

## D6.5 – ECVET accreditation report

<b>Document description</b>	This deliverable presents the ECVET system and EQUAVET guidelines and provides the result of the accreditation process within the FIELDS project.
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<b>Author(s)</b>	Erica Giordano, Carlo Colomba (task leader, INFOR ELEA) Jan Gundelach/Marg Leijdens (AERES) Krista Mikkonen (ProAgria)
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# 1 Structure of the report

The Work Package 6 is dedicated to ensuring the quality of the FIELDS output.

In particular the ECVET accreditation aspects have been analysed in order to support the transfer recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes with the view to achieving a full or partial qualification.

The Report gives general info on ECVET and EQAVET systems and presents the experience within the project. It presents an European system (providing insight into Italian, Dutch and Finnish accreditation systems) and procedures to ensure that experiences conducted in respective countries could obtain ECVET certification in another country in case of mobility of the individuals involved.

## 2 The ECVET accreditation

### 2.1 What is ECVET?

ECVET, or the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, is a framework used across Europe to make vocational education and training more flexible and effective. The ECVET system allows learners to accumulate and transfer credits gained from various learning outcomes in vocational education and training (VET) across different countries within the EU. This helps to support and enhance lifelong learning and mobility across Europe.

ECVET accreditation refers to the approval process that ensures educational programs are compatible with the ECVET standards. This involves:

1. **Defining Learning Outcomes:** Courses are structured around specific knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to achieve.
2. **Assigning Credits:** Each learning outcome is assigned a certain number of credits, reflecting the amount of work required to achieve these outcomes.
3. **Assessment and Validation:** Methods are established to assess whether the learning outcomes have been achieved by the students, validating the credits they earn.
4. **Transfer and Accumulation:** Credits can be accumulated to achieve a qualification and can be transferred from one participating institution to another, facilitating student mobility.

Accreditation ensures that these components are correctly implemented and maintained, allowing for consistency and quality assurance in vocational education and training across Europe. Institutions that meet these standards are recognized as ECVET compliant, providing them with a mark of quality in vocational education and training.

### 2.2 A glimpse into the past

The process began 15 years ago with the **Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council** of June 18, 2009, which established a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes, with the aim of fostering mobility and lifelong learning. Beyond its

full implementation, which has occurred in many but not all European countries, the usefulness of its principles and tools is undoubtedly more extensive than was the initial intention of the Recommendation.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a significant policy initiative aimed at enhancing the mobility of learners and workers within the EU. This recommendation was designed to facilitate the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes across different countries and educational systems within the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

*The VET (Vocational Education and Training) sector refers to a segment of the education system focused on providing students with the skills and knowledge necessary for specific trades, professions, and careers. This sector emphasizes practical and work-oriented training, often leading directly to employment or further education in a particular field. Key characteristics of the VET sector include:*

- 1. Work-Based Learning: Programs often include hands-on training, internships, apprenticeships, and workplace experiences to ensure students gain practical skills.*
- 2. Industry-Relevant Curriculum: Courses are designed in collaboration with industries to meet current labor market needs and standards.*
- 3. Credentialing and Certification: Students can earn certificates, diplomas, or other qualifications that are recognized by employers and professional bodies.*
- 4. Accessibility: VET programs are typically more accessible to a broader range of students, including adults, part-time learners, and those seeking to upskill or reskill.*
- 5. Diverse Fields: The VET sector covers a wide array of industries such as healthcare, engineering, information technology, construction, hospitality, and many more.*

*The VET sector plays a crucial role in supporting economic development by ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills to meet the demands of various industries.*

The main goal of ECVET is to promote lifelong learning and improve the mobility of workers and learners, particularly within the EU. It targets the VET sector specifically, aiming to make it more flexible and efficient by using a common method for transferring credit.

The system is based on *learning outcomes*, which are statements of what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do upon completion of a learning process. These are expressed in units, which can be assessed, validated, and certified.

ECVET introduces a credit system for VET that allows the *accumulation and transfer of credits*. Each unit of learning outcomes is associated with a certain number of ECVET credits, suggesting the relative weight of the learning outcomes in the qualification.

The system facilitates the transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes across different countries and systems. It enables learners to accumulate the required units of learning outcomes over time, and from different learning contexts, to achieve a recognized qualification.

The recommendation encourages the development of partnerships and networks among VET providers across Europe. These partnerships help to establish agreements and mutual trust, which are crucial for the effective transfer of credits.

ECVET recommends using a variety of tools and documents such as Memorandums of Understanding and Learning Agreements between educational institutions to facilitate the recognition and transfer of credits. The use of a personal transcript for documenting the learning outcomes achieved by an individual is also promoted.

The recommendation emphasizes the importance of maintaining quality assurance in the ECVET system. It suggests that participating institutions adopt consistent standards and procedures for the assessment, transfer, and recognition of credits.

By implementing ECVET, the European Union aims to make VET more appealing and accessible, enhancing the employability and mobility of citizens across member states, and supporting the development of a more integrated European labour market.

**Riga Conclusions:** Priorities for European cooperation in VET defined in 2015 in Riga by the ministers of education and labor include: enhancing work-based learning and the training value of VET, promoting access to training and qualifications for all in an LLL logic, through more flexible and permeable pathways.

The Riga Conclusions refer to a set of conclusions adopted at a high-level meeting or conference held in Riga, Latvia. These conclusions typically summarize the key points of discussion, agreements, and action items decided upon during the event. The term "Riga Conclusions" can pertain to various contexts, such as political, economic, or scientific meetings.

