Quality tools for non-formal adult training in planning, organization and certification : EQAVET and practical examples

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Quality aspects in adult training

- Quality aspects of adult training are emphasized in European Union (EU) and national level policy documents and recommendations, and legislation.

- It aims: to increase participation rates in adult learning, to monitor the impact of adult learning policies and to improve them.

- Supporting decisions and actions of policy makers and implementers in field of non-formal adult education, by taking into account transnational experiences and EU policy tools like EQAVET, applying it on adult education quality assurance is best way to improve quality of non-formal adult learning programs and gain trust of adult learning stakeholders, increase participation of adults in learning.

EQAVET

- Common European reference framework for Quality Assurance stands for the Vocational Education and Training and its called EQAVET.

- EQAVET places importance on Quality Assurance in non-formal and informal learning contexts, providing a flexible framework adaptable to different national contexts, aslo applicable to non-formal adult trainings.

- EQAVET does not prescribe a particular Quality Assurance system or approach but provides a framework of common principles, indicative descriptors and indicators that may help in assessing and improving the quality of existing education systems.

- The EQAVET emerged from the 2009 Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council, as a European-wide framework to support Quality Assurance in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe

- It was revised in the 2020 Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

EQAVET framework

- The EQAVET framework is structured around a Quality Assurance and Improvement cycle, comprising planning, implementation, evaluation, and review phases.

- EQAVET is based on a Quality Assurance and Improvement cycle which consists of four phases:

  Planning

  Implementation

  Assessment and **Evaluation**

  Review

- The EQAVET Framework consists of indicative descriptors and set of reference indicators and both can be applied on adult education system.

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Planning (1)

Planning is associated with determination of clear and measurable goals, actions to achieve goals and indicators to assess the level of achievement of goals, preparation of relevant documentation to comply with legal acts, analysis of the competitive environment, identification of expectations and needs of potential customers – adults.

Criterion 1: Clarity of Goals and Objectives

Definition: This criterion evaluates the clarity and specificity of the goals and objectives set during the planning phase of non-formal education programs for adults.

Examples:

- Clearly defined objectives, such as specific skills or competencies learners should acquire

- Analysis and forecasting of adult training needs

- Measurable goals, with defined indicators for success.

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Planning (2)

Criterion 2: Stakeholder Involvement

Definition: This criterion assesses the extent to which relevant stakeholders, including educators, learners, employers, and community members, are involved in the planning process.

Examples:

- Involvement of industry representatives in identifying relevant skills and competencies.
- Soliciting input from learners on their educational and career goals.

Criterion 3: Integration of Technology and Innovation

Definition: This criterion evaluates the integration of technology and innovative teaching methods to enhance the learning experience.

Examples:

- Utilizing emerging technologies to stay relevant and competitive in the rapidly evolving job market.
- Incorporating e-learning platforms, virtual labs, or simulations to supplement traditional instruction.

Questions for assesment of planning phase:

Criterion 1: Clarity of Goals and Objectives

- Are the objectives of our non-formal adult education program clearly defined and specific in terms of skills or competencies to be acquired?

- Do we have measurable goals with defined indicators for success in place?

Criterion 2: Stakeholder Involvement

- To what extent are relevant stakeholders (educators, learners, employers, community members) involved in the planning process?

- Can you provide an example of how industry representatives are engaged in identifying relevant skills and competencies?

- How do we gather input from learners regarding their educational and career goals?

Criterion 3: Integration of Technology and Innovation

- To what extent do we integrate technology and innovative teaching methods to enhance the learning experience?

- Can you provide an example of how we incorporate technology or innovative methods in our instructional approach?

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Implementation (1)

Implementation encompasses a wide range of activities and processes. It is in this phase that the adult training program is prepared and implemented, the human, financial and material resources necessary for the high-quality implementation of the program are allocated accordingly, and staff qualification improvement activities are carried out.

Criterion 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Definition: This criterion assesses the extent to which various stakeholders, including learners, educators, employers, and community members, are actively engaged and involved in the implementation process.

Examples:

- Seeking input from learners on their preferences for instructional methods and learning environments.

- Involving employers in designing curriculum

- The needs of the learner are clearly defined and understood by all provider staff

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Implementation (2)

Criterion 2: Resource Allocation and Utilization

Definition: This criterion focuses on the effective allocation and utilization of human, financial, and material resources to support the implementation of the adult education program.

Examples:

- Ensuring that funds are allocated for necessary equipment, technology, and materials.

- Effectiveness of staff qualification development.

- Implementation of modern learning technologies in the educational process.

Criterion 3: Learner-Centered Approach

Definition: This criterion assesses whether the implementation process prioritizes the needs, preferences, and learning styles of the learners.

Examples:

- Offering multiple learning pathways

- Providing opportunities for self-directed learning and individualized support.

