knowledge, skills and competencies to ensure that staff understand their role and how this relates to the organisations goals, policies and procedures creating a 'learning culture' for the organisation. Across OECD countries employer provided or sponsored training is the most important source of Post-compulsory Training and Education for working people. Through international surveys like PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) the OECD has underlined the value of workplace learning in a CPD, CVET and RPL perspective.

2. Europe 2020 Strategies for VET

The quality of human capital is crucial for Europe's success. The European 2020 Strategy puts a strong emphasis on education and training to promote “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”. This Communication responds to the call of the European 2020 Strategy to reinforce the attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET) [...]. VET must play a dual role: as a tool to help meet Europe's immediate and future skills needs; and, in parallel, to reduce the social impact of and facilitate recovery from the crisis. These twin challenges call for urgent reforms. The case for better skills development in Europe is even more urgent in the light of the global race for talent and rapid development of Education and Training (E&T) systems in emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India.

Forecasts of future skills' needs show a greater demand for medium and high level qualifications up to 2020. The continuing ICT-driven evolution of products and processes, coupled with the need for a low-carbon economy as well as population ageing will mean that jobs and social structures will change: education and training, including VET, must adapt accordingly. [...]

In addition, as the traditional life sequence of "training-work-retirement" is modified, with mid-life changes of careers and occupations, adults must be able to update their skills and competences through continuing vocational education and training (CVET). (EUROPEAN COMMISSION - Brussels, 9.6.2010 - COM(2010) 296 final)

In the communication on “Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes”, the European Commission underlined the need for intensified competence developments:

EDUCATION AND SKILLS – A CORE STRATEGIC ASSET FOR GROWTH

Investment in education and training for skills development is essential to boost growth and competitiveness: skills determine Europe's capacity to increase productivity. In the long-term, skills can trigger innovation and growth, move production up the value chain, stimulate the concentration of higher level skills in the EU and

shape the future labour market. The massive increase in the global supply of highly skilled people over the last decade puts Europe to the test. The time when competition came mainly from countries that could offer only low-skilled work has come to an end. The quality of education and supply of skills has increased worldwide and Europe must respond. (Strasbourg, 20.11.2012 - COM(2012) 669 final)

The Council of the European Union has on several occasions underlined the value of training to build a competitive and robust society, not the least taking into account and directly addressing youth unemployment. As an example, the Council meeting 24 February 2014

..... adopted conclusions on innovative education and training to invest in skills, in the context of the European Semester and in particular the education aspects of the 2014 Annual Growth Survey. The conclusions call for action to improve skills performance across the EU and to help protect investment in education and training as areas which can both foster and support growth.

The Council also held a policy debate on skills and employability in the light of the results of recent OECD surveys (PIAAC and PISA). Ministers indicated some of the concrete measures that have been taken or planned at national level to make education and training policies more responsive to the changing needs of the labour market and how the EU could best contribute to supporting those efforts through policy cooperation and funding instruments.

Minister ARVA/ITOPOULOS underlined that "member states should continue to invest in high quality education. They also need to accelerate the reform agenda in education and training to urgently address the challenge of skills mismatch which is one of the causes of young people unemployment (Brussels 24 February 2014; Presse 6907/14)

These perspectives are continued in the communication on the European Area of Skills and Qualifications and it complements the Flagship initiatives launched in the Bruges Communiquée of December 2010, where the need to boost growth and create jobs were underlined with actions on:

1. Smart growth
 - a. Digital agenda for Europe



- b. Innovation Union
- c. Youth on the move
- 2. Sustainable growth
 - a. Resource efficient Europe
 - b. An industrial policy for the globalisation era
- 3. Inclusive growth
 - a. An agenda for new skills and jobs
 - b. European platform against poverty

Several of these initiatives are in line with the aims and actions of the RETAIL project and are described and specified as parts of the EUFURM matrix of the European Retail Manager's competence portfolio.

2.1 ESCO : European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations

ESCO is the recently launched multilingual classification of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations. It identifies and categorises skills and competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training, in 24 European languages. The system provides occupational profiles showing the relationships between occupations, skills, competences and qualifications.

To help bridge the gap between the world of education and training, and the labour market, the European Commission is developing ESCO, by introducing a standard terminology for occupations, skills, competences and qualifications ESCO can help education and training systems and the labour market to better identify and manage the availability of required skills, competences and qualifications. Its multilingual character facilitates increased international transparency and cooperation in the area of skills and qualifications.

ESCO supports initiatives developed by the European Commission aimed at making labour market and educational systems more transparent, stimulating mobility and creating opportunities. In the context of EUFURM the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are building blocks for transparency and cross sectorial understanding and use of competences. ESCO, using a standardised terminology, makes it easier to describe how occupations, skills, competences and qualifications are linked and interact with each other. The 22 languages of ESCO will facilitate cooperation between countries and will support the mobility of learners between countries and systems.

ESCO developments reflect the on-going shift to learning outcomes currently taking place across Europe. The learning outcomes approach states what an individual needs to know, understand and is able to do on completion of a learning process. It offers an

alternative to the traditionally strong emphasis on learning inputs (where a qualification is judged according to time spent in education, subjects studied and the location of the learning). These learning outcomes are commonly defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, thus sharing the basic terminological principles underpinning ESCO. This shared terminological core will facilitate the dialogue between labour market and education and training stakeholders.