One notable instance is the "Riga Conclusions" from the 2015 high-level meeting of European Union (EU) education ministers. This meeting focused on promoting education and training across EU member states. The key points of these conclusions included:

1. **Strengthening Basic Skills:** Emphasis on the need to improve literacy, numeracy, and digital skills among all age groups.
2. **Promoting Inclusive Education:** Ensuring equal access to quality education and supporting disadvantaged groups to enhance social inclusion.
3. **Encouraging Lifelong Learning:** Developing opportunities for continuous learning and skill development throughout an individual's life.
4. **Enhancing Teacher and Trainer Quality:** Investing in the professional development of educators to improve teaching quality.
5. **Linking Education to the Labor Market:** Aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs to enhance employability and economic growth.

The conclusions often include specific recommendations for policy actions, collaborative efforts, and future initiatives to address the challenges and opportunities discussed during the meeting.

**New Skills Agenda (NSA) for Europe:** On June 10, 2016, the EC adopted a comprehensive new skills agenda aiming to ensure that everyone, from a young age, develops a wide range of skills and that maximum benefit can be drawn from Europe's human capital, so as to promote employability, competitiveness and growth in Europe. The new agenda calls on Member States and stakeholders to improve the quality of skills, their visibility and responsiveness to Labor Market needs. The NSA indicates what framework ECVET should develop: the modernization of VET, including through the provision of open and flexible career pathways.

The New Skills Agenda (NSA) for Europe is a comprehensive initiative launched by the European Commission aimed at improving the skills of the European workforce. Introduced in 2016, the NSA seeks to ensure that people in the European Union have the necessary skills to thrive in the labor market, which is increasingly influenced by digitalization, globalization, and demographic changes.

The **Key Objectives of the New Skills Agenda for Europe** are:

1. **Improving the Quality and Relevance of Skills Formation:**
  - Ensuring that education and training systems deliver the skills that are in demand in the labor market.
  - Enhancing the quality of vocational education and training (VET).

## 2. Making Skills and Qualifications More Visible and Comparable:

- Facilitating the recognition of skills and qualifications across EU member states.
- Promoting transparency and comparability of qualifications to support mobility and employability.

## 3. Improving Skills Intelligence and Information for Better Career Choices:

- Providing better information and intelligence about skills demands and trends.
- Helping people make informed career and education choices.

### The **Key Actions and Initiatives** are:

#### 1. Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults:

- Offering adults with low levels of skills, knowledge, and competences the opportunity to improve their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills.
- Providing flexible learning pathways to acquire new qualifications.

#### 2. Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills:

- Encouraging stakeholders in specific sectors to work together to address skills shortages and mismatches.
- Developing sector-specific skills strategies.

#### 3. Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition:

- Mobilizing resources and partnerships to improve digital skills among the workforce and the general population.
- Supporting digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

#### 4. Europass Framework:

- Enhancing the Europass framework to provide better tools and services for skills and qualifications recognition.
- Facilitating access to information about learning opportunities and qualifications in Europe.

#### 5. Skills Guarantee:

- Ensuring that everyone has access to basic skills training, regardless of their background.
- Supporting lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

The NSA for Europe is designed to create a more agile and skilled workforce capable of adapting to the evolving needs of the economy. By focusing on lifelong learning, digital skills, and the recognition of qualifications, the initiative aims to enhance employability, reduce skills gaps, and promote inclusive growth across the EU.

The New Skills Agenda continues to evolve, with ongoing efforts to address emerging challenges and opportunities in the labor market, such as the impact of artificial intelligence, the green transition, and the need for social inclusion and equality in access to education and training.

## 2.3 Modernization of VET: Preparing the post-2020 strategy.

The European Union (EU) has developed several instruments to support its Vocational Education and Training (VET) policy. These tools aim to enhance the quality, relevance, and accessibility of VET across EU member states, ensuring that VET systems are aligned with labor market needs and capable of fostering lifelong learning. Here are the key instruments supporting the EU VET policy:

### 1. European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The EQF acts as a translation tool to compare the qualifications across different European countries. It helps to ensure that qualifications are recognized and understood across the EU, facilitating mobility for learners and workers. The EQF levels range from 1 to 8, corresponding to the complexity and depth of learning outcomes.

### 2. European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

ECVET is designed to facilitate the transfer, recognition, and accumulation of learning outcomes acquired by individuals moving between different countries or learning contexts. It enables learners to gain credit for the knowledge and skills they acquire, promoting mobility and lifelong learning.

### 3. European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)

EQAVET is a reference framework to help EU member states develop, improve, and monitor their VET systems. It provides a set of quality criteria and indicative descriptors to support continuous improvement and accountability in VET provision.

### 4. Europass

Europass is a set of online tools and information to help individuals manage their learning and career paths. It includes a standard CV template, language passport, and other documents to present skills and qualifications clearly and transparently across Europe.

### 5. Skills Panorama

Skills Panorama is an online platform providing comprehensive information on skills needs and trends in the EU. It supports policymakers, education and training providers, and job seekers by offering data and insights on labor market developments and skills demand.

### 6. European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EaFA)

EaFA brings together governments, businesses, social partners, VET providers, and youth organizations to strengthen the quality, supply, and overall image of apprenticeships across Europe. It promotes work-based learning and encourages the sharing of best practices.

### 7. Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)

CoVEs are networks of vocational education and training institutions that aim to drive innovation and excellence in VET. They act as catalysts for local development by aligning skills provision with regional and sectoral economic needs.

## **8. ERASMUS+ Program**

The ERASMUS+ program supports education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. It provides funding for VET mobility projects, strategic partnerships, and policy reforms, fostering international cooperation and improving the quality of VET.

## **9. Digital Education Action Plan**

This plan supports the digital transformation of education and training systems in Europe. It includes initiatives to enhance digital skills and competences, integrate digital technologies into teaching and learning, and promote online learning and digital pedagogies.

## **10. Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills**

This initiative focuses on tackling skills mismatches in specific economic sectors. It brings together industry representatives, education and training providers, and public authorities to develop sector-specific skills strategies and action plans.

These instruments collectively aim to create a more coherent, accessible, and high-quality VET system across Europe, supporting individuals in acquiring the skills needed for personal development and employment in a rapidly changing labor market.

