



Multistakeholder Guidance System based on Quality Assurance and Evidence - Based

WP2 Activity 2.1

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Introduction

The document describes the *Digital Quality Assurance System for Guidance*, developed in alignment with EQAVET criteria. It contributes to achieving the specific objective of the QUAHVET project: enhancing the quality and inclusiveness of guidance services provided by HVET providers and upper secondary schools.

Additionally, the Digital Quality Assurance System for Guidance aims to increase enrollment in the HVET system.

Based on the principle that “the quality assurance cycle provides the foundation for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of guidance in VET, which can serve as the basis for change and improvement,” the Digital Quality Assurance System for Guidance enables HVET providers to:

1. **Innovate the guidance process** (from design to evaluation) by applying specific QA criteria and descriptors tailored to guidance processes, through the development of a dedicated Model;
2. **Lay the groundwork for a quality-informed evaluation** of regional guidance strategies, through the structure of a connected web-app (<https://www.highbervet.eu>), which allows for continuous self-monitoring and provides an up-to-date big picture of the quality of the guidance delivered;
3. **Implement continuous improvement actions**, through the development of recommendations/guidelines to align HVET institutes' guidance practices—in terms of inputs/processes and outcomes—with defined quality criteria.

The Digital Quality Assurance System for Guidance, which can be transferred to other HVET institutes, enables the mapping of gaps between the elements of one's own guidance process and the developed criteria/indicators, and provides a knowledge-based and operational-methodological foundation for evidence-informed guidance strategies.

The Digital Quality Assurance System for Guidance is multistakeholder and grounded in quality assurance and evidence-based approaches.

This document outlines the **HVET guidance model based on QA**. It includes ACTION STRATEGIES, QUALITY STANDARDS (criteria-indicators-descriptors), and QUALITY PROCEDURES for services, products/results, and activities, across each of the four phases of the Quality Cycle: Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Review.

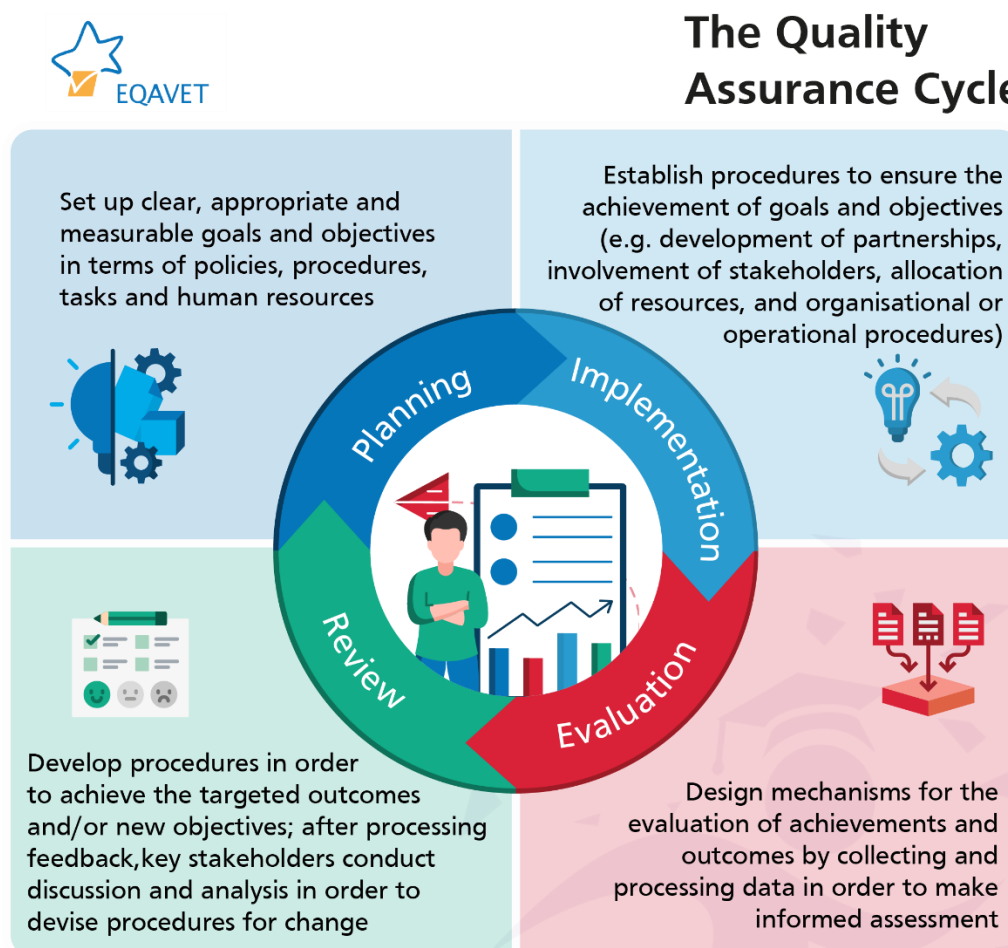
Quality Assurance Cycle¹

At both the system and provider levels, there are several methods to ensure the quality of VET provision. One of the most effective is the EQAVET Framework, a four-stage process designed to

