VALUING ALL LEARNING

Guidelines for a Vocational Education and Training Qualifications System for Malta's NQF.

A Working Document

prepared by the

Malta Qualifications Council

April 2007

Copyright: Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) 2007

The Malta Qualifications Council is composed of Charles Mizzi as Chairman, Felix Borg, Anthony DeGiovanni, Veronica Grech, Grace Grima, Charmaine Portelli and Emmanuel Zahra as Members.

This document has been created by James Calleja, Acting Chief Executive of MQC and critically appraised by the Chairman and Council Members of MQC and Mr Vincent MacBride, specialist on NQF at the European Training Foundation. Produced in draft form for MQC by Suzanne Gatt and Kevin Gatt. Proofread by Joyce Hili.

It is available on Malta the Qualifications Council's website www.mqc.gov.mt

The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part, except for commercial purposes, provided that the extract is preceded by a complete reference to the Malta Qualifications Council followed by the date of publication of this working document.

Every attempt has been made to provide the most current information at the time of going to print.

Text completed in the first week of April 2007

Photographs on front cover by courtesy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, the Malta Tourism Authority and Printit Printing Services
Designed by: PRINTIT Printing Services
Printed at: SALPRESS

MESSAGE

FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT,
THE HON. DR LOUIS GALEA

It is my government's firm commitment to enhance vocational education and training in Malta. Over the last ten years, vocational education and training has had remarkable innovations and success stories. The opening of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, the increase in the quality and number of training courses at the Employment and Training Corporation and at the Institute of Tourism Studies, as well as the strengthening of adult education provision by state and private institutions are significant steps towards a knowledge-based society.

These working documents prepared by the Malta Qualifications Council, lay the foundations of Malta's National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (NQF) within the context of vocational education and training. They are also documents which propose Malta's NQF within the European Qualifications Framework which, on the 5th of September 2006, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the EQF. In the last week of September 2006, the EP adopted the report by Thomas Maan on the creation of an EQF. It is expected that the EP will adopt the EQF in Autumn 2007. They spell out the standards and criteria on which such a framework is based and the necessary steps that stakeholders need to take to ensure that vocational education and training qualifications in Malta become tools for mobility, progression, transferability and employment.

This is a very essential step in our reform programme in education and training. Malta's proposed NQF lays the groundwork for a bridging exercise between vocational education and compulsory education on the one hand and higher education on the other. Malta's NQF is a neutral device which locks together in synergy and complimentarily, the four main educational strands: Compulsory, Vocational, Higher and Adult education. This is, in my opinion, the main function of our National Qualifications Framework. It illustrates, in a transparent manner, the various routes to learning. It aims at valuing all learning in formal, informal and non-formal contexts. It provides clear pathways to learning experiences which can lead to employability and personal enrichment. It opens up the opportunities for public and private training providers to build the professional capacity within their organizations in order to ensure quality education at all levels of their training provision. It gives Malta the opportunity to have an autonomous and self-regulating system of education and training at all levels and in all sectors.

The challenges that an NQF poses on us are to build our capacity to create qualifications that are demand-driven and directly related to Malta's economic and social needs; to ensure that such qualifications fit within an agreed qualifications framework for lifelong learning; to guarantee that Malta's qualifications are recognized nationally and internationally and serve to attract overseas learners of the highest quality, and finally, that informal, non-formal and prior learning as well as sectoral qualifications form the backbone of Malta's NQF in the years to come.

I wish to encourage all stakeholders to play an active and constructive role in this ongoing process. Malta's NQF and our vocational education and training system are instrumental in addressing our economic needs, in building capacity in vital sectors of our economy and in ensuring that all learning is valued against agreed standards and criteria.

Most of all we want an NQF and a VET system, including quality assurance, which respond to inclusion, competitiveness and excellence.

LOUIS GALEA

PREFACE

The aim of publishing three working documents is to instigate an informed dialogue on the proposed National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the implications of the Framework to vocational education and training, the sector which falls within the remit of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC).

MQC was set up in December 2005 to steer the development of a national qualifications framework and to oversee the training and certification leading to qualifications within the Framework and which is not already provided for by compulsory education institutions or degree awarding bodies.

The working documents carry a single title *Valuing all Learning*. It indicates MQC's objective of providing the standards, criteria and infrastructure necessary to value all formal, informal and non-formal learning within the parameters established by Legal Notice 347 of 2005. The working documents reflect the discussions carried out within MQC and with key stakeholders and international consultants commissioned to critically review these documents.

The first document entitled *A National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning* focuses on the philosophy underlying the level descriptors for each of the eight levels designed to represent all qualifications in Malta. The Framework has two distinctive routes: the academic and the vocational route which converge into the higher education sector defined in terms of the Dublin descriptors. Each level is described in detail indicating its implications to learners and other key stakeholders in particular training providers, employers, those representing workers and social partners.

The second working document entitled *A VET System for Malta's National Qualifications Framework* looks at our current VET system within the proposed NQF and focuses on aspects related to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in relation to mobility, progression, transferability and employability. The document illustrates how our VET system requires the intensive capacity building and the support of a comprehensive policy which adopts an outcome approach to accreditation, learning, assessment and certification. The document also focuses on the importance of having VET programmes driven by industry.

The third document spells out a *Quality Assurance Policy for VET within the NQF*. It illustrates MQC's policy on quality assurance support mechanisms for vocational education and training. Aware of the fact that VET institutions in Malta may possess quality assurance policies, this document draws on the proposed VET quality assurance policy published by the European Commission to suggest an overall QA policy for Malta's VET provision.

We hope that these three documents will stimulate discussion and form the basis of an agreed policy for a National Qualifications Framework that adds quality and visibility to vocational education and training and opens up new opportunities for learning within and outside our public and private training institutions.

Valuing all Learning is the goal that MQC aims to achieve through its policies and standards. We are confident that these documents will provide a valuable support to engage key stakeholders to participate in this ongoing dialogue.

CHARLES MIZZI
Chairman

JAMES CALLEJA
A/Chief Executive

Abbreviations

AQF	-	Australian Qualifications Framework
BTEC	-	Business & Technology Education Council
CS	-	Certificate Supplement
DS	-	Diploma Supplement
ECTS	-	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECVET	-	European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training
EHEA	-	European Higher Education Area
ENIC	-	European National Information Centre
ENQA	-	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	-	European Qualifications Framework
ERA	-	European Research Area
ERDF	-	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	-	European Social Fund
ESIB	-	National Union of Students in Europe
ETF		European Training Foundation
ETQA	-	Education & Training Quality Assurance Bodies (South Africa)
EU	-	European Union
EUA	-	European University Association
FHEQ	-	Framework for Higher Education Qualification Levels (England, Wales & N. Ireland)
GCE	-	General Certificate of Education (U.K.)
GCSE	-	General Certificate in Secondary Education (England, Wales & N. Ireland)
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
ICMCH	-	Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage - Heritage Malta
ISCED	-	International Standard Classification of Education
KC	-	Key Competences
MATSEC Board	-	Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examination Board
MCVET	-	Malta Credit Transfer System for VET
MQC	-	Malta Qualifications Council
MQF	-	Malta Qualifications Framework
NARIC	-	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NCEA	-	National Certificate of Education Act (New Zealand)
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NRP	-	National Reform Programme
NSB	-	National Standards Board (South Africa)
NSSB	-	National Skills Standards Board
NVQ	-	National Vocational Qualifications (England, Wales & N. Ireland)
OPM	-	Office of the Prime Minister
SAQA	-	South African Qualifications Authority
SCQF	-	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SEC	-	Secondary Education Certificate
SGB	-	Standards Generating Bodies (South Africa)
SS	-	Sectoral Skills
SVQ	-	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
UK	-	Underpinning Knowledge
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation
VET	-	Vocational Education and Training

Contents

		Page
Executive Summary		**11**
PART ONE		**13**
1.0	**A positive Agenda for Change**	
1.1	Skills development as the key to economic growth	
1.2	Expanding opportunities for learning	
1.3	Participating in the European Education Space	
1.4	Malta's Political Response to Challange	
1.5	Education and Training based on Competences	
1.6	Qualifications based on outcomes	
1.7	A focus on Key Competences	
1.8	National Competency Standards	
1.9	Underpinning Knowledge	
PART TWO		**21**
2.0	**Pathways to learning**	
2.1	Flexible Pathways	
2.1.1	The traditional path to learning and certification	
2.1.2	Other paths to Certification	
2.2	Flexibility across Educational Sectors	
2.3	Validation of informal and non-formal learning	
2.4	A credit system for Vocational Education	
2.4.1	The European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training: the ECVET	
2.4.2	A Malta Credit System for Vocational Education and Training: the MCVET	
2.5	The Proposed framework for National Vocational Qualifications	
2.5.1	A Vocational Training Programme aimed to target current labour market needs	
2.5.2	Defining the Proposed National Vocational Qualifications	
2.6	Partial and Full Certification	
2.7	Aligning Existing Training to the New National Vocational Qualifications Framework	
PART THREE		**35**
3.0	**Assuring Quality**	
3.1	Accreditation	
3.1.1	Accrediting Training Institutions	
3.1.2	Accrediting Courses Offered	
3.2	Quality Assurance	
3.3	Assessment	
3.4	Issuing Certification	
PART FOUR		**43**
4.0	**A Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Vocational Qualifications**	
4.1	Roadmap for Harmonisation of existing courses leading to Full Certification	
4.1.1	Input from Key Stakeholders in Industry	
4.1.2	National Competency Standards	
4.1.3	Course Development	

4.1.4 Accreditation
4.1.5 Delivery of Course
4.1.6 Assessment and Certification
4.2 Harmonisation of Short Courses leading to Partial Certification
4.3 Action Plan for the Implementation of Sectoral Qualifications

CONCLUSION **55**

Annex 1 Historical Background to VET in Malta **57**
Annex 2 International Experiences and Examples **61**
Annex 3 Helsinki Communiqué **65**
Annex 4 ECVET - European Credit in Vocational Education and Training **73**
Annex 5 Education and Training 2010 programme **91**
Annex 6 Glossary

List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page
1	Proposed National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by MQC	21
2	Traditional Path to Certification in Vocational Education and Training	22
3	Alternative Path to Certification	23
4	Examples of a flexible pathway for a learner within the financial sector	24
5	Summary of distribution of MCVET over one year of study	27
6	A tentative guide of the percentage distribution of emphasis on key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge in the vocational education sector	29
7	Proposed Maltese Vocational Qualifications for levels 1-5	29
8	Summary of Proposed Distribution of MCVET for the different Vocational Qualifications	30
9	Proposed alignment of existing qualifications to the NQF	32
10	Mapping the Accreditation Process	35
11	Sample draft checklist for institutions applying to be included in MQC's register of accredited training providers	37
12	Prototype template for the Malta Vet Record of Achievement	41
13	Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Courses leading to Full Certification	44
14	Prototype Template of Curriculum Plan that can be presented to MQC for Accreditation	46
15	Checklist for training institutions to ensure that their harmonization of curriculum plan takes in account all aspects prior to applying for accreditation from MQC	48
16	Main steps for the harmonization of existing courses Leading to Full Certification	50
17	Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Courses leading to Partial Certification	51
18	Prototype template for course descriptions of MCVET offered	52
19	Main Steps for the Harmonization of existing courses Leading to Full Certification	53
20	Checklist for training institutions to ensure that they have taken all aspects in consideration prior to applying for accreditation of their course descriptions for MCVET from MQC	53
21	Action plan for the implementation of the National Vocational Qualifications	54

Executive Summary

This working document is intended as guidelines to help all vocational education and training institutions to harmonise their courses to the newly proposed national qualifications framework. It also allows a degree of flexibility to training providers without compromising quality and standards.

This document maps Malta's VET system within the proposed National Qualifications Framework. The objective is to create an autonomous and self-regulating system in vocational education and training which on the one hand responds to competitiveness and cost effectiveness and, on the other hand, to a wider inclusion of learners.

The document also focuses on the relationship between VET and employability. Modernization of education and training systems to improve the quality and level of skills available in the labour markets are part of the solution to issues related to employability. Education and training are also an integral part of social development and social cohesion. They transmit values of solidarity, equal opportunity, and social participation and have positive effects on health, the rational use of resources, democratization, and the general quality of life.

Education and training is also a determining factor in our country's development potential and relationship with European and world economy. Many countries work to develop and implement policies that maximise the contribution of their human resources to economic growth and social development. This is a challenging process that is constantly evolving. This document addresses such challenge in the context of vocational education and training.

In recent years our vocational education and training system has gone through extensive reform and innovation. It has grown in quality and in the number of users. It has developed in many of the vital economic sectors of our social structure. It has addressed economic needs and investment strategies.

This document places the development of vocational education and training at the heart of the proposed national qualifications framework for lifelong learning.

It proposes a system built on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and key competences through a learning outcome approach across all learning experiences. The document aims at creating structures that lead to parity of esteem between vocational education and training and higher education. It aims at placing: the learner in a position to increase his or her capacity for further education and training; training providers in ensuring an approved standard in the provision of learning experiences; industry in playing a more central role in the design and implementation of vocational education and training; and other stakeholders in contributing to a learning process which targets national economic growth, employment, mobility, social cohesion and recognition of certification at national and international levels.

Vocational education is seen as one example of major investment in improving the quality of training in promoting an education system more sensitive to labour market needs. Traditionally, the modernisation of vocational education tended to be mainly concerned with ensuring that the content of curricula was relevant to specific occupations. In recent years there has been a major paradigm shift in vocational education policy. Today, vocational education is not only about acquiring the skills required in a single occupation relevant to a fairly predictable and stable workforce environment. It is also about providing skills that are responsive to a labour market that is more fluid and a working life that is more mobile. This is the underlying philosophy across the various chapters of this document.

Vocational education involves preparing young people for the expectation to change role or position in the labour force. This means that education and training must balance the time required for the acquisition of professional skills with the acquisition of broader based and transferable competences across all qualifications. Concrete examples of this change in the labour force include enterprises that are being restructured, occupational classifications that are

becoming multi skilled, industry sectors that are adopting new technologies, as well as individuals who are changing their careers and their location.

The expectation of greater mobility requires workers to keep upgrading their skills and competences during their working life. Vocational education modernisation, therefore, also needs to take into account the possible options of a training programme that provides for further learning – whether in the vocational sector or in other sectors. The issue of broad based skills (or the acquisition of key competences) within vocational education brings it also closer to the general or traditional education path. This raises the issue of the need to create pathways and links between vocational education and higher education which would promote lifelong learning.

From the point of view of policy design and implementation, these may seem complicated matters. The different education systems have very different traditions, experiences, and ideas about what quality is and what relevance means. However, if Malta is to succeed in upgrading its workforce skills and in preparing its youth for a competitive economic market, then it is necessary to have an educational system that allows learners to move from one level to the other as well as from one sector to another. It is also important to build our own capacity to assess training needs, to design qualifications based on occupational standards and to accredit and certify training institutions and qualifications autonomously.

This document also outlines the various aspects of a vocational education and training system built on the NQF levels described in the proposed national qualifications framework with particular focus on Levels 1 to 5. The stress on a common structure for VET qualifications and the importance attached to key competences across all training programmes is an attempt to encourage coherence and a systemic approach to VET qualifications. It is also a strategic position which will ensure that all learners are well equipped for the flexible labour market emerging out of competitiveness and the knowledge-based society.

Finally the document provides a number of templates indicating MQC's general standards and criteria for accreditation, certification and course structuring or re-structuring.

1.0 A Positive Agenda for Change

Today's ever-changing industrial and technological developments require an innovative industry to ensure its competitiveness. This can be achieved through the continual development of skills and competences of a nation's workforce who are highly skilled but who can also easily adapt to these changing needs. It is a challenge for Malta to ensure that the supply of its human resources meets the demand of this changing market. It is only through its highly trained workforce that Malta, with its small scale, can be competitive within a global economy. The more skilled job seekers are, the better their chances of employment, as they will have the necessary skills to meet the market demands. Promoting the employability of citizens also promotes social cohesion within a knowledge based society.

Demographic changes mean that the number of school leavers will decline over the coming years while the number of elderly workers will increase.[1] This demographic shift, combined with the relentless transformative pressures being exerted on industry by global competition and technological change, demands more investment in the up-skilling of citizens. This aspect must assume a greater role than before for both young workers as well as older workers who need to upgrade their skills and competences. Whereas technological improvements, innovation and the efficient distribution of goods and services are critical to economic growth, the quality and relevance of human resources is essential. The goal of many countries in recent years has been to create better links between education and economic needs to ensure the relevance of qualifications and education programmes to economic growth and development. The same strategy has been adopted in order to promote better social cohesion and improve the quality of life of citizens.

1.1 *Skills development as the key to economic growth*

The opportunities of initial and further training offered by education and training systems have an impact on the rate of growth of each and every economic activity in any sector in the country. This is even more crucial when considering Malta's high-value added target sectors that are the key for our future prosperity and which require a highly-skilled and adaptable workforce. Such a high-skilled workforce is developed through a process of lifelong education, starting from early childhood, through effective primary and secondary schooling, moving on to vocational or tertiary education as appropriate and progressing systematically subsequently in continuous professional development.

It is thus necessary to ensure that Malta's education meets these challenges. It is not enough to invest in attracting foreign and local investors to Malta. It is just as essential to have a supply of skilled and flexible workers who can provide entrepreneurs with that productivity which can respond to the changing economic needs. Investment in education thus has to cater for the upskilling of all workers, not only those in initial training, but also those who are already in employment. It is also necessary to recognise those skills and competences that learners develop as part of their work and other experiences.

Government has always invested heavily in education, resulting in a strong compulsory education as well as a consistent growth in tertiary level graduates. The past years have seen a huge investment in the vocational sector with the reopening of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). However, more needs to be done, particularly in the vocational training sector. Vocational education needs to offer an approach that provides quality training while also **being accessible to as many learners as possible.** There is a need to go beyond the traditional full-time courses that we are accustomed to and to develop flexible pathways that are attractive, relevant, and accessible and provide maximum possible potential development to Maltese citizens. Such pathways should enable progression and learning opportunities throughout the working life of citizens. The more opportunities provided, the more and better skilled can our workers be, contributing to the further economic growth of the country.

[1] See ETC, study on School to Work Transition – published 2006 and A Better Quality of Life, 2006-2010 Pre-Budget Document, Government Print p.69

1.2 *Expanding opportunities for Learning*

In expanding opportunities for learning, the understanding of training provision needs to become wider and more flexible than the traditional modes of learning that we are accustomed to. Training opportunities have to become flexible, allowing learners to follow courses and training at their own rate. Adults have a range of responsibilities beside their working life, such as family and social responsibilities. This needs to be respected and a system which allows learners to accumulate learning and to have opportunities of progression that give them the chance to pace their learning according to their time available is necessary. It is also important to recognise other modes of learning, such as informal and non-formal learning. **There are workers who have no formal training and consequently, no formal certification, but yet are highly skilled and capable in their line of work. All that our workers know and are capable of doing needs to be recognised through certification.** There is thus the need to develop a system for certifying and recognising what workers know and the skills and competences that they have developed.

A key development required in this regard is the introduction of a national vocational qualification framework. A national vocational qualification framework brings increased clarity to the meaning of different types of qualifications and allows qualifications to be compared easily. Together with the associated policies on access, transfer and progression, the introduction of such a framework promotes wider access to awards and creates additional opportunities for transfer to different programmes, including improved links between vocational education and academic programmes, parity of esteem between the two education sectors as well as increased encouragement to learners to progress to tertiary education. This is what this document aims to address: that of proposing a system of vocational education certification which would provide certification of skills and competences of workers. The system which is being proposed will try to respond to all these different learner needs, providing all learners with as many opportunities for lifelong learning as much as possible. The certification system being proposed will promote progression within the National Qualifications Framework, will allow the option to shift from the vocational to the general education track, as well as have recognition both locally and on a European level, promoting labour force mobility within a European labour market.

1.3 *Participating in the European Education Space*

The present challenge is not unique to Malta.

Many countries have already been developing their human resources sector by introducing industry driven qualifications to maximise its contribution to economic growth. Two good examples are Scotland with the Scottish Vocational Qualifications and the National Vocational Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland[2]. The trend among national governments has been echoed by a co-ordinated approach by the Member states of the European Union through the 'Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs'. This strategy aims to encourage investment and stronger outcomes from the education sector with the goal of making Europe the most knowledge based competitive region of the world. A key part of this objective is the amelioration of links between education and training systems in the European Union. To facilitate this, Malta has worked in co-operation with the other Member States to develop a European Qualification Framework (EQF)[3]. This framework enables qualifications frameworks and systems at national and sectoral level to be related to each other – thus facilitating the transfer and recognition of the qualifications of individual citizens across Europe as a whole.

In a situation where the mobility of workers and learners is growing, where people increasingly combine education and training from different countries, communication between national systems increasingly matters. Questions related to progress, transfer, accumulation, recognition and quality development can only be treated to a limited extent in the context of single (isolated) national or sectoral frameworks. The challenge is to build bridges between these frameworks and systems enabling communication, comparison and mutual trust.

---

[2] An overview of some of these developments in other countries can be read at attachment (Appendix 5).

[3] An overview of developments at the European Level can be seen at appendix (Appendix 5). Recent decisions by the Member states of the European Union can been seen in the Helsinki Communiqué at appendix (Appendix 3)

A vocational qualifications framework for Malta will not only support learning and training in Malta. It will also promote greater recognition of its education and training throughout Europe, as well as, through the European Qualifications Framework, contribute to the development of **a common European Space for Education and Training**. Such an initiative can bear different types of results. It can produce a clear and easily understandable system of national vocational qualifications that are understood and valued within the European economic area. It can also provide **an opportunity for Malta to establish its vocational education and training system within the European Education Space**, thus attracting and serving learners, not only locally, but also within Europe and beyond.

1.4 *Malta's Political Response to the challenge*

The Maltese government has been aware of the need of certifying and upskilling its workforce for some time and has included it in its policies. The need for a national framework for vocational qualifications was highlighted in the European Training Foundation (ETF) report[4] as early as 1999. One of the recommendations in this document tackles directly the need for a holistic qualification structure for the whole vocational education and training provision. This report also stresses the importance of the role of the social partners who could be taken on board as part of the process.

These recommendations, together with the challenge of promoting economic growth, have since been taken up by government and have been reflected in government policy a number of times. The National Reform Programme (NRP)[5] identifies the vocational and educational training (VET) field as one key weakness in Malta. It is argued that there is strong segmentation and fragmentation between formal, non-formal and informal training. It is also pointed out that there is no framework for vocational education that outlines the setting up of standards on VET provisions. The NRP also stresses the need to work towards developing flexible education pathways between VET and non-VET streams[6]. One thus finds that one of the measures – M 04.5 "Ensure that formal, informal and non-formal qualifications and skills are certified" - targets the issue of certification directly.

The targets set in the NRP are reflected in the government's pre-budget documents of 2006 and 2007. The pre-budget for 2006 makes reference to the need for a national vocational qualifications framework twice. In the first case, in section 3.2 it is listed in the context of upgrading Malta's workforce's skills to make the country more competitive[7]. It is stated that establishing a framework for National Vocational Qualifications is important to put vocational education on a sound and better structured footing for the benefit of both students and employers. The second reference is found in section 4.2.4 on adult education and training. The document here argues that a national vocational qualifications framework would increase the clarity of the meaning of different types of qualifications and would allow qualifications to be compared easily. Such a system would open access to training, and allow transfer and progression of learners as part of the lifelong learning process. There is also reference in the pre-budget document of 2007[8]. One again finds that the need for education and training pathways to become more attractive and flexible is stressed in order to underpin its importance for economic growth[9]. The document spells out a number of proposed actions for achieving the vision of the government's strategic principles. One finds that in reinforcing Malta's human resources capital comparative advantage, one of the proposed actions includes that of introducing a National Vocational Qualifications Network (NVQ) as the foundation for skills upgrading. It is stated that its introduction in the immediate term is seen as a matter of national importance[10].

---

4 ETF, 1999, An overview of Vocational Education and Training: Malta

5 Ministry of Competitiveness and Communications, National Reform Programme: Malta's strategy for growth and jobs, October 2005

6 Ibid. p.4

7 Office of the Prime Minister, For a Better Quality of Life: Pre-budget document 2006, July 2005, p.38

8 Prime Minister, *Securing Our Future: Pre-budget document 2007*, August 2006

9 Ibid. p.43

10 ibid. p.119, no.3

Government's commitment to the setting up of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework reflects the intention to promote capacity building by upgrading the nation's workforce and to empower citizens in determining their own learning paths. It is the intention of government to move from the concept of 'hand holding' to that of 'share holding'[11]. This document is an outcome of government's policy.

1.5 *Education and Training based on competences*

A growing emphasis on the development of competences is at the heart of the goal of creating stronger links between education and its contribution to the economy. This is a broad concept and is being used in most countries of the European Union as well as across countries of the Commonwealth.

Competence[12] is taken to be understood as the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. The concept of competence is used in an integrative manner: as an expression of the ability of individuals to combine – in a self-directed way, tacitly or explicitly and in a particular context – the different elements of knowledge and skills they possess.

Acquiring a certain level of competence can be seen as the ability of an individual to use and combine his or her knowledge, skills and personal competences according to the varying requirements posed by a particular context, a situation or a problem. Put another way, the ability of an individual to deal with complexity, unpredictability and change defines/determines his or her level of competence. Competence is therefore, much more than the application of procedures required in a specific job.