### *Bibliography:*

*EC Study «Instruments supporting the European Union vocational education and training (VET) policy» (2018):*

*CE study: «Vocational mobility in Europe: analysing provision, take-up and impact and reflecting on the way ahead» (2018)*

*CEDEFOP study «The changing role and nature of VET in Europe » (2016 - 2018)*

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/changing-nature-and-role-vocational-education-and-training-vet-europe>

## **5.**



### 3 The Italian context

The system of certification of competences in the Piedmont Region of Italy is designed to formally recognize and validate the skills and competencies individuals have acquired through various means, such as formal education, vocational training, work experience, and informal learning. This system aims to enhance employability, support lifelong learning, and improve the transparency and transferability of qualifications across different sectors and regions. Here's how the system generally works:

The certification system in Piedmont operates under **regional regulations** and is aligned with national and European frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The system ensures that the certification process meets quality standards and is recognized across the EU.

The region has defined a set of **competence standards** for different sectors and professions. These standards describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for specific job roles and are used as benchmarks for the certification process.

Certification of competences is carried out by **accredited bodies**. These can include vocational training centers, schools, universities, and other authorized institutions. These bodies must meet specific criteria and are regularly monitored to ensure they comply with the standards.

The **validation process** typically involves several steps:

- **Assessment of Prior Learning:** Individuals can have their prior learning and work experience assessed against the competence standards. This may involve the submission of a portfolio, interviews, practical demonstrations, or written tests.

- **Training and Skill Development:** If gaps are identified, individuals may be required to undergo additional training to acquire the necessary competences.

- **Final Assessment:** Once the individual is deemed ready, a final assessment is conducted to verify that they meet the required standards. This can involve practical exams, written tests, or other evaluation methods.

Upon successful completion of the assessment, individuals receive a **formal certificate** that details the competences they have acquired. This certificate is recognized within the Piedmont Region and can be used to demonstrate qualifications to employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

The certification is designed to be transparent and portable. It includes detailed information about the competences and the levels achieved, facilitating recognition across different sectors and regions, including at the European level.

The system also provides support services to help individuals navigate the certification process. This can include guidance on the assessment procedure, assistance with compiling evidence of prior learning, and advice on further training opportunities.

The Piedmont Region ensures the **quality of the certification system** through continuous monitoring and evaluation. This involves regular audits of the accredited bodies, feedback from participants, and alignment with evolving industry standards and labor market needs.

Overall, the certification of competences system in Piedmont is a structured and standardized process that helps individuals validate their skills and enhance their career prospects, while also providing employers with reliable indicators of an individual's capabilities.

#### Italian references:

Legge n. 92/2012 - Riforma del mercato del lavoro in una prospettiva di crescita

*Law No. 92/2012 - Labor market reform with a growth perspective*

Decreto Interministeriale del 30 giugno 2015

Quadro operativo per il riconoscimento a livello nazionale delle qualificazioni regionali e delle relative competenze, nell'ambito del Repertorio nazionale dei titoli di istruzione e formazione e delle qualificazioni professionali

*Interministerial Decree of June 30, 2015.*

*Operational framework for the nationwide recognition of regional qualifications and related competencies within the National Directory of Education and Training Qualifications and Vocational Qualifications*

Decreto Interministeriale dell'8 gennaio 2018

Istituzione del Quadro nazionale delle qualificazioni rilasciate nell'ambito del Sistema nazionale di certificazione delle competenze.

*Interministerial Decree of January 8, 2018.*

*Establishment of the National Framework of Qualifications issued under the National Skills Certification System.*

*Acts as a link with EQF and thus gives greater value to qualifications and usability at the European level*

## 4 The Dutch context

One of the principles underlying the education system in the Netherlands is freedom of education. This means there is freedom to establish schools, freedom to organise teaching and to determine the principles on which education is based (freedom of conviction).

### **Quality standards**

Freedom to organise teaching means that both public and private schools are free to determine - within legal boundaries - what is taught and how. The education ministry sets quality standards such as the subjects to be studied, the number of teaching days/hours per year and the required teacher qualifications; they apply to both public and government-funded private education.

In the institutional VET framework, the Cooperation Organisation for Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market (Samenwerkingsorganisatie Beroepsonderwijs Bedrijfsleven - SBB) has a key role. SBB optimises the links between VET and the labour market to deliver well-qualified professionals. The organisation is responsible for maintaining the qualifications for upper secondary VET, for accrediting and coaching companies offering work placements, and collecting suitable labour market information. Representatives from vocational education and social partners work together on the VET qualifications system, examinations, work placements, the efficiency of programmes and more. SBB also works on themes with a cross-regional and cross-sector focus.

### **Designing qualifications**

For VET level EQF 4, the **national qualification system** (nationally referred to as 'qualifications structure') defines the desired output of qualifications. There are three steps:

- social partners develop and determine/validate vocational/occupational standards. This process takes place in committees at sub-sectoral level referred to as 'market segments' in the national context;
- social partners and VET representatives develop qualification profiles (educational standards as output), which are adopted by the education ministry. This is done within SBB;
- VET colleges develop curricula in cooperation with training firms based on qualification profiles;

In higher professional education (HBO, EQF 5) qualifications and programmes are developed by schools and accredited by the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO). A curriculum is part of the accreditation request. The education ministry decides whether an accredited programme is to be publicly funded or not.

### **Quality assurance**

A national quality assurance approach and a methodology for internal and external evaluation are in place. VET level EQF 4 (MBO) and higher VET (HBO, EQF 5) have quality assurance systems, the first based on supervision and inspection, the latter based on self-evaluation, review and accreditation. A common quality assurance framework for VET providers is in place and applies also to workplace learning.

