INQUAL

Imprinting Quality to Entrepreneurship Education

Guidelines

For the implementation of a Quality Management System in Entrepreneurship Education

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Revision history

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Project information

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Contents

Executive Summary

The Guidelines for the implementation of a Quality Management System in Entrepreneurship Education is a tool developed for Quality Managers in order to have an easy-to-use reference point on Quality Management in VET provider. They will help the Quality Manager to implement the EQAVET instruments to their own organization and its specific needs.

It is a part of the "Quality Management Toolkit" together with "The European Baseline Report" and "The Common Reference Framework". Together, they represent a complete set of documents that can improve the overall Quality of an Organization.

Moreover, the Guidelines are complementary to the Training Course for Quality Managers developed inside the IN-QUAL project, titled "Implementing Quality Management in Entrepreneurship education: a training course for the Quality Manager".

The synergy between all the Outputs of the project will result in a general improvement of the culture of Quality inside VET providers, and, consequently, help them improve the Quality of Entrepreneurship Education.

1. Introduction

1.1 – Project aims and objectives

The main aim of the IN-QUAL project is to contribute to the improvement of Quality Management (QM) mechanisms in vocational education and training and work-based learning pathways, specifically in the field of entrepreneurship education in continuing VET (cVET).

Therefore, the project is focused on presenting Quality Managers in VET providers with a range of methods and tools from which they can benefit, in order to establish a wide culture of quality and to improve the offer in entrepreneurship education.

The project is especially focused on the principles and indicators of the Reference Framework for European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) and aims to help VET providers in their application of these indicators and principles inside their own organizations.

The Project will provide three main Results:

- **The Quality Assessment Toolkit**
- **Training Course:** "Implementing Quality Management in Entrepreneurship education: a training course for the Quality Manager".
- **Recommendations** for the implementation of Quality Management system in entrepreneurship education.

1.2 – Quality Management Toolkit

The Guidelines for the implementation of a Quality Management System in Entrepreneurship Education is a part of the "Quality Management Toolkit", a series of instrument and tools to help the Quality mangers in setting up the Quality System of their organizations.

It is composed by:

- The **European Baseline Report**, which stems from research and interviews of Entrepreneurship Education Providers that were carried out by the Partners in the early stages of the Project. It is the basis for all the following work since it describes the legal and institutional situation in the Partners Countries for the Quality Management Systems in VET, as well as it shows the needs and expectations of VET Providers.

- The **Common Reference Framework**, which is a working document that offers the fundamental notions of the Quality Management Tools and Methods, and, specifically, the EQAVET standards and principles, to Quality Managers of Entrepreneurship Education Providers. This document is meant to function as a reference point for Quality Managers, who can reach the information contained in it in support of their work of with transparency and quality assessment in their organizations.

- The **Guidelines for the implementation of a Quality Management System in Entrepreneurship Education**, which represents an accessible and easy-to-follow document that can provide the Quality Managers with an immediate instrument to apply the EQAVET tools to their organizations. Specifically, it guides the Quality Manager to apply the

information contained in the Common Reference Framework in a more practical way.

The Quality Management Toolkit is a coherent set of documents that are complementary to each other, and work together to provide to Quality Managers all the necessary information on Quality Management for Entrepreneurship Education providers. They work in synergy to each other, and thus, are meant to be consulted together.

1.3 – Navigating the Guidelines

Since the Guidelines are based on the content of the Common Reference Framework, they are divided into the three main chapters that compose it. Finally, each Guideline has a correspondence to a specific phase of the PDCA cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act).

The Guidelines are thought of as an easily accessible document, and for this reason, they can be read in the order that the reader prefers. To navigate the Guidelines, refer to the table 1, in which the Guidelines are clustered based on the chapter of the Common Reference Framework and on the phase of the PDCA cycle to which they are linked.

