

....QualiCarte

The QualiCarte project was started by the Swiss conference on vocational training working in partnership with Swiss organisations from the world of work, and especially the Swiss Union of arts and crafts, and the Swiss employers' Union). It was supported financially by the Swiss federal office for vocational training and technology.

QualiCarte is a tool designed to help with self-assessing the quality of on-the-job training, and it can be used directly by company training instructors or by anyone else who is in charge of the apprentice's vocational training in a work situation.

The aim of the project was to provide company training staff (tutors, apprentice masters) with simple, practical help allowing them to maintain and develop the quality of vocational training in any sector.

Twenty-eight quality standards, set out in a checklist and describing the most important stages in any on-the-job vocational training, were chosen and experiments were carried out in a number of professional branches and institutions in Switzerland.

This tool also aroused a great deal of interest among the partners involved in the COPILOTE project, because numerous common points were found between the Swiss approach and the search for a strategy to support company tutors being carried out in the eight European countries.

As a result the QualiCarte system has been adapted to the European context in a number of ways. This work was carried out by the ECAP Ticino, by agreement with the heads of the original project. This is how the COPILOTE QualiCarte came about and it is now available to all European partners who are interested in the quality of on-the-job tutoring.

To find out more about the original project please see www.qualicarte.ch

INTRODUCTION

The QualiCarte system, as put together by its designers in Switzerland, currently comes under the responsibility of the Swiss conference on vocational training. It is an instrument used to self-assess the quality of on-the-job training and it is suitable for use in any professional sector.

The partners in the COPILOTE project decided to use this tool and, after making the necessary adjustments, to offer it to company tutors in the European construction industry, thus expanding the framework, which had been strictly Swiss to start with. The ECAP Ticino, working in partnership with the CCCA-BTP, took the initiative of handling the work involved in adapting it to the wider context and also carried out the necessary consultations and tests.

The Swiss project interested the European partners because its design gets through to company tutors who need simple tools, so that they can easily get their bearings in the process of training the apprentice. In addition to this, the idea of offering company tutors **a self-assessment instrument** is both daring and unusual. It can help the company to take greater responsibility in terms of actually providing the training.

Within the European context, **the COPILOTE version of QualiCarte** will be neither contractually binding nor compulsory, but it will help people to ask the right questions so that they themselves can check the quality of the training provided on the job at companies. **Under no circumstances is the system to be used as an instrument to assess the apprentice.** Indeed there are other tools which can be used to appraise the progress made by apprentices in acquiring professional skills and a compendium was put together as part of the COPILOTE project (see the *Library* section of the www.copilote.org website).

The original QualiCarte is made up of 28 quality indicators, divided into 4 chapters. By working on **developing closer links between the QualiCarte and the work produced by the COPILOTE project itself**, especially by making use of *the reference manual of the tutor's activities and skills in small and medium-sized construction businesses in Europe* (see the project's document no. 3), the partners found that the methodology used in both cases was similar, as is proven by the comparative table below.

Indeed, the company tutor's 5 activities picked up upon as part of the COPILOTE project practically match the 4 self-assessment chapters suggested in the QualiCarte.

COPILOTE: activities listed	QUALICARTE: phases which are subject to self-assessment
A1 Getting ready for the apprentice's arrival	1. Contractual and mutual commitment
A2 Inducting the apprentice into the company	2. Start of the training (special programme for the start of the training)
A3 Training	3. Training
A4 Assessment	
A5 Supporting the apprentice	4. The responsibility of the company providing the training and end of the apprenticeship contract.

As a result, the partners took the original methodology of the SWISS QualiCarte as a starting point and applied it to the COPILOTE QualiCarte, adhering to the structure of the reference manual of activities and skills of the European tutor. Like everything else produced by phase 4 of the project, this new version of the QualiCarte can be tailored to each partner's own special needs and can be transferred to other professional sectors.

TIPS

As was the case with its Swiss model, the aim of the COPILOTE QualiCarte is to help company tutors to **introduce a monitoring system**, managed either by themselves or working together with training centres, which will help them to appraise the quality of on-the-job training simply and pragmatically and to react if necessary by taking steps according to the findings.

Although the company providing the training may use the QualiCarte whenever it wishes, **the minimum recommended frequency is four times a year**. Notes must be taken both in order to record as much information as possible and to make it easier to measure the **progress made by the company in its training work** between the two self-assessments.

The use of QualiCarte in companies providing training in the countries taking part in the COPILOTE project can only be on a **voluntary basis**, unless certain domestic professional bodies should decide otherwise and make this tool more restrictive, as is the case in certain cantons or certain professional sectors in Switzerland.

The COPILOTE QualiCarte can also be **used by vocational training centres, as a support for dialogue and a way of helping** the companies providing the training. It is perfectly possible for the QualiCarte system to be used to appraise the quality of work-based education alternating between the company and the training centre, and also for the purposes of building up a dialogue between the two places where the training is provided on a more objective basis, thus helping to pick up on any difficulties which might prevent the company from properly carrying out its role in providing the training.

