



OpenQAsS

Open Source Quality Assurance System for Vocational Education

QA SYSTEM IN THE PRACTICE OF THE EUROPEAN VET INSTITUTION

The OpenQAsS project vision was to utilise the potential of today's networking technology in all areas of the implementation of the EQAVET Reference Framework principles, and so make the resulting tools part of the daily practice of institutional Quality Assurance in our VET schools. One of the final product is an open source software toolkit (OpenQAsS Toolkit) for supporting the management of QA systems in the vocational schools and training providers.

The aim of the first working phase (Intellectual Outcome 1) was twofold: to create a solid basis for the development of OpenQAsS Toolkit via a detailed requirement analysis; to produce a valuable study for use by all actors in vocational education, systematically revealing both the problems and good practice.

In order to analyse the state-of-the-art of the implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) systems in European VET institutions, partners in the partner countries (UK, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Hungary) have carried out a needs-analysis on the implementation of QA systems in their respective countries, and documented their results in national reports.

The main hypotheses behind the analysis are:

1. Most of the vocational schools and institutions in the partner countries operate certain type of QA systems, or there are governmental rules for them to implement certain QA components.
2. There are systematic controlling processes (in both IVET and CVET) in every partner country; these processes impose strict requirements for establishing internal and/or external evaluation processes.
3. We know that the level of usage QA systems and the rules of QAs differ from country to country, but we assume that these systems share common components (a sort of *QA Core*), that are the same in every country. This assumption is based on the fact that EC has required all EU countries to introduce the components of EQAVET.
4. We assume that most of the teachers working in VET are running QA mostly by using traditional methods (for example paper-based surveys). This imposes an additional effort on teachers and, consequently, they tend to refuse QA activities.

In this document, we give a short overview with the conclusions of the comparative study based on the national reports of the partner countries, and on the desk research carried out by the partners.

A Quality Assurance culture is spreading quickly in the European educational systems, driven partly by pressure from specific and recent national legislation. In most of the investigated countries legal frameworks concerning QA in the VET system have been released in 2012 and 2013. Vocational schools, colleges, VET and FET providers in the investigated countries operate certain type of QA practices, and in some cases there are governmental rules for them to implement QA components; these rules can be strict or more flexible (e.g. Denmark);





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furthermore, systematic quality controlling practices are regulated in some countries or in some educational sectors.

However, QA practices, levels of usage QA systems, QA criteria and indicators highly differ across countries as well as administrative regions or jurisdictions (e.g. England, North Ireland, Scotland, Wales in UK; regions and autonomous provinces in Italy; autonomous communities in Spain). They can also depend on the levels of education and on the legal form of the providers (e.g. *school-based and adult education is regulated separately in Hungary*). Finally, responsibility for quality control can be centralized (e.g. Scotland; Denmark) or distributed (in most of the countries, different ministries and institutions are responsible for QA in different sectors).

Nevertheless, two important facts emerge from the national reports:

QA systems and practices share common elements (a sort of *QA Core*, including accreditation; self-assessment/evaluation; assessment of the quality of teachers' work; school inspections). Convergence between different systems could be accelerated by the implementation of the EQAVET principles and components in the national QA policies in the member states, even though many states are starting now.

There is little evidence of an IT implementation of a QA system in any member state, with only few exceptions.

Some statements from the National reports clearly point out this matter:

There is little if any evidence of ICT support to the various 'toolkits' that can be found. Toolkits tend to be in the form of forms plus guidance [...] OpenQAsS has therefore started at a good time for the UK as a whole, but for Scotland in particular [UK Ntl. report].

The two systems presented above ...are focusing rather on administrative issues, than on operating QA cycles in the schools, or supporting quality culture among the schools' staff. [...] We did not find any IT solution for supporting the operation of the institutional Quality Assurance System in Hungary, what we intend to develop in the frame of the OpenQAsS project [HU Ntl. Report].

Positive insights arrive from the research carried out by the experts of University Alcalá, who created a lists of QA applications and web-applications, and from the experience of a regional project in Italy. As a results we could select three solutions developed for providing IT support for managing QA systems in educational institutes (like QualiteasyEdu – Agora (<http://www.qualiteasy.com>), ISOTools, ReQuS - Quality Network for the School in Lombardia).

The main conclusions for the next working phase OpenQAsS partners agreed, that the design of the OpenQAsS Toolkit should focus on the common components of QA practices and systems that have been depicted in each National report (the QA core). Specifically, QA indicators defined at national level, still referenced to EQAVET, should be used as a primary source of information for the OpenQAsS system; similarly, the system design should focus on some core functions which reflect the typical QA practices in the investigated country, as reported in the national reports.

Exemplary IT-based solutions should be used as inspiring source. The above listed application include functions that prove to be extremely effective to support QA practices in VET schools and providers¹. As a part of the system design, the experts will carry out deeper analysis of the functionalities and services of the selected applications listed above.

Editor: Giovanni Fulantelli, National Research Council Institute, Italy





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Detailed information, studies and documents are available publicly on the website, under the menu *Results/Studies, documents.*



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<http://openqass.itstudy.hu/>



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Project

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Target groups

- Teachers and headmasters of VET schools; managers and trainers of VET provider companies;
- VET schools and VET providers;
- Researchers working in the field of the vocational education;
- Software developers joining the OpenQAsS.org community.

Objectives

- To improve the culture of quality assurance by involvement of VET teachers and trainers into online consultation in the partner countries;
- To develop Open Source Software toolkit (Open QAsS) to promote and facilitate QA management in VET schools and adult educational VET providers;
- To develop a certificate – Institutional Quality Manager (IQAM) – for VET teachers and trainers who take responsibility for quality management tasks in institutions.

Partners

[iTStudy Hungary Educational and Research Centre for ICT](#) - Hungary
[Universidad de Alcala](#) - Spain
[AICA, Associazione Italiana per l'Informatica e il Calcolo Automatico](#) - Italy
[CAPDM Ltd.](#) - United-Kingdom

Programme: Erasmus+, Strategic Partnership, Vocational Education and Training

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Coordinator: iTStudy Hungary Ltd.

Contact: Mária Hartyányi. Email:

maria.hartyanyi@itstudy.hu



[SZÁMALK Szalézi Vocational High School](#) - Hungary

[National Research Council Institute](#) - Italy

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[ICS-SKILLS Certification Body Of The Irish Computer Society](#) - Ireland



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