¹ The text and image in this paragraph were taken from the following web page https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/skills-and-qualifications/working-together/eqavet-european-quality-assurance-vocational-education-and-training/about-eqavet/eqavet-quality-assurance-cycle_en visited on June 30, 2025.



support continuous improvement. This process is based on the Deming Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act), as shown above.



The EQAVET Framework's quality assurance cycle can be applied to various aspects of VET at both the system and provider levels. It plays a crucial role in improving the design of vocational qualifications, supporting online learning, and strengthening accreditation or validation systems, among other areas. This cycle is widely used across Europe in initial and continuing VET, work-based learning, apprenticeships, blended learning, the accreditation of prior learning and experience, and the development of full and partial qualifications.

Since the cycle supports continuous change and improvement, each VET system or provider can start the quality assurance process at any stage, such as:

When ensuring the quality of a new VET procedure, such as designing new qualifications, it may be best to start with the planning stage.

For changes like shifting from center-based learning to online or blended learning, it may be more effective to begin by implementing the existing quality assurance processes and then evaluating their effectiveness.

For well-established VET processes, the quality assurance cycle often starts with evaluating the effectiveness of current arrangements.



When introducing new policies or approaches to VET, such as increasing the time learners spend in a work environment, reviewing the existing arrangements is often the first step in the quality assurance process.

No matter where the quality assurance journey begins, going through all four stages of the cycle is essential to achieving high-quality VET.

The EQAVET Framework has led to the creation of diverse quality assurance approaches across Member States, tailored to meet national and regional needs, circumstances, and traditions. All of these approaches use the EQAVET cycle, indicators, and indicative descriptors to support quality assurance processes at the national, regional, or local levels.

Abbreviations

Higher VET school | *partner's organization that deal with (ISCED 5)*

Higher VET staff | *teachers, representatives, other people working Higher VET school.*

Upper secondary schools | *Schools ISCED 3-4 where students come from.*

Upper secondary school teachers | *teachers/staff responsible for guidance in Upper Secondary Schools.*

Glossary

Guidance and counseling/ information, advice and guidance (IAG) | Range of activities designed to help individuals to take educational, vocational or personal decisions and to carry them out before and after they enter the labor market.

There is the following distinction:

- guidance and counseling may include:
 - counseling (personal or career development, educational guidance);
 - assessment (psychological or competence/performance-related);
 - information on learning and labor market opportunities and career management;
 - consultation with peers, relatives or educators;
 - vocational preparation (pinpointing skills/competences and experience for job-seeking);
 - referrals (to learning and career specialists);
- guidance and counseling can be provided at schools, training centers, job centers, the workplace, the community or in other settings.

Higher VET² | *programmes... that prepare for direct entry to the labour market in a specific profession, are of one year or more in length (full-time equivalent), are provided beyond upper secondary level, and lead to recognised qualifications (OECD (2012) Post-Secondary Vocational*

² OECD (2012) *Post-Secondary Vocational Education and Training: Pathways and Partnerships, Higher Education in Regional and City Development*, Paris: OECD.



Education and Training: Pathways and Partnerships, Higher Education in Regional and City Development, Paris: OECD)

Stakeholders | *labour market organizations, companies, chambers of commerce, municipalities.*

Upper secondary schools | *Schools that implement programmes designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both.*

Upskilling | *Short-term targeted training typically provided following initial education or training, and aimed at supplementing, improving or updating knowledge, skills and/or competences acquired during previous training.*

VET | *vocational education and training as ‘education and training which aims to equip people with knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competences required in particular occupations or more broadly on the labor market’³*



³ Cedefop (2014) *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy. Second edition. A Selection of 130 Key Terms*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Structure of the guidance system

This section outlines the foundational elements necessary to build an effective and quality-driven guidance system within Higher VET institutions. Drawing from the EQAVET framework, it emphasizes the importance of structured planning, staff specialization, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and inclusive strategies. The paragraph presents a series of quality statements to assess the degree of implementation of guidance planning components—such as the existence of dedicated organizational units, defined staff roles, cooperation with secondary schools and labor market actors, and tailored approaches for students with specific needs. These elements serve as pillars for developing a coherent, data-informed, and collaborative guidance ecosystem that can effectively support students in making well-grounded educational and career choices.

