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The EQF and ECVET support portal



EU VET SUPPORT

Guidelines on the practical implementation
of ECVET learner mobility



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Introduction in ECVET

ECVET is the acronym for *European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training*. ECVET is a recommendation of the European Union that dates from 2009. It is a European instrument to support lifelong learning, the mobility of European learners and the flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications. It supports the transfer, recognition and where appropriate, accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieve a qualification. ECVET ultimately is about validating learning performance. ECVET is based on a set of technical components that are all underpinned by the use of 'learning outcomes'.

the subject of learning mobility in education. In education more and more international components are observable. These are indeed important for the everyday professional practice and it is possible to follow part of the study or do a work placement abroad as a learning mobility.



Mobility of workers and learners a crucial factor for Europe's welfare and economy

Learning outcomes

“Learning outcomes means statements of what a student knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process and which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.”

ECVET recommendations

Students, employees and entrepreneurs, and therefore companies and the labour market, are influenced by globalization, considering the rapid communication techniques or the enlargement of the European Union to 28 Member States. We live and work in Europe where freedom of movement is a right - the right to learn, work and live in another country within the European Union. This raises

Student learning mobility advances the personal and professional development of students and enhances their employability through the acquisition of new skills and competences. Knowledge, language, intercultural dialogue and a better understanding of other education systems are also important elements. In order to promote and ensure the quality of learning mobility European tools are developed. One of those tools is the 'European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training' (ECVET).

The ECVET quality circle

In order to be able to recognise students' learning outcomes it is necessary to organise the process. A lot of things have to be taken into account. One of the ECVET tools is the ECVET quality circle, which summarizes all the phases of ECVET and makes clear the most essential elements of each phase. It thus helps to ensure quality in the process of learning mobility and helps the organising parties to accomplish the realisation.



Figure 1: Quality circle: using ECVET for transnational mobility
Source: www.ecvet-team.eu

The quality circle consists of four processes figure 1), based on the phases:

- Planning refers to the phase 'ECVET before mobility')
- Implementation (refers to the phase 'ECVET during mobility')
- Evaluation (refers to the phase 'ECVET after mobility')

- Review (based on the evaluation process, an action plan can be developed)

Communication is very important in all phases of the ECVET process. In the phase of the planning it is all about becoming partners, exchanging information on systems, learning to understand each other, bridging differences and the qualification systems. Crucial herein is being transparent and creating mutual trust. In the phase of the implementation the communication is directed at the progress, the process. It is gearing the activities to another, keeping a finger on the pulse.

Communication in the phase of the evaluation and review is directed to reflecting the process, the ups and downs and the learning process of the partnership. The aim of these phases is how to reflect on the partnership and looking forward to future mobilities and improving the elements of the partnership that need improvement.

“Communicate with existing host partners, who may have further contacts.”

“If it is a new partner (first project with them) ensure your preparation is thorough to ensure both parties understand the need and purpose of this project and potential project to follow.”

“Don’t be afraid to encourage two way communication of feedback”

ECVET life circle

These general guidelines will briefly describe the elements of the process of mobility along the 4 steps of the quality circle, planning, implementing, evaluating and reviewing the process. It will include the mobility phase before, during and after the mobility. It gives a short introduction of the elements in the process. Several ECVET documents are available. These documents give reference to all kind of examples of all these elements.

ECVET partnership: planning – ECVET before mobility

In the planning phase the mobility is set up. A partnership is formed and underpinning agreements are made. As mentioned ECVET aims to valorise learning mobility. A broader framework of agreements are made to make this possible. It starts with setting up a partnership in which competent institutions agree on sending and receiving students in order to learn and with the aim to recognise this learning as a part of the qualification.

The partner institutions set the conditions for smoother exchange, agree to the conditions under which learning outcomes can be validated and recognised. These agreements are formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

A MoU is an agreement between competent institutions which set the framework for credit transfer. It formalise the ECVET-partnership by stating the mutual acceptance of the status and procedures of competent institutions involved. It also establishes the partnership procedures for cooperation.

ECVET toolbox

In order to be able to transfer learning outcomes ECVET uses units.

Units

A unit is a component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated.

ECVET toolbox

Competent institutions

Competent institution' means an institution which is responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries.

