

Survey on the impact of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework on Vocational Education and Training

The information provided will remain confidential, and individuals and organisations will not be identified.

1.1 Name *Dugald CRAIG*

1.2 Organisation Name *West of Scotland Colleges' Partnership for Scotland's Colleges*

1.3 Position within organisation *International Development Manager*

1.4 Telephone Number *0141 559 4786*

1.5 E-mail dcraig@woscop.co.uk

1.6 Before participation in this survey how aware were you of EQARF?
 Very aware Slightly aware Not aware at all

1.7 If very, or slightly aware, how did you hear about EQARF?
 Internal meeting/ correspondence Meeting/Conference
 Own research

2. Quality Criteria

How well do you think existing QA systems for VET meet the indicative descriptors of EQARF? Please tick the most appropriate box

2.1 Planning

	Completely	Partly	Not at all
Indicative descriptors:			
Goals/objectives of VET are described for the medium and long term and are linked to European goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant stakeholders participate in setting VET goals and objectives at the different levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targets are established and monitored Through specific indicators	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanisms and procedures have been established to training needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the word "identify" missing?		
An information policy has been devised to ensure optimum disclosure of quality outcomes subject to National/regional data protection requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standards and guidelines for recognition, Validation and certification of competences of individuals have been defined

Would you be able to provide evidence for your answers to the Indicative descriptors at a later stage

Yes

No

(I could probably provide evidence at VET-provider level, but it would be for others to provide this at VET-system level)

If you answered ~~No~~ Not at all to any of these questions please comment here why you think this is not currently taking place.

What, if any, are the main barriers to ensuring Planning reflects a strategic vision, as detailed in the above descriptors?

- 1. Short-termism in labour market planning and its subsequent impact on the development of VET responses that emerges because of the difficulties in making detailed medium or long term plans in this domain. Whilst the analysis of trends may provide a picture of where the labour market has been, this does not accurately indicate the direction in which it is heading.**
- 2. The absence of adequate labour market information and advice to allow employers and learners to fully comprehend the range of options open to them and to cope with a "flexisecure" labour market.**
- 3. The failure to learn from experience and adequately engage new and emerging stakeholders.**
- 4. The recurring failure to recognise that learning is frequently not a linear process.**
- 5. The absence of parity of esteem between academic and vocational education and their respective qualifications.**
- 6. The constant drive to reduce costs and deliver learning and qualifications as cheaply as possible.**

2.2 Implementation

Completely

Partly

Not at all

Indicative descriptors:

Implementation plans are established in cooperation with social partners, VET providers and other relevant stakeholders at the different levels

Implementation plans include consideration of the resources required, the capacity of the users and the tools and guidelines needed for support

Guidelines and standards have been devised for implementation at different levels

Implementation plans include specific support towards the training teachers and trainers

VET providers' responsibilities in the implementation process are explicitly described and made transparent

A national and/or regional quality assurance framework has been devised and includes guidelines and quality standards at VET provider level to promote continuous improvement and self-regulation

Would you be able to provide evidence for your answers to the Indicative descriptors at a later stage Yes No

If you answered 'Not at all' to any of these questions please comment here on why you think this is not taking place

What, if any, are the main barriers to ensuring that Implementation plans are devised in consultation with stakeholders

- 1. The failure to learn from experience and adequately engage new and emerging stakeholders.**
 - 2. The recurring failure to recognise that learning is frequently not a linear process.**
 - 3. The absence of parity of esteem between academic and vocational education and their respective qualifications.**
 - 4. The constant drive to reduce costs and deliver learning and qualifications as cheaply as possible**
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2.3 Evaluation

	Completely	Partly	Not at all
Indicative descriptors:			
A methodology for evaluation has been devised, covering internal and external evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholder involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process is agreed and clearly described	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The national/regional standards and processes for improving and assuring quality are relevant and proportionate to the needs of the sector	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Systems are subject to self-evaluation, internal and external review, as appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early warning systems are implemented	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance indicators are applied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant, regular and coherent data collection takes place in order to measure success and identify areas for improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Regular but not always coherent.