The education ministry, through the education inspectorate, and VET providers themselves are responsible for quality assurance in upper secondary VET (EQF 4). The VET law mandates VET providers to set up a quality assurance system. They are relatively free to design and set up their systems, but have to ensure regular quality assessments that include the arrangements in place for teacher training. Upper secondary VET institution annual reports are the basis for external quality evaluation by the education inspectorate.

Internal monitoring and control: upper secondary VET colleges have small executive boards and internal supervisory boards. Middle management is accountable to the executive board. Participation of students, teachers and parents in decision making is regulated in the Act on Work Councils.

Vertical monitoring and control: the education Inspectorate is in charge of external supervision, checking whether statutory provisions are met and quality assurance is in place. The assessment framework covers five quality areas: (i) educational process; (ii) school climate; (iii) learning outcomes; (iv) quality assurance and ambition; and (v) financial management. Supervision is proportional in nature, meaning it is stricter where deficiencies are found, and the inspectorate follows up by monitoring whether required improvements have been put in place.

In 2017, the Inspection framework for external supervision was renewed. One of the most important changes is the distinction between statutory requirements and quality factors defined by the schools themselves. Self-defined quality factors pertain to the objectives and ambitions set by the school itself above and beyond the basic quality level. In its reports, the Inspectorate will draw a clear distinction between judgements related to statutory requirements and the assessment of performances on the self-defined quality indicators above and beyond those enshrined in law.

Horizontal dialogue: using self-chosen tools, the executive board of a VET college is expected to develop and sustain good relations with important local/regional stakeholders: employers, local governments and regional organisations.

Guidelines and standards promote a culture of continuous improvement. Stakeholders (including the inspectorate, VET providers, students/learners and teachers/trainers and VET expertise centres) have contributed to its development. Stakeholders take part in setting VET goals and objectives and their involvement in monitoring and evaluation has been agreed. An advisory committee consisting of all important VET stakeholders meets several times a year to discuss further developments. All EQAVET indicators are used.

Quality, responsiveness and innovation capacity in upper secondary VET have been core policy priorities in recent years. Extra (partly performance-based) funding is introduced to increase quality. The minister responsible has concluded quality agreements with all VET institutions, which makes them responsible and accountable for their performance. The quality agreements are the basis for quality plans for 2019-22 drafted by VET providers themselves. VET colleges should elaborate strategic plans to improve the quality of VET in line with regional needs and in close collaboration with regional stakeholders, young people in a vulnerable position and equal opportunities for all students.

(Source: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/netherlands-u2>)

#### **VET courses offered by private providers**

For recognised VET courses (in the official registry) offered by private providers, the same national quality assurance approach is required and a methodology for internal and external evaluation has to be in place. For these courses there is no external quality assurance by the National Inspectorate. CINOP, a private accreditation organisation, assures the quality of courses which are not under the Ministry of Education. CINOP validates first the course provider, to assure that the provider has the capacity to assure quality of a course, that the provider has an internal evaluation system in place. CINOP will also validate the EQF level of the course offered.

(Information based on interview by Aeres with senior advisor of CINOP, 2021).

## 5 The Finnish context

The recommendation for the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) was given to member states in June 2009. According to Finland's education and research development plan for 2011-2016, approved by the Council of State, the ECVET system was implemented in basic, vocational, and specialized vocational qualifications by August 1, 2015. The development plan emphasized goals such as increasing the mobility of vocational education students, graduates, and teaching staff, as well as enhancing the recognition of studies, work-based learning, and work experience obtained abroad as part of vocational qualifications.

Finland has been a pioneer in piloting and implementing the ECVET system. Since 2002, Finland has participated in the European Commission's technical working group, which played a crucial role in preparing the recommendation. National pilot activities began in 2004 with the FINECVET project, considered the first national ECVET trial in Europe.

Finnish vocational education can be considered "ECVET-friendly." The system has long met the requirements for the transfer, accumulation, and recognition of learning outcomes. Finnish qualifications are divided into modules based on learning outcomes. Education providers are the competent authorities for assessing, identifying, and recognizing competencies. Examination boards make recognition decisions for vocational qualifications as competent authorities. Finnish qualifications also offer flexible individual learning pathways, allowing competencies to be accumulated module by module and acquired from other education systems. The recognition of prior learning is legislated and based on learning outcomes rather than time spent.

A key aspect of ECVET is that the processes for international mobility and domestic work-based learning or apprenticeship are structurally similar. Both processes emphasize planning learning, acquiring quality competencies, and properly documenting and recognizing learning outcomes. The common goal in these processes is to acquire competencies according to a personal learning plan, ensuring that the learning is meaningful and motivating for the student.

### ECVET Stakeholders in Finland

In different European member states, ECVET stakeholders can vary widely and may include various sector ministries, chambers of commerce, regional and employment administrations, or vocational schools. The European Commission's recommendation refers to these stakeholders as competent organizations. A competent organization is one responsible for designing and awarding qualifications, recognizing parts of qualifications, or other ECVET-related activities, such as defining the scope of qualifications and parts in terms of credits, and assessing, identifying, and recognizing learning outcomes according to the rules and practices of participating countries.

### Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education

The Ministry of Education and Culture, along with the Finnish National Agency for Education, is responsible for implementing the credit transfer system. The Ministry has made the necessary decisions and regulatory changes for ECVET implementation. The Ministry has designated the Finnish National Agency for Education as the national ECVET coordination point. The agency was responsible for making the necessary changes to qualification and preparatory training requirements, and issuing regulations and recommendations to enable ECVET implementation in vocational qualifications and training in 2015. They also disseminate information about the credit transfer system and ensure that stakeholders were ready to implement it. Representatives from the agency and vocational education providers participate in the European ECVET network and users' group, while the Ministry and agency monitor the implementation process.