This broad approach is critical if education and training is to be relevant to a labour market that is becoming more fluid and a working life that is becoming more mobile. Vocational education now also involves the expectation that persons will change their role or position more than once in the labour market.

The implications of a mobile labour market mean that the skills required in an occupation have to be balanced against skills that are more broad based and transferable across a range of occupations. One finds concrete examples of this in the labour force in enterprises that are being restructured, in occupational classifications that are becoming multi-skilled, in industry sectors that are adopting new technologies, or with individuals who are changing their careers as well as their location. Similarly, with the expectation of greater mobility there is greater demand for workers to upgrade their skills and competences several times in their working life as part of lifelong learning.

Vocational education programmes in today's demand for lifelong learning need to take into account the possible options a training programme provides for further learning – whether in the vocational sector or in other sectors. The issue of broad based skills highlights the need for creating greater links between vocational education and general education as well as creating pathways between vocational education and higher education.

1.6 *Qualifications based on learning outcomes*

One of the key features of the developing trends towards education and training in recent years has been an increasing emphasis on competences gained through learning outcomes rather than, the inputs associated with specific learning or training programmes. Learning outcomes describe what an individual is expected to be able to do and know as a result of the learning that an individual has undertaken in the course of study. This means that what the programme delivers in terms of learning is much more important than the actual duration of the course. The use of learning outcomes features strongly in many approaches and has been an important element in

---

[11] Speech delivered by the Hon Prime Minister, Dr. Lawrence Gonzi, National Conference on the EQF/NQF organised by *Forum Malta Fl-Ewropa* and MQC, Intercontinental Hotel, Wednesday 29 th November, 2006

[12] Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - a European Reference Framework DG1 Annex 1, 7255/06 p.2

many of the vocational programmes offered in Malta over the past five or six years. This trend has also been mirrored in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) as well as the Bologna Process for Higher Education.

The use of learning outcomes is increasingly common in all sectors of education as a means of emphasising the capacity to integrate skills and knowledge in the application of learning. Programmes seeking to be recognised within a framework of qualifications usually have to identify the learning outcomes they contain. This provides greater transparency in the content of learning and allows users of the programme to evaluate if the qualification's specific content is relevant to their purposes, and how it might link up to other qualifications and occupational standards.

The use of learning outcomes to describe what a person needs to be able to do at the end of a programme of study highlights the possibility of greater flexibility in how programmes can be used to support qualifications. Learning programmes can be designed around groups of learning outcomes. In this way, the use of learning outcomes offers the opportunity for the development of module-based learning with a choice of entry and exit pathways into a qualification.

It is thus irrelevant how long and in what way one acquires the competences identified.

What the Malta Qualifications Council is interested in is the competence levels that an individual has reached - **the exit point**, rather than the entry point to a qualification. Such an approach is based on providing certification of what individuals know and are capable of doing. It also makes assessment easier to design and carry out. A competence based qualification[12] also allows people who would have acquired competences through life experiences within informal and non-formal learning to present themselves for assessment and acquire the required certification.

The National Qualifications Framework is based on the general learning outcomes identified in eight levels as defined by law[13]. Similarly, any vocational qualification should emerge directly from Industry and is to be based on the required competency outcomes relevant to the needs of the labour market.

1.7 *An emphasis on key competences*

An essential element of the Vocational Qualifications Framework is an emphasis on a series of key competences. These basic competences are intended to provide the possibility for learners to move from one occupation and possibly also one sector to another. They are also intended to **provide parity of esteem between the vocational track and the general education track**, leading to options for progression beyond Level 5 to those within the vocational track. These are perceived as supporting the development of the necessary skill base for Malta in four main ways:

- Firstly, by providing basis for comparison between general education including post secondary education and possibly the first cycle of higher education;

- Secondly, by creating a foundation of broad skills in VET that will support ongoing learning;

- Thirdly, by establishing a framework of generic skills that taken together with the skills required in different economic sectors, will facilitate the transferability of competences between sectors;

- Fourthly, by connecting the skills developed in Malta's vocational education system with those recognized within the framework of the European Qualifications Framework.

13 Legal Notice 347/2005 of the Laws of Malta

These key competences, (as detailed in the European Commision Staff Working Document Towards a European Quaalifications Framework for Lifelong Learning) essential for lifelong learning, must be an integral part of the NQF and consequently of the qualifications to be created or/and re-structured. Eight key competences have been included, based on the key competences identified within the European Qualifications Framework. Each one is defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. These key competences include:

1 ***Communication in the mother tongue***: The ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written format, and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in the full range of societal and cultural contexts – education and training, work, home and leisure;

2 ***Communication in foreign languages:*** This is similar to that for the mother tongue and refers to the understanding, expression and interpretation of thoughts, feelings and opinions in both oral and written form. It also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding;

3 ***Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology:*** Mathematical competence refers to the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations and includes a mastery of numeracy, as well as a willingness to use mathematical modes of thought and presentation. Scientific competence refers to the ability to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world in order to identify and question and draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology involves the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human needs or wants;

4 ***Digital Competence:*** The confident and critical use of Information Technology for work, leisure and communication;

5 ***Learning to learn:*** The ability of individuals to organise their own learning through being aware of their own learning processes or needs. It means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance;

6 ***Social and civic competences:*** All forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies to resolve conflict where necessary. It is based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation;

7 ***Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:*** The ability to turn ideas into actions. It involves creativity, innovation and risk taking as well as planning and management of projects in order to achieve objectives. It is a foundation needed for establishing social and commercial activities;

8 ***Cultural awareness and expression:*** The appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, arts, literature, and the visual arts.

The implication of these key competences is that each and every vocational qualification needs to cater for the development of these competences to different extents. The benchmark is that of having all persons on Level 3 having attained the minimum acceptable level in these key competences, thus ensuring that they can have a full and quality lifestyle as active citizens.

1.8 *National Competency Standards*

An additional feature of the skills to be found in vocational qualifications in the framework involves identification of specific sector skills.

The trend in many countries is increasingly towards the adoption of standards for occupations

and activities in the labour force as a clear mechanism for co-operation between the providers of education and the education needs of the economic sectors of industry, services, and commerce. To some extent Malta's current vocational qualifications are based on occupational standards[14] published by the Sector Skills Development Agency of the United Kingdom. Internationally, these standards are often called Skill Standards, Occupational Standards, Industry Standards, or Competency Standards. Whatever title is used, the intent is the same, namely, to describe clear benchmarks for quality performance in employment.

If quality performance is identified in a standard, it can serve as a guide to curriculum development in education and the recognition and assessment of competences used in activities in the labour market. Beyond this, these standards provide a map of the quality of performance for an entire occupation thus providing valuable insights into the relevance of its technology or methods as compared with international practices.

The work in occupational analysis and mapping emerging from Industry must lead to the establishment of National Competency Standards in Malta for the different occupations within the labour market. They will serve as the standards that any vocational education and training provider needs to aim to achieve in successfully training people for the particular jobs. These occupational standards will thus be the national benchmarks for Malta and will be matched to the National Qualifications Framework as part of the process. This exercise will not only set standards for workers in Malta, but will also provide certification which can be easily understood and translated by employers abroad, thus promoting workforce mobility.

These National Competency Standards will be the benchmarks that each and every training institution would eventually have to use in designing its courses. They will thus provide not only harmonisation, but also comparability between the quality and level of training provided in the same area by different training providers.

National Competency Standards are to reflect labour market needs and consequently also changes within the local economy. This requires that occupational standards are periodically reviewed and updated, with new occupations added whilst others removed depending on the changes within the labour market.

1.9 *Underpinning Knowledge*

A third component that will support qualifications in the vocational framework is that of underpinning knowledge. Underpinning knowledge is that body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of study or work. Within the qualifications framework, such knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

There are content areas that are specific to particular sectors and even specific for particular occupations. For example, a mechanic needs to have content background in the physics of hydraulics as one area falling under underpinning knowledge. Many times, the skills required to carry out specific tasks are based on the underpinning knowledge that the individual has within the work area. It is thus necessary for training providers to identify which content areas are needed for the different sectors and to design their curriculum plan for training provision based on these knowledge areas

Consequently, any vocational training is to include aspects of these three elements of study: key competences, sectoral tasks, as well as underpinning knowledge. The distribution of emphasis on these three aspects will vary according to the different level of vocational qualifications. This aspect will be dealt with in the next chapter.

[14] Cite BTEC, ETC courses that are using occupational standards

2.0 Pathways to learning

Within the current framework, learning is understood to take place in different forms, modes and settings. In order to recognize all these different aspects of learning, one needs to view learning pathways in different ways. Learning pathways are to become more flexible than the traditional full-time courses. It also envisages a different conception of how and when assessment can take place. The ultimate goal is to offer certification for all forms of learning such that any member of the workforce will be in a position to offer documentation of the competences that s/he is able to offer. It is also important to allow the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, as well as allow the transferability of learning and consequently certification, to promote progression in learning.

2.1 Flexible pathways:

Flexible pathways are a mode of promoting lifelong learning in view of the need for workers to continue with their training throughout their working life. The possibility of progression between different levels and types of qualifications underpins Malta's Qualification Framework.

8	DOCTORAL DEGREE		8
7	MASTER'S DEGREE POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE		7
6	BACHELOR'S DEGREE		6
5	UNDERGRADUATE DIPLOMA UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE	VET HIGHER DIPLOMA	5
4	MATRICULATION LEVEL ADVANCED LEVEL INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	VET DIPLOMA	4
3	GENERAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL 3 SEC Grade 1-5	VET LEVEL 3	3
2	GENERAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL 2 SEC Grade 6-7	VET LEVEL 2	2
1	GENERAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL 1 School Leaving Certificate	VET LEVEL 1	1

Fig. 1: Proposed National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by MQC. cfr vol.1 pg42.

The role of the NQF is that of indicating the levels that an individual has achieved and other levels that s/he can attain. **It is up to the training providers to indicate what entry qualifications or competences are required for acceptance to a training course.** It is also up to the individual to decide at what level of certification s/he would like to sit for once the mechanisms for recognizing and certifying informal and non-formal learning is in place.

2.1.1 The traditional path to learning and certification

The traditional path to certification in vocational education is usually that obtained through following full-time day courses offered by vocational training institutions. Many times, these institutions base their training on Industry needs and are responsive to it through the range and type of training that they provide.

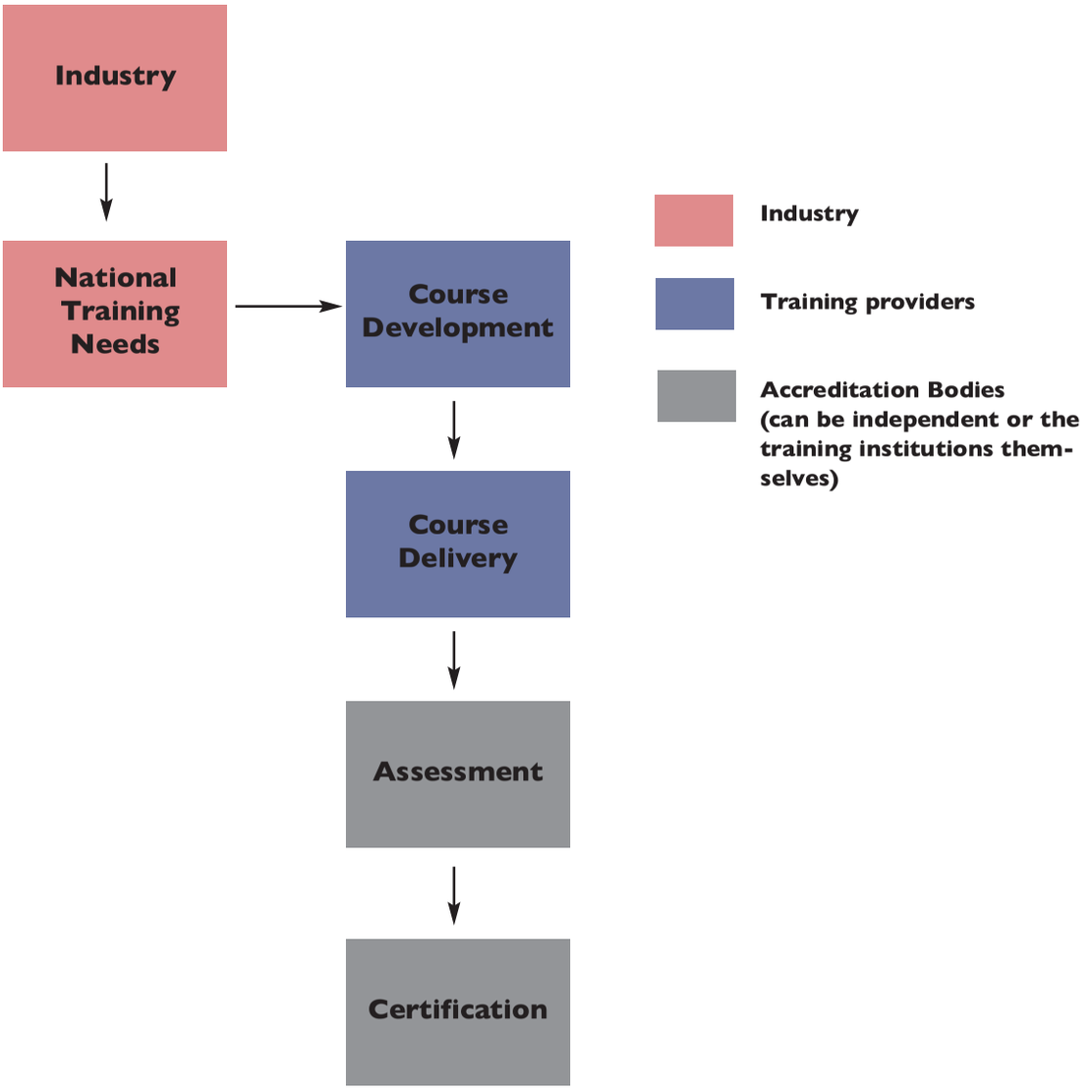


Fig. 2: Traditional Path to Certification in Vocational Education and Training

The figure above describes the main steps to traditional learning. Industry usually expresses its training needs according to the changing economic and technological developments. Vocational institutions are sensitive to the country's economic needs and respond either by adjusting their already existing courses to reflect the new needs or else by designing and introducing new courses that target the new training needs. Once the curriculum development of the courses is done, then the courses are offered to prospective students. The course is delivered to students. If successful, the trend is for courses to be offered a number of times. In the case of long courses such as those offered at the MCAST, these are usually offered each academic year. In the case of short courses such as those usually offered by the MCAST, on the ETC, these can be offered a number of times depending on the demand within industry. Following the completion of the course, many times students sit for summative assessment, following which, on successful performance, they are issued with certification. This traditional path is usually followed by youths in their initial vocational training and by adult learners for up-skilling or re-training.

2.1.2 Other paths to certification

While the model described exemplifies most of the certification that is currently present in Malta, it does not exemplify the modes of learning through which workers in Malta learn and gain competences. Many times, adults do not learn within the model just described. There are cases where individuals follow short courses leading to learning but not to certification. In other cases, individuals learn through direct trial and error at work, through coaching, through being involved in activities that are learning situations, etc. These methods can be summarized as informal and non-formal learning. If we are to support flexible learning pathways, we are then also to recognize these other forms of learning.

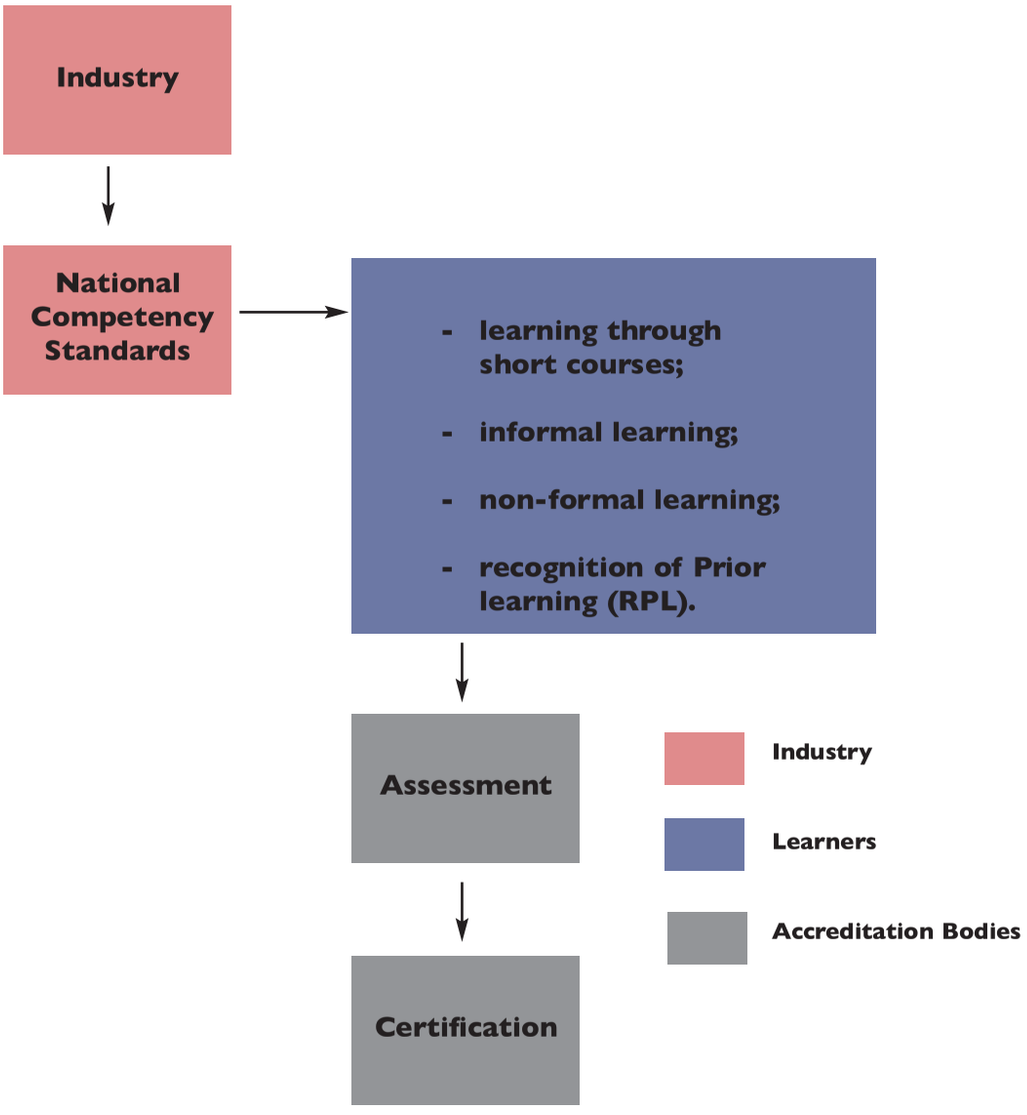


Fig. 3: Alternative Path to Certification

The figure above shows how it is possible to have a methodology that will accommodate these other alternative paths of learning which can lead to certification. It is possible to envisage a system which recognizes that individuals can learn in different modes and circumstances. Learners can either be allowed to accumulate their learning through a system of credits, or to present themselves directly for certification, no matter the path through which they would have achieved these competences. Although this system is still to be developed and has not yet been elaborated, the basic structure of the national vocational qualifications structure is being designed to allow such paths to be possible in the future. **It is the intention of the Malta Qualifications Council to work on the possibility for individuals to have partial certification and to accumulate credits which can eventually lead to full certification.**

The framework also creates additional possibilities for **self certification**. The emphasis on learning outcomes and sector skills means that in some cases employers would be able to assess their employees' competences, and to provide in-house training and continuous professional

development to upgrade those skills and competences that have been identified as missing in fulfilling the required skills to obtain any one of the vocational qualifications at any of the Levels from 1 to 5.

It would be possible for MQC to accredit in-house training within companies if these satisfy the criteria of quality assurance which it sets.

2.2 *Flexibility across Educational sectors*

Flexibility of learning should not only occur across the VET educational path, but should also allow learners to switch from the vocational and general educational paths. The National Qualifications Framework is designed to allow flexibility as well as progression between the vocational and the tertiary paths.

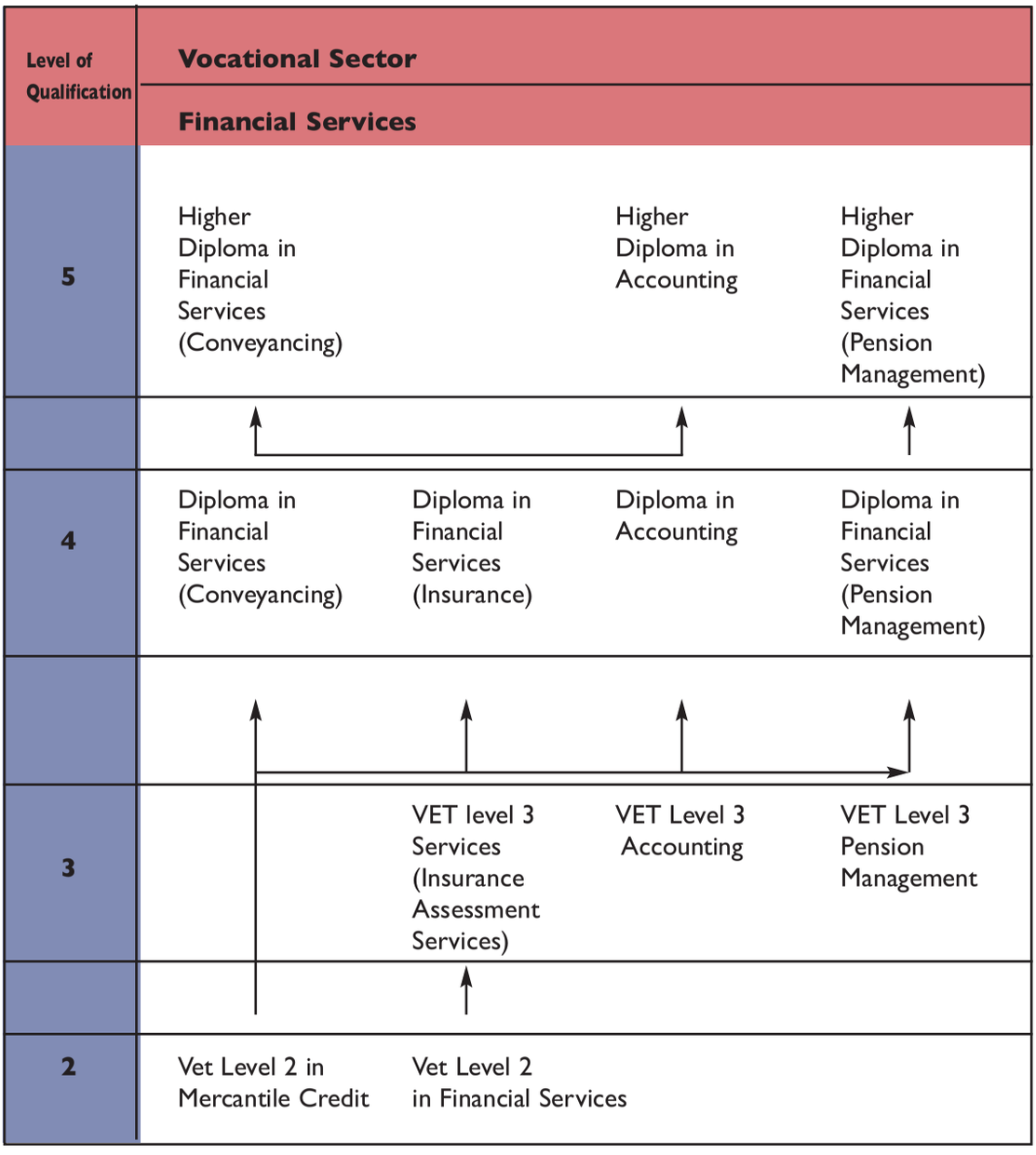


Fig. 4: Examples of a flexible pathway for a learner within the financial sector

In view of lifelong learning, there is a need to open up paths so that workers can keep upgrading their training and to proceed to the highest level – NQF Level 8 within the NQF. There should not be a limit at NQF Level 5 for individuals within the vocational education track. This also requires that there is parity of esteem between the general and vocational track which would then make qualifications at the same levels within the different track comparable and consequently allow progression within the National Qualifications Framework.

2.3 *Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Learning*

It has already been argued that in order to have as much of our workforce certified and the individual competences recognized, **it is important to give value to all forms of learning**. All youths pass through the compulsory education system. A good percentage succeeds in obtaining a school leaving certification. There is however a group who leave compulsory education with no certification whatsoever. Whether certified or not, most youths move on to the labour market, finding employment and learning skills on-the-job to carry out different types of activities. Whatever the level of job, each individual who is earning a living has at some point – through initial training on the job or through short courses – developed a number of skills and competences. This implies that learning takes place in different forms and formats other than the traditional mode.

Within an outcomes approach to certification, the main point of interest is what the individual has learnt and not in what mode it has been learnt. Within such context, it then makes sense to develop methods of assessment which would allow the certification of informal and non-formal learning. Whereas in the case of informal learning, individuals can present themselves for assessment of the competences that they have developed, in the case of non-formal learning, organizations such as many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can have their programmes of non-formal learning accredited and certified.