- Attractiveness of the learning process

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Questions for assesment of implementation phase:

Criterion 1: Stakeholder Engagement

- How actively are various stakeholders engaged in the implementation process (learners, educators, employers, community members)?
- Can you provide an example of how employers are involved in designing curriculum or providing work placements?

Criterion 2: Resource Allocation and Utilization

- How effectively do we allocate and utilize human, financial, and material resources to support the implementation of the non-formal education program?
- Can you provide an example of how we ensure that funds are allocated for necessary equipment, technology, and materials?

Criterion 3: Learner-Centered Approach

- To what extent does our implementation process prioritize the needs, preferences, and learning styles of the learners?
- Can you provide an example of how we offer multiple learning pathways or flexible scheduling options to accommodate diverse learner profiles?
- How do we provide opportunities for self-directed learning and individualized support?

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Assessment and evaluation (1)

In the assessment phase, it is determined to what degree the goals of the non-formal adult education program have been achieved at the learner and system levels. In general, the assessment phase consists of two stages: 1) data is collected and discussed and 2) a decision is made on the basis of that. In this phase, the strengths and weaknesses of program development and implementation activities are also revealed, which become guidelines for quality improvement.

Criterion 1: Data Collection Methods

Definition: This criterion evaluates the effectiveness and appropriateness of the methods used to collect data during the assessment phase.

Examples:

- Regular and consistent collection of relevant data throughout the program implementation cycle

- Early warning systems are designed to help identify early warning of emerging threats to program quality.

- Use of surveys to gather feedback from learners and stakeholders.

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Assessment and evaluation (2)

Criterion 2: Inclusivity and Equity in Assessment

Definition: This criterion examines whether the assessment process is inclusive and fair, ensuring that all participants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Examples:

- Providing reasonable support for learners with specific needs during assessments.
- Ensuring that assessment methods do not inadvertently disadvantage any particular group.

Criterion 3: Transparency and Communication

Definition: This criterion evaluates how transparent and clear the assessment process is for all stakeholders, including learners, educators, and external partners.

Examples:

- Clearly communicating assessment criteria and expectations to learners in advance.
- Publicizing learner feedback: testimonials, success stories.

Questions for assesment of evaluation phase:

Criterion 1: Data Collection Methods

- How effective and appropriate are the methods used to collect data during the assessment phase?
- Can you provide an example of how we use surveys to gather feedback from learners and stakeholders?
- How do we analyse performance records and outcomes of participants?

Criterion 2: Inclusivity and Equity in Assessment

- To what extent does the assessment process ensure inclusivity and fairness for all participants?
- Can you provide an example of how we provide reasonable accommodations for learners with specific needs during assessments?
- How do we ensure that assessment methods do not inadvertently disadvantage any particular group?

Criterion 3: Transparency and Communication

- How transparent and clear is the assessment process for all stakeholders, including learners, educators, and external partners?
- Can you provide an example of how we communicate assessment criteria and expectations to learners in advance?
- How do we provide regular updates on assessment progress and results to all relevant parties?

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Review (1)

The review completes the program quality cycle. Also, the results of the assessment must be discussed in detail with all interested parties.

Criterion 1: Action Planning and Implementation

Definition: This criterion focuses on the development and execution of action plans to address identified areas for improvement or new objectives.

Examples:

- Creating a detailed action plan with specific tasks, responsible parties, and timelines for implementation.

- Allocating resources to support the execution of identified improvements, such as additional training for instructors or updated equipment.

Review (2)

Criterion 2: Monitoring of Changes

Definition: This criterion assesses the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and tracking the progress of implemented changes.

Examples:

- Using key performance indicators to measure the impact
- Validity and appropriateness of updating the content of the program and/or improving the implementation process.

Criterion 3: Stakeholder Engagement in Follow-up

Definition: This criterion evaluates the level of engagement and involvement of stakeholders in the follow-up process, including their participation in discussions and analyses.

Examples:

- Convening regular meetings or forums with stakeholders to review progress and discuss the effectiveness of implemented changes.
- Organization of peer learning and peer assessment activities.

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Questions for assesment of review phase:

Criterion 1: Action Planning and Implementation

- How focused and effective are we in developing and executing action plans to address identified areas for improvement or new objectives?

- Can you provide an example of a detailed action plan with specific tasks, responsible parties, and timelines for implementation?

- How do we allocate resources to support the execution of identified improvements?

Criterion 2: Monitoring of Changes

- How well have we established mechanisms for monitoring and tracking the progress of implemented changes?

- Can you provide an example of how we conduct regular progress assessments to ensure planned improvements are on track?

- How do we use key performance indicators to measure the impact of implemented changes on learner outcomes?

Criterion 3: Stakeholder Engagement in Follow-up

- To what extent do stakeholders actively engage in the follow-up process, including their participation in discussions and analyses?

- Can you provide an example of how we convene regular meetings or forums with stakeholders to review progress?

- How do we encourage active participation from industry partners in evaluating the relevance of program updates?