### Education Providers as ECVET Stakeholders

Education providers are competent authorities responsible for managing cooperation agreements, learning agreements, recognition of competencies, assessment of competencies, and recording competencies acquired during mobility in academic records and certificates. They must understand the content of acquired competencies to compare them with vocational skill requirements and learning objectives. Education providers in Finland have been well-positioned to implement ECVET, with work-based qualification foundations and defined learning outcomes.

Providers have reviewed their curricula to include ECVET principles for mobility and internationalization. They have established bodies responsible for planning and implementing vocational skills demonstrations, which include evaluating and approving assessors and handling assessment appeals. Teachers are responsible for planning and implementing students' individual learning and demonstration plans, including mobility periods. The recognition phases are integrated into the provider's operations, requiring teachers to assess students' competencies when receiving them.

#### Qualification Committees

Qualification committees, responsible for arranging and supervising vocational qualifications, are tasked with recognizing competencies and awarding qualification certificates. ECVET requires them to adopt new approaches to evaluation, identification, and recognition of competencies, fostering trust between national and international stakeholders. Under ECVET, learners can acquire competencies abroad, and these competencies can be assessed and recognized through agreements between sending and receiving organizations.

#### Work Life

ECVET has increased the involvement and significance of businesses and employers in the training process. Companies can develop their business by sending and receiving employees for mobility periods. ECVET has enhanced vocational education's ability to meet businesses' skill and training needs. The primary role of work life is to assess students' or learners' competencies and learning outcomes. Education providers must guide and inform employers about the purpose and goals of ECVET, and the evaluation of competencies and learning outcomes according to agreements between sending and receiving organizations.

Some key points in the use of ECVET in International Mobility from Finnish perspective

#### Preparation for ECVET Mobility

**Learning Outcomes:** The learning outcomes of the mobility period should always be based on the vocational qualification criteria (assessment targets and criteria) and the individual study plan. This plan is personalized and considers individual starting points for acquiring competence.

**Importance of Preparation:** Proper preparation facilitates easier and more transparent collection, identification, and recognition of study achievements when the student returns to their home institution. The "ECVET before mobility" phase is crucial for quality assurance.

**Simplified Preparation:** Preparation is simplified through a cooperation agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) between the two organizations involved. Also Learning Agreement and Europass need to be prepared.

**Mutual Trust:** Trust between partners typically grows as they become more familiar with each other's qualification systems and constraints, making ECVET use easier over time.

#### During ECVET Mobility

**Acquiring Competence:** During mobility, the student or qualification candidate acquires competence according to the objectives outlined in the agreements. The receiving organization is primarily responsible

for guiding the student during this period, although support from the sending organization is also important.

Competence Assessment: The receiving organization assesses competence during the mobility period, and the sending organization relies on the partner's assessment. The assessors' qualifications must be recognized before any assessment, vocational demonstration, or qualification event abroad.

For vocational demonstrations, assessors must have sufficient expertise and skills relevant to the field, typically acquired through education, work experience, or other means.

For qualifications:

Assessors represent employees, employers, educators, and, if typical for the field, independent professionals.

Reliable evidence of previously demonstrated competence can be evaluated by assessors against the qualification requirements. The documentation is submitted to the qualification committee for recognition.

In vocational education, competence assessment during mobility includes vocational demonstrations of parts or entire qualifications as agreed in the learning agreement. Qualification events can be organized by the receiving organization in cooperation with the qualification committee. Competence assessed abroad is not reassessed in Finland.

After ECVET Mobility

Feedback and Discussion: The student or qualification candidate provides feedback and discusses their learning experiences and competence acquisition during the mobility period.

Documentation: The student or candidate presents signed documents on assessed competences or learning outcomes from the mobility period. The sending institution identifies and recognizes the competence assessed abroad without reassessment.

In vocational education:

Recognized competence is recorded in the student's academic transcript.

The vocational demonstration assessment is added to the student's certificate.

Learning assessed through work-based learning or parts of qualifications is recorded according to the institution's curriculum.

In qualification-based assessments:

The institution's representative submits a competence identification and recognition proposal to the qualification committee based on the assessment documents.

The mobility period is recorded in the student's academic transcript, becoming part of the qualification and professional skill acquisition.

Competence acquired abroad is made visible to the candidate through a participation certificate issued by the institution.

Source: Finnish National Agency for Education "Implementation of ECVET in Vocational Education"

[https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/171613\\_ecvetin\\_toimeenpano\\_ammattillisessa\\_koulutuksessa.pdf](https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/171613_ecvetin_toimeenpano_ammattillisessa_koulutuksessa.pdf)

## 6 ECVET in the Erasmus+ Programme

Erasmus+ supports EU transparency and recognition tools for skills and qualifications - particularly Europass, Youthpass, the European Qualifications Framework(EQF), the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

ECVET can facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes achieved during periods of mobility abroad, strengthening the value and expendability of such experiences

ECVET is an instrument to describe vocational competences in an easily understandable and comparable way throughout Europe.

ECVET utilizes Learning Outcome description to show what a student knows, understands and is able to do upon completion of a learning process.

In other words ECVET shows knowledge skills and competences acquired in a formal, non formal or informal way.

The individual Learning Outcomes are assessed and validated. In case of a mobility project this means that the learning outcomes acquired abroad can also be used for own country qualification. In order to reach this there are certain processes and agreements needed between the coordinators on the sending and hosting side which are fixed in two important documents: the Memorandum of understanding and the Learning Agreement.

### What is a Learning Outcome?

A learning outcome is a clear and specific statement describing what learners are expected to know, be able to do, or value as a result of completing a learning activity, course, or program. Learning outcomes are typically used in educational settings to guide teaching and assessment. They help ensure that all aspects of a course or program are aligned with the intended educational goals.

Key characteristics of learning outcomes:

1. They are clearly stated and unambiguous, making it easy for learners and instructors to understand what is expected.
2. Learning outcomes are measurable, meaning that there are ways to assess whether learners have achieved them.
3. They focus on what the learner will be able to demonstrate or accomplish, rather than what the instructor will teach.
4. They often begin with action verbs (e.g., analyze, create, evaluate) to specify the level of cognitive skill or type of learning.
5. Learning outcomes are aligned with broader educational goals, such as program objectives or institutional mission statements.

