



D3.4 Guidelines for licensing of a DPO VET Curriculum

WP3. Establishing a Sustainable Cooperation Structure and Recognition of qualifications for Data Protection Officers and “Data Protection Ready” employees

Project Acronym	DataPRO
Project title	Upgrading the EU Data Protection Sector with new Skills
Agreement number	2018-1737 / 001-001
EU programme	ERASMUS+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform
Project website	www.datapro-project.eu

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Date	November, 2020
Version	Final
Dissemination Level	Restricted to other programme participants (including Commission services and project reviewers)



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Executive Summary

This document is part of the “*DATA PRO: Upgrading the EU Data Protection Sector with new Skills*” Project and refers to Output D.3.4 “*Guidelines for licensing of a DPO VET Curriculum*”. The Output is based on the Action 3.1.4: “Preparation and testing of a coherent guideline for licensing of Curricula”, as described in the application of the project. It is also related to the D.3.3 Output (Checklist & Profile of Assessors) and its aim is to provide general guidance on the licensing of a DPO VET Curriculum.

Based on the outcome of the previous Action 3.1.3, in which the Certification of a Joint DPO VET Curriculum is foreseen, this deliverable exhibits the **general criteria and standards** which have to be met **by a VET provider** in order to **achieve positive external assessment, that will guarantee licencing of the DPO VET Curricula**, the accompanied WBL Scheme and the data protection training program at EU Level and in other Partner Countries.

On this basis the criteria and standards for accreditation will vary widely between different countries or according to the specific field of training. Nevertheless, these criteria and standards are not drafted for individual cases but will always apply for a certain type of VET provider or VET programme, to allow also comparisons, exchange of experience and eventual benchmarking.

The guidelines documented in this deliverable, take into consideration **that curriculum accreditation is not obligatory** but will **provide a platform should other countries would like to proceed to the accreditation** (each phase of the accreditation). More specifically, steps for accreditation can be taken in accordance to each country regulations through consultation with relevant national authorities in the participating countries, and this document aims to give helpful advice on the overall processes and considerations as DPO partners and future users of the content progress towards formal, external, accreditation.

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1. Introduction

There are quite different meanings of accreditation in the VET systems of the EU Member States but there is at least one core element in relation to quality and accreditation which is generally accepted. This is the need for external assessment of the quality of training provision. Given this element as a starting point, there must be two different parties involved in this process: the VET provider and an external body which is recognised to perform the external assessment and to award accreditation as a result of (positive) evaluation. It is accepted that whenever an external assessment or evaluation takes place, some criteria and standards must be applied to arrive at a positive or negative decision (Cedefop, 2009).

Based on the above, this deliverable provides a set of general criteria and standards, which have to be met by a VET provider in order to achieve positive external assessment that will guarantee the licencing/ accreditation of the DPO VET Curriculum.

EOPPEP, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, being the National Reference Point (NRP) of the EQAVET Network in Greece, ensures that the design and implementation of the VET curricula are in alignment with the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and tools, especially the EQAVET principles, which enhance the transparency, recognition and quality of competences and qualifications and support the mobility of learners.

2. Purpose and scope of guidelines for curriculum licensing

This coherent guide presents the methodology on the curriculum internal licensing in the framework of the DPO Project, based on the European Quality Assurance Framework for VET (theoretical part), but has also the scope of a practical guide for the facilitation of VET providers towards the aim of achieving positive external assessment that will guarantee the licencing/ accreditation of the DPO VET Curriculum, by providing a set of general curriculum accreditation criteria and standards. These standards address not only the quality of the curriculum design but also the quality of the delivery of training, in order the accreditation to be achieved.

The deliverable aims at illustrating the key quality parameters that guarantee the transparency in the process of curriculum accreditation/ licensing and strengthen the confidence and trust among learners, VET providers and labour market not only at national, but also at European level.

3. Terms and Definitions

In this chapter important terms and definitions are presented according to EQF and ECVET recommendations, which will be used as a basis for the development of the learning outcomes and of the later outputs and tasks of the project.

Accreditation: Accreditation – the formal recognition that a body or a person is competent to carry out specific tasks (Cedefop, 2003) – assesses compliance with predefined objectives and permits regular examination of progress made.

Accreditation Body: The Accreditation Body (AB) is a competent body that develops evaluation standards and criteria that an educational program or institution has to meet in order to gain the accreditation, following the implementation of a structured and impartial accreditation process. The AB conducts experts' visits to assess whether or not these criteria are met.

Curriculum: The lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program.

Learning Outcomes: Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence

Knowledge: The outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study.

Skills: The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.

Competence: The proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development

Expected learning outcome - a formal statement of what learners are expected to learn in a course (synonyms for "expected learning outcome" include learning outcome, learning outcome statement, and learner learning outcome).

Standard – statement approved and formalised by a competent body, which defines the rules and criteria to follow in a given context or the results to be achieved. Standards may take a quantitative form, being mostly the results of benchmarking, or they may be qualitative, indicating only specific targets. When quantitative, the standards include threshold levels that have to be met. More often than not, the thresholds are defined at the level of minimally acceptable quality.