ECVET recommendations

Units describe a set of learning outcomes that contribute to the qualification. This can either be an existing unit of a qualification or a set of learning outcomes that are grouped into a unit in a way that is transparent for all partners in the process and will be recognised when the final assessment that leads to the award of the qualification is successfully completed by the learner.

Together with defining units ECVET points can be allocated. These points represent the overall weight of learning outcomes and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification.

ECVET points

ECVET points are a numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification and of the relative weight of units in relation to the qualification

ECVET toolbox

Assessment is necessary to be able to transfer learning outcomes. The learning agreement will specify which learning outcomes are to be achieved during the mobility and how this will be assessed.

The sending institution or the home institution is the institution that will validate and recognise the achieved outcomes. Prior to the mobility the partners have to discuss and agree the way learning outcomes will be assessed during the mobility period. The ensuring of the quality of this assessment must be part of this discussion. Elements in this discussion will be: the assessment methods, the profile of the assessor. In the end it is the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credit that validates the learning outcomes of the learner. The hosting or receiving institution organises the assessment according to the prior made agreements and the related quality standards.

ECVET partnership: implementation – the mobility report

The implementation phase is directed at the mobility. The learning activities related to the identified learning outcomes have to be prepared. All those concerned, including the students, have to be prepared for the period ahead and have to be well informed about the related activities. The learning activities should be executed, and in the end assessed.

During this process the learning agreement, the units, the underpinning procedures are important instruments to guide the process.

The requirements on the assessment are described in the learning agreement. This learning agreement is signed by the sending institution, the hosting institution and the learner. All elements that are important to facilitate the learning are described

Learning Agreement

A learning agreement is an individualised document which sets out the conditions for a specific mobility period. It specifies, for a particular learner, which learning outcomes and units should be achieved together with the associated ECVET points.

In the mobility phase the communication between the student and the hosting institution is also important. The hosting institution guides the student.



Transnational mobility to broaden the experiences of transport and logistics workers

For the hosting institution it's important to be well informed and thus be able to guide and assess the student according to its learning goals and the learning agreement.

If the learner achieves the expected learning outcomes and these are positively assessed by the hosting institution, the home institution will validate and recognise them as part of the requirements for a qualification. Therefore the learning agreement constitutes a commitment to the learner that his/her achievement, if in line with the expectations, will be recognised.

The learners achievements will be described in a personal transcript which contains the information on the assessed learning outcomes units and ECVET points awarded. It also specifies the identity of the learner and the competent institution(s) that assessed, validated and recognised learners' credit. The personal

transcript is a document that belongs to the learner.

ECVET partnership: the evaluation – ECVET after mobility

In the period after mobility the learner achievements have to be validated and recognised in line with the Memorandum of Understanding and the learning agreement. It's also the period of reflecting on the previous processes:

ECVET partnership: the review

The final step in the process is focused on the consequences of the process. What revisions have to be made in order to improve the quality of the process. It can imply to change the partnership, revise procedures, and agreements.

Specific guidelines per ECVET phase

ECVET before mobility - planning

Starting a partnership

- European database, or interactive platform at a European level that enables the formation of effective partnerships
- Networks – to join and to take part in
- Reference profiles

For newcomers it could be advised to join an existing network or partnership in order to learn from the partners and share the already developed procedures and tools. It enriches the network/partnership adding new information and the perspective of the 'newcomer'. In case of transport or logistics the advice could be to connect with the the NETINVET network, www.netinvet.eu.

Another place to start is Adam. Adam is the project and product portal for Leonardo da Vinci projects. Adam is the database where information on projects and partners is assembled. By using Adam a full picture of the many products and results produced by the Leonardo da Vinci programme can be obtained. It is possible to use keywords, like logistics, to search for projects or products, see www.adam-europe.eu.

Procedures to identify units of learning outcomes

- Take time and attention to speak the same language, to see into the different VET systems, making/using European reference profiles and

define tasks, activities and processes well

- Use existing examples to identify units of learning outcomes or use already identified units
- Use the ECVET instruments and documents (questions & answers, toolbox) as an example
- Have a look at NETINVET (www.netinvet.eu) and the developed units

Bridging differences

- Use reference profiles/ frameworks and be aware of differences between countries
- Deal with the differences between systems and try to find a way it works for all partners
- Inform each other, keep in contact, continuous communication, be transparent
- Have a look at NETINVET (www.netinvet.eu) and the developed units, decide if it can help you to bridge differences

Learning outcomes

- Use reference profiles, use clear definitions – avoid misunderstanding/ interpretation
- At the level of students: provide background information and make it possible to add additional attained K,S,C and to describe them in the documents.