For example, a learning outcome for a biology course might be: "By the end of this course, students will be able to explain the process of photosynthesis and analyze its importance to ecosystems."

Learning outcomes can be categorized into three main types: knowledge, skills, and competences. Each type focuses on different aspects of learning and achievement.

#### 1. Knowledge-based Learning Outcomes

These outcomes focus on the cognitive aspect of learning, specifying what learners should know and understand.

*Examples:*

- "Students will be able to explain the fundamental principles of thermodynamics."



- *"Learners will understand the historical context and significance of the American Civil War."*
- *"Graduates will be able to identify and describe the major theories of psychology."*

## 2. Skills-based Learning Outcomes

These outcomes emphasize the practical abilities that learners should acquire, often involving the application of knowledge.

*Examples:*

- *"Students will be able to conduct experiments using appropriate scientific methods and equipment."*
- *"Learners will be able to use statistical software to analyze and interpret data."*
- *"Graduates will be able to develop and deliver effective business presentations."*

## 3. Competence-based Learning Outcomes

Competences refer to the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, emphasizing the ability to apply learning in real-world contexts.

*Examples:*

- *"Students will be able to work collaboratively in teams to solve complex engineering problems."*
- *"Learners will demonstrate cultural competence in diverse workplace settings."*
- *"Graduates will be able to design and implement effective marketing strategies based on consumer behavior analysis."*

## Creating Effective Learning Outcomes

When writing learning outcomes, it is useful to follow the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). Using action verbs from Bloom's Taxonomy can also help in crafting clear and measurable outcomes.

Knowledge Outcomes (Cognitive Domain):

- Remember: list, define, identify, recall
- Understand: explain, describe, summarize, interpret
- Apply: use, demonstrate, solve, implement
- Analyze: compare, contrast, examine, differentiate
- Evaluate: assess, critique, judge, recommend
- Create: design, construct, produce, formulate

Skills Outcomes (Psychomotor Domain):

- Imitation: follow, replicate
- Manipulation: perform, execute
- Precision: calibrate, adjust
- Articulation: integrate, adapt
- Naturalization: automate, master

Competence Outcomes (Affective Domain):

- Receiving: listen, acknowledge
- Responding: participate, contribute
- Valuing: demonstrate, support
- Organizing: integrate, modify
- Characterizing: exemplify, embody

Examples of Comprehensive Learning Outcomes

Knowledge:

- "By the end of the course, students will be able to explain the impact of climate change on global weather patterns."

Skills:

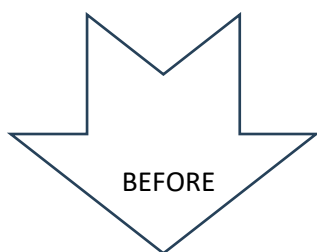
- "By the end of the training, participants will be able to create a detailed project plan using project management software."

Competences:

- "By the end of the program, graduates will be able to lead multidisciplinary teams to develop innovative solutions for sustainable development."

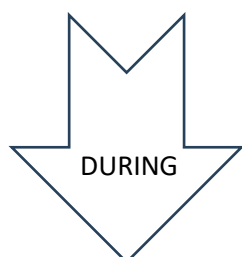
By integrating these types of learning outcomes, educators can ensure a well-rounded approach to teaching and assessment, ultimately enhancing the learning experience and better preparing learners for real-world applications.

The phases of ECVET for credit recognition:



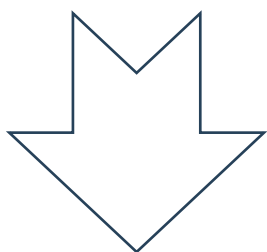
What to do BEFORE mobility:

- Establish an **ECVET partnership**
- Sign a **Memorandum of Understanding** between the partners.
- Agree modalities for evaluation of the unit among partners
- Identify ways of validation and recognition
- Define the EQF level of the Learning Outcomes
- Sign a **learning agreement** with the learner (for mobility projects)



During the Mobility the host organisation provides learning activities according to the learning outcomes and organising an assessment. The students put the results of the assessment in their portfolio

- Implement the designed learning pathway
- Evaluate learner achievement.
- Document the assessment process.



When the student are back at their own school/organisation they know their acquired results to the exam committee for validation and recognition of the Learning Outcomes:

- Validate "credits" awarded abroad.
- Recognize validated "credits"
- Register the recognized credits in the learner's personal booklet

To ensure that the entire process from preparation to implementation to validation end recognition is continually improved. Evaluation should involve all partners with feedback from individual

*Example of a Learning Outcome:*

*(explaining what a student is able to do, how, in which context and at what level)*

	<b>Paul</b>
is able	is able
to do	to prepare a cold dish
how	by using several vegetables
in which context	in a professional kitchen
at what level	independently

## ECVET -Technical Components

**The recognition of learning passes through:**

Qualificazione (Qualification) -- FIRST

Units of results from Learning -- FIRST

Scores expressed in credits -- FIRST

Memorandum of Understanding -- FIRST

Learning agreement -- FIRST

Assessment of results -- DURING

Validation of results -- AFTER

Recognition of results -- AFTER

Registration in personal booklet – AFTER

## 6.1 The Partnership

Establishing an ECVET partnership:

- must involve (either internally or through specific agreements) the relevant institutions in the partner countries for the following functions:
  - identification of learning units
  - delivery of the pathway
  - evaluation of results
  - validation and recognition of results
- can form a long-term cooperation network (even beyond the duration of the single Erasmus project)

## 6.2 The Memorandum of understanding

Is an agreement between sending and hosting organisation to cooperate on the basis of ECVET.