The aim to certify all existing jobs and provide the opportunity for all workers to be certified, is an ambitious goal. The Malta Qualifications Council is aware of such a great challenge, and is working towards this objective by making sure that the NQF being proposed does not only apply to existing vocational training, but will also be able to accommodate the process of validation of informal and non-formal learning as well as the recognition of prior learning in the future.

2.4 *A Credit System for Vocational Education*

One way of promoting comparability, transparency of learning as well as mutual trust between training institutions locally as well as on a European level, is to design a credit system which would allow learners to obtain recognition of their learning in short periods of time as well as for established qualifications. A credit system, similar to the successful ECTS system adopted for tertiary education, would allow learners to spend different periods of learning in accredited training institutions, or else combine with training other modes of learning allowing partial certification which can later be used in order to obtain full certification.

The following two sections will describe the work done so far in developing the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training – the ECVET at European level as well as a credit system that is being proposed within the local vocational education and training system.

2.4.1 *The European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training: the ECVET*

The concept of using a credit system within the vocational sector similar to that within the tertiary sector is not new to Malta. In fact, one finds that the concept of a European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training – the ECVET has been part of the Copenhagen Process which aims at attaining the harmonization of vocational education within the European Education and Training Space. This process is also promoting parity of esteem between the vocational and the general education track in working towards the Lisbon goals.

Official documents at European level reflect this commitment to the development and harmonization of vocational education. Both the Education Council Resolution adopted on 12 November 2002 and the Copenhagen Declaration[15] of the 30 November 2002 emphasized the

15 Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, "The Copenhagen Declaration" http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf

need for a system of Vocational Education Qualifications having transparency, transferability and recognition of competences between different countries and at different levels. The Maastricht Communiqué[16] in 2004 actually gave priority to the development and implementation of an ECVET system which would allow learners to develop their learning pathways when moving between vocational systems.

ECVET[17] complements the European Qualifications Framework in that they are both based on common principles notably:

- Focus on learning outcomes expressed in knowledge, skills and competences;
- Are based on a process of qualification;
- Are adapted to the demands of lifelong learning and all learning contexts on an equal footing; and
- Are geared towards the mobility of people.

ECVET thus aims to facilitate the mobility of people undertaking training; validates the outcomes of lifelong learning; provides transparency of qualifications as well as promotes mutual trust and cooperation between vocational education and training provided across Europe[18]. ECVET proposes a methodological framework and common principles to foster dialogue between the providers and facilitates understanding of qualifications from one system to another as well as improving the transparency of qualifications.

ECVET has officially been defined[19] as:

- A useful and concrete device intended to facilitate transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes to another and/or qualifications system to another;

- A methodological way of describing a qualification in terms of learning outcomes which are transferable and which can be accumulated.

The proposed process of transfer of ECVET involves one body of institution assessing learning outcomes achieved and credits awarded to the learner to a second awarding body which validates and accepts the credits and recognizes them for the award of a qualification.

One main bone of contention in proposing the ECVET structure is the allocation of ECVET credit points. ECVET credit points give simple representation of the relative value of the learning outcomes in relation to the whole qualification as well as facilitate the transfer of learning outcomes across Europe by providing a common reference.

The main difficulty lies in identifying the allocation of credit points. It is being proposed[20] that these credit points be allocated on the basis of criteria such as:

- an estimation of the importance of the contents of each unit defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;

- reference to real or notional average length of programme;

- real or notional learner workload in a formal learning context.

---

16 Ministers responsible for Vocational Education and Training, Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET), 14th December 2004, Maastricht

17 Commission Working Document, European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training: A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe, Brussels, 31.10.2006, document SEC(2006) 1431

18 ibid, p.8

19 ibid, p.9

20 Commission Working document, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training: A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe, Brussels, 31.10.2006, document SEC(2006) 1431, p.13

A qualification will thus include a number of units, each carrying a number of credit points. A practical proposal[21] being put forward is that of 120 ECVET points on average to cover the learning outcomes which can be achieved by an individual in a year in formal full-time VET context. ECVET are awarded after the assessment of the learning outcomes. Credits are then recorded in a transcript of record which gives details of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired as well as the number of credit points associated with these learning outcomes.

2.4.2 *A Malta Credit System for Vocational Education and Training – the MCVET*

Vocational education and training qualifications need to have comparability, transferability, transparency as well as promote mutual trust between one vocational education and training institution and another. It is important, in harmonizing Malta's vocational and educational qualifications, to have a system of credits which would provide **a measure that would ensure that qualifications at the different levels, although in different sectors, have more or less the same level of weighting.** This is crucial if one is to promote a qualifications structure which would allow flexible pathways to learners as part of their lifelong learning development.

Although the qualification system is to be based on learning outcomes, it is important to have a measure of comparability of credits across levels as well as sectors.

The Malta Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (MCVET) is thus being considered against reference points proposed for the definition of credit points for the ECVET - reference to real or notional average length of programme; and real or notional learner workload in a formal learning context.

The MCVET is being defined as a credit of study which is equivalent to the learning outcomes one would achieve through a period of 25 hours of learning – whatever the learning context (direct teaching, work experience, tutorials, self-study etc.) is. The reference to learning is made specifically in that it does not specify the type of learning context – formal teaching, on the job coaching, tutoring etc. Since at the end of the day the learning outcomes are the main basis of the credit system, the concept of 25 hours of learning is only being proposed as a yardstick which would allow training providers to organize their courses in terms of credits. The MCVET would allow the transfer, accumulation and recognition of credits achieved as one proceeds up the NQF.

The system of national vocational qualifications is based on a total of 60 MCVET achieved for every year of study within a formal full-time course. This means that each of the new vocational qualifications proposed is to include 60 MCVET a year, each level to be achieved to an equivalent of one year formal full-time study.

1 MCVET = 25 hours of learning

60 MCVET for one year	X	25 hours learning each credit	=	1,500hours total learning in 1 year

Taking one week of learning to include 40 hours
1500 hours are equivalent to 37.5 weeks of learning

Fig. 5: Summary of distribution of MCVET over one year of study

Since one finds both tertiary and vocational education at Level 5, the credit system for vocational education – the Malta Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (MCVET) has been strategically defined such that it can also be comparable to the ECTS system that is used within tertiary education systems across Europe. Since both the ECTS and the MCVET are based on 25 hours of learning or study, then this allows comparability of both credits, at the same time indicating the different orientation of the types of credit values. This system has thus been designed to facilitate the recognition by tertiary institutions of MCVET at Level 5 which would enable learners to proceed with studies at tertiary level at Universities without the need to repeat that training leading to learning outcomes that have already been achieved within the vocational track.

21 ibid, p.14

2.5 *The Proposed Framework for National Vocational Qualifications*

The current state of qualifications within the vocational sector in Malta is one where there either is a local certification or else a reliance on British certification.

In view of the variance in the nature of qualifications within the vocational sector and the need to address issues concerning accreditation, equivalence, self-certification, mobility, transfer and progression, it is necessary to restructure the provision of vocational qualifications. There is a need to have a system which would harmonise the provision of vocational training to fit within the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) but which would also allow flexibility across the different sectoral skills, as well as flexible pathways for progression within the NQF.

Vocational qualifications should be based on what people really do at work. They should be assessed by reference **to nationally agreed standards** and which allow people to show that they have achieved competence in their occupation through assessment in the workplace.

2.5.1 *A Vocational Training programme aimed to target current labour needs*

If Malta is to remain competitive within the global market and have highly skilled workers, then current vocational training needs to fine-tune its existing structures to the proposed NQF. As has been argued earlier on, in view of the greater worker mobility and the requirement for workers to change work a number of times, training must evolve in order to address particular needs. Vocational education requires training in key competences which are transferable across different sectors, practical skills required to perform the job within the sector, as well as underpinning knowledge needed in order to be able to perform the job competently. These can be summarized to include:

1 ***key competences***[22] which refer to the key competences just described in the previous section;

2 ***sectoral skills*** that include skills related to the specific vocational sector of the training provided; and

3 ***underpinning knowledge*** which includes that knowledge which is relevant to the discipline within which training is provided.

The emphasis on each of these components varies as one moves up from one level to another. There is more emphasis on the key competences at the lower levels, with more focus shifting to the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge as one moves up towards NQF Level 5. The figure overleaf shows **the proposed distribution** of these three aspects of vocational education and training from NQF Level 1 to NQF Level 5.

As can be seen from the figure overleaf, the percentage focus on key competences falls from 70% of the whole qualification at Level 1 down to only 10% at Level 5. The reasoning behind such structure is that one becomes more proficient in the key competences with each level and thus can spend more time to develop the sectoral skills and learn the underpinning knowledge required for particular occupational standards (jobs) within a given sector. What is to be clearly understood is that one cannot obtain **FULL** qualification without having achieved the required standards in the 8 basic key competences adopted by Malta's NQF based on the proposed EQF standards. **PARTIAL** qualification at any of the levels will however be also possible.

[22] The MQC will be publishing level descriptors in the 8 key competences for Levels 1-3 in Q2, 2007.

Level of Qualification	Distribution of KC, SS & UK for each Qualification		
	KC	SS	UK
Level 5	10%	45%	45%
Level 4	20%	40%	40%
Level 3	40%	30%	30%
Level 2	60%	20%	20%
Level 1	70%	15%	15%

KC – Key competences

SS – Sectoral Skills

UK – Underpinning knowledge

Figure 6: A tentative guide of the percentage distribution of emphasis on key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge in the vocational education sector

2.5.1 Defining the proposed National Vocational Qualifications

The proposed National Vocational Qualifications introduces new certification at Levels 1-5 of the National Qualifications Framework. These start from VET Level 1. One moves on to VET Levels 2 and 3. Level 4 is a VET Diploma whereas the VET Higher Diploma is a Level 5 certification in vocational education and training.

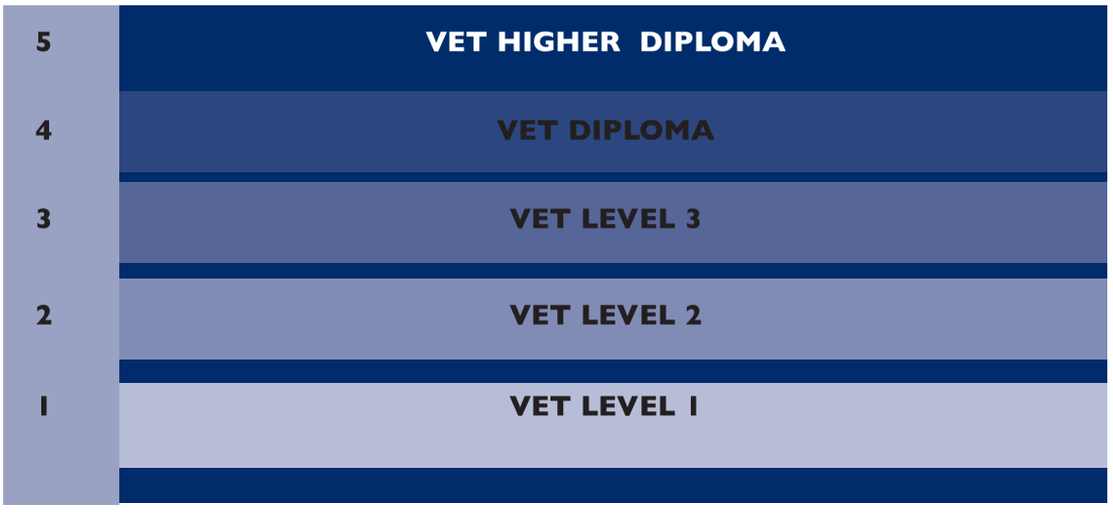


Fig. 7: Proposed Maltese Vocational Qualifications for Levels 1-5

The MCVET system can be used and applied to provide comparability, recognition and mutual trust for VET qualifications obtained across vocational education and training systems. It also serves to harmonise the Vocational Education system of qualifications. Only one type of qualification is being proposed from VET Level 1 to 5.

VET Level 1

This qualification contains elements of both sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. The balance of credits between these three aspects has been proposed at 70% key competences and 15% in each of sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. This amounts to a ratio of 42 MCVET in key competences, 9 MCVET in sectoral skills as well as 9 MCVET in underpinning knowledge. All those jobs (mainly operative) that have been identified by employers to require Level 1 qualifications are to include this proposed ratio of training.

VET Level 2

The ratio between key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge at NQF Level 2 is that of 60% to 20% to 20% respectively. This would amount to having 36 MCVET in key competences and 12 in each of sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. Those jobs, mainly operative but which require higher level competences than those within NQF Level 1, are at NQF Level 2 and consequently should have this balance of competences being proposed.

Level	VET Qualification	No. of MCVET		
		KC	SS	UK
Level 5	VET Higher Diploma	6	27	27
Level 4	VET Diploma	12	24	24
Level 3	VET Level 3	24	18	18
Level 2	VET Level 2	36	12	12
Level 1	VET Level 1	42	9	9

KC – Key Competences SS – Sectoral Skills UK – Underpinning Knowledge

Fig. 8: Summary of Proposed Distribution of MCVET for the different Vocational Qualifications

VET Level 3

This certificate is at NQF Level 3 which is the target at which an individual can be considered to have reached the minimum level in key competence to enable the individual to progress in the learning pathways and also be able to live as a full active citizen. This level also exemplifies those jobs that are closer to technical or administrative and therefore require higher order competences than those at lower levels. Traditionally this is the craftsmanship level of competence. The ratio of the key competences to the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge now becomes 40% to 30% to 30%. This refers to 24 MCVET in key competences and 18 MCVET in each of the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

VET Diploma

The focus on key competence now goes down to only one fifth of the qualification with most of the credits focusing on sectoral skills as well as underpinning knowledge. This also reflects the job types which require more specific competences which can only be acquired if an individual already possesses the basic key competences. With a ratio of 20% key competences, and 40% for each of the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge, the number of MCVET in each of the sectors will be that of 12 MCVET in key competences and 24 MCVET in each of the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

VET Higher Diploma

The ratio now goes down to 10% key competences and up to 45% in each of the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. These would amount to a total of 6 MCVET in key competences, and 27 MCVET in each of the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. The main emphasis now is on training in skills specific to the job sector, reflecting the specialization and high level of competence required from people employed with this level of qualification.

The differences between the levels will not only be in the distribution of credits across the three aspects – key competences, sectoral skills or underpinning knowledge, but also and most importantly, **in the level of difficulty between one level and another in an ascending order.** There are also differences envisaged in the level of competences required at each level. In order to avoid confusion in understanding credits and to promote mutual recognition and transparency of credits gained, it is being proposed that the first number of the coding used for the different credits will indicate the level at which the MCVET is being provided. This means that a credit of MCVET starting with a code 2 will indicate that the credit covers learning outcomes considered to be at Level 2 of competence.

The implementation of such a system in national vocational institutions implies the reorganization of course make up, the method of describing courses, credit value as well as credit coding. These aspects will be tackled in the next section[23] where a methodology for restructuring will be proposed.

2.6 Partial and Full Certification

The credit system that is being proposed allows learners to have **FULL or PARTIAL Certification** at any particular level. In considering the traditional path leading to full certification, individuals can apply and follow a whole full-time course, which contains the proposed balance of MCVETs within the level of vocational qualifications. On the successful completion of the course, an individual then receives the full vocational certification.

If, however, the system is to recognize different modes of learning as well as open up to flexible learning pathways that give learners more control over the period and mode of their learning, it is important to allow partial certification at any of the proposed levels. It is not necessary to complete all the MCVETs required for any one of the qualifications just described in order to obtain some form of certification. This means that an individual will be able to obtain MCVETs in either of the key competences, sectoral skills or underpinning knowledge in different modes, at different times as well as from different training providers.

Certification will be possible for each and every MCVET gained. Once an individual would have accumulated the whole range of MCVETs required for full certification, then s/he can present their credits to an accrediting body which would issue the full certification.

There should be no limiting factors in such a system but one is expected to provide learners with all the possible pathways to certification. This flexibility will bring a new challenge to training providers.

23 Section 3 contains a roadmap describing how both short courses offering partial certification as well as whole courses leading to full certification need to be adapted to the new credit system.

Training providers will not be obliged to necessarily provide all the training in the different areas – key competences, sectoral skills as well as underpinning knowledge – themselves.

Such system makes it possible to have training providers who provide training in one or more of these aspects. One possible model would be one institution which provides training in the sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge whereas another provides the key competences.

One other option can be training in underpinning knowledge in one training institution, key competences in another while sectoral skills are learnt at the workplace. The possible permutations are numerous and as long as the MQC is satisfied that an individual has obtained the necessary combination of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge, then certification can be issued.

The system also offers opportunities for employers to identify the skills and competences of their own workers and to develop their own training services, in order to help their workers accumulate their partial certification which, on accumulation, will eventually lead to full certification. This would give a greater significance to continuous professional development where the outcome would not only be further learning, but learning that leads to certification, and consequently to employability and economic growth.

2.7 Aligning Existing Training to the new National Vocational Framework

Existing vocational education and training can be aligned to the new qualification system being proposed. As guidelines, the main training qualifications have been taken into consideration in order to help training providers understand the level of competences that are being required at the different NQF Levels of 1-5. One must take into account already existing vocational qualifications such as those issued by MCAST and ITS. The following alignment of existing qualifications is being put forward to provide training providers with guidelines about the level that their different qualifications could be associated with.

NQF Level of Qualification	MCAST Qualifications	ITS Qualifications
Level 5	Existing Level 4 courses	ITS Higher Diploma Level
Level 4	Existing Level 3 courses	ITS Diploma Level
Level 3	Existing Level 2 courses	ITS Certificate Level
Level 2	Existing Level 1 courses	ITS Foundation Course Extended Skills Training Scheme – ESTS Part II
Level 1	Not applicable to existing MCAST courses	Extended Skills Training Scheme – ESTS Part I

Fig. 9: **Proposed alignment of existing qualifications to the NQF**

It must be stressed that the proposed NQF Levels at which existing qualifications are to be pegged does not imply that existing courses would automatically fit into such Levels of Qualifications. They would still need to fulfil the learning of competences specified by occupational standards. They will also have to reflect the proposed ratio of learning with respect to key

competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge. The courses have also to implement the proposed MCVET system of credits.

It is being recommended that training providers initiate a Course Audit exercise in order to assess which courses comply (fully or partially) with this proposed policy.

It is also important to discuss the process to introduce MCVET. Such a credit system will accelerate the process of progression and transferability and will open up the possibility of parity of esteem in a more constructive way.

3.0 Assuring Quality

The National Vocational Qualifications Framework offers the opportunity to establish qualifications in the field of vocational education and training in Malta as well as within the European area of education. In order to rise to this challenge, it is important to ensure that the quality of the training and assessment provided meet set standards.

It is also essential to have a system of certification which would be easily readable and understood in Malta and also across Europe. Thus, it is the role of the Malta Qualifications Council to address important issues relating to accreditation, quality assurance, assessment as well as certification as they will be the basis of the credibility of vocational qualifications issued in Malta.

3.1 Accreditation

Qualifications, local or international, offered in Malta need to be **recognized by the Malta Qualifications Council** in order to ensure standards and nationally agreed accreditation. This is important to ensure a system of certification which can be used and understood, not only in Malta, but across Europe, thus promoting mobility and contributing to a knowledge-driven society. It is important to endorse the accreditation process in certification.

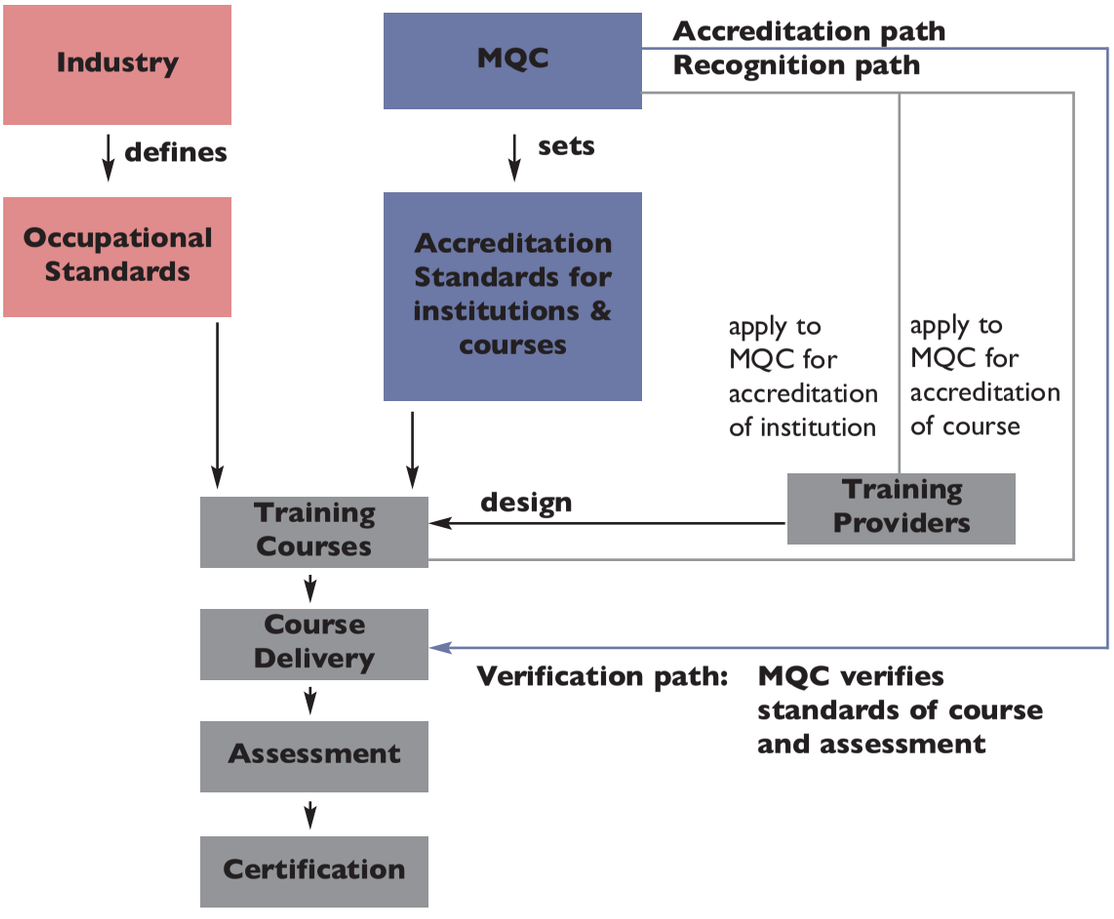


Fig. 10: Mapping the Accreditation Process

The path to accreditation and certification in vocational education starts with two parallel processes. On the one hand there is Industry which defines the jobs within the labour market and sets occupational standards. On the other hand, the Malta Qualifications Council sets the standards for the accreditation of vocational training institutions as well as the accreditation of courses, whether these lead to full or partial certification.

Based on these two processes, training institutions first need to comply with the quality standards set for the accreditation of training institutions, and then to apply to be included in MQC's register of accredited training institutions. Following accreditation of their institution, training providers need to consider the occupational standards as well the quality assurance standards for course development and assessment in order to apply for the

accreditation of each and every course developed. Once the course design is approved by the Malta Qualifications Council, training providers can then offer and deliver the course to learners, provide assessment and issue certification.

Within this process, the MQC will be involved in a consultation/verification process, where, through the service of verifiers experts in the particular vocational field, it will be ensured that, the standards it has set are being respected.

3.1.1 Accrediting Training Institutions

The first important step in the accreditation process is for the MQC to develop a system for the accreditation of all institutions, state or private, offering full-time or short duration vocational education and training in Malta. This system of accreditation can be achieved based on a number of standards that each training provider needs to fulfil. The Malta Qualifications Council will set the criteria against which training institutions may apply for recognition and accreditation. Each training institution would need to satisfy a set of criteria such as:

- administrative infrastructure available;
- trainer capacity within the training institution;
- approved physical space for the delivery of training;
- standards in internal quality assurance.

Each institution would need to apply to the MQC to become a registered training provider to be able to issue credits and vocational qualifications.

The MQC will thus hold a register of accredited training institutions, allowing these institutions to issue MCVETs achieved as well as any of the vocational qualifications that are being proposed.

MQC will recognize these training institutions as accredited bodies offering vocational qualifications.

The different standards that training providers need to consider when applying for accreditation as a training institution may involve:

1. Acceptable physical amenities to provide training in adequate and safe conditions;

2. An administrative structure that is efficient in the administration of the services provided;

3. Fully qualified trainers who would be able to provide training of acceptable level and meet the competence standards developed by the sectoral bodies;

4. Assessment systems which allow learners to have a fair and accurate (truthful) judgement of his/her competences, together with a system of appeals which allows an individual the right of having a fair re-evaluation should there be a dispute on assessment;

5. A quality assurance system, internal and external, which provides continuous monitoring and evaluation, as a well as a mechanism for improving the training provision within the institution.

Training providers will be able to offer certification for their training which, if satisfying the standards set by the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC), can be accredited and thus provide currency and recognition in Malta and within Europe.

The following diagram summarizes these issues and provides a checklist which training institutions would need to see that they have professionally addressed before applying to the Malta Qualifications Council for including their institution within the register of accredited training providers.

Provisional checklist for Training Providers when applying to MQC to be included in the register of accredited Vocational Institutions

In order to ensure that you have considered all the required standards of MQC when applying for the inclusion of your institution in the register of accredited vocational training providers, read through the following list and check that all issues have been addressed.