In order for the approach to be effective, it must not stop at findings, but give rise to numerous appraisals and the corresponding action plans. These action plans can be put into place by working together with training centres and professional organisations.

Indeed, **a proper exploitation of the results** recorded in the COPILOTE QualiCarte questionnaire should help:

- to remind apprentices that there is appropriate support available should they need it, offered by the company, by the training centre or by other partners, depending on the country,
- to pick up on any problems in time, whether these are on the side of the company, the training centre or the apprentice him or herself,
- to guide the company tutor towards the right person who can also help him or her deal with any difficulty as quickly as possible,
- to offer apprentices help in dealing with any difficulties they may face, whether they are professional or personal,
- to analyse the trainee's level of satisfaction.

The people who designed the QualiCarte system start out from the principle that it is better to resolve any problems as soon as they come up and that the situation must not be allowed to deteriorate. In addition to this, some problems from which companies really suffer can be more easily resolved with the participation of someone from outside the company (a member of staff from a training centre, a representative of a professional organisation who has the task of monitoring the on-the-job training, apprenticeship inspector).

A1 Getting ready for the apprentice's arrival

Quality indicators	Appraisal				Observations
	--	-	+	++	
1. The criteria which determine the kind of applications sought are known.					
2. There are interviews with the preselected candidates.					
3. The candidates are offered observation training courses.					
4. The candidates are given clear information about the mutual undertakings and this is recorded in the training contract.					
5. Information about working conditions is given.					

A2 Inducting the apprentice into the company

Quality indicators	Appraisal				Observations
	--	-	+	++	
6. The clauses of the training contract are discussed in detail.					
7. The induction is personalised, there is a full, detailed inspection of the company.					
8. Additional details are given about the company's fields of activity, about the main projects on which it is working, about its main successes and any weaknesses.					
9. The people responsible for training are appointed and introduced to the apprentice. The roles of any people who are occasionally involved in training are also explained.					
10. The apprentice is informed and his or her awareness is raised about the importance of provisions on health, safety and hygiene at work.					
11. The work station, the tools and the materials required in order to go about the scheduled training activities are placed at the apprentice's disposal.					
12. The apprentice is informed and his or her awareness is raised about the importance of the formal framework for the training: reference manuals, training plans, progress tables or others.					

A3 Training

Quality indicators	Appraisal				Observations
	--	-	+	++	
13. The training plan (a roadmap negotiated with the training centre in certain countries) is used interactively, working with all of the parties who are actively involved in the apprentice's training.					
14. The apprentice's training is properly included in the company's schedule of activities. It is not considered to be an additional, unproductive activity.					
15. The company provides the tutor with the material and organisational resources s/he will need in order to organise the apprenticeship properly.					
16. The company tutor sets the training targets clearly and measurably. S/he makes sure that both the apprentice and the other employees working with him or her understand them properly.					
17. The on-the-job apprenticeship methods and processes are scheduled, explained and demonstrated both to the apprentice and to the other employees working with him or her.					
18. Weekly interviews are held and help to produce first of all an appraisal of the past week and, secondly; the training plan for the coming week. More in-depth interviews are held at least once every six months.					
19. The apprentice is given increasingly complex tasks to do, thus helping him or her to become more independent.					
20. Any training provided in which the apprentice takes part anywhere other than at the company, for instance at a vocational school or at an apprentice training centre, is taken on board and tools used for contact with the other training venue are in operation.					
21. The company tutor is prepared to listen to the apprentice's needs in relation to his or her training course and reacts quickly if required.					
22. The company tutor asks the apprentice's opinion about his or her training and takes this on board, where applicable asking other partners who are taking part in the training process.					

A4 Assessment

Quality indicators	Appraisal				Observations
	--	-	+	++	
23. The work carried out by the apprentice is subject to both quantitative and qualitative checks. An appraisal of this work is given back to the apprentice.					
24. A training report is drawn up at least once every six months, based upon criteria established in advance and by agreement with all of the partners involved in the training process. It is sent to the other partners involved in the apprenticeship (training centre, vocational school, inspectorate).					

A5 Supporting the apprentice

25. If the apprentice encounters any difficulties (whether professional or personal), the company tutor quickly contacts the training centre, the family or any other partner who can take action to help him or her.					
26. The tutor informs the competent persons or bodies in the event of any risk, even if it is only theoretical or remote, of the breaking off of the on-the-job apprenticeship, in order to avoid it.					
27. The end of the on-the-job apprenticeship contract is scheduled and the tutor takes an interest in the apprentice's professional future.					
28. The company tutor thinks about his or her own continuing training and takes any appropriate steps, both in his or her own interest and in that of the apprentice.					

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European strategy for developing and optimising in-house tutoring in the construction sector

8 partner European countries

GOALS

To give tutoring better positioning in the vocational training process

To support both young people and adults entering the profession in small companies in the construction sector

To professionalise the support provided to apprentices (tutoring) and to highlight its value by means including recognition based upon a European reference manual