	Plan	Do	Check	Act
Quality Management in VET	1. Compare your QM system to existing best practices	2. Use EQAVET as a methodology to ensure quality assessment	3. Ensure internal and external evaluations	4. Include feedback into daily practices and procedures
Principles and Indicators for EE providers	5. Ensure there is a management culture committed to Quality Management and supportive of staff training	6. Invest in Staff Training	7. Develop a culture of self-assessment and use data and feedback to improve VET provision	
Stakeholders Engagement	8. Include internal and external Stakeholders in all the phases of the project	11. Differentiate the levels of engagement	12. Plan and Follow a Stakeholder engagement methodology	13. Make your results publicly available
	9. Create a Stakeholders Map			
	10. Study the different Engagement Tools and choose the more appropriate to the situation			

Table 1 – Map of the Guidelines

2. Guidelines

2.1. Quality Management in VET

G 1 - Compare your QM system to existing best practices

Description of the Guideline:

The five case studies included in the Common Reference Framework are part of a set of 29 case studies selected by the EQAVET Network working group; they are considered illustrative of an effective application of EQAVET[1] standards to national Quality Management systems.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

Reading about what worked in similar contexts to yours can be a useful indicator to guide the development of your Quality Management system.

Risks of applying the Guideline:

Even in comparable contexts of application, similar strategies do not necessarily yield similar results. Before adapting your QM system to another model, consider carefully the associated threats and opportunities.

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[1] EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) is a community of practice that brings together EU Member States, the Social Partners and the European Commission to develop and improve quality assurance in European VET systems within the context of the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.

G 2 - Use EQAVET as a methodology to ensure quality assessment

Description of the Guideline:

Implement Quality Management based on the EQAVET quality cycle and the ten EQAVET indicators by using EQAVET tools. EQAVET indicators are a set of **10 Quality Assurance indicators** developed by the European Union to support the evaluation and quality improvement of VET systems and/or VET providers. Consult the list of indicators in the Common Reference Framework or on EQAVET's website.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

Your organisation may or may not have a Quality Management system already in place. The EQAVET indicators can be useful in both cases: as a starting place to develop a new QM system or as a point of reference to reinforce or upgrade an existing one.

It will allow the Quality Manager to apply quality assurance according to European standards with clear steps and indicators, but also a comprehensive overview of how quality management can be implemented.

Risks of applying the Guideline:

There is the risk of focusing only on the EQAVET tools, though there are other tools which can also be used and might be more relevant. The Quality Manager should know the different tools and learn when to apply the most appropriate to the situation. Moreover, keep in mind that EQAVET indicators are not designed for benchmarking, but to support a culture of quality in VET: only choose those that are relevant to your organisation.

G 3 - Ensure internal and external evaluations

Description of the Guideline:

Make sure you have internal evaluations by evaluating Management and organisation, Infrastructure Personnel and Programmes. Also, involve external bodies/systems, to have a full evaluation process. Define for your VET institution how often to implement this guideline. It is recommended to do internal and external evaluations every three months. Quality Management should be organized in a cycle and involve a continuous process of reflection and feedback.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

The Quality Manager will have a checklist on what needs to be evaluated and covering evaluation by including all factors needed. It will help the creation of a quality cycle and allow the VET provider to continuously adapt to changes.

Risks of applying the Guideline:

Time and people are needed to apply this guideline in the best possible way. For this reason, it is necessary to plan the evaluation carefully and in due time. The cycle of evaluation and improvement should be a never-ending process.

G 4 - Include feedback into daily practices and procedures

Description of the Guideline:

The Quality Manager should take into account the feedback received from learners, teachers, and external collaborators when reviewing the courses or other activities in their organizations, and use this feedback as a guide to propose remedial actions whenever issues are raised.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

It will create a cycle of continuous learning and improvement inside the organization, that will enhance its effectiveness. Moreover, the learners and teachers will feel that their opinions are taken into account, and will feel more involved in the decision-making process, thus contributing more to the overall improvement of the organization.

Risks of applying the Guideline:

Feedbacks from individuals can be biased due to various reasons, that should be taken into account when applying their suggestions. They can be due to an issue that was limited in time, or they can put too much emphasis on a secondary problem while ignoring its real cause. Thus, the received feedback should be analysed attentively before being applied.

2.2. Quality Culture in Entrepreneurship Education

G 5 - Ensure there is a management culture committed to quality assurance and supportive of staff training

Description of the Guideline:

Create a commitment and involvement of all levels, an open mindset towards improvement and an environment with mutual trust and open communication, by assuring a clear vision of quality and quality improvement.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

By using a bottom-up approach, you will involve all actors and accomplish a commitment to quality assurance.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

Sometimes the main motivation of the management is focused on external verification, with the consequence that there is no real culture for quality improvement.

