



ERACON 2025 - CAREER-EU 2025 PROGRAMME

A SHARED VISION FOR QUALITY: ALIGNING POLICY AND PRACTICE THROUGH EU RECOMMENDATIONS AND ERASMUS STANDARDS

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INTRODUCTION



The **Italian EQAVET National Reference Point (NRP)** was established in 2006. The Italian NRP is located in the Training Systems Structure, in **Inapp**, in Rome.

The Italian NRP promotes a Steering Committee (National Board) which includes delegates from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of Education and Merit, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, the Social Partners as well as training experts and representatives of Italian Vocational Education and Training providers.

The Italian NRP **promotes the application of the EU Recommendations and supports the national process for the implementation and development of a National QA system in VET**, through the dissemination of a technical-scientific QA culture and the circulation of practices and tools for the adoption of a continuous improvement process.



European VET Recommendation 2020 – the relevance of quality and micro-credentials

A **Quality Assurance National Reference Point for Vocational Education and Training** brings together all relevant stakeholders at national and regional levels to:

- **take concrete initiatives** to implement and further **develop the EQAVET Framework**;
- inform and **mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, including Centres of Vocational Excellence**, to contribute to implementing the EQAVET framework;
- **support self-evaluation** as a complementary and effective means of quality assurance to allow the measurement of success and the identification of areas for improvement, including with respect to digital readiness of VET systems and institutions;
- participate actively in the European network for quality assurance in Vocational Education and Training;
- provide an **updated description of the national quality assurance arrangements** based on the EQAVET Framework;
- **engage in EU level Peer Reviews of quality assurance** to enhance the transparency and consistency of quality assurance arrangements, and to reinforce trust between the Member States.

INTRODUCTION



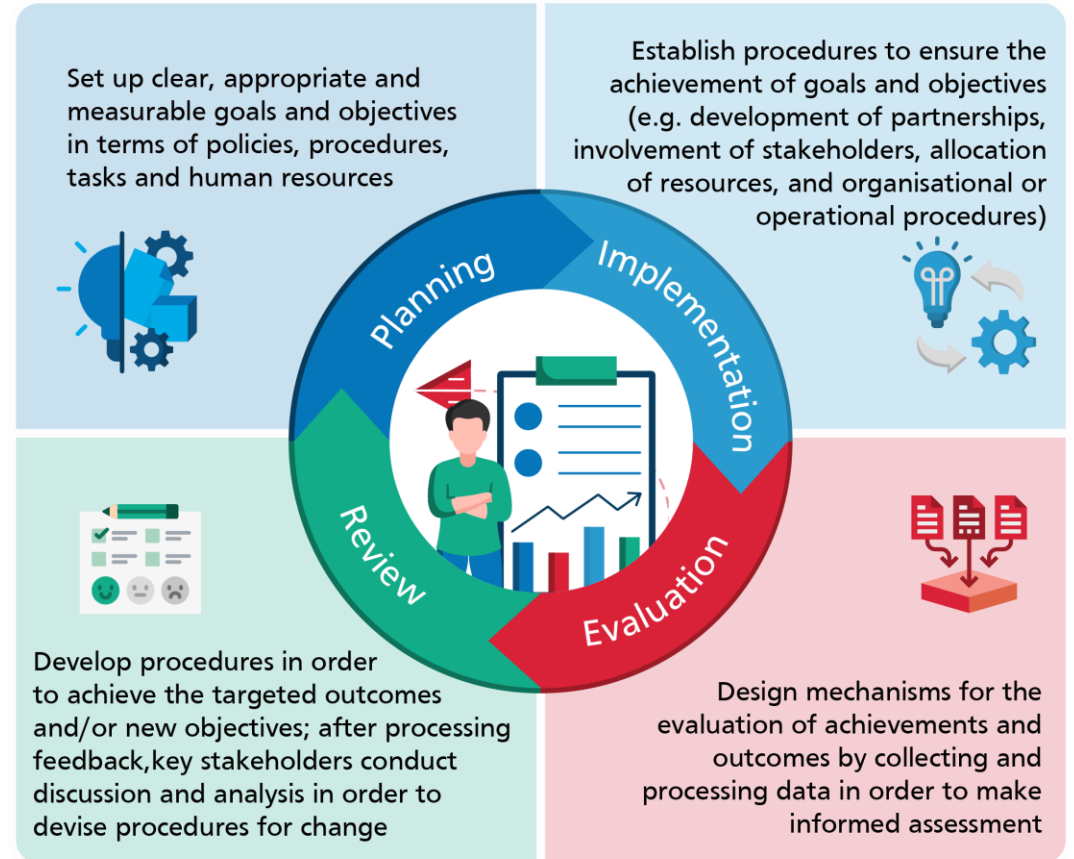
The **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)** emerged from the **2009 recommendation of the EU Parliament and Council**, as a European wide framework to support quality assurance in vocational education and training (VET) across Europe.