These elements and the Recommendations available on the next paragraph constitutes the base of the web-app created to to assess the adequacy of the HVET provider guidance process in relation to quality criteria. The web app is available here: <https://www.highervet.eu>.

GUIDANCE PLANNING

By Planning, EQAVET refers to setting up clear, appropriate and measurable goals and objectives in terms of policies, procedures, tasks and human resources.

Organizational unit/office

1. **My Higher VET organization has a specific organizational unit/office that deals with guidance.**
 - a. Not agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Mostly agree
 - d. Completely agree

Special education of the staff

2. **Staff responsible for guidance and counseling has as special education for guidance.**
 - a. Not agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Mostly agree
 - d. Completely agree

Teachers involvement

3. **In our Higher VET organization, teachers also are involved in guidance.**
 - a. Not agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Mostly agree
 - d. Completely agree

Cooperation with teachers and guidance counselors from upper secondary schools



4. **Teachers and guidance counselors from upper secondary schools cooperate with the organizational unit/office that deals with guidance.**
- Not agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

Labour market representatives cooperation

5. **Labour market representatives cooperate with the organizational unit/office that deals with guidance.**
- Not agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

Structured knowledge of upper secondary schools

6. **My Higher VET organization has a structured knowledge of upper secondary schools aligned to our educational curriculum.**
- Not agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

Agreements with external bodies

7. **My Higher VET organization has agreements for cooperation with external bodies/upper secondary schools to handle guidance program.**
- Not agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

Identification of students' guidance needs processes

8. **My Higher VET organization has specific processes/activities aimed to identify students' guidance needs.**
- Not agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Mostly agree
 - Completely agree

Guidance needs of students with disadvantaged or vulnerable status

9. **My Higher VET organization has specific processes/activities aimed to identify guidance needs of students with disadvantaged or vulnerable status (*migrants, low family socio-economic-cultural status, educational special needs*).**



- a. Not agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Mostly agree
- d. Completely agree

Cooperation to identify students' guidance needs

10. **My Higher VET organization involve upper secondary schools and stakeholders to identify students' guidance needs.**

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Cooperation to identify guidance goals and activities.

11. **My Higher VET organisation has developed steps for the involvement of upper secondary schools in the definition of guidance goals and activities.**

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Roles and responsibilities of Higher VET staff

12. **My Higher VET organization has defined the roles and responsibilities of its Higher VET staff in the guidance implementation (*before, during and at the end of the guidance*).**

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

13. **My Higher VET organization has defined the roles and responsibilities of upper secondary schools and stakeholders (*before, during and at the end of the guidance*).**

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes



Upskilling activities for the guidance staff

14. **My Higher VET organisation implements continuous upskilling activities, addressed to the guidance staff.**
- Not at all
 - Mostly not
 - Mostly yes
 - Absolutely yes

Upskilling activities for upper secondary schools teachers

15. **My Higher VET organisation implements continuous upskilling activities, addressed to the upper secondary schools teachers that cooperate in the guidance programs.**
- Not at all
 - Mostly not
 - Mostly yes
 - Absolutely yes

GUIDANCE IMPLEMENTATION.

By implementation, EQAVET refers to establishing procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and objectives.

Internal detailed design of the activities

16. **In my Higher VET organization, the internal guidance staff designs the guidance activities in detail.**
- Not at all
 - Mostly not
 - Mostly yes
 - Absolutely yes

Cooperation in detailed design of the activities

17. **My Higher VET organization involves stakeholders in the detailed designing of guidance activities.**
- Not at all
 - Mostly not
 - Mostly yes
 - Absolutely yes

Cooperation with upper secondary schools and stakeholders in guidance activities

18. **The guidance activities of my Higher VET organisation are carried out in closely cooperation with upper secondary schools and stakeholders.**
- Not at all
 - Mostly not



- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Cooperation in monitoring of the progress of guidance activities

19. **My Higher VET organization monitors the progress of guidance activities, in collaboration with upper secondary schools.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

Student's results assessment

20. **My Higher VET organization assess the student's results at the end of the guidance activities.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

GUIDANCE EVALUATION.

By evaluation, EQAVET refers to designing mechanisms for the evaluation of achievements and outcomes by collecting and processing data in order to make informed assessment.