G 6 - Invest in Staff Training

Description of the Guideline:

Invest on professionalization of the staff involved and ensure staff is well prepared for their training role which includes Quality Management.

Establish partnerships with organisations dedicated to foster entrepreneurship to ensure the relevance of learners´ training.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

The training of staff and the establishment of partnerships regarding entrepreneurship matters and also quality issues helps VET providers improve their competitive advantage and offer more attractive programs to trainees. On the other hand, it helps you develop a quality culture as well as a commitment to Quality Management among trainers and staff.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

It might take quite some time either to train the trainers about Quality Management or to readjust trainer's educational material to Quality Management standards and principles.

G 7 - Develop a culture of self-assessment and use data and feedback to improve VET provision

Description of the Guideline:

Establish a process of self-assessment that cuts across all levels of training, using both internal self-evaluation as well external evaluators.

Benefits of applying the Guideline:

The data collected about students, training and trainers allow you to ensure better planning, implementation, evaluation and review.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

Spending time and effort in collecting data about the quality of the training and then not using it for further development.

2.3. Stakeholder Engagement

G 8 - Include internal and external Stakeholders in all the phases of the project

Description of the Guideline:

Stakeholder engagement should be considered as early as possible and throughout the entire duration of the project. Stakeholder engagement should start from the very beginning, from concept development and planning, through implementation, to monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Ensure that you have representatives of the different internal and external stakeholders in every process and that they share the same vision of the Quality Management System.

Benefits of applying the Guidelines: An early involvement is considered essential in order to obtain high quality and durable decisions. Stakeholders should also be involved in monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the process, in order to have constant feedback from them during the whole duration of the project.

Moreover, involving various stakeholders will bring a holistic approach to entrepreneurial education and an inclusive as well as an extrovert climate of the institution.

Risks of applying the Guidelines: Quality managers should be very careful with the involvement of Stakeholders during the entire length of the project, because their influence can both improve the project, but also lead it off track, and they might have different interests and perspectives about Quality Management.

G 9 - Create a Stakeholders Map

Description of the Guideline:

Many different individuals or groups can be part of the Stakeholders of a project: anyone who affects, is affected, or simply perceive themselves as affected by the project or one of its outcomes can be considered a Stakeholders. Before engaging them in the activities of the project, it's critical to do a stakeholder analysis and mapping exercise. This will help to identify the key stakeholders in each area, as well as the types of input they require, what kind of communication they might need and when.

In order to guarantee a proper engagement of the Stakeholders is fundamental to take into consideration the stake, the interests to participate, of each Stakeholder: interests, rights, ownership, knowledge and contribution. Each of the different stakes represent a way to successfully engage the Stakeholder, always remembering that the Stakeholder engagement can only be achieved through effective communication

Benefits of applying the Guidelines:

The stakeholder analysis and mapping will help the Quality Manager in expanding the type and number of Stakeholders to include in their project, and to identify with more precision the adequate level of engagement needed and the specific kind of communication required.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

A risk during the Stakeholder Analysis is the tendency to include only the most obvious Stakeholders in the Map, those who have a high interest in the project and are willing to be involved. This can lead to a communication only targeted to those stakeholders. A more in-

depth analysis will help avoid this risk and instead provide a clearer and wider understanding of all the actors involved. At the same time, to avoid the risk of a wrongly targeted communication, the Map should also include an analysis of the best communication strategies, appropriate to the single stakeholder to be engaged.

G 10 - Study the different Engagement Tools and choose the more appropriate to the situation

Description of the Guideline:

There are many different instrument and tools that can be used for the Stakeholders Engagement. They include Invitation Letters, Questionnaires, Interviews, Focus Groups, Conferences, and the use of all form of Media. Each of them can reach a specific goal and is indicated for a specific situation.

Benefits of applying the Guidelines:

A correct use of all of the different engagement tools ensures a high level of effectiveness to the communication strategy targeted at the various Stakeholders and allows the Quality Manager to always use the more indicated to the targeted Stakeholder.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

A superficial knowledge of the different tools might result in poor choices among the many instruments the Quality Manager can use, thus reducing the effectiveness of the engagement. For this reason, an in-depth study and analysis of the tools are needed.