- ☐ Have acceptable physical amenities to provide training adhering health and safety standards;
- ☐ Have an efficient administrative infrastructure to cater for the number of courses and students;
- ☐ Possess capacity of trainers to provide quality training to meet the levels and learning outcomes specified by the sectoral bodies;
- ☐ Shows the capacity to deliver training in the learning modes that it proposes to use;
- ☐ Have developed assessment procedures to ensure that learners have a fair and truthful judgement of his/her competences, together with a system of appeals which allows an individual the right of having a fair re-evaluation should there be a dispute on assessment;
- ☐ Have a quality assurance system involving both internal and external quality assurance, as well as a mechanism for improving the training provision within the institution.

Fig. 11: Sample draft checklist for institutions applying to be included in MQC's register of accredited training providers

3.1.2 Accrediting Courses offered

Accrediting a vocational training institution is the first step. Next, training institutions will still have to apply for the accreditation of each and every course that they offer if they intend to offer certification. The MQC is responsible to set the standards and develop procedures which training institutions will need to follow. This process will be explained in the following section[24]. The roadmap proposed in section 4 of this document will describe in detail the steps which need to be taken so that each and every training course will be accredited in a way in which learners will be able to know beforehand the NQF Level at which it is offered, the credit value (MCVETs) to be obtained, whether the training falls under key competences, sectoral skills or underpinning knowledge, as well as competences that are to be learnt as a result of such training.

This system is essential to empower learners in deciding their lifelong learning pathways. Learners will have the information available to enable them to make informed choices about the training to follow in order to fulfil the requirements for the target certification that they want to achieve. Such a system will also be very useful to employers as it will allow them to specify the certification that they require by job applicants, and to know what competences the people applying for the jobs possess from their certification. The system also gives employers the opportunity to plan in a better way, the continuous

24 For specific details please refer to section 4 in this document.

professional development of their employees as they can direct the training to fill in the missing gaps of their workers and help them improve their skills, consequently improving their efficiency.

3.2 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is essential for obtaining accreditation and consequently recognition of the qualifications issued. The Malta Qualifications Council will thus set standards which need to be met in order to provide accreditation to the institutions and the courses that are offered within accredited institutions. Further details on how to go about providing quality assurance within the vocational educational sector will be dealt with specifically in a third policy document which is to follow the publication of this document.

In the meantime, it is thus important to highlight the need for institutions to develop mechanisms for providing quality assurance of the services that they are offering in order to maintain the standards of provision of training within national standards set by the MQC. These mechanisms need to be such that they ensure the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the service being provided, but which also have a system for feeding the results of monitoring and evaluation into the development and improvement of the training provided.

Accreditation of institutions is necessary for regulating standards as well as for protecting the interests of learners, employers and other key stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the Malta Qualifications Council to ensure that all training institutions wanting to offer certification provide quality training. The MQC will thus embark, as part of the implementation process of a system of National Vocational Qualifications, on accrediting training institutions seeking to offer certification accredited by the MQC[25]. It aims to build up **a REGISTER OF ACCREDITED TRAINING INSTITUTIONS**. Anybody interested in following education and training courses would be able to consult this register to see if the institution is accredited.

There will also be **a list of accredited courses offered which would also serve the purpose of informing anybody interested in taking up further training of the value and standard of the course they would like to follow**. This process has significant implications for training institutions, both those offering full-time vocational education and training courses as well as those offering short courses, state or private. Any institution wanting to take up the opportunity to provide accreditation for its courses will need to follow a process of restructuring as is proposed by MQC.

This harmonization process should not be seen as a means of control. On the contrary, it should be interpreted as a professional means to regulate standards in the provision of training in Malta. This would serve to add value to Maltese qualifications and increase their currency on the international "stock exchange" of qualifications.

Although international qualifications in Malta may have had a longer history in provision and quality, our objective is to create enough capacity to have a VET system of qualifications which is interdependent rather than dependent on foreign standards and quality.

Interdependency is an excellent indicator of higher standards, autonomy and cost-effectiveness.

3.3 Assessment

It is important that training institutions develop assessment systems which enable them to identify whether learners have achieved the competences that have been specified within the particular MCVET credit. It will also be possible for specific bodies to be able to offer certification through the assessment of specific learning outcomes as stated for the different sectors. This would enable employers to apply for the certification of their workers and to provide certification for those employees who have achieved specific sectoral competences through experience

[25] The MQC intends to issue a policy document which will focus on quality assurance standards for accrediting training institutions as well as courses leading to full or part certification.

and in informal and non-formal training learning settings.

Assessment can take different forms. Since certification will be job oriented and industry driven, then most of the competences identified will relate to skills and abilities related to the specific jobs. Demonstration of competences can thus be through a combination of ways: practical demonstration, evidence through testimonials, knowledge questions as well as written assessment. The reform in National Vocational Qualifications thus brings with it a reform of assessment procedures where assessors will be involved in identifying the competences achieved by learners through different procedures.

The Malta Qualifications Council, in providing accreditation to any certification provided by training institutions, will also be requiring a description of the assessment procedures adopted. The process of accreditation of training institutions will ensure that training institutions have in place adequate assessment structures. The accreditation process of each training course offered will ensure that the appropriate assessment tools are used for each and every training course being provided. The MQC will also be involved in helping accredited training institutions train official assessors as well as provide independent verifiers who will provide external quality assurance of any training provided.

3.4 Issuing Certification

Certification is obtained following the successful demonstration that competences and skills that had been identified have been achieved. In order to certify what learners have achieved and to help employers know exactly what job applicants are capable of doing, it is essential that certification reflects the skills and competences achieved.

It is being proposed that learners are provided with certification which refers to each and every MCVET that they have obtained.

For each MCVET, certificates need to include information such as:

1 The code of the MCVETs achieved;

2 The number of MCVETs achieved;

3 The sector in which the MCVETs have been achieved;

4 The NQF Level (1-5) at which the MCVETs have been achieved;

5 Whether the MCVET are in key competences, sectoral skills or underpinning knowledge;

6 A reference to where one can find the specific learning outcomes that have been achieved through the successful completion of the credit MCVETs obtained.

It will be possible for learners to collect certificates for the number of MCVETs that they accumulate through training in key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge either due to following a full-time course or through short separate courses. It will also be possible in the future, for individuals to present themselves for the assessment of competences in order to collect MCVETs through the accreditation of prior learning (RPL). **The ultimate aim of such a system is to have a workforce that is all certified and that both individuals and employers will be aware of the skills and competences that the workers possess. It also important to set up an ONGOING UP-SKILLING policy to ensure that learning is continuously updated.**
The successful completion of a full-time course or else the successful completion of a number of MCVETs will lead candidates to a certificate of training at a particular level. Once all the necessary MCVETs in the different sectors of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge have been satisfied, then institutions will issue certification (NQF Level 1 Certificate, NQF VET Level 1, NQF VET Level 2 etc.).

A European model of certification in vocational education is the Europass. A particular feature of the Europass is that it identifies the skills, competences and knowledge that an individual

has learnt as a consequence of a learning experience. Certification developed in tertiary education is the Diploma Supplement. This Diploma Supplement includes details about the course undertaken, the list of credits done as well as the individual student's performance. In both cases, these two tools have been developed in order to allow individuals to demonstrate what they know and are capable of doing. They also allow employers, as well as training institutions offering further study at higher education levels, to understand the type and level of competences an applicant has acquired.

Each certification issued has to be signed and authenticated by a representative of the training provider. Such document can then be presented as a whole or together with other credits accumulated in order to obtain certification at one of the levels on the NQF.

In the case of a training course leading to a complete qualification, accrediting institutions must provide certification that reflects the competences that an individual has developed through a whole course of studies. Such document (**secured by the Data Protection Act)** could include the following information:

- Personal details of the individual – name, I.D. card number, student reference no. if different, date of birth, address and nationality;
- Awarding institution;
- Qualification being awarded
- NQF Level of Qualification;
- The date of issue of qualification;
- Statement referring to recognition by the Malta Qualifications Council;
- Sectoral Field of Study;
- Relevant Career Areas;
- Total number of MCVETs in the qualification;
- The Distribution of MCVETs across key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge;
- The list of titles of MCVETs achieved and the credit value of each;
- The list of learning outcomes for the key competences as well as the learning outcomes of the occupational standards reached by the qualification;
- An annex with relevant website which employers may wish to consult in order to obtain further details about the qualification as well as the occupational standards on which the qualification is based.

The aim behind such process is to provide learners (and employers or other stakeholders) with certification which gives credit to what the individuals learnt and what they are capable of doing. Such documentation will help make workers employable and employers will be in a better position to understand the competences of candidates applying for work.

The certification being proposed for certifying Malta's vocational qualifications should not only show the NQF Level of VET Qualification achieved but also give information about the type of competences achieved. The formal certification, to be referred to as the ***Malta VET Record of Achievement,*** is to have a format that is similar to the Europass, but which will also include information about the level and number of MCVETs achieved. The Malta VET Record of Achievement will have the format of a booklet where learners will be able to add on to the certification of the competences achieved as part of their lifelong learning process. **It will also be onlineas an eRecord of Achievement.** On the successful completion of the requirements for a particular level, then an official Certificate will be issued to accredit the completion of the whole range of competences achieved. The MQC will work on developing templates of recommended formats for the *Malta VET Record of Achievement* for training institutions and learners to adopt and use.

The example given overleaf is one possible model that can be used when issuing certification. The Malta Qualifications Council will respect and recognize those certification systems which include all the required information which shows what individuals have demonstated that they are capable of doing and knowing.

Institution	MCAST
Qualification	**Diploma in Care**
Level [Reg.11[2] LN347]	NQF Level 3
Recognition by MQC	Yes
Career area	Care
Academic Year/s	2005-2007
No. of MCVETs	60
Occupational Field	Care of Older Persons
Occupational Standard	Care Worker [Technician 1]
Sectoral skills	Care Worker
Accrediting or Awarding Body	BTEC – UK or MCAST/BTEC or MCAST or MATSEC
Modes of Learning	Lectures, seminars, study, assessment, reading, practical work, work experience, workshop sessions, community work, etc.
Forms of Assessment	Written tests; seminars; practical work; work placement.

Fig. 12: Prototype template for the Malta VET Record of Achievement

Title of Study Unit	MCVET value	Knowledge	Skills	Competence
Equality, Diversity and Rights in Care Work				
Communications and Support Skills for Care Work				
Protecting Self and Others				
Applying Psychology				
Health Promotion				
Practical Caring Skills				
Lifespan Development				
Working with Groups				
Technology in Health and Care Services				

4.0 A Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Vocational Qualifications

Having discussed the main ideas and strategies to be incorporated in implementing the proposed National Vocational Qualifications Framework, the steps in which the whole process is to take place for each of the different key stakeholders must now be spelled out.

It is being proposed that in restructuring VET courses to reflect the European Qualifications Framework, the following ***roadmap*** is to be followed. This roadmap will govern ***every course/qualification at every NQF Level*** of vocational education and training that is to be provided in Malta and certified by MQC. Such roadmap ensures that all vocational training is industry driven and that training will reflect local training needs. It will provide guidance to key stakeholders on how to harmonize their existing training courses to fit in with the new proposed structure. The roadmap will also ensure that the necessary standards as well as the targets are achieved within the time frames set by the Malta Qualifications Council. The following sections will describe how each step is to be achieved by the different key stakeholders involved.

4.1 Roadmap for the Harmonisation of existing courses leading to Full Certification

The diagram overleaf provides a pictorial representation of the roadmap to the harmonisation of existing vocational courses leading to full certification. As can be seen, the starting point is industry which is involved in the process of occupational mapping leading to the setting of occupational standards in the different sectors. These will be represented by SECTOR SKILLS UNITS within MQC.

The Malta Qualifications Council is not involved in determining the content and type of training to be included in the harmonised training programmes.

The role of the Malta Qualifications Framework is that of setting the quality assurance standards on which it will provide accreditation to training institutions as well as individual courses. It is based on these two aspects – the occupational standards as well as the quality assurance standards - that training institutions are to adapt their existing training courses as part of the harmonization process. Once the training providers, who are already included in the register of accredited training providers, have designed the harmonised curriculum plan, then they apply to the Malta Qualifications Council for the recognition of their course and consequently of the certification that they issue. Having achieved this, they can offer the course to learners who, on successful completion, can be issued with certification. Following this roadmap means that training institutions will be able to offer certification which is transparent, clear and comparable in level. It also implies that the certification will have official recognition locally as well as within the European Education Space.

4.1.1 Input from key stakeholders in Industry

One of the major problems with any previous existing local qualifications is that they are often based on what training institutions believe are the needs within the labour market. They often do not necessarily reflect actual labour market needs. Effective reform for a framework of vocational education and training requires that **qualifications be based on real, existing jobs or occupations in the short and medium terms perspectives.** This can only be achieved through the active participation of key players within the labour market. It is thus essential to have on board key players, such as employers, unions, trainers, student bodies etc. in the whole process of identifying key competences for the various jobs within the different sector skills and to set national sectoral standards on which qualifications are to be based;

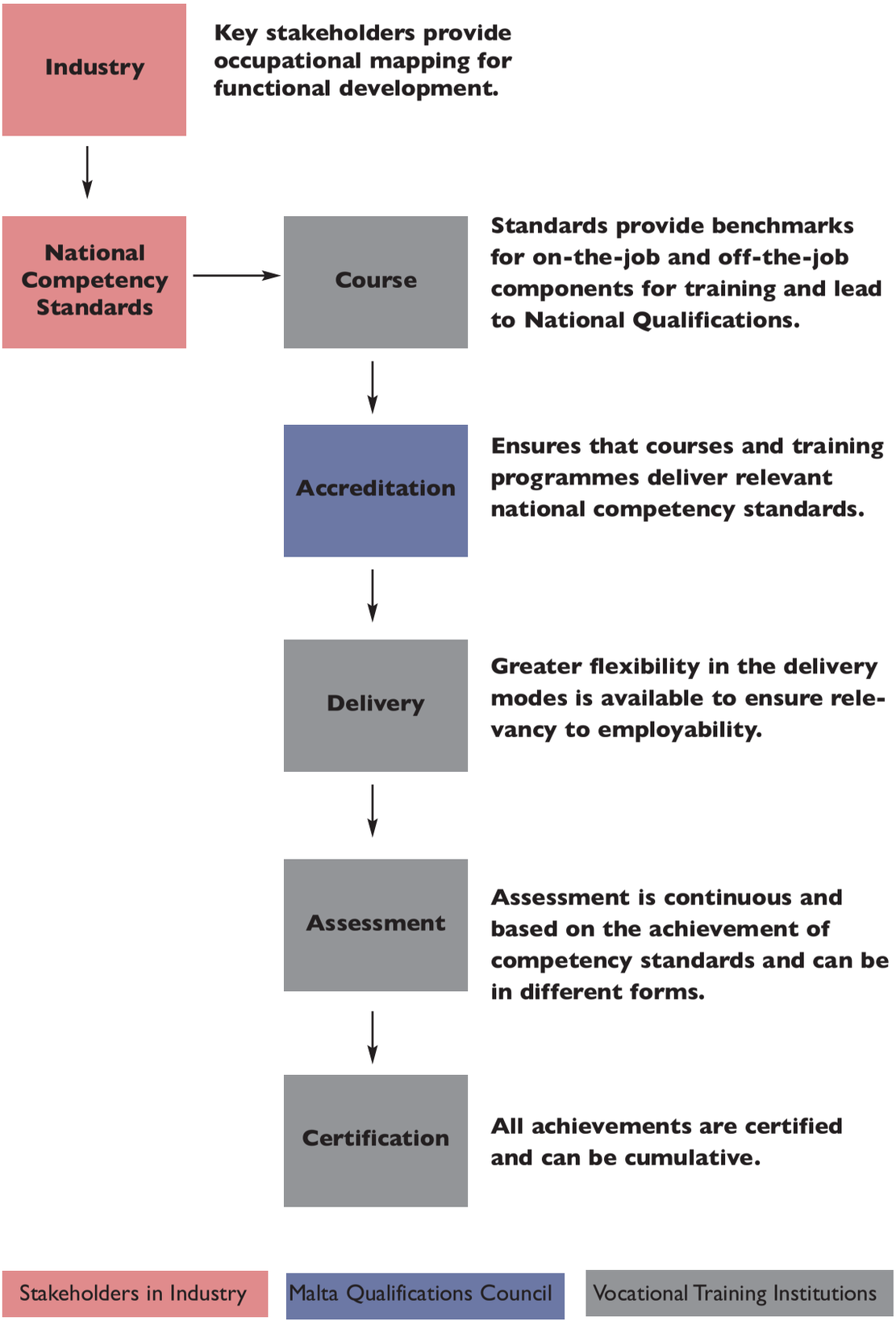


Fig. 13: Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Courses leading to Full Certification

All vocational qualifications in Malta need to be industry and demand driven. Consequently, Industry has to be involved in the first step in the process of reorganisation. It is the Industry in collaboration with the relevant key stakeholders such as unions, professional associations and training providers, who are to work together in order to identify the competences that have to be achieved by workers in the different jobs within the different sectors. They will be involved in an exercise of occupational analysis and mapping. Based on the type and demand of the competences identified, the level of qualification (NQF Level 1-5) is then decided upon.

There are various sectoral fields. The fields being suggested include:

- Agribusiness
- Art and Design
- Arts and Social Sciences
- Business, Administration and Management
- Care
- Communication and Media
- Computing and Information Technology
- Construction
- Education
- Emergency and Security Services
- Entertainment
- Engineering
- Hairdressing and Beauty Services
- Hospitality
- Land and Sea based Industries
- Manufacturing
- Performing Arts
- Pyrotechnics
- Retail and Distribution
- Science and Mathematics
- Sport and Leisure
- Transport

Groups for each of these sectors are to be set up with the responsibility of setting the standards of competences which each type of job identified within the sector requires. Based on the level of these competences, occupational standards are set and the level of qualification is also determined.

An important aspect of VET Qualifications in Malta will be the setting up of Sectoral Skills Units within the Malta Qualifications Council in order to create qualifications frameworks for the various sectors of our economy.

This is a mammoth task which MQC is planning to embark upon in the fourth quarter of 2007. The purpose of this strategy is to empower Industry to take a pivotal role in the strategic design of our vocational qualifications and training. Such a role cannot be fulfilled unless another project is launched to provide occupational standards to VET qualifications.

Writing occupational standards and managing Sector Skills Units within MQC will be two major tasks in the months and years ahead. It is MQC's policy to ensure that VET qualifications in Malta not only address specific needs within Industry but that the content of every course reflects Malta's specific characteristics. It is in this sense that MQC wants to build the capacities of people within the various sectors so that they themselves will be able to provide the guiding principles upon which VET qualifications should be based, both in terms of content and more importantly in terms of the acquisition of practical skills through on-the-job training.

MQC will be discussing how people from sectors as described in the Table above can be selected and organized into associations or councils so that Sectoral Qualifications will be defined and aligned with the National Qualifications Framework within the next few years.

Malta stands to gain from such a process. If we are valuing ALL learning, then it is obvious that no learning can be disregarded. Furthermore, all learning that has a market value must be part of an NQF that acknowledges it. Whether it is dance or theatre, pottery or skydiving, snorkelling or diving…all learning must find its niche in Malta's National Qualifications Framework through specific Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks.

4.1.2 National Competency Standards

The work in occupational analysis and mapping emerging from Industry leads to the establishment of National Competency Standards for the different occupations within the labour market. They will serve as the standards that any vocational education and training provider needs to aim for to successfully train people for the particular jobs. These occupational standards will thus be the national benchmarks for Malta and will be matched to the National Qualifications Framework as part of the process. This exercise will not only set standards for workers in Malta, but will also provide certification which can be easily understood and translated by employers abroad, thus promoting workforce mobility.

These National Competency Standards will be the benchmarks that each and every training institution would have to use in designing its courses. They will thus provide not only harmonization, but also comparability between the quality and level of training provided in the same area by different training providers.

National Competency Standards are to reflect labour market needs and consequently also changes within the local economy. This requires that occupational standards are periodically reviewed and updated, with new occupations added whilst others removed depending on the changes within the labour market.

4.1.3 Course Development

Training providers will have to fulfill the requirements of the key competences and the occupational standards as set by the Malta Qualifications Council. They will also have to respect the balance between key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge that have been specified in this document. Training providers will thus have to divide the competences set for a particular job in a sector into MCVET. In working out the number of MCVET to allocate, the equivalent of competences that can be learnt within 25 hours of learning have to be kept in mind. Following the allocation of the various MCVET to the various areas of key competences,sectorial skills and underpinning knowledge, course descriptions for each and every component of MCVET need to be drawn up.

Courses leading to a qualification at any of the levels need to provide details about the training provided. In order to obtain recognition from MQC, course descriptions need to follow standards that indicate that they have adhered to the guidelines set by the MQC. Courses leading to qualifications as stated in the National Qualifications Framework must provide the following information prior to the start of the course.

- Institution providing Training;
- Institution providing Certification;
- Qualification to be achieved on successful completion of the course;
- Level of Qualification offered;
- Indication of whether the qualification has recognition;
- The academic year(s) during which the course is to be offered;
- The sectoral field of the qualification;
- The career area of the qualification;
- Which occupational standards the course targets (and which competences have to be achieved);
- The distribution of credits in terms of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge;
- The titles and MCVET value of the different credits to be followed;
- The distribution of learning modes (including on-the-job learning) within the course; and
- The range of methods of assessment used within the course.

The diagram below gives an example of how a course description can be designed for presentation to MQC for accreditation.

Curriculum Plan

Title of Study Unit	MCVET value	Type of MCVET (KC, SS or UK)	Semester/term of delivery
Equality, Diversity and Rights in Care Work			
Communications and Support Skills for Care Work			
Protecting Self and Others			
Applying Psychology			
Health Promotion			
Practical Caring Skills			
Lifespan Development			
Working with Groups			
Technology in Health and Care Services			
Total Number of MCVETs	**60**		

Fig. 14: Prototype Template of Curriculum Plan that can be presented to MQC for Accreditation

Institution	MCAST
Qualification	Diploma in Care
Level [Reg.11[2] LN347]	NQF Level 3
Recognition by MQC	Yes
Career area	Care
Academic Year	2006-2007
No. of MCVETs	60
Occupational Field	Care of Older Persons
Occupational Standard	Care Worker [Technician 1]
Sectoral skills	Care Worker
Accrediting an Awarding Body	BTEC – UK or MCAST/BTEC or MCAST or MATSEC
Competences achieved	This section is to include the list of competences related to the occupation for which the course prepares candidate.
Modes of Learning	Lectures, seminars, study, assessment, reading, practical work, work experience, workshop sessions, community work, etc.
Forms of Assessment	Written tests; seminars; practical work; work placements, etc.

Institutions will also need to provide information for each and every MCVET that they offer within the course through official course descriptions. Credit descriptions need to have specific features. They need to show the type of knowledge, the NQF Level, as well as the number of MCVETs given[26]. But most importantly, the course description needs to identify the competences that will be developed as a consequence of the learning experience being provided. Course descriptions for the individual MCVET that make up the area must be presented to MQC for consideration together with the curriculum plan.

26 Detailed information about information on MCVETs offered is given in the section describing the harmonisation of courses offering partial certification.

Checklist for Course Harmonisation

In order to ensure that your harmonised course has all the required standards of MQC read through the following list and check that all are ticked:

- ☐ Course has title and qualification level to be awarded;
- ☐ Course description is available;
- ☐ Course uses the MCVET system;
- ☐ Course has the required number of MCVETs in Key Competences, Sectoral Skills and Underpinning Knowledge;
- ☐ Distribution of learning components/modes is specified in course description;
- ☐ Course descriptions for the individual MCVETs are available and written in terms of learning outcomes;
- ☐ Key course tutors'/academic level identified;
- ☐ Main modes of assessment identified;
- ☐ Course has been processed and approved by institution internal structures;
- ☐ Internal and external quality assurance of course planned.

Fig. 15: Checklist for training institutions to ensure that their harmonisation of curriculum plan takes in account all aspects prior to applying for accreditation from the MQC

4.1.4 Accreditation

The issue of accreditation of training institutions has already been discussed in the previous section. This section will consider in detail the accreditation of the courses offered by training institutions. Having the status of an accredited training institution with the MQC does not automatically imply that all courses offered by the institution will be recognised by the MQC. Accredited training institutions seeking to obtain recognition for the courses that they offer, are to present the course descriptions as well as fulfil the quality assurance standards set by the MQC.

The process being proposed is the following:

1. The training institution wanting to offer a training course is to present an application to the MQC; and
2. This application is to include details about the institution, as well as ensure that it is included within MQC's register of accredited training institutions.

The following information should be provided by training institutions requesting recognition:

1. Description of the course structure as specified in section 4.1.3 as well as all the course descriptions for each and every MCVET making up the course, as well as the different learning components (traditional learning, work periods etc.);
2. Indication of the knowledge capacity within the institution through providing a list of the trainers involved and their C.V.s reflecting their knowledge and work experience in the field of study;
3. A description of the internal quality assurance measures that would ensure quality service during the course of studies;
4. A description of how external quality assurance is to be sought. This may be through the external verifiers within MQC or else other experts which MQC may consider to satisfy the required standards of expertise;
5. A description of the method of assessment, whether the institution will be using internal accredited assessors or else the service of external accredited bodies.

Each course application will be considered individually and based on the details provided as well as possible inspection visits from MQC staff. MQC will also provide accreditation to the course offered for a stipulated period of years (3 to 5 years). MQC reserves the right to send its experts to verify course quality at any time during the delivery of training programmes in order to ensure that the standards agreed upon are being adhered to systematically.