EQAVET is based on a quality assurance and improvement **cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/ assessment, and review/revision)** and a selection of descriptors and indicators applicable to quality management at both VET system and provider levels.

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 VET systems and provision.



The Quality Assurance Cycle



Erasmus Quality Standards – Origins and Purpose

The **Erasmus Quality Standards** were established to guide organisations involved in **mobility projects** under the Erasmus+ programme for the **2021–2027** period. They apply to organisations in **Vocational Education and Training (VET)**, **school education** and **adult education**.

These standards were introduced to:

- ensure a **high-quality learning experience** and **positive outcomes** for all participants;
- guarantee that **EU funds** are used effectively in line with the **objectives** of the Erasmus+ programme.

They cover:

- **basic principles** (such as inclusion, transparency, and cooperation);
- **good management practices** (including planning, logistics, and evaluation);
- **support and quality assurance for participants** (e.g., preparation, mentoring, and follow-up);
- **dissemination of results** and sharing of knowledge gained from mobility activities.



EQAVET Framework – Origins and Purpose

The **EQAVET Framework** (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) is a **European-level tool** designed to improve the **quality of VET provision** across both system and provider levels. Based on the **Deming Cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act)**, it follows a four-stage process to support **continuous improvement** in VET.

It is applied to **various forms of VET**, including:

- Initial and continuing VET
- Work-based learning and apprenticeships
- Online and blended learning
- Accreditation of prior learning
- Full and partial qualifications

The cycle allows **flexibility**—VET systems or providers can start at any stage depending on their needs (e.g., planning for new qualifications, evaluating existing procedures).

Regardless of the starting point, completing all four stages ensures **comprehensive quality assurance**.

Widely implemented across Europe, EQAVET has led to **national and regional quality assurance models**, tailored to local contexts. It supports not only the **design and delivery** of training but also **evaluation, accreditation, and policy development**.



Introduction

The Erasmus+ Programme (2021–2027) emphasizes quality in learning mobility through its established *Erasmus Quality Standards*. Simultaneously, the *EQAVET Framework* provides a structured model (Plan–Do–Check–Act) to ensure continuous improvement in Vocational Education and Training (VET). This study investigates how these two frameworks align in practice, supporting mutual goals of quality assurance, learner-centredness and institutional improvement.

Research methodology

A **qualitative, document-based study** was conducted, including:

- **document analysis** of Erasmus+ programme guides, Quality Standards, and EQAVET national implementation reports.
- **thematic analysis** guided by the PDCA structure.



Research Objectives:

- To examine how Erasmus Quality Standards can be linked to the EQAVET Framework and QA Cycle;
- To assess how effectively Erasmus+ providers can apply to EQAVET principles in planning, delivery, evaluation and refinement of their mobility actions;
- To identify gaps or enhancement opportunities for education and training providers using both frameworks.