- must be formalized
- can be bi- or multi-lateral
- may be project-specific or involve longer-term cooperation
- should have some minimum contents:
  - mutual recognition of status (mutual trust)
  - identification of all parties involved in the process (relevant institutions)
  - conditions for the operation of the partnership
  - agreement on criteria and procedures for the transfer of experience results
  - agreement on the comparability of the qualification units involved (ref.EQF)

## 6.3 Learning Agreement

It describes the Learning Outcomes and agrees about the way of validation and recognition, ensuring individual students are aware of all aspects relating to their mobility.

- LO units (with associated ECVET credits)
- mode of assessment
- mode of validation and recognition

Agreement is signed by sending institution, host institution and learner in mobility projects

The agreement may be accompanied by a Europass Certificate Supplement presenting the LO units covered by the experience

## 7 EQAVET

EQAVET stands for the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training. It is a framework established to improve the quality of vocational education and training (VET) in Europe.

EQAVET provides a structured approach to quality assurance, helping VET providers develop, monitor, evaluate, and improve the quality of their training programs.

It fosters collaboration among EU member states, social partners, and other stakeholders involved in VET. This network promotes the sharing of best practices and mutual learning.

EQAVET offers a set of indicators and tools to assess and improve the quality of VET. This includes a cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation, and review.

The framework encourages VET providers to continuously improve their processes and outcomes, ensuring that the education and training provided meet the needs of learners and the labor market.

By adopting EQAVET, VET providers can demonstrate the quality of their programs, which helps build trust among learners, employers, and other stakeholders.

EQAVET supports the development and implementation of national and European policies aimed at enhancing the quality and attractiveness of VET.

Overall, EQAVET aims to ensure that VET systems in Europe are of high quality, responsive to the needs of the labor market, and capable of providing learners with the skills and competences they need for their professional and personal development.

### 7.1 EQAVET Indicators

EQAVET indicators are a set of reference points used to monitor and improve the quality of vocational education and training (VET) systems across Europe. These indicators help in assessing various aspects of VET provision, ensuring consistency, and supporting continuous improvement. The EQAVET framework includes ten indicators, which are categorized into two groups: context, input, process, and output/outcome indicators. Here is a summary of these indicators:

#### **1. Context, Input, Process Indicators:**

##### **1. Relevance of Quality Assurance Systems for VET Providers (Indicator 1)**

- Measures the extent to which VET providers implement quality assurance systems aligned with EQAVET.

## 2. Investment in Training of Teachers and Trainers (Indicator 2)

- Assesses the investment made in the professional development of teachers and trainers to improve the quality of VET.

## 3. Participation Rate in VET Programs (Indicator 3)

- Evaluates the percentage of learners participating in VET programs, reflecting the accessibility and attractiveness of VET.

### 2. Output/Outcome Indicators:

## 4. Completion Rate in VET Programs (Indicator 4)

- Indicates the percentage of learners who successfully complete their VET programs.

## 5. Placement Rate of VET Learners (Indicator 5)

- Measures the employment or further education rate of VET graduates, indicating the effectiveness of VET in meeting labor market needs.

## 6. Utilization of Acquired Skills at the Workplace (Indicator 6)

- Assesses the extent to which VET graduates use the skills acquired during training in their current job, reflecting the relevance of training to labor market demands.

## 7. Unemployment Rate (Indicator 7)

- Compares the unemployment rate of VET graduates with the overall unemployment rate, providing insights into the labor market integration of VET graduates.

## 8. Prevalence of Vulnerable Groups (Indicator 8)

- Evaluates the participation and success rates of vulnerable groups (e.g., individuals with disabilities, migrants) in VET programs.

## 9. Mechanisms to Identify Training Needs in the Labor Market (Indicator 9)

- Assesses the systems in place to identify and address the training needs of the labor market, ensuring that VET programs remain relevant and responsive.

## 10. Schemes Used to Promote Better Access to VET (Indicator 10)

- Measures the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at improving access to VET for all individuals, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

These indicators are used by VET providers and policymakers to monitor and evaluate the performance of VET systems, identify areas for improvement, and share best practices across Europe.

Within the project we decided to adopt for quality assurance of the delivery training contents the following indicators:

Indicator n. 3 – Participation Rate

Indicator n. 4 – Completion Rate

Indicator n. 5 – Placement Rate

Indicator n. 6 – Satisfaction Rate

Indicator n. 9 – Training Quality and Relevance

## 8 Conclusion

Under the FIELDS Project INFOR ELEA (on the Italian side) and AERES (on the Dutch side) coordinated activities to ensure that pilots conducted in their respective countries could obtain ECVET certification.

This was made possible by signing the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations, ensuring mutual recognition of training in case of mobility of the individuals involved.

This approach can be extended to any training provider from any European country (in this report we also delved into the Finnish system), who wishes to proceed with recognition of their training, obviously following the above guidelines.

## 9 Annexes

### ANNEX I



## 'File code' of the Memorandum of Understanding (optional)

Remove if not necessary

## 1. Objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding<sup>1</sup> (MoU) forms the framework for cooperation between the competent institutions. It aims to establish mutual trust between the partners. In this Memorandum of Understanding partner organisations mutually accept their respective criteria and procedures for quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competence for the purpose of transferring credit.