4.1.5 Delivery of Course

The Malta Qualifications Council does not intend to impose any modes of learning. However, due to the nature of the competences involved, it strongly recommends the inclusion of work-related training which involves direct exposure to the work environment that students are being prepared for. In addition, MQC also encourages the use of new methods and technologies such as ICT in promoting more effective and more client oriented training. Details about the modes of learning and the distribution of direct teaching and work placements need to be indicated when training providers submit their course description for recognition by the Malta Qualifications Council.

4.1.6 Assessment and Certification

The issue of assessment has already been dealt with in the previous section. Training providers need to indicate the type of assessment used for each and every MCVET provided. The Malta Qualifications Council encourages the use of a variety of assessment modes, ranging from written tests to on-the-job competences. Training providers need to apply assessment procedures that ensure standardisation and fair assessment of the individuals' competences. External Quality Assurance will ensure that standards agreed upon are being incorporated within the assessment procedures used by training providers.

Training institutions will have the option to decide on the main methods of assessment. They may either opt to develop their own assessment tools through a quality assurance structure which ensures standards or offer certification themselves. They may also opt to present their candidates for assessment by Local Awarding Bodies which may provide the assessment of competences at particular NQF Levels or in occupational areas. In both cases, it is necessary that the Awarding Body providing assessment is accredited with the Malta Qualifications Council. Once a learner has successfully completed the vocational course s/he will be issued with a certificate[27].

All these processes would have to be followed in the harmonization process of the existing vocational courses leading to full certification. In order to provide further guidance to the process the steps that need to be undertaken have been summarized in the table overleaf.

---

[27] Certification has to follow guidelines outlined in section 3.4

Step	Action
1	Decide the NQF Level of Qualification (1-5) of your course
2	Review existing course to identify areas of Key Competences, Sectoral Skills and Underpinning Knowledge;
3	Divide existing course in number of MCVETs, each with course title
4	Identify excess/under-represented MCVET in each of the Key Competences, Sectoral Skills and Underpinning Knowledge
5	Draw up curriculum plan indicating: • Title of qualification; • Level of qualification; • Institution issuing certification; • Sector and career area of qualification; • Duration of course and workload; • Conditions for access; • Distribution of learning modes (work/direct teaching etc.); • Main modes of assessment; • Titles of and number of MCVETs for each of Key Competences, Sectoral Skills and Underpinning Knowledge; • Distribution of MCVETs within institution's semesters/terms
6	Draw up course description in terms of learning outcomes. Course description is to include: • Title of Course; • Institution issuing MCVETs; • Level of MCVETs; • Sectoral Field; • Career Area; • Mode of Study; • Competences achieved; • Mode of Assessment; • Proposed academic/experience background of tutors
7	Course proposed needs to go through the internal quality assurance structures within the institution. This involves ensuring that: • Remit of study is within institution's field of training; • Course content proposed is adequate by having it reviewed by a number of experts in the field within institution; • Ensuring that course obtains formal approval within institution; • Ensuring that proposed course is in line with MQC guidelines; • External quality assurance of course is planned; • Space/administrative/academic capacities to deliver course exists; • Course reviewed possibly by employers for validity of training programme
8	Course is submitted to MQC with all details for recognition. Information to include: • Proposed title of course, level, sectoral field and career area; • Course description; • Individual MCVET descriptions; • Description of quality assurance structures to be used
9	MQC's recognition of course

Fig. 16: Main Steps for the Harmonisation of existing courses leading to Full Certification

4.2 Harmonisation of Short Courses leading to Partial Certification

The system being proposed also allows the partial certification of Short Courses which may include only a number of MCVETs. It is essential for such courses to be harmonised so that learners would be able to accumulate credits as part of their lifelong learning path. Training providers must apply for accreditation by MQC of all Short Courses. The difference between the harmonisation processes of Short Courses from that of courses leading to full certification is that training providers do not need to justify (with MQC) that they are providing a balance between the three strands of key competences, sectoral skills and underpinning knowledge.

The diagram below represents the path for harmonisation adapted to Short Courses (similar to that of full-time courses cfr. pg 44)

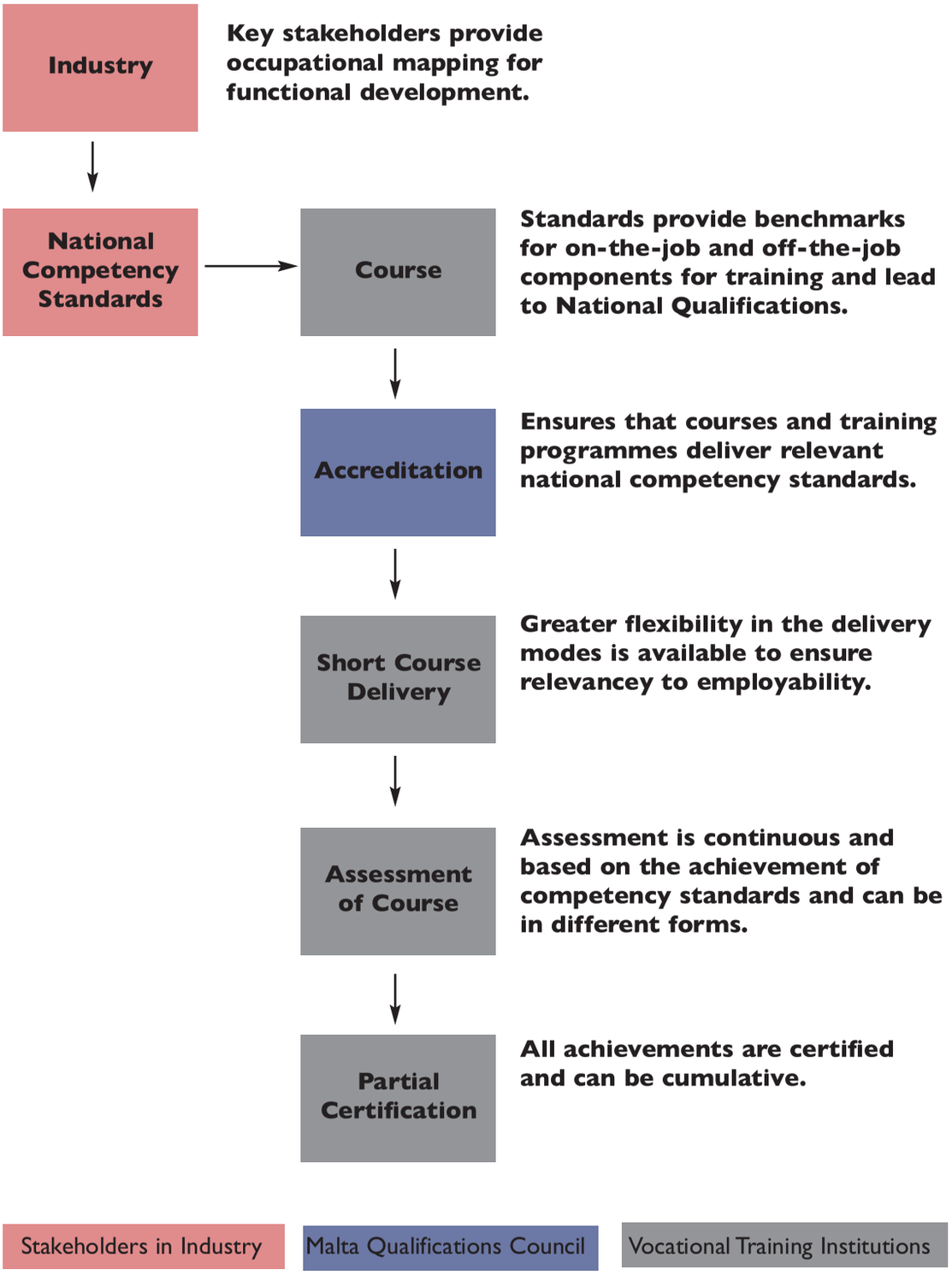


Fig. 17: Roadmap for the Harmonisation of Short Courses leading to Partial Certification

In the harmonisation of short courses, training providers have to follow a similar procedure to that for courses leading to full certification. The difference lies in that instead of planning for the completion of 60 MCVETs, all that they need to do is to decide (based on the definition of the MCVET) the number of MCVETs that should be awarded to the short course and to draw up the course description in line with the VET credit system. Course descriptions should include detailed information about the training being provided as shown hereunder:

- The title of the MCVET
- The institution providing certification of MCVET
- The MCVET value of the course
- The NQF Level (1-5) of the MCVET
- Whether the MCVET is recognized by the MQC
- The sectoral fields in which the MCVET is offered
- An indication of type of study (Key Competences/Sectoral Skills/Underpinning Knowledge)
- The academic year(s) when MCVET is to be offered
- The learning outcomes of the MCVET
- The modes of learning to be adopted
- The modes of assessment of the MCVET.

The diagram below shows a prototype template for an MCVET course description which can be adopted by training providers applying for the accreditation of their Short Courses leading to partial certification.

Title of MCVET	Title of Course
Institution Providing Service	VET Institution/Organisation
MCVET value	No. of credits
NQF Level	NQF Levels 1-5
Recognition by MQC	Yes/No
Sectoral Field	One of the fields listed by MQC
Career Area	One of the job national standards set by MQC
Type of Study	Key Competences/Sectoral Skills/Underpinning Knowledge
Academic Year	Year is of study
Learning Modes	Teaching/tutorial/work experience/e-learning etc.
Learning Outcomes	By the end of the credit learners will be able to: • Competence 1 • Competence 2 etc.
Assessment Modes	Assessment is to be through: • Direct observation; • Written test; • Oral presentation etc.

Figure 18: Prototype template for course descriptions of MCVET offered

Training providers intending to harmonize their Short Courses to the proposed National Vocational Qualifications need to undergo a whole process of adaptation of their existing courses to the proposed system.

In order to help training providers understand the steps involved in such process, a summary of the process has been drawn up as seen in diagram 19.

Step	Action
1	Consider the content/skills included in the existing training course
2	Divide the course into a number of components which form coherent credits of learning
3	Reflect on how many MCVETs (using definition of MCVET in doc ument) a component of study is worth;
4	Identify the NQF Level (1-5) at which this MCVET should be
5	Identify the learning outcomes to be included in the course description
6	Identify the modes of learning – work experience, job-coaching, tutorials, direct teaching etc. to be used in this credit
7	Identify tutor(s) responsible (or academic/experience back-ground) for the delivery/coordination of the course
8	Identify the modes of assessment to be used in credit
9	Identify the internal and external quality assurance procedures to be used
10	Assign title and code to the credit
11	Draw up details in template form for MCVET course description
12	Present the MCVET for internal approval if part of whole qualification
13	Present the MCVET credit to MQC for accreditation in the case of short courses

Fig. 19: Main steps for the Harmonisation of existing courses leading to Full Certification

All the steps outlined need to be undertaken prior to submitting courses for accreditation by MQC. The following checklist can serve to help training providers ensure that they have gone through the whole harmonization process.

Checklist for MCVET Credits

In order to ensure that your restructured MCVET has all the required standards of MQC read through the following list and check that all areas are adequately addressed:

- ☐ Credit has title;
- ☐ Credit has code assigned to it:
- ☐ Number of MCVETs awarded for credit is specified;
- ☐ Course description is available and is described in learning out-comes;
- ☐ Learning modes used are specified in course description;
- ☐ Key course tutors/academic level identified;
- ☐ Main modes of assessment specified;
- ☐ Course has been processed and approved by institution internal structures;
- ☐ Internal and external quality assurance of course planned.

Fig. 20: Checklist for training institutions to ensure that they have taken all aspects in consideration prior to applying for accreditation of their course descriptions for MCVET from MQC.

4.3 Action Plan for the implementation of NQF and VET Qualifications

This document has so far described the mechanisms and the processes involved in implementing a National Vocational Qualifications Framework for Malta. A further detail to be included in this document involves a proposed action plan for the implementation process, with possible target dates for the consultation and harmonization process to begin. The action plan below is a more elaborated version of that proposed in the first policy document on the National Qualifications Framework. It includes the stages which need to be taken by the various key stakeholders within the time frames set.

Target Date	Action	Key stakeholders involved
Q1 2007	Preparation of working documents on the NQF and the provision of vocational education in Malta	MQC, vocational sector, higher education, compulsory education providers, private training institutions, employers' bodies, professional bodies, student bodies, trade unions, ETC, etc.
Q2 2007	Publication and consultation of working documents	MQC, vocational sector, higher education, compulsory education providers, private training institutions, employers' bodies, professional bodies, student bodies, trade unions, ETC, etc.
Q2 2007	Finalisation of the working documents on the NQF, on VET in Malta's NQF and on Quality Assurance in VET	MQC
END OF CONSULTATION PROCESS ON NQF		
Q2/3 2007	Consultation on working documents	MQC
Q2/3 2007	Alignment exercise by public institutions where qualifications are linked to the NQF	Vocational sector, higher education, compulsory education providers, private training institutions
Q4 2007	Application by institutions for accreditation	Vocational sector, private training institutions
Q4 2007	Publication of courses with NQF levels indicated	MQC, vocational sector, higher education, compulsory education providers, private training institutions
Q4 2007	Publication of courses with NQF level indicated on MQC website	MQC
Q1 2008	ETC and other public entities to start indicating qualifications level on job availability	MQC, ETC
Q2 2008	Publication of register of accredited training institutions on MQC website	MQC
START OF ACCREDITATION PROCESS		

Fig. 21: Action plan for the implementation of the National Framework Qualifications Q1, 2007 to Q2, 2008

The National Vocational Qualifications cannot be successfully implemented without the active participation of the key stakeholders in the whole implementation process. All key players must provide constructive feedback and practical suggestions during the consultation process so that these may be included in the final document. It is also the duty of all education and training providers to take the necessary actions to discuss and fine-tune the guidelines set by the MQC so that our future generations will be provided with quality standard qualifications that have currency across Europe and beyond.

4.4 Conclusion

This draft policy document is intended as guidelines to help all vocational education and training institutions to harmonize their courses to the newly proposed National Qualifications Framework. It also allows a degree of flexibility to training providers without compromising quality standards. It may seem a complicated and difficult road to follow to arrive at a fully implemented system.

However, it also offers a great opportunity to training providers wishing to provide their own certification which is recognised in Malta and across Europe. It will also be the vehicle in promoting quality standards across all occupations in Malta leading to a real knowledge-based society and to the much desired social cohesion and sustained economic growth.

This policy document is also an attempt to establish VET Qualifications which are home grown in terms of design, accreditation, quality assurance and certification. Benchmarking is a vital exercise to ensure that standards are kept at an international level and that certification is widely recognized internationally.

However, education and training carries with it a cost.

It is therefore in Malta's interest to ensure that VET qualifications (like their counterpart in Higher Education) have a distinctive brand which is Malta and that such brand means **attractiveness** (to local and international learners and investors), **cost-effectiveness** (money spent on the administration of qualifications is regenerated in our economy) and **quality** (Malta's VET standards are benchmarked against excellence in terms of knowledge, skills and competences).

The third policy document will focus on quality assurance and how such process will guarantee that Malta's NQF and VET system are of very high quality in terms of output and employability.

Appendix 1

The development of Vocational Education in Malta: a quick overview

Traces of some form of technical education in Malta go back to as early as the 14th century, to 1854[28]. It mainly involved training in skills and craftwork related to the building trade, cabinet and furniture making, silver work etc. There was also a school of navigation set up to provide a supply of skilled shipbuilding[29].

Technical classes for boys and girls at primary level were introduced on the initiative of the Director of Education at the time, Canon Pullicino. He also included commerce, design, navigation and applied mathematics in the Lyceum. However, in the nineteenth century, technical education was not considered important with technical education being provided mainly by the Dockyard School.

The Keenan report in the 1880s recommended the development of vocational education. The then Director of Education, Savona, appointed in 1880, implemented these recommendations in schools. The first state school dedicated to technical instruction, the 'Technical and Manual School' opened its doors at Valletta in 1893. It catered for young apprentices in carpentry, joinery, carving and stuccowork. However, attendance at this school was low and it was eventually closed down in 1906.

A technical school was opened in 1930 at Mriehel. The school offered a bi-annual four year course in woodwork, metal work and agriculture to boys who were 12 years or older. By 1934, the syllabi were raised to City and Guilds levels and students qualified as teachers of hand- craft. By 1939, the school had a population of 150 students and the foundations for a senior technical school to cater for 300 boys were laid at Corradino.

Following the end of the Second World War, Brennan, the then Director of Education, strengthened the provision of technical education. The Mriehel School was also made available to adults in the evening. The Industrial Training Act[30] in 1952 provided regulation of the employment and training of apprentices. It placed a new responsibility on employers to invest in the training of their workers. The Engineering Training Workshop at Hamrun was converted into another technical school and organised evening courses in skilled and semi-skilled trades. Brennan opened 16 centres for woodwork theory and practice. His efforts were successful in that more students applied to enter these technical schools. However, the dropout rate was very high and very few actually completed their training.

The publication of the White Paper for Future British Defence Policies by the British Government in 1957 led to the reduction in its defence investments[31]. The government realised that it needed to develop technical education. The technical school in Corradino was opened, followed by another secondary technical school for girls in Hamrun. The number of students following technical education increased steadily[32].

Following the success with secondary technical education, the government planned to cater for technical education at a higher level. Funds were requested from the United Nations and these were approved in 1960. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) became fully operational in 1966. It offered courses in the areas of Hotel Administration, Commerce and Business Studies, and Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. It was eventually closed down and transformed into a 'New' University in 1977.

---

28 Sultana R., 1992,

29 ibid.

30

31 Sultana, R., 1992, Education and National Development: Historical and critical perspectives on Vocational schooling in Malta, Malta: Mireva Publications

32 ibid.

Economic challenges in Malta during the 1970s and international ideas on education led to restructuring of the compulsory educational system. Trade schools were set up with 75% of the time allocated to vocational skills for students of ages 14-16 and technical institutes were consolidated[33].

The late 1990s and early 2000 have seen a gradual dismantling of trade schools for 13-16 year olds and the strengthening of vocational education at post-secondary level. In 1999, an expert in vocational and educational training was sent to Malta from the European Training Foundation (ETF). A report[34] was prepared at the request of the European Commission which provided a review of six countries' national vocational education and training systems and which indicated the key challenges that they were facing. This report highlighted how vocational education and training in Malta was not a viable alternative route to that of tertiary education. It proposed the setting up of a new institution which would bring together the vocational institutions already offering training but which were then separate entities. The MCAST was consequently re-established in 2001 to bring together the various existing vocational education institutions as recommended. The current trend is to have a general education up to compulsory age with an option to follow vocational courses at post-secondary level.

The current MCAST[35] today works with a mission statement 'to provide universally accessible vocational and professional education and training with an international dimension, responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy'. It houses nine institutes. Courses offered vary in the type of study as well as training. Not only is there a difference in the level of study, but also in the work experience offered. Some courses form part of apprenticeship schemes while others have different forms of work placements or exposure. The institutes include:

- ***Agribusiness***[36]: This institute offers courses related to agriculture and animal husbandry. It offers courses at Foundation level, BTEC-First Diploma and BTEC National Certificate. Currently 4 courses are offered;

- ***Art and Design***[37]: This institute offers training in art and design, offering courses from basic level at certificate level or MCAST access course which prepares students for higher level courses within the same institute. Courses offered range from a BTEC-First Diploma in printing or in art and design, as well as a BTEC-Higher National Diploma in the same areas. There are currently 7 courses offered;

- ***Building and Construction Engineering***[38]: This institute offers training in trades related to the construction industry. Courses are offered in skills areas such as painting and decorating, plastering, tile laying, air-conditioning, masonry, and construction. These are offered at different levels ranging from Foundation courses which require no qualifications, to Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma and National Diploma. Currently 16 courses are being offered;

- ***Electrical and Electronics Engineering***[39]: This institute offers courses related to electronics, ranging from electrical installations, industrial electronics, computer engineering to electronic engineering. These courses are offered at different levels from Foundation Course, MCAST Certificate and Diploma, to MCAST-BTEC National Diploma. There are currently 7 courses being offered;

- ***Business and Commerce***[40]: This institute offers courses in areas related to business such as insurance, retail, administrative and secretarial studies, as well as applied science. Courses are also offered at different levels, ranging from the MCAST Foundation Certificate to BTEC National Certificate, National Diploma and Higher National Diploma. There are currently 12 courses being offered;

---

33 Zammit Mangion, 1992, Education in Malta, Malta: Studia Editions

34 ETF, 1999, An overview of Vocational Education and Training: Malta.

35 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/

36 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_agribusiness.asp

37 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_artanddesign.asp

38 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_buildingandconstructionengineering.asp

39 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_electricalandelectronicsengineering.asp

40 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_businessandcommerce.asp

- ***Community Services***[41]: This institute offers training in the service related sector. Courses offered are mainly in the hairdressing and beauty sector, child-care services, as well as sport and leisure. Courses are offered at different levels ranging from BTEC and ITEC Foundation Certificate and First Diploma to National Diploma in the different areas of study. There are currently 15 courses being offered;

- ***Mechanical Engineering***[42]; This institute offers training in the area of mechanical engineering, motor vehicle engineering, aerospace as well as motor vehicle repairs. Most of the certification offered is at City and Guilds, but there are also other courses at Certificate level leading to an MCAST Certificate. Currently 14 courses are being offered;

- ***Information and Communication Technology***[43]***:*** This institute offers training in the area of ICT. Courses are offered from a very basic level such as Foundation Certificate to higher levels like MCAST-BTEC First Diploma, National Diploma and Higher National Diploma in software development and/or ICT systems support. There are currently 5 courses being offered;

- ***Maritime Institute***[44]; This institute offers training to those who are interested in taking up a career in the maritime sector, whether within the Armed Forces or as an officer sailing ships. The institute offers courses in Navigational Watch, Engineering Watch, Chief Mate, Second Engineer, Master Mariner, Chief Engineer as well as Probationary Cadet. Overall, there are currently 7 courses offered in total. Certification is issued by the institution and one can proceed from one course to another, depending on the ambition of job one has.

MCAST also has its Gozo Centre[45] where it offers a range of courses. It offers some of the courses that are also provided by the mainland institutes, thus eliminating the need for students from Gozo to travel to Malta for their studies. This year[46], the Gozo Centre is offering 13 courses in total. Three courses are at Foundation Certificate level, one that is general and the other two in retailing and care. Six courses are at Level 2: MCAST Certificate in electrical installation; MCAST-BTEC First Diploma level for I.T. practitioners; City and Guilds in mechanical engineering; and MCAST-BTEC First Diploma in electronics, care and construction. There is also one MCAST Certificate in administrative and secretarial studies at level 3, an MCAST-BTEC National Diploma also at Level 3. There are at Level 4 an Accounting Technician Certificate and a Diploma in financial services.

There is a common trend across all institutes – that of also offering a range of courses in their areas on a part-time basis in the evening. This allows adults interested in professional development to further develop and enhance their skills. They give the opportunity to people to either retrain or increase their employability.

Besides MCAST, the Institute of Tourism Studies[47] (ITS) provides tertiary, higher and vocational education in the field of Tourism. ITS seeks to identify and monitor customer needs and satisfaction and is responsible for providing the Hospitality Industry with personnel trained to international standards. Courses are offered at different levels, ranging from Foundation Level, to Certificate, Diploma, and Higher Diploma. They also offer apprenticeships under the ESTS programme. There is training offered in a variety of services within the tourism sector, these ranging from food preparation, food and beverage, restaurant services, accommodation, hotel operations, travel agency to Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Vocational courses are also offered by the Institute of Conservation and Management of Cultural Heritage[48] (ICMCH) which promotes and co-ordinates the pursuit of interdisciplinary training at professional, technical and craftsman levels in all aspects of conservation, restoration

41 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_communityservices.asp

42 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_mechanicalengineering.asp

43 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_informationandcommunicationtechnology.asp

44 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_maritimeinstitute.asp

45 http://www.mcast.edu.mt/institutes_gozocentre, p.22

46 MCAST, (2006) MCAST Prospectus

47 http://www.its.edu.mt/

48 http://www.heritagemalta.org/icmch/index.html

and management of cultural heritage. ICMCH makes use of Heritage Malta's Conservation Division's extensive facilities, providing courses leading to degrees conferred by the University of Malta as well as certificates awarded by the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.

In addition, one also finds other courses being offered by both government and private entities, mainly on part-time basis and as evening courses within the adult education sector. Government entities such as the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) as well as the Department of Adult and Further Education at the Education Division, offer a range of evening courses in both general and vocational training. The ETC[49] anticipates and responds to the changing economic and social environment in Malta and provides training to those adults looking for work. The type of training offered varies and ranges from training in Basic Skills competences, Management and Development, ECDL, Hospitality, IT, Technical areas, Food Handling, and in a number of trades[50]. Courses are run at the ETC Skills Centre in Hal Far, the ETC Training Centre in Valletta, as well as at other approved venues made available by the Education Division and private organisations. In Gozo, courses are delivered at the ETC Employment and Training Centre in Mgarr Road, Xewkija. The ETC also has the Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE)[51] aimed for mature adults, highly motivated to pursue further studies. Training courses vary in length and level and certification is offered by the ETC. This certification has value with employers but does not have accreditation.