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Recommendations for planning the Self-Assessment Process (1)

- Dividing the self-assessment process into manageable phases is a strategic approach that ensures a systematic and organized evaluation.

- This division is aligned with the EQAVET Quality Assurance and Improvement cycle, which comprises planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment, and review phases.

Planning Phase:

- During this initial phase, set clear and measurable goals and objectives for the self-assessment process. Define the policies, procedures, tasks, and allocate necessary human resources.

Example: An adult education provider outlines its goal to enhance the quality of its adult education programs. Objectives include improving learner outcomes and increasing industry relevance.

Recommendations for planning the Self-Assessment Process (2)

Implementation Phase:

- Establish procedures to achieve the defined goals and objectives. This involves tasks such as developing partnerships, involving stakeholders, allocating resources, and setting operational procedures.

Example: An adult education provider forms collaborations with local businesses to provide practical training opportunities for adult learners. Resources are allocated for updated learning materials

Assessment Phase:

- Design mechanisms for data collection and processing to make informed assessments. Evaluate the achievements against the set goals and objectives.

Example: Surveys are administered to learners, teachers, and industry partners to gather feedback on program effectiveness. Performance records are analyzed to assess learner progress.

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Recommendations for planning the Self-Assessment Process (3)

Review Phase:

➡ After processing feedback and assessment results, engage key stakeholders in discussions and analyses. Devise procedures for change, focusing on achieving targeted outcomes and setting new objectives.

Example: An adult education provider convenes a review meeting with educators, administrators, and industry partners. They analyse the assessment findings and develop action plans for program enhancements.

Recommendations for planning the Self-Assessment Process (4)

- *Establishing a timeline* is crucial to ensure that each phase is adequately addressed. For example, the planning phase may take one month, followed by two months for implementation, and so forth.

- *Allocating resources* is equally vital. This includes budgetary allocations for necessary materials, personnel hours, and any external expertise required for the self-assessment process.

- *Assigning responsibilities* clarifies who is accountable for each aspect of the self-assessment activities. This ensures that tasks are completed efficiently and that all team members understand their roles. For instance, the Self-Assessment Team Leader oversees the planning phase, while Implementation Team Members handle tasks related to the implementation phase.

- *Data Analysis and Reflection.* After collecting data throughout the self-assessment process, it's crucial to dive into a thorough analysis. Look for trends, patterns, and areas where improvements can be implemented. Reflect on these findings and consider how they align with the overarching goals of your non-formal adult learning program.

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Recommendations for planning the Self-Assessment Process (5)

- *Action Planning and Continuous Improvement*. Based on the identified areas for improvement, the adult education provider should develop a detailed action plan. Assign responsibilities, set clear timelines, and allocate necessary resources for implementation. As the action plan progresses, make sure to monitor the progress over time.

- *Documentation and Reporting*. Adult education providers should maintain meticulous records of the entire self-assessment process, including findings, action plans, and outcomes. Transparency and accountability are key. It is preferable to generate comprehensive reports to share with stakeholders, showcasing the progress made

- *Feedback and Stakeholder Engagement*. Throughout the self-assessment process, actively seek feedback from stakeholders. Their input is invaluable in refining strategies and approaches. Foster ongoing engagement with stakeholders to ensure their perspectives are valued.

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MAIN PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EACH PHRASE OF ADULT TRAINING (1)

▶ ***Ensuring a consistent and effective approach to certification***

Certification is an important quality assurance mechanism for many adult training service providers.

The main advantage is that after establishing clear quality standards, service providers can be certified by a third-party organization, for example, by recognizing the quality-of-service provision with a certificate confirming compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001 or another standard, or establish your own transparent procedure.

This approach ensures consistency and simplifies assessment processes. Standardized criteria and efficient procedures help manage the increased number of service providers seeking certification while meeting minimum quality requirements.

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MAIN PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EACH PHRASE OF ADULT TRAINING (2)

► ***Empowering adult trainng providers to carry out self-assessment***

In self-assessment, adult learning provider evaluates his services and procedures using predetermined quality indicators or criteria.

Empowering providers to take responsibility for their quality improvement efforts reduces the burden on external evaluators. Scalability and efficient management of a larger number of providers could be achieved through online platforms or automated systems, facilitating simplified self-assessment procedures.

► ***Cost management through the selection method for quality inspections***

Quality checks can be performed using a representative sample of providers selected using statistically sound sampling methods. This approach provides a reasonable assessment of overall quality without testing each supplier individually.

MAIN PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EACH PHRASE OF ADULT TRAINING (3)

➡ ***Balance of benefits and costs of quality recognitions (signs).***

Quality labels can raise awareness of quality standards in the adult training service sector. Used to recognize and reward those providers who excel in maintaining high standards, quality marks promote a culture of quality and continuous improvement among all providers.

They also encourage competition and motivate service providers to achieve better results. Quality awards can also be an effective marketing tool, improving the reputation of awarded service providers and increasing their appeal to potential learners.

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