Appropriate data collection methodologies have been devised e.g. questionnaires and indicators/metrics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you be able to provide evidence for your answers to the Indicative descriptors at a later stage	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	

This would take some time to assemble.

If you answered ~~Not at all~~ to any of the above questions please comment here on why you think this is not taking place

What do you regard as the main barriers to ensuring that evaluation is regularly carried out and measured

Evaluation is carried out frequently. However, the systems-driven nature of evaluation can mean that it is sustained with a self-perpetuating and self-serving dynamism that fails to adequately consider need, purpose, relevance and validity.

2.4 Review

	Completely	Partly	Not at all
Indicative descriptors:			
Procedures, mechanisms and instruments for undertaking reviews are defined at all levels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Processes are regularly reviewed and action plans for change devised. Systems are	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

adjusted accordingly

Information on the outcomes of evaluation is
Made publicly available

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Would you be able to provide evidence for
your answers to the Indicative descriptors at
a later stage

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you answered ~~Not at all~~ to any of these questions please comment here
on why you think this is not happening

Are there any specific comments you have regarding the review mechanism?

3. Impact and Recommendations

Completely Partly Not at all

The official UK response to the
recommendation has yet to be announced.
From what you know of EQARF and the
timetable for implementation how ready do
you think your organisation is to meet the
Criteria?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Major impact Some impact No impact

Do you think that EQARF will have
any impact on strategy and decision
Making for your organisation ?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Over the medium to longer term

Please comment briefly on your answer

High Import Some Import No Import

What importance does your
organisation place on European
initiatives such as EQARF and ECVET?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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What importance do you think other
stakeholders, that you work with, place
on European initiatives?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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What do you think are the potential barriers to the implementation of EQARF in the UK?

- 1. The fact that quality assurance for VET is an industry in the UK, as opposed to the responsibility of contributing occupational stakeholders/social partners/government means that the frameworks in place have the potential to be distorted to meet income-generating targets and the self-serving needs of those bodies and practitioners who have established themselves in the VET market place rather than addressing the needs of learners.**
- 2. The plethora of existing (and frequently competing) quality systems in the UK and the aforementioned self-interest could result in the existence, visibility and potential benefits of EQARF being crowded out and those who have most to gain – employers, employees and learners – failing to become aware of or appreciate it.**
- 3. A potential barrier could emerge if the UK approach to implementation fails to respect the inherent diversity of the separate jurisdictions.**

As a stakeholder do you have any further comments about the recommendations proposed in EQARF?

- 1. It is good and realistic that the recommendations are gradualist and designed to respect the diversity of arrangements across Europe.**
- 2. The underlying approach of involving key actors at system and provider levels is inclusive and should foster a quality culture.**
- 3. It seems to me, that whilst systems-level actors will take due cognisance of European policy drivers and goals, it is more likely that provider-level actors will be more interested in national and regional policies, goals and objectives and that significant promotional and development activity would need to be undertaken if a deeper appreciation of the European dimension is to be engendered and sustained.**

1. Added Value

	Great Value	Some Value	No Value
Do you think there is an Added Value to Aligning with this framework?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If so, what do you think it would be?

Encouraging and supporting mobility in VET and as a pillar to support labour market mobility.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire – your comments are important and will help to inform the coordinating group to respond to the Recommendation.

Additional Comments on the survey and its structure

1. As presented, the survey fails to distinguish between the application of the EQARF Indicative Descriptors at VET-systems and VET-provider levels. This is a cause for concern as a simple merging of the responses is a false conflation since EQARF and QA impact upon the two groups in significantly different ways.
2. The approach adopted, of simply cutting and pasting the EQARF indicative descriptors against a set of tick boxes, is superficial and constrains the output. It is difficult to discern any clear attempt to explore the future impact of EQARF on VET in the separate jurisdictions of the UK.
3. The physical presentation and construction of the MSWord document is clumsy and has not considered ease of use for respondents.
4. These comments are motivated by a desire to ensure that Scotland's and, in turn the UK's, approach to implementing EQARF is not solely informed by the consolidated responses to this questionnaire, alone.