The Department for Further Studies and Adult Education[52] within the Education Division is responsible for the provision of adult education. The Adult Education and Evening Courses Section within this department provides various services including vocational, academic, craft as well as leisure oriented courses in drama, music and art. The section also provides centres for basic literacy for adults and runs a day centre, the Adult Education Centre, which also provides courses in a number of subjects at secondary level particularly aimed at returnees. The academic courses lead students to academic qualifications such as SEC and Matriculation Certificate, the technical courses lead to a City and Guilds certification, while the rest of the courses offer a certificate of attendance.

The institutions reviewed so far consist of the major providers of vocational education and training in Malta. However, one also finds a number of private training providers offering training in a range of sectors such as Beauty and Aesthetics, ICT, Management among others. These courses are followed either as part of initial vocational training or else as continual professional development during one's working life within a lifelong learning approach. A number of these institutions offer training leading to certification by foreign institutions. Other providers do not provide certification and often just issue a certificate of attendance or prepare their students for standard examinations (SEC, City and Guilds, etc.) leading to certification. In addition, there are also other institutions such as trade unions, non-governmental organisations etc. which offer training to specific groups, often vulnerable groups, in different areas of studies.

The list of providers and the type of training offered is very long. Some have the legal status to provide certification. Others act as representatives of foreign institutions which enable them to offer certification for the training offered. Others offer training but no certification. There is little harmonization which often does not enable learners the opportunity to show employers their new acquired competences. This is the aim of this document: to develop a structure for National Vocational Qualifications which would enable all training institutions to provide certification accredited by the MQC. It will also enable learners to obtain credit for their learning, whatever the context and allow them to work towards higher levels within the qualifications framework.

49 http://www.etc.gov.mt/

50 http://www.etc.gov.mt/course/course_list.

51 http://www.etc.gov.mt/site/page.aspx?pageid=2014

52 http://www.education.gov.mt/edu/edu_06.htm

Appendix 2: International Developments in Vocational Education Frameworks

Examples of good structures can be identified in a number of countries. A Vocational Qualifications system enables employers and employees to demonstrate competence in the workplace. Vocational qualifications relevant to the engineering construction industry are National Vocational Qualifications - NVQs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Another example is the Scottish Vocational Qualifications - SVQs in Scotland. There has also been work on the European Credits in Vocational Education – the ECVET.

2.1 The Scottish Vocational Qualifications- SVQs[53]:

Scotland has developed the Scottish Vocational Qualifications system - the SVQ. The SVQ is a certificate available to people of all ages. It was developed, accredited and awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) in response to the need for certification of the different existing occupations in Scotland.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications are based on standards of competence that describe a candidate's ability to work in real conditions. Possessing an SVQ is a confirmation that an individual is competent at the standards on which the SVQ is based. These standards of competence are developed by Sector Skills Councils on behalf of Industry and consequently reflect actual competences needed to carry out specific jobs.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are nationally recognised, work-based qualifications designed to provide learning and development paths for employees within their current jobs.

SVQ training credits employees for the skills and knowledge that they have already gained in their jobs, and also provides a framework through which they can gain the extra skills and knowledge they need to obtain the SVQ and consequently to progress in the future.

There are five levels of SVQ, whose definitions are as follows:

Level 1	basic, routine and repetitive work skills;
Level 2	broad range of skills including non-routine activities and individual responsibility;
Level 3	supervisory skills;
Level 4	management skills;
Level 5	senior management skills.

SVQs gauge one's occupational ability by judging one's performance at work. The qualification also includes some oral and written questioning. Qualification is based on National Standards which are drawn up by people from industry, commerce and education. It is a means of letting employers know how much their workforce is confident, capable and committed to their work.

Standards in SVQs are divided into units, each of which covers some part of the work involved in the work area. Units are then broken down into elements which describe specific tasks usually performed. Performance criteria describe the level of competence to be achieved[54].

The User Guide[55] on SVQs describes in detail how employers can apply and provide certification to their employees. SVQs can be used by employers to certify people within their workforce. Employers in Scotland can thus apply to the SQA to offer SVQs. They can do this by satisfying SQA criteria and obtain initial approval where they show that the organisation

53 http://www.sqa.org.uk/

54 Scottish Qualifications Authority, 2003, SVQs User Guide

55 ibid.

has processes involving:

- Management of information;
- Management of resources;
- Management of staff involved in assessing and verifying internal assessment;
- Management, induction, support and guidance of candidates;
- Internal verification process; and
- Appeals process and procedures.

Approval to offer SVQs also requires organisations to demonstrate that they have the staff, learning and assessment resources, as well as the equipment needed to offer the SVQs they are interested in. If such capabilities are not present within the organisation, employers can buy in external assessors that have expertise[56].

The process for employers following approval to offer SVQs includes a number of steps. Based on the SVQs chosen, candidates who have different levels of competence are identified. These may be either fully experienced candidates who can tackle the assessment immediately; highly experienced candidates who can gain parts of the SVQ through the accreditation of prior learning; or other candidates who need to gain more experience, training and development to reach the standards. Assessors within the organisation match the job role and skills profile of each individual candidate. An individual assessment plan is usually developed for each candidate where the assessor together with the candidate draw up assessment plans as stated in the Assessor's Guidelines and the Assessors' Support Notes published by the SQA.

Based on the assessment forms, employers develop staff training programmes aimed at filling the competences gaps identified in the assessment exercise. Training can take different forms including secondments, on-the-job coaching, small group learning, distance learning etc.

When candidates feel ready to take their SVQs, assessment is carried out and it involves 4 stages:

- Assessor describes how candidates should be assessed;
- Candidate generates evidence of competences with the assessor's help;
- The assessor makes a judgement about the candidate's competence on the basis of the evidence;
- Assessor records his judgement.

The assessor then has to make one of three judgements:

- Candidate is competent;
- Candidate is not yet competent;
- The evidence is insufficient to make a judgement.

SQA is then notified of the results and issues the candidates with the Scottish Qualifications Certificate. Once all the necessary units have been achieved, the candidate is issued with the SVQ Certificate in addition to the SQC.

SQA has mechanisms that ensure quality assurance. This is achieved mainly through external verifiers who are subject specialists and whose job is to make sure that the qualifications are being assessed to the same national standard. SQA also has systems verifiers who make sure that centres delivering SQA qualifications have the systems they need to operate effectively.

2.2 National Vocational Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - NVQs[57]

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are work-related, competence-based qualifications offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They reflect the skills and knowledge needed to do a job effectively, and show that a candidate is competent in the area of work the NVQ framework represents.
NVQs are based on national occupational standards. These standards are statements of per-

56 Ibid.

57 http://www.qca.org.uk/

formance that describe what competent people in a particular occupation are expected to be able to do. They cover all the main aspects of an occupation, including current best practice, the ability to adapt to future requirements, as well as the knowledge and understanding that underpin competent performance.

NVQs do not have to be completed in a specified amount of time. They can be taken by full-time employees or by school and college students with a work placement or part-time job that enables them to develop the appropriate skills. There are no age limits and no special entry requirements. The main important aspect of NVQs is that the learner has all the specific learning outcomes at the particular level.

NVQs are achieved through assessment and training. Assessment is normally through on-the-job observation and questioning. Candidates produce evidence to prove they have the competence to meet the NVQ standards. Assessors sign off units when the candidates are ready. The assessor tests candidates' knowledge, understanding and work-based performance to make sure they can demonstrate competence in the workplace.

When new candidates start an NVQ, the assessor will usually help them to:
- Identify what skills they already possess;
- Agree on the standard and level that they are aiming for;
- Identify what they need to learn;
- Choose and agree on activities that the learner needs to do to reach the level needed.

Candidates might take a course if that seems the best way to learn what they need. An alternative is to agree with their employer or supervisor to do slightly different work to gain the evidence of competence that they need to fulfil the requirements of the qualification. The system works well for those candidates who already have skills and want to increase them, as well as for those who are in their initial training. As the system is so flexible, new ways of learning can be used.

There are a number of institutions involved in the process of developing, delivering, awarding as well as ensuring the standards of these qualifications:

- ***Sectoral bodies*** who identify, define and update employment-based standards of competence for the different types of occupations within different sectors;

- ***Awarding bodies*** who design the assessment and quality assurance systems in order to gain sector bodies' endorsement prior to submitting their qualifications for accreditation to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA);

- ***QCA*** provides accreditation for proposals of qualifications submitted by awarding bodies;

- ***Assessment centres*** assess the NVQs.

The QCA has the responsibility to ensure that the NVQ qualifications follow particular criteria and are broadly comparable across sectors. It then accredits proposals for NVQ awards developed by sectoral and awarding bodies by ensuring quality assurance through auditing their activities.

NVQs are accredited to a maximum of five years, and mainly for three years, ensuring that qualifications are constantly updated and kept abreast with the demands in the marketplace. There are currently 682 different titles for NVQs which will be offered up to June 2006, and they continue to increase as different sectors keep on adding qualifications in different sectors.

BTECs[58] are vocational qualifications offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but which can also be offered overseas. They provide a more practical, real-world approach to learning and skills development alongside a key theoretical background. BTEC qualifications continue to be developed and updated with and for industry and in response to the needs of learners. This approach ensures that learners gain maximum benefit from their work experience whilst quali-

58 http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/nationals/what/

fying. This could be in readiness for the workplace or continued study at the next level, whether in an academic environment or a more specialist vocational area.

BTEC qualifications range from Entry Level to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They offer natural progression along a vocational path, from and to academic qualifications and university in these countries. BTEC Nationals are Level 3 qualifications, equivalent to A levels on the NQF.

They are the vocational qualification of choice in further education and come in three sizes:

- **BTEC National Award**: Gives students specialist and practical knowledge that focuses on particular aspects of employment in a sector;
- **BTEC National Certificate**: Gives students a strong grounding in the key expertise and knowledge-base of a particular sector specialization.
- **BTEC National Diploma**: Gives students a specialist work-related focus, enabling them to extend key sector knowledge and practical skills. This can add immediate value in the workplace or aid progression to BTEC HND/HNC, BTEC Foundation Degree or a university degree programme[59].

BTEC qualifications are offered in a number of different sectors, including:

- Art and Design
- Business
- Construction
- Engineering
- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Care
- Hospitality
- IT and Computing
- Land and Environment
- Media Production
- Music and Performing Arts
- Public Services
- Retail
- Science
- Sport
- Travel and Tourism

[59] http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/nationals/what-nat/

Appendix 3: The Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training

Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process

Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training

I. EUROPE NEEDS INVESTMENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Investment in human capital and skills needed
Education and training have a central role in responding to the challenges we are facing in Europe: globalisation, an ageing population, emerging new technologies and skills needs. This is reflected in the European Union's agenda and in the revised Lisbon strategy and its integrated guidelines for growth and jobs 2005–2008. It calls for expansion and improved investment in human capital and for adaptation of education and training systems in response to the challenges.

VET constitutes a major part of lifelong learning
Lifelong learning covers learning in all forms and in all settings. Lifelong learning strategies should ensure a well functioning training market and a broad skills base. VET – Vocational Education and Training is an integral part of this. It plays a key role in human capital accumulation for the achievement of economic growth, employment and social objectives. VET is an essential tool in providing European citizens with the skills, knowledge and competences needed in the labour market and in a knowledge based society. The fact remains that VET caters for a major part of learners in Europe and a significant share of the future workforce will need vocational skills and competences.

Twin challenge: engaging young people and those in working life
European VET policies should promote high quality initial VET and create conditions to improve the skills of those in the labour force through continuing VET. Policies should engage all young people in vocational training and/or higher education, ensuring at the same time that they acquire skills and competences relevant to the labour market and to their future lives. Furthermore, policies should serve people already in working life by ensuring possibilities for further development throughout their careers. VET systems should, as part of flexible educational pathways, increasingly enable progression to further education and training, especially from VET to higher education.

Delivering a skills base relevant to working life
VET should provide a broad knowledge and skills base relevant to working life, highlighting at the same time excellence at all levels. Policies and practices should assess the relative impacts of investing in different levels of skills and competences. The supply of intermediary and technical skills as well as high level skills should be increased to overcome skills shortages and to help sustain innovation and the growth of the knowledge society.

Contributing to competitiveness and social cohesion
VET has a dual role in contributing to competitiveness and in enhancing social cohesion. VET policies should address all sections of the population, offering attractive and challenging pathways for those with high potential, while at the same time addressing those at risk of educational disadvantages and labour market exclusion – especially early school leavers, those with low qualifications or no qualifications at all, those with special needs, people with an immigrant background and older workers. In short, VET should be equitable and efficient.

European and national policies for enhancing VET
Basic education should provide young people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for further learning, entrepreneurship and employability and prepare students to follow a general education pathway or a VET pathway or a combination of both. *Young people in VET*

should acquire skills and competences relevant to labour market requirements, for employability and for lifelong learning. This calls for policies to reduce drop-out rates from VET and to better facilitate school-to-work transition, e.g. by combining education and training with work through apprenticeships and work-based learning. The skills, competences and mobility of the *labour force* should be promoted by encouraging the recognition of prior learning gained through training and work experience. Training opportunities should be provided for those in working life. At the same time, learning opportunities should be available for disadvantaged individuals and groups, especially for the less educated.

Competitive business environments and strained national budgets pose challenges for ensuring necessary *investments in skills*. Public and private investment in VET should be improved through the further development of balanced and shared funding and investment mechanisms. Against this background, training systems should be efficient in providing the expected outcomes. This calls for better governance of training systems and responsiveness to the changing skill requirements of the labour market – training should be more demand-driven.

II. MAKING IT HAPPEN – THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS DELIVERING REFORMS

Diversity – an asset and a challenge

The diversity of European VET systems is an asset which serves as a basis for mutual learning and inspiring reforms. At the same time, this diversity makes it important to increase transparency and common understanding on quality issues, and hence mutual trust between VET systems and practices. The aim should be to promote a European VET area in which qualifications and skills acquired in one country are recognised throughout Europe, thus supporting the mobility of young people and adults. This VET area should be cultivated through use of common frameworks, instruments and tools and supported by consistent use of comparable data enabling evidence-based policymaking.

A process to improve the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET

The Copenhagen Process on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training was launched as a European strategy to improve the overall performance, quality and attractiveness of VET in Europe. Since 2002, the process has significantly contributed to raising the visibility and profile of VET in Europe. It has different dimensions:

A political process. The process plays an essential role in emphasising the importance of VET to political decision makers. It facilitates agreeing common European goals and objectives, discussing national models and initiatives, and exchanging good examples of practice at the European level. At national level, the process contributes to strengthening the focus on VET and has inspired national reforms.

A process to develop common tools. Another central role of the process is the development of common European frameworks and tools, aimed at enhancing transparency and quality of competences and qualifications, and facilitating mobility of learners and workers. The process paves the way towards a European labour market, and a European VET area complementary to the European area for higher education.

A process that fosters mutual learning. The process supports European cooperation. It allows the participating countries to consider their policies in the light of experience from other countries and provides a framework for working together, learning from others, sharing ideas, experience and results.

A process that takes the stakeholders on board. The process strengthens the involvement of different stakeholders and enables their contribution to common goals.

Copenhagen – Maastricht – Helsinki

The priorities of the process were first set in the Copenhagen Declaration, December 2002. In the Maastricht Communiqué, December 2004, they were further specified and expanded and, for the first time, national priorities were agreed. At the second follow-up meeting in Helsinki on 5 December 2006, the process was evaluated and its strategies and priorities were reviewed.

A more focused process
The process is viewed as successful and necessary. Now, four years after Copenhagen, it is important to focus on continuing the work and completing and putting into practice initiatives already started. However, a more focused approach with a limited number of priority areas and clear targets should be ensured. Different initiatives and tools should be interlinked and mutually supportive, and VET should be developed at all levels as an essential part of lifelong learning with close links to general education.

The measures initiated by the process are voluntary and are developed through bottom-up cooperation. Particular emphasis is placed on engaging social partners and sectoral organisations in all stages of the work and feeding national experiences back into the work at European level.

Reforms take time – consistency needed
While the Copenhagen and Maastricht priorities remain valid, the process should be strengthened, and the work focused in the following priority areas:

- The image, status and attractiveness of VET. In this context, more emphasis should be placed on good governance of VET systems, institutions and/or providers.

- Further development, testing and implementation of common European tools. The aim should be for the agreed tools to be in place by 2010.

- A more systematic approach to strengthen mutual learning. To support this, special attention should be given to improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics by 2008.

- Active involvement of all stakeholders in the work as the Copenhagen process moves towards an implementation phase.

Next follow-up meeting
The next Ministerial follow-up meeting will be held in two years' time, to evaluate progress, to reinforce priorities and strategies for VET within the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme and to reflect on the orientation of the process beyond 2010.

III. REVIEWED PRIORITIES

1. Policy focused on improving the attractiveness and quality of VET
More attention should be paid by participating countries to the image, status and attractiveness of VET. This calls for:
- improved guidance throughout life to take better account of the opportunities and requirements of VET and of working life, including increased career guidance and advice in schools and for families, in order to ensure informed choice;
- open VET systems which offer access to flexible, individualised pathways and create better conditions for transition to working life, progression to further education and training, including higher education, and which support the skills development of adults in the labour market;
- close links with working life, both in initial and continuing VET, and increased opportunities to learn at the workplace;
- promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to support career development and lifelong learning;
- measures to increase the interest and participation of men or women in those VET fields in which they remain under-represented, for instance women in the technology field;
- developing and highlighting excellence in skills, for example by applying world-class standards or organising skills competitions.

In improving the attractiveness and quality of VET, more emphasis should be placed on good governance of VET systems and providers in delivering the VET agenda 12, through:
- responsiveness to the needs of individuals and the labour market, including anticipation of skills needs. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises;

- highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development;

national quality assurance and improvement in line with the Council Conclusions on Quality Assurance in VET;
- improving public and private investment in VET through the development of balanced and shared funding and investment mechanisms;
- increased transparency of VET systems;
- stronger leadership of institutions and/or training providers within national strategies;
- active partnership between different decision makers and stakeholders, in particular social partners and sectoral organisations, at national, regional and local levels.

2. Development and implementation of common tools for VET

The development of common European tools should be continued in order to pave the way towards a European area of VET and to support the competitiveness of the European labour market. The aim should be for the agreed tools to be in place by 2010. Further development of common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:

- developing and testing a European Credit System for VET[14] (ECVET) as a tool for credit accumulation and transfer, taking into account the specificities of VET and the experience gained with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System[15] (ECTS) in higher education;
- strengthening cooperation on quality improvement by using the European Network of Quality Assurance for VET[16] (ENQA-VET) to support the creation of a common understanding on quality assurance and to foster mutual trust. Cooperation with higher education should be continued.

Further development of common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:

- developing and testing a European Qualifications Framework[17] (EQF) based on learning outcomes, providing greater parity and better links between the VET and HE sectors and taking account of international sectoral qualifications;
- further developing EUROPASS[18] as the single European framework for transparency, and tools for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, in order to support and complement the introduction of EQF and ECVET.

Implementation of common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:

- participating in the testing of ECVET and encouraging its implementation;
- drawing on the principles underlying a Common Quality Assurance Framework, as referred to in the May 2004 Council Conclusions on quality assurance in VET, in order to promote a culture of quality improvement and wider participation in the ENQA-VET network.

Implementation of common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:

- linking national qualification systems or national qualifications frameworks to the EQF;
- supporting national qualification systems in incorporating international sectoral qualifications, using the EQF as a reference point;
- promoting widespread use of EUROPASS.

3. Strengthening mutual learning

A more systematic approach is needed to strengthen mutual learning, cooperative work and the sharing of experience and know-how. This should be facilitated by:

- common concepts and agreed definitions at European level in order to make national solutions, models and standards more easily understood;
- Commission funding for research and surveys on specific topics to deepen understanding of European VET systems and practices, and their links to the labour market and other education sectors;
- monitoring by the Commission of networks, the exchange of examples of good practice and the development of mechanisms which can be used to disseminate knowledge and expertise;
- a systematic and flexible framework to support peer learning activities in the field of VET. The framework should also support decentralised peer learning.

Adequate and consistent data and indicators are the key to understanding what is happening in VET, to strengthening mutual learning, to supporting research and to laying the foundations for evidence-based training policy. By the time of the next Ministerial follow-up Conference in 2008

the Commission should have:

- given special attention to improving the scope, comparability and reliability of VET statistics so that progress in developing VET can be evaluated;
- devoted attention to the development of the VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks[19];
- paid particular attention to the development of statistical information on investment in and the financing of VET.

This would best be achieved by using and combining existing data to the best advantage, while ensuring adequate national/regional data on VET and consistency and comparability with other data on education and training.

4. Taking all stakeholders on board

The success of the Copenhagen Process relies on the active involvement of all stakeholders in the field of VET, including in particular the social partners at European and national level, sectoral organisations and VET providers. This calls for:

- concise and clear information on the process, its background, priorities and activities and the effective transfer of results;
- the active participation in all stages of the process of stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level;
- emphasis on involving VET providers, teachers and trainers in testing and implementing the outcomes of the process;
- the involvement of learners and their organisations at national and European level.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

The implementation of the Copenhagen Process and its priorities should be supported through:

- the effective use of structural funds to support VET reforms at national level;
- targeted use of the Lifelong Learning Programme (2007-2013) to support the process, particularly for innovation, testing, experimentation and implementation;
- the continued support of CEDEFOP[20] and ETF[21] and their networks. They will, in particular, monitor progress in the priority areas and report on the developments;
- the active participation of other relevant Community bodies and committees, such as the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT), the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), the Education and Training Coordination Group (ETCG);
- close cooperation on statistics, indicators and benchmarks with EUROSTAT, OECD, CEDEFOP, and ETF;
- the exchange of information, expertise and results with third countries, particularly those countries covered by the 'enlargement' policy and by the 'wider Europe neighbourhood' policy. Cooperation with high-performing countries and international organisations such as OECD should be strengthened.

The right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured. In the annual reporting on the national Lisbon reform programmes special attention should be paid to progress in VET.

The integrated biennial report on the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme should include a specific part addressing VET, enabling monitoring of the progress and identifying key outcomes to be reported to the European Council.

The process is supported by the 'Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications' of the European social partners which is also subject to annual reporting follow-up.

Appendix 4:

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION **Brussels, 14 November 2006**

15289/06

EDUC 229
SOC 537

COVER NOTE
from: Secretary-General of the European Commission,
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director
date of receipt: 3 November 2006
to: Mr Javier SOLANA, Secretary-General/High Representative
Subject: **COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) - A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe**

Delegations will find attached Commission document SEC(2006) 1431.

Encl.: SEC(2006) 1431

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 31.10.2006
SEC(2006) 1431

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)

A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe

Table of contents

Summary and purpose of the consultation

1. Why ECVET ?

1.1. ECVET: the political mandate

1.2. ECVET for enhanced mobility

1.3. ECVET for validating the outcomes of lifelong learning

1.4. ECVET for increased transparency of qualifications

1.5. ECVET for mutual trust and cooperation

What is ECVET?

2.1. The ECVET learning outcomes transfer process

2.2. What does ECVETmean for individuals?

2.3. What does ECVET mean for competent bodies?

2.3.1. The description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes

2.3.2. Allocation of ECVET credit points

2.3.3. The decision on the adoption of ECVET

2.4. The implementation of ECVET

2.4.1. Stage 1: the establishment of partnerships

2.4.2. Stage 2: the learning agreement

2.4.3. Stage 3: award ECVET credits

2.4.4. Stage 4: Transfer, validation and accumulation of credits

3. Conclusions

4. The consultation

4.1. The consultation process

4.2. Questions for the consultation process

4.2.1. The purpose of and reasons for an ECVET system

4.2.2. The technical basis for ECVET

4.2.3. Implementing ECVET

4.2.4. Measures for supporting the implementation and development of ECVET

4.2.5. ECVET's potential for enhancing mobility

5. Members of the Technical working group

Summary and purpose of the consultation

The project entitled "European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training" (ECVET) is designed to facilitate the transfer, accumulation and recognition of people's learning outcomes. It has been developed under the aegis of the European Commission pursuant to the Education Council Resolution of 12 November 2002 and the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002. The mandate given in 2002 has been renewed and strengthened by the Maastricht Communiqué of 14 December 2004, which was agreed by the Ministers responsible for vocational education and training from 32 European countries and also by the European social partners and the Commission.

Main issues and challenges for ECVET

In Europe, many people undertake learning activities outside their own country. The appeal of this kind of mobility is nonetheless limited by various factors, in particular the absence of provisions for the transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired abroad. The same applies to the transition from one system of vocational education and training to another, or from an informal learning situation to a formal training context.

What is therefore needed is a system whereby people can follow through the process of qualification while moving from one learning context to another. ECVET thus aspires to be an information exchange tool to help individuals take full advantage of learning acquired, in particular as a result of transnational mobility, whether the context was formal, non-formal or informal.
Within the European area, the disparate nature of vocational education and training, the large number and diversity of those involved and the differences in the national or sectoral systems of qualification, constitute one of the major challenges facing ECVET.

Principles of ECVET

ECVET is a method enabling qualifications to be described in terms of transferable and accumulable learning units (knowledge, skills and competence) to which credit points are attached.

ECVET is intended to facilitate the transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes acquired by people moving from one learning context to another, from one system of qualification to another.

ECVET will be based on the voluntary participation of the Member States and of the stakeholders in their respective qualifications systems and vocational education and training.

ECVET will be a mechanism to foster a synergy between the training providers through the support it will provide for cooperation between partner organisations, with a view to the transfer and accumulation of individual learning credits.