Evaluation model of the guidance process

21. **My Higher VET organization has an evaluation model of the guidance process.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

Cooperation in the evaluation model

22. **My Higher VET organization developed an evaluation model of the guidance process in cooperation with stakeholders.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes



Evaluation process in cooperation

- 23. My Higher VET organization carries out the evaluation process in cooperation with upper secondary schools and stakeholders.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

Action plan for the improvement

- 24. My Higher VET organization implements an action plan for the improvement of the guidance process.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

Co-design of action plan for the improvement

- 25. My Higher VET organization has involved upper secondary schools and stakeholders in the development of the action plan.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

Co-implementation of the action plan

- 26. My Higher VET organization has involved upper secondary schools stakeholders in the implementation of the action plan.**
- a. Not at all
 - b. Mostly not
 - c. Mostly yes
 - d. Absolutely yes

GUIDANCE REVIEW

By review, EQAVET refers to developing procedures in order to achieve the targeted outcomes and/or new objectives.

Method of evaluation data analysis

- 27. My Higher VET organization has established how evaluation data have to be analysed.**



- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Tasks and responsibilities in evaluation data analysis

28. My Higher VET organization identified tasks and responsibilities in order to analyse the evaluation data.

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Result of the evaluation data dissemination

29. My Higher VET organization make the result of the evaluation data available both internally and externally.

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes
- d. Absolutely yes

Co-implementation of the improvement actions

30. My Higher VET organization implements the improvement actions in collaboration with the upper secondary schools and the stakeholders.

- a. Not at all
- b. Mostly not
- c. Mostly yes



Recommendations

This paragraph presents a set of strategic and operational recommendations aimed at improving the quality of the guidance process within Higher VET institutions.

The proposals are divided into four key areas:

- *Planning* – how to structure the guidance system by strengthening data analysis, staff training, and stakeholder engagement.
- *Implementation* – how to carry out guidance activities effectively, leveraging digital tools, collaborative design, and continuous monitoring.
- *Evaluation* – how to measure the outcomes of guidance activities by integrating feedback, performance indicators, and participatory review.
- *Review* – how to ensure continuous improvement by dynamically and collaboratively updating strategies and action plans.

The recommendations are addressed to managers, trainers, counselors of HVET institutions who aim to make the guidance process more effective, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving labor market and educational landscape.

General recommendation/s for each Area and specific dimension/statement

PLANNING

Strengthen Data Analytics: Enhance the capacity to analyze educational data to more precisely identify trends and requirements in student guidance needs, facilitating more informed planning and allocation of resources.

Expand Stakeholder Engagement: Broaden engagement strategies to include more diverse groups such as parents, local businesses, and non-profit organizations, ensuring comprehensive input and support in planning stages.

1. Expand the resources and visibility of the **guidance unit**, ensuring that all students are aware of its support services and can easily access them.
2. Develop and implement a **continuous professional development** program specifically designed for **guidance staff**, focusing on the latest counseling techniques and educational technologies.
3. Create formal programs that integrate **guidance responsibilities into teacher training and professional development** to enhance their capability in student advising.
4. Establish a formal **partnership framework with upper secondary schools** that includes shared activities, resources, and training sessions to strengthen the support network for students transitioning between school levels.
5. Form strategic **partnerships with labor market representatives** to design guidance programs that align closely with current and future job market demands.
6. Conduct **research of upper secondary schools** aligned with your educational curriculum **aimed at promoting cooperation with them**.



7. Formalize **agreements with external organizations** to ensure mutual support and resource sharing in the guidance process, specifying roles and expected contributions.
8. Implement a robust system to regularly assess and update the **processes for identifying individual student guidance needs**, using data-driven approaches.
9. Develop targeted guidance programs that address the **specific needs of students from disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds**, ensuring they receive tailored support.
10. Enhance **stakeholder engagement** by setting up advisory panels that include representatives from various backgrounds, including students, parents, and community leaders, to provide diverse insights into guidance needs.
11. Implement **collaborative workshops with upper secondary schools** to jointly define and update **guidance goals and activities**, ensuring they are relevant and comprehensive.
12. Clearly define and communicate the **roles and responsibilities of all HVET staff** involved in guidance, ensuring clarity and accountability.
13. Establish clear **guidelines and training sessions for stakeholders on their specific roles and contributions** during the guidance process to optimize collaboration.
14. Provide **continuous training opportunities for guidance staff**, focusing on emerging guidance methodologies and student engagement strategies.
15. Offer **specialized training programs for upper secondary school teachers** involved in the guidance programs, enhancing their skills in student support and counseling.

IMPLEMENTATION

Integrate Technology: Utilize digital tools and platforms to streamline guidance processes, making them more accessible to students and easier for staff to manage.