G 11 - Differentiate the levels of engagement

Description of the Guideline:

When a Quality Manager wants to engage some Stakeholders, he/she may need to differentiate the level of engagement in order to guarantee the proper development of the project; indeed the Quality Manager may need to choose among the following levels of engagement (depending on the level of influence he/she wants to leave to each stakeholder): giving information, consultation, functional participation, interactive participation and self-mobilization.

Benefits of applying the Guidelines:

A correct use of the different level of Stakeholder engagement will provide the Quality Manager with the necessary information to better understand the area in which he/she works and to reach efficient results.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

A superficial knowledge of the different Stakeholder might result in poor choices in the different level of engagement for the Quality Manager, which may be influenced too less or too much by the wrong stakeholder.

G 12 - Plan and Follow a Stakeholder engagement methodology

Description of the Guideline:

Every Quality Manager should respect the different steps to engage each stakeholder. The Quality Manager should engage the different stakeholders according to the following methodology: define the purpose of the engagement, identify the relevant Stakeholder, elaborate a strategic plan to engage them, implement a Stakeholder plan and review it.

Benefits of applying the Guidelines:

Applying a correct methodology will guarantee to the Quality Manager to reach successfully the Stakeholder and engage them for a long-lasting collaboration.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

Not applying all the steps suggested may lead the Quality Manager to not engage the Stakeholder successfully.

G 13 - Make your results publicly available

Description of the Guideline:

The Quality Manager should provide information on the outcomes of the projects, and make them publicly available, in the form of Reports or Newsletters, or any kind of document that is suitable to the project.

Benefits of applying the Guidelines:

It will reinforce the engagement between the VET provider and the stakeholders, especially those who have participated in previous phases of the project, that will be able to see their contributions to the organization or to feel that their feedback and suggestion have been taken into consideration.

Risks of applying the Guidelines:

Which results to make public and in which form is a decision that should be carefully considered since it can have lasting effects on the communication strategy of the organization.

3. Conclusions

The Guidelines developed during the IN-QUAL Project aim at being a "reference point" for VET providers which specialize in Entrepreneurship Education, and specifically for the Quality Managers of such organizations.

The synergy between all the components of the Quality Management Toolkit enables the Guidelines to be accessible and easy to use, and at the same time informative and complete, thanks to the references to the other documents of the Toolkit.

Moreover, the Quality Management Toolkit will work in complete synergy with all the other results of the whole project, thus helping in the diffusion of a Quality Culture inside VET providers, and especially Entrepreneurship Education providers.

Specifically, the Guidelines are complementary to the Training Course for Quality Managers developed inside the IN-QUAL project, titled "Implementing Quality Management in Entrepreneurship education: a training course for the Quality Manager". Many of the Guidelines will receive a more in-depth explanation in the course, and, vice-versa, the course will be able to make references to the Guidelines.

The actions to be undertaken by Quality Managers inside VET providers are numerous and cover many different areas of an organization life, but they are all central for the implementation of the overall Quality Management. This is why having the tools to navigate them is fundamental for a Quality Manager to be able to put into practice an improved Quality Management and consequently enhance his/her whole Organization.

Further reading

Croatian Quality Assurance Framework for Vocational Education and Training: SELF-ASSESSMENT MANUAL

https://www.asoo.hr/UserDocsImages/projekti/kvaliteta/Self-assessment%20Manual.pdf

EQAVET implementation: "A European goal to be achieved through national approaches":

https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Events/EU-Presidency-2013/Conference-21-22-May-2013/EQAVET-Projects-2011-to-2013.pdf

If your country is not featured in the Common Reference Framework or if you would like to read about a specific EU country, consult this comprehensive country-based list of case studies.

EQAVET building blocks for VET Providers:

https://www.eqavet.eu/EU-Quality-Assurance/For-VET-Providers

EQAVET Malta manual for Vet Providers un Implementation of Quality Assurance:

https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Publications/Quality%20Assurance/EQAVET%20Manual.pdf

EQAVET in Practice:

https://www.qspirit.eu/images/docs/03_Q-Spirit_Guidelines-CQAF-VET_2017.pdf