The consultation document

The consultation document outlines the main characteristics of ECVET.

It consists of thematic headings (supplemented for public consultation with annexes and a slide show accessible on the European Commission's[60] website) forming a coherent whole.

These documents serve as the basis for the consultation, which involves, in particular, the policy-makers, the social partners, the stakeholders and experts in qualifications systems and vocational education and training in Europe.

The results of the consultation will be analysed with a view to creating a Community instrument. They are scheduled to be discussed at a major European conference to be held in June 2007 under the German Presidency. This conference will close the consultation process and open the approval process.

Following the consultation, the Commission will decide on how best to take the project forward.

In addition, experiments, studies, further tests and pilot projects under the Leonardo da Vinci programme, whether ongoing or planned, can supplement the solutions arising from the consultation. At the end of the consultation process and during the subsequent phase, the European Commission, supported by Cedefop, will ensure that the work carried out on ECVET will be enhanced and expanded through the development of, for example, a " tool box" or a system user guide.

* * * * * * *

60 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html

Why ECVET ?

ECVET is part of the overall project for developing European cooperation in the field of vocational education and training and constitutes one of its operational tools. In this regard, ECVET complements the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In fact, EQF and ECVET are based on common principles and concepts which favour approaches:

- focused on learning outcomes expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;
- based on a process of qualification;
- adapted to the demands of lifelong learning and all learning contexts, on an equal footing;
- geared towards the mobility of people.

ECVET could thus be adopted whatever the training and qualifications systems. Moreover, the actual implementation of ECVET should be based on common reference levels proposed by the EQF. The European framework should thus be a powerful lever for the adoption of ECVET by the various competent bodies, responsible in the Member States for its implementation at national level, regardless of the existence of a national qualifications framework.
ECVET presents some principles, rules and conventions in a coherent and rational way. It aims to facilitate:

- the mobility of people undertaking training;
- the validation of the outcomes of lifelong learning;
- the transparency of qualifications;
- mutual trust and cooperation between vocational training and education providers in Europe.

ECVET: the political mandate

The Education Council Resolution adopted on 12 November 2002[61] and the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002 on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), emphasised that giving priority to a system of credit transfer for vocational education and training[62] was one of the common measures needed to promote "*the transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competence and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels*"[63].
Following up the conclusions of the Education Council of 15 November 2004[64], the Ministers responsible for vocational training in 32 European countries, the European social partners and the Commission agreed in the Maastricht Communiqué of 14 December 2004[65] to give top priority to the "*development and implementation of a European credit transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET) in order to allow learners to build upon the achievements resulting from their learning pathways when moving between vocational training systems*".
The Commission, having been invited to explore the possible options for designing, implementing and developing a credit transfer system compatible with the specificities of vocational edu-

---

61 Council Resolution on promoting enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, OJ C 13, p. 2-4, 18.01.2003

62 Copenhagen Declaration by Ministers responsible for vocational education and training, in EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA countries and the candidate countries, the Commission and the European social partners.

63 Resolution on promoting qualifications OJ C 13, p. 4

64 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational training and education, 13832/04 EDUC 204 SOC 499, 29 October 2004, adopted by the Council on 15 November 2004 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/council13832_en.pdf)

65 Maastricht Communiqué on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational training and education, 14 December 2004 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/ip/docs/maastricht_com_en.pdf)

cation and training, brought together a technical working group composed of experts[66] appointed by the Member States and the representatives of the social partners. It is on the basis of the work of this group that this document has been prepared.

ECVET for enhanced mobility

In the general context of developing a lifelong learning society in Europe, the mobility of learners is identified in the Copenhagen Process as a development priority. For more than a decade, the European Union has promoted the transnational mobility of people in vocational training thanks to the "mobility" measures of the Community action programme Leonardo da Vinci[67]. Under this programme, the Union finances every year mobility projects for approximately 60,000 people, of which around 50% are young people in initial vocational training, including apprentices.

In spite of these efforts, the scale of mobility leading to a professional qualification is still small in comparison to that organised for higher education under the Erasmus programme. The mobility of young people in initial vocational training usually corresponds to the minimum period of three weeks. It is considered to be more of an "interlude" than an integral part of the training pathway. This state of affairs can be explained by the obstacles to mobility in vocational education and training: these obstacles are regulatory and administrative, economic and financial, cultural and linguistic, etc.

One of the main obstacles to attracting more interest in mobility within the framework of initial and continuing vocational training is the difficulty in identifying and validating learning outcomes acquired during a stay in another country.

ECVET proposes :

- an approach whereby learning outcomes acquired abroad can be taken into consideration for the purposes of issuing a qualification in a learner's country of origin;
- a tool for providers, practitioners and competent bodies, enabling them to compare more easily the learning outcomes acquired in different countries, and to validate and recognise them.

ECVET for validating the outcomes of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning may take place in a wide variety of contexts resulting in comparable learning outcomes:

- non-formal learning (programmes, modules completed outside the formal system of education and training);
- informal learning (self-teaching, on-the-job training, daily experience);
- different kinds of training programmes and modules of various durations, and involving various arrangements.

In addition, standardised training programmes may be pursued by different categories of learner (full-time, part-time, intensive or non-intensive training, ICT based learning, etc.).

---

66 See the attached list of experts

67 Council Decision 1994/819/EC of 06.12.1994, OJ L340, 29.12.1994, establishing an action programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy; Council decision 1999/382/EC of 26.04.1999 establishing the second phase of the Community vocational training action programme "Leonardo da Vinci" OJ L146, 11.06.1999 (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2_en.html)

68 Council Resolution on lifelong learning -2002/C 163/01-27 June 2002

In its Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning[68], the Council acknowledges that priority should be given to "*the effective validation and recognition of formal qualifications as well as non-formal and informal learning, across countries and educational sectors through increased transparency and better quality assurance*".

In May 2004, the Council Conclusions on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning[69], emphasised again that "*in the context of the principle of lifelong learning, the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning aim to make visible and to value the full range of knowledge and competence held by an individual, irrespective of where or how these have been acquired[…] Identification and validation are key instruments in enabling the transfer and acceptance of all learning outcomes across different settings.*"

What is needed therefore is a way of enabling people to pursue their learning pathway by building on their learning outcomes when moving from one learning context to another, in particular in the framework of mobility.

Given that it is based on learning outcomes:

- ECVET can be implemented irrespective of the learning context. It facilitates the transfer and validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes;
- ECVET helps to improve access to qualifications for all, throughout their lives.

ECVET for increased transparency of qualifications

Vocational education and training in Europe encompasses a large number of qualifications, diplomas, levels, certificates, etc. Many countries have a national framework defining levels of qualifications or a classification for these levels. These tools may or may not be geared towards the organisation of education or training cycles which are based, in some cases, on the accumulation of units (with or without credit points). Moreover, depending on the system, qualifications may be obtained either after only one type of formal training programme or following several kinds of programmes, regardless of whether the learning pathway is formal, non-formal or informal.

Furthermore, depending on the country, there are many ways of using learning credits in vocational education and training. In countries where there are several sub-systems for vocational education and training, different systems for the allocation of learning credits may coexist. In other cases, there is no learning credits system at all.

Against this background of diversity, several Community initiatives have recently made significant progress, in particular concerning increasingly easy access to tools for ensuring the transparency of qualifications (Europass, the certificate supplement) and information on training opportunities (Ploteus).

Greater transparency of qualifications is nonetheless required to enable the transfer of learning outcomes to be implemented effectively in the context of mobility.

ECVET

- is in line with the initiatives taken at European level, such as the planned introduction of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), designed to improve the transparency of qualifications;
- proposes a common approach to describing qualifications in order to make them easier to understand from one system to another, and to describing the procedures for validating learning outcomes.

69 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, 9175/04 EDUC 101 SOC 220 - 18 May 2004

ECVET for mutual trust and cooperation

One of the most important challenges to be faced in the development and implementation of ECVET is the diversity, even fragmentation in certain countries, of vocational education and training systems in Europe. There may be a very large number of very different competent bodies, organisations and actors involved. Their activities may include the definition of qualifications, methods for assessing and validating learning, setting training objectives, determining the number and contents of units and the number of credits, implementing training programmes, etc. A wide range of providers may be involved: ministries (of education, employment, agriculture, etc.), agencies, occupational sectors, companies, social partners, chambers of commerce, non-governmental organisations, and so forth. In some cases, a national authority may accredit or empower training providers or other actors to prepare and issue qualifications, credit points, etc. In other cases, these functions can be devolved to regional level, or even to the providers.

Several Community initiatives have recently made progress in developing common principles as regards this disparate pattern which creates obstacles to transnational cooperation:
– the adoption of common European principles in the field of quality assurance[70];
– the adoption of common European principles on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.[71]

However, the persisting lack of mutual trust and cooperation between the competent bodies and other actors involved in training and qualifications systems impedes and even prevents the development of initiatives to resolve the various problems posed by the transfer and validation of learning outcomes.

ECVET proposes

- a methodological framework, agreements and common principles to foster dialogue between the providers;
- instruments for developing partnerships between the actors involved (competent bodies, providers, etc.).

What is ECVET?

ECVET is:

- A useful and concrete device intended to facilitate transfer and accumulation (capitalisation) of learning outcomes of individuals who pass from a context of learning to another and/or from a qualifications system to another.

- A methodical way for describing a qualification in terms of units of learning outcomes which are transferable and which can be accumulated (knowledge, skills and competence), with associated credit points.

The ECVET learning outcomes transfer process

The ECVET learning outcomes transfer process can be described like a transaction between two competent bodies or institutions which are empowered to award qualifications and/or **credits for learning outcomes**[72]:

---

70 Council Conclusions on quality assurance in vocational education and training, 9599/04 EDUC 117 SOC 252, 18 May 2004 (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/vetquality_en.pdf)

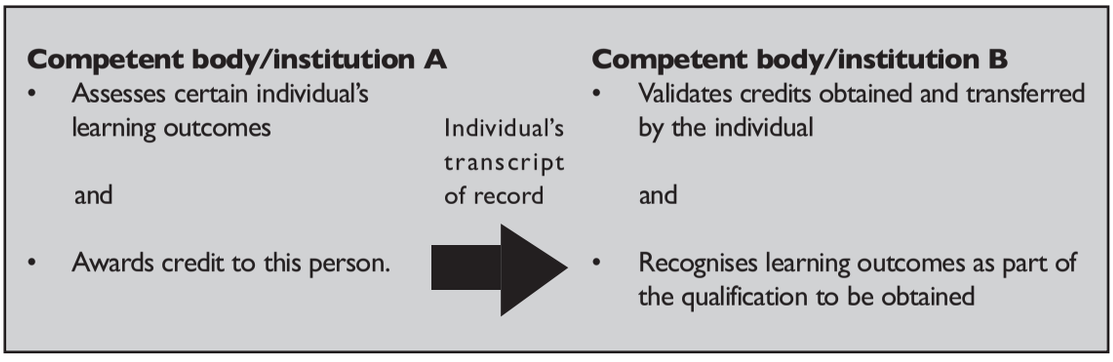
71 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, within the Council, on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, 9600/04 EDUC 118 SOC 253, 18 May 2004

72 The credits for learning outcomes designate the totality of a person's learning achievement, which having been assessed, could be officially transferred, validated or recognised for obtaining a qualification.

- One body or institution assesses certain learning outcomes achieved and awards credits to the learner, the learner's credit is registered in a **personal transcript of record**

- The second awarding body **validates** (accepts) the credits as a valid record of the learner's achievement and **recognises them** for the award of the qualification.

Thanks to this process, an individual can thus transfer and accumulate learning outcomes in order to obtain a qualification.



To facilitate the transfer process of learning outcomes, ECVET is based on:

- The description of **qualifications** in terms of **learning outcomes** (knowledge, skills and competence);

- The expression of qualifications in **units of learning outcomes** which can be transferred and accumulated.

In addition, to facilitate the understanding of qualifications and units, **ECVET credit points** are used for a numerical representation of each unit and to define its weight and its value compared to the whole qualification.

What does ECVET mean for individuals?

ECVET is a tool which benefits many people who avail of transnational mobility, in a variety of learning contexts, and supports lifelong learning pathways which can be very diverse.
This is illustrated by the following examples.

The case	The ECVET solution
Martin Martin, an apprentice cook, is taking a qualification at a training centre (i.e. in a formal learning context). He has the opportunity to spend several weeks in a partner training centre abroad. With his adviser, he draws up a training plan for the mobility period and a ***learning agreement*** which is signed by him and by the two training centres. During mobility: Martin acquires the desired knowledge, skills and competence. At the end of his mobility period, the outcomes of the learning undertaken by Martin in this formal learning context abroad are assessed by the reception training centre. On his return, Martin will draw maximum benefit from his mobility: his learning outcomes will be recognised because they correspond to a part of the knowledge, skills and competence required for the qualification he wants to achieve.	**Before mobility**: a description of the qualification of cook in units learning outcomes enables Martin to precisely identify the ***knowledge, skills and competence*** which he must acquire during his mobility so that they will be taken into account when he comes back: hence he knows which unit(s) he will be able to transfer. The ***credit points*** give him an idea of the weight of each of these units compared to the ***whole qualification*** to be achieved. This information enables him to prepare a plan for his training abroad. ***The partnership*** between the two training centres means that Martin's learning outcomes are assessed by the reception training centre during the mobility period. When he comes back, the learning outcomes that have been assessed are ***validated*** and taken into account as part of Martin's qualification as cook.

The case	The ECVET solution
Marie Marie is an adult who wishes to obtain a qualification in electronics at a training centre in her country. However, she already has several years' occupational experience in a company abroad. During this period, her job in the company widened her knowledge, skills and competence. The outcomes of Marie's learning experience in the company abroad are assessed by the training centre and credits are awarded to her. Her learning outcomes are recognised for the qualification to be achieved.	A description of the qualification in electronics in ***units*** of learning outcomes enables Marie to identify which parts of the ***knowledge, skills and competence*** which she has acquired in the company can be taken into account to obtain the qualification she has chosen. The ***associated credit points*** give an idea of the weight of these learning outcomes compared to the ***qualification*** as a whole. On the basis of the assessment of these learning outcomes, ECVET enables what Marie learned in a non-formal context to be *validated* and ***taken into account*** for her qualification.

What does ECVET mean for competent bodies?

The kind and type of competent bodies which can have a role in the implementation of ECVET vary from one country to another, from a VET system to another or from a qualifications system to another.

In each country, according to national rules, competent bodies, at relevant levels, are responsible for:

- Design arrangements which are linked to the assessment, transfer, validation and recognition processes;
- Description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence);
- Allocating ECVET credit points to qualifications and units.
- The decision on the adoption of ECVET

What is a competent body for ECVET?

An authority, institution or organisation at national, regional, local or sectoral level that, according to national rules and practices, is responsible for and/or involved in one or more of the functions related to the implementation of ECVET

The description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes.

The description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes makes it possible to specify knowledge, skills and competence which characterise each qualification and to improve the legibility for the individuals as well as for the competent bodies responsible for qualifications and for employers. Learning outcomes expected for the award of a qualification can be listed in a catalogue of units, a qualification standard or any other memorandum on qualification. This practice right now is already implemented in many VET systems in Europe.

What is a unit?

A set of knowledge, skills and competence which constitute a part of a qualification. A unit can be the smallest part of a qualification that can be assessed, validated and, possibly, certified. A unit can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications.

The definition and description of units can vary according to the qualifications system and the procedures of the competent body. However, for ECVET purposes, the specifications for a unit should typically give information such as:

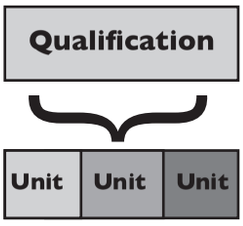
- the generic title of the unit,
- the knowledge, skills and competence which are contained in a unit,
- the criteria for assessment of the cor responding learning outcomes.

There is a broad range of possible specifications and flexible ways of using the concept of units. However, units of learning outcomes should be:

- legible and understandable;
- built up and organised in a coherent way;
- assessable.

The heart of ECVET: Units of learning outcomes

Competent body decides:



- Number
- Size
- Characteristics of units

Who defines units?
The characteristics of units composing a qualification (content, size, total number of units, etc.) are defined by the competent body responsible for the qualification at the appropriate level.

There are numerous methods for describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes. From the moment of the adoption of ECVET, the European Commission will support the diffusion of the most suitable methodologies as well as the development of new methodologies.

Allocation of ECVET credit points

ECVET credit points are suggested as an additional source of information in numerical form. Being associated both with qualifications and units, ECVET credit points have two functions:

- to give a simple representation of the relative value of a unit of learning outcomes in relation to the whole qualification. They illustrate the proportion of the unit to the qualification;
- to facilitate the transfer of learning outcomes in a concrete way by providing a common reference at European level between qualifications systems;

ECVET will enable the allocation of credit points through different approaches and instruments. ECVET credit points should be allocated on the basis of criteria such as:

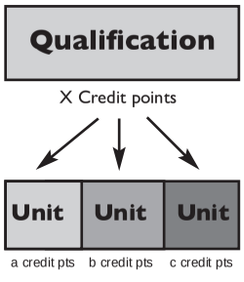
- an estimation of the importance of the contents of each unit defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence;
- reference to a real or notional average length of programme;
- real or notional learner workload in a formal learning context;
- real or notional learner effort in an informal learning context;
- combination of several criteria.

How are ECVET credit points allocated?

For ECVET purposes, credit points are first allocated to a whole qualification, with points from this total then allocated to units as appropriate, because credit points represent the weight of each unit relative to the full qualification.

Credit Points

Competent body allocates credit points to:



- Qualification
- Units

The credit points of a qualification are made up of the combined credit points of the units within that qualification

Competent bodies which are empowered for the allocation of ECVET credit points might use the following convention as a practical indicator: 120 ECVET credit points on average could be associated to the learning outcomes achieved by an individual in a year in a formal full time VET context. This convention is purely indicative. It does not fix an absolute and rigid yardstick of measurement. It does not prescribe learning durations, required learning times or a mandatory learning effort. It is intended to be used as a reference for the allocation of credit points to learning outcomes, qualifications and/or to units.

There are numerous methods for allocating credit points to qualifications and units. From the moment of the adoption of ECVET, the European Commission will support the diffusion of the most suitable methodologies as well as the development of new methodologies.

The decision on the adoption of ECVET

Deciding on how qualifications should be linked to ECVET (notably their description in terms of units of learning outcomes and the allocation of ECVET credit points) is an important issue for the effective and sustainable implementation of ECVET. The implementation of ECVET needs clear commitments from competent bodies and providers, formalised at the relevant levels in each country. This requirement has been clearly demonstrated in the Bologna Process for Higher Education where voluntary commitments have contributed to the widespread implementation of ECTS.

In order to properly implement ECVET, the competent body responsible for qualifications or units, or more generally empowered to implement ECVET should define and decide the scope of its implementation and formalise its decision at the appropriate level, according to the national rules.

The implementation of ECVET

ECVET should be applicable in various learning situations and contexts. Consequently, the application which is described below is given as an example, following the chronology of the principal stages.

Stage 1: the establishment of partnerships

In order to facilitate the implementation of ECVET, VET providers and/or competent bodies at the relevant level could establish **partnership agreements or memoranda of understanding (MoU).** During this phase of initialization, the memoranda of understanding could contribute to creating the climate of trust which is necessary for insuring the durability of the system, its operational characteristics and the effective credit transfer.

In the MoU, partners could specify:

- Correspondence between qualifications (units and credit points) and/or learning outcomes concerned by transfer. The EQF levels could contribute to the establishment of the correspondence.
- The assessment, transfer and validation processes (units or parts of units).
- The specifications for quality assurance.

The key point of the MoU is that the learning outcomes for which credits are awarded by one or the other of the partners can be recognised irrefutably.

Partnership agreements could be established between different authorities or organisations, according to the type and desired degree of co-operation. Thus, MoU could be established between bodies responsible for qualifications (ministries, branches…) and/or networks of VET providers (Chambers of Commerce …) and/or VET providers or other stakeholders in VET (training centres, schools, firms…).

A model memorandum of understanding could be developed at European level.

Stage 2: the learning agreement

It could be necessary to draw up an individual learning agreement for each person, notably in the formal learning context. This document would specify the learning outcomes expected at the end of a period of mobility (units or parts of units) and the associated points of credit. This individual learning agreement should be drawn up between the person and the two partners. A model learning agreement could be developed at European level.

Stage 3: award ECVET credits

ECVET credits are awarded (units or parts of units and associated ECVET credit points) after the assessment of the learning outcomes. Credits are recorded in a transcript of record which gives details on:

- knowledge, skills and competence which are acquired
- the credit points which are associated with the achieved learning outcomes.

A template of the transcript of record could be designed at European level.
Moreover, the Europass documents could be used to record credits and assure their transparency.

Stage 4: transfer, validation and accumulation of credits

In accordance with the MoU and the learning agreement, credits should be transferred, then validated by the sending organisation and recognised for obtaining the qualification concerned, by accumulation, according to the rules.

Conclusions

ECVET should be developed and implemented gradually on a voluntary basis without any legal obligation, since it does not have a regulatory mission. When ECVET is applied in the countries which decide to implement it, national or regional legislation and/or current sectoral rules on qualifications should be taken into account.

With its modern and ambitious approach focused on learning outcomes, ECVET comprises a certain number of principles, rules and conventions essential to its implementation, but its application will nonetheless remain as flexible as possible. In the short to medium term, implementation of ECVET will need support. Indeed, time, tests and studies will be needed to gradually and effectively improve it, make it more flexible, if necessary, in order to take into account the particular features of the qualifications systems of every country and to ensure the dissemination and promotion of the most appropriate practices and methods for its implementation. Above all, it will have to be simple and adapted to the real needs of its target groups if people are to make effective use of it.

The consultation

This Commission Staff Working Document puts forward arguments for the design and adoption of an ECVET system at European level and contains suggestions for its implementation. The success of an ECVET system will depend as much on its relevance and accessibility to learners as on its credibility and reliability in the eyes of the authorities responsible for qualifications, vocational education and training systems. In all the training systems of the Member States (vocational education and training and lifelong learning) those involved will have to be convinced that the ECVET system is useful and can contribute – directly and indirectly – to the promotion and development of lifelong learning leading to enhanced knowledge, skills and competence of trainees and ultimately to more stable and satisfactory careers in a given country or in Europe. The document outlines ECVET's fundamental principles and provides pointers for its practical implementation. However, ECVET can only work if it is based on a broad consensus resulting from an extensive consultation process open to questions, proposals and suggestions on the

most efficient way of pursuing its creation. This consultation is also important for gaining an appreciation of the needs of partners likely to contribute to the success of the ECVET system.

The consultation process

The consultation at European level concerns all the European countries involved in the Copenhagen Process, the European social partners and professional organisations. It will take place until March 2007 with the aim of inviting all the players and experts to give their opinion what the objectives, principles and technical characteristics of the ECVET system could or should be. The different countries and social partner organisations will organise their own consultations at national level. The European Commission expects the Ministries for education, vocational training and employment, the European social partners, the sectoral and regional authorities, and also the competent authorities and qualification providers to participate.

The European social partner organisations (employers' associations and trade unions), sectoral services and industry associations, European networks for research on education and training for young people and business networks; all interested parties are invited to comment on the plan. The consultation document is also published on the Internet.

The European Commission will analyse and summarise the responses to the consultation. The latter will be available on the Internet[73].

The results of the consultation will be analysed with a view to creating a Community instrument; they are scheduled to be discussed at the major European conference to be held in June 2007 under the German Presidency. This conference will close the consultation process.

The results of the consultation process will be used to prepare the formal proposal on an ECVET system which the European Commission will put forward as the most appropriate legal instrument in the course of 2007.

Following the consultation process, the European Commission will decide how best to develop the system. Financial support (and other kinds of assistance) may be granted to national and sectoral players, for example under Community programmes on the mobility of young people and adults in training. In this way, the new integrated programme on lifelong learning will be used to help implement the ECVET system.

The findings of the consultation and also of ongoing studies and tests will serve as a platform for a series of pilot projects responding to the specific needs of the competent authorities responsible for credit systems and making use of ECVET.

Questions for the consultation process

The parties consulted are invited to respond to the following questions which are considered particularly important for the development of ECVET:

The purpose of and reasons for an ECVET system

– Are the most important objectives and functions of a European system of credits for vocational training and education and the role of competent authorities fully outlined in the consultation document? If not, what is missing?
– What would be the main added value of the planned ECVET system?

The technical basis for ECVET

– Do some technical specifications need to be set out in greater detail with a view to the practical implementation of ECVET? If so, which ones?

– Do ECVET's technical specifications take sufficient account of the:

- evaluation,
- validation,
- recognition,

---

73 http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_en.pdf

- accumulation,
- transfer

of learning outcomes whether formal, non-formal or informal? If not, please give details.

– Are the allocation of credit points to qualifications and units and using a reference figure of 120 credit points sufficient to ensure the convergence of approaches and the coherence of the system at European level? If not, what would you suggest?

Implementing ECVET

– Under what conditions could describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and expressing them in units effectively improve the transparency of qualifications and contribute to the development of mutual trust?
– Which criteria or combinations of criteria for allocating credit points could be selected and used?
– Are there any features in your qualifications system which would favour the introduction of ECVET? What constraints, if any, do you foresee?
– How and within what time frame (launch, introduction, experimentation, widespread introduction) could ECVET be implemented in your country?