Enhance Interdepartmental Collaboration: Foster closer cooperation between various departments (academic, administrative, support services) to ensure a seamless implementation of guidance programs and activities.

16. Encourage guidance staff to participate in **design thinking workshops to innovate and refine guidance activities**, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of students.
17. Facilitate joint **design sessions with stakeholders** to collaboratively develop guidance activities, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of these programs.
18. Strengthen **collaborative efforts in carrying out guidance activities** through regular coordination meetings and shared project management tools.
19. Utilize advanced **monitoring tools** to track the **progress and impact** of guidance activities, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements.
20. Implement comprehensive **assessment strategies** to evaluate the outcomes of guidance activities, incorporating both qualitative feedback and quantitative data.



EVALUATION

Regular Feedback Mechanisms: Establish routine feedback mechanisms from students and staff to continually assess the effectiveness of guidance activities and make real-time adjustments.

Implement Peer Review Systems: Develop peer review systems within the organization to promote accountability and continuous improvement in guidance practices based on comparative evaluations.

21. Develop and establish a comprehensive **evaluation model** that includes diverse metrics to assess the effectiveness of guidance processes. Incorporate both direct feedback mechanisms and performance indicators to ensure a holistic view.
22. Collaborate with stakeholders, including industry partners and educational institutions, to **co-develop the evaluation criteria**. This shared responsibility will ensure the model addresses all relevant perspectives and increases buy-in.
23. Facilitate regular **joint evaluation sessions with stakeholders and upper secondary schools to review guidance processes**. Use these sessions to refine practices based on collective insights and ensure alignment with external educational standards.
24. Design an **action plan** based on evaluation outcomes that prioritizes areas for **improvement** and specifies clear steps for implementation. Ensure the plan is dynamic and allows for periodic updates based on ongoing feedback.
25. **Engage stakeholders and upper secondary schools** in the development of the **action plan** by organizing workshops and strategy sessions. This will help gather diverse input and foster a sense of ownership among all participants.
26. Establish clear **roles and responsibilities for stakeholders and upper secondary schools in the action plan's implementation**. This includes setting up a monitoring system to track progress and impact collaboratively.

REVIEW

Develop Forward-Looking Strategies: Create strategies that not only address current gaps but also anticipate future challenges in guidance, incorporating innovative practices and emerging trends.

Annual Review Meetings: Hold annual strategic review meetings with all stakeholders to assess the efficacy of the guidance process and plan for the subsequent year, ensuring that the program remains dynamic and responsive to change.

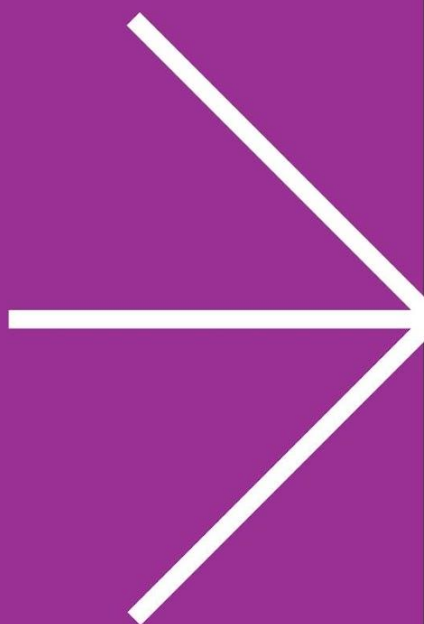
27. **Standardize the methods for analyzing evaluation data** across the organization. Train staff in data analysis techniques and use software tools to aid in data processing and interpretation to ensure accuracy and objectivity.
28. **Clearly delineate tasks and assign responsibilities for the analysis of evaluation data among HVET staff**. Consider creating a dedicated team or role focused on data analysis to enhance accountability and efficiency.
29. Develop **protocols for sharing the results** of guidance evaluations both internally and externally. Create detailed reports and presentations that highlight key findings, recommendations, and the next steps for continuous improvement.



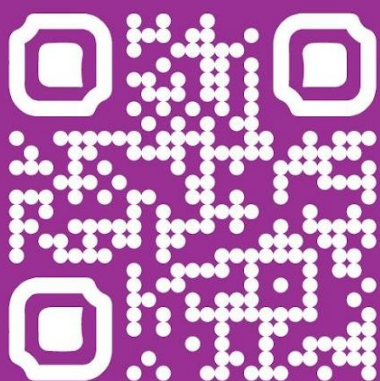


30. Ensure that the **implementation of improvement actions is a collaborative effort** involving input and cooperation from all relevant parties. Regularly update stakeholders and upper secondary schools on progress and solicit their ongoing feedback to refine the improvement actions.





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