4. Accreditation of curricula

4.1 Accreditation vs Certification

Accreditation is primarily understood as an assessment tool, which is applied not by the VET provider himself but externally by a body officially recognised for this task. While policy frameworks for quality are the driving forces behind the VET improvement, with their role to define the objectives, criteria and standards to be pursued, accreditation procedures must determine whether vocational training programmes are implemented in accordance with those objectives, criteria and standards.

Frequently, accreditation and certification are used synonymously and what is called accreditation in one country might be called certification in another. They are both about external verification of quality but they have a slightly different focus. Certification is about compliance with the standards, rules and criteria as defined by a methodological framework for quality assurance, such as the ISO-9000ff standards.

Accreditation normally will encompass certification: in Italy, for example, a provider certified according to ISO-9000 will be accredited by the regional authorities for education and training. In other cases, accreditation will require more than compliance with the principles of quality assurance frameworks. Since it means recognition by a public body, the accreditation process may also consider public concerns such as the adequacy of a training programme for the regional labour market or its relevance to certain policy objectives.

Going beyond certification, accreditation additionally will ask if certain policy objectives are met by the respective programme.

Accreditation consists of external assessment in relation to predefined requirements (objectives, criteria, standards of quality) for VET programmes or the provider organisation, they lead to reasonable judgements, and finally to a decision with implications for the VET provider and/or the quality of the training programme, dependent on what has been assessed. Positive external assessment might result in registration, licensing or even a quality label for the provider and/or the training course.

External accreditation and internal approaches to quality management should complement each other. Effective improvement of VET provision will have to build on both top-down and bottom-up elements, although there is always a certain tension between internal and external elements of quality assurance.

Accreditation is the result of an external assessment of the quality of VET providers, to make sure that the whole organisation or a particular training programme adheres to certain predefined criteria and standards. Quality labels are not awarded forever but must be renewed in a continuous cycle with an average time span of about five years. *(Cedefop, Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training, 2009)*

4.2 Accreditation Key Elements

Despite the variations that exist between the different procedures for accreditation, there are common features and understanding:

(a) Accreditation is concerned with quality of VET programmes and/or VET institutions (the objects of accreditation);

- (b) Accreditation follows transparent standards, regulations and rules;
- (c) Accreditation is a process of external quality review used to scrutinise VET programmes or VET organisations for quality assurance and quality improvement;
- (d) Accreditation implies clearly defined consequences and, in most cases, formal recognition (right to award qualifications) resulting from formal decisions.

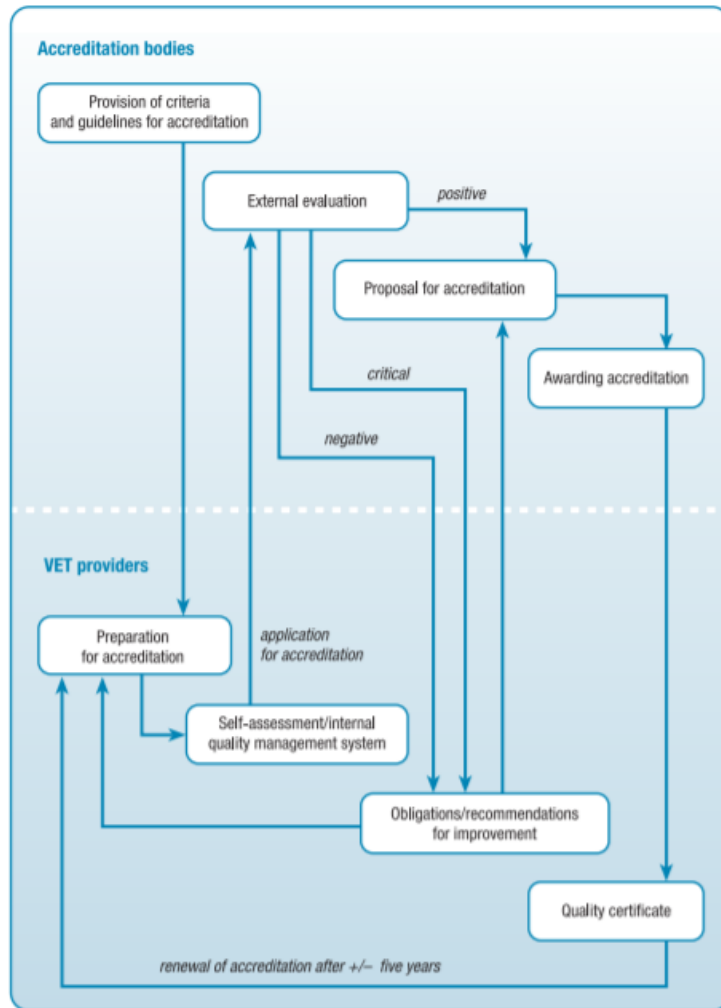
Based on these common elements and understood in broad terms as **external evaluation of training provision**, accreditation can be a focal point for developing the quality and accountability of vocational education and training:

- (a) Accreditation is closely related to the institutional framework for governance of VET systems as it implies the creation of specific independent bodies to evaluate and to promote the quality of training provision;
- (b) Accreditation is a lever to extend autonomy, responsibility and a culture of self-assessment in training organisations;
- (c) Accreditation asks for discussions and decisions on quality objectives and quality concepts to be applied, as well as on stakeholders and actors to be involved in decision-making processes;
- (d) Accreditation allows for evaluation of training programmes according to their usefulness and effectiveness for the labour markets and the national economy, their adequacy for the students and their efficiency for the country;
- (e) Accreditation seeks the necessary quality tools to assess the inputs (for example: equipment, qualification of trainers) and processes (curricula), the results (certificates) and the outcomes (employability) of training;
- (f) Accreditation supports transparency when mechanisms to communicate and disseminate the results and outputs of training provision are set up. (*Cedefop, Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training, 2009*)

4.3 General Accreditation Process

There are different meanings of accreditation in the VET systems, but there is one core element in relation to quality and accreditation which is the need for external assessment of the quality of training provision.

The accreditation is a multistep procedure and in the figure below a general process of accreditation is presented



Source: Erwin Seyfried.

Figure 1: General process of accreditation (Cedefop, 2009)

As far as the accreditation process is concerned, some key parameters are presented below:

Involved Parties

Given this element two parties are involved in the process: the **VET provider** and an **external body** which is recognised to perform the external assessment and to award accreditation as a result of (positive) evaluation. Whenever an external assessment or evaluation takes place, some criteria and standards must be applied to arrive at a positive or negative decision. (Cedefop, *Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training*, 2009)

The Accreditation Body (AB)

Traditionally, the Ministry of Education or Labour is formally responsible for recognition of VET providers and/or VET programmes, in particular when public financing is involved. In most countries ministries will not undertake accreditation by themselves but make use of an organisation closely linked to the ministry. In many countries ministries are supported by semi-public agencies fulfilling a broad range of operational tasks with approval or

accreditation of VET providers being included in their mission. As a general tendency in many European countries accreditation tasks are nowadays no longer carried out by the ministries responsible for VET themselves but by external bodies which act in cooperation with the ministries or which have independent status.

Prerequisites for accreditation

Based on practices from different European Countries, it can be concluded that an **internal self-assessment of the VET provider** and/or **the implementation of an internal quality management system** is a precondition for all accreditation procedures. Further, internal quality systems at VET provider level must reflect the criteria and standards of the external accreditation, although providers are usually free to design their internal quality system according to their specific local needs. In a number of countries, self-assessment reports of VET providers are used as a starting point for the external evaluation.

External Evaluation Group - Assessors

As far as the nature of the team of assessors is concerned; they can be VET experts in the field of training, also peers, i.e. representatives from other VET providers in the same field. Other members of the evaluation group may represent the learners, the social partners, gender organisations or other groups representing civil society. (*Cedefop, Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training, 2009*). The external assessors forming the evaluation group of assessors, could be part/members/employees of the Accreditation Body or they could be external partners organized and managed by the Accreditation Body that has the overall responsibility of the accreditation process. In many cases, the assessors are registered in the relative Assessors' Register of the Accreditation Body, following a training session on the accreditation criteria/system/process. In some cases, a prerequisite to become an assessor and to enter the Assessors Register is to pass the relative exams, after the training. What is also important is the frequent retraining of the Assessors for calibrating reasons and for ensuring their competence to act as assessors.

Objects of accreditation

Given that accreditation is a multistep procedure, objects of accreditation vary in different stages along this process:

- In the first stages of the accreditation process the focus is mainly on **input standards and process criteria**.
- In the later stages of the accreditation, when the external evaluations are carried out, the focus is much more on the **effectiveness and efficiency of programme delivery** and thus on **output and outcome**.

The areas that are addressed during the accreditation process are mainly:

- the organisational infrastructure and technical equipment of VET providers or VET programmes,
- the qualification of teachers and trainers,
- the contents of the training programme,
- its duration and
- The kind of examinations which must be passed by learners to achieve a certain qualification award.

A difference in accreditation object is between VET programmes and the VET providers' organisation. Some accreditations focus on VET programmes, whereas overall accreditation of the VET provider's organisation apart

from programme delivery is quite rare. In some countries, the first approval is focused on the organisation and the VET programme is evaluated along with its implementation

Evaluation Result

If the result of the evaluation is negative, accreditation will be denied and the VET provider will have to prepare and apply again after having improved its organisational structures and the quality of its training. The decision of the evaluating body will normally include advice and recommendations on necessary changes. Following a positive evaluation and proposal for accreditation, the VET provider will be awarded its accreditation and the organisation or the VET programme in question will receive a quality certificate. This certificate can be used for marketing activities of the VET provider to potential customers.

Duration of accreditation

A quality certificate is never issued for an unlimited period of time. A renewal of accreditation has to be made after a specified time span, normally around five years, although this renewal is often a lighter procedure than for the initial accreditation. In renewal procedures it is mainly the adequateness of the internal self-assessment or quality management system of the VET providers which are assessed.

4.3.1. Self-assessment in Accreditation

There is a strong relationship between internal self-assessment by the VET provider and external assessment procedures. Self-assessment is both the starting point for better quality and, through continuous application, one of the most effective methodological tools for improvement.

Self-assessment is carried out under the responsibility of the VET provider itself, the main difference between this method and the accreditation, where an external body with decision-making power is involved

Self-assessment is suitable for all types of VET organisations. Compared to accreditation it is an inexpensive tool which can also be used by small VET providers.

The involvement of the senior management and active participation of all members of the organisation is a precondition for success, and self-assessment will develop its full potential only when it becomes an integral part of the management standards and the organisational structure of the VET provider.

Self-assessment becomes all the more powerful when results are transformed into a development plan. This plan should define the areas and problems that need to be changed, as well as the objectives, procedures, resources and those people personally responsible for the change process. The relationship between these two elements can be stated in the following terms: self-assessment is for measurement, the development plan is to improve quality. Self-assessment alone is not a guarantee of quality. It is a powerful tool in this respect when it forms an inherent part of a quality approach at VET system level, providing guidance for VET providers on how to apply self-assessment coherently and ensure the transparency of the results. Finally, there is growing consensus that self-assessment also needs to be counterbalanced by a view from outside, by external evaluation as part of an accreditation process.

5. DPO VET Curriculum licensing within the framework of the DPO Project

5.1 Introduction

Curriculum accreditation in the DPO project takes the form of two steps procedure:

1. Initially the curricula that are developed will be “licensed” by a committee of experts.
2. The second phase is that the accreditation per se, which will occur after the implementation of training (meaning that accreditation is the procedure that ensures not only the quality of the curriculum design but also of the quality of delivery of training).

The prevailing areas that are examined in the Curriculum accreditation are the following:

- Curriculum Effectiveness
- Curriculum Efficiency
- Curriculum Appropriateness
- Curriculum Adequacy

Apart of the process orientation of the project structure, the whole approach follows the EQAVET Quality Cycle steps (**Plan – Implement/Do – Check/Evaluation - Improve/Review**).



Figure 2. The EQAVET Quality cycle

5.2 First phase of Curricula licensing in the DPO Project

The first phase of the Curricula licensing will be performed with the use of a committee of experts, and represents the internal evaluation phase leading to accreditation. The Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel of the DPO Project plays the role of this committee, and consists of members from the Project Partners. Such a committee would be set up to ensure a complete and coherent internal evaluation of the curricula serving VET providers who proceed with accreditation outside the lifespan and framework of the DPO project.

The Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel has the form of a working group with a specific role in advising on the planning, monitoring and evaluation of processes and outputs, ensuring the coherence of the curriculum with the EQF and ECVET as well as with the country specific needs in skills and competencies in the target sector and quality

assure the core curriculum and its country adaptations. It also validates that providers have developed the curricula according to the guidelines set in WP2.

The Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel works in close collaboration with the Project Director, as well as with Project Coordinator/ Manager. Each deliverable to be delivered to the Commission and/or uploaded at the project website shall be approved by the Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel.

The Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel meetings are implemented via teleconferences or Skype sessions minimum every two months. The panel meetings results in meeting notes and a set of actions, which all core partners are made privy to.

In order to strengthen the quality of the approval procedure and to increase the common understanding of the approval procedure and the sharing of a common view among the members of Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel, it was agreed to develop a set of evaluation criteria that will serve as a guideline for the licensing procedure of the deliverables by the Panel. These evaluation criteria may be not be applicable in all deliverables but their role is to serve as a guideline for the Panel approval procedure and not as a strict check list.

The evaluation criteria that the Quality Assurance & Evaluation Panel exploits on, for the project deliverables, are listed below:

- ***It follows the ECVET/EQAVET Recommendations***
- ***It follows CEDEFOP studies and guidelines***
- ***It is innovative***
- ***It follows the rules of visual identity of the Project and the publicity rules of EACEA***
- ***It is relevant and aligned to the Project Description***
- ***It owns a high level of Exploitation Potential***
- ***It creates synergies and multiplication effects***

6. External Curriculum Accreditation / Licensing Process of the DPO VET Curriculum

6.1 Introduction

The external curriculum accreditation is the accreditation per se by an Accreditation Body (AB). The external accreditation is the procedure that ensures not only the quality of the curriculum design, but also of the quality of the training provision. Based on that, the assessors that form the accreditation team, during the accreditation process, at first they will focus on the quality of the design parameters of the curriculum, and then they will focus on the delivery of the curricula, by visiting the premises of the VET provider(s). A more analytical description of the accreditation process is presented in the next chapters.

The formation of a set of general curriculum accreditation criteria and standards that VET providers has to fulfill towards the aim of achieving positive external assessment that will guarantee the licensing/ accreditation of the DPO VET Curriculum, is based on the best common practices and bibliography presented in Chapter 4.

6.2 Curriculum Accreditation Pillars

The accreditation of the DPO VET Curriculum are structured under four (4) pillars:

1. VET Providers' QMS Certification
2. VET Providers' Self-Assessment / self-assessment report
3. VET Curriculum Design / Plan
4. VET Curriculum provision parameters

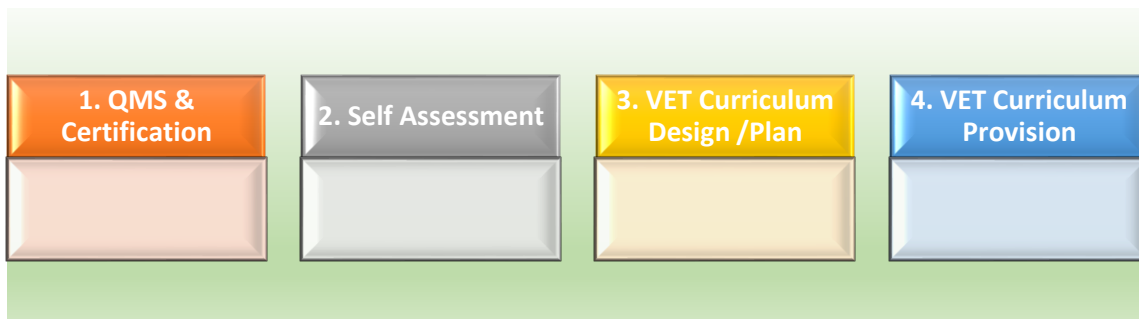


Figure 3. DPO VET Curriculum Accreditation Pillars

This phase of accreditation is performed by an Accreditation Body (AB) with the employment of an evaluation group of Assessors. These experts / group of assessors are acting in the name of the Accreditation Body, which has the overall responsibility of the curricula accreditation. They can be employees of the AB or external experts. Whatever their employment status is, what matters is that their qualifications comply with the Assessor's profile as it has been defined in D3.3 Deliverable and it is presented in Annex 1.

As it is obvious, the assessors are assessing / evaluating the Curriculum after its development phase by the VET providers. The accreditation process may result to the development of improvement actions regarding the design of the curriculum as well as regarding the provision aspects of the curriculum.

The three accreditation pillars are presented below:

6.2.1 First Accreditation Pillar: Quality Management System (QMS) & Certification

The first accreditation pillar and a prerequisite for the positive evaluation and reaching the accreditation of the VET Curriculum, is the existence of a VET Provider's certified Quality Management System (QMS). The certification may be according to an international (e.g. ISO Standard), with the certification scope being the delivery of VET programs, or according to a National Standard, depending on each country legal framework and VET policy. The certificate shall be submitted to the Accreditation Body as a supporting document used for the accreditation process.

6.2.2 Second Accreditation Pillar: Self-Assessment

The second accreditation pillar and a prerequisite for the accreditation of the VET Curriculum is the implementation of a Self-Assessment process from the VET Provider that delivers the curriculum. The results of the Self-Assessment process shall be documented in a **Self-Assessment Report**, structured according the assessment criteria that are developed and presented in the third and fourth accreditation pillars. As a prerequisite for the initiation of the accreditation process, is the submission from the VET Provider to the Accreditation Body of the self-assessment report.

6.2.3 Third Accreditation Pillar: Curriculum Design/Plan

The third accreditation pillar is structured around two (2) main areas of criteria, addressing parameters related to the design of the Curriculum: These areas are the Comprehensiveness and the content of the Curriculum.

- As far as the **Curriculum Comprehensiveness** is concerned, the accreditation focuses on the existence and on the volume of the needed (minimum) information/ data required to be contained in the curriculum.
- For the **Content of the Curriculum**, the accreditation criteria are more "qualitative" and they address issues focused on the Learning Outcomes (LOs) and delivery aspects of the curriculum.

These accreditation criteria may include areas like the following:

- **Objective of the curriculum**
- **Structure of the curriculum modules/units/sections based on the Learning Outcomes approach**
- **Modular design of the curriculum**
- **ECVET /EQF references**
- **Trainers profile**
- **Learners' needs and entry requirements**
- **VET provider required organization, technology, HR and infrastructure for the delivery of the curriculum.**
- **Duration of the program and hours of each module/unit/section**
- **Learning Activities, teaching methods**
- **Assessment and learners' self-assessment types**
- **Bibliography, required and recommended Readings/resources**
- **Related Occupational Profile and industry-sector trends and practices**
- **Curricula QA /Revision plan Criteria**

Samples of documents that can be used for the accreditation of the Completeness and the Content of the curricula are presented in Annex 2.

6.2.4 Fourth Accreditation Pillar: Curriculum Provision

The fourth accreditation pillar looks at the provision aspects of the curriculum and takes place on the site of the VET provider, in contrast with the previous three accreditation pillars that can be performed in the office away from the VET providers' facilities.

6.3 Curriculum Accreditation

6.3.1 Curriculum Accreditation Process

The VET Curriculum accreditation process, based on the four (4) accreditation pillars presented above, can be comprised by the following steps:

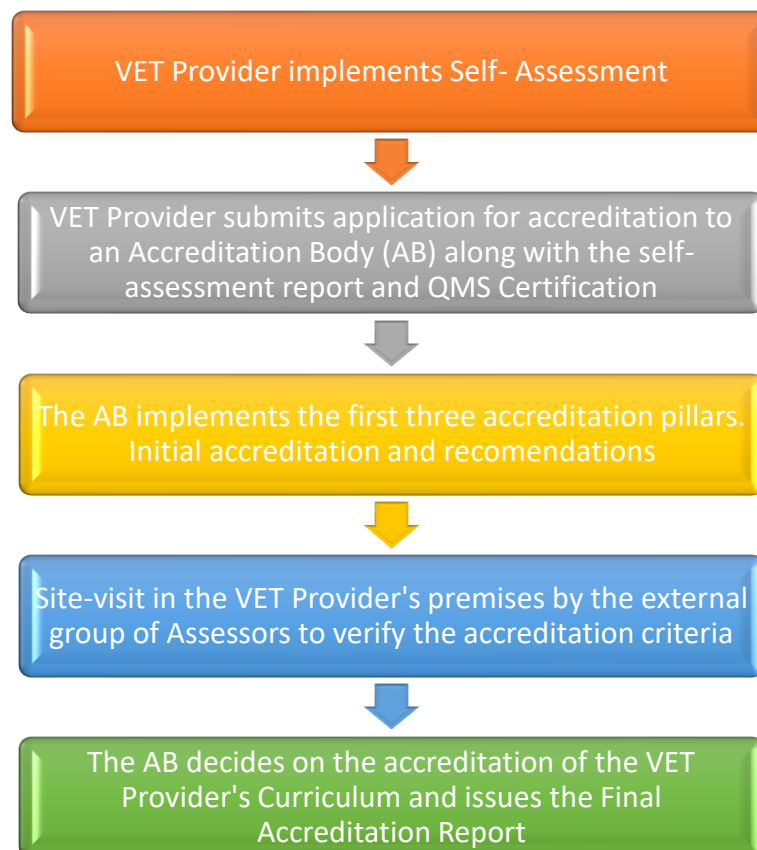


Figure 4. VET Curriculum Accreditation Process

6.3.2 The self-assessment report

The self-assessment process and the relative self-assessment report generated by the VET Provider and submitted to the Accreditation Body may be constructed according to the following sections.

6.3.2.1 Sections of the self-assessment report

1. Objectives

Does the training programme have clearly defined, reasonable and valid objectives?

1.1 Objectives of the institution, overarching objectives, and (state) restrictions if applicable

- Which overall strategy do the VET Provider pursue?
- How is the VET Curriculum integrated into this strategy? Which quantitative objectives does the VET Curriculum have? What is the current demand?
- How was compliance with legal regulation taken into consideration and guaranteed during the development of the VET Curriculum?

1.2 Objectives of the VET Curriculum

- Describe and substantiate the objectives of the VET Curriculum, the development of the objectives as well as the measures taken to assure the validity of the objectives:
- Which specific competences – both related to the specific study field and beyond – should be taught?
- How are the following aspects implemented in the objectives of the VET Curriculum?
 - Training delivery approach
 - Employability
 - Personality/personal development of the learners
 - Gender equality
- For which fields of activity does the VET Curriculum prepare its learners for?

2. Concept

How are the objectives implemented in the concept of the training programme? How do individual modules contribute to the achievement of the study programme's objectives?

2.1 VET Curriculum structure

- Please describe the structure of the VET Curriculum with regard to its internal coherence and its achievement of the objectives set:
 - Structure of the VET Curriculum regarding time and content
 - Integration of latest scientific or artistic developments into the curriculum
 - Structuring, integration and supervision of practical phases and/or periods spent abroad
 - Consideration of gender equality and the concerns of students in special situations

2.2 Learning objectives, modularisation, ECVET

- How is the VET Curriculum structured?
 - Use of ECVET
 - Modularisation concept
 - Scope of the obligatory, elective-obligatory and elective offerings, offering cycle

- Feasibility of the programme within the standard period of study
- Assessment and description of the learner workload
- Content of the module descriptions: content and learning outcomes, forms of teaching, participation requirements,
- applicability of the module, requirements for awarding
- credit points, credit points/workload, frequency of the module offering, duration of the module, classification
- development of transferable knowledge and skills

2.3 Learning Context

- Which educational means are used to provide the students with adequate professional and social skills in their field of expertise and (to what extent) are they appropriate?
 - Intended course structures and teaching methods
 - Justification of the selection and appropriateness of the forms of examination
 - Integration of distance learning elements and new media
 - Integration of foreign languages
 - The required qualifications of teaching staff is guaranteed

3. Implementation

Are the resources and organisational requirements adequate to implement the concept in a consistent and target-oriented way?

3.1 Resources

- Are the human resources required for the implementation of the VET Curriculum and the fulfilment of its profile available?
- Are the current resources/concerning equipment and budget sufficient and appropriate for the objectives of the VET Curriculum?

3.2 Decision-making processes, organization and cooperation

- How is the study programme organized?
 - How are responsibilities and contact persons defined and made transparent?
 - Committees for teaching and studies
 - Participation of learners
 - Participation of external people, stakeholders

3.3 Examination system

- How is the examination system organised? How does it contribute to achieving the VET Curriculum objectives?

3.4 Admission requirements

- Are the admission requirements, selection and recognition criteria appropriate and is the suitable target group addressed consequently?

3.5 Transparency

- How requirements are made transparent for all target groups?
 - Individual learner support and advice (information, subject-related advisory service, consultation hours, support through tutorials, etc.)
 - Documentation and publications with regard to the training programme, admission criteria, study plan and examinations, measures for disadvantage compensation
 - Access to the relevant study documents (e.g. module handbook)

4. Quality Assurance and Development/Improvement

- How is the quality of the VET Curriculum assured? Which measures aimed at the further development of objectives, the concept and implementation exist?
- Does the VET Provider have a quality management system with defined organisational and decision making structures to guarantee the systematic further development of the VET Curriculum?

There are **two basic purposes** for writing a self-assessment report.

1. The self-assessment is the foundation of the VET Curriculum accreditation process, providing information that asserts and confirms the VET Curriculum's compliance with all of the applicable standards.
2. The online conference and/or on-site visit validates evidence provided in the self-assessment. The self-assessment process also provides the opportunity for institutional benchmarking. It facilitates an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of the VET Curriculum and identifies its strengths, uniqueness, and areas for improvement.

Practical tips for VET providers on the compilation of a successful self-documentation report:

- ✓ Create a Self-assessment Committee or Team within your institution.
- ✓ Working with a committee can lessen the individual workload, provide multiple perspectives, and ensure the integrity of the self-assessment process and report.
- ✓ Use feedback from teachers and the self-evaluation committee, revise the curriculum and/or curriculum documentation.
- ✓ Gather documents that support, verify, and provide evidence of compliance with each standard and EQAVET indicator.
- ✓ The introductory section of the self-assessment report must provide essential background information, context, and perspective for the readers.
- ✓ Make the self-assessment "user friendly".
- ✓ Appendices/attachments consistently referenced to verify compliance.
- ✓ Strengths and uniqueness of VET Curriculum always highlighted.
- ✓ Clear statements of how VET Curriculum complies with each standard.

6.3.3 Curriculum Accreditation Criteria

Based on the above it is obvious that the above mentioned sections of the self assessment serve as the Curriculum Accreditation Criteria, during the process of the external assessment by the Accreditation Body.

They are also structured in consistency with the the EQAVET Quality Cycle steps (Plan – Implementation – Evaluation - Review).

Apart from that, they are very close related to specific EQAVET indicators. More precisely, the following EQAVET Indicators are primarily linked to the accreditation / self assessment criteria:

- **Indicator 3: Participation rate in VET programmes**
Operational definition: Number of participants in VET programmes (1), according to the type of programme and the individual criteria (2)
- **Indicator 4: Completion rate in VET programmes**
Operational definition: Number of successfully completed/abandoned VET programmes, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria
- **Indicator 5: Placement rate in VET programmes**
Operational definition:
 - a) *Destination of VET learners at designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria (1);*
 - b) *Share of employed learners at designated point in time after completion of training, according to the type of programme and the individual criteria.*
- **Indicator 9: Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market**
Operational definition:
 - a) **Information on mechanisms set up to identify changing demands at different levels;**
 - b) **Evidence of their effectiveness.**

In Annex 2 specific accreditation criteria are proposed in the form of a check-list template for the accreditation of the Curriculum.

6.3.4 Curriculum Accreditation Report

The final Curriculum Accreditation Report usually is an output of the collaboration of the assessors' team members / experts. It consists of a common assessment stemming -most of the times- from task/responsibility allocation, brainstorming and consultation process within the team.

The Curriculum Accreditation report that will be delivered to the VET Provider by the AB (Accreditation Body), may be comprised of the following sections:

1. VET Provider's essential background information
2. VET Curriculum essential background information (Title/ Code/ Description/ EQF level/objectives/ concept/ etc...)
3. Final decision of accreditation / or not by the assessors group
4. Key strengths and key areas for improvement
5. Assessment check list with comments of Completeness of Curriculum
6. Assessment check list with comments of the Content of Curriculum
7. A descriptive and an evaluative section addressing the provision aspects of the curriculum, as they have been assessed during the on-site assessment (e.g. facilities/ teachers/etc.)

Since the accreditation report may serve as an improvement initiator for the VET Provider, both positive and negative findings stemming from the accreditation process should be specified. The accreditation report should be sufficiently informative and conclusive so that the recommendations of the assessors'/expert group is clearly comprehensible without any further background information needed. A clear distinction is therefore to be made between recommendations, which can contribute to the optimisation of the study programme, and conditions, on whose fulfilment in due course and time the accreditation status is based.

6.3.5 Accreditation process Final results

The outcome of the accreditation process, as depicted in the accreditation report, may result to the following options:

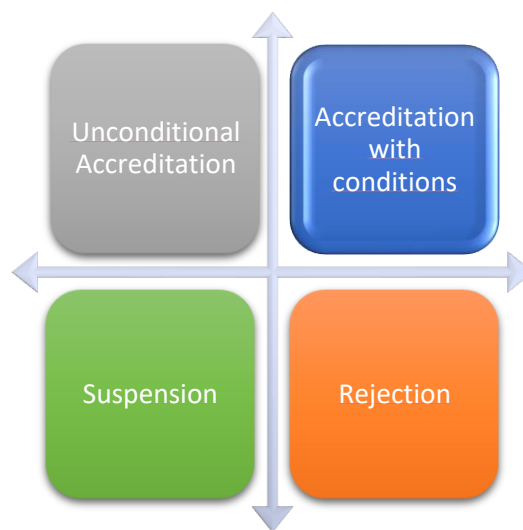


Figure 5. VET Curriculum Accreditation Process Final results

Unconditional Accreditation

The VET Curriculum has none nonconformance with regard to content and structure. However, every VET Curriculum can and should be further developed. Therefore recommendations can be given that should be considered with regard to quality development by the VET Provider.

Accreditation with conditions

The VET Curriculum is accredited. It has, however, areas for improvement or inconsistencies that are nonessential with regard to content or structure, but must be corrected to ensure the long term quality of the VET Curriculum. This means that the VET Curriculum needs, at least in some areas, improvement. But, it does not imply any disqualification of the VET Curriculum, which in fact may be demanding in terms of quality. The VET provider must make these improvements within a certain time period.

Suspension of the procedure

The VET Curriculum is not accredited now, but there is the prospect of accreditation. Essential deficits with regard to content and structure must first be corrected, before the VET Curriculum can be re submitted for accreditation.

Rejection



The accreditation is denied as the VET Curriculum has fundamental deficits, which further revision cannot correct.

7. Resources

- (Cedefop, 2009). Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training
- Cedefop (2015). Ensuring the quality of certification in vocational education and training. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/25991>
- Cedefop (2017). Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes: a European handbook. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/566770>
- www.eqavet.eu

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Profile of Assessors

Profile of Assessor
<p><i>Main tasks of the Assessor are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessing the completeness of the information that the curriculum provides 2. Assessing the content of the Curriculum 3. Reaching to a conclusion and producing an assessment report
<p><i>General knowledge of field of study:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poses knowledge of GDPR compliance and relative business practices • Has sufficient understanding of the relative field of study
<p><i>General requirements for professional knowledge / qualification:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has sufficient professional knowledge of the relative field of study • Poses relative certification and qualifications which are in the area or closely related to the area being assessed. Assessor must have qualifications one level above units being applied for. • Has undergone a training on assessment procedure/ assessor role
<p><i>General requirements for professional expertise:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an educational background / experience as a trainer and understands the education process (educational philosophy, content, teaching methods and level of training) • Work experience in the industry is a distinct asset to the assessor. Such experience should be current and relevant to the competency field and he/she should be aware of current best practices in the industry. • Uses sources to be kept informed of the latest developments in the sector and the profession and poses current exposure to industry practices that will assist in benchmarking best practices for assessment (by remain in practice, reading magazines, internet and visiting trade fairs and conferences etc.) • Additionally experience in the evaluation of programmes and/or projects will be an asset • Experience should be directly related to the competency and should cover a range related to competencies that will enable the assessor to make consistent assessment decisions. The assessor should be aware of local and international best practices in the skill and related areas.

ANNEX 2: Curriculum design accreditation check list template

1. Assessment of Curriculum Comprehensiveness				
#	Assessment Criteria	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1	Is the Curriculum structured on the basis of the Learning Outcome (LO) approach?			
2	Are the modules identified sufficiently (Code / Title / Description)?			
3	Is there a link to the relative Qualification?			
4	Is the relative EQF Level determined?			
5	Is there a reference on the Duration?			
7	Are the LOs identified sufficiently (Name / Definition)?			
8	Are the LOs described in terms of Knowledge, Skills and Competences?			
9	Is there a Course Syllabus per LO described?			
10	Are there sample Learning Activities described?			
11	Is the Assessment Type described for each session?			
12	Are there Required and Recommended Readings documented?			
13	Are there the hours of the curriculum delivery for each module documented?			
14	Are the learners' profile and entry requirements for the curriculum documented?			
15	Is the trainers' profile determined for each module/session?			
16	Are the required technology, human and infrastructure needs for the delivery of the curriculum documented?			
15	Is there the period of the curriculum review documented?			
16	Is there a reference of ECVET points for each Module?			

2. Assessment of the Content of Curriculum				
	QUESTION	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1	Does the Curriculum support the objective of the DPO Project?			
2	Can the Curriculum be implemented by applying a hybrid teaching methodology using innovative technology for blended learning?			
3	Are the modules that the curriculum is comprised of, adequate and appropriate in order to cover the scope of the curriculum?			
4	Are the described LOs reflecting the current industry trends and practices?			
5	Are the LOs corresponding to the relative EQF level?			
6	Is the course syllabus appropriate and suitable for each Learning Outcome?			
7	Are the proposed assessment types appropriate and suitable for the relative LOs?			
8	Are the proposed teaching methods appropriate for each LO?			
9	Are the proposed Learning activities appropriate for each LO?			
10	Are the proposed Resources/Reading appropriate for each LO?			
11	Are the sessions of each Module appropriately linked to each LO & Aims of the sessions?			
12	Are the number of days of the curriculum delivery adequate and appropriate?			
13	Is the delivery of the curriculum almost equally distributed across face-to-face, online and workplace?			