ECVET during mobility - implementation

- Transparent information
- Assessment at the beginning of the mobility
- Formative assessment
- 360° feedback
- E-portfolio
- Frequent communication
- Frequent visits – VETPro mobility projects

During the implementation phase communication can be seen as the mean to keep everything ongoing. Transparent information, frequent communication and frequent visits refer to communication. Communication is important to build the mutual trust, to steer the process, to be able to give feedback. Feedback among the student and the company and the VET school during the period of mobility, feedback among the sending and hosting institution regarding the mobility.

At the level of the support of the learning process: close involvement of the tutor, sufficient information about the stage of learning of the student and involvement of the student in the defining of learning outcomes are recommended. 360° feedback and the E-portfolio are instruments in this communication process. It also documents the process. The assessment at the beginning of the mobility is an instrument to mark the starting point of the student and thus have a reference point in the process of coaching to the aim of the mobility. Mutual trust is an important issue in relation to assessment. The quality of the assessment must be assured. The Member States and the European Commission are establishing a European

Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET) to promote and monitor continuous improvement of national systems of VET. EQAVET forms part of a series of European initiatives aiming at to better recognise skills and competencies acquired by learners in different countries or learning environments, including Europass, the European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, ECVET and the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF). For detailed information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqavet_en.htm. Especially the EQAVET leaflet and the EQAVET Descriptors' Guide could give more background information.

ECVET after mobility - review

- Open communication
- Networks / sustainable partnerships
- Reference profiles as an instrument

In the stage of evaluation the learners' achievements must be validated and recognised in line with the memorandum of understanding and the learning agreement. The reference documents are part of the learning agreement and are an instrument in the process of describing units and linking the units to qualifications. The evaluation concentrates on the functioning of the partnership implementing mobilities. It can be necessary to expand the partnership, or to change the partnership for future mobilities. But it is also a possibility that the partnership remains unchanged. After that the cycle starts again and again all steps will be taken.

Specific guidelines for the transport and logistic sector

All general guidelines are also important for the transport and logistic sector. Several ECVET projects have been directed at this sector. The results of these projects are brought together in the NETINVET network. It thus provides a solid base starting an ECVET project in this sector. The NETINVET network encloses international trade and the transport and logistic sector.

This network relies on the outcomes of several ECVET projects and thus has developed all kind of instruments that are important in the ECVET process.

All elements of ECVET can be found within the network. Quality assurance is an important issue within the network.



Quality assurance in the transport and logistic sector

Resources

euVETsupport.eu

Transparency and comparability of qualifications, the recognition of non- and informal learning, flexibility and mobility within vocational education and training (VET) as well as a European approach within VET are more important than ever in times of skill shortages, economical challenges and high youth unemployment rates in Europe.

Europe facilitates this process with European VET instruments such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for VET (ECVET). The proper application and implementation of EQF and ECVET offer many advantages and help both HR departments and VET providers to successfully master the challenges faced by industry today.

The euVETsupport portal guides and advises VET providers and HR departments in applying and implementing the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the European Credit System for VET (ECVET) in their daily praxis. The portal serves as the virtual environment of the euVETsupport users and network. Aligned to the individual needs and particular requirements of the VET practitioners concerned, the portal provides its end-users with specific information, support tools and assistance for making best use of the European instruments in their daily practice.

The portal will be open to the public after a testing and adjustment phase as of April 2014 and after the project's end. Please get in touch with the project coordinator in order to participate in the testing.

www.euVETsupport.eu



The euVETsupport portal with information and learning opportunities for VET practitioners implementing EQF and ECVET in praxis

ecvet-project.eu

The ECVET projects website is the major official source for information on ECVET: www.ecvet-projects.eu

This site gives information on all kind of subjects regarding ECVET. A toolbox offers examples of documents written by ECVET pilot projects and related sources on methodological approaches to ECVET implementation examples that can be found, such as: Memorandum of understanding, describing qualifications, comparing qualifications, designing learning units, learning agreements, etc.

Netinvet.eu

www.netinvet.eu

Netinvet is a network promoting European mobility for learners completing vocational education in international trade and transport & logistics

EU VET SUPPORT

Further information about euVETsupport:

URL: www.euVETsupport.eu

Email: eu-project.akademie@dekra.com



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