

QA in HE and VET in the context of NQFs, EQF and QF-EHEA—promoting trust between the sectors?

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Following the Conclusions¹ from the Irish Presidency Conference on Quality Assurance in Qualifications Frameworks (Dublin, March, 2013) the main aim of the Seminar is to further explore the second item of the Conclusions, hence to facilitate the dialogue between the main actors in higher education (HE) and vocational education and training (VET) underpinning the issue of exchange and mutual learning about different and similar quality assurance (QA) arrangements in order to promote their greater compatibility.

The purpose of the Seminar is two-fold. Firstly, it will address the issue of QA systems in HE and VET in relation to the development and implementation of the national qualifications frameworks reflecting and responding to the EQF and QF-EHEA. Secondly, the Seminar will tackle the issue of different QA arrangements for facilitating recognition of qualifications, both in HE and VET education and training sectors.

Already established role of QA systems in referencing and self-certification processes which provides a base for transparency and trust between different NQFs can be broadened with additional role of securing the added quality value of NQFs in modernisation of education and training systems. In terms of delivering possible new tasks and rearranging current QA systems, the Seminar will examine some of the existing models of QA systems in HE and VET and their effectiveness in delivering quality brand NQFs. In particular, discussion will outline the question on how can QA systems, both in HE and VET learning sector, ensure that teaching and training, quality of learning outcomes, assessment and validation of knowledge, skills and competence achieved as well as certification of qualifications are regulated and monitored in accordance with required set of quality standards, thus enhancing the quality of NQFs themselves. The intention is to look at and compare diverse QA arrangements in HE and VET in order to elaborate on common principles of QA which can assure meaningful NQFs in terms of accommodating for quality assured qualifications. Although the QA processes in HE and VET so far have been developing on two separate tracks, both learning sectors have been sharing some common objectives such as to increase mobility. The issue of mutual recognition of qualifications, what steps have been taken by different countries to ensure the acceptability of qualifications coming from other countries and to what extent are NQFs being used to facilitate these arrangements shall be the second focus of the respective Seminar.

¹<http://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Presidencyconferenceconclusions.pdf>