



VET Organisations reported on in The Netherlands:

The following institutes have been consulted:

- Hogeschool Zeeland, Vlissingen (University for Higher Professional Education)
- ROC Westerschelde, Terneuzen (Regional VET Centre)
- ROC West Brabant, Radius College, Breda (Regional VET Centre)
- ROC Zeeland, Goes (Regional VET Centre)
- ROC Tilburg, Tilburg (Regional VET Centre)
- Fontys Hogeschool (University for Higher Professional Education)

The interview survey was carried out in December 2009 and January/February 2010. Basic information regarding use of Quality standards and directives from the Ministry of Education and the Inspectorate has been gathered in a short literature study as preparation for the interviews. Materials of both MBO-Raad as well as HBO-Raad have been used for this purpose. A short checklist has been developed consisting of 23 potential themes. These themes have been discussed and have been elaborated upon during the interviews. In the appendices there is a short summary regarding the national standard criteria for professional education as well as vocational education.

Results are used as a check for relevant themes regarding Quality and potential materials that are available. What is recognisable for each organisations, what do they all have in common? The conclusions are presented in a concept proposal Building Blocks for Quality Assurance based on the Dutch situation.

I Short summary of the different interviews

1. ROC Westerschelde, Terneuzen (Regional VET Centre)

ROC Westerschelde has approximately 2800 day students and caters for four main areas of Education: Technical Education (such as Metalwork, process-operation, mechanics, ICT technology), Economic Education (commercial, leisure, administrative curricula), School, Care (educational curricula, social work and nursing) and Adult Education (literacy, Dutch as a second language).

ROC Westerschelde uses a Quality Assurance model of its own. Efforts have been made to introduce the widely used INK model (used by many local and regional authorities, companies and services). Management of ROC Westerschelde has not yet opted for the INK model.

The quality model covers the following themes:

Performance data such as examination and qualification results and drop out percentages. Several client satisfaction queries are carried out each year checking satisfaction rates on the intake procedure and introduction period for students, general satisfaction on the curriculum, match between curriculum and future work, school



infrastructure, learning material, teacher performance and exam procedures. This is partly carried out on the organization level, whereas most satisfaction queries are carried out on a lower (team) level. Also staff and teachers satisfaction queries are carried out (once every two years). Teachers and other staff members on the whole are not altogether satisfied with improvement plans based on these surveys.

Themes which come out on top in the various Quality Assurance schemes:

Communication	Accountability	Student rights	Examination
Intake/assessment	Accessibility	Curriculum	Learning processes
Apprenticeship	Tutoring	Mentoring	Output

2. ROC Zeeland, Goes (Regional VET Centre)

ROC Zeeland has approximately 10000 daytime students in different training centres scattered across the province of Zeeland. In the past a quality assurance model was designed by specialised staff members in the college. This model consists of a number of 'result themes' or 'strategic themes' and an analysis scheme is derived from this 'theme list'.

The school year consists of three semesters and during each semester a query is carried out measuring student satisfaction on intake and introduction period, teaching methodology, tutoring and mentoring and special care programmes. Also match between curriculum and future work is surveyed.

Staff and teaching staff satisfaction queries are carried out every two years. A systematic improvement plan is implemented and evaluated every year.

Themes which come out on top in the various Quality Assurance schemes:

Teacher development	Accountability	Student rights	Examination
Intake/assessment	Accessibility	Curriculum	Output
Apprenticeship	Tutoring	Mentoring	

Evaluation of educational innovation and the effects of teacher performance are difficult because of analytical diversity, bias and number of variables.

3. ROC West Brabant, Radius College, Breda (Regional VET Centre)

Radius College is part of a very large VET Organisation (28300 students) in the Southeast of the Netherlands. Radius College consists of 3700 students. It is a Poly-Technical College situated in the town of Breda. Up to three years ago the INK Model was in use. The present principal of the College has reorganised the Quality Assurance system after concluding that the INK Model was too complex for the managers in his college. INK provides an elaborate analysis but is too time-consuming in doing so. Real Quality improvement is hampered by the complexity of the system. Too much time was spent collecting and analysing data and too little time was invested in actually improving things.

On the whole two major themes are being taken up by the new Quality Assurance Model designed by Radius College.



Examination Competence Development

Examination should be considered in connection with a grand tour de force in the college to introduce competence based learning. This kind of education requires a totally different approach to examining students on their knowledge, skills and attitude. Much is done to replace the traditional forms of separate tests by integrated form of 'master proofs', complex assignments with various student activities judged simultaneously. It also requires a different kind of teacher, shifting away from the traditional knowledge expert to a teaching coach and tutor. On inquiring about the particular competences the principal has in mind he mentions communication techniques, the ability to produce sophisticated teaching and learning material, to give feedback on other teachers' material and assessment skills. These competences have been brought together in a Qualification Dossier (the standard requirements of a Radius College teacher).

Student and staff satisfaction queries are carried out in the same manner and frequency as those of other VET Centres as this is required by the national educational authorities.

4. ROC Tilburg

ROC Tilburg has approximately 10.000 students and 1200 adults are following programs for AVET including "Dutch as a second language and introduction to the Dutch society". The ROC covers 144 curricula spread over 19 separate locations. Curricula are offered as a fulltime day program as well as in a combination of learning and working. Introduction of competence based learning is asking for a lot of flexibility and energy of the staff involved.

A couple of years ago the organization had already opted for a large investment in the development of quality programs based on the INK-model. This has resulted in the production of a vast number of protocols as well as competence profiles for key functions. Everything written in a PDCA-cycle. This investment has created much transparency throughout the organization, but the shadow side is that the created accountability costs a lot of time. One of the problems is finding the proper balance between evaluation/analysis and time for solving the problem (action). After management change it is yet unclear whether the new management actively supports the use of the INK-model.

The ROC uses performance data. School- as well as development plans are based on these data. Performance data also find ground in student satisfaction scores, reviews from regional employers, as well as staff reviews. Part of the indicators are based on the directives of the Ministry and Inspection as well as local government (AVET program). Content and criteria for the curricula stem from the Knowledge Centres (standard procedure in the Netherlands). The ROC has added content in some curricula on the basis of local feedback from employers (not standard).

Themes which come out on top in the quality scheme of the ROC:

Leadership(-competences)	Accountability	Tutoring
Management of resources	Work based learning	Examination
Valuation of employers	Mentoring	Learning, teaching, roles
Support structure (students)	Recruitment	Staff development



5. Fontys (University for Higher Professional Education)

Fontys offers more than 200 professional education programs in the bachelor – master structure. It offers programs for professionals (AVET) as well as students (VET). The length of the programs vary: ranging from short courses and part time programs in combination with work to programs for day students with a duration of 4 years. The programs cover a wide range of subjects: Economics, Engineering, Health Care, ICT, Arts, Teaching, Media and Communication, Sciences, Sports. Fontys has locations in several cities like Amsterdam, Den Haag, Den Bosch, Eindhoven, Breda and Tilburg and has appr. 35.000 professionals and students in their programs. For each program a team leader is responsible. Each year he is advised on the development of the program by a quality team on the basis of the different scans Fontys has.

Fontys has a Quality Assurance program of their own that is based on the Deming Learning cycle in combination with the criteria of NVAO. Much attention is paid to accountability (targets) and stakeholders (being students, professionals, alumni employers, local and national government as well as staff). For quality aspects of all programs and program related activities there is an evaluation scheme for each of the stakeholders.

Involvement and commitment of employers in the development of the contents of the program, in the delivery of the program itself, in work based learning (apprenticeships) and in examination is of great importance.

At this moment Fontys is putting more effort in making protocols for the different aspects of a program. One of the obstacles at this moment is: how to arrange all available information in such a way that the right person has the proper information. Also much time is put in setting up procedures. But in many instances there is a lack of time to work on improvement.

Themes which came out on top:

Accountability
Learning processes
Examination

Leadership
Valuation

Apprenticeship
Curriculum

6. Hogeschool Zeeland (University for Higher Professional Education)

Hogeschool Zeeland is a University for professional education with approximately 4100 students and a staff of approximately 400 people. Studies range from maritime science, education, social work and sustainable process technology.

The HZ has a quality assurance model of its own based on the national accreditation system and plans are to incorporate the INK system as a tool for the improvement cycle. Satisfaction surveys take place among students and staff.

Student satisfaction is measured every semester (course-evaluation) and annually (apprenticeship evaluation and curriculum evaluation). Also an alumni survey is carried out one and a half years after graduation to check themes like curriculum relevance to professional competence demands. Every two to three years staff satisfaction is measured. Also annually a stakeholder enquiry is carried out to check curriculum relevance and regional educational demands.



Quality assurance is also taken up by a student quality circle (a panel of students) and a curriculum commission (students and teachers). These two committees meet several times a year to discuss the quality and content of the courses. A special examination committee deals with issues of exam logistics and the quality of examination content.

HZ takes pride in the fact that though the scrutiny is tough, all curricula have been approved and accredited at least satisfactory by the NVAO.

Quality Assurance themes focus on:

Teacher quality

Research quality

Quality assurance

Teacher development

II Themes combined, a short list of relevant themes

Based on the interviews of 6 different (A)VET organizations the following themes appear to be most relevant (in random order):

- a. Intake, information and assessment
- b. Apprenticeship
- c. Outcome and accountability / valuation by student, professional field, staff, stakeholders
- d. Accessibility
- e. Coaching, tutoring and mentoring
- f. Guidance, care structure and student rights
- g. Curriculum (purpose, form, entry levels, exit levels)
- h. Examination
- i. Learning methods and processes
- j. Teacher, staff development, staff allocation
- k. Leadership (profile, vision on learning)

All themes should demonstrate use of a PDCA- cycle.



Appendices

1. Themes and criteria of the valuation framework used by the Inspection of initial VET institutes, qualification levels 2, 3 and 4 (for institutes that receive funding from the Ministry of Education, full time as well as work based learning) as well as AVET

On behalf of the Ministry of Education the valuation of Quality in this VET area is regulated in "Het waarderingskader BVE" (valuation framework initial VET and AVET). The Inspectorate is the supervisor for this framework. The institutes are hold responsible to make their delivery process transparent according to the themes and criteria set out in this framework. Apart from that they may use one of the standard quality models (like INK, ISO etc) to align all areas and processes. The framework is set up in such a way that organizations themselves are responsible for fining and describing the criteria which they need to meet. All processes need to account for in a PDCA-type of circle thus focusing on continuous improvement.

Within this framework the following themes and criteria need to be covered by the organization:

- a. Governance
An VET organizations assesses, accounts for, and improves its performances systematically. Relevant stakeholders are involved. Targets and objectives are formulated. Financial position, staff , organizational and staff development are also part of this.
- b. Requirements by Law
Are the legal terms and conditions met regarding f.e. contract, education and exam arrangements (OER), apprenticeship, appeal procedures, confidentiality matters, hours, presence, rules regarding compulsory education
- c. Accessibility
This area addresses issues like: Relative amount of underprivileged participating in the educational program as well as their educational success, the targets that are set for this group, the way they have been set as a result of interaction with the social environment . How is the care system organized to contribute to the expected results?
- d. Program
Focus of this area: Consistency of the educational program internal as well as between institute and professional field. Consistency in content as well as didactics,. Consistency as well as coherence in terms of the link with prior as well as further education. Attention for specific needs of the learner. Proper balance between time required and time invested by the student. Measures for continuity. Adequate educational materials as well as facilities.
- e. Learning methods and processes
Focus on: Attention for actual use and effective use of learning time. Use of learning methods in line with competence profile and didactical concept, effective and inspirational study guidance of all participants



f. Career guidance during study

Theme covers issues like: Participants are attended to carefully in their career within the institute. Intake and selection processes, careful and tailor made guidance of all students during decisive stages or phases in the study, adequate facilities for this, adequate network of partners for specific services or needs, adequate registration system (including information for preventive actions).

g. Association and safety

Focus on: Participants study in a respectful and safe environment. Addressing ways of contact and approach in school as well as in the professional field. Safety covers social as well as physical safety. Working on social cohesion is one of the areas an organization should demonstrate effect (competences for citizenship, relationships and network of organization with society).

h. Output (effectiveness)

Focus on: Outcome and results are evaluated against realistic and well founded targets (regional specificity as well as specificities of the professional area are taken into account) for VET as well as AVET.

2. Themes and criteria of valuation used in professional VET, qualification levels 5 and 6 (for institutes that receive funding of the Ministry of Education, full time as well as part time)

Official recognition as well as validation of purpose and quality is officially done by the NVAO (Dutch Flemish Accreditation Organization) on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

Accreditation is primarily given for the professional training itself but not for organizations. An accredited training benefits from this recognition since they will receive finances from the Ministry and its students are eligible for a study grant.

Accreditation means that NVAO has found good evidence that the training is covering the following themes adequately:

- Purpose of the training: the end terms of the training are based profiles that have been generated by the relevant professional field. The bachelor level is equal the level of a starting professional, and the masters profile equals the level of an independent professional or an executive.
- Content of the training: the training can demonstrate that it takes into account professional topics of present interest, the present profession.
- Employment of staff (both qualitative as well as quantitative)
- Infrastructure, materials
- Tutoring, mentoring and guidance
- Internal quality care: measurable targets and objectives, periodic evaluation, improvement measures and the involvement of staff, (ex-)students and representatives of the profession in evaluation and development
- Conditions for continuity (for students as well as in general)

Apart from this a new training needs to demonstrate how the training is adjusted to the terms and demands of the professional field.

Internationella PROGRAMKONTORET



GD Utbildning och kultur

Programmet för livslångt lärande

The institutes for higher professional education as a sector have opted for the use of the Dutch version of EFQM (INK) to demonstrate their quality and their continuous attempt to improve.



Literature

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