Measures for supporting the implementation and development of ECVET

– What kind of measures should be taken at European national and sectoral levels to facilitate the implementation of ECVET?
– What documents, manuals and guides could be developed to facilitate the implementation of ECVET?

ECVET's potential for enhancing mobility

– To what extent and how will ECVET be able to contribute to the development of transnational and even national partnerships?
– To what extent and how will ECVET be able to help improve the quality of Community programmes on mobility and participation in these programmes?
– To what extent and how do you think that ECVET and Europass could complement each other to enhance mobility?

Members of the Technical working group

Experts

Enrica FLAMINI	Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione post-secondaria - I
then MVittoria Marini Bettolo Marconi	
José Luis GARCIA MOLINA	Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones, Ministerio de Educación, Culture y Deporte - ES
Luís IMAGINARIO	Faculdade de Psicologia da Universidade do Porto - P
Françoise DIVISIA	
then Edith KIRSCH	Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche - F
Sirkka-Liisa KARKI	Finnish National Board of Education Vocational Education Division -FIN
University - LT	
Zsófia LUX	Ministry of Education - HUN
Moira McKERRACHER	Scottish Qualifications Authority - UK
Edwin MERNAGH	National Qualifications Authority - IRL
Arthur SCHNEEBERGER	Österreichisches Institut für Bildungsforschung
then Reinhard NOEBAUER	der Wirtschaft - A
Jan REITZ JOERGENSEN	Ministry of Education, National Education Authority - DK
Sten PETTERSON	
then Björn SCHÉELE	National Agency for Education (Skolverket) - S
Winfried HEIDEMANN	European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Heikki SUOMALAINEN	Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers (UNICE)
Peter THIELE	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung - D
Loukas ZAHILAS	O.E.E.K. - Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs - GR

Providing support to the expert group

Isabelle LE MOUILLOUR	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB) - D
Burkart SELLIN	CEDEFOP

Commission (Coordination)

Simon JONES	
then Michel ARIBAUD	DG EAC – A3

Contributions

Jens Bjornavold, CEDEFOP	
Peter Van der Hijden	DG EAC – A2

Appendix 5: European Commission Education and Culture

Lifelong Learning: Education and Training Policies
Coordination of Lifelong Learning Policies

January 2007

'Education & Training 2010'
Main policy initiatives and outputs
in education and training since the year 2000

This document provides an overview of the main policy initiatives and outputs resulting from the work of the European Commission in the field of education and training since the Lisbon European Council in March 2000. These form part of the integrated policy framework 'Education & Training 2010' and include Commission contributions to the Bologna intergovernmental process in the field of higher education.
(See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/compendium05_en.pdf)

Table of Contents

An integrated Policy Framework 'Education & Training 2010'
- *Policy framework*
- *Implementation*
- *Programmes supporting 'Education & Training 2010' and lifelong learning*
Developing lifelong learning strategies
- *Policy framework*
- *Implementation and European tools*
Higher Education Reform
- *Programmes supporting higher education*
European Institute of Technology
Developing school education policies
- *Programmes supporting school education*
Enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training and adult education
- *Programmes supporting vocational education and training and adult education*
Removing obstacles to mobility.
- *Mobility instruments*
Promoting multilingualism
- *Programmes supporting multilingualism*
ICT for innovation and lifelong learning (Information and Communication Technology)
- *Programmes supporting ICT*
Measuring progress in education and training (statistics, indicators and benchmarks)
Expert networks in economic and social sciences
Other relevant documents related to the Lisbon Strategy

An integrated Policy Framework 'Education & Training 2010'

Policy framework

Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe
2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the "Education & Training 2010 work programme" (February 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_079/c_07920060401en00010019.pdf

"Education & Training 2010" – The success of the Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms
Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe (February 2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf

Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe
Work programme of the Education Council in cooperation with the Commission (February 2002)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_142/c_14220020614en00010022.pdf

Future objectives of education and training systems
Education Council report (February 2001)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/rep_fut_obj_en.pdf

Implementation

Annex to the Draft 2006 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010 work programme"
Commission Staff Working Paper (November 2005)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/report06staff.pdf

Implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" programme
Commission Staff Working Document
Supporting document for the draft joint interim report on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe (November 2003)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/staff-work_en.pdf

Programmes supporting 'Education & Training 2010' and lifelong learning

Action programme in the field of lifelong learning (2007-2013)
Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning (November 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_327/l_32720061124en00450068.pdf

Action programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of education and training (2004-2006)
Decision No 791/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (April 2004)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_138/l_13820040430en00310039.pdf

Developing lifelong learning strategies

Policy framework

Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems
Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/c_298/c_29820061208en00030006.pdf
Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament (September 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comm481_en.pdf

Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe
Commission Communication (January 2003)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0779en01.pdf

Lifelong Learning
Council Resolution (June 2002)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_163/c_16320020709en00010003.pdf

Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality
Commission Communication (November 2001)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/communication/com_en.pdf

A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning
Commission Staff Working Paper (October 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/memoen.pdf

Implementation and European tools

Key competences for lifelong learning
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf

European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning - Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme
Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (September 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/com_2006_0479_en.pdf

Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
Commission Staff Working Document (July 2005)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/consultation_eqf_en.pdf

Career Guidance - A handbook for policy-makers
Commission staff working paper and joint publication with the OECD (November 2004)
http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/53/34060761.pdf

Guidance throughout life in Europe
Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe (May 2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/resolution2004_en.pdf

Validation of non-formal and informal learning
Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (May 2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_en.pdf

Implementing National Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe
Commission Progress report on the follow-up to the Council resolution of 2002 (December 2003)
– EU and EFTA/EEA countries
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/synthesis_efta_eea_en.pdf
– Acceding and candidate countries
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/synthesis_acc_en.pdf

Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning – Fifteen Quality Indicators
Commission Report based on the work of the Working Group on Quality Indicators (June 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/report/quality/report_en.pdf

Higher Education Reform

Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation
Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (May 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2006_en.pdf

Further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_064/l_06420060304en00600062.pdf

From Bergen to London – The EU Contribution
Commission Progress Report (January 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/report06.pdf

Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling higher education to make its full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy
Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States (November 2005)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/c_292/c_29220051124en00010002.pdf
Commission Communication (April 2005)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2005_en.pdf

European Higher Education in a Worldwide Perspective
Annex to Commission communication 'Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy' (April 2005)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/comuniv2005annex_en.pdf

The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge
Commission Communication (February 2003)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0058en01.pdf

Strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (July 2001)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0385en01.pdf

Programmes supporting higher education
Erasmus-Mundus (2004-2008)
Programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries
Decision No 2317/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2003)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus/decision_en.pdf

Erasmus (2000-2006)
The second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education 'Socrates'
Decision No 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (January 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/decsoc2_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/erasmus_en.html

European Institute of Technology

European Institute of Technology
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the European Institute of Technology (October 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0604en01.pdf

Implementing the renewed partnership for growth and jobs - Developing a knowledge flagship: the European Institute of Technology
Communication from the Commission to the European Council (February 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0077en01.pdf

Developing school education policies
Key competences for lifelong learning
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00100018.pdf

Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe
Publication by the Eurydice European Unit with the financial support of the European Commission (November 2004)
http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KDLANG/2005/EN/FrameSet.htm

European cooperation in quality evaluation in school education
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2001)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_060/l_06020010301en00510053.pdf

The Quality of School Education – Sixteen Quality Indicators
Commission Report based on the work of the Working Committee on Quality Indicators (May 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/indic/rapinen.pdf

Programmes supporting school education
Comenius (2000-2006)
The second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education 'Socrates'
Decision No 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (January 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/decsoc2_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/comenius/index_en.html

Enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training and adult education

Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training
Communiqué of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, convened in Helsinki on 5 December 2006 to review the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen Process (December 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/helsinkicom_en.pdf

European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe
Commission Staff Working Document (October 2006)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/work_en.pdf

Adult learning: It is never too late to learn
Commission Communication (October 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0614en01.pdf

Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET)
European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, European Social Partners and European

Commission review of the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002 (December 2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/ip/docs/maastricht_com_en.pdf

Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET
Final report to the European Commission (November 2004)
Study prepared for the European Commission in preparation for the conference "Strengthening European cooperation in VET: The way forward", Maastricht, 2004
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/studies/maastricht_en.pdf

Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
Education Council Conclusions (May 2004)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/vetquality_en.pdf

"Copenhagen Declaration"
Enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training
Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission (November 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenahagen_declaration_en.pdf

Programmes supporting vocational education and training and adult education
Leonardo da Vinci (2000-2006)
The second phase of the Community vocational training action programme 'Leonardo da Vinci'
Council Decision (April 1999)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2/decision/decision_en.pdf

Grundtvig (2000-2006)
The second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education 'Socrates'
Decision No 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (January 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/decsoc2_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/grundtvig/home_en.html

Removing obstacles to mobility

Transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes:
European Quality Charter for Mobility
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_394/l_39420061230en00050009.pdf

Mobility within the Community of students, persons undergoing training, volunteers and teachers and trainers
Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the follow-up to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 10 July 2001 (January 2004)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2004/com2004_0021en01.pdf

Mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers
Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (July 2001)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_215/l_21520010809en00300037.pdf

Mobility instruments

Europass
Single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences

Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2004)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/l_390/l_39020041231en00060020.pdf

Common European format for Curricula Vitae (CVs)
Communication concerning the Commission Recommendation on a common European format for curricula vitae (CVs) (March 2002)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_073/c_07320020322en00020002.pdf

Promoting multilingualism

The European Indicator of Language Competence
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (August 2005)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/com356_en.pdf

Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity:
An Action Plan 2004 – 2006
Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (July 2003)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/official/keydoc/actlang/act_lang_en.pdf

Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity
Commission Staff Working Paper (November 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/policy/consult/consult_en.pdf

The promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001
Council Resolution (February 2002)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/c_050/c_05020020223en00010002.pdf

The European Year of Languages 2001
Decision No 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (July 2000)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2000/l_232/l_2322000091 4en00010005.pdf

Programmes supporting multilingualism

LINGUA (2000-2006)
The second phase of the Community action programme in the field of education 'Socrates'
Decision No 253/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (January 2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/decsoc2_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/lingua/index_en.html

ICT for innovation and lifelong learning
(Information and Communication Technology)

Key Data on Information and Communication Technology in Schools in Europe
Publication by the Eurydice European Unit with the financial support of the European Commission (November 2004)
http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KDICT/en/FrameSet.htm

E-Learning: Designing Tomorrow's Education - A Mid-Term Report
Commission Staff Working Paper (July 2003)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/elearning/doc/mid_term_report_en.pdf

Using the Internet to develop twinning between European secondary schools
Report from the Commission to the Council (June 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/elearning/schooltwinning.pdf

E-Learning – Designing tomorrow's education
Commission Staff Working Paper – An Interim Report as requested by the Council Resolution of 13 July 2001 (February 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/elearning/sec_2002_236_en.pdf

E-Learning
Council resolution (July 2001)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/elearning/reso_en.pdf

The eLearning Action Plan – Designing tomorrow's education
Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (March 2001)
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0172en01.pdf

The eLearning initiative – Designing tomorrow's education
Communication from the Commission (May 2000)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2000/com2000_0318en01.pdf

Programmes supporting ICT

E-Learning (2004-2006)
Multiannual programme for the effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme)
Decision No 2318/2003/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (December 2003)
http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/l_345/l_34520031231en00090016.pdf

Measuring progress in education and training (Statistics, indicators and benchmarks)

Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training - Report based on indicators and benchmarks 2006 Report (Annual Report, May 2006)
Commission Staff Working Paper
Detailed analysis of progress (Annex)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf

Key data on education in Europe 2005
Joint publication Eurydice/Eurostat (July 2005)
http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/indicators/en/frameset_key_data.html

New indicators in education and training
Council Conclusions (May 2005)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/c_141/c_14120050610en00070008.pdf

Reference Levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (Benchmarks)
Council Conclusions (May 2003)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/after-council-meeting_en.pdf

European benchmarks in education and training: follow-up to the Lisbon European Council
Communication from the Commission (November 2002)
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/bench_ed_trai_en.pdf

Expert networks in economic and social sciences

European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE)
EENEE advises the Commission on the analysis of economic and social aspects of education and training policies. EENEE also organises, on behalf of the Commission, symposia to encourage fur-

ther exchanges between policy-makers and researchers and to draw out promising proposals for the development of human capital policies. The website of EENEE has become the main forum to promote and disseminate research on the Economics of Education in Europe.
http://www.education-economics.org/

Other relevant documents related to the Lisbon Strategy

Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning
Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme
Commission Communication (February 2006)
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0033en01.pdf

For further information relating to the EU's work in the field of education and training, please consult the following web-sites:
DG EAC (Directorate-General Education and Culture):
http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training):
http://www.cedefop.eu.int/

ETF (European Training Foundation):
http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf

EURYDICE (The information network on education in Europe):
http://www.eurydice.org/

Annex 1:
Bibliography

Local Reports and Policy Documents

Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment,

State Higher Education Funding, November 2004

For all Children To Succeed. A New Network Organization for Quality Education in Malta, June 2005.

School Attendance Improvement, October 2005

National Commission For Higher Education, October 2005

MATSEC, Strengthening a National Examinations System, October 2005.

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, *National Standards for Child Care Facilities*, July 2006.

Office of the Prime Minister, *For a Better Quality of Life*, Pre-Budget Document 2006-2010, July 2005

Securing Our Future – Pre-Budget document 2007, August 2006.

International publications

Adam, Stephen; Gemlich, Volker (2000). *Report for the European Commission: ECTS extension feasibility project.* London: University of Westminster.

Behringer, Friederike; Coles, Mike (2003). *Towards and understanding of the mechanisms that link qualifications and lifelong learning*. Paris: OECD. Available from Internet: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/11/15520534.pdf[23.5.2005]

Bottomley, David. (1996). *The Scottish credit accumulation and transfer framework: an organizing framework for higher education in Scotland.* Scotland: HEQC Scottish Office.

CEC (2000) – Commission of the European communities. *A memorandum on lifelong learning: Commission staff working paper.* Brussels: Commission of the European Communities. Available from Internet: http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/MemorandumEn.pdf

CEC (2001) – Commission of the European Communities. *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality: communication from the Commission.* Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2001. Available from Internet: http://europea.eu.int/comm/education /policies/lll/life/communication/com_en.pdf

CEC (2002c) - Commission of the European Communities. *European benchmarks in education and training: follow-up to the Lisbon European Council: communication from the Commission.* COM(2002) 629 final. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2002

CEC (2003a) – Commission of the European Communities. *ECTS extension: questions and answers.* Available from Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ecstfea_en.html#10

CEC (2004) – Commission of the European Communities. *Developing a European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET): not to the directors general of vocational training and the group coordinators of the ACVT. Brussels:* Commission of the European communities.

CEC(2002a)- Commission of the European Communities. *Declaration of the European Ministers of vocational education and training, and the European Commission, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training: 'the Copenhagen Declaration'.* Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2002. Available from Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/copenhagen_declaration_en.pdf

CEC(2003b) – Commission of the European Communities. *ECTS: European credit transfer system.* Brussels: Commission of the European Communities. Available from Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ecskey_en.pdf

Coles, Mike. (2004). Evaluating *the impact of reforms of vocational education and training: examples of practice.* Luxembourg: Office for official Publications of the European Communities.

Coles, Mike; Oates, Tim. (2003). *Understanding the operation of zones of mutual trust forming reference levels for vocational education and training.* London: QCA.2003.

Coles, Mike; Collar, Debbie. (2003).*The currency of qualifications today.* London: QCA, (QCA research paper).

Coles, Mike; Oates, Tim. (2005) *European reference levels for education and training: promoting credit transfer and mutual trust.* Cedefop. Panorama series; 109. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Council of the European Union (2004b) *Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) – EDUC 116, SOC 251, CODEC 734.* Brussels: Council of the European Union.

Deanne, Cynthia; Watters, Elizabeth. (1995.).*Towards 2010: common themes and approaches across higher education and vocational education and training.* Dublin: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Further Education Unit. *A framework for credit: Common framework for post -16 education and training for the twenty-first century.* London: FEU.

Gonzalez, Julia; Wagenaar, Robert (2003). *Tuning educational structures in Europe: final report.* Groningen: University of Groningen.

Green, Andy. (1997). *Education, globalization and the nation state.* London: MacMillan.

Le Mouillour, Isabelle. (2005). *European approaches to credit (transfer) systems in VET: An assessment of the applicability of existing credit systems to a European credit (transfer) system for vocational education and training (ECVET).* Cedefop Dossier series; 12. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Le Mouillour, Isabelle; Sellin, Burkart; Jones, Simon. (2003). *First report of the technical working group on credit transfer in VET.* Brussels, October 2003.

Murray, Asa; Steedman, Hilary. (1998). *Growing skills in Europe: the changing skill profiles of France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom.* London: Centre for Economic Performance.

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. (2002). *Towards a national framework of qualifications: establishment of policies and criteria.* Dublin NQAI.

NICATS. (2002).*Designing learning programmes: a credit based approach: a practical manual.* Belfast: Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System.

NQAI. (2003)*Outline national framework of qualifications: determination made by the national authority of Ireland.* Dublin National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

NQAI. (2004). *Irish presidency conference: towards 2010: common themes and approaches across higher education and vocational education and training in Europe*. Dublin: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland.

OECD. (2003). *The role of qualifications in lifelong learning*. Paris: OECD.

OECD. (1996).*Measuring what people know*. Paris: OECD.

OECD. (1999). *Classifying educational programmes: manual for ISCED-97 implementation in countries*. Paris: OECD.

Reichert, Sybille; Tauch, Christian (2003). Trends 2003. *Progress towards the European higher education area Bologna four years after: steps towards sustainable reform of higher education in Europe*. A report prepared for the European University Association, July 2003. Available from Internet: http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Trends_III_neu.pdf

Reuling, Jochen; Hanf, George. (2003). *The role of qualifications systems in promoting lifelong learning*. OECD-Projeckt. Länderportrait Deutschland. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.

SAQA. *South African qualifications framework*. Pretoria: South African Qualifications Authority. Available from Internet: http://www.saqa.org.za

Sellin, Burkaret. (2002). *Scenarios and strategies for vocational education and lifelong learning in Europe: summary of findings and conclusions of the joint Cedefop/ETF project.* Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Committees, (Cedefop Panprama, 40). Available From the Internet: http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5131_en.pdf

Tait, Tony (2003). *Credit systems for learning and skills. Current developments. Learning and skills development agency reports. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.*

The Scottish credit and qualifications framework (2003). *An introduction to the Scottish credit and qualifications framework*. Glasgow: The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Available from Internet: http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/IntodctiontoSCQF-2ndEdition.pdf

Tissot, Phillipe (2004). Terminology of vocational training policy. A multilingual *glossary for an enlarged Europe*. Luxembourg: EUR-OP

Unesco. (1997). International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED-97. Paris: Unesco,. Available from internet: http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/ISCED_A.pdf

Young, Michael [et al.]. (2003) National qualifications frameworks: an international and comparative approach. *Journal of Education and Work,* Vol. 16, No 3 [special issue on NQF].

Annex II:

Glossary of Select Terminology Associated with Qualifications Frameworks

Accumulation and transfer of qualifications
Accumulation and transfer of qualifications means that training programmes or parts [units] of programmes are interchangeable or can replace each other and that validated learning outcomes can exempt a person of whole or part of a training programme. Accumulation and transfer of qualifications require that learning outcomes acquired in different contexts and at different times are compared as regards equivalence and relative value.

Accreditation (of programmes, institutions)
The process of accrediting an institution of education and training, a programme of study, or a service, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative and professional authorities by having met predetermined standards.

Assessment
The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how, skills and competences) of an individual, and typically leads to certification.

Awarding body
A body issuing qualifications (certificates or diplomas) formally recognizing the achievements of an individual, following a standard assessment procedure.

Basic skills (key competences)
The skills and competences needed to function in contemporary society, e.g. listening, speaking, reading, writing, digital competence and mathematics, among others.

Bologna Process
The Bologna process initiated by the Bologna Declaration of European Ministers of Education on 19th June 1999 is a commitment by all EU Member States to harmonize the architecture of the European higher education system by improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability.

Certificate/Diploma
An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following the successful completion of a training programme or a course of studies.

Certification (of knowledge, skills and competences)
The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or skills and competences acquired by an individual, following a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies.

Competence
'Competence is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and other abilities to perform a function against a given standard in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development. In the EQF, 'competence' is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Comparability of qualifications
The extent to which it is possible to establish equivalence between the level and content of formal qualifications (certificates or diplomas) at sectoral, regional, national or international levels.

Continuing education and training
Education or training after initial education or entry into working life, aimed at helping individuals to: *improve or update their knowledge and/or skills; acquire new skills for a career move or retraining;* continue their personal or professional development.

---

74 Extracted from http://www.mqc.gov.mt/page.asp?id=2002&pid=2

Copenhagen Declaration
The Copenhagen Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission convened in Copenhagen on the 29th and 30th of June 2002 is a declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.

Credits
Credits are awarding tools [such as A, B or C etc…] for the successful completion of a task. Credits are one of the tools designed to facilitate the implementation of credit transfer systems at national and European level. They are used by authorities, vocational and training providers, competent bodies and learners to support arrangements for accumulation and recognition for learning outcomes towards a qualification and for transnational mobility. Credits [credit points] are allocated to the qualifications and to the units of which a qualification is made up.

Curriculum
A set of actions followed when setting up a training course: it includes defining training goals, content, methods (including assessment) and material, as well as arrangements for training teachers and trainers.

EQF
EQF stands for the European Qualifications Framework which is a meta-framework to support translation and communication between national qualifications systems and frameworks.

Formal learning
Learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment (in a school/training centre or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to certification.

Informal learning
Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organized or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective. It typically does not lead to certification.

Initial education/training
General or vocational education carried out in the initial education system, usually before entering working life.

Knowledge
'Knowledge' is the outcome of the collection and assimilation of information through learning. In the EQF, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual.

Learning
'Learning' is a process by which individuals acquire and assimilate information, ideas and values as well as practical and cognitive skills and other personal and social competences. They learn through personal reflection and reconstruction and through social interaction. This process takes place in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

Learning outcomes
'Learning outcomes' are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process.

Level descriptors
Level descriptors express the level of knowledge, skills and competences in relation to higher or lower levels of achievement by the individual.

Lifelong learning
All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.

National Qualifications Framework
A National Qualifications Framework is a common reference point to all nationally recognized qualifications indicating level of education and training and progression from one level to another.

National Qualifications System
Qualifications systems include all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalizing national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding processes, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualifications systems may be more or less integrated and coherent.

Meta-framework
A 'meta-framework' like the EQF is a classification instrument for levels of qualifications designed to act as a translation device between different national and sectoral qualifications systems. For this purpose, the criteria for levels in a meta-framework are written in a highly generalized form and the EQF does not take over any of the established roles of national systems.

Mutual trust
Mutual trust is a term used in the context of qualifications to indicate quality assurance support measures and accountability in the awarding of certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Non-formal learning
Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It normally does not lead to certification.

Programme (of education and training)
An inventory of activities, learning content and/or methods implemented to achieve education or training objectives (acquiring knowledge, skills or competences), organized in a logical sequence over a specified period of time.

Quality assurance
A transparent and clearly defined process to assure that quality education and training and quality deliverables will be built in institutions, training programmes and programmes of studies before the work is done.

Qualification
A 'qualification' is achieved when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. A qualification is a formal outcome of an assessment and validation process.

Qualifications Framework
A qualifications framework provides a system of coordination and for comparing qualifications by relating qualifications to each other, for promoting the quality of education and training provision, for establishing standards of knowledge, skills and wider competences and for introducing and maintaining procedures for access to learning, transfer of learning and progression in learning. The scope of a framework may be comprehensive of all learning achievement and pathways in a country or may be confined to a particular sector.

Recognition
Formal recognition is the process of granting official status to skills and competences either through the award of certificates or through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained skills and/or competences. Social recognition is the acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders such as employers or national or international institutions.

Regulated profession
Professional activity or group of professional activities access to which, and the practice of which (or to one of its forms), is directly or indirectly subject to legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions concerning the possession of specific professional qualifications.

Sector
A 'sector' is a range of professional activities on the basis of their main economic activity, product, service or technology (e.g. chemicals) or as a transversal professional category (e.g. marketing).

Sectoral qualifications system
A 'sectoral qualifications system' is concerned with the qualifications process confined to a specified sector and may exist at national and international level.

Sectoral qualifications framework
A 'sectoral qualifications framework' is defined as the structures and processes established by a sector for the development and implementation of qualifications, including institutional arrangements, quality assurance, assessment and awarding procedures, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market.

Skills
'Skills' are the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the EQF, skills are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

Translation device
In the context of qualifications, the term is used to denote the language or methods of verifying the equivalence between one qualification and another. An NQF for example is a translation device to verify whether one qualification carries the same weight of another in terms of content, level of education and training and assessment.

Transparency of qualifications
The degree to which the value of qualifications can be identified and compared on the (sectoral, regional, national or international) labour and training markets.

Validation (of non-formal and informal learning)
The process of assessing and recognizing a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences, which people develop throughout their lives within different environments, for example through education, work and leisure activities.

Valuing learning
The process of recognizing participation in and outcomes of (formal or non-formal) learning, in order to raise awareness of its intrinsic worth and to reward learning.

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:

Notes: