

Exploring the Challenges of Permeability: EQF-5 and Higher Levels (Higher Education and Higher VET)

9 –10 December 2019, MCAST, MALTA



This interactive conference will focus on constructing flexible learning pathways through Levels 5 and higher of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)



SUB-THEMES

As input for the conference in Malta, in this memo more attention voor wat in het schema de sector voor Vocational-Professional Education (VPE) wordt genoemd.

VPE

This name VPE is an alternative, in the international context (national choices can always be made, of course), for Higher VET. The combination of 'Higher' and 'VET' can be confusing in certain circumstances and also suggests a kind of link to 'Higher Education'. The term VPE is used *inter alia* in Switzerland and – interestingly enough – in Hong Kong. Therefore that possibility mentioned in the scheme, to be discussed further in Malta during the workshops and sessions.

What is certainly an issue that needs to be examined is how further to shape the status of the VPE sector in the coming years, i.e. the qualifications at levels 5 and higher. For higher education, a lot of work has been done since 1999 on a set of instruments that have ensured that the underlying qualifications are recognizable in an international context, provided with a certain orientation and positioned in such a way that agreements can be made between countries. This has led to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as an umbrella name for higher education qualifications - from the Short Cycle to the Doctorate.

It is expected that the growth in the number of qualifications offered in the VPE sector will continue in the coming period. This is possible at all levels, 5 and higher. Then there is a clear need to 'communicate' with each other in a broad international setting. Not just for VPE between countries, but also with the HE and BPT sectors. This may involve continuous learning pathways, a start in another country with a certain qualification and/or getting accepted for a job elsewhere, followed by all sorts of additional training.

The question that we can try to answer during the conference is what tools are needed and then can be developed. It is obvious that we have to look at how that happens in the other sectors, in order to increase international recognition.

The workshops during the conference are primarily intended to see for which aspects of the design of a VPE sector relevant international instruments can be sought. On the one hand, they must be distinctive for VPE and on the other hand, offer the possibility of establishing a connection with the other two sectors in the system.

That is a major challenge. A process must start, with experts in this field. A form of coordination is needed, with the involvement of various European organizations. It is clear that level 5 can play an interesting role, partly in view of the connection with secondary education. In that way the input from CHAIN5 can be explained.

Briefly listed:

- We can explore the specific characteristics of the VPE sector.
- Based on this, it can be considered what tools are needed to give the VPE sector 'an international face' and also a sufficient status for all stakeholders.
- There is a need to identify the connections with the HE and PBT sectors and to see whether these instruments are adequate or whether additional options must be built in.

It is therefore up to the participants in the conference to consider whether such a process can be initiated based on the presentations, the workshops and the sessions, and how this can be done in the best way. Initiatives can be proposed, to be used by the organizations involved, together with all other international partners.

PROGRAMME

Monday 9th December

- 09:00 – 09:45 Registration and coffee
09:45 – 10:35 Opening / Welcome addresses
CHAIN5, EfVET, MCAST, Ministry of Education and Employment
- 10:35 – 10:50 Introduction to the theme and the aims of the conference – based on recent developments
EfVET
- 10.50 – 11.15 A proposal for a model, including three sectors at the tertiary level – looking at the role of the EQF
CHAIN5
- 11.15 – 11.35 Coffee break
- 11.35 – 12:15 The role of the EQF in making the system at the tertiary level more transparent
- *General introduction*
- *Developments in Norway in HE and VPE*
Plenary discussion
- 12:15 – 12:30 Short introductions – concerning the key-issues and the workshops
- 12:30 – 13:45 Lunch

Contributions to the workshops and sessions by:

- Suzanne Gatt, University of Malta
 - Hans Daale, CHAIN5
 - James Calleja, EfVET / MCAST
 - Marjolein van der Moolen and colleagues, NHL-Stenden, the Netherlands
 - Jo Baeyens, Flanders, Belgium
 - Knut Erik Beyer-Arnesen, Norway
 - Roland van der Poel, Associate degrees Academy, Roosendaal, the Netherlands
- and others

- 13:45 – 14:40 Thematic Workshops – using the key-issues (round 1):
- permeability between a VET College and a Higher Education Institute
 - using international common names, for having more transparency
 - EQF and the role of this framework for qualifications at level 5 and higher
 - role of businesses in lifelong learning, using all qualifications at level 5 for workforce development (institutes)
 - Higher Vocational Colleges: 5 and also 6...
 - using non-formal qualifications (professional qualifications) as basis for formal programmes at level 5
 - the need for standards and guidelines for permeability between VET and HE
 - role of international associations for VET and HE in having a new 'process'
- 14:40 – 14:50 Short break
- 14:50 – 15:45 Roundtable sessions – using the key-issues (round 2)
- 15:45 – 16:00 Coffee break
- 16:00 – 16:15 Plenary: a student's vision of the theme of the conference
- 16:15 – 17:00 Plenary: reporting of the workshops and sessions – input for day 2
Moderation: CHAIN5 and EfVET
- 17:30 Transport to the Institute for Tourism Studies
- tour and dinner
- 22:00 Transport back to the hotels and other central places

Tuesday 10th December

- 08:30 – 09:00 Registration and coffee
- 09:00 – 09:10 Welcome
- 09:10 – 10:00 The challenges... seen from a Maltese perspective...
Short presentations: VET, University, Employers, Ministry...
- 10:00 – 10:50 Roundtable sessions: The way forward... what's next...
Using the outcomes and recommendations from day 1
- 10:50 – 11:05 Coffee break
- 11:05 – 11:45 Plenary: Reflections from an observer and feedback of the delegates
- 11:45 – 12:30 Plenary: Conclusions, recommendations...
- 12:30 – 12:40 Closing of the conference
- 12:40 Lunch
- 14:00 – 16:30 Option: Guided Visit to Valetta

KEY-ISSUES FOR THIS CONFERENCE

- How can qualifications be linked to each other for permeability between the two sectors, at the levels 5 and higher of the EQF (and the national frameworks):
 - Higher Education
 - Vocational Education (Vocational and Professional Education - also known as Higher VET)?
- How can we promote cooperation for learning pathways where institutions from those different sectors are involved, and how can they be filled in correctly?
- What is the role of the business community in promoting flexible learning pathways that are making use of both sectors?
- Is there a strong need for 'international common names' for qualifications in both sectors, to make the whole system for level 5 and higher levels more transparent for the stakeholders?
- Can common guidelines be drawn up for a strong approach to permeability procedures between the two sectors, to the benefit of students and adult learners?
- What can be the role in all this of the international associations and networks for both sectors, to initiate a process for this, and who can contribute to such an initiative?