Are other objectives agreed on? Please tick as appropriate

No

Yes – these are: **insert information**

<sup>1</sup> For more information and guidance on the establishment of a MoU please refer to the ECVET User's Guide: 'Using ECVET for geographical mobility (2012) - Part II of the ECVET Users' Guide - Revised version – including key points for quality assurance' – available at: [http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET\\_Mobility\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/ECVET_Mobility_Web.pdf)



## 2. Organisations signing the Memorandum of Understanding

### Organisation 1

Country	
Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	Name
	Position
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

### Organisation 2

Country	
Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	Name
	Position
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

**Organisation 3 (remove table if not necessary)**

Country	
Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	Name
	Position
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

**Organisation 4 (remove table if not necessary)**

Country	
Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	Name
	Position
Telephone/fax	

### 3. Other organisations covered by this Memorandum of Understanding (if appropriate)

Explanatory note:

For MoUs established within a broader context (such as agreements set up by sector based organisations, chambers, regional or national authorities) a list of organisations (VET providers, companies, etc.) who are able to operate in the framework of the MoU can be added. This list can consist of their names or it can refer to the type of VET providers. The list can be included as an annex.

insert information here or remove if not necessary

#### 4. The qualification(s) covered by this Memorandum of Understanding

##### Qualification 1

Country	
Title of qualification	
EQF level (if appropriate)	
NQF level (if appropriate)	
Unit(s) of learning outcomes for the mobility phases (refer to enclosure in the annex, if applicable)	
Enclosures in annex - please tick as appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Europass Certificate Supplement <input type="checkbox"/> The learning outcomes associated with the qualification <input type="checkbox"/> Description of the unit(s) of learning outcomes for the mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <b>please specify</b>

##### Qualification 2

Country	
Title of qualification	
EQF level (if appropriate)	
NQF level (if appropriate)	
Unit(s) of learning outcomes for the mobility phases (refer to enclosure in the annex, if applicable)	

---

Enclosures in annex -  
please tick as  
appropriate

- Europass Certificate Supplement
- The learning outcomes associated with the qualification
- Description of the unit(s) of learning outcomes for the mobility
- Other: **please specify**

---

## 5. Assessment, documentation, validation and recognition

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding we confirm that we have discussed the procedures for assessment, documentation, validation and recognition and agree on how it is done.

---

## 6. Validity of this Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding is valid until: **insert information**

---

## 7. Evaluation and review process

The work of the partnership will be evaluated and reviewed by: **dd/mm/yyyy, person(s)/organisation(s)**

---

<b>8. Signatures</b>	
<b>Organisation / country</b>	<b>Organisation / country</b>
Name, role	Name, role
Place, date	Place, date

<b>Organisation / country (remove if not necessary)</b>	<b>Organisation / country (remove if not necessary)</b>
Name, role	Name, role
Place, date	Place, date

<b>Organisation / country</b> (remove if not necessary)	<b>Organisation / country</b> (remove if not necessary)
Name, role	Name, role
Place, date	Place, date

add more tables if necessary

## 9. Additional information

## 10. Annexes





# Learning Agreement



**11. Information about the participants**

Contact details of the home organisation

Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

Contact details of the host organisation

Name of organisation	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

Website	
Contact person	
Tutor/mentor	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

Contact details of the learner

Name	
Address	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Date of birth	(dd/mm/yyyy)
Please tick	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

Contact details of parents or legal guardian of the learner, if applicable

Name	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	

If an intermediary organisation is involved, please provide contact details

Name of organisation	
Address	

Telephone/fax	
E-mail	
Website	
Contact person	
Telephone/fax	
E-mail	

## 12. Duration of the learning period abroad

Start date of the training abroad	(dd/mm/yyyy)
End date of the training abroad	(dd/mm/yyyy)
Length of time abroad	(number of weeks)

## 13. The qualification being taken by the learner - including information on the learner's progress (knowledge, skills and competence already acquired)

Title of the qualification being taken by the learner (please also provide the title in the language of the partnership, if appropriate)	
EQF level (if appropriate)	

NQF level (if appropriate)	
Information on the learner's progress in relation to the learning pathway (Information to indicate acquired knowledge, skills, competence could be included in an annex )	
Enclosures in annex - please tick as appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Europass Certificate Supplement <input type="checkbox"/> Europass CV <input type="checkbox"/> Europass Mobility <input type="checkbox"/> Europass Language Passport <input type="checkbox"/> European Skills Passport <input type="checkbox"/> (Unit[s] of) learning outcomes already acquired by the learner <input type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify

#### 14. Description of the learning outcomes to be achieved during mobility

Title of unit(s)/groups of learning outcomes/parts of units to be acquired	
Number of ECVET points to be acquired while abroad	Please specify (if appropriate)
Learning outcomes to be achieved	

<p>Description of the learning activities (e.g. information on location(s) of learning, tasks to be completed and/or courses to be attended)</p>	
<p>Enclosures in annex - please tick as appropriate</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Description of unit(s)/groups of learning outcomes which are the focus of the mobility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Description of the learning activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual's development plan when abroad</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: please specify</p>

<b>15. Assessment and documentation</b>	
<p>Person(s) responsible for assessing the learner's performance</p>	<p>Name:</p> <hr/> <p>Organisation, role:</p>
<p>Assessment of learning outcomes</p>	<p>Date of assessment: dd/mm/yyyy</p> <hr/> <p>Method: Please specify</p>
<p>How and when will the assessment be recorded?</p>	
<p>Please include</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Detailed information about the assessment procedure (e.g. methods, criteria, assessment grid)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Template for documenting the acquired learning outcomes (such as the learner's transcript of record or Europass Mobility)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual's development plan when abroad</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify</p>

## 16. Validation and recognition

Person (s) responsible for validating the learning outcomes achieved abroad	Name: Please insert
	Organisation, role: Please specify
How will the validation process be carried out?	Please specify
Recording of validated achievements	Date: dd/mm/yyyy
	Method: Please specify
Person(s) responsible for recognising the learning outcomes achieved abroad	Name: Please insert
	Organisation, role: Please specify
How will the recognition be conducted?	Please specify

## 17. Signatures

Home organisation/country	Host organisation/country	Learner
Name, role	Name, role	Name
Place, date	Place, date	Place, date

<b>If applicable: Intermediary organisation</b>	<b>If applicable: Parent or legal guardian</b>
Name, role	Name, role
Place, date	Place, date

**18. Additional information**

**19. Annexes**



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