Research Questions:

RQ1: *How does the Erasmus Quality Standards support the alignment with the EQAVET Framework and QA cycle?*

RQ2: *In what ways do Erasmus Quality Standards fulfil the EQAVET cycle, particularly in terms of EQAVET principles?*

RQ3: *To what extent do Erasmus Quality Standards encourage organisations to adopt a continuous improvement process consistent with the EQAVET?*



Focus on Continuous Improvement

The standards emphasize the **use of feedback**, **evaluation of learning outcomes**, and **integration of results** into organisational practice. These are hallmarks of continuous quality improvement.

Ownership and Accountability

Beneficiary organisations are required to retain **ownership of core tasks** and remain **ultimately accountable** for quality, even when delegating tasks. This ensures that quality assurance is not diluted through outsourcing.

Participant-Centered Support

The standards promote participant welfare through:

- Clear **selection and preparation** processes
- **Monitoring and mentoring** mechanisms
- Support for **linguistic and cultural adaptation**
- Emphasis on **health, safety, and inclusion**

This ensures the **quality of participant experience** throughout the mobility cycle.

Transparency and Inclusiveness

Guidelines on **fair funding allocation**, **inclusive selection**, and **public sharing of results** enhance the transparency and democratic accountability of the mobility programmes.



Alignment with European Priorities

The standards actively support:

- **Environmental sustainability**
- **Digital education**
- **Inclusion and diversity**

These priorities reflect broader **EU education and social goals**, embedding quality within policy alignment.

Clear Responsibilities in Consortia

Special provisions for **mobility consortium coordinators** define role-sharing, joint decision-making, and capacity-building, ensuring **distributed quality assurance** among partners.

Conclusion

The Erasmus Quality Standards offer a robust **quality assurance framework** grounded in **best practices, participant focus, and strategic alignment** with EU priorities. The standards facilitate **effective implementation, evaluation, and long-term impact** of mobility projects in education.



Analysis of Erasmus Quality Standards through the EQAVET Lens

The EQAVET Framework promotes a Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) quality cycle to continuously improve VET systems. The *Erasmus Quality Standards* align well with this framework across multiple dimensions:

PLAN – Setting Clear Goals and Planning

- **Strategic alignment** with EU priorities (inclusion, sustainability, digitalization) reflects forward-thinking planning.
- **Learning outcomes** are explicitly defined and agreed upon between sending and hosting organisations.
- Quality expectations and roles in mobility consortia are clearly **pre-defined** and formalised.

DO – Implementation and Delivery

- Strong emphasis on **participant preparation**, logistical arrangements, and support during mobility mirrors the implementation phase of EQAVET.
- **Digital education tools**, environmental consciousness, and inclusive access mechanisms are actively integrated into project delivery.
- Mobility processes must be **learner-centred**, safe, and well-documented, supporting quality delivery.



CHECK – Monitoring and Evaluation

- Systematic **collection of participant feedback** and evaluation of learning outcomes is mandatory.
- Organisations are required to document and reflect on **quality indicators**, similar to EQAVET's recommendation of using common indicators for assessment.
- Regular updates in EU tools and databases ensure transparency and traceability.

ACT – Review and Improve

- Emphasis on **using feedback** and evaluation results to improve future mobility projects aligns with EQAVET's continuous improvement principle.
- Organisations must **integrate outcomes** of mobility into their institutional development, promoting lasting impact and refinement.

Conclusion

The Erasmus Quality Standards **strongly reflect the EQAVET quality cycle**, particularly in the areas of:

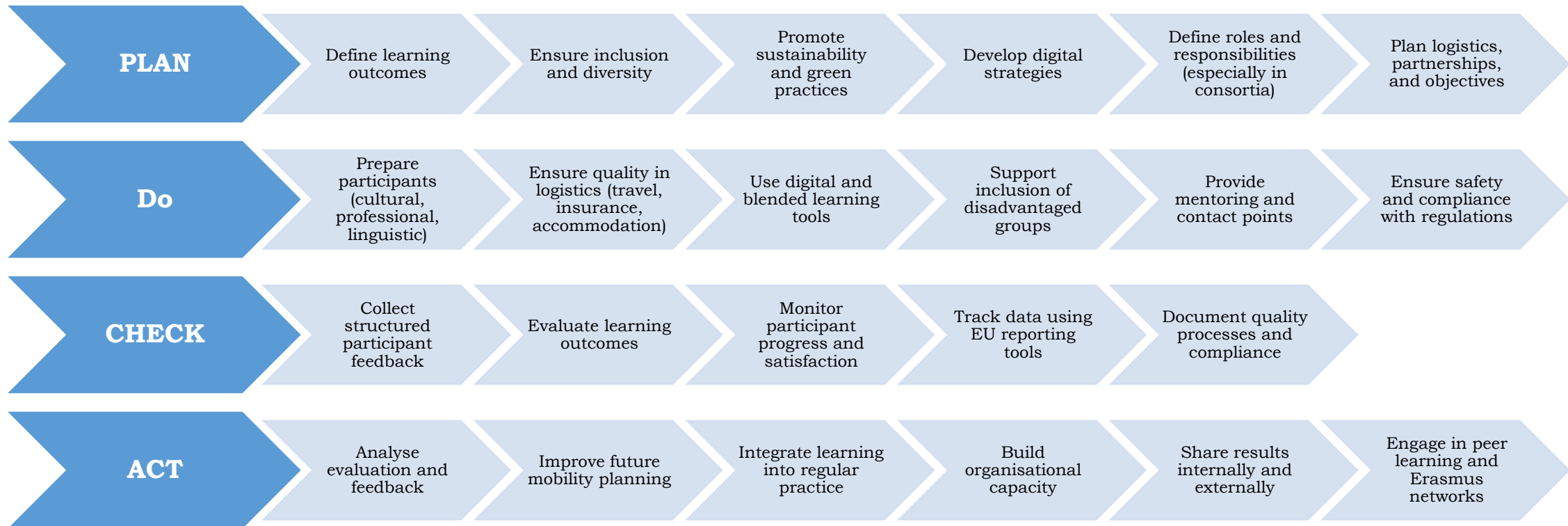
- Continuous improvement (Plan–Act)
- Participant-centred delivery (Do)
- Systematic evaluation and feedback use (Check)



CONCLUSION



Key Erasmus elements:



CONCLUSION



The analysis of the Erasmus Quality Standards through the lens of the EQAVET Framework reveals a significant and **constructive alignment** between the two. Both are deeply rooted in the principle of **continuous improvement**, offering complementary structures that guide Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers across Europe toward higher standards of quality and accountability.

At the core of this alignment is the shared use of the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle. Erasmus Quality Standards reflect this quality assurance loop in practical and actionable ways.

- In the planning phase, organisations are encouraged to align with EU strategic priorities, such as inclusion, digital transformation, and sustainability, while also defining clear learning outcomes and assigning responsibilities across consortia.
- During implementation, attention is given to participant preparation, mentoring, and logistical arrangements that support inclusive and learner-centred mobility experiences.
- The evaluation stage requires providers to systematically collect and analyse feedback and outcomes, aligning closely with EQAVET's call for the use of common quality indicators.
- Finally, in the act phase, organisations are expected to use these insights to enhance future mobility actions, ensuring that quality assurance leads to institutional development and long-term impact.



CONCLUSION



Furthermore, the Erasmus Standards emphasize accountability and ownership, making it clear that organisations remain responsible for quality even when tasks are outsourced.

This reinforces the culture of transparency and reliability that EQAVET promotes. The strong participant-centred approach, with its focus on welfare, health, inclusion, and adaptation support, underlines a commitment to quality not just in systems, but in learner experiences.

In conclusion, the Erasmus Quality Standards do more than comply with the EQAVET Framework—they bring it to life in mobility contexts.

Their structured, cyclical approach, rooted in practical application and policy alignment, creates a solid foundation for continuous improvement. However, opportunities remain for further integration and cross-framework learning, especially in areas such as joint capacity-building and the harmonisation of evaluation practices.

Ultimately, this shared vision for quality represents a forward-looking, collaborative effort to elevate the effectiveness and impact of vocational education across Europe.





THANK YOU FOR YOU ATTENTION

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