The introduction of the EQF and the ECVET has triggered a shift towards learning outcomes. The linking of national qualifications frameworks (NQF) to the EQF is expected to be completed by 2014, thus signalling that the learning outcomes approach has been broadly accepted as the basis for future European cooperation in the area of education and training. ESCO will complement the EQF and through use of the ECVET principles be compatible with it.

2.2 ECVET : definition, objectives, tools and methodology

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. ECVET aims to give people greater control over their individual learning experiences and makes it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments, partly for training and partly for work opportunities. The system aims for a greater compatibility between different vocational education and training (VET) systems and their qualifications and training programmes across Europe.

The European Commission is responsible for the ECVET users' guide, and the established ECVET users' group and ECVET network. EU member States should ensure that all relevant qualifications and related 'Europass' documents issued by national or regional authorities contain clear information related to the use of ECVET. Several projects focusing on the development and promotion of ECVET are being developed in different sectors, funded by the EU's Leonardo da Vinci Programme for vocational training. RETAIL is one of those projects.

ECVET is a mechanism for description, identification, documentation, validation and recognition of learning and as well as for mobility initiatives – either within employment or during training:

recognition of learners' achievements

stimulating exchanges and mutual trust (supporting mobility of European citizens)

recognition of learning outcomes without extending learners' education and training pathways (facilitating lifelong learning)

ECVET tools and methodology comprise:

the description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated knowledge and skills (competence) criteria

a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements, transcripts of records and ECVET users' guides or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tools

3. The RETAIL Project

3.1 Project background and overview

The RETAIL sector is one of the most important sectors for the European economy. Its importance stems not only from its size (which is estimated to be € 1.352,00 billion or 11,8% of European GDP), but also from the fact that it will experience a job growth in the next future (Cedefop, Future skills supply and demand in Europe, 2012).

Crisis, globalisation, internationalisation, strong competition and mass customisation in that respect pose huge challenges, comprising both risks and opportunities.

RETAIL Sector Skills alliance will provide new solutions in terms of:

- Development of sectoral methods for anticipation of skills needs (New skills for Future Retail Managers (FURM));
- Design and implementation of specific initiatives that stimulate sector SMEs' incentives to invest in training (Decalogue for future retail trade SMEs, motivational guidelines for companies in all the project languages and a Label for companies accepting the agreement);
- Development of a new model of training provision within an overall lifelong learning strategy for the retail sector, taking into account barriers existing among SMEs and micro enterprises;
- Set up of the EU curricula of the new professional figure of the Future Retail Manager (FURM), endowed with more advanced social, entrepreneurial and management skills;
- Development of flexible devices for validation, transfer and recognition of learning outcomes, using ECVET principles;
- Providing the sector with the Info Formative Toolkit for the new FURM – with a strong use of simulation and blended learning modalities;
- European Peer Development Network for FURM.

The following documents the basic knowledge, skills and competencies needed by Managers in the Retail Sector. Within the initial phase of RETAIL project development a desk research - an in depths look into many aspects of the retail sector on a regional, national and European level has been carried out. From the collected data conclusions were drawn on the skills and competences necessary for the Future Retail Manager. The research was focused on: the actual state as well as the development of the last ten years, such as: economic situation, employment situation, purchasing power, demography, education and further education, good practice examples.

The Strategy for Competitive RETAIL companies is a report implicating the outcomes of the initial research phase of the Retail Sector Skills Alliance. It gives an in-depth look on the outcomes of the field survey and represents the profile of the Future Retail Manager (FURM) defined after the summarized results of both: the findings of the desk research carried out compared to the results of the field research.

The report describes the basic competencies needed by Retail Managers in order to:

- Quickly pick up new trends;
- Explore new markets, channels, invest in customer relations;
- Provide attractive working conditions and learn conducive and flexicure environments;
- Organize the retail process to better manage mass customization and lifestyle changes.

The Strategy furthermore shows the main barriers/ incentives met by companies in introducing innovative learning methods within the retail sector, describes the main evidence based advantages of managing SMEs in a knowledge intensive and flexicure way and identifies possible incentives that could motivate companies to invest in training.

3.2 Knowledge, skill and competencies for Retail Managers

The RETAIL project use the following definitions of knowledge, skills and competencies as defined by the EQF:

- **Competence** – the ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or inter personal skills, in work, study or professional development, in the context of the EQF competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy
- **Knowledge** – the outcome of assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that are related to a field of work or study, in the context of the EQF knowledge is described as theoretical or factual.
- **Skills** – the ability to apply knowledge and use ‘know-how’ to complete tasks and solve problems, in the context of the EQF, skills are described as either cognitive, that is, involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking, or practical, that is involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments.

The knowledge, skills and competencies for the main work tasks for a RM have been described as aggregated units of learning outcomes under the headings listed in the EUFURM matrix:

RETAIL-U1	Products and markets
RETAIL-U2	Business organisation and management
RETAIL-U3	Retail marketing
RETAIL-U4	Sales, customer services and support
RETAIL-U5	Human resources management

RETAIL-U6	Law and regulations
RETAIL-U7	Economics and accounting
RETAIL-U8	ICT
RETAIL-U9	Communication
RETAIL-U10	Transversal skills

The compliance with these units of learning outcomes is defining the full qualification of